
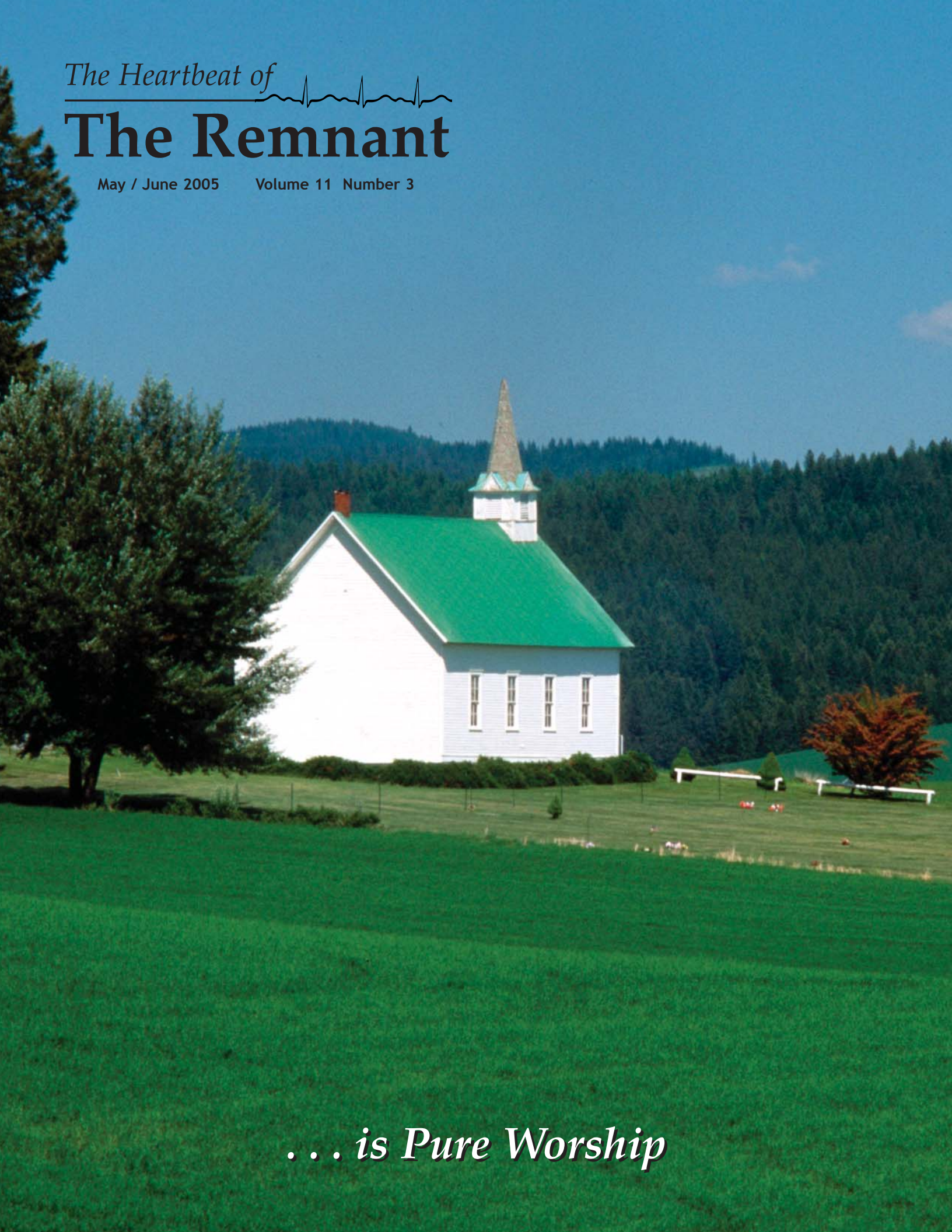


*The Heartbeat of*  
  
**The Remnant**

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*... is Pure Worship*

*The Heartbeat of*  
**The Remnant**

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# Sing the New Song

by John D. Martin  
Shippensburg, PA

From a message preached at Charity Christian Fellowship

Every time I sing, I think these thoughts: This is the only activity in the typical church service that we're still going to be doing in eternity. Someday the preaching will all be over. Someday the praying will all be over. Now we'll still be fellowshiping and worshipping, and that might include more than singing, but of the activities that we're used to in a typical congregational experience, this is the one we're going to do through all eternity. And so, we want to get it right while we're here.

Turn in your hymnal (*the hymnal used is The Christian Hymnary*) to "Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah". This has long been high on the favorite list of our family. If you'll look at the date on that song, it takes us back about 200 years, to the country of Wales. I don't know how much you know about what happened there, but if you would have gone out early in the morning, every morning—this went on for years—you would see miners walking to work, and women walking to work, and they would be singing this song. If you were at a public meeting, the public meeting probably would not be closed until this song was sung. It practically became the national anthem of Wales, and was written by a man by the name of William Williams. Now we don't hear that much about

him, but he was very notable in his own country, at least as much in Wales as John Wesley was in England! He traveled about 95,000 miles by horse, and he was a little different from Wesley—he was a great singer. He was known as the "sweet singer of Wales" and wrote about 900 songs, all of them in Welsh. The interesting thing about that revival was he basically promoted it as a revival that was motivated and inspired by singing! Very little preaching was done in that revival. Often, if there was preaching done, in the middle of the sermon someone would burst into song, and they'd spend the rest of the evening singing! It was a singing revival, and the Spirit of God came down upon the country of Wales and changed the country—for almost a century it was not the same. Williams had a forty-year ministry, and he was an extremely influential person, but the power of his ministry was mostly the power of song, and the songs that he wrote. And so, this is indeed a very important subject.

Now I would like you to turn back 2,500 years. Let's go back to 2 Chronicles 20. Here we have a story that tells us about the tremendous power of song. I'm going to state up front my personal belief, and that is that



## Music Brings us Right up into the Supernatural

The minute we start singing, we are on the verge of the supernatural world, be it the right world or the wrong one! That's why I think music is so terribly important, because when people are singing, they are starting to commune with spirits—either the Holy Spirit, and all the power that it represents, or the wrong kind of spirits, and all the power that they represent. You will recall that the nation of Judah was in terrible trouble. Jehoshaphat was their king, and the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites had come up against them—these were formidable enemies that the Israelites had not destroyed. God would not let the Israelites destroy these nations. Because of Israel's weakness, Judah would be attacked by these groups in times of weakness. Jehoshaphat got an army together, including the Syrians, the Israelites, and the people of Judah, and he proclaimed a fast. He stood up in the congregation as we read in verse 6 and said:

*"O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen, and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee"* and then he reminded God of His promise, that if they ever got into trouble, and they came and prayed in His sanctuary, that he would hear, and this is what he prayed: *"Art not thou, our God,*

*who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land for thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham Thy friend forever, and they dwelt therein, and have built Thee a sanctuary therein for Thy name, saying when evil cometh upon us, as the word, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.*

Verse 12: *"O our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what*

*to do: but our eyes are upon thee."* And then Jahaziel, one of the sons of Asaph, who was a singer, and a Levite, stood up and said *don't you be dismayed about this great multitude. The battle is not yours, it's the Lord's and you shall not need to fight in this battle.* Verse 17: *"Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you."* And they all worshipped. Now, let me define the word worship. Worship is not getting together and making a lot of exciting noises. Worship is not something we do primarily on Sunday mornings. Worship is not even something primarily we



**It was a singing revival... Williams had a forty-year ministry, and he was an extremely influential person, but the power of his ministry was mostly the power of song, and the songs that he wrote.**

do when we're singing. The word worship comes from the Old English word *worthship*. We only worship whenever by our entire life we demonstrate that God is worth more to us than anything else! And then if we come together and



our singing is part and parcel of what we have demonstrated by word and deed throughout the week, then we worship! But if this is disconnected from what you were doing over the past six days, then you were not worshipping this morning! We only worship when we have demonstrated that God is the highest thing on our list of priorities. You worship all week, and you do it here when you sing. So these people worshipped, and then the Levites stood up to praise the Lord with a loud voice. Are you aware that there were four thousand paid musicians in Israel? It was a paid position. Four thousand people were paid to full-time worship the Lord in song. That's how important it was to God. Out of those four thousand people (you can read this in I Chronicles 23:5 and 1 Chr. 25:1 and 7) 288 of them were especially trained to go out and teach all of the people of the land to sing. This gives us some idea of how important music is to God! I imagine that when the Levites sang that it became very evident that the most powerful thing they could do the next morning was to sing! And so the next morning, Joshua was still so inspired by those Levites and their singing that he put those singers right in front of the army and they marched into battle singing. And the Lord sent ambushments against Moab, Edom, and Ammon. They got confused, and they started killing each other until they were all dead! That must have been an amazing sight for these people to stand there and watch this battle being won without having to lift a sword! And on they go with their song! I think it got louder and louder! All the people had to do was gather up the spoil! It took them three days, and it tells you that they couldn't even carry it all!

This was indeed an amazing experience—I wish I could have been there! But brothers and sisters, we've been there. I don't know what you do when the battle is hard, I don't know what you do when you're sorely tempted, I don't know what you do when you're opposed, and bitterly accused, and the devil's right there with discouragement. I'll tell you what I do: I sing. And you'll see the same thing happen. You'll see ambushments, and you'll see the enemy defeat

its own self and leave the field. **Singing is a powerful weapon!** It is a tremendous resource that God has given every one of us, and I think this is why it is such a tragedy if there's somebody who cannot sing, or if can, they will not sing! There's nothing we have at our disposal that is more strategically powerful than song. I remember John Risser, a godly bishop who used to preach in our community frequently, stood in one of our pulpits, and very sadly said, "Beware of the person who has no song." Now he didn't mean a person that could not sing beautifully, but a person that doesn't have that song of praise welling up (even if they cannot sing in tune) out of their hearts, in every situation of life.

I chose that story to introduce the idea that in worship, and in songs of worship, there is supernatural power! I want to convince you that the most powerful thing you can do, through the next week, and through your entire life is to sing, in true worship—whether it's the revival in Wales, or it's this deliverance we just read about in Israel, we find that there is supernatural power in true songs of worship, especially in difficult situations. Remember Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi—how they were thrust into the inner part of the prison, and into those stocks with their backs bleeding. They began to sing, and the foundations of the prison shook! And all the doors were open, but there was something more amazing that happened that day than that! Not one prisoner got up and left. Have you ever noticed that? Note that when the jailer came, and was scared to death for his own life, Paul says, "We're all here!" To me that's the most amazing miracle—you have a prison with all the gates open, and everyone's chains loose, and everyone just sits there! Paul and Silas' song had that whole situation, even the human element, under complete control. I told you, there's supernatural power in song!

