

“BE STRONG AND OF A GOOD COURAGE”

Submitted By

Bishop Dr. Elgarnet B. Rahming, C.M.G., D.D., J.P.

National Overseer

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” (Joshua 1:9)

We offer thanks and praise to the Almighty God for bringing us safely over into this brand New Year of 2012. This New Year will place special demands on those who have committed themselves to carry out God’s will and purpose for their lives. Whilst we were seriously challenged last year, we were yet blessed, refreshed, advanced and prospered as a church, a country and a people. Now is therefore the time for us to plunge into deeper depths of national and spiritual commitment heretofore unknown. However, it requires courage to move from the ‘comfort zone’ of the known to the unknown. But there is no choice for those who will obey the voice of God that is calling and urging us to go forward in faith. And go forward we will by the grace of God.

Unlike pioneers in the physical world, who have no guarantee of their survival as they explore the unknown, those who walk by faith in obedience to the voice of God will move under His guidance, protection and abiding presence. God’s Word reminds us, “...I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” (Joshua 1:5b) “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the holy One of Israel, thy savior.” (Isaiah 43:2, 3a)

While this year of 2012 holds many mysteries and unknowns for us, it holds none for God. He forsees all that we will encounter each step of the way. God knows our down sitting and our uprising. He understands our thoughts afar off. He loves us and cares for us. His thoughts for us are thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give us a glorious and a victorious future in Him. And so, as we prepare ourselves to embrace the challenges and opportunities that 2012 will present to us as a church, country and people, let us not linger and lament on the past year of 2011. Bahamas, people of God, if we are to experience and enjoy our present

privileges and blessings, we must of necessity leave the past behind us. We are reminded of Paul's writing to the Philippians, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13, 14)

Bahamas, people of God, in this year of 2012 let us be strong and of a good courage. As strength and courage are attributes that come directly from God, let us recommit ourselves to be a people given to absolute and unflinching faith in God, and given to constant and committed communion with Him in prayer. The closer we get to God, the stronger and more courageous we will become because of our knowledge of and reliance on Him. Strength and courage of character will enable us to face the adversities and uncertainties of this year devoid of fear. God's Word to Isaiah reminds us, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isaiah 41:10)

Bahamas, people of God, I am persuaded that we are on the precipice of a great, historic and unprecedented move of God in 2012. God is poised and ready to give our Bahamaland a miraculous spiritual and economic breakthrough that will bring to an end the stronghold of spiritual drought and economic recession. But, for us to experience such a supernatural breakthrough, we must re-position ourselves by becoming a people of strength and good courage who possess an unshakeable faith in the Almighty God. May God help us all to so be, and may He bless immeasurably the body of Christ, and our beautiful Bahamaland.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!