

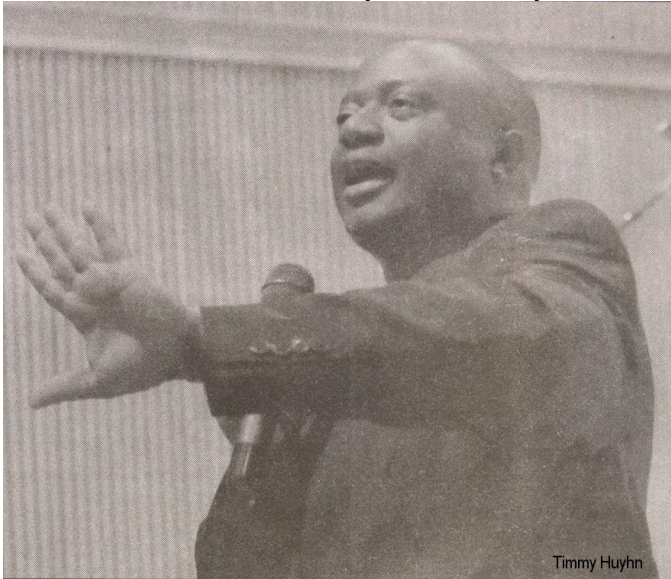
War Survivor Shares Bullet-proof Faith

Yallah Kawala brings compelling stories to Taylor

By Stephen Groves on March 6, 2009

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“Praise god,” he started his talk. That’s a lot to say for a man who has heard a machine gun blast 10 bullets at his chest from five feet away.

What’s amazing is there is not a scratch on the body of Yallah Kawala.

On Sunday night in the Recital Hall, Liberian national Kawala related his trials and miraculous events during his involvement in the First Liberian Civil War.

Kawala brought a simple message: “I like to talk about Jesus and what he has done for me.”

He encouraged students to go out as missionaries and to “know the One who is sending you.”

Kawala told of how he risked his life multiple times to help members of his church during the civil war.

The most dramatic miracle he experienced came at the beginning of the war in 1990 when he was watching the house of a Nigerian friend from his church. While he was staying at the house, rebels invaded the capital city of Monrovia and entered the neighborhood where the house was located.

The rebel soldiers were killing Nigerians because of Nigeria’s support for the government in power.

When the rebels found out that the house belonged to a Nigerian, they surrounded it.

“They had rocket launchers, they had grenades, they had automatic rifles on their chests,” Kawala said.

Kawala was gathered in the house with several members of his church singing praise songs. They heard gun shots outside, and Kawala decided to go out and meet the rebels.

There was a large concrete wall surrounding the house, so Kawala went to the gate to explain they were not Nigerians. As he approached the gate, the rebels demanded he jump over the wall so they could see who he was. Kawala complied.

However, as he climbed over the wall, one of the soldiers raised his machine gun to kill him.

“The gun was pointed five feet from my chest. He pulled the trigger. Ten shots came out, but not a single shot touched me.” Kawala said. “The man with the gun ran away and they thought I was bulletproof.”

God spared Kawala’s life that day, and he continued to protect him through the civil war.

After that ordeal, Kawala received an opportunity to return to his village in the mountains where he would be safe. However, Kawala said God told him to stay to help with the church in Monrovia.

He smuggled Ghanaian Christians who were being targeted by the rebels, over the border several times during the war. The punishment for being caught helping Ghanaian was death on the spot.

However, God continued to protect Kawala.

“Death was afraid of me. I did everything that I could do to be killed, and death fled,” Kawala said.

Through his message, he encouraged students to expect God to perform miracles.

“God is real. He does real, powerful, miraculous things,” he said.

Senior Neil Long, Global Outreach co-director, saw Kawala’s talk as challenge to Christians in the United States.

“The God we serve can do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine. That fact is made evident in the life of Yallah Kawala. At the same time it is very challenging. Why are we not experiencing God working in these ways? It is apparent that he still moves miraculously, but seldom do we see this firsthand,” he said. It excited me to hear how truly alive our God is. When I allow these stories, and others like them to sink into my heart such that I accept their reality, I get excited about how awesome my Creator is.”

After serving his church during the war Kawala eventually made it to the United States as a student. He earned his master’s degree in counseling and plans to return to Liberia to start a counseling ministry.