

Scarborough

Mid-summer; lovely sunny day; and 57 members! This sums up our day trip to Scarborough late summer of 2008. Upon arrival, while some headed straight to the beach, others decided to stay back enjoying what nature has to offer. The trip, the first of its kind, was fun-filled. It provided much needed relief from the hectic schedule that have come to characterise our every day living. There were lots to eat and drink; games to play and spirit lifting music to dance to. A general consensus among the participants was that the day out was a delight, and an event to remember.

In fact, members are already looking forward to the next day out trip.

Strongtower Parish, Bradford

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You are Special

The Redeemed Christian Church of God
Strongtower Parish Bradford
Mayfield Centre
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Our Service

- ◆ SUNDAY
Worship Meeting: 9:30am-10:00 am
Sunday School: 10:00am-10:45am
(Bible Study)
Worship Service: 10:45am-12:30pm
- ◆ THURSDAY
(Except preceding the 1st Friday of the month)
Prayer Drop: 6:30pm-7:30pm
(Bible Study)
- ◆ FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH
Holy Communion: 11:00pm-2:00pm

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Strongtower Parish, Bradford

Advancing Kingdomtouching lives

Special Edition



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HIGHER GROUND 2008

Holiness

Key to Divine Exploits

How To Build

An Intimate Relationship In The Family

YOU & YOUR HEALTH

SELF DEVELOPMENT

DIVINE EXPLOITS: KILL YOUR GIANTS

GET TO KNOW HIM

"A SEASON OF DIVINE EXPLOITS."

(Daniel 11:32b. "...but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.")

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We congratulate our father and mother in the Lord

PASTOR & MRS. 'DARA SHOFOLUWE

on the occasion of their

10th Wedding Anniversary

that was celebrated on the 24th October

and also wish Pastor 'Dara Shofoluwe

*Happy Birthday
in arrears.*

We wish you more anointing and grace for more exploits in Jesus name.



RCCG Strongtower Parish Bradford.

We the Choristers of Redeemed Christian Church of God
 Strongtower Parish, Bradford,

celebrate

the goodness and faithfulness of God
 over his church for the past 6 years.

We pray may the lord continue
 to take us to Higher Ground (Amen).

RCCG Strongtower Voices



The Sunday School Department is responsible for teaching the word of God in the Foundation Class, Workers in Training and Sunday school sessions.

Our vision is to see members thoroughly equipped with the sound knowledge of God's word with the help of the Holy Spirit and to be able to apply this in their daily walk while doing great exploits for God's Kingdom.

"Please note your Sunday service is not complete without Sunday school."

God bless.



RCCG Strongtower Parish Bradford.

The Ushering Department

Congratulates

The church On the

6th Year Anniversary

We pray may the Lord continue to strengthen you all (Amen.)

The Ushers:



Editorial

Welcome To A Season Of Divine Exploits

".....but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." (Daniel 11:32b)

What does doing exploits mean? What is involved in doing exploits? What are the attributes of an individual who does divine exploits?

What challenges may someone doing divine exploits face and how can they be overcome? These are salient issues addressed in this special anniversary magazine.

An important truism presented in the various articles in this edition is the credence given to the multifaceted nature of divine exploits.

There is a need to strike the appropriate balance between the spiritual and the socio-physical.

Therefore as well as addressing spiritual issues, the magazine contains articles on other life issues such as a

healthy lifestyle and building a healthy marriage and home. However, major emphasis was placed on the fact that these other lifestyle issues only compliment, not supplement, the spiritual requirements for divine exploits.

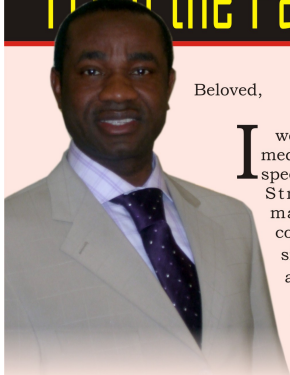
We are sure you will find this edition of the Higher Ground magazine both refreshing and spiritually fulfilling.

God Bless.

Editorial Team

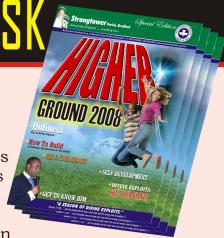


From the Pastor's desk



Beloved,

I would like to use this medium to introduce this special edition of the RCCG Strongtower Bradford magazine; produced in commemoration of the sixth year anniversary of this ministry and its annual conference- Higher Grounds 2008.



The theme of the conference, Divine Exploits, denotes the necessity to attain our potentials through God. For it is written, "...those that know their God shall be strong and do exploits" (Daniel 32:11b). This bible passage

unambiguously pinpoints a salient requirement: for us to experience supernatural advancement in life and indeed be lifted to greater heights, it is imperative to know God. It is the spiritual precursor to Divine Exploits and the tackling of challenges that might hinder us from getting to our God-ordained destinations.

It is the Lord's promise, to equip us with the requisite resources to advance His work in this end-time. For us, extraordinary exploits will be our portion in our generation. As we read this anniversary edition of the magazine, the Holy Spirit will impact us with the strength required for divine exploits.

The materials in this magazine are educative, inspirational, and most importantly, a timely addition to the arsenal of the end-time army of God. I declare to all readers; that this period signals the commencement of your season of divine exploitation and unfettered advancement in all your undertakings.

God Bless

Pastor Dara Shofoluwe
Parish Pastor.

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*The Pastor and the entire congregation of
RCCG Strongtower Bradford*

Rejoice with

Pastor Wellington Yomi Obadimeji – 25th October

& Pastor (Mrs.) Mofe Obadimeji – 7th September



On the occasion of their

Birthday Celebrations



May the Lord shower His grace upon you and strengthen you in His work in Jesus name.



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HIP! HIP! HIP! HURRAH

Olamide Adeyemi



1



On 13th November 2008

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FROM LITTLE ACORN TO AN OAK TREE.

History of RCCG Strongtower Parish, Bradford

RCCG Strongtower Parish, Bradford is part of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), which was established in Lagos, Nigeria in 1952. The General Overseer of the church is Pastor E.A. Adebayo. This ministry has over 5000 parishes worldwide and a membership of over 5 million worshippers worldwide (see www.rccg.org).

The term 'parish' is used to describe an administrative subdivision of a larger body of a civil or church organisation. Strongtower Parish, Bradford was one of the first parishes of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in West Yorkshire. It started as a house fellowship with 7 adults and a toddler, Sis. Florence Oyedele, Bro. Openyi Adebisi, Bro. Dara Shofoluwe, Bro. Akpo Onduku, Sis. Abiola Shofoluwe, Sis. Bola Smart, Bro. Pele Odiase and little Damilola Shofoluwe were among the earliest members of the church.

