

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

357

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with praying for our leaders. Paul wrote to Timothy: **"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and for all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Tim. 2:1-2).** Solomon said: **"When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn" (Prov. 29:2 KJV).** It is good to pray for our leaders!

Those in authority need Christ just like everyone else. Paul was God's chosen instrument to carry His name before the Gentiles, their kings, and the people of Israel (Acts 9:15). Not everyone has a chance to preach to those in authority, but Paul did! Felix, for example, was the governor of Judea. When Paul appeared before him as a prisoner, the bold apostle **"discoursed on righteousness, self control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, 'That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you'" (Acts 24:24-26).** In reality, it is never "convenient" to become a Christian. To become a Christian you must take up your cross daily (Lk. 9:23) and crosses are not designed to be convenient. So, as far as we know, Felix never became a Christian.

Some leaders, however, do become Christians. For example, on Feb. 1, 1953, Dwight David Eisenhower was baptized into Christ just 10 days after being inaugurated as President. Among the many godly things President Eisenhower did, is the fact that he signed the law making "In God We Trust" our nation's official motto. As Solomon said: **"When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice"**.

Perhaps you remember that on Dec. 20, 1989 the United States invaded Panama to oust their drug dealing dictator, Manuel Antonio Noriega. Some 26,000 American troops did their job quickly and Noriega surrendered on Jan. 3, 1990. Noriega was imprisoned just outside of Miami, Florida and in less than a week received a package containing a leather-bound copy of the Soul Winner's New Testament. This special gift came from an evangelical preacher in Longview, Texas named Clift Brannon. Noriega sent Brannon a letter on Jan. 10, 1990 thanking him for the Scriptures.

Upon receipt of this letter Brannon applied for a permit to visit Noriega in prison. Soon Brannon, with his translator Rudy Hernandez, were conducting weekly Bible studies with Noriega. My good friend Joe Garman also went to Florida and studied the Bible with Noriega. Joe said that Noriega's Bible was filled with highlighted pages and that he easily found the passages he was looking for when given "book, chapter, and verse". In May 1990 Noriega confessed Christ as his savior, but was not able to be baptized until Oct. 24, 1992. Joe Garman's ministry, *American Rehabilitation Ministries*, provided a portable baptistry so this famous dictator could obey Christ and be baptized. Joe said that Noriega sent his good friend Fidel Castro a leather bound copy of the Bible. As far as we know, Gen. Noriega is the only man to have been baptized into Christ in a federal courtroom.

In April 1992 Noriega was sentenced to 40 years in prison in the U.S. In 2010 he was extradited to a prison in France. Noriega was also condemned in absentia in Panama for embezzlement, corruption, and murder. Thus from prison in the U.S., to prison in France, he was finally returned to a prison in Panama. In 2015 he apologized to his nation for his regime and his ungodly actions that led to the 1989 invasion. On March 7, 2017 Noriega had a brain tumor removed and died two months later

on May 29, 2017 at the age of 83. It is a good thing to pray **“for kings and for all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness”**

African warlord Joshua Milton Blahyi was born September 30, 1971. During Liberia’s 14 year civil war he became their most feared warlord. During the long civil war most of the country was controlled by rival militias and everyone had reason to fear Blahyi. He was a ruthless killer who confessed to the murders of at least 20,000 people. Believing in magic he chose to go into battle naked as he believed this made him immune to bullets. So, with only a crazed look on his face and shoes on his feet he earned the moniker of “General Butt Naked”. The *Daily Mail* ran a profile about him under the headline “face to face with general butt naked—‘the most evil man in the world.’”

A long time friend of our family, Australian Evangelist Doug Willis, had the privilege of baptizing this vicious killer into Christ. In 2013 Blahyi published his memoirs entitled: *The Redemption of an African Warlord*. Bojan Jancic, an evangelical pastor, wrote the forward to the book and said: “*Not since the conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the Road to Damascus have I ever heard a conversion story more radically compelling.*” Since 2006 Blahyi has been traveling throughout Liberia preaching the gospel and rescuing children whom he had formally drugged, killed, and cannibalized. He has now built a compound for these precious souls and has already provided hope and guidance to over 500 children in need.

Remember! **“our struggle is not against flesh and blood” (Eph. 6:12)**. Anybody that bleeds is not our enemy. Vicious killers like Saul of Tarsus and Joshua Milton Blahyi are actually victims! Once they are rescued from Satan’s power and filled with the Holy Spirit, they are new creatures with unlimited potential to do good. So **“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and for all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness”**.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce