

In the daily battles of life one can be tempted to give in to depression or fatigue as we see sin and compromise increasing. Yet there is hope. God is sovereign. Nothing is inevitable except what God has decreed. And there is power in prayer.

Christians are not doomed to defeat but called to victory. If God can change us then He can use us to change some part of this world. Christians can change the course of human history by prayer and obedience to God. The Bible is full of examples of believers "who through faith conquered kingdoms." Hebrews 11:33. And recent history confirms the power of prayer.

Shortly after I was converted to Christ early in 1977, I remember an OMF missionary urging us to pray for God to open the doors to Red CHINA. Even as we prayed my heart was filled with unbelief - how could a communist country like China ever be open to the Gospel again? Yet we have seen how Mao Tse Tung died, how his little "Red Book" became discredited and how the doors to china have been gradually opening since.

Not that China is at all free - the brutal massacre of thousands of unarmed civilians in Peking's Tiananmen Square shows that communism is still in control -but the doors have opened. In 1977 many questioned if the Church had survived the "Cultural Revolution" and vicious persecution. Now we know that there are well over 50 million Christians in China! And millions of Bibles have been safely delivered behind the Bamboo Curtain since.

When I first started praying for MOZAMBIQUE in 1981, it was firmly closed to the Gospel. Many of my friends thought I was foolish to try to enter Marxist Mozambique on my motorbike, laden with a thousand Gospels and Bibles and the "Jesus" film. Yet God opened the doors time and time again and we managed to deliver tons of Bibles and relief aid and show Christian films throughout that war-torn country.

As the persecution of Christians in ANGOLA escalated under the Marxist dictator, AGESTINO NETO, we prayed for God to intervene. Shortly after Neto declared that: "Within 20 years there will not be a Christian left in Angola. I will have eradicated Christianity!" Neto died in mysterious

circumstances on an operating table in Moscow. His successor, Dos Santos, has shown a marked lack of enthusiasm in continuing Neto's wave of church burning.

In 1986 as Samora Machel's brutal persecution of Christians in Mozambique intensified, we published the "Mozambique Report" and launched a campaign of prayer for the suffering Christians there. Although there seemed to be no hope - we continued to trust God to intervene and stop the bloodbath. Suddenly, in October 1986, the dictator's Soviet aircraft crashed in the midst of a storm. A month earlier, Machel had publicly cursed Christ and challenged God to prove His existence by striking him dead. When, after 60 seconds nothing had happened, Machel declared that "God is dead! But I am alive!" Now the persecutor is dead and God is clearly alive. Although much suffering continued, Mozambique officially renounced marxism and allowed some measure of freedom to many churches - especially in the cities. And missionaries at last managed to evangelise in Mozambique again. The atheistic persecutors of the Church had to acknowledge defeat.

When I first saw THE BERLIN WALL in March 1988, and the crosses in memory of those who had been shot in that back whilst fleeing from socialism - I wept. I prayed, as did so many others, that God would break down this evil structure even as He had demolished the walls of Jericho. Yet how amazed I was when our prayers were answered in 1989, and millions poured over the border for their first look at the other half of their city and country.

When Lenora and I visited ROMANIA early 1989, we experienced the oppression of communism and witnessed the tyranny of Ceaucescu. Along with millions of others - we prayed. And before the year was ended we saw Ceaucescu executed, communist symbols smashed and God's Word openly proclaimed in the public squares of Romania.

Now Romania was not yet free - communists hijacked the revolution and dominated the new government - but the churches experienced dramatic new opportunities to serve God. Even if those freedoms are temporary, millions of Bibles have flooded in during the last years, and the Gospel has made great advances in the lives of millions of Romanians.

ALBANIA had declared itself the first fully atheist state in the world in 1966. Yet in answer to prayer the communist government of Albania was forced to re-open many churches in 1990. Oppression continued but tens of thousands packed the few open churches each week until the communist regime was overthrown. Those who declare was on God will surely lose.

"The Lord will be awesome to them when He destroys all the gods of the land. The nations on every shore will worship Him, every one in their own land." Zephaniah 2:11

"Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession." Psalm 2:8

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