Do you want to know how it started? Read on:

The year was July 2002, having just arrived from Nigeria, Bro Dara being a minister in the RCCG desired to have continuous fellowship with the RCCG family. Consequently, he made contact with the then nearest RCCG parish to Bradford which was RCCG Strongtower Parish Manchester pastored by Pastor Yomi Obadimeji. Pastor Yomi was asked if he would consider supporting the planting of an RCCG parish in Bradford. Independently and almost simultaneously, Bro. Akpo Onduku, then a research student at Bradford University, also got in touch with Pastor Obadimeji with the same vision. The Bible declares, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27). Pastor Obadimeji sought the face of the Lord and thereafter mobilised a remarkable amount of resources to support and help realise this wonderful vision.

To further the church planting vision, by September 2002 a house fellowship centre was inaugurated at 187 Brookfield Road, Bradford 3 the then residence of Bro & Sis Dara Shofoluwe. The fellowship meeting was something everyone looked forward to as there was always a wonderful atmosphere of worship. As the fellowship increased in numbers, it became necessary to seek more suitable premises. Thus, the church secured a meeting hall at YMCA Macmillan Centre, Dorset Street Bradford where the church began in earnest.

It was at this address, on the 23rd of November 2002, that the church was formally commissioned. The church dedication and inaugural ceremony was well attended by members and non-members. The occasion was graced with the presence of some very senior pastors of RCCG Worldwide at the Assistant General Overseer level. These included, Pastor Akindele, Pastor Ojo and Pastor Babatunde Isiaka (the then Director of Evangelism UK & Ireland). It goes without saying that this gathering was also a reflection of the recognition accorded to Pastor Obadimeji who personified the baby church's main link to the RCCG UK structure.

As the word spread about the church, more and more people came to be a part of the vision. Pastor Obadimeji, an exemplary man of God and a tireless worker provided much needed and effective pastoral guidance for the new church in those early days. Through him the congregation had the privilege of being ministered to by other powerful men and women of God from the Manchester church. These included, Deaconess Aijke, Deaconess Taiwo, Deaconess Lawunmi, Deaconess Bolaji Shobo, Deaconess Lawumi Onafaju, Deaconess Ronke Edem and very supportive Mothers-In-Israel to the church,

Pastor (Mrs) Mofe Obadimeji and Pastor (Mrs) Femi Labeadan.

The day of small beginnings, the Bible says should not be despised (Zech 4:10). The early days were a time of hard work consisting of morning evangelism, packing and unpacking of equipment and cleaning of the venue just before service and re-arranging of chairs just after the service. It was a humble but busy beginning, filled with numerous activities. All of this was accompanied by continuous praise, clapping of hands and stamping of feet in joyful enthusiasm. That small place brought every member together with love and unity being in full manifestation. By early 2003, the church however, moved to Hilton Hotel, Bradford. God gave the church more recognition and increased the numerical strength of the church. It was this tremendous growth that prompted the church's move later to the Victoria Hotel, for 2 months, and subsequently, to its present location at the Mayfield Centre.

The pioneering Bradford Parish Administrator was Bro. Openiyi Adebisi who doubled as the Minister-in-Charge supported by a Committee of Elders- Sis. Florence Oyedele, Bro. Dara Shofoluwe, and Bro. Akpo Onduku. Brother Adebisi led the church from infancy until his move to Bedford in 2003. From the middle of 2003 to the end of 2004 Bro. Dara Shofoluwe took over as the church administrator.

In January 2005, the era of leadership by church administrators came to a timely end as Bro. Dara Shofoluwe was appointed the Pastor of RCCG Strongtower Parish, Bradford. Pastor Shofoluwe, a man of God, like David, who loves the Lord with a passion, was already a minister and a teacher of the word. What always shines through his service to the Lord is his deep and profound concern for souls, his humility and his sense of goodwill to all of God's creation. This was a new dawn in the history of the church and with it came direct recognition of the parish from RCCG's UK Central Office. With this new lease of life, and under the leadership of Pastor Shofoluwe, the current pastor, the church experienced tremendous growth and metamorphosed from a satellite parish to a fully-fledged family church.

This brief historical account would not be complete without recognising some of the pioneering and early members of the church whose contribution was remarkable. These included, Sis. Florence Oyedele, Bro. Akpo Onduku, Bro. Yemi Egbeleke, Bro. Dara Oyedele Bro. Abiodun Fajilade, Bro. Anthony Fagboun, Sis. Abiola Shofoluwe, Sis. Bola Smart, Bro. Yinka Adeyemi and Bro. Adeyemi Adedokun. Special mention should be made of Sis. Florence Oyedele, affectionately referred to as Mummy Oyedele, a firebrand minister whose wisdom and grace was a constant blessing to the fellowship. There are a great many others that deserve a

mention but for the need for brevity. To God be all the glory.

The Church is Marching On

In recent times the Church has been a hub of activity for Christian events and training. It has been the host of a number of conferences, seminars and musical concerts. It now has a plethora of ministries and departments through which it promotes the work of the Kingdom of God.

Some of the ministries include, the Evangelism Team, 24 Hour Prayer Chain and Prayer Walk organised by the Prayer Department, The Music Ministry, The Technical Team, The Protocol Team, The Redeemed Students Christian Fellowship, University of Bradford, The Welfare Team, The Men's Fellowship, The Good Women's Fellowship, Children Department, The Pre-Marital Class, The Marriage Counselling Team and the Visitation Ministry.

Bearing Fruit: New Parishes

To God be the Glory, three parishes has been established on the platform of RCCG Strongtower Bradford namely: The Everlasting Father Assembly in Leeds under the leadership of Pastor Samuel Obafaiye, The Power House Restoration Centre in Halifax, under the leadership of Pastor (Dr.) Joel Fagborun and lately In June 2007, the Chapel of Grace Parish, Shipley was established and headed by Pastor (Dr.) Kenneth Omeje.

The Church is advancing; forward! Forward! On and on! For the Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge. He is indeed our Strong Tower. Come, join the advance today!



from Left:
Pastor Wellington Yomi Obadimeji
with Pastor 'Dara Shofoluwe

THE REDEEMED STUDENTS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD

...Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
Heb 10:22

September 2007 saw the birth of The Redeemed Students Christian Fellowship, University of Bradford, under the leadership of Christ Jesus through his servant Hephzibah Akpovwa. The fellowship had its first meeting on the 10th of October 2007 with just three students in attendance. Since then the fellowship has had over thirty fellowship meetings with the membership growing from strength to strength. There has also been an expansion of leadership following the appointment of Kelly Osadolor, Damilade Ekoli, Abimbola Soares and Abisade Adebayo as the President, Secretary, Treasurer and Evangelism Secretary respectively.



