

*The Heartbeat of*

July/August/September 2008  
Volume 14 Number 3

# The Remnant

## ***Are You Asleep?***

**Are you asleep about your soul?**

page 3

## ***Have You Ever Been Unwilling To Receive Counsel?***

**I remember once when I asked  
counsel of my minister and I  
differed with him. Today I am  
very glad that I bowed my heart....**

page 6

Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.  
Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 18:3-4

The Heartbeat of

# The Remnant

## Publisher

Charity Christian Fellowship

Publication Office

400 W Main St Ste 1 • Ephrata, PA 17522

## Board of Directors

Denny Kenaston • *Chairman & Overseeing Editor*

Ben Beiler • *Treasurer*

Nathan Zeiset • *Secretary*

Mose Stoltzfus • *Advisor*

Myron Weaver • *Advisor*

Mark Brubaker • *Advisor*

## General Editor

Dean Taylor

## Art & Design

Lisa Strubhar • *Artist*

Eric Wenger • *Layout*

Some images ©2001-2008

clipart.com / fotolia.com

## Reprint Policy

All material in this magazine may be copied or reprinted in its **entirety**, unless we used it by permission or a copyright is indicated. Please include our full name and address.

## Subscription Policy

**The Heartbeat of The Remnant** is published quarterly by Charity Christian Fellowship. ©2008 by Charity Christian Fellowship. Subscription is available at no cost upon request. However, there is considerable cost involved in printing *The Remnant*. It is financially supported by the gifts of God's people as they respond to the promptings of His Spirit. We request your prayerful consideration of this need. Send subscriptions or contributions to:

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

You can call 1-800-227-7902 or 717-721-7775. Also you can email us at [theremnant@charityministries.org](mailto:theremnant@charityministries.org).

# C O N T E N T S



## 3 ARE YOU ASLEEP?

6 AUTHORITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST  
• by Clifford Fox •

11 THE BEAUTY OF "WE"  
• by Claudia Esh •



12 A SINGING HEART  
• by Rachel Weaver •

17 FEEDING SHEEP OR AMUSING GOATS?  
• by Charles Spurgeon •



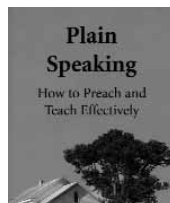
18 DIVORCE AND ALSO REMARRIAGE IN THE EARLY CHURCH—MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE (PART 5)  
• by Dean Taylor •

23 MONSTERS OF CRUELTY  
• by James Meikle •



24 WHEN GOD COMPLAINED  
• by Don Kistler •

26 BEWARE OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES  
• by Michael Sattler •



28 "PLAIN SPEAKING"  
• Book Review by Dean Taylor •

30 THE PRAYER MEETING IS DEAD!



33 ZWINGLI—REFORMER  
• by Glendon Fox •

Back cover photo: © Ewa Nowosielska - Fotolia.com



# ARE YOU **Asleep?**

by J. C. Ryle

*“Awake thou that sleepest.” Eph. 5:14*

Put before you now a simple question. Look through the pages of this paper and you will soon see why I ask it. “Are you **asleep** about your soul?”

There are many who have the name of Christians, but not the character which should go with the name. God is not King of their hearts. They mind earthly things.

Such persons are often quick and clever about the affairs of this life. They are, many of them, good men of business, good at their daily work, good masters, good servants, good neighbors, good subjects of the Queen: all this I fully allow. But it is the eternal part of them that I speak of; it is their never dying souls. And about that, if a man may judge by the little they do for it, they are careless, thoughtless, reckless, and unconcerned. They are **asleep**.

I do not say that God and salvation are subjects that never come across their minds: but this I say—they have not the uppermost place there. Neither do I say that they are all alike in their lives; some of them doubtless go further in sin than others: but this I say—they have all turned every one to his own way, and that way is not God’s. I know no rule by

which to judge of a man’s estate but the Bible. Now when I look at the Bible I can come to only one conclusion about these people: they are **asleep** about their souls.

These people do not see the sinfulness of sin, and their own lost condition by nature. They appear to make light of breaking God’s commandments, and to care little whether they live according to His law or not. Yet God says that sin is the transgression of the law—that His commandment is exceeding broad—that every imagination of the natural heart is evil—that sin is the thing

He cannot bear, He hates it—that the wages of sin is death, and the soul that sinneth shall die. Surely they are **asleep**.

Is this the state of your soul? Remember my question. ARE YOU ASLEEP?