Nehemiah 8:10 says "*The joy of the Lord is your strength.*" Psalm 22:3 says "*O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*" Song puts you right upon on the edge of the spiritual world, and when you start to sing, Christ comes right into your song, and He's there. Are you ever in



a situation in life in which you don't feel as if God's presence is very real? It's never failed for me—singing makes God's presence very real in my life. My mother was one of the most cheerful people I had ever met in my life, and she was one of the most victorious people that I knew in my life. And I think I know why—she spent almost all her time singing. I know most of the hymns in our hymnal by heart because she sang them, and that's where I learned them. She knew them by heart. It was a tremendous experience to grow up with a mother who spent all her time singing. No wonder she was so happy! Everybody in the family will tell you that my mother was one of the most joyful and cheerful persons that our family ever knew. She had her down times, but by and large, she was a happy person, and I think it had to do with the fact that she spent a lot of her life singing. She couldn't read a note and couldn't sing a part, and was not a great musical person, but she loved to sing! And I want to tell you something, mothers, the best thing you could do for your children is to sing! And fathers too, for that matter! It will bring God's presence right into your home! It will make it very real to your children! They'll never know what it's like to grow up without a song! (It's the best ear training, by the way, that you could give your children, and they have to have ear training if they are going to learn to sing.) I want everybody to leave the congregation this morning determined that song is going to be a prominent part of their everyday experience.

I want to show you another reason why I believe that singing opens us up to the world of the spiritual. Turn to 2 Kings 3. In this incident, Moab had come up to attack Judah. Judah had then gotten Israel and Edom together to fight against Moab, and when they went out to fight, they ran out of water! They were in dire trouble. Somebody remembered to call on Elisha. Look at verse 15: "But now bring me a minstrel. (This is Elisha, the great prophet! How did he make contact with God for the help these people needed? Music!) And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came

upon him." And he said, "Make this valley full of ditches." And you know what happened—they made the valley full of ditches, and it didn't even rain, but the next morning, the ditches were full of water (though it didn't rain the night before) and they looked like blood—then these Moabites got afraid, and so they fled. And these people ran after them, and attacked them from behind, and slew many of them—again, a great victory. But I want to point out: even Elisha knew that the very best contact he could make with God was through music! When I study this subject, I wonder why this resource is so neglected! I understand why when the church goes into apostasy; one of the first things the devil takes from them is there song! He knows (if we don't know it, he does) that that's our most powerful weapon! And when churches are in apostasy, they are without a song! The devil loves it, because they have just thrown aside the most powerful weapon they have to fight against him. Turn to 1 Chronicles 25:1. "Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals"—Isn't that interesting! We often talk about prophesying—Paul says he would that every person would prophesy; well here is something maybe we should take into consideration! These people prophesied with music! It was the key to the best insight they could get into the will of God! No wonder it says in Psalm 89:15: "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound: They shall walk O Lord in the light of thy countenance." Music gives us prophecy. It gives us direction! So the next time that somebody comes to you and says, brother, I'm having trouble finding direction in life, your answer should be: Sing brother, sing! Many is the time that I've found myself confused and frustrated, and singing cleared it, and God's will became clear to me, and I was able to walk in the light of His countenance!

Songs of true worship are associated with power, and they always were associated afterward with the most powerful things that hap-



pened in the Bible. We have the song of Moses in Exodus 15, right after the Red Sea. Deborah, and Barak, after their victory over Hazor, and Sisera, in Judges 5, you find a very interesting song—you don't find out what happened in that battle until you read the song! You just find out that Sisera was defeated, he came running and Jael drove a tent peg through his head. That's all you find out, but if you have the song you find out what happened as Sisera was up there on the mountain he had chariots—Israel didn't have chariots, they were foot soldiers—and they were there in the valley, and they were scared to death of chariots because these chariots were made of iron, and they usually had swords fastened to there axles, and someone could just come swooping down through a bunch of foot soldiers and saw off their legs with those chariots, and so Israel was terrified of those chariots, but God had told them not to have chariots. So here they were, standing in the valley, and Sisera says this is a piece of cake. He thought he would just swoop down off this mountain, and they were all going to look like grass lying on the ground. But what he didn't count on was up the valley at the river, God sent a huge thunderstorm. By the time Sisera got down off the mountain into the valley the river had overflowed and the valley was mud! His chariots got stuck and the wheels came off! The children of Israel pursued the people, and killed them, one after another. In fact the Bible says the stars fought against this poor man! But it was associated here with song! The last words of Moses were two beautiful songs outlining the attributes of God and his wonders among them, and ends with some pretty severe judgments that were all in the song, and the second one was a song basically of blessing upon these people, tribe by tribe. Let me put in a little comment: Those songs were more than just five words projected upon a wall sung fifty times. Seven-Eleven songs, I call them: seven words sung eleven times. We have good examples in the Scripture as to what God calls songs! They have content! They tell us something! Now we can sing Alleluia, Alleluia, and I'm sure we'll do a lot of that in heaven too, but I don't want to

sing that all Sunday, every Sunday. It's okay occasionally, but most of our singing should be instructing our minds, and inspiring our hearts, and saying something of worth, about what we believe about God, and understanding his will for our lives! Some other incidents: Christ sang before going to Gethsemane. I think he did it for the same reason we've been talking about. I think it was one of the weapons that he took in his grasp, when he marched out to that dreadful death! He knew he needed this! Luther's enemies said he's done more harm with his songs than with any of his sermons. The Anabaptists sang at the stake—the witness of those people singing in the most inhumane and unbelievable circumstances was so effective that they finally had to execute them secretly because the song of these people was so powerful and so effective. The Wesley revivals were carried along by song as well as were the Moravian revivals.

Well, my first point was that music is associated with supernatural power. It's one of the most important and one of the most crucial weapons that you and I have. The second point I'd like to make is:

## Music is Important to God

I want you to turn to an interesting Scripture in Zephaniah 3:17. Speaking to the future glorification of Israel, it says, "*The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.*" I can't wait to hear that! Can you imagine what it must sound like when God sings! No wonder we are supposed to sing. We are made in His image and He is a singer! **God is a singer!** And he left us with a tremendous witness to that! There are over three hundred references in the Bible to song, urging us to sing unto the Lord! It doesn't say that this is a suggestion—it's a command! But like all of God's commands, we love them! They're not grievous! And, of course, we have a whole book of the Bible devoted to nothing but songs! Psalm 33:3—"*Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise.*" Now the Bible talks repeated-



ly about this new song. That tells me something about music. **Music is NOT amoral.** Before people are converted, they sing a song, and when they are converted, they sing a different song! He says, sing a NEW song! Psalm 40:1-3—*“I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear (just like in the days of Jehoshaphat), and shall trust in the Lord.”* Do you want to evangelize? Psalm 96:1: (three times He tells us to sing here) *“O Sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.”* Psalm 98:1 *“O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvelous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.”* Psalm 144:9— *“I will sing a new song unto thee, O god: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.”* **So what is this new song about?** Well, if you look at all these references, it’s always about God’s mighty works, especially his work of salvation and deliverance! The word “salvation” means “to salvage”, to bring a person out of a bad situation into a good situation. In fact, that’s what most of the Psalms are about. Many of the Psalms follow a pattern—they start out with a problem, and they end up with praise. So the psalmist starts out by saying you have ransacked me, you have searched me, I can’t handle this, Lord—I can’t get away, I can’t do anything about it! You know everything I’m thinking and everything I’m doing—you know my words before I say them and I can’t handle this kind of scrutiny! And then, in the middle of the psalm, he starts to contemplate God (and here’s the worship), who God really is, and he realizes that when God sees a problem, he begins to salvage; so if he sees a mistake in your life, he doesn’t clobber you—he starts to redeem! When the psalmist realizes that, see how he ends the psalm: Ransack me God, and know my heart! And see if there be any wicked way in me! When in the beginning, he didn’t want the Lord to see

that, in the end, he says: please, ransack me and see if there be any wicked way in my life, and lead me in the way everlasting. Praise all the way through! For God’s salvation! Psalm 96: *“O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name: shew forth His salvation from day to day.”* So that’s what we’re going to do! We’re going to sing the mighty delivering power of God in our lives! So what else is going to be the content of our songs? Verse three says, *“Declare his glory among the heathen”*. It’s going to be a description of God’s magnificent character! Glory, as I understand it, is an expression of excellence. We talk about the glory of a sunset, and we mean that nothing could be added to it—it’s already perfect. And that’s what we sing about—we sing about the excellence of God’s characteristics. One of the reasons that it’s so necessary in our day is that most people have a very pitiful, pitiful concept of God. And we need to tell the world about His magnificent character! They need to hear that. Sing and declare His glory! Then he goes on to say, *“For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness”*: We should tell the whole world that we have been made whole—that’s beautiful!

After 9/11, I began contemplating other religions of the world, and I made an amazing discovery that I should have known before. I always had the impression that the heathen gods promised something that couldn’t deliver. And then all of a sudden it struck me: They don’t even offer it! It’s not that they offer it and can’t deliver—they don’t even offer it! Mohammed doesn’t offer an agent that cleanses sin! Islam says, that if you keep the month of Ramadan (sic) by fasting during the day, and you make a pilgrimage to Mecca, and you pray five times a day (and there are two other ones





which I can never remember) when you meet Allah, you just might incur his favor, but you can't be sure. In fact, if you want to witness to a Muslim, say to them, "Is Allah holy?" "Why yes!" "Are you holy?" "No." "How do you hope stand in Allah's presence someday? And they will be speechless! They have no blood! Declare this to the heathen, who are scared to death of their gods! You better start singing—They don't know that there is one god and he has offered an agent to cleanse them of their sin! They don't know it! "Rock of ages, cleft for me—Let me hide myself in thee. Let the water and the blood, from thy riven side which flowed, Be of sin the double cure! Save from wrath and keep me pure! Cleanse me from its guilt and its power!" What an offer! Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Demonstrate to the world the effect of that blood, and what it has done for you in your life!

Let's turn to Psalm 100 in bringing this to conclusion. "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands." The whole earth is called to praise. "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing." When you went into the presence of a king, in those days, you always brought a present that had the greatest value of any gift you could accumulate. When the wise men came to Christ, they brought very expensive gifts. There are people that go charging into God's presence without any gift! That won't do—He's a great king! You can't come into His presence without a gift! What gift does He want? A heartfelt song! The heathen come into the presence of their gods with dread and fear—we're commanded to serve a good God with gladness! "No good thing will withhold from them that walk uprightly!" So we come with our gifts of praise with joy. "Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."

It's not that we don't have enough to praise Him about, is it?

## What Makes Good, Godly Music? What Makes Worldly Music? Is There Really a Difference?

I Chronicles 12:32—"And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment." We need these men today, in an age when most Christians do not know that the gospel and entertainment are incompatible. Many do not understand that those two are the antithesis of each other. The word "muse" means to think, or to meditate. "Amuse" means **not** to think or to meditate, much like "amoral" means not moral or "atypical" means not typical. The church once sang "We Stand Amazed in the Presence." The modern church might as well sing "I Stand Amused in the Presence." You simply don't dwell in God's presence that way. We have people today that believe that worship is synonymous with excitement! In reality, worship is often very quiet. Sometimes, it's exuberant—but excitement doesn't equate with worship. If we're going to go down the road of contemporary music, down the road we'll have worship teams leading our services, and we'll have instrumental music—especially percussion. Wouldn't it be sad if, in twenty years, we find ourselves somewhere where we don't want to be?