The main purpose of the fellowship is to reach out to students on campus and in line with this vision the fellowship under the supervision of its co-ordinator Deacon Akpo Onduku, organised a music concert - In His Presence- as part of the programmes scheduled for the 2008/2009 academic session. The event featured leading London based UK gospel artists Muiyawa and Riversongz, and was attended by people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

More recently, the fellowship organised a talk on the topic- Is Christianity a Religion?-an event that saw Christians airing their views about Christianity. It was an event in which thought-provoking and intriguing questions about Christianity were addressed like never before. The presence of God was felt by those who attended as God began to pour down His wisdom and knowledge to all those present. "It was amazing to hear comments that was far beyond my imagination" a student said, which was a testament to how enlightening the event turned out to be.

The fellowship is organising another talk on the topic- 'Life After Death' - and wishes to invite everyone again. This will be an excellent opportunity to gain a greater understanding of what we can expect after death. The date of this event will be announced in due time.

Indeed, the Lord is doing great things through the fellowship and on behalf of the leadership team I would like to implore other students to be participants of what the good Lord is doing. Come and worship God in the

beauty of His holiness and enjoy fellowship with believers in Christ. It is an awesome time of refreshing and restoration. A time to feel hope, meet Jesus and discover worship like never before.

Hebrews 10:23-25 says *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the day approaching....*

This is my message to you all. Indeed, let us not forsake the assembly of God's people.

The fellowship meets every Wednesday 7.00 - 8.30pm, at Meeting Room 2, Communal Building, Opposite the entrance of the Student Union Shop, University of Bradford.

Finally, on behalf of the leadership team, I wish to say a special thank you to all members of the fellowship and all members of the Church who has supported us in all our meetings and programmes.

May God Bless you all

Kelly Osadolor
President, The Redeemed Students Christian Fellowship (RSCF), University of Bradford

On a lighter note

Recipe Corner



How to make Madeira cake:

Madiera cake is plain, closely textured and keeps very well in an airtight tin.

Ingredients

1. 175g/6oz butter, at room temperature
2. 175g/6oz caster sugar
3. 3 large eggs
4. 250g/9oz self-raising flour
5. Approx. 3 tbsps full-cream milk
6. Few drops lemon essence or own choice of flavor

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Grease an 18cm/7in round cake tin, line the base with greaseproof paper and grease the paper.

2. Cream the butter and sugar together in a bowl until pale and fluffy. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, beating the mixture well between each one and adding a little of the flour with the last egg to prevent the mixture curdling.

3. Sift the flour and gently fold in, with enough milk to give a mixture that falls slowly from the spoon. Fold in the lemon zest. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and lightly level the top.

4. Bake for about 1 ¼ hour.

Do not open oven until after at least an hour to prevent the cake from caving in.

Store in an airtight container.

For an 8 inch (20 cm) sponge Cake:

- ❖ Use the same amount of Flour, Sugar and butter
- ❖ Add 1 rounded teaspoon baking powder for

every 175g of Flour

- ❖ Use half-teaspoon vanilla extract
- ❖ A little sifted icing sugar for dusting
- ❖ Prepare using the same method as the Madeira cake

These cakes will take 30-35 minutes to cook, but don't open the oven door until 30 minutes have elapsed. To test whether the cakes are cooked or not, touch the centre of each lightly with a finger; if it leaves no impression and the sponges spring back, they are ready.

JOKES

There was a very gracious lady who was mailing an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country. "Is there anything breakable in here?" asked the postal clerk. "Only the Ten Commandments," answered the lady.

A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question, "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?" A hand shot up in the air. "He is an artist!" said the kindergarten boy. "Really? How do you know?" the teacher asked. "You know - Our Father, who does art in Heaven."

"Somebody has said there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are those who wake up in the morning and say, "Good morning, Lord," and there are those who wake up in the morning and say, "Good Lord, it's morning."

Cartoon



Ministerial Team



Bro. Bosun Olukanni



Bro. Wale Adekoya



Bro. Femi Fasae



Bro. Openiyi Adobiyi



Pastor Dara Shofoluwe



Danceness Titilola Bashorun



Pastor (Mrs) Abiola Shofoluwe



Bro. Victor Olobaniyi



Deacon Akpo Onduku

HEAD OF DEPARTMENTS

- Bro Yinka Adeyemi: **Ushering**
- Bro Ladi Orejobi: **Choir**
- Bro Adeola Kehinde: **Drama**
- Sis Andrea Onduku: **Follow-Up**
- Sis Bisi Olobaniyi: **Welfare**
- Bro Gbenga Ifatumo: **Publicity/Media/Technical**
- Bro Femi Fasae: **Sunday School**
- Bro Hephzibah Akpovwa: **Prayer / Children**
- Bro Yemi Egbeleke: **Finance**

Office Administrator:

Sis Andrea Onduku

Youth/ Singles Fellowship Leader:

Sis Rolake Fasae

Men Fellowship Leader:

Bro Abiodun Fajilade

Women Fellowship Leader:

Sis. Sijuwade Morafa

RCCG Student Fellowship Leader:

Bro Kelly Osadolor



HOLINESS:

A KEY TO DIVINE EXPLOITS

Andrea Onduku

"For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy... Lev. 11:34"

"But as He who called you is Holy, you also be holy in all your conduct." 1 Pet. 1:15

We are called to be holy as our God is holy. What then is holiness? Holiness is a manifestation of an inner state of purity. This purity reflects the righteousness of God.

We were made the righteousness of God when we accepted Jesus Christ, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him, we might become the righteousness of God" (2Cor. 5:21). There is therefore nothing that we can do to make ourselves any more righteous than God has made us through the sacrifice of His Son. However, to be partakers of His righteousness, we have to actively pursue holiness.

There is a prevailing attitude that once we are saved, we will make Heaven, no matter what we do, because God is a merciful God who will forgive all our sins. Yes, God is a merciful and forgiving God but that doesn't mean that we can live any way we choose. God is so holy that sin cannot come near Him, therefore if we are not living holy we automatically cut ourselves off from His presence. The Bible says in 2 Cor. 7:1 that we should "cleanse ourselves from filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

We see many times in the Old Testament when God called His servants to consecrate and cleanse themselves before He could show Himself or His power. This was the case in Exodus 19. God had delivered the Israelites out of Egypt and had brought them to the Wilderness of Sinai where He wanted to come down upon Mount Sinai so they could see and hear Him. In order for God to do this, He told Moses in v10-11 to "go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow and let them wash their clothes. And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people." They were only to encounter God from a distance and yet they had to rigorously cleanse themselves. Later in the Old Testament, we are told that no one was allowed into the Holy of Holies (the holiest part of the tabernacle where the Ark of the Covenant i.e. God's presence dwelt) except the Levite priests who had to go through comprehensive consecration before they were ready for

service.

