

GOSPEL ALLIANCE QUARTERLY UPDATE

Birth Pangs

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BIRTH PANGS

***“My children, of whom I am again in birth-pains till Christ is formed in you”
Gal 4:19***

God in all his dealings with us have just one objective. That Christ be formed in us. This is the way to be conformed to the image of Christ (See Rom.8:29). The coming of Lord Jesus Christ, and all He went through by way of the cross is to bring many sons unto glory. There can be no birthing of children without going through birth pangs. All that the Lord Jesus went through is describe in terms of birth pains: “He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.” Isa 53:11

Birth pangs refer to the pains that comes with giving birth. Most mothers will tell you that it cannot be described, you can only know it by passing through the experience.

When my wife gave birth to our last child, I was with her in the labour ward. All I can say was that my wife passed from death to life just to bring out that little baby. The positive side is the that a new life is brought forth. The pain is bearable only because of the hope of bringing forth a new life. The woman looks at the baby and is gratifies; the pain was well worth it.

To come to a fuller life in Christ, we cannot escape going through such “birth pangs”. Whether the goal is for an increase in ourselves, for some individuals or a company. There must be this cry: “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” Phil 3:10-11. It is an experience of death and of suffering, of pains that can be described as a birth pangs. It comes first as a strong desire, an all-consuming desire for God, for the manifestation of the fulness of his life, for an emancipation from earth-boundness.

CONT'D...

Such was the travail we see in Rom. 8:22-23, and 2Cor. 5:1-4:

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

These desires find expression in our daily experience; the world loses its lustre and glamour before us, we lose taste for the world as our soul pants after God. If we mean business with God in our prayer for a release of a fuller life, He will put us through terrible experiences that we sever us completely from the grip of the world and worldliness until He becomes our all-consuming passion.

What is true in the personal travail for a fuller experience of God, is true, if not even more severe when we take responsibility for the spiritual growth of those God has put in our care. Paul describes his experience in Col 1:24 as completing that which remains of the suffering of Christ. While he does not mean being co-redemptrix in any sense

of it, he meant the same soul anguish Jesus went through.

The church was the singular burden in his heart. *"Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches."* (2Cor.11:28-29). He could go through all to birth forth men and women that are conformed to the image of Christ.

In very practical sense, this labour meant travail in prayer. The example of Epaphras is given to us: "Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured." Col 4:12-13. Paul spoke of his own praying (See Rom. 1:9, Eph.1:15, Phil.1:8-9, Col. 1:3,9, 1Thess.1:2, etc). The labour meant labouring in the word of God, for Paul he had to go house to house, sometime teaching all night, preaching with tears, and even maintaining a class daily for about two years. (See Acts 19:9-10, 20:7, 18-20, What a labour! The labour meant setting the right example in character and personal dealings. All of this comes with very serious sacrifices, for Paul it meant giving up marriage, giving up salary, taking on a flexible job, sleepless night, fasting, etc. (See 1Cor.9:1-18, 2Cor.6:3-10, 1Thess.2:1-12)

Labouring for Christ to be formed in the Church is indeed like going through the pains of pregnancy and delivery. It affects everything a person does, from social life to private life. May the Lord truly have men that are willing to go through the birth pangs required to birth forth the sons of God.

REPORTS

PWC 2024

The year started with our annual prayer and word conference. The Lord reminded us of our trust in the gospel and why we must take responsibility for the gospel in our time. As we look at the theme: **A DISPENSATION OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST (1Cor.9:16-17)**. We saw that we are key stakeholders in the gospel scheme in our time and our sphere. We also learn how we may discharge the trust repose on us, so as not to disappoint heaven.

The conference held which held from January 3rd to 7th, 2024 at Scripture Union Life Centre, Igbo-Etche, Rivers State featured talks, seminars, missions mobilization, expository study of 1Corinthians and prayer sessions. A total of 60 persons were in attendance. You can listen to talks, seminars, etc. via our YouTube channel. Conference materials may be downloaded via our website.