Music is a very powerful thing—even **the heathen knew this**. Socrates said, "Let us write the words to the music of our nation, and we care not who writes its laws," saying in effect that it would be the words and songs that people would sing and hear in Greece that would determine what would happen to the nation. In fact, David at one time said something similar—he said, "Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage!" Listen to this text:

*My God, I thank thee, who has made the earth so bright, so full of splendor and of joy, beauty and light. So many glorious things are here, noble and right.*



*I thank Thee, too, that Thou hast made joy to abound.  
So many joyful thoughts and deeds circling us round,  
that in the darkest spot of earth, some love is found.*

*I thank Thee more that all our joy is touched with  
pain, that shadows fall on brightest hours—that thorns  
remain; so that earth's bliss may be our guide and not  
our chain.*

*I thank thee Lord, that Thou hast kept the best in  
store; we have enough, yet not too much to long for  
more, a yearning for a deeper peace not known before.*

*I thank thee Lord, that here our souls though amply  
blessed can never find, although they seek a perfect  
rest, nor ever shall, until they lean on Jesus' breast.*

I challenge you to find a contemporary song that says something like that. The author died in her thirties—I suspect that she was sick all her life—and this is her testimony. And if you have people singing those types of songs, you're going to have a certain kind of people. They will be a people that know how to face pain, and know how to rejoice in sorrow, and know the value of shadows, and the things in life that people normally don't choose.

So you see why Socrates said what he did. His student Plato said this: "The introduction of a new type of music must be shunned, as endangering the whole state. Because of the styles of music are never disturbed without affecting the most political institution." His student, Aristotle, said this: "Music directly represents the passions or states of the soul: gentleness, anger, courage, temperance. If one listens to the wrong type of music, he will become the wrong kind of person, and vice versa."

Now these are not Christians! These are Greeks!

Why is music so powerful? Music addresses the whole being. It actually transcends even the conscious thought and reaches the deepest part of our being, which is our desire. When the Hebrews talked about the heart, they always considered it the seat of desire. And your desire is the deepest part of your being. Music goes

straight to the heart, the root of your desires. That's why Proverbs says, "Keep thy heart will all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Schumann, the composer, said, "Music is the perfect expression of the soul. Whatever is inside a person will be evidenced finally in his music." One particular heathen culture has music with floating melodies that never have any resolution or ending—it's much like the New Age music of today. The reason for this: their basic concept of life is that life goes in circles, with no ending in sight. It's not fitting for Christians to sing this type of music, because we know that life isn't that way—things are all going somewhere. Another heathen culture has pulsating, chanting rhythms that show the restless emotions of the heathen heart. Contemporary music, with very few exceptions lacks a sense of direction, is in many cases atonal (without a real sense of harmony), and has rhythms that introduce misdirection into the song. But as we said, the new birth should give us a new song. The Christian should have a distinctive kind of song, and shouldn't be borrowed from another source. Even the songs that Anabaptists used as tunes for their songs were of a generally moral culture heavily influenced by Western civilization, which was heavily influenced by Christianity. Even the folk music of the culture was good, sound music.

Turn to I Samuel 16:22-23. This passage tells us what David's music did for Saul when an evil spirit troubled him:

*"And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed (the word literally means he physically breathed easier), and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."*

So we see from this passage that music affects us **physically**. We also know that rock music affects 9 out of 10 people in weakening muscle tone. This is because rock music is the





## Swift Seduction

### A Look at the Spirit and Growth of Contemporary Christian Music

by Dean Taylor

*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col 3:16)*

*"Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." (3 John 1:11)*

I can still remember many of the youth group activities that my Baptist church took us to when I was young. Water slides, pizza parties, and movie night lock-ins were common. But probably the most influential activity we indulged in was loading the youth group into busses and heading off to mega-church auditoriums or conference halls to hear the new emerging phenomena known as Contemporary Christian Music.

It was the late 1970's and the more progressive youth

groups were really pushing this new fad. It seemed innocent. These early concerts usually ended with an altar call and many young people responded to the request and recited a sinner's prayer. With so many "decisions" reported back at church on Sunday morning it seemed no one could argue with it.

My pastor was relatively young, new and full of innovative ideas. I can remember some of the people laughing at how backward the former, older pastor was. One of the

common jokes on the way to Christian rock concerts was laughing at the fact that, only a few years prior, the church had experienced a revival that had resulted in people burning their rock and Christian rock albums in a burn barrel right out in the church's main parking lot. They said that the event even made the local newspapers. They were then all quick to agree, "it really put the church in a negative light." How quickly things were changing for the better...or so we thought.

The sad thing for me was that before this I had never even liked rock music. My brother played it a lot but I never had a taste for it. However, about once a month we either hosted one of these concerts ourselves or we headed off to another place to hear one. Eventually, I began to crave the sound and started to purchase as much of the music as I possibly could.

I can vividly remember those concerts. We would brag on how exciting and wild the music would get. It would seem to me that some bands like Petra, Rez Band and Mylon Lefever would see just how far they could push the Christian envelope. Anyone who dared the next “radical thing” would get all of us talking. Just like the secular concert-goers, we bought T-shirts, screamed for the musicians and some even waved lit cigarette lighters.

I can remember thankfully, that some protested, but we were quick to label them as “old fashioned,” “legalists,” and “out of touch” with our generation. Besides, people were getting saved...or at least that is what we thought.

One by one, I saw my friends going on to secular rock, sin and godless lives. Once they hit high school, all caution was thrown to the wind. Many still went to church, they would even respond at some of the revival meetings, but all of us were completely ignorant of a Holy God and His standards for our lives. Few, if any, had any conviction at all to search

out God’s Word and live a godly life.

Once the young people in the youth group reached dating age it seemed the only goal that the youth ministers had was to keep the young ladies from having children before they were married. Still faithfully, month-by-month, off we went to hear the newest and most progressive Christian rock band. There is no doubt in my mind that this influence in my life gave me a taste for rock music that led to my eventual acceptance of and even thirst for the secular rock culture later in my life. Rock music has a persuasive and even demonic power to it—it can become addictive just like drugs or alcohol. It may not appeal on the first try, but the more it is taken in, the more you seem to crave it.

In those days the warning signs were a little harder to recognize. I remember going to see an “unknown” young lady at the time—Amy Grant—sitting on a stool and playing nice songs like “Father’s Eyes” on her guitar. Sandi Patti sang at my wife’s (then girlfriend’s) church and it all seemed ok. Keith Green was trying to do a lot of evangelism, Petra said they wanted to reach the lost, and I can even remember the Imperials saying they should try not to dance on stage. But the insidious disease had already long-

affected all of us. Warning signs were everywhere but because we all loved the music so much we explained all of them away. Likewise, I believe



the musicians themselves were led from one compromise to another ignoring the warning signs as this industry grew.

That was over twenty years ago, and by the grace of God my wife and I have been saved from that seductive stronghold. Over these years I have been more and more removed from this culture. Today, when I think of these types of problems in the church, I tend to think of them as they were 15 years ago. However, since then, this Christian rock culture has only proceeded from bad to worse, with few Christians recognizing the heinous beast that it has become today.

Hardly any church is free from its influences. Since those early days, the Christian music companies have sold out to larger, secular music companies that are owned by completely secular management or stockholders. The sale of Contemporary Christian Music out-sells that of Jazz and Classical combined. The musicians have become rich

and the message has become adulterated.

In preparing John D. Martin's, "Sing the New Song," for this issue, I wanted to do some research to see just how the Christian music scene has progressed in the last 15 years. In doing this I was completely shocked. I knew it was bad, but just how bad—I had no idea.

Following is a sample of some interviews and direct quotes taken from some of the leading artists of our day. I apologize in advance that they are rather graphic and very disturbing. As I was gathering these quotes I had to discard most of them because they were simply too grievous to print. Scandals, divorces and unrepentant adulterous relationships were all too easy to find. It seemed that some of the biggest names had some of the worst family lives. As you read these quotes, please remember these are real people, with real lives, involved in real sin. Please pray for their repentance. I am mostly repeating only the quotes or incidents that were boldly stated or preformed by the musicians themselves, rather than what was said about them. Much, much more could have been said. Most of the research has been taken from two publications, "Christian Rock: Blessing or Blaspheme," by Terry Watkins, and "The Seduction of Our Youth," by Carol Guffey.

To the shame of the Christian church, she has received this invasion with hardly a word. Even the world

has taken notice of what they see as obvious mixed messages. People Magazine (July 15, 1991, p.71) says of Amy's video *Baby, Baby*, "There's saintly Amy cuddling some hunky guy, crooning "Baby, Baby" into his ear and looking pretty sleek and sinful..." When asked about similar inconsistencies from rolling Stone magazine, Amy confesses, "I'm trying to look sexy to sell a record..." (Rolling Stone, June 6, 1985, p. 10)

In a candid interview with Ladies Home Journal (December, 1985, p.100) Amy stated, "I have a healthy sense of right and wrong, but sometimes, for example, using foul, exclamation-point words among friends can be good for a laugh."

Speaking about what she considers a "no fun" stigma on the Christian, Amy says, "Why isolate yourself? Your life isolates you enough. I'm isolated when I walk into a room and somebody says, 'She's a Christian,' and nobody offers me a joint and all the coke (cocaine) disappears..." Amy also says, "I remember years ago—the first time I smelled anybody smoking a joint at a concert, I was thrilled...it meant to me that obviously this person is not affected by the church peer pressure." (Bob Millard, *Amy Grant*, [New York, 1986,] p. 169) Ex-Husband Gary Chapman even confessed in People Magazine (July 15, 1991, p. 72) of a six-year cocaine and marijuana addiction.

Moving quickly into music videos, the Contemporary

Christian market has wasted no time. Sadly, the pace to mix and flirt with witchcraft and the occult has also been a fast one. In Amy Grant's video, "That's What Love is For," copying the dress style of professed witch, Stevie Nicks, Amy is dressed in a hooded red robe, as is used in witchcraft rituals. Flashing strangely on the palms of each hand, she has fixed a six-pointed-star called a hexagram, which is a symbol heavily associated with occult practices. It is hard to believe that this is a coincidence or accident. These videos cost thousands of dollars to produce. They are researched and choreographed to the smallest detail.

Speaking of the youth in attendance at Michael W. Smith concerts, it was reported by the Tulsa Tribune, "Smith, with synthesizers blaring, drums blazing, and guitars screeching, sent a young crowd into a frenzy from beginning to end." Another source said, "With sweeping strobes lighting the stage and crowd areas, Smith took the stage with some twirling dance steps that sent the crowd into a rocking frenzy. The moment Smith's hands hit the air, the audience responded with over-the-head hand claps and stomping feet."

Inside Music Magazine, interviewing Michael W. Smith said, "There's also the influence of such groups as Alan Parsons in your music. It's especially noticeable on the first record, *The Michael W. Smith Project* (named after

Alan Parsons' album, *The Alan Parsons Project*.) Smith's reply: "Definitely!"