These examples illustrate how seriously God views sin. He cannot be in the presence of it! Thank God that Jesus died for our sins, thereby reconciling us to God. But in this day of 'grace' we forget that God is still a God of judgement and a consuming fire. When we sin, we once again cut ourselves off from His presence and it is only when we confess and repent genuinely that we are again reconciled. 'Genuinely' is the key word here. When an individual is continually, willingly and knowingly committing the same sin, thinking in their heart that it'll be okay because they can repent tomorrow then God will judge them accordingly. Gal. 6:7 says "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked..." We cannot fool God for He knows the heart, 1Sam. 16:7 says "...the Lord does not see as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart." Therefore, someone can be viewed by others as righteous but only God knows whether we are living a holy life or not.

The purpose of these words is not to condemn but to challenge. Most of us are still 'works' in progress but this is no excuse for living any way we like, depending only on the grace of God. Especially in today's society of complacency, we need to remind ourselves to actively pursue holiness in all our thoughts and actions. It's not just about us and our relationship with God; there are souls that are waiting on you to bring them to Christ. But to be active soul winners, we need to be vessels unto honour, fit for the Master's use. "Therefore if anyone cleanses himself...he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work." (2Tim. 2:21).

How then is holiness a key to Divine Exploits? An exploit is an extraordinary achievement. In order to do exploits, we need God's empowerment. As was mentioned earlier, God can only show his power once we are living in holiness. Without holiness then, we cannot do the exploits that God has ordained for us to, such as living a victorious life, winning souls and healing the sick. A man of God said, "If there is no intimacy between the Bride (the church i.e. you and me) and the Bridegroom (Jesus Christ) then there can be no children." In other words, we cannot win souls for the Kingdom unless we have intimacy with God and this intimacy can only take place where there is holiness. Therefore, from today let us examine ourselves and make the necessary changes so that we can be in right standing with God and be candidates for Divine Exploits.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Gbenga Ifatumo

A core attribute of a Godly man reflects in his ability to set goals and work towards their actualization.

This makes such a person a trailblazer; someone above his peers in reasoning and vision. After all, it takes a man with sight to lead the blind; otherwise, they both fall into a ditch- Luke 6:39

Therefore, to impact our world in a different way we must be unique; being ahead of those we lead, having the courage to change things we can. For Dave Thomas once said, "if there are things you do not like in the world you grew up in, make your own life different".

Brethren, this might seem challenging, but it is not impossible. It only tests our courage to assert the integrity of purpose and imaginative vision against the lack of commitment and mediocrity.

All through history, it has always taken just one man who saw things differently to make a difference. Come to think of it, that man can be you.

Don't think little because you have a great future.

24 Hour Prayer Chain/ Prayer Walk

Andrea Onduku

"...for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. (Isa 56:7)

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will hold their land." (2 Chron. 7:14)



To God be the glory, on February 16 2008 Strongtower Parish, Bradford began its first 24hr prayer chain. Since the first event, the church has held 4 in total throughout the year 2008 and the attendance has increased each time.

Prayer is an essential part of the Christian walk, however with our busy daily schedules, this obligation can sadly become low on our list of priorities. Perhaps it is for this reason that the enthusiasm towards this programme has been so overwhelming. In fact the programme has even seen participation from brethren in other churches. Setting time aside daily for prayer can be a struggle for some, in this line many participants have commented that they appreciate time being set aside by the church for prayer and some brethren have even requested that the event become a monthly one.

The idea behind the prayer chain is simple. 24 hours is set aside (usually from 12 midnight Friday – 12 midnight Saturday) to be dedicated completely to intercession. The 24 hours is broken into 12 two hour slots and participants are asked to join for a minimum of 1 slot, although as the event has progressed, we have seen people come for as many as 3 or 4 slots, such has been the enthusiasm. Prayer points are provided for each group to pray along with as the Holy Spirit leads. Topics include praise & thanksgiving, personal walk with God, intercession for all aspects of the church, including leaders, members and all departments, intercession for our city, including political leaders, prayers for the nation as a whole and prayers for all the nations represented in the church as well as prayers for Israel.

Each time that we gather for the prayer chain, we have experienced open heavens and the glory of God has come down in our midst. There have been many testimonies of healing and other breakthroughs as a result.

The coordinator of the programme would like to thank the entire pastorate, the Head of Department and all those who have participated for their support of the program thus far and would also like to encourage everyone not to miss the next one. The prayer chain takes place once every quarter; watch out for the next one in the New Year.

Prayer Walk

In addition, the church holds a monthly early morning prayer walk (5am – 6am) around the City of Bradford. We believe that as we pray and claim the land for Jesus Christ every stronghold of the devil in this city will crumble and there will be a mighty revival that will extend far beyond this city alone. The prayer walk usually holds on the last Saturday of the month, however feel free to contact the church for the exact date if you wish to join us.

TESTIMONIES



DIVINE TURNING POINT

After a long search for employment in Nigeria, I got an opportunity to further my studies in the United Kingdom. I had a promise of a sponsor for the payment of my fees and just as I was about to commence the course of study, I was disappointed by both family and institutional sponsors. It was the darkest moment of my life as I didn't know anybody in the United Kingdom, it was a hope and dream dash. Somebody encouraged me to attend the Festival of Life in London which was titled "Turning Point" by paying for my transport fare to the programme. After the programme my life experienced a divine turning point as I was able to pay my tuition's fees, completed my programme and received invitations to attend and make presentations at World Class international programmes organised in Europe, America, Asia and Africa.

AE

GOD OUR JEHOVAH RAPHA

I want to magnify the name of our LORD GOD ALMIGHTY for glorifying HIS Holy Name in my Dad's life. My Dad has been Diabetic and Hypertensive for the past 9 years and was diagnosed to have chronic kidney disease early this year and had to be placed on weekly dialysis which he was using to sustain himself. To the glory of God Almighty, he was healed completely 6 months ago and has been off medications and dialysis ever since and doing very fine. Our God is a good God.

DO

GOD OF RESTORATION

On my visit to London at the start of the summer holiday, I forgot my bag containing my laptop, my two phones, my iPod, my digital camera, my play station portable (PSP), my international passport and other valuables including my wallet, keys and bank cards. I cried to God and a day later, my passport was delivered to me in a blank envelope. I received a new digital camera as a gift from a brother and returned to Bradford with just my passport and began to look for a job. In a matter of weeks, I got a job which would be willing to be flexible alongside my academics. A month later I did an assessment in school, which confirmed that I was entitled to a laptop, printer, voice recorder and more funding as well as much more.

KO

GOD'S EARS ARE NOT HEAVY TO HEAR US.

I cried to God concerning the job I desired and He made it happen without pain. Although I had to look beyond my territory (London) when I decided to relocate to Bradford I got the job of my choice. My friends thought I was out of my mind but all glory to God as I am more at peace here and love my job. Thanks to God for His provision. Brethren, God is able to deliver and to save, hold on to him.

