

**NOTE: I read this excerpt in the lesson GS180325 Obey His Voice**

**This event took place in the Ritz Carleton Hotel In Johannesburg, South Africa. The evangelist had invited all of the Christian leaders from that region to come to a breakfast where he could present the vision for the 34,000-seat tent to evangelize the nation of Africa. There would be an opportunity for them to become partners in prayer and finances if they chose to do so.**

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Then came the time for me to present the vision. I stood and walked to the podium. Again, my heart overflowed. I thanked my guests for coming. I let them know that it was an honor to know they cared enough to respond to our invitation to this breakfast. Then I presented God's plan for increasing the maneuverability of our organization. The time had come to ask them to consider joining us as prayer partners. Suddenly, the Spirit whispered in my heart, Give an altar call. I stopped talking at the podium. Surely I had heard wrong. This was not a crowd of sinners.

These were Christian leaders. They might be insulted if I gave an altar call for salvation. Or, if one in the room who had a great reputation was somehow still unsaved, that person would be exposed for his or her hypocrisy by responding in this public meeting.

"My friends," I said, "I have heard from the Holy Spirit that I should give an altar call. In a crowd like this, I must say, I did not plan to do this, but I will simply obey. Will you please bow your heads just now?"

There was a lot of clearing of throats in the room. There were coughs. You could hear the scraping of chairs and rustling of garments as the crowd of believers slowly bowed their heads. Now they waited in silence. "I would like to ask everyone to examine themselves honestly this morning. If your life should end today, do you know where you would spend eternity? Do you have that certainty? If you have received Jesus as your Savior, of course, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. But if you have not accepted Jesus as your Savior, then you have ignored the one gift of salvation that God Himself has provided for you. How can you escape if you reject so great a gift? I would like to ask those in this room who would like to accept Jesus as their Savior, to raise their hands."

In every altar call there is a moment of recognition for the audience. It comes when they have bowed their heads in prayer and then hear the pastor or evangelist say, "Yes, I see that hand." These words mean that in the assembled group, someone is not saved, and that person has acknowledged it by raising his hand. He has made his private lost condition a matter of public knowledge. It would be fair to say that among these Christian leaders, each was highly curious to know if any of their number would respond. No doubt, they would be shocked if one hand was raised. And, frankly, so would I.

You could hear a pin drop in that room as I asked for a show of hands. "Yes, I see that hand," I said. "And you, and you, and you, and you, and another, and yet another. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes

... I see that hand.” And still, there were more. You could feel something like electricity ripple through the atmosphere. But what none of my Christian friends knew was that I was receiving a great revelation of God’s love and grace. It was coming to me in a way I would never have imagined. Each member of that crowd was, no doubt, asking him or herself, how could so many wonderful Christian leaders not know Christ as their Savior? Some in the audience even began to break from their positions of prayer to see who had raised a hand. “This is a solemn moment,” I said. “I ask that we remain in an attitude of prayer. The Spirit is speaking to many hearts here this morning. We do not want to miss what He is doing.”

After another moment, I said, “I would now like to ask those who raised their hands to come forward and stand here in front of me. Do not delay. If you need to receive Jesus this morning, come now.” I will never forget it. 17 people came forward, some of them running. They quickly assembled in a line in front of that speaker’s platform, some weeping aloud, others trembling, all moved by the Spirit to accept Jesus as their Savior. Then I said to the crowd, “You may lift your eyes now, and see what God has done.”

That crowd of Christian leaders raised their heads. Now they received the same revelation that had already come to me. Each of the 17 persons standing in front of me wore a Carleton Hotel uniform. These were the people we had overlooked in our search for prayer partners. These were the black servants, the waiters we had not counted in our minds as we had enjoyed our breakfast. 17 waiters who had walked that morning from Soweto to the white part of the city to work – these people wanted to know Jesus.

I looked at this crowd of Christian friends, and said, “Is this not why we came here? We should all go home today with the greatest of joy. By coming to this Christ for all Nations breakfast, we have helped to make these 17 divine appointments possible.” A holy silence had fallen across that room. Nothing I could have said or done better illustrated the nature of our calling to be witnesses and evangelists of the good news.

I went on to lead those 17 waiters in the sinner’s prayer. Then I greeted them, one by one, shaking shaking their hands and letting them know that this was not the end of their relationship with the Lord – just the beginning. Each had a story. Nathan contemplated suicide before coming to the Lord that day. The funds were provided and souls were saved by obeying the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Bonnke, Reinhard. *Living a Life of Fire - Reinhard Bonnke - An Autobiography* (Kindle Locations 6580-6581). Harvester Services, Inc.. Kindle Edition.