

# Movin' in a Slow Hurry

By Jamie Buckingham

I grew up under the tutorage of a wonderful old Southern "black mammy" named Willie Mae McGriff. She was an intimate part of our family for more than 30 years. It was she who taught me the art of being in what she called a *slow hurry*.

There were mornings when she arrived at our house moving slow. My mother, who was hyper and sometimes demanding, would push her a little. I remember Willie Mae's delightful response: "Don't worry 'bout that, Miz B. I'll get it done. Today I's just moving in a *slow hurry*."

What a great way to accomplish the important things!

It was this lesson King David learned so painfully when it came time to return the Ark of the Covenant after it had been released from captivity by the Philistines. Eager to have the ark placed in its new home atop Mt. Zion, David commandeered the first vehicle he could find. It turned out to be an ox cart pulled by a couple of milk cows. That didn't matter to David as long as he got the job done.

While God is a God of enthusiasm (the word "enthusiasm," you may know, comes from two Greek words, *en theos*, meaning "in God"), man's problem is confusing genuine spiritual excitement with impetuosity. Too many of us act like old steam locomotives—blowing off all the power in the whistle, saving little to turn the wheels.

David was not interested in means. His job, as commander, was to secure the ark on Mt. Zion—as quickly as possible. Away they went, singing and dancing in the victory.

The story of what happened when David got ahead of God—and tried to do God's work using man's method—is classic. Depending on organization rather than charisma, he assigned men to hurry the process. To David the completion of the task was far more important than the method used. The results were tragic. When the ark tilted on the cart and one of the men reached up to steady it, he was struck dead. That's heavy stuff. It was God's way of saying He is more interested in the way a thing is done than whether it is completed.

After losing one of his top men because of his haste, David slowed down. He left the ark at the house of a fellow named Obed-Edom. He returned to Jerusalem to do a little Bible study. When all else fails, read the instruction manual.

Three months later he returned for the ark. But his attitude had changed, as well as his methods. No longer was he impetuous. This time he was willing to move in a *slow hurry*.

How had he changed?

He had *studied* the Bible.

He had *sought counsel* from wise men.

He was determined to *follow God's plan*—no matter how foolish it seemed.

He *communicated* with his people.

He *organized* his men.

Finally, he *moved ahead*, but only six steps at a time. After



Jamie Buckingham is an award-winning columnist and editor-at-large of Charisma.

each stage he stopped the procession. They took time to build an altar, offer sacrifices and celebrate before moving on another six steps and repeating the entire process. He was moving in a *slow hurry*—right on God's time schedule.

I shudder when I consider all the projects going on in the kingdom. God has a perfect way for His people to evangelize the world, to spread the gospel through the media, to raise money for building projects. Yet every place I go, following the ark up the road, I hear the sounds of the ox cart.

I wonder: Could it be that God is more interested in how we raise money—than the amount we raise?

My old jungle pilot friend Bob Griffin reminded me recently that those early World War I fighter planes had no slow speeds. When Eddie Rickenbacker and the Red Baron were dueling over France, their aircraft engines had two power positions: full on and full off.

The fact is those early rotary engines didn't have an adjustable throttle. That was a later invention. All they had was an off/on ignition switch.

At "contact" the engine bellowed into an immediate full-throated roar. Woe to the pilot who wasn't pointed in the right direction when some luckless private hand-propped the engine. From that moment on the engine was running at full rpms.

Getting the plane back on the ground was even more exciting than taking off. It was done by killing the engine by "blipping" the ignition with a switch on the joystick—alternately shutting the power off and letting it come back on, a series of loud roars each followed by deadly silence.

Pilots of today's planes know the danger of running at full throttle. While it is necessary to get off the ground and clear obstructions, full power will quickly burn out an engine. That probably applies to the number of meetings a person can attend in a week as well.

Paul Garlington, a pastor in Rochester, New York, says folks sometimes ask what he is doing on a certain day. When he says, "Nothing," they try to move in. "You don't understand," Paul tells them. "I'm occupied that day. I'm doing Nothing."

I know a lot of people who have only two speeds—full power and off. They keep passing me in life at full speed. I envy them for their ability to get a lot done in a short period. Yet as I plod down the road like the proverbial tortoise racing the hare, I often see their burned out ruins.

No engine, especially the human engine, is designed to run at full power.

Throttle back occasionally. Stop and study. Happiness and health come when you learn to move in a *slow hurry*.

Believe it or not, God is not depending on you—He wants you to depend on Him. ■