KA

GOD OF SUPERNATURAL PROVISION

I testify to God's goodness for he has provided work for me in times where there is none. I write this to encourage you and testify to the true nature of God's promise. Just as Paul did in his letter to the Corinthians, he wrote "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed" (2nd Corth 9:8); although this was written to encourage giving, I quote this to encourage you to persevere for our God is a faithful God.

TO

AWESOME GOD

Ascribing all glory and praise to God for seeing me through the challenges of my study year and for putting my family in all facets of their life.

OB

20 JANUARY 2008 - DIVINE EXPLOITS AND UNDENIABLE FAVOUR

GET TO KNOW HIM

Interview with
Pastor 'Dara Shofoluwe (PDS) – Parish Pastor, Redeemed Christian Church of God,
Strongtower Bradford, by the Editorial Team (ET) of the Church.



ET: *Can you tell the readers a little about yourself, where you were born and grew up, your family and how you came to be in Bradford?*

PDS: My name is Dara Shofoluwe. I was born into a Christian family – the seventh child out of a family of eight. I grew up in Lagos and had both my primary and secondary education there. I graduated from the University of Ado-Ekiti (formerly Ondo State University), Nigeria with a Bachelor Degree in Political Science and I came to England in 2002.

ET: *Can you share your testimony, how did you come to know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour and when did you join the Redeemed Christian Church of God?*

PDS: I gave my life to Christ on August 29, 1982, at a Success Camp organised by the Deeper Life Student Outreach, an arm of the Deeper Life Bible Ministry. This was in Lagos, Nigeria. However, there were challenges along the way. By the time I finished my secondary education, I felt I had backslidden. So, I rededicated my life in 1991 at an event organised by the Christian Union in my University. Ever since, I have come to realise what it meant to be saved. I joined RCCG in 1997

ET: *Why and how did you come to be the Parish Pastor of RCCG Strongtower Parish Bradford?*

PDS: There have been a series of long foretold prophecies that I was going to be a pastor. I did

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not personally realise this calling since I had my own plan and agenda. Knowing the responsibility involved in being a pastor I did not answer the call even when the opportunity arose in Bradford. Even when God ministered to me on the issue, I struggled with it. I still preferred to be addressed as the minister in-charge despite counselling from some pastors including Pastor Obadimeji and persuasions from other members on the ministerial team. I was so reluctant to become the parish pastor; however there came a time that I just couldn't have rest in my spirit. I prayed over the issue; and my wife counselled against disobedience as she was not willing to partake in any punishment from God due to my disobedience. Eventually, I surrendered to Gods will by taking charge as the resident Parish Pastor of the Church in 2005.

ET: *What has been your most joyous experience as the Pastor-In-Charge of RCCG Strongtower Bradford?*

PDS: It has always been God and God alone seeing us through even in the midst of difficult situations. God has blessed me with able lieutenants that are ministers and workers of purpose who I regularly refer to as destiny helpers. Hence, this enables me to work under an atmosphere in which I can fulfil my calling as a pastor.

ET: *Are there any lessons that you've learnt in the course of your time in this ministry that you would like to share with the readers?*

PDS: The office of a pastor is not a ministry that somebody can jump into. It requires much effort and the price is high. It demands a high degree of maturity, self-sacrifice, patience, love, perseverance and ability to keep on in the face of opposition. In everything, I thank God for what He has done, through this position. He has built me, I have come to know more about leadership and have developed more spiritually and intellectually. Therefore I would say that being a Pastor is like going to school. I have learnt to be as wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove, as the bible instructed, possess the mind of a soldier, forgive wholeheartedly and love as a true father.

ET: *As a family man with three children who is also working full-time in a secular*

environment and pastoring a parish, how can one be able to strike a balance between ministry and family?

PDS: Honestly, it is just the grace of God. Both family affairs and ministry are two sides of the same coin. You can only know which one to prioritize above the other in any given situation by the leading of the Holy Spirit. In my opinion there are times when ministry comes before marriage, especially when one is at the forefront of the battlefield. However, there are also many occasions whereby family comes before ministry. A man of wisdom under the leading of the Holy Spirit will know which one to prioritize and the right time to do so. Moreover, if you let your family know that the call of God upon your life is a call upon the entire family, every member of the family will share in the joy and the challenges involved.

ET: *To the Glory of God three parishes have been planted through Strongtower Parish Bradford in Halifax, Leeds and Shipley. What is the relationship between the parishes and can you explain the reasons behind the name changes that have occurred in these parishes? This question refers to the fact that most church plants retain the name of the church that birthed them, in this case, Strongtower; however all of these parishes have since changed their names. Moreover will Strongtower Parish Bradford also be*



YOU AND YOUR HEALTH

Dr. Femi Fasae

Health has been defined as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

When God created man, He saw all he had made, and it was very good without blemish or deformity (Gen 1:31). His will has always been for us as Christians to be in a good and complete state of physical health. He is the giver of good and sound health and wants us to enjoy the same (James 1:17). He wants us to nourish our body in a healthy way without neglecting our souls (3 John 1:2).

However, after the creation of man, because of sin the devil has subtly sown seeds of bad health and many have been afflicted with all various forms of illnesses and diseases (Matthew 13:25). But the good news is that he is willing to restore and heal us of all our diseases. He has always been in the business of healing (Gen 20:17). Healing is one of the primary assignments of Our Lord Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 61, Acts 10:38). The disciples were also empowered to heal those that were sick and tormented by evil spirits (Acts 5:16).

Walking in divine health however, also involves the personal responsibility of taking care of our body which is God's temple by living a healthy lifestyle. Living a healthy Christian life requires balancing spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical needs. We all want to be in good health yet many of us having a carefree attitude towards health care.

As Christians, there are useful tips that will help us in living a healthy lifestyle and making sure that our health does not suffer especially when we may be sick.

To maintain physical health, we need to make sure that nutrition, exercise, sleep and good hygiene must be monitored and kept in balance. The foundation for healthy nutrition involves not only what is allowed into the body as nourishment, but also what is not allowed. Eating healthily and avoiding inappropriate nourishment for the body goes a long way in making us healthy and free of diseases. Many of the diseases including cancer may all be linked to diet and the way we treat our body.

Exercise may profit little but this little should not be discounted. It helps us to keep fit and therefore healthy. Sleep is a natural way of refreshing the



body but when deprived it can be overworked and a breakdown or malfunctioning may be the result. Of even more importance are those substances that can not be overlooked in Christendom: alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. They are nothing but poisons that both destroy the body and inhibit spiritual growth. Therefore we must learn to keep our body in check by avoiding these.

Another important tip is knowledge. The Bible says my people perish for lack of knowledge. (Hosea 4:6) Christians should seek knowledge and understanding with regards to their health. Any part of your body that you may think is not right needs to be looked into. Do not be reluctant in seeking advice or help from your doctor or other healthcare professionals when you are in doubt or do not feel well. Prevention is always better and cheaper than cure.