This specialized bible study focused on building a sound family life holds once every two months. March Edition was held on the 9th of March 2024 with the focus: **"Be fruitful and Multiply"**. 12 Persons were in attendance.

MONTHLY PRAYER MEETING

As part of mobilizing the body of Christ to labour in prayer for revival, we had our February prayer meeting on the 16th of February with the theme: **Birth Pangs (Galatians 4:19)**. A total of 11 persons participated.

PARTNERING WITH GOSPEL ALLIANCE

Gospel Alliance aims to raise mature and balanced Christian workers. Our vision is for the Church to fulfill her vocation in this age, and we believe that this can be achieved through the word of God, prayer, fellowship, training, and a strong emphasis on family life. Our mission is to provide a platform for Christian workers to come together in fellowship and receive ministerial support. We believe that through this, we can labor for the reformation and revival of the Church, and the promotion of the gospel.

WHAT WE DO

1. Campus Work: As part of our aim to raise mature Christians, we have a special focus on campuses and higher institutions of learning. We carry out the following:

- **Campus Evangelism:** We visit campuses for one-on-one evangelism.
- **Discovery Bible Study (DBS):** This class helps seekers discover the way of salvation.
- **Discipleship Exposure and Experience Program (DEEP):** This is a follow up to DBS, those who have come to faith are further exposed to discipleship.
- **The Gates:** This is a program that strategically engages young leaders.

2. Publication and Media: We seek to reach out to the church and young ministers in particular through:

- **Young Ministers Digest (YMD):** This is a biannual publication aims to equip young people for ministry.
- **E-books:** Our e-books consist of training materials and transcribed messages. You can check them out on our website.
- **Podcast:** We host weekly podcast on various Christian themes. Please subscribe to our YouTube Channel for more.

3. Trainings: Equipping the saints for the work of the ministry involves intensive trainings. We run the following trainings/Courses

- Short Bible Course
- Evangelism and Missions Exposure Course
- Music Ministers Course
- Children and Teens Ministry Training
- Leadership Trainings

Please visit our website to see and register for upcoming training

4. Retreats and Conferences: This is aimed at promoting fellowship and edifying the saints. We hold the following retreats and conferences:

- **Prayer and Word Conference:** This conference holds annually in January.
- **Co-Labourers Retreat:** This is a quarterly Retreat of friends and partners
- **Family Time Out:** Once every two months we meet to study issues relating to family life.

REGULAR PROGRAM

1. Weekly Prayer Meeting and Bible Studies every **Friday by 9pm** @Bro Val's Residence Eneka, Port Harcourt

2. **Tuesday** online Intercessory Prayers **8:45pm**

3. Campus Evangelism: every **Sunday by 3pm**

Are you an undergraduate on campus? Join our **CAMPUS REVIVAL LABOUR**, call Bro. Don on **+2348089013084**

NEWS

1. **Gospel Alliance website:** Our website www.gospelalliance.org.ng has been fully launched. Thanks to *eloti designs* and all who supported this project. You can now view and download ministry materials from the site, register for conferences and trainings and also read edifying blogs.

2. **The maiden edition** of young ministers digest have been published. You can download your soft copy (pdf) via our website.

3. The family of our Treasurer Sister Juliana Ayebatonye was blessed with a baby boy on the 24th of January, 2024.

4. Our Coordinator Bro. Obioha Valentine lost his mother on the 6th of January, and she has been buried. Please continue to uphold the family in prayer.

UP-COMING EVENTS

1. **Co-labourer's Retreat:** Theme: Bringing many sons to Glory (Heb 2:10). Date: 19th to 21st April, 2024

2. **May Family Time out:** Focus: "Identity and Compatibility in Marriage" Date: 11th May, 2024

3. **"Birthing The Unprecedented"** Campus Edition (May to June)