Terry Watkins, (author of the tract, *Christian Rock: Blessing or Blasphemy*) commenting on this interview remarks, "Alan Parsons is among the most occultic in rock! Alan Parsons has songs entitled: 'Lucifer,' and the blasphemous 'Genesis Ch. 1 V. 32.' (There is no Genesis chapter 1, verse 32!) Alan Parsons', album, *Eye In The Sky*, has on the cover (and back) the Eye of Horus (also called the Eye of Lucifer.) Not surprisingly, Smith also has an album titled, *I2(EYE)*. Of course, the name of Jesus is nowhere to be found. (Did you really think it would be?)"

Of the musician Carmen one magazine reported, "One of the first song routines Carman swings into is a jazzed-up 50's imitation of Elvis Presley called "Celebrating Jesus." Carman shakes, stutters and shimmies just like the "King" himself, as the crowd cheers and be-bops in the aisles."

Of the group Whitecross, a publication reported on their concerts stating, "a hot new six-piece band from Rhode Island, got the place rocking with a blend of pop metal melodies and straight-ahead power...The crowd was in a frenzy by the time Whitecross appeared, and the front of the auditorium was packed with screaming metalheads."

The popular Dove Award winning group DC Talk made the *Dallas Morning News*, (April 27, 1996) when they

reported on their concert series entitled "Freak Show:" "As teenagers' shrieks filled the Dallas Convention Center moments before DC Talk took the stage Friday night, one of the relatively few grown-ups in the sold-out crowd observed, 'This is just like the Beatles.'"

Keeping in line with the Roman Catholic push for One World Ecumenism (one world church), Contemporary Christian artists have begun joining together with people of other faiths as well. Carol Guffey, (author of the tract, *The Seduction of Our Youth*) reports: "Popular CCM musician Michael Card led the singing for the 'Evening of Friendship' in Salt Lake City, November, 2004. The crowd was composed of Mormons and Evangelical Christians. The *Desert Morning News* wrote that 'he doesn't see Mormonism and Evangelical Christianity as opposed to each other; they are more like the two ends of a long chord – part of the same thing.' Card said, 'The older I get, I guess the more I want to integrate everything.' Card now has the distinction of having the greatest ecumenical reach of any of the CCM artists."

Friendship Fest, "A historic gathering between Christians and Muslims," will take place in Morocco, May 6-8, 2005. NAE states "the goals of Friendship Fest are to make use of the universal language of music to bridge cultures and make friends, to set a good example of religious tolerance by engaging in respect-

ful dialogue." CCM Musicians from the U.S. and Morocco will be performing on the same stage in a collective celebration for peace and tolerance. Participating artists will be Newsboys, Stacie Orrico, Phil Keaggy, Delirious, Jeremy Camp, Out of Eden and Rock and Roll Worship Circus.

The Bible states plainly, "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*" (2 Corinthians 6:14) During these "Christian" concerts, not only are ecumenical agendas propagated, but some of the most worldly and satanic music is mixed right in:

- **Jars of Clay** admits that they listen to Ozzy Osbourne (a self professed Satanist,) and even sing his song "Crazy Train" during their concerts.
- **Amy Grant** plays Joni Mitchell (professed New Age follower.)
- **Johnny Cash** plays Danzig, Beck and SoundGarden.
- **Petra** plays Argent, Ditto and KISS.
- **77's** plays Led Zeppelin. DC Talk plays Doobie Brothers, Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Nirvana and REM.
- **Audio Adrenaline** plays Edgar Winter.
- **Point of Grace** plays Earth, Wind and Fire (professed New Age followers and Pantheists.)
- **Rez Band** plays The Who and Jefferson Airplane.

- **Holy Soldier** plays Rolling Stones.
- **Rachel**, Rachel plays Kansas.
- **Deliverance** plays Black Sabbath (very outspoken Satanists.)
- **MXPX** plays Buddy Holly.

Here are a few direct quotes taken from other leading Contemporary Christian musicians:

### **Rich Mullins**

"I'm really sick of all this heavy-handed Christianity. Musicians take themselves too seriously. They should have more fun, and they should stop preaching unless that's what God has called them to. If I want to hear a sermon, I'll go to church, thank you." (CCM Magazine, April, 1987, p. 12)

### **Wayne Watson**

"There's one way I won't write. I won't write a song that says, 'You better get right with God.' From my own experience, I find that way sometimes makes people defensive..." (Christian Activities Calendar, Spring/Summer, 1989, p. 111)

### **Creed**

"We cannot say this enough. We are not a 'Christian' band. We have no agenda to lead others to believe in our specific beliefs. Drug use is allowed in the band, but nothing more than you

could grow in your own back yard. And I love women." (USA Weekend, 2002) "We've always just had a positive message. I grew up listening to Slayer, Celtic Frost and Metallica. The last thing I ever thought people would say was that I was in a Christian band. After a while of us going, "No, we're not... no, we're not... no, we're not," it got to a point there was not much more we could say or do aside from coming out with satanic T-shirts onstage." (Rolling Stone)

### **Michael English**

In 1994, Michael English swept the Gospel Music Association's Dove awards, winning six awards, including the prestigious Artist of the Year. But a few days later, English confessed publicly to marital infidelity with a leading musician from another popular Contemporary Christian group, First Call.

### **Audio Adrenaline**

"This is a call to save the church and reshape and reform ideas... to not be afraid to stand up and challenge fundamental thoughts." (Interview, CCM Planet, 2/25/03)

### **Jars of Clay**

"We don't have a specific audience in mind...we're not writing songs that are intentionally geared for a Christian audience versus

a regular mainstream audience. There's an understanding that when people say 'Christian,' and some of it's just Western civilization, that there's an agenda that will come along with that and there's a guideline and a standard and people can expect to be served something that they are going to have to digest on some level." (CNN Entertainment)

### **Sixpence None the Richer**

Front woman Leigh Nash says she's "really fed up with being pigeonholed as 'that Jesus band.' The Christian thing doesn't follow Creed or Lifehouse around, does it? It's so irritating—80% of the articles written about us, 'Christian' is in there somewhere. It's always a banner, and we just don't wanna carry that around anymore. People with all their religious claims and...just gets old. I don't wanna read their books and I don't wanna hear 'em talk. I just wanna know what I believe, and try and quietly nurture that, so I can be a little stronger when I go out and face the world again." (Tom Lanham, The Examiner, 6/23/03)

### **Point of Grace**

Speaking about the musical group Point of Grace, Terry Watkins reports: "The album 'I AM' has a cross of Christ in the center with an embryo and an old



man in the center with a temple in the foreground. Their song 'Serpentine Fire' is based on the new age teachings found in Shah Kriza Yogi Meditation Cult. On Point of Grace's album, "Life, Love and Other Mysteries" is "Sing A Song," by Earth, Wind and Fire." The writer of "Sing A Song" is Maurice White—a life-long Buddhist!

There is so much more that I could have written. This is just a sample of the tip of the iceberg. However, I think it should be enough to demonstrate some serious problems in the Contemporary Christian industry. If you are still listening to this music please pray and ask God to show you the way of truth. This industry has deteriorated much in the 20 years that I have known about it. Old songs like "My Father's Eyes" and "Rise Again" are far removed from today's taste. However, in even those seemingly innocent songs of years-gone-by we should have seen the warring signs. But now... how could there be any excuse? Jesus warns us, "wisdom is justified of all her children." (Luke 7:35) I think it is past time for the Bride of Christ to take a sober, honest look at this insidious intruder.

It could obviously be argued that I have only portrayed the bad things and that there are some good, edifying exceptions in the world of CCM. This may be true, but I feel a strong urgency that someone needs to blow the

trumpet here. If we turn a blind eye then what is to be the final end of it all? Not to mention the fact that trying to find edifying exceptions is much like digging through the trash bin to find a decent meal. May the Lord open our eyes and grant us wisdom and discernment.


*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a*

*roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)*

*Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. (1 Tit. 5:20)*


*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them. (Eph. 5:11)*

□



## Music

J.S. Bach said, "All music should have no other end and aim than the glory of God and the soul's refreshment; where this is not remembered there is no real music but only a devilish hub-bub." He headed his compositions: "J.J." "Jesus Juva" which means "Jesus help me." He ended them "S.D.G." "Soli Dei gratia" which means "To God alone the praise."



# AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND PERSECUTIONS OF John Wickliffe

*Following is an excerpt from Foxes Book of Martyrs on the life of John Wickliffe. He was turned away from Catholicism by the arrogance and pomp of the bishops and pope. There were two popes, one in Rome and the other in Avignon, France who struggled to rule the church. He did much to expose the fallacies of the church in his day. He also had the Bible translated to the language of the common people, so that they too could read and understand the scriptures. He was persecuted by the Catholic Church and was called to trial repeatedly, but his friends in the authority of England protected him. Forty years after he died, his bones were dug up and burned by the church as a way of getting revenge and trying to suppress the truths that he had brought to light. ~Clifford Fox*



**I**t will not be inappropriate to devote a few pages of this work to a brief detail of the lives of some of those men who first stepped forward, regardless of the bigoted power which opposed all reformation, to stem the time of papal corruption, and to seal the pure doctrines of the Gospel with their blood.

Among these, Great Britain has the honor of taking the

lead, and first maintaining that freedom in religious controversy which astonished Europe, and demonstrated that political and religious liberty are equally the growth of that favored island. Among the earliest of these eminent persons was

This celebrated reformer, denominated the "Morning Star of the Reformation," was born about the year 1324, in

the reign of Edward II. His parents designing him for the Church, sent him to Queen's College, Oxford, about that period founded by Robert Eaglesfield, confessor to Queen Philippi. But not meeting with the advantages for study in that newly established house which he expected, he removed to Merton College, which was then respected as one of the most learned societies in Europe.

The first thing which drew him into public notice was his defense of the university against the begging friars, who about this time, from their settlement in Oxford in 1230, had been troublesome neighbors to the university. Disputes were continually provoked; the friars appealing to the pope, the scholars to the civil power; and sometimes one party, and sometimes, the other, prevailed. The friars became very fond of a notion that Christ was a common beggar and that his disciples were beggars too; and that begging was of Gospel tradition. This doctrine they preached from the pulpit and wherever they had access.

Wickliffe had long held these religious friars in contempt for the laziness of their lives, and now he had a fair opportunity to expose them. He published an article against able beggary, in which he lashed the friars, and proved that they were not only a reproach to religion, but also to human society. The university began to consider him one of their first champions, and he was soon promot-

ed to the mastership of Baliol College.

About this time, Wickliffe was slighted by a bishop; he appealed to the pope, but did not receive the help he desired because Wickliffe did not support the pope in the issue of the tribune that the king of England refused to pay to the pope. A well-taught monk wrote a strong essay in favor of the pope and had much support. Wickliffe was irritated and wrote a good reply against it. Everyone knew that his opposition to the pope at this critical time was the reason that his suit was immedi-

the keenness of argument, along with logical reasoning. This soon got him the attention of the clergy, who, with the archbishop of Canterbury, took away his office.

