

# Story #1

## Jesus Breaks Through Satanic Opposition in Newfoundland, AD 1770

(This story is told in the 2nd Edition of *Taking the World for Jesus* by Kevin Swanson, published by Generations. Get a copy for your family at [Generations.org/store](https://www.generations.org/store).)

Without exception, every missionary outreach for Christ's church of historical import initiated upon a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God — with immediate and deep-seated effects of the conviction of sin, reception of the Gospel, and the fruits of love, peace, and joy in the Spirit. The first major Protestant missionary movement of the 18th Century opened up on August 13, 1727. As the Herrnhut congregation of Moravians, in Saxony Germany, received communion on that particular Sunday, the Holy Spirit came upon them in a powerful way. A diary entry from a member of the congregation has been preserved and recounts the experience:

The church service started with the hymn "Deliver Me, My God," whereby a wicked person, watching the ceremony, was totally overcome. Afterwards Pastor Rothe, supported by the congregation, bestowed a true apostolic blessing upon the two confirmands. Then the congregation fell down before the Lord, and started to cry and sing at the same time: "My Soul Before Thee Prostrate Lies." One could hardly tell whether we were singing or crying, but it happened with such grace that the officiating minister was also totally perplexed by it. After the hymn was finished some of the Brethren prayed with divine power, laying before the Lord the plight of the congregation and especially that they were at a loss at what to do with those who had left us, doubting they would succeed without sectarianism or separatism, since both are not the right way for the Lord's house. We also prayed childlike and modestly, that He should teach us the true nature of His church and how to live and walk in His law; that we remain unsullied and inoffensive, so that we don't become solitary but fruitful, and neither violate the loyalty and obedience sworn to Him and His Word nor injure the common love through trivialities. We prayed that He would fully bestow on us the holy order of His grace, and not allow our souls to be led from the blood-and-cross theology, on which our sole salvation depends. We laid before Him especially the worrying circumstances of our neighboring Brethren and of hundreds of souls that were awakened through our household, but now are partly led astray, partly fail to grow in the spirit and only want to burden themselves with knowledge.

Afterwards, as a great anointment flowed over us and we felt not far from Him, we prayed in faithful assurance that He should let our two Elders, Christian David and Melchior Nitschmann [who were on a mission in Hungary]. . . be powerfully drawn into our fellowship and experience what we were experiencing. Following the absolution, communion was held with humbled and strengthened hearts, and each of us went home, feeling quite beside ourselves. . . We spent this day and the following in calm and joyful composure and learned to love."<sup>1</sup>

Christian David and Nitschmann felt a powerful urge to pray at this very moment (10:00 am, they had marked the time), that the outpouring came upon their home church. Christian David wrote, "It was truly a miracle of God that out of so many kinds and sects as Catholic Lutheran, Reformed, Separatist, Gichtelian, and the like, we could have been melted into one. . . there were we all baptized by the Holy Spirit."<sup>2</sup> David Nitschmann commented on that memorable day in August of 1727: "From that time on, Herrnhut became a living congregation of Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup> Immediately following the Pentecost, the Moravians initiated a practice of "continuous prayer" — 24-hour a day prayer from Herrnhut that perpetuated for a hundred years. This was the beginning of a worldwide campaign that would profoundly impact the entire globe for Jesus Christ.

1 [https://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/thismonth/11\\_08%20August%202013.pdf](https://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/thismonth/11_08%20August%202013.pdf)

2 Weinlick, 79.

3 Weinlick, 79.

The pioneering Moravians would establish missions in South Africa, the Danish West Indies, the British West Indies, Greenland, North American native populations, Surinam, Labrador, Tibet, Jamaica, and Nicaragua. Among the first of the Moravian missions, the first contact with the Inuit on the Labrador coast in the province of Newfoundland stands out.

