

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER JOHN KIRUBI AT THE FUNERAL SERVICE ON JUNE 18TH 2021

Chris Kirubi, a testament of God's greatness

Some people mistakenly think that Christopher John Kirubi found God during his illness. The truth is that Chris' life and work has been a testament of a man who the almighty God has blessed with incredible skills and capacity and who lived his life fulfilling God's command of carrying on with the work of converting his extraordinary talents into new creation. Chris was a man who had heeded the advice in 1 John 3:18 "dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth". He also lived the teaching of James 2: 14 – 20, "what use is it my brethren, if a man says he has faith but he has no works.....faith without works is useless." Chris in his works created opportunity for thousands to find an outlet for the talents that God has vested in them.

Chris took Genesis 1:27 to heart, he believed that he was a child of God created in his image and that is where he drew his confidence from. He also lived by Genesis 1:28, and took the abundant blessings God had given him and obeyed to his last breath the command from God to be fruitful and increase in number. That is the Chris legacy although he had four children Robert and his wife Kim and Maryanne and her husband Andrew and five grandchildren he was the father of a great nation of great men and women that he has mentored. Chris' extraordinary gift was that of a visionary, a creator and an enabler of others. That is the blessing he applied through his long life and today we celebrate the fruits of his life's work.

A lot has been written and said this week on the fruits of this great man. I had the good fortune of working closely with him for twenty years and I drew many lessons on the character of the man that bore those fruits. In Matthew 7:16 it says you will know them by their fruits. This morning I will speak about the lessons I have distilled on Chris' character.

1. Man of extraordinary faith

In fulfilling his purpose Chris was a man whose life was grounded in extraordinary faith in his ability to triumph over any odds. Chris surely had read and lived the advise of Jesus in Matthew 21:21, "truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, go throw yourself into the sea and it will be

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done. I recall in one of our many lunch meetings I told him that we were having challenges securing an anchor tenant for Two Rivers but that there was a possibility that we could persuade Carrefour who at the time did not have a presence in Africa to come and establish themselves as our anchor tenants. Rather than panic he calmly asked me to set up a meeting with them in Dubai. A man of refined taste he flew first class and I business class. He always flew first class, he was not a man prepared to compromise his high standards. At the meeting with the Carrefour leadership he persuaded them that they should come and do business in Kenya and that they should set up at Two Rivers. After a three hour meeting we left with commitment from Carrefour. Chris was a man of extraordinary faith. It was his faith that gave him the fortitude to fight his disease for four years overcoming all the odds that had been cited by doctors and experts.

2. A dreamer

Chris was a dreamer. He was a man of extraordinary vision and resilience. He believed like Paul in Romans 4:17 that in faith and in God's will he could call those things that are not as if they are. That was the faith that underpinned his vision to dream about building new cities- Vipingo, Two Rivers and Pearl Marina. The odds and the risks were never really relevant. One of the things he mentioned to me many times was that obstacles are the frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal. Chris' eyes were always fixed on his goals and obstacles and risks were mere inconveniences to be overcome.

3. A man of courage

Chris was a man of courage. A man who respected himself and others and who also demanded to be respected. A man who had the courage to pursue his vision no matter how daunting the odds were, Confident that any trials were only temporary and that he would in the end conquer. Chris believed that he could overcome any situation. He knew that faith and abundance could not exist in an environment of fear and lack of faith. When I visited him in the United States in late 2017 at a time when he was critically ill he asked that I bring him the designs of his house which was under construction at a time when most people in a similar situation would be putting their affairs in order. While praying with him on one of the evenings he asked that I read for him Mark 6: 5 – 6. “ he could not do any miracles there expect lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed by their lack of faith.”

4. A mentor

Chris was a man who worked hard to develop other leaders. Like Moses mentored a young Joshua, Chris has mentored several generations of leaders many of whom are in the church today. Chris was a student of the biblical Moses. Ask any leader that Chris has mentored and they will tell you that he was deliberate in his mentorship and he had three distinct attributes.

- a. Chris empowered people and gave them authority no matter how young.
- b. Chris provided his mentees with experience and opportunities to apply themselves.
- c. Chris gave all those he mentored encouragement and affirmation.

Our challenge as those that Chris has mentored is to do unto others as Chris has done unto us and speak life into them so that we too can be fruitful and multiply.

5. Generous

Chris was extraordinarily generous. He multiplied that which he had and he gave it out freely. Many of his donations and contributions were either anonymous or he requested that they be kept confidential.

6. An eagle

Chris was an eagle who flew at high altitude and kept the company of other eagles. He soared way above small noisy birds like parrots, sparrows and crows. His seeming thick skin was perhaps because he was out of the hearing range of the noisy chirping of the parrots and crows in life. He was a true eagle who soared way above the chattering parrots and they therefore never understood him.

7. A lover of knowledge

Chris loved knowledge. He educated himself to the highest possible level. He constantly challenged his assumptions and was constantly innovating. He was a man surrounded by books in his office, at home, in his bags. He carried books wherever he went. He admired and kept the company of other knowledgeable people. Finally, he enabled many people to acquire knowledge. Chris heeded the advise in Hosea 4:6 “my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.”

8. Chris loved life and he was not anxious

Chris ate life with a big spoon. In an empire as large as his it was inevitable that at any given time one or two of his companies would be facing one challenge or another. He had reason to be anxious, however Chris was never anxious even in the face of seemingly daunting and overwhelming personal challenges. Chris lives Paul's advice in Philippians 4: 6 "do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your mind."

This is my honest and faithful account of this great man that we lay to rest. Mathew 7:16 has given us the scale to weigh the worth of a man and it says you shall know them by their fruits. It goes on to say that every good tree bears good fruit. Chris has borne good fruit. He was a good man. He was a great man. A man of impact. A creator. A man who fulfilled his purpose. A man who employed the extraordinary talents God had given him in obedience of God's command to be fruitful.

The great writer and poet George Bernard Shaw must have had men like Chris in mind when he penned that immortal poem – *A splendid torch*.

This is the true joy of life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a selfish clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle for me. It is a sort of a splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

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Chris was thoroughly used up by the time he rested. His life belonged to the whole community. He worked to the end. He obeyed God's command and he was fruitful. His faith shines through in his works and the lives of those he has touched.

Christopher John Kirubi has fulfilled his purpose and we thank God for his long and fruitful life.

He did not do this alone and on his behalf I thank all of you who worked closely with him, those who loved him and enabled him to achieve all that he did in his life time.

I thank God for having given me the rare opportunity to directly share with Chris what he meant to me and to personally thank him for all that he has been and done in my life.

Christopher John Kirubi now belongs to the ages.

Fare thee well our leader, our friend, our mentor. Fare thee well till we meet again.

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