At this time the administration of affairs was in the hands of the duke of Lancaster, well known by the name of John of Gaunt. This prince had very free notions of religion, and was at odds with the clergy. The demands of the court of Rome having become very taxing, he decided to send the bishop of Bangor and Wickliffe to protest against these abuses, and it was

pared them with the simplicity of early bishops. Their superstitions and deceptions were topics that he urged with energy of mind and logical precision.

From the patronage of the duke of Lancaster, Wickliffe received a good paying position; but he was no sooner settled in his parish, than his enemies and the bishops began to persecute him with renewed vigor. The duke of Lancaster was his friend in this persecution and by his presence and that of Lord Percy, earl marshal of England, he so overawed the trial, that the whole thing ended in disorder.

After the death of Edward III his grandson Richard II succeeded, at eleven years old. The duke of Lancaster not obtaining to be the sole regent, as he expected, his power began to decline, and the enemies of Wickliffe, taking advantage of the circumstance, renewed their articles of accusation against him. Five formal documents were written in consequence by the pope to the king and certain bishops, but the officers and the people showed a spirit of contempt at the haughty proceedings of the pope. The bishops, however, supported by the papal authority, insisted upon bringing Wickliffe to trial. He was actually undergoing examination at Lambeth, when, from the riotous behavior of the people outside, and awed by the command of Sir Lewis Clifford, a gentleman of the court, that they should not proceed to any definitive sentence. They

...an order to Wickliffe not to preach those doctrines which were obnoxious to the pope; but this was laughed at by our reformer, who, going about barefoot, and in a long frieze gown, preached more vehemently than before.

ately determined against him.

Now that he was fully convinced of the errors of the Roman Catholic Church, and the wickedness of its monks, he was determined to expose them. In public lectures he lashed their vices and opposed their follies. He unfolded a variety of abuses covered by the darkness of superstition. At first he began to loosen the prejudices of the vulgar, and proceeded by slow advances; with the supernatural beliefs of the age, he mingled opinions in divinity apparently novel. The usurpations of the court of Rome was a favorite topic. On these he elaborated with all

agreed that the pope should no longer arrange of any benefices belonging to the Church of England. In this embassy, Wickliffe's observant mind penetrated into the constitution and policy of Rome, and he returned more strongly than ever determined to expose its greed and ambition.

Having recovered his former office, he strongly argued, in his lectures, against the pope - his wrongful power - his (supposed) perfection - his pride - his greed - and his tyranny. He was the first who termed the pope **Antichrist**. From the pope, he would turn to the pomp, the luxury, and frills of the bishops, and com-

terminated the whole affair in with an order to Wickliffe not to preach those doctrines which were obnoxious to the pope; but this was laughed at by our reformer, who, going about barefoot, and in a long frieze gown, preached more vehemently than before.

In the year 1378, a contest arose between two popes, Urban VI and Clement VII which was the lawful pope, and true deputy of God. This was a favorable period for the exertion of Wickliffe's talents: he soon produced a tract against popery, which was eagerly read by all sorts of people.

About the end of the year, Wickliffe was seized with a violent disorder, which it was feared might prove fatal. The begging friars, accompanied by four of the most eminent citizens of Oxford, gained admittance to his bed chamber, and begged of him to retract, for his soul's sake, the unjust things he had spoken against their order. Wickliffe, surprised at the solemn message, raised himself in his bed, and with a stern countenance replied, "I shall not die, but live to declare the evil deeds of the friars."

When Wickliffe recovered, he set about a most important work, the translation of the Bible into English. Before this work appeared, he published a tract, wherein he showed the necessity of it. The zeal of the bishops to suppress the Scriptures greatly promoted its sale, and they who were not able to purchase copies, procured transcripts of particular Gospels

or Epistles. Afterward, when Lollardy increased, and the flames kindled, it was a common practice to fasten about the neck of the condemned heretic such of these scraps of Scripture as were found in his possession, which generally shared his fate.

Immediately after this transaction, Wickliffe ventured a step further, and attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation. This strange opinion was invented by Paschade Radbert, and asserted with amazing boldness. Wickliffe, in his lecture before the University of Oxford, 1381, attacked this doctrine, and published an essay on the subject. Dr. Barton, at this time vice-chancellor of Oxford, calling together the heads of the university, condemned Wickliffe's doctrines as heretical, and threatened their author with excommunication. Wickliffe could now derive no support from the duke of Lancaster, and being cited to appear before his former adversary, William Courteney, now made archbishop of Canterbury, he sheltered himself under the plea, that, as a member of the university, he was exempt from episcopal jurisdiction. This plea was admitted, as the university was determined to support their member.

The court met at the appointed time, determined, at least to sit in judgment upon his opinions, and some they condemned as erroneous, others as heretical. The publication on this subject was immediately answered by

Wickliffe, who had become a subject of the archbishop's determined malice. The king, solicited by the archbishop, granted a license to imprison the teacher of heresy, but the commons made the king revoke this act as illegal. The primate, however, obtained letters from the king, directing the head of the University of Oxford to search for all heresies and books published by Wickliffe; in consequence of which order, the university became a scene of tumult. Wickliffe is supposed to have retired from the storm, into an obscure part of the kingdom. The seeds, however, were scattered, and Wickliffe's opinions were so prevalent that it was said if you met two persons upon the road, you might be sure that one was a Lollard. At this period, the disputes between the two popes continued. Urban published an official document, in which he earnestly called upon all who had any regard for religion to exert themselves in its cause; and to take up arms against Clement and his adherents in defense of the Holy See (the pope).

A war (in which the name of religion was so vilely prostitute) roused Wickliffe's inclination, even in his declining years. He took up his pen once more, and wrote against it with the greatest sharpness. He argued with the pope in a very free manner, and asked him boldly: 'How dared he make the symbol of Christ on the cross (which is the token of peace, mercy and charity) a banner to lead us to slay

Christian men, for the love of two false priests, and to oppress Christendom worse than Christ and his apostles were oppressed by the Jews? 'When,' said he, 'will the proud priest of Rome grant indulgences to mankind to live in peace and charity, as he now does to fight and slay one another?'

This severe piece drew upon him the resentment of Urban, and was likely to have involved him in greater troubles than he had before experienced, but providentially he was delivered out of their hands. He was struck with the palsy, and though he lived some time, yet it was in such a way that his enemies considered him as a person below their resentment.

Wickliffe returning within short space, either from his

banishment, or from some other place where he was secretly kept, repaired to his parish of Lutterworth, where he was parson; and there, quietly departing this mortal life, slept in peace in the Lord, in the end of the year 1384, upon Silvester's day. It appeared that he was well aged before he departed, "and that the same thing pleased him in his old age, which did please him being young."

Wickliffe had some cause to give them thanks, that they would at least spare him until he was dead, and also give him so long respite after his death, forty-one years to rest in his sepulcher before they dug him out, and turned him from earth to ashes; which ashes they also took and threw into the river. And so was he resolved into three elements,

earth, fire, and water, thinking thereby utterly to extinguish and abolish both the name and doctrine of Wickliffe forever. Not much unlike the example of the old Pharisees and sepulcher soldiers, who, when they had brought the Lord unto the grave, thought to make him sure never to rise again. But these and all others must know that, as there is no counsel against the Lord, so there is no keeping down of truth, but it will spring up and come out of dust and ashes, as appeared right well in this man; for though they dug up his body, burned his bones, and drowned his ashes, yet the Word of God and the truth of his doctrine, with the fruit and success thereof, they could not burn. Hallelujah! □

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## *Let's Try it* **GOD'S WAY**

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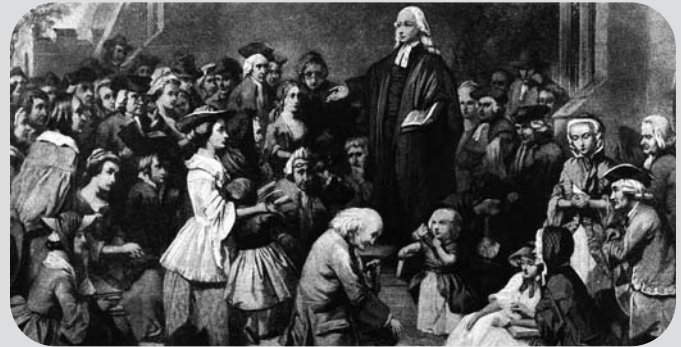
The citizens of Feldkirch, Austria, didn't know what to do. Napoleon's massive army was preparing to attack. Soldiers had been spotted on the heights above the little town, which was situated on the Austrian border. A council of citizens was hastily summoned to decide whether they should try to defend themselves or display the white flag of surrender. It happened to be Easter Sunday, and the people had gathered in the local church. The pastor rose and said, "Friends, we have been counting on our own strength, and apparently that has failed. As this is the day

of our Lord's resurrection, let us just ring the bells, have our services as usual, and leave the matter in His hands. We know only our weakness, and not the power of God to defend us." The council accepted his plan and the church bells rang. The enemy, hearing the sudden peal, concluded that the Austrian army had arrived during the night to defend the town. Before the service ended, the enemy broke camp and left.



# Assurance of Salvation

After John Wesley had been preaching for some time, some one said to him, "Are you sure, Mr. Wesley, of your salvation?" "Well," he answered, "Jesus Christ died for the whole world." "Yes, we all believe that; but are you sure that you are saved?" Wesley replied that he was sure that provision had been made for his salvation. "But are you sure, Wesley, that you are saved?" It went like an arrow to his heart, and he had no rest or power until that question was settled. Many men and many women go on month after month, and year after year, without power, because they do not know their standing in Christ; they are not sure of their own footing for eternity. Latimer wrote Ridley once that when he was settled and steadfast about his own salvation he was as bold as a lion, but if that hope became eclipsed he was fearful and afraid and was disqualified for service. Many are disqualified for service because they are continually doubting their own salvation.



## godless

First dentistry was painless;  
Then bicycles were chainless  
And carriages were horseless  
And many laws, enforceless.  
Next, cookery was fireless,  
Telegraphy was wireless,  
Cigars were nicotineless  
And coffee, caffeineless.  
Soon oranges were seedless,  
The putting green was weedless,  
The college boy hatless,  
The proper diet, fatless,  
Now motor roads are dustless,  
The latest steel is rustless,  
Our tennis courts are sodless,  
Our new religions, godless.

Arthur Guiterman  
Gaily the Troubadour, 1936

# Christ's

*Cry*

# To Today's Church

by Keith Daniel

Edited from a message delivered at the  
"Heart-Cry for Revival" Conference in Lancaster, PA, May 26-29, 1998

*Reading Matthew,  
chapters 5, 6, & 7.*

If I were asked what the Lord Jesus Christ would say to His Church in America, without any hesitation I would say these words, "Ye are the salt of the earth, but" ...and I believe He would weep... "but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13).

Is it possible that something could happen to the Church of Jesus Christ that Christ could say these words: "My Church is good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men"? One of the greatest theologians in the history of the Church said that the most accurate interpretation of this verse would read like this: "Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost his savor"—if you lose your effectiveness, your vital reality, your impact—"what will happen to the world?" You are the world's protection to make it tolerable to live in, Church of Jesus Christ. And you yourselves will eventually be thrown out by the world, and your religion will be considered worthless if you lose your vital reality.