Rather short and stocky himself, the Moravian, Jens Haven fit in well with the native population in far north (modern-day) Canada, especially when dressed up in Inuit style. Upon his first exploratory visit to the Labrador coast, Havens promised honest trade to assist their economies, and exhorted the men to quit murdering each other — a practice all too common with the tribes. He told them that he would return to tell them about the Creator of the world who came to die for their sins. Upon his return, Jens brought nine other missionaries with him, and official approval from the English governance for the mission to purchase 144,000 acres from the natives. The exchange was conducted by contract — each head of household signing the agreement before they took possession of the land. The colony then purchased a boat and opened up trade with the Inuit, which made for a self-supporting mission from the get go. The Moravian community came with ready-made church fellowship that included two preachers (including Jens Haven), one doctor, seven carpenters (to build houses), and three ladies who could cook and sew for the party.

The evangelistic work, however, was slow. After 25 years the missionaries had only 102 professing converts in total, most of whom turned out to be fake believers. Finally, the brethren realized that the Inuit were kept under the iron hand of the chieftain, a high priest named Tuglavina. The natives lived in perpetual fear of this tyrant who murdered at will and forced the people into sexual sin and drunkenness. Sometimes he would lead the new converts back into sin, and occasionally kill those who would not cooperate. In that Tuglavina was the only mediator to their god, the Inuit were therefore greatly beholden to him. As though some demonic spiritual force hovered over the entire territory, this chieftain specialized in deceiving the missionaries. When the missionaries learned that the tribe was giving in to the sin of homosexuality, they added this to the list of all that was hindering Gospel reception with the tribal people.

Yet, our God bulldozes mountains that are in His way, and breaks in pieces the gates of bronze and slices through bars of iron; and these strongholds would have to give way to the power of the Kingdom of God on earth. Miraculously, Tuglavina himself was delivered from the darkness, deceit, and demonic bondage, and he became an evangelist for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A leading witchdoctor or Angekok was converted and would run “from hut to hut preaching the Gospel with fervour.” Another man had abandoned his wife, but then repented and “he restored his injured wife to favour, became a model husband, and preached the Gospel with singular power.” Hundreds were converted and, as the account goes, “In the past the people had been not only murderers and robbers, but fornicators, adulterers, and sodomites; now they were learning to be both honest and pure. . . For this reason the Great Revival was a movement of the highest value.”<sup>4</sup>

***Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)***



## Story #2

### Breaking the Bars of Iron and Gates of Brass in the Interior of Sudan (c. AD 1899)

(This story is told in the 2nd Edition of *Taking the World for Jesus*, by Kevin Swanson, published by Generations. Get a copy for your family at [Generations.org/store](http://Generations.org/store).)

The first Christian missionary to make his way into the interior of the Sudan, Rowland Bingham (1872-1942), described the scene in his autobiography: "The habitations of pagan heathenism were the dwellings of cruelty. Every kind of horrible heathen custom was practised. Every child's face was disfigured by tribal markings, done by the witch doctor with his dirty knife, which practice swelled the number of graves of infant innocents, with its blood-poisoning sequel. The murder of twins was performed by the same cruel executioner. Then he dashed the heads of the newly-born babes together and left their bodies in the bush for the wild beasts to devour at night. Cannibalism was prevalent. With no provocation, merely to satisfy the hunger for human flesh, the pagans constantly sat down to these inhuman feasts, and then decorated their huts with the skulls of their victims."<sup>5</sup>

The scene opens up in Toronto Canada, where a certain Mrs. Gowans presented the case for Sudan to 21-year-old Roland Bingham at her home, hoping he would join her son Walter in early pioneering missionary work into sub-Sahara Africa. Rowland was smitten hard with the call, these words repeating over and over again in his mind: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And, he said, "I know, too, that He heard my response, 'Here am I, send me!'" Two weeks later he was on a ship to Africa. A regiment of the British army attempted a journey up the Niger River, and only 13% of them survived.