As we play our part in ensuring that we live a healthy life as Christians, the Bible also encourages us to seek help from the elders of the Church when we are sick so that they can anoint us with oil and pray with us in faith so that we can be healed. (James 5:13). The power of God is always available to heal and restore us unto good and perfect health.

We must remember to always appreciate God for our health and never forget to pray to Him even when the doctors seem to be helping out or offering treatment because He is the one that gives the ability, knowledge and wisdom. Many do not have the same privilege we have.

No matter what situation we may find ourselves in, God has made provisions and is willing to show his abundant mercies so we can be set free.

You are encouraged to take your health more seriously while we believe God to do His own part in keeping us free from illnesses. His promises shall never fail and if we obey His word and apply His wisdom, according to His Word, he shall satisfy us with long life and show unto us His full salvation.

HOW TO BUILD AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP IN THE FAMILY

Pastor (Dr.) Ken Omeje

The ideal Christian home is a home in which a man leads in building intimate relationships, depending on the Holy Spirit for direction, provision and protection. Why did God make man the head of the woman and household? Let me address a few misconceptions about this. The man is not made the head of the woman because of any superiority in physical strength, intelligence or hard work as many women also display these qualities. Rather the headship of the man is an act of grace (unmerited favour), which God primarily instituted from the beginning for good (godly) leadership and accountability. God in His sovereignty will make man head over the woman and the woman as the 'help meet' to the man. Even though the woman was the first to fall into sin in the Garden of Eden, God's first point of accountability and explanation over what happened was the man (Adam). Hence, when a Christian marriage or home fails the man is principally accountable. Like in everything that has to do with 'Grace', man's headship should be handled with utmost humility, responsibility, dedication and care. Headship should not be abused because God can literally "take it away" and give to another.

Man's headship has 3 important dimensions or roles and each comes with corresponding responsibilities, which should inspire intimacy in the home.

1. As Head of Household – he is the Priest of the home, but also provides visionary leadership.
2. As Husband to his wife – he has a responsibility to demonstrate unconditional love.
3. As Father to his children – the man has a duty of care, love and the obligation to ensure godly discipline.

It is important to note that the man is not a father to his wife, even if she calls him 'Daddy' as in many African settings. Furthermore, a man should always remember that he became a husband before becoming a father, unless he went off the bible standard to procreate before marriage. Being a husband helps a man to become a father. Hence, as important as children are, the man is not, and should not see himself as being in a marriage because of children. The wife should take pre-eminence over children. Children will grow up and leave the home but the marriage subsists and continues.

Submission versus Love: The Role of the Man in Building Intimacy in the Home

Let's consider 3 pertinent scriptures:

1. "Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them" (Col. 3:18-19).
2. "Wives submit to your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is head of the Church" (Ephesians 5:22-23).
3. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it" (1).

To win respect and submission, husbands should try not to use, quote or invoke the "submission" scripture against their wives. It is almost instinctive to adopt this

faultfinding and grandstanding disposition. But in reality, it hardly earns the submission of the Christian woman, let alone those that may not be born again in Christ. Instead, the husband should regularly invoke and quote the "love your wife" scripture to himself. Following the example of Jesus, "love" precedes and determines "submission" Submission [as unto the Lord] is voluntary. Even though the man is head of the woman in marriage, he has no power to enforce submission. Rather He should love His wife as Christ loved the church. How did Christ love the Church? Let's explore this under the 3 dimensions of love in the original Greek New Testament Scriptures: Agape, Philo and Eros.

Loving as Christ Loved the Church: The Role of the Man in Building Intimacy in the Home

Agape (1 Cor.13:1-13; 1 Jn. 4:7-12; Acts 10:38-39): Agape is unconditional, undeserved, unlimited, servant-like, selfless, ever-forgiving and sacrificial love. The man should, among other things: (a) Make efforts to know and meet the needs of his family members within the limits of his resources. (b) Always come to their level to appreciate their needs and how they feel and think; listen more and argue less. (c) Always respect and not provoke his wife and children. Use kind language, practice courtesy and be mindful of authoritarian tendencies. (d) Recognise and not undermine his wife's authority in the home. (e) Respect his wife's judgement in matters of decision making and resource management. (f) Learn not to insist that things should always go his way. (g) Respect his wife's individuality and learn to overlook and ignore trivial things he dislikes in her character. Do not struggle to change her because only God can change a person, especially an adult. (h) Teach him self to walk in forgiveness and tolerance and always take the lead in peacemaking. (i) Be firm, mild and corrective in disciplining his children, always letting them know the reason for any disciplinary measure. Aim to lay

DIVINE EXPLOITS: KILL YOUR GIANTS

Pastor (Mrs.) Abiola Shofoluwe



According to Daniel 11:32b "....those that know their God shall be strong and do exploits." The word exploit according to the dictionary means 'accomplishment, achievement or success'. Hence, to do exploits or to reach your goal in life, it is imperative that you know God and have a deep relationship with Him.

However, doing exploits comes with an array of challenges and obstacles that need to be overcome. Matthew 11:12 says "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." This means that there may be a battle that needs to be fought before the exploits that God has ordained for you to do can be fully accomplished. Often there will be obstacles or 'giants' that are blocking the way to success. Generally speaking in life, success cannot be attained by simply 'turning up', there is hard work involved. For example, to obtain a driving licence or degree certificate, there must be completion of exams which at the time may appear to be 'giants' until they have been successfully overcome.

A giant could be defined as anything which is stronger than us and cannot be faced alone. They are often sent by the enemy to hinder our progress and seize our possessions but my prayer is that God will give us victory in Jesus Name.

I would like to use David as a case study, being one of the men who knew God and was able to do great exploits, reaching his goal as destined by God. David was only a teenager when God ordained him to be king. The spirit of the Lord was upon him but there were several things standing in his way and he needed to kill these 'giants' on his way in order to be enthroned. The following were noticeable factors which aided David to do great exploits.

Risk - David confronted Goliath and in so doing took a large risk to combat him. After all, as previously mentioned David was only a teenager and Goliath was a giant in the true sense of the word. 1 Samuel 17:32 says, "...let no one lose

heart on account of the Philistine, your servant will go and fight this giant." We cannot effectively confront giants if we are not ready to go a step further by taking risks as it is impossible to slay a giant from a far distance. When Jesus defeated death, He did not do it from the comfort of heaven.

Focus on victories of the past-to be a giant killer you need to focus on past successes and not past failures. David focused on what God had done for him before, when He helped him to kill the lion and the bear while looking after his father's sheep

Shun discouragement or refuse to listen to the taunting of people around you. When Goliath laughed and cursed David, he could have retreated, even his brothers don't believe in him but he believed in himself with the help of God. Don't listen to everybody or any satanic advisers even your family members, as they can be out of tune with God's calling upon your life - 1 Sam 17vs28.

