

Tumekutana Prayer Letter – February 2017

Dear Sisters and Friends,

I bring you greetings of love and peace from Nigeria in the precious name of our Lord and saviour, Jesus Christ.

Not too long ago I ran into a Secondary School classmate after 34 years since we shared our early teenage years in an Anglican Boarding School. We reminisced about our days in school and recalled, amidst bursts of laughter, how we would heartlessly recite the Lord's Prayer as recorded in Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV). It was a set part of the liturgy of our missionary school at morning and evening devotions but it was a Prayer we mumbled mindlessly through while packing our bags or lacing our shoes. And as we got to the end of our 'recitation', we would stand up straight and thunder 'for ever and ever, Amen'. But it is no longer like that for us today because we have come to better appreciate the Prayer for its worth. Time and experience have changed our perspectives significantly.

We now appreciate many aspects of the Lord's Prayer including at least these four. First, we appreciate the strengthening communal nature of the Lord's Prayer as a people under a dear and loving Parent revealed to us as "Father" but whom we have also come to know as "Mother," "Guardian" and "Friend." In saying "our Father" we express our communality and, therefore, our mutual dependence and need for one another. Second, we appreciate the strong hope of the Prayer for a just and peaceful world, concerning which we could boldly pray for God's kingdom to come and for the will of God to be done on earth as it is in heaven. In this Prayer, we find the invitation to committing to all that makes for healing the brokenness of our present world, especially in the reality of our economic recessions, rampant loss of jobs, political instabilities, wars, Islamic fundamentalism, violence and famine. Third, we express our day to day dependence on God for the nourishing of our spiritual and material needs: "give us this day our daily bread." Fourth, we appreciate in this Prayer a clear affirmation of God's sovereign rule and glory: "for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever." This is a prayer for daily surrender to God's loving Parenthood no matter what life brings our ways.

In the responses to the previous Prayer Letters, we heard and read of famine in Sudan and Nigeria, of economic recessions in Nigeria, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Malawi, etc and we heard of general hardships and political instabilities in many other African countries. Violence, war and insecurities have hindered agricultural and other developmental activities in our continent and in some places the rains have 'refused' to come and so the land is unable yet to yield food. Evil lurks at our doors and manifests itself in several unpleasantnesses leaving us vulnerable, tired and exhausted. It is against these backgrounds that we should meditate afresh on the Lord's Prayer and find communal strength, hope for a just world, the provision and the sovereign glory of God over all our lands.

In the spirit of the Lord's Prayer, may we continue to carry one another in our hearts and prayers. And in our prayers, may we continue to pray for Africa and to believe, like my earthly father has taught me to know, that God will take care of everything that concerns us, that justice and peace will be our portion again and that God's glory will continue to be over our lands. Not to so believe absolutely because of the realities of our circumstances would belittle our faith and make non-sense of our devotion. Let us then in trust of God pray for all our programmes for March, especially for the women of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana as they plan towards their national women conference holding from March 30 through April 2, 2017.

Have a wonderful and blessed month of March 2017 and let us know how you are doing.

With love from your sister and friend,

Jessie Fubara-Manuel
Secretary, Tumekutana