This was the hardest territory in the world to reach for westerners. The average life expectancy of missionaries in the pioneering stage was two years in West Africa. One missionary insisted, "Our God bids us first build a cemetery before we build church or dwelling house, showing us that the resurrection of Africa must be effected by our own destruction."<sup>6</sup> At that time, considered the entire strip south of the Sahara desert, the Sudan was a brutal country. To this day Nigeria, Chad, and Sudan claim the lowest life expectancy in the world. Disease, abject poverty, extremely hot weather, Islam slave traders, highway robbery, and other problems made this nation almost totally inaccessible to foreigners. Bingham recounts of his first visit to Lagos "Of a party of six missionaries who had landed in Lagos ten days after our arrival, four died before they reached their destination on the lower Niger, a fifth was invalidated home, and one solitary survivor walked into the mission station. Within twelve months he also was dead."<sup>7</sup>

Already warned by missionaries in Lagos of the risks, the three young men (Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent, and Rowland Bingham) persisted on their plans. And, Rowland came down with malaria and could not join the first overland journey. Gowans was kidnapped by a slave-trader. After his release, Gowans died of disease, and Kent as well. Only Bingham survived the ordeal, and he subsequently returned home thoroughly disheartened. Seven years later, Bingham attempted another trip with two young recruits. These two companions quickly lost heart, while Bingham came down with a second bout of malaria. They returned home to Canada. However, Bingham refused to give up and returned the next year (1901) with 4 more recruits. Within two years, only one of the original recruits remained and the mission work continued. This was the beginning of the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM).

Initial success came in an unlikely place for the mission, as reported by Mr. Bingham. A diminutive Canadian man, by the name of Thomas Titcombe applied for admission to the work in 1905. He was turned down for lack of a college education or seminary preparation, largely due to his needing to provide a living for his

5 Rowland Bingham, *Seven Sevens of Years and a Jubilee, The Story of Sudan Interior Mission* (Evangelical Publishers, 1943), 15.  
6 Quoted in Peter Hammond, *The Greatest Century of Missions* (Christian Liberty Books, 2002), 129.  
7 J.H. Hunter, *A Flame of Fire, The Life and Work of R.V. Bingham* (Scarborough, Ontario: Sudan Interior Mission, 1961), 58.

widowed mother. He studied a few courses as recommended by Bingham, and three years later reapplied to serve. Bingham writes that Titcombe “was still very limited in his preparation, but he had an indomitable spirit and a love for souls; and that is a preparation that no college can furnish, and of inestimable value in the missionary enterprise.”<sup>8</sup> Above all, “God the Holy Ghost had bestowed on him the gift of the evangelist. He believed and proclaimed the old gospel in the power of the Spirit.”<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, a little boy enslaved by a cruel Muslim master heard about the white missionaries in Lagos (Nigeria). He escaped his master, and found his way to the missionaries where he was converted and disciplined. Hence, he request a missionary to come to his people in a little village about 200 miles to the Northwest of Lagos. Titcombe was dropped off by himself in this village of Ogga, and the young man lived with the people in a hut “hardly fit for a decent pig.” The lives of the people were little above beasts, and human sacrifice was a regular practice with the tribe. Within a year of living in these squalid conditions, Titcombe had learned the language and the mission at Ogga was well underway.

Two years later, Titcombe moved to another village (Egbe), and there one of his first converts was severely tested. When he refused to worship the chief’s idol, he was tied securely hand and foot, “and beaten until his back was lacerated and raw, then left outside in the hot sun.”<sup>10</sup> Tommie nursed him back to life, and found himself holed up in his house with 11 men who were afraid for their lives. When the word came down that the chief had sent men to kill the missionary, Tommie stepped outside to meet the mob. The killers came running down the hill to the mission house brandishing knives and clubs, but when they had come within fifty feet of their target, mysteriously all of them stumbled and fell, one upon another.

Tommie called out, “Why did you stop? Why didn’t you attack me?”

“We couldn’t. Someone held us back,”<sup>11</sup> they said.

Tommie sang out, “Thank you very much, Jesus came into the world for me. . . He suffered for me. . . He died for me.” At this point, every one of them dropped their weapons, and sat down. The crowd listened, spell bound as Tommie preached for two hours, and “the Spirit of God moved among them in convicting power.”<sup>12</sup> Fifty professed Christ, and immediately they gathered up and destroyed 200 idols in the village. Not long afterwards the chief died, and was replaced with another chief who attended the church services. Now weekday meetings averaged 400 in attendance, and Sunday services averaged 1,200. This was the first major breakthrough for the Sudan Interior mission work.