Focus on God and not on the giant- David said "you come against me with the sword but I come against you in the name of the Lord". David relied so much on God. The story is more than David versus Goliath rather God-focused versus Giant-focused - 1 Samuel 17:45. If you focus on the giants you will tumble but when you focus on God your giants will tumble.

In conclusion, no matter the intimidating giant in your life- dead-end job, debts, financial matter, academic struggle, your spouse, sickness, satanic attack or may be struggle to overcome sin, I challenge you to take a cue from David, arise, confront and kill every giant facing you through prayers (your slingshot) and absolute trust in God. Be resolute and fear not so that you can cross over to your Godly ordained destiny. There is a promised land for you and there is a battle you must win to get there. You've got to kill the giants! This is your season of Divine exploits.

2008 YEAR OF NEXT LEVEL



Easter Family Picnic at Lister Park



Cross session at the Music Concert



From Left: Mr. Fajilade, Pastor (Mrs.) Shofoluwe, Pastor 'Dara Shofoluwe and Mrs. Fajilade



Pastor & Pastor (Mrs.) 'Dara Shofoluwe at the Music Concert



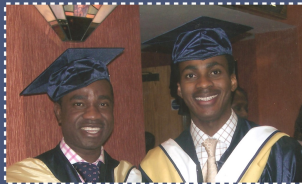
Students Sunday Lunch Meeting - Hosted by the Church



RCGG Student Fellowship Music Concert (In His Presence) with Muiyiwa & Riversongz



RCGG Student Fellowship Music Concert (In His Presence) with Muiyiwa & Riversongz



Graduation Ceremony @ The School of Disciples
Left: Pastor 'Dara Shofoluwe with Pastor Sam Obafaye

a solid foundation in the Lord for your children before they reach adolescence.

Phileo: The Phileo type of love is about friendship and companionship. It is not 'blind' love but one based on reason and shared purpose (Jn. 15:15; Eccl. 4:9-12). Below are some of the imperatives of phileo in home-building as it concerns the male head. He should: (a) Strive to ensure that no other friendship is stronger than that between him and the wife and that his home is his strongest association. (b) Try to identify and build on common interests between him and the wife, but also the children. (c) Aim to establish common grounds or noble interests in his family members through inspiration, motivation and encouragement. (d) Invest in what he admires in his wife and children or what he feels they relish to have. (e) Show sufficient interest in what his wife and children do (school, job, career). Help to motivate them to plan their careers without necessarily trying to impose a career on anyone. God has endowed us with varied talents, interests and gifts. (f) Aim to build transparency with his wife in matters of finance and lead in quickly rebuilding trust whenever it is breached.

Eros: (1 Cor. 7: 3-5) This type of love is related to sex and fulfillment of sexual desire. The Holy Spirit teaches about Eros in Christian marriage (1 Cor. 7: 1-6, 29). Do not quote and exploit 1 Cor. 7: 3-5 against your wife. It is important that any time you read 1 Cor. 7: 3-5 as a husband, always quote verses 6 & 29 to yourself. Let's try to capture and highlight these verses of scriptures:

- 3 "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband."
- 4 "For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does."
- 5 "Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."
- 6 "I say this by way of concession, not of command" (RSV)
- 29 "This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none."

Every aspect of sex should be openly and transparently discussed between the husband and wife. Research suggests that after the first few years of marriage (the honeymoon phase), especially as childbearing sets in, the majority of women desire sex less frequently to build intimacy, but more of agape and phileo. Most husbands do not understand this psycho-physiological transformation in a woman, and if they are Christians, they try to invoke 1 Cor. 7:3-5. In matters of sexuality, a woman has the natural instincts of a child. She needs tenderness, kindness, soft words, gentle touch, pampering, just like a child. For sexual intercourse to contribute to intimacy, the goal should be mutual pleasure and enjoyment, not the satisfaction of the man alone. Naturally, the man's sexual satisfaction is easier and quicker to attain than the woman's. Hence, the man should take initiative to find out how to improve his wife's sexual satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction should not be counted in frequency of indulgence but in the hilarity of each episode, especially as a marriage grows older. Couples should not be embarrassed to seek medical

and spiritual help if their sexual life is agonising and unfulfilling. We should all note that 1 Cor. 7:5 is not an excuse for any married person to fall into the sin of adultery. God accepts no excuse for extramarital sex and it is clear from the scriptures that God hates and punishes the sin of adultery severely. Keep in mind that, 'the marriage bed must be kept holy' and 'no temptation comes to you that is not common to men'.

The Imperative of a 'Costly Perfume' in Home-Building

John 12: 1-9; Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-7
I have used the above phraseology to capture the significance of money and financial prosperity in home-building. We should pray and diligently work towards it in all righteousness. Unrighteous money sooner or later comes with multiple sorrows and believers should carefully refrain from it. Let's refer to the narrative of the 'costly perfume' in Mark 14: 3-7. The money that Jesus allowed to be 'wasted' on anointing him in less than one hour could have been used to feed dozens of poor people for many years. Was Jesus being insensitive? No. He was already doing his best for the poor. In home-building, especially among African families in the Diaspora, it is so easy to be consumed by the manifold responsibilities one faces to the neglect of a quality life for yourself, wife and children. We, therefore, need to strike the right balance between meeting obligations back home and our responsibilities to our spouse/children without compromising one or the other. It is a 'beautiful thing' to waste a 'costly perfume' on yourself and family once in a while. Hence, it is fitting that the man occasionally takes his family to a 'reclining table'; a day trip; a convenient holiday; a shopping spree - plan and save for all these. I have underlined the word 'convenient' to qualify 'holiday' because the dominant idea among the few African families that have a holiday culture is to visit close relatives in a distant place and inconvenience the host family by congesting their already stretched accommodation, straining their resources and exposing everyone to health and safety hazards. This is unacceptably retrogressive. Couples (husband and wife) should learn to save and plan for a family holiday in a modest hotel accommodation as the average Western family does. You are not committing sin by so doing.

Conclusion

When you lead and build your family as a responsible man of God, it is important that you:

- Lead and build appropriately on the godly foundation of the three dimensions of love: agape and phileo for your wife and children; and eros for your wife alone.
- Do not be overwhelmed by the manifold problems of poverty around you. Do your best for relatives, parents and the poor, but also believe God and plan for 'a costly perfume' for yourself, wife and children.
- There are times when, as Jesus demonstrated, you have to ignore and not listen to the indignant ranting of slanderers and the seemingly 'pro-poor' who may not realise what you have suffered to come thus far and to keep going. Judas Iscariot, one of the slanderers, had a disingenuous motive. Placed in Jesus' position, none of the slanderers would have done any better for the poor.