These people do not see their need of a Saviour. They appear to think it an easy matter to get to heaven, and that God will of course be merciful to them at last, some way or

other, though they do not exactly know how. Yet God says that He is just and holy, and never changes—that Christ is the only way, and none can come unto the Father but by Him—that without His blood there can be no forgiveness of sin—that a man without Christ is a

**“Are you asleep about your soul?” There are many who have the name of Christians, but not the character which should go with the name.**

man without hope—that those who would be saved must believe on Jesus and come to Him, and that he who believeth not shall he damned. Surely they are **asleep!**

Once more I say, is this the state of your soul? Remember my question. **ARE YOU ASLEEP?**

These people do not see the necessity of holiness. They appear to think it quite enough to go on as others do, and live like their neighbors. And as for praying and Bible-reading, making conscience of words and actions, studying truthfulness and gentleness, humility and charity, and keeping separate from the world, they are things they do not seem to value at all. Yet God says that without holiness no man shall see the Lord—that there shall enter into heaven nothing that defileth—that His people must be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Surely they are **asleep!**

Once more I say, is this the state of your soul? Remember my question. **ARE YOU ASLEEP?**

Worst of all, these people do not appear to feel their danger. They walk on with their eyes shut, and seem not to know that the end of their path is hell. Some dreamers fancy that they are rich when they are poor, or full when they are hungry, or well when they are sick, and awake to find it all a mistake. And this is the way that many dream about their souls. They flatter themselves that they will have peace, and there will be no peace; they fancy that they are all right, and in truth they will find that they are all wrong. Surely they are **asleep!**

Once more I say, is this the state of your soul? Remember my question. **ARE YOU ASLEEP?**

If conscience pricks you, and tells you that you are yet **asleep**, what can I say to arouse you? Your soul is in awful peril. Without a mighty change it will be lost. When shall that change once be?

You are dying, and not ready to depart—you are going to be judged, and not prepared to meet God—your sins are not forgiven—your person is not justified—your heart is not renewed. Heaven itself would be no happi-

ness to you if you got there, for the Lord of heaven is not your friend: what pleases Him does not please you; what He dislikes gives you no pain. His word is not your counselor; His day is not your delight; His law is not your guide. You care little for hearing of Him: you know nothing of speaking with Him. To be forever in His company would be a thing you could not endure; and the society of saints and angels would be a weariness, and not a joy.



**...unless sin be hateful,  
and Christ precious,  
and your heart a temple  
of the Holy Ghost,  
you will prove in the end  
no better than a lost soul.  
A holy calling will never  
save an unholy man.**

At the rate you live, the Bible might never have been written, and Christ might never have died, the Apostles were foolish, the New Testament Christians madmen, and the salvation of the Gospel a needless thing. Oh, awake! and sleep no more.

Think not to say you cannot believe your case is so bad, or the danger so great, or God so particular. I answer—the devil has been putting this lying delusion into people’s hearts for nearly six thousand years. It has been his grand snare ever since the day he said to Eve, “Ye shall not surely die.” Do not be so weak as to be taken in by it. God never failed yet to punish sin, and He never will: He never failed to make His word good, and you will find this to your cost, one day, except you repent. Reader, awake: awake!

Think not to say you are a member of Christ’s Church, and therefore feel no doubt

you are as good a Christian as others. I answer—this will only make your case worse, if you have nothing else to plead. You may be written down and registered among God’s people: you may be reckoned in the number of saints; you may sit for years under the sound of the Gospel; you may use holy forms and even come to the Lord’s table at regular seasons; and still, with all this, unless sin be hateful, and Christ precious, and your heart a temple of the Holy Ghost, you will prove in the end no better than a lost soul. A holy calling will never save an unholy man. Reader, awake: awake!

Think not to say you have been baptized, and so feel confident you are born of God, and have His grace within you. I answer—you have none of the marks which

St. John has told me, in his first epistle, distinguish such a person. I do not see you confessing that Jesus is the Christ, overcoming the world—not committing sin—loving your brother—doing righteousness—keeping yourself from the wicked one. How then can I believe that you are born of God? If God were your Father, you would love Christ: if you were God's son, you would be led by His Spirit. I want stronger evidences. Show me some repentance and faith; show me a life hid with Christ in God; show me a spiritual and sanctified conversation: these are the fruits I want to see, if I am to believe you have the root of the matter in you, and are a living branch of the true vine. But without these your baptism will only add to your condemnation. Reader, awake: awake!

I speak strongly, because I feel deeply. Time is too short, life is too uncertain, to allow of standing on ceremony. At the risk of offending, I use great plainness of speech. I cannot bear the thought of hearing you condemned in the great day of assize; of seeing your face in the crowd on God's left hand, among those who are helpless, hopeless, and beyond the reach of mercy. I cannot bear such thoughts—they grieve me to the heart. Before the day of grace is past, and the day of vengeance begins, I call upon you to open your eyes and repent. Oh, consider your ways and be wise. Awake: awake! Why will ye die?