The same missionary tells of a test like that of Elijah on Carmel. An extended drought threatened imminent starvation to the tribe, affecting both Muslim and pagan. The pagans suggested sacrificing a young girl — which was oft their custom in such exigencies. They sacrificed a calf and sprinkled blood on the idol. The Muslims ordered a weeklong fast. But after all that failed, the missionary announced to the little flock of Christians, “Tomorrow night we are going to pray for rain. Let none come if they do not believe God hears and answers prayers.”<sup>13</sup> The next day, he reported the heat “unbearable,” and no sign of rain — “even a cloud the size of a man’s hand.” Entering the church building, he couldn’t help but notice the Christians donned in “large umbrella hats.” They gathered and prayed a simple prayer, “Lord, send rain. Lord, we need rain. Glorify your name in Yagbaland.”<sup>14</sup> The Muslims had gathered on one side of the building, and the pagans on the other — waiting and watching what Yahweh God would do for these Christians. Twenty-five minutes later, everybody heard a “tapping on the corrugated iron roof of the church.” The missionary recalled, ‘My didn’t it rain! The Lord just opened the windows of heaven so that the pagans and the Muslims fled in terror to their homes. They cried, ‘We fasted for a week, and sacrificed a lamb and we got no rain. But the Christians were

8 Hunter, 130.

9 Hunter, 133.

10 Sophie De la Haye, *Tread Upon the Lion, The Story of Tommie Titcombe* (Shoals, IN: Kingsley, 2014), 63

11 *Ibid.*, 65.

12 *Ibid.*

13 Hunter, 154.

14 de la Haye, 20.



only praying for a few minutes and God sent a deluge on the earth and has given us all the rain we needed. There is only one God and that is the God of the believers.”<sup>15</sup>

Still, witches strenuously opposed the work of the Gospel. But, the power of the Gospel could not be stopped, and the time came to divide the spoil among these pagan tribes. After two witches were converted, Bingham wrote, the harvest really set in. “On that later visit to the field I was booked to participate in a morning meeting in the one town of the tribe and an evening meeting in the other town. At the morning service there were about five hundred present, gathered to observe the sacred feast of our Lord. They had the table spread with the elements of the bread and wine. Many were present whose hands had been stained red with human blood at their cannibal feasts and here they were, with all hatred gone and the love of Christ filling their hearts, come to celebrate this feast with its bread and wine symbolizing the death of One whose blood was shed for them and whose blood could cleanse from all sin.”<sup>16</sup> Stories poured out of these parts of Africa, relating of how so many were “brought out from the lowest depths conceivable into the saving grace of Christ Jesus.”<sup>17</sup>

***Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, [Jesus] himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.***  
(Hebrews 2:14-15)

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15 Ibid., 155-156.

16 Bingham, 59.

17 Bingham, 60.

# Story #3

## A Divine Interposition at the Formation of a Nation (c. AD 1781)

(This story is told in *The Story of Freedom* by Kevin Swanson, published by Generations. Get a copy for your family at [Generations.org/store](http://Generations.org/store).)

Between the fall of 1779 and the summer of 1780, the American colonials were facing the very worst of conditions in the war against the empire. The French Navy, supposedly come to help George Washington, had miserably failed in its attacks on Newport, Rhode Island and Savannah Georgia. In the most devastating setback of the war, General Clinton had captured Charleston on December 26, 1779. In May of 1780, the colonials suffered a tremendous loss at Waxhaws, resulting in a massacre of Virginians. Then, to make matters worse, General Gates' troops were routed by British General Tarleton, a man known for his cruel severity, on August 16th, 1780. In the North, George Washington was fighting mutiny among his troops. Some regiments were going days without food, reminiscent of the Valley Forge days. He had also just received the news of Benedict Arnold's treason. Things could hardly be worse.