2008 YEAR OF NEXT LEVEL



1st SET OF CHOIR: From Left, Bro Victor Olobaniyi, Sis. Bola Smart, Sis Folake Ifatimo, Sis. Joke Oyetele, Sis. Tolu Oduobate, Bro. Ricardo Ublebor, Bro. Dara Oyetele, Bro Robert Umoh



Area Pastor Visit to RCCG Strongtower Bradford From Left: Pastor & Pastor (Mrs.) Dara Shofoluwe, & Pastor & Pastor (Mrs.) Marcus Chilaka



Pastor Shofoluwe Ministering



Children's Thanksgiving Service



Worship section during the Church Service



Pastor 'Dara Shofoluwe & Family



RCCG Strongtower Voices



The Editorial Team with Muiyiwa at the Music Concert



Strongtower Voices- Praise & Worship Section



1st set of RCCG Strongtower Bradford Ushers - From Left: Bro. Patrick Smart, Bro. Yinka Adeyemi and Bro. Soji Adeniyi



Cross section of Church Service



From Left: Pastor (Mrs.) Eunice Bako - Good Women Coordinator (Midland & North England), Pastor (Mrs.) Abiola Shofoluwe, Mrs. Bisi Olobaniyi & Mrs. Sijuwade Morafa at the Women's Conference



Easter Family Picnic at Lister Park

Self Development

Bro. 'Bosun Olukanni

"When you stop fighting yourself and become your best friend, then you will have true success and happiness" Alexander Michaels.

Simply defined, self development depicts improvement upon one's capabilities or potentialities; the act of taking personal responsibility for one's own growth through the chain process of assessment-reflection and-action.

It is a known fact that no single person, in any way, is perfect. Inbuilt in us are different levels of strengths and weaknesses. This makes self development (capitalising on our strengths and addressing our weaknesses) a necessity of life. A man of understanding continuously seeks growth and development opportunities because he knows that improving himself is key to impacting the larger society. Hence, self development becomes inevitable in life as we find ourselves in positions of responsibilities; making decisions and taking actions that not only affect us, but others as well.

Self development is replicated in a plethora of ways that stretches from the spiritual to encompass the social and physical aspect of our life. The bible says in Matt. 6:20-21; "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also". It is therefore imperative for us as children of God that we sow spiritually and aspire to grow in things of eternal value every day of our lives. We can do this by: maintaining a consistent daily devotional life with God (Mark 1:35), investing richly in praying in the Spirit (Eph 6:18), maintaining consistent fellowship with brethren, studying God's word, listening to sermons on CDs and reading Christian literature books (2 Tim 2:15).

The bible also informs us that it is God's will for us to prosper and be of good health. For this to happen, we need to compliment the spiritual with the physical by living a healthy lifestyle. We have to maintain a balanced diet, which is an important and essential part of everyone's life. This can be achieved by eating foods with the appropriate balance of nutrients required by the body. A balanced diet strengthens muscles and the cardiovascular system, thereby maintaining a healthy weight and keeps fatigue from getting us down. It is also necessary to drink plenty of water

for hydration and body cleansing and to eat breakfast which is the most important meal of the day as it refills your energy sources, hence keep lethargy at bay.

"The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; he walketh mine ear to hear as the learned." (Isaiah 50: 4).

Only God knows what lies ahead of us, however those who fail to plan, plan to fail. It is the personal preparations of today that count towards the realisation of goals in the future. Perhaps, an important way of addressing this concern is through social interaction, networking and information gathering. We should strive for knowledge and education. We should show class, sagacity and intelligence, these are attributes of interaction and networking. We should also strive to be informed by listening to, and watching news and documentaries on diverse issues.

Marenda Hughes described 25 winning principles for self developments. These are enumerated as follows: Set goals for yourself, commit your goals to paper, expect to be successful, ask for what you want, be decisive, accept responsibilities for your life and your actions, proactively seek opportunities to learn and grow, make it a point to learn from key experiences, seek the lesson in any failures, mistakes and setbacks, look for the good in every situation, seek feedback, accept constructive criticism, adapt to changes, find ways to effectively manage stress, balance your work your personal and family life, work effectively with little or no supervision or direction, meet commitments, face fears and challenges head on, believe in yourself, refuse to compromise, follow and trust your intuition, be confident, be persistent and never give up, Do not hold grudge and make sure you forgive forget and let go. Lastly, go the extra mile every time and always seek advice on ways to improve.



changing its name soon?

PDS I want to thank God for all three parishes. I stand to say we are still one regardless of the changing of names. To put it simply so that the readers can understand, we answered to the same name initially due to the network arrangement of RCCG UK and the vision of the then senior pastor (Pastor Obadimeji). However, the network structure has since been abolished in RCCG UK. This means that parishes can now have their own independent vision rather than being part of a network of churches. There was also a reshuffling of the area boundaries which meant that consequentially two of the three parishes are now in a different area of jurisdiction to us. Concerning Chapel of Grace which we recently planted in Shipley, we chose the name as directed by the leading of the Holy Spirit. As for Strongtower Parish Bradford, we will not be changing our name unless God instructs us in this regard. Hence, we still remain Strongtower today but tomorrow if God is leading us to change we will not hesitate to do that.

ET: *What is life all about as a pastor judging from your experiences?*

PDS: It's been wonderful and glorious, because I find fulfilment in being a pastor. Living as a pastor means you must think less of yourself and more of others. The souls of the people are top on your mind and it takes full courage through God's word to achieve that. I try as much as possible to meet the needs of the people spiritually, financially and otherwise. There are many expectations from you as a pastor and so you must be a man of many parts. But in all this, God is always on the throne to grant the divine enablement needed.

ET: *What is your vision for Strongtower Parish in the future? Where do you see the parish in five years time? How will you situate this within the wider RCCG vision?*

PDS: I see RCCG Strong tower parish Bradford as a pace-setter which is evolving now. I can see a church auditorium of worship with a 1,500 seating capacity and 500 overflow space. I would also like to establish a day care and nursery school of high standard, an orphanage and sheltered home for the homeless and widows and a relaxation centre for the elderly and community centres for young people and the whole community.

ET: *What is your advice for us as believers, workers and ministers in this work of God?*

PDS: Be yourself, I mean be original; the measure of anointing that God places upon each individual differs. Stay within your area of calling and ability; be a good follower, responsible and accountable. Celebrate the anointing of a higher person and never forget your source, no matter the pleasant and unpleasant situations that may arise. Also learn to celebrate your destiny helpers and above all **whatever you sow you will surely reap.**

Felicititation

Wish to congratulate
Pastor & Pastor
Mrs Dara
Sofoluwe and the
wonderful
ministers of God
on the 6th year
anniversary of
RCCG
Strongtower
parish, Bradford



Our God who has started the good works in His church and in your lives; He is faithful to complete it.

The church of God will march on & the gate of hell shall not PREVAIL AGAINST IT.

WELCOME INTO THE ERA OF DIVINE STRENGTH AND EXPLOITS (Dan 11:32)

Deaconess Titilola Bashorun