This day, as the ambassador of Christ, I pray you to be reconciled to God. The Lord Jesus who came into the world to save sinners—Jesus the appointed Mediator between God and man—Jesus who loved us and gave Himself for us—Jesus sends you a message of peace: He says, "Come unto Me."

"Come" is a precious word indeed, and ought to draw you. You have sinned against heaven: heaven has not sinned against you. Yet see how the first step to-

wards peace is on heaven's side. It is the Lord's message: "Come unto Me."

"Come" is a word of merciful invitation. Does not the Lord Jesus seem to say, "Sinner, I am waiting for you: I am not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. I would have all men saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Judgment is my strange work—I delight in mercy. I offer the water of life to every one who will take it. I stand at the door of your heart and knock. For long time I have spread out my hands to you. I wait to be gracious. There is yet room in my Father's house. My long-suffering waits for more of the children of men to come to the mercy seat before the last trumpet is blown—for more wanderers to return before the door is closed for ever. Oh, sinner, come to Me!"

"Come" is a word of promise and encouragement. Does not the Lord Jesus seem to say, "Sinner, I have gifts ready for you: I have something of everlasting importance to bestow upon your soul. I have received gifts for

men, even for the rebellious. I have a free pardon for the most ungodly—a full fountain for the most unclean—a white garment for the most defiled—a new heart for the most hardened—healing for the brokenhearted—rest for the heavy laden, joy for those that mourn. Oh, sinner, it is not for nothing that I invite you! All things are ready. Come: come unto Me."

Hear the voice of the Son of God. See that you refuse not Him that speaketh. Come away from sin, which can never give you real pleasure, and will be bitter at the

last; come out from a world which will never satisfy you: come unto Christ! Come, with all your sins, however many and however great—however far you may have gone from God, and however provoking your conduct



**"Come" is a word of promise and encouragement. "Sinner...I have a free pardon for the most ungodly—a full fountain for the most unclean—a white garment for the most defiled—a new heart for the most hardened...."**

*continued on page 22*

# AUTHORITY

---

## *In The Body Of Christ*

by Clifford Fox



I present to you today what I feel is a great need in many believers' lives. I fear that many of us have absorbed way too much of this individualism that is so prominent in our land. This is a call to lay down our own agendas and have a meek and humble spirit, looking to our authorities as speaking from God. I am not a pastor or leader of any kind, so I am not seeking for any type of respect for myself as such. It is just my heart to see people accept counsel from capable leaders. In no way will leaders ever replace the need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, or time spent reading the Word of God. Also, I know that there are leaders who have abused this authority and perhaps you have been hurt in such a situation. I am sorry if you have. But remember, just because you have had one bad experience does not mean that all leaders are the same. Let me begin with a short allegory.

### Adam

Adam needed help with handling his finances. It was obvious to everybody, but was a bit hard for him to admit. But one day he finally asked an expert we'll call Eli to help him set up a budget and hold him accountable until he was financially stable. So they sat down together and talked about what his needs were and how to avoid all the struggles he had to pay his bills. He went home with renewed determination to pay off his mounting bills. But as time went on, he realized that his spending habits were not so easily changed and he felt he needed things that did not fit his budget. There were also some bills that he had not mentioned to Eli. And so the next time he met with Eli, his record did not look much better. Eli pointed this out and explained that for this plan to work, he would not be allowed to spend any money that was not in the budget. Adam sighed and nodded his head.

Another month went by and they met again. Again Eli pointed out that the budget was not always being followed and that debts were accruing interest. By now, Adam was beginning to resent hearing about this, even though he knew he had a problem. So when Eli started to scrutinize his spending, Adam began to feel defensive. He started to think things like, "That's such a small amount. Why should he even mention that? He is just too particular!" But he didn't say anything about this to Eli.

When they met again, Eli was discouraged about how little he had been able to help this man. Things

seemed to be getting worse instead of better as the interest added up. So Eli gave Adam some specific guidelines to follow. He told him that he should not go out to eat or even stop for coffee on the way to work. He also told him to buy used things instead of new if he needed something. By this time Adam had enough of Eli's advice and was feeling like half of his problem was Eli himself. So, in frustration, he told Eli that he wouldn't come back again and that it was his own money and he would decide how to spend it. He left in a hurry and went his way to manage his own affairs the best he could.

