

Fanning it into Flame

Sunday, 5-15-11

Never Give Up

The message this Sunday was given by my dear friend of 32 years, Roy Olsen. His life is an inspiration and a living testimony to the fact that *“God works all things together for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose.”* Romans 8:28. The title of the message did not come by way of just trying to offer some theoretical words of encouragement, but as a result of a life being lived. His stories, supported by great pictures taken over the last ten years, touched our hearts and elicited gratitude to our God and Father who loves us and is always at work within us.

Roy made the following declarations that we would do well to recite every morning as we start our day:

You are significant. The best is ahead of you. You never know what God is up to. Keep the Faith!

Keep trusting. Sorrow may endure for the night, but **Joy comes in the morning.**

Facing the most difficult situation of his life, Roy left the church he had pioneered and was the senior pastor for 19 years and moved to Virginia to be with his sister. He said he went through the 4 D's: Depression, Despondency, Despair, and Defeat. Christ in him would not let him drift into oblivion. Roy began to attend his sister's church and eventually went on a few mission's trips. His second trip to Romania began to spark a vision in him as he developed relationships with Christian leaders there. He began to stay for extended periods of time and invited me to come in 2004. We preached in 13 churches in 11 days. What an incredible time! The people in the poorest nation in Europe had such a hunger for God. They worked in the fields all day and then came out for church services in the evening. These wonderful people captured Roy's heart which over time helped develop a vision to reach this entire country which is shaped like a fish and is about the size of Oregon.

He didn't know how he would accomplish this dream, but when he saw a piece of property for sale, it had the possibilities of a beginning. Roy cashed in his meager pension and bought it, naming it **Apa Vie** which means Living Water. Over the past 6 plus years they have been renovating it and making it a center for outreach with conferences and retreats for youth, church members, and pastoral leaders. Roy realized that he could not reach the entire nation alone, but if he could touch the leaders and empower them, they could get the job done. As visiting pastors from the USA would come he would schedule a conference and have them teach. This has been very effective. His encouragement to us is to not wait until you have everything in place to start something. Start now! God didn't part the Jordan until their feet touched the water. Daniel wasn't delivered from the Lions' Den at the door, but in the den. Sometimes we just have to face what life brings us knowing that God has a plan through it all and will use it to accomplish his ends.

Have you been through a crisis that you don't think you'll ever recover from? Do you have dreams in your heart that you think are too big for you to accomplish? Have the “4 D's” been part of your diet? Take Roy's counsel and believe God to work in and through you to accomplish his will. **Matthew 17:20b** *“I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”* **Philippians 2:13** *“for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”*

Roy is presently looking to purchase another piece of property that has a house, 2 ½ acres, is fully furnished, and includes a 1991 VW Bus all for \$63,000. It's only a 5 minute walk from **Apa Vie** and has such tremendous potential. You are invited to be part of this ministry! They have room for you to come and be part of a short term missions' trip. Watch God do incredible things in your life. Let's pray that just as God worked in Roy's life and has given him a ministry that he feels he was born for, you too are about to move into your God given destiny. We are all called to be part of advancing the Kingdom of God. Let him speak to you and don't sell yourself short. **Jeremiah 29:11** *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*