During these critical weeks and months of the war, Continental Congress responded in genuine reverence for God and reliance upon His aid. Three separate calls were made for national repentance and prayer. On April 28th, 1780, the Congressional delegates issued the call:

It having pleased the righteous Governor of the World, for the punishment of our manifold offenses, to permit the sword of war still to harrass our country, it becomes us to endeavor, by humbling ourselves before him, and turning from every evil way, to avert his anger and obtain his favor and blessing, with one heart and one voice, to implore the sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth to remember her mercy in his judgments; to make us sincerely penitent for our transgressions, to prepare us for deliverance, and to renounce the evils with which he is pleased to visit us.

Then, again on October 17th, 1780, the Continental Congress issued a call for another day of repentance and prayer assigned for December 7th, 1780. The delegates instructed the people "to assemble on that day to celebrate the praisies of our Divine Benefactor, to confess our unworthiness of the least of his favours, and to offer our fervent supplications to the God of all graces, that it may please him to pardon our heinous transgressions and incline our hearts for the future to keep all His laws. . . and to cause the knowledge of Christianity to spread all over the earth!"

Expressed here in clear words is nothing less than the very essence of Christian government, the basis of all liberty on earth. The leaders of this nation solicited the sovereign Ruler of the universe to "incline our hearts for the future to keep all His laws." Not only did they acknowledge God's sovereignty over the hearts of men, and its regeneration, but they submitted themselves to God's sovereignty in the area of ethics. This is the very opposite of humanist democracy that assigns man to the source of law. It is rare to find this sort of commitment confessed in church services let alone in the legislatures today! Moreover, the commitment to the spread of Christianity is highly important. Over the following two centuries, America became the primary source of financial support for the worldwide missionary movement. These words were both confessional and prophetic. Of course, humanism and state-endorsed polytheism (the respect of all gods and religions) would eventually dominate the American governments. But, at least during the sessions of the Continental Congress, there was no interest in supporting Islam, Humanism, and the other world religions. America was born a Christian country.

Would these official proclamations from America's leaders at this critical juncture make any difference in the scheme of history? If this nation above all nations favored the true and living God, the God of the Bible, the Creator of heaven and earth, would God show His favor to them? Will those who acknowledge

God as sovereign, receive the favor of this sovereign God? Is there a God in the heavens in who presides over the destiny of nations, as these men believed and as Patrick Henry claimed in his speech before the second Virginia convention? Does He take any interest in the proclamations issued by rulers He has placed in position? Does He consider nations, as He oversees each sparrow that falls to the ground? Is He as interested as He was in Ninevah when Jonah called that wicked empire to repentance? Does He hold these highly vulnerable nations and armies and institutions of men between His thumb and forefinger? Would He respond to a spirit of humble repentance, exhibited at a national level?

## Heaven's Response

There are moments when the future sits in a very delicate balance. The prospects for liberty are tenuous. From a human perspective, it even appears to be a losing cause, in a history of loss after loss. In this case, the answer from the Lord of Heaven and Earth came in a rather odd way.

I took my family to Williamsburg for the first time in the fall of 2014. We thoroughly enjoyed the tours, but I was particularly interested in the large Anglican church (where all of the Virginia Assembly attended when they were in town). While walking down a side street, it started to rain. So we ran for cover under the eaves under an obscure, out-of-the-way building. Peering into the windows, we could see several wooden benches, a small podium crowded into a small room. I noticed a small plaque containing the words, "Presbyterian Meeting House." One of the tour guides explained that this was not a church, as the only church permitted in Virginia by the crown was the Anglican church. But, a few Presbyterians were permitted to meet here on occasion. What a contrast with the ornate Britain Parish Church at the center of the town!

Now, back to the story. It was in the summer of 1780 that Francis Marion, the legendary Swamp Fox of South Carolina began his escapades. Marion was a descendent of the French Huguenots, Calvinist Protestants who were persecuted out of France in the 17th century. He assembled a merry band of Scots-Irish Presbyterians who gave the English no end of grief through small skirmishes throughout the Carolinas. Marion's feats are worthy of note, but they did not turn the tide on the war.