Eli felt crushed. He had grown to love this man and wished so much that he would be able to turn his life around and be financially stable. But he had also sensed that his advice was not always appreciated and certainly not always followed. Yet, he felt like somehow he should have done more for Adam. So, he called him a few days later just to see if he had changed his mind and would accept his help again. Would Adam see his need or would he still go his own way?

So how many times have you been in Adam's shoes spiritually? Have you ever been unwilling to receive counsel for your own good? Do you feel defensive when someone begins to give you some direction? It goes against our human nature to admit that we need someone to guide us when we think we know the way ourselves.

Can we step back from our experiences and take a look at God's heart on the matter? Should there be people in authority in church? Or is it right to say that God is my only authority? Let us look at what God's Word speaks to us on this subject.

*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." (Ro 13:1)*

I know this verse is speaking of the leaders of the land, but if they are ordained of God to have authority,

how much more are the leaders of God's own children given this authority from Him.

*"And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." (Ro 13:23)*



Have you ever been  
unwilling to receive  
counsel for your own  
good? Do you feel  
defensive when  
someone begins to  
give you some  
direction?

*"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." (Tit 1:5)*

Here are two verses that show that it was the practice of the early church to have men ordained to be the spiritual leaders of the group.

*"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." (Heb 13:7)*

That word rule sounds rather strong to us independent-natured Americans, does it not? Well, ten verses later the writer again uses that word rule and adds that we shall obey them and submit ourselves.

*"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb 13:17)*

## Warnings to Elders

I believe that there is clear teaching in the Bible that leaders shall not be seeking after honor or the ability to flaunt their authority over someone else. James 3:1 says:

“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.” There is more required of one in leadership. Like the analogy of the watchman on the city wall, so God will require an account of His children from those who are leading. Any leader who comforts a sinner in his sin will have to answer to God for it.

James and John were also rebuked by Jesus for desiring the glory and power of a position rather than looking for a way to be a servant. (See Mt 20:20-28)

Jesus clearly teaches that He has an “upside-down kingdom”. If you want to be somebody in His kingdom, you need to be an humble servant. The natural person desires the fame, power, and honor that comes with a title, but God’s children shall seek no honor for themselves, but only for their King.

So if there are authority figures, how should they be viewed? Should we put them way up on a pedestal and view them as someone totally separate from the laity? Or are they just another brother and we are all equal? In the Reformation, the Roman Catholic model was rightly challenged, but have we gone too far?

## Instructions from the Inspired Word of God

### 1. Respect

We treat leaders with respect.

*“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” (1Ti 5:17)*



If you want to be somebody in His kingdom,  
you need to be an humble servant.  
The natural person desires the fame, power,  
and honor that comes with a title,  
but God’s children shall seek no honor  
for themselves, but only for their King.

### 2. Obedience

We’ve already read how we need to obey them that have the rule over us and submit to them. You all know that at a workplace one must be in charge and say what gets done and how it gets done. If everyone had equal authority, it would not work well. There may be more than one good way to do something, but cooperation makes things flow smoothly. The same thing applies to marriage. One must be the leader and the other a supporter of that leader. Otherwise the marriage will have difficulties. A group of believers must also have a recognized leader to function properly.

### 3. Support

*“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you....” (2Th 3:1)*

I believe that this is a very crucial, though hidden ministry. We must pray for our leaders that they may hear the voice of God and not preach words that only tickle our ears and soothe us. This verse says that the Word of the Lord will be glorified when the preacher has the freedom to preach what God has laid on his heart. Several of the letters are closed with the request that the group of believers pray for them. It is one way to give your support to your leader.

Now I would like to look at several examples of rebellion against leaders and what those rebels gained or lost by it.



## 1. Moses vs. Aaron & Miriam

“And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.” (Num 12:1–10)

## 2. Moses vs. Korah

“Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: And he spake unto Korah

and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?” (Num 16:1-11)

## 3. Jesus vs. Pharisees

The Pharisees challenged Jesus’ authority and were shamed for it. They also were rejected by God for their rejection of Jesus.

“And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?” (Mk 11:28)

## 4. Paul vs. Corinthians, etc.

In 1 Cor 9 Paul was challenged by the people about his authority and he boldly told them: “Your very existence as a church is proof that I am an apostle.”

“Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.” (1 Cor 9:1–2)

## 5. One example of a man who understood authority.

“The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant

shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour” (Mat 8:8–13).

Now for some practical applications. In what areas do they have authority? How far does this authority reach? Does your heart have boundaries where a leader cannot speak to you about certain subjects?

### 1. Church doctrine and operations

I believe that a church must be unified about their belief and practice and of their interpretations of Scripture. I also believe that the leaders must chart the course. A leader also needs brothers who care about the church enough to pray and discuss issues with their leader.