I believe the Church of Christ not only in America, but in the West and in the world, has come to a crisis of having lost its effectiveness to stop the advance of corruption. If we were

what we ought to be in God's eyes, sinners wouldn't stand up so brazenly; they would melt in condemned hearts before they whispered, let alone shouted out, the things they cry out. If we were right in our reality with God, if we were effective as God wants us to be, sin could not advance.

I don't blame the politicians, though I weep over them. I don't blame Hollywood, though I agonize that there is such a hell-bent place, turning so many to hell. I blame the Church of Jesus Christ. It is going to shock you that I blame the Church.

## *Stepping Stones To Revival*

In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ gives us the stepping stones to revival—to vital reality with God, to become effective so the world will stagger and turn from sin. "Blessed..." He says. The joy and peace God gives are incomparable; He gives joy unspeakable and full of glory. His blessing is something that comes only when men take certain steps.

The first step is, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3). This is talking about a brokenness. How can the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek be blessed? It is because God says: "To this man will I look." God's eyes

look past the thousands walking and leaping and praising God but having no burden. God sees millions who worship not in truth but to be seen of men. God looks at them in dismay.

It is to the broken in spirit and the contrite in heart that God looks, broken like Jesus Christ, and mourning. God has to break us until we have no pride, no confidence in ourselves. The first step then we take to revival is that we as individuals and the church as a corporate body become broken, and we mourn and weep and are contrite.

But it is not very blessed to stay there. We have to take the next step. "Blessed are those who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "Filled" means satisfied. If you find a man in the desert who is hungering and thirsting and you give him a million dollars, that man won't be satisfied. That man will only be satisfied when you give him that for which he is thirsting. Nothing will satisfy you until God makes you righteous. If you hunger and thirst, you are going to be made righteous. You will receive the only thing that will quench this thirst and will take away this hunger and will satisfy you.

This is righteousness imparted by God, not righteousness imputed. There is a great difference. The context here has nothing to do with righteousness imputed, whereby at a moment of faith in the Blood of Christ God declares me righteous. It is nothing of myself; I put my faith in the Blood of Christ. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5). Just a moment of faith, that is righteousness imputed.

Here in Matthew 5, it is speaking of righteousness imparted. God's righteousness is

seen in my life when I'm made righteous. Are we hungering and thirsting to be made righteous by God?

When we have been made righteous by God, do you know what will happen to the Church? The first thing I see is that we become amazingly able to forgive so that we can be forgiven (verse 7). Also as a result of God's righteousness we are pure in heart (verse 8).

The next thing I see is there's peace coming between God's people—peacemakers (verse 9). I have the ability to go to my worst enemy, embrace him, fall on my knees and beg him to be at peace, no matter what it costs me. As

God sees us being merciful and making peace, persecution comes suddenly. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (verse 10). We won't be persecuted for righteousness imputed, but if righteousness is imparted we will be persecuted. "All who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution," God says (2 Tim. 3:12). "All!" We can't escape it because we are the salt of the earth.

The righteous life condemns those in the home and at work. A man's family may

become his enemies as he is standing up and living a righteous, holy life. Men see the good works.

It doesn't matter that we are persecuted, because they're eventually going to get saved because their hearts are so condemned. We're the salt of the earth. They can't go on with sin. They can't enjoy their sin any more because of the righteous life. They'll persecute but they'll come. They'll see the good works. We're the light of the world. We're showing the way. Men see the good works and come to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

**"Filled" means satisfied. If you find a man in the desert who is hungering and thirsting and you give him a million dollars, that man won't be satisfied. Nothing will satisfy you until God makes you righteous. If you hunger and thirst, you are going to be made righteous.**



## *Fulfilling The Law*

As a result of righteousness imparted by God, we are now able to fulfill the law in our lives. We realize that Jesus didn't come to destroy the law but to fulfill it in our life.

Some people say, "I'm not under law; I'm under grace. You're under the law, Keith Daniel; and I'm under grace. This is the dispensation of grace." Most people who say that to me end up in disgrace.

Christ said, "I haven't come to destroy the law but to fulfill it—in you!" It is through God's righteousness imparted by His grace and mercy in and through me. It is not by rigid discipline, but by Him writing the law of God upon my heart, and by the Holy Spirit I spontaneously live the standard. I don't memorize and think, "Thou shalt not..." and say, "Thou shalt not do this..." No, I don't do the forbidden thing, but it is not by my own effort. This is God's righteousness imparted. This is God's liberty. The liberty of the law in Christ Jesus is an amazing liberty, not a bondage of the law. When one finds God's righteousness imparted into him, imparted through him, it is not his own.

In every circumstance spontaneously seen is the fruit of the Spirit. No matter how trying the circumstances it's there, the law fulfilled even if you haven't memorized it. It's written on your heart by God. You're vitally real. You're fulfilling the law of God. In case you think the law is destroyed through Christianity let me tell you that the standard is ten times higher in the New Testament than in the Old Testament. And you can live it!

Christ says in effect, "You've heard it said, 'You mustn't kill,' but this is what I want you to live—and you're going to live it: you mustn't be angry anymore. Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer in My eyes. I don't want you to be angry any more without a cause." Any anger that can come in our life must be such a righteous indignation that anybody who watches could see nothing else but holiness in our reaction to that at which we are offended. In time of deepest offence we will be Christlike because it's caused by righteous indignation. This will condemn hearts and not condemn us.

The righteousness imparted by God gives one the ability to leave anything he wants to do for God the moment he realizes someone has something against him, and get right. He doesn't want to give out a tract, or give the tithe or give anything to God, for he knows God is not going to receive it if he doesn't go quickly and get right. Then he will come and offer his gift.

This righteousness imparted gives one the ability not to look at women with lust. Your wife is all you see and all you want. We can be holy by God's grace. This righteousness imparted is the result of purity of life and thought, and of even what our eyes behold. You wouldn't put away your wife and marry someone else if you think you've found someone better than your first wife. Ninety percent of divorce will stop, one-hundred percent I hope, when revival comes, and the Church will live the message and be able to preach it again rather than write volumes to deny it and try to explain it away and find psychologists to deal with it. No, God deals with it.

When we find God's righteousness we don't have to swear. Just our "yes" is all right. Every man looking at us with our integrity wouldn't require more than a "yes."

If the Church is the salt of the earth, this holy righteousness imparted by God to give us holy living would help us to turn the other cheek. Have you ever seen someone do that? Touch a man's theology and see if he turns the other cheek. Oftentimes there is something sinful in the way he defends his doctrine.

God's righteousness imparted helps us to be able to turn the other cheek. I saw a man hurting my father for righteousness. My father was one of the holiest men of God who ever lived. Before we could jump up, before we could stop the man, what my father made everyone in that room unable to move. No matter what that man was doing to him in his anger, my father just looked at him, and with such love as I've never seen in my life, he said, "I love you." He turned the other cheek. The man melted and crumpled onto the floor. Do you know what it is by God's righteousness imparted to you to love your enemies, to bless them that curse you, to do good to them?

How can a man carry on hating you if you do good to him? What good did you do to your

enemy to win him? Pray for him. Go back to him. Love him. Bless him. Turn the other cheek. You can as the result of God's righteousness imparted to the Church of Jesus Christ.

Revival puts reality into the standard of God's Word, by God's grace fulfilling the law. We'll find the ability to do our righteousness not to be seen by men. Do we know what it is to let not our left hand know what our right hand does? How many of us are as the hypocrites are? If we make sure everyone knows when we give, we won't have any thank you from God. Our gift is received by men but not by God. There are people who do have to know about our giving, but we do our best that no one knows it's us, when we're righteous.

When we pray we won't be as the hypocrites are. They love to pray standing where people will hear and they feel, "Oh, what a prayer warrior." How did Jesus tell how to differentiate between the hypocrite and the true disciple of Christ? Here's how to know: "When thou prayest enter into thy closet. When thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret and thy Father who sees in secret..." (Matt. 6:5). What did our Father see this morning? We didn't miss the meeting men expected us to attend, but did we miss the meeting with God? It would be terrible to us if we missed the service on Sunday or if we missed the prayer meeting. People would say, "He's a pillar of the church. What's wrong?" But the meeting with God in secret, we can miss it like the snap of the fingers. God says, You want to know whether you are a hypocrite? Do you miss the meeting when no one is watching?

Am I a prayer warrior when I pray in the mornings? Do I pray what I pray in the prayer meetings when I'm crying for the world? I have no right to pray in the meeting for the souls of the world unless I'm on my knees when no one knows, groaning before God. I have the right to stand before men like a prayer warrior only if I agonize alone with God. Otherwise I am a hypocrite.

Righteousness imparted by God will stop hypocrisy. Then our prayers, instead of doing nothing, will make heaven come down, when we're gathered together because we're real and our prayers are not a stench of hypocrisy. Our prayers are like a fragrance going to God.

Righteousness imparted will stop us from laying up treasures on earth. We'll not have anxious thoughts for tomorrow. The Bible says, "Take no thought." Don't lay up for yourself treasures upon earth. This isn't where you are going to spend eternity. Lay up for yourself treasures in heaven. How many Bibles could you have sent out in the years that you've named Jesus as your Saviour, instead of spending on the luxuries you've had? Don't put everything into the material. Don't have darkness through materialism.

You can't be materialistic and serve God, America. It doesn't mean God wants you to live poverty stricken lives. If God knows He can trust you He will abundantly bless you. God doesn't want to withhold from us even some luxuries, but these things must not keep us from being what God wants of us. We must all give account to God.

When we are right with God, we will be stunned what doesn't have any value, or hold any attraction for us anymore. We lose interest in these things. Do we hunger and thirst after materialism to be satisfied or do we hunger and thirst after righteousness to be satisfied? Do we hunger and thirst after sensuality to be satisfied? We'll never be satisfied. Do we hunger and thirst after men's esteem to be satisfied? When we get all their esteem because of all we give and all we do and all our sacrifices and everybody sees and everybody knows, we ourselves will know nothing of satisfaction. We'll have nothing of the heart of fulfillment, of joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. We'll never know what God could have given us. We'll be poverty stricken though we name the name of Christ.

Nothing will satisfy until we find God's righteousness. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). That is, what you need to be happy, not what you want.

## *How To Receive*

How do we receive this righteousness imparted by God? Just as we obtained right-

eousness imputed to us by faith in God, there is a thirsting, a longing, a brokenness, a seeking—but there must come this moment when by faith we say, “God, I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me, no matter what it costs me. I put my trust in Thee, God, as I put my trust for righteousness to be imputed in Thy eyes by the Blood of Jesus. I hunger, I thirst, and I long, and by faith I ask Thee, let the Blood go through and through in my life, through and through.”

Andrew Murray says that the Holy Spirit dwells in you if you’re saved, but being filled with the Holy Spirit means He takes control of you. He can only take control of you when you absolutely surrender to God on every issue and say, “I will not let Thee go, unless Thou dost have Thy complete way in my life. Have Thy way, God; have Thy way!”

