



## **“Counting the Cost”**

***“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23***

What is the cost of salvation? As I traveled to Africa on a mission trip several years ago, I learned a lot about their culture. The young boy pictured above lived in a village that was predominately pagan-believing people, as indicated by the tribal marks on his face. The cost for these people to become a Christian is a lot different than we in America experience.

You and I, living in this country, have the freedom to accept Christ as our Savior and Lord of our life. The cost for us is; to seek forgiveness of our sin with a repentant heart, forgive others their sin against us, and be baptized into the Christian Faith. No one is going to create a barrier for us or make us do anything. *We know that Jesus paid it all.*

On the other hand, in Africa, as in many countries, the cost is much higher. This young boy in the picture would have to denounce his family beliefs, break the clay pot that held his soul, and most likely be shunned by the rest of his family and the entire local Moab tribe unless some were Christians. The children in these villages were not happy. They struggled to survive. As we were able to bring some of their tribal leaders to Christ, the door opened for others, but they still had to turn their back on a long-held tradition and faith.

Now, considering the African villages that had strong Christian leadership, individuals would be made to study and prove themselves ready to be interviewed by the elders of the local church before they could be baptized into the faith. They would have to break their “pot” and fully denounce any pagan beliefs, and fully turn to Jesus and the Word of God as their rule of faith. Pictured above is a baptism service where individuals were considered by the elders of the Christian church for membership. More than twenty had asked to be baptized, but after about twelve hours of in-depth council and prayer, the elders declared that only thirteen were ready. The others would be considered at another time.

Once an African village has strong Christian leadership, the people who accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and pay the price by denouncing their pagan beliefs, are “all in” for Him and are ready to “walk their talk”.

So, where are we in America? We know that there are many strong Christians in our country. On the other hand, for some, it is so easy to be a Christian that it doesn't mean as much. Do some call themselves Christian just to have a handle? I believe for too many of us in America the cost is not enough.

***Christ Jesus says, “Count well the cost  
When you lay the foundation.”*** Alexander Mack, 1720

Grover Duling – Executive Board member

### **Weekly Prayer Request**

Letting Our Light Shine – Read Matthew 5:13–16

Pray that we might be worthy of our calling in Christ Jesus

Pray that we will not be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Pray that our lives reflect the Light of our Lord and Savior

Pray for CBC leadership: Congregational \* Regional \* Denominational

Ask our Lord for opportunities to minister, share and pray with those around us.

### **Please pray for the following congregations and pastors.**

Mill Creek Congregation in Tryon, NC and Pastor Alan Edwards

Ministerio Uncion Apostolica Congregation in Sevierville, TN and Pastor Ivis Gutierrez

### **CBC Prayer Committee**