The decisive event that turned the tide occurred on October 7th, 1780. The British Major Patrick Ferguson had warned the South Carolinians that he was come to "hang your leaders, and waste your country with fire and sword!" The threat of scorched earth warfare became a real concern to the citizens. As he approached a place called Kings Mountain, he vowed to his troops that he would be "King of that mountain, and . . . even God almighty could not remove him." Now, this was a mistake. These sorts of declarations do not end well. To deny the sovereignty of God, while claiming sovereignty to oneself is hazardous business.

Meanwhile, out in a town called Sycamore Shoals, Tennessee, the pioneers had organized a militia to defend hearth and home from the invading force. They called themselves the "Over-Mountain Men," largely made up of "Scots-Irish Presbyterians." As the men prepared for battle, they solicited the aid of their Presbyterian pastor to preach the sermon. The little known Reverend Samuel Doak preached what may be the most powerful sermon in the history of this country. He ended his final prayer with the passionate words from the Old Testament Scriptures, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" The men ran off to the battle on Kings Mountain, what was to be the shortest and most decisive battle in the history of American warfare. In a single hour, the men shattered the Ferguson's army. The British sustained 900 casualties against the Mountain Men's 28. It was a total rout. But more than that, it was a turning point. This was Britain's Waterloo in the war — a catalytic moment in history. One historian writes about the battle, "The Victory at Kings Mountain was the first in a series of remarkable events that would change the direction of the war in America's favor." Concerning Kings Mountain, the British General Henry Clinton admitted, "Though in itself confessedly trifling, overset in a moment all the happy effects of his Lordship's glorious victory at Camden, and so encouraged the spirit of rebellion in both Carolinas that it never could be afterward humbled."



General Clinton's assessment was right on. War is all about morale. The delicate balance of historical moment is shifted in wartime when morale shifts. And there is nothing human leadership can do to guarantee a certain morale. It is in the hand of God, and small distinct events can shift morale in one direction or another.

The next momentous battle occurred on January 17th, 1781, also on the southern front. The British General Tarleton pursued Brigadier General Daniel Morgan with 1100 British troops through the South Carolina back country for weeks. Finally, Morgan elected to take the stand at a broad meadowland called Cowpens on January 17th. The Americans were outnumbered again, but it was a complete rout. Almost the entire British force was either dead or captured by the end, and Tarleton fled the battlefield alone. Daniel Morgan was also a devout Presbyterian layman of Welsh background.

Reports have it that General Morgan rode across the field praising God for the victory. Later he recorded these words on the Battle of Cowpens: "Such was the inferiority of our numbers, that our success must be attributed under God. . . to the justice of our cause and the bravery of our troops!" An Irish Presbyterian soldier from the Carolina back country used a few imprecatory words in his prayer: "Good Lord, our God that art in heaven, we have great reason to thank Thee for the many battles we have won. . . the great and glorious battle of Kings Mountain, and the iver glorious and memorable battle of the Cowpens, where we made the Proud Ginerel Teartleton run doon the road helter-skelter!"

The American General, George Washington also recognized the importance of these battles, and the providential hand of God over these events. He wrote shortly after Cowpens: "The many remarkable interpositions of the divine government in the hours of our deepest distress and darkness have been too luminous to suffer me to doubt the happy issue of the present contest." Following several minor setbacks for the colonials, the war was over. Yorktown came ten months after Cowpens, when Washington moved his troops south and took advantage of the weakened southern front of the British force.

**Daniel answered and said:**

***"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,  
to whom belong wisdom and might.***

***He changes times and seasons;***

***he removes kings and sets up kings;***

***he gives wisdom to the wise***

***and knowledge to those who have understanding;***

***he reveals deep and hidden things;***

***he knows what is in the darkness,***

***and the light dwells with him.***

***To you, O God of my fathers,***

***I give thanks and praise.*** (Daniel 2:21-23)