Murray says when God fills you, when He takes you in absolute surrender and takes control of you, then in every circumstance in your life, spontaneously, no matter how trying the circumstances, is the fruit of the Spirit, is Christ. Christ is seen to your enemy as he beats you. Christ is seen to every soul that looks at you even if they’re persecuting you. They come to God because they can’t fight such a life.

If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. Whatsoever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. He would that all men pray everywhere, lifting holy hands without wrath and doubting. Without doubting is holy confidence, which is the result of a holy life, of asking in faith nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

God wants a holy confidence that can come from a heart that condemns us not. If our heart condemn us not then have we as a church of Jesus Christ, confidence toward God and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments, because we are vitally real. We are honored by God because we hungered and thirsted in brokenness and then by the same faith by which God imputed righteousness, God made us be righteous, filled us with the Holy Spirit. Then through the fruit of the Holy Spirit, righteousness is imparted in my life and I become the salt of the earth.

If God says to you, “Child, I want your life on the altar, I want you in brokenness, I want you for Me and Me only,” cry out, “I need to be made vitally real with God! I’m not the salt of the earth. I’m not bringing lives to Christ. My prayers are not being answered. And it’s because of this! I need righteousness imparted by God, written in my heart. I can’t attain it in my own strength...”

If you need to do that, call on God. Confess your sins; tell Him that you’re broken. Trust Him by the Blood to cleanse you through and through. Tell Him that you absolutely surrender, that you won’t let Him go now except He has His way and blesses you. Tell Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit, to take absolute control no matter what the cost. Tell Him you won’t settle for anything less than to believe that He’s done it, and that your life will live the standard of the

**Tell Him you won’t settle for anything less than to believe that He’s done it, and that your life will live the standard of the vital reality laid before you by Christ here in these Scriptures, lived even to your worst enemy, to bring him to Christ soon.**

vital reality laid before you by Christ here in these Scriptures, lived even to your worst enemy, to bring him to Christ soon. Tell God you want to become a prayer warrior, to have a heart that doesn’t condemn you, that whatever you ask for your country He can do, He will do, because you keep His commandments! □

# Sonshine Girls

by Kara White

Ministry to Area Widows from Zion Christian Fellowship, Wellman, IA

*"Pure religion before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." James 1:27*

The ministry of visiting widows has provided an amazing amount of opportunities and blessings into our lives as young ladies at Zion Christian Fellowship in Wellman, Iowa. We trust it has also touched the lives of those to whom we minister. When I returned from five months in Africa, I felt like a fifth wheel - not sure where I fit in our church and community. I wanted to be doing something for the Kingdom of God. After hearing the overflow of our Pastor's wife's heart for the multitude of area widows- I began seeking some way I could reach out to them.

In January of 2004, a few months after my return, this ministry was born and has provided an outlet for my desire to touch others for God's glory. I remember an article in the Remnant in which there was a picture of a young woman knocking on a door in the wintertime, and Brother Denny shared how to get into homes and share the gospel. We have found so much freedom to

share Jesus Christ with these ladies as they welcome us in to sing, share and pray. One of the ladies referred to us as the 'Sonshine Girls' and the name stuck. I've marveled at the experiences we've had just opening God's Word by way of testimony or from a special blessing in our personal devotions. Also, songs will often lead into spiritual discussions. The response to God's Word is very revealing. Some enter into the conversation with enthusiasm, while others listen quietly or change the subject whenever spiritual topics arise. Yet, whether they respond or not, we have sowed a seed that later they can ponder in their quiet moments. Occasionally our efforts reach beyond the older ladies to a visiting granddaughter or son who arrives while we are there. The widows are usually anxious to introduce us and have us sing a song for them. An unexpected captive audience provides a golden opportunity for that soul to be touched and potentially changed for a life-



time by listening to a hymn, hearing a testimony or closing prayers.

When we began, four girls were going out on Tuesdays and ministering to ladies we knew who lived alone. Gathering at the church at 3:30 we prayed together before heading out. We scheduled the first stop for 4:00, then 5:00, ate supper together at 6:00 and saw one more lady at 7:00. Soon we were running out of contacts, so I talked to a Mennonite neighbor lady who is well acquainted with the people in this area. She proved to be a valuable asset as she provided list after list whenever we needed more contacts. These ladies were, almost without fail, people I had never heard of, so I usually used my neighbor's name as a point of reference when making arrangements to visit in the ladies' homes. I would call Monday evening or Tuesday morning to ask if we girls could sing for them. I often introduced us using our church name. The best time to reach them seemed to be around 7:00p.m. We would meet back at church around 8:30 to pick up our cars, allowing us to be home by 9:00.

As the ministry has developed, more girls have become involved. We now have 3-4 groups of 3-5 girls, each with their own 'circuit'. We try to keep our groups consistent. Presently we have 3 regular group leaders and 3 assistant leaders. When a group leader can't come the assistant takes over. This prevents the widow from needing to adjust to a whole new group of girls. This is important not only for the widows' sake, but also for us as we build relationships with them and get to know where they are spiritually and how to reach out to them in meaningful ways.

Due to other responsibilities not all the girls can come every week. The first and third week we just visit two widows with those girls who can come, and all get together the second week- including eating supper (each bringing one dish) as a group at the church

or in a church family's home. The fourth week we usually see 2-3 widows and take supper to eat with them. That is a very special time of blending hearts in a more informal setting.

With different ladies we naturally have different responses to our visits. Some are nominal Christians, others vibrant; some quiet and reserved, others vivacious and talkative. Our visits have included some from Amish, Mennonite, Methodist, and Community Christian Churches. On the phone some sound like they aren't looking forward to our visit but then when we arrive they receive us very warmly. Others bubble over from the start, so thankful to have someone visit. Most thank us for coming and ask us to come back again. There have been, however a few that we have dropped. In one instance the lady seemed cool toward us and sat through our visits with hardly a word. Since she didn't have a phone visits couldn't easily be pre-arranged to give her opportunity to say 'no'. After 3 or so visits I realized the need to approach her and see whether she wanted us to come back. I finally asked her if she would rather us stop coming, while making it clear we want to keep coming if it would be a blessing to her. She confirmed she'd rather we not come. It was a burden and a relief to my heart to let her go, as she seemed to really need salvation; yet I hated to impose upon her if she resented us intruding into her life. Soon after that, the caretaker of one of our ladies called and said she'd like us to stop coming. With 3 rejections of this kind in a relatively short time I was beginning to feel nervous about calling to make arrangements for our visits. While sharing this with one of the

other girls she said, "If we don't open ourselves up to rejection we'll never be able to minister..." That was so true and what I needed to hear. After all, the Word of God does speak of believers not being popular with the world and expecting to receive persecution.



If I can't handle these little tests how will I endure much worse things? Yet, of the 40-50 widows/single ladies visited, we rarely have one who wants to be dropped. In fact it can be overwhelming at times when realizing the huge number of widows all around us! We can't hope to reach them all, but ministering to the ones we can has been a tremendous blessing. Recently we've stopped adding ladies to our list as fewer girls have been available during the busy summer months. This makes it hard when we hear of a lady who was informed by a friend of our visits and said with disappointment- "they never came to visit me..." Truly, the opportunities abound to reach out and bless others!

Our goals for this ministry are: to provide encouragement, to bring Jesus to those who are unsaved, and to give opportunity for the ladies to share their wisdom with us. We sing a good part of the evening, share impromptu testimonies, meaningful Bible verses, small talk, ask questions, etc. During our first time or two we often ask how they came to know the Lord - assuming we feel they would be comfortable with the question. Their answers help us see where they are spiritually. One thing which we have found most precious and valuable is closing with prayer. The group leader usually asks them if they have any special need they'd like us to pray about and then opens it up for anyone to pray. Their requests include a

physical need, a wayward grandson, or a desire to be faithful to the end. Some pray out loud with us and others don't. Often we get a glimpse into their hearts at this point that we may not see so much otherwise. Tears sometimes flow and very often they thank us sincerely for praying for them. Some, who are more reserved, express gratefulness in their prayer for our visit though they wouldn't have the courage to say it to us directly.

Some of our visits stand out from the rest as especially meaningful. One sweet, quiet lady when asked if we could pray for her shared that, yes, she'd like us to pray for her because she's been discouraged. When the last of us girls prayed and we opened our eyes there were fresh tears on her cheeks. Who knows if our being there may have lifted her back up to hope that was almost gone? Another lady surprised us with tears before we had even started to sing. With a shaky voice she told us as we looked for our first hymn number that we shouldn't mind

her if she starts to cry, but some of these songs are just so meaningful to her! It has been amazing to see even those whose guest books are full touched by the type of visit we give. That is our desire, by God's grace to meet a need that otherwise is unmet in the hearts of these dear ladies.

Another special visit was when it was just one other girl and I, and we had arranged to see a widow lady I had come to know and love over the months of visit-



ing. We planned to do something special since we just had two in our group. We brought in supper, visited, sang and ate together. This sister just overflows with the grace and Spirit of Christ and I love to be in her home. She isn't free from trials but her years of walking with the Lord provide a wealth of experience with which to bless us young ones. I had prayed that God would give me a gem from our visit that I could take home with me. As our visit was drawing to a close I still didn't feel like God had answered my prayer and I prolonged our stay a bit, hoping to give her more opportunity. Soon the conversation turned and I saw God answering my cry. In our discussion on sacrificing for the Lord she replied that she did not see it as a sacrifice when it was for Jesus' sake. He'd done so much for her, how could the little bit she had given back to Him be considered a sacrifice? Those words sunk deep into my heart. I pondered them as I left, for during that time I felt like I was making a big sacrifice for the Lord regarding some issues I was struggling over. Those words continue to re-play in my mind, and I'm sure during many future 'sacrifices' I will remember and ponder that deep principle spoken by a lady who from many years of experience was no stranger to real commitment to Christ! We have so much we can learn from these ladies - even unconverted ones have much practical wisdom. It is a challenge though, to know how to draw it out of them as many are not used to giving advice to younger ones. Too often they are a forgotten, discarded part of our society and many have grown used to just keeping to themselves and plodding through one lonely day after another.

Last spring, a few months after we'd started our widow's ministry, we had our first 'Widow Supper'. Since we were inviting older single women as well we called it a 'Special Ladies Banquet'. Due to considerable contact

with the area widows we were able to invite around 40 ladies whose homes we had already been in. 33 ladies were able to come and we also had our church sisters and girls age 12 and up. For those interested in having a supper for the widows in your area, there is a very helpful tape by Sue Brechbill available from Charity Gospel Tape Ministry. We tried to involve more church people in reaching out by having each family make 2-3 little coupons for a service they were willing to provide. We announced at the end of our program that these service coupons were available for them to look through and take one each. We had a wide variety of options offered. The coupons for a family's coming to sing in their home and window washing seemed to be best received, though they varied from filling a bird feeder to minor roof repair. Some widows who had children who help them did not take a coupon.

One lady expressed that her children would be offended if she would let someone else do what they could. That's the way it should be, but it's nice when we can fill in the gap for those who aren't so blessed. Our extra coupons we take along on our Tuesday visits to pass out as we see needs. We kept a record of who took what coupon so that we could see if they weren't using it and encourage them to call their coupon family. We are eagerly anticipating our second Special Ladies' Banquet this spring! □

We'd love to correspond with anyone interested in starting up a similar ministry. Please feel free to ask questions.



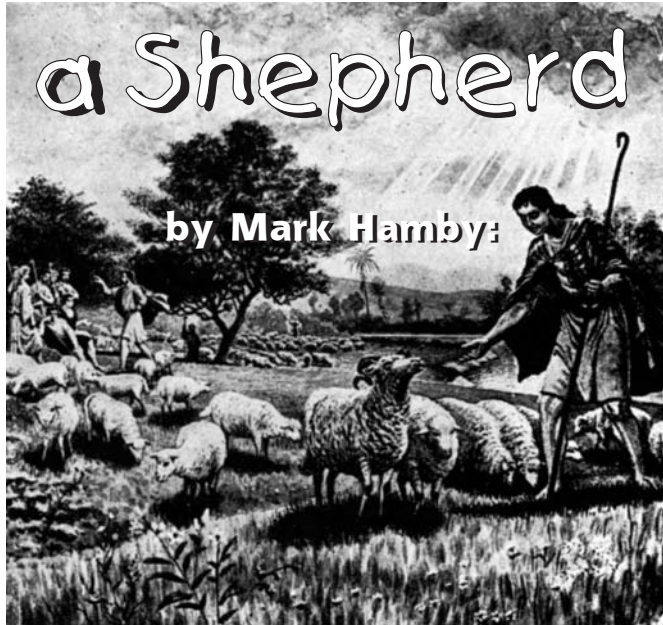
Write to:

Sunshine Girls  
32740 132nd St.  
Kinross, IA 52335

# The Day Daddy Became

## a Shepherd

by Mark Hamby:



One of my most memorable experiences as a shepherd was the day that my sheep followed me for the very first time. This event, however, didn't take place overnight. For five years my sheep refused to follow me! They ran from me, they stamped their feet at me, and they were an embarrassment to me. But they followed my seven year old daughter. They knew her voice and they ate out of the palm of her hand. But me? One look at me and they gave a loud bleating sound that sent shivers up my spine, especially when visitors were around.

To make matters worse, Rambo (our ram that we named for obvious reasons) tried to kill me several times. You can be sure I didn't take this lightly. Since strangulation didn't work, there were several times that I had the scope on him. I often employed this method of using the scope on my rifle to check the sheep in

the upper pasture. I found that when Rambo came into sight, my finger seemed to find its way to the trigger! No, I never did shoot him, but if I could do it again, I might just hold on to that trigger a little more firmly.

One time in particular, Rambo stood on his hind legs and "rammed" me square in the back. As I lay on the ground trying to catch my breath, I thought he had broken my back. I looked up to see the beast was standing above me, ready to finish me off! I quickly rolled and he missed me. But what happened next was the best part. Losing all sense of humanity and filled with anger, I surprised him with full-nelson choke hold. My wife, the protector of all who stand in my way, yelled down from the back porch, saying, "What on earth are you doing to that

poor animal?" Holding on for my life, I retorted, "What does it look like I'm doing!?, I'm trying to kill him; he tried to kill

me first!"

I think you have a pretty good picture of my early days as a shepherd. My relationship with my sheep was a hate-hate relationship. I couldn't wait to have some of them for dinner, but my daughter loved them so much that she threatened never to speak to me again if I touched one of her beloved sheep. So I was stuck. Little did I know that God would use my relationship with the sheep to teach me that I had a problem with anger, and that forceful control leads only to broken relationships.

It was 1994. My health had been poor for several years now, and for the most part, I was on empty. To make matters worse, Jonathan, my oldest son, had just told me that he hated me. Without realizing it, I had been treating him



just like Rambo—controlling him with threats, anger, and forcefulness.

After several newborn lambs had died due to an unforecasted severe storm, my daughter had informed me that, I wasn't a good shepherd. My heart was pierced. God sure knows how to get our attention. I was determined that during the next lambing season that not one lamb would die even if I had to stay in the barn the whole season. Then it happened. I had spent eight weeks in the barn during our third lambing season. About the sixth week, after sheering, de-worming, immunizing, and bottle feeding, I noticed that the ewes were behaving differently toward me. They were observing my movements, and were not as anxious around me. Now, picture this: there I was, not feeling very well, with no energy and little hope; but I was giving these sheep the best care I could give. I often sat in the hay, reading the Psalms and praying aloud, holding a lamb that nibbled on my finger. I truly began to love these creatures of God, and the mother sheep knew it. Then one day, as I walked to the other side of the barn, all seventy sheep moved toward me. I walked to the other side, and they followed. I quickly opened up all the stall doors and then began parading up the path toward our house and when I looked back, all the mothers and their lambs were following! As we approached the house, I yelled, "Jennifer! Debbie!!!



**When the sheep knew that I really cared, especially for their lambs, they began to follow. No more control, no more anger, no more forcefulness.**

Look outside!" When my little girl came to the window, I saw a great big smile, and knew exactly what she was thinking: "Today, my Daddy became a shepherd." And I did! When the sheep knew that I really cared, especially for their lambs, they began to follow. No more control, no more anger, no more forcefulness. Psalm 40:11 I believe captures the essence of the shepherd and his sheep best:

- *He tends his flock like a shepherd*
- *He gathers the lambs in his arms*
- *He carries them close to his heart*
- *He gently leads those that have young.*

Notice that the shepherd gathers the lambs in his arms and not upon his shoulders. The reason for this is to calm the lambs by allowing them to hear the beating of the shepherd's heart...not the beating of his voice. This is what my son was yearning for all of those years...to hear the beating of my heart not the beating of my voice. It has now been seven years since I experienced this incredible transformation. Is my son following? Yes indeed. But only when he hears my heart beating louder than my voice! □

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*Charity Ministries*  
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 and Ephrata Christian Fellowship

*The Heartbeat of*  
**The Remnant**



**January-March 2005 Financial Report**

**Articles Needed!!**

**Have you sensed the call to write an article? Have you read something that you would like to share? Is God moving in your family or church, and you would like to share it?**

Here is what we could use... There is a need for articles around two pages in length. Submission by electronic media is preferred, as in a CD, or even more preferably, by e-mail. We will accept submission by regular mail, but please know that we will not be able to return your submissions to you. Pictures or illustrations are always welcomed, but please make copies since we will not be able to return these to you once they are submitted to us.

Some ideas for submission are on the topics of family life and child training, revival, evangelism or teachings on living a holy life. We also welcome personal testimonies of how God is working in your life or church. There is a particular need for articles that come from an Anabaptist perspective. This could be a historical tidbit or something current.

Once you have submitted an article please understand that your article may or may not appear in print, depending on the need and content of each issue. We do receive a lot of mail, and we like to go through everything that is submitted, pray over it, and ask God for His guidance in our selections.

On the practical side, the more "ready-to-go" your submission is (i.e. proof read, pictures, electronic, and organized) the easier it is for us here on the Remnant staff, and also might increase the probability of your article being printed.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to each of you in advance for prayerfully considering how God might use you to bless this ministry. May the Lord be glorified!

Please send articles to:

The Heartbeat of the Remnant  
 400 W. Main St., Ste. 1  
 Ephrata, PA 17522

<b>01/01/05 Beginning Balance</b>	<b>\$29,425.51</b>
<b>Receipts</b>	
Tape Ministry Donations	\$48,401.52
Remnant Subscription Donations	\$5,324.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$53,725.52</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>	
UPS & Postage	\$3,851.87
Tapes, Albums, CD's & Labels	\$14,295.89
Equipment & Software Purchases	\$811.97
Equipment Maint & Repairs	\$331.50
Mailing & Office Supplies	\$1,189.99
Rent	\$2,250.00
Telephone	\$860.43
Website Development & Maintenance	\$433.75
Building Improvements	\$4,873.63
Miscellaneous	\$2,481.02
Payroll Expense	\$13,400.01
Books & Catalogs	\$2,073.68
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$9,585.41
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$56,439.15</b>
<b>03/31/05 Ending Balance</b>	<b>\$26,711.88</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-\$2,713.63</b>



## Precious Letters from Our Readers

**W**e thank God for the many letters of counsel and encouragement we have been receiving. It is the only way we can evaluate our progress. Keep them coming. Our desire is to foster a free flow of edification, inspiration and burden from us to you, and you to us. This way we can pass some of the blessings on to the others who are reading. We would love to hear from you in any of the following ways:

- A meaningful lesson in family devotions that you can pass on to other fathers.
- A testimony for "The Blessing Corner" of God's blessing in some area of obedience.
- A question that can be answered to the edification of all.
- An area of spiritual growth, obtained by one of the exercises suggested in the magazine.
- A word of encouragement or counsel about *The Remnant*, or any section of it.

*Waiting to hear... --The Editors*

Dear Remnant,

We have been so blessed to read your magazine. It is so refreshing to see that there are other people out there who see things the way we do. We live in Louisiana and there are but a few of us down here of the Anabaptist faith. We hope to soon plant a church here with hopes of revival coming to our area. Enclosed is a love offering for our subscription to the Remnant. I have also included a love offering for a few of our friends who we know will be edified by the Remnant magazine. Would you mind including them on your mailing list? Thank you so much for your ministry and for being a "voice crying in the wilderness!"

Sincerely,

*Chad Lee  
Vivian, LA*

Thank you for producing such an excellent publication that is edifying and so Biblically based. May God continue to bless your labor with much fruit that remains!

Sincerely,

*Patryce Williams  
Flint, MI*

We are refreshed by the very useful (applicable!) articles in the Remnant. Keep those magazines coming.

*Rodger & Gwen Wehage  
Longview, WA*

## Announcing...

You can now listen to a live service at Ephrata Christian Fellowship on Sunday mornings at 9:00am ET or during any special meetings held at Ephrata Christian Fellowship.

**(319) 279-1015    Pin number: 291563#**

The name of this service is called FreeConferencing but your normal long distance charges will apply. This is a regular toll call and is NOT toll-free. This service is in broadcast mode so your room noise will not backfeed into the system. For a schedule during special meetings, see [www.charityministries.org](http://www.charityministries.org) or if you have any other questions or problems call Charity Ministries at 1-800-227-7902.



## Pressed

Pressed out of measure and pressed to all length;  
Pressed so intensely it seems, beyond strength;  
Pressed in the body and pressed in the soul,  
Pressed in the mind till the dark surges roll.  
Pressure by foes, and a pressure from friends.  
Pressure on pressure till life nearly ends.

Pressed into knowing no helper but God;  
Pressed into loving the staff and the rod.  
Pressed into liberty where nothing clings;  
Pressed into faith for impossible things.  
Pressed into living a life in the Lord,  
Pressed into living a Christ-life outpoured.

Author Unknown

*The Heartbeat of*  
  
**The Remnant**

**Charity Christian Fellowship**

**PUBLICATION OFFICE**

400 W Main St Ste 1 • Ephrata, PA 17522

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