### 2. Personal lives of congregation

What about your personal life? If there is sin in the church many will be weak and sickly. We must judge ourselves, but sometimes we are blind to our own sins and we need a loving leader who is bold enough to confront sin. A minister will preach principles and should teach practical applications as well.

*For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

I remember once  
when I asked counsel  
of my minister and I  
differed with him.  
Today I am very glad  
that I bowed my  
heart....

*For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.  
(1 Cor 11:29–31)*

### 3. Missions

I believe that missions is another area that should be guided by the leaders of the church.

So how far should I obey? What if I feel God is saying something different to me? I remember once when I asked counsel of my minister and I differed with him.

Today I am very glad that I bowed my heart and said “Okay, Lord, you know what is best”. It was a blessing to see how quickly God worked and I could see the wisdom of that advice. This is just one testimony of God’s power to bless the heart that is willing to be humble.

Compare your life with the Scriptures. What does the Bible say to your situation? It says to try the spirits to see whether they are of God. Search the Scriptures. Your minister is also human and can make mistakes. He may not see the whole picture. However, be slow to pass judgment if you disagree. Time bears fruit; don’t be hasty. Be willing to try to understand his point of view. Patience is a fruit of the Spirit, but a zealous, dogmatic spirit is not.

So, in closing, how much have we been affected in our churches by the “great American democratic ideas”? Are we willing to hear what God has to say to us through our leadership, or are we going to side with Aaron and Miriam and Korah, etc? I pray that we can honor our leaders as God would have us to; not lifting them up to a position to the point that they are thought of as infallible or that they become our mediator with God. We recognize the error of the Catholic Church. But let us not go to the opposite extreme and say (or think), “No one is going to tell me what to do”.

So, what if I am Adam and it is my spiritual life that is bankrupt? Will I reject the best efforts of my leaders or will I follow their advice? Will I say that it is my life and I will live as I see fit? Will I see my leaders as God’s hand directing me or will I say that I answer to God and no one else? I do not mean to judge anyone, but I do feel burdened about this subject. I hope that I did not offend you. I think a minister can survive without much financial support easier than if he doesn’t have your support. □

# THE BEAUTY OF “WE”

*Claudia Esh*



I saw an interesting article this evening. It was about the Anabaptists and had a sentence that I've been thinking about: 'I sometimes wonder what it would have been like to have been part of the "we" of Michael Sattler's congregation at Horb, or Conrad Grebel's group of followers in Zurich.'

He's not the only one. But what did he mean by using "we" in that sense? You'd think he would have said part of the 'church' or something like that. But the fact is that in the Christian church, the little word "we" takes on a profound and beautiful new tone.

Imagine those ancient creeds. "This I believe" sounds rather arrogant, cocky, even critical. But "This we believe" is mellow, lovely, and strong. It is the combined voice of a unified church, the harmony of hundreds of voices singing the same heavenly song.

This generation is individualistic to the core. I don't know if that is all wrong; God made us each unique and has a distinctive plan for each of us. But I do believe that it is easy to get so caught up in "I" that we forget the beauty of "we." Today's world rushes off, each to his own agenda, with his own vendettas and loves and prides, shouting about no partisanship, and then they look back in dismay ten years later and wonder why everything fell apart.

They may as well ask why it doesn't work to hitch one horse to each end of a cart. Until we find the unity that comes through Christ, we can forget about making a difference. I don't mean a forced unity of agreeing on every little detail; that's almost impossible and it's unnecessary anyway.

No, I mean rediscovering the beauty of "we." Caring about each other enough to stop gossiping. Sharing the same vision of a unified body. Pressing toward the same goals of a relationship with God, an evangelized world and a holy eternity. But the problem with that is that it takes sacrifice. It takes giving. It takes devotion. It takes agape love.

Does it take more than we are willing to give?

Individualism takes nothing. You reap the benefits of all that you work for. If you get slack, you're the one to suffer. Not so when you're part of a "we." In that kind of a community, when one part hurts, they all do. When one is joyful, they all are. And when they make a difference, they do it together.

In fact, most of the time the reason they make a difference is because they are together. I suppose the Holy Ghost could have baptized all those early believers individually while they were waiting in their houses. But that's not the way God did it. He sent the Comforter when "they were all with one accord in one place." And I have a feeling that even if they had been visited separately, they wouldn't have stayed apart for very long.

Why? Because they were a "we." Togetherness characterized the early decades of the church. It was a beautiful thing. It drew other people, individualistic people, to renounce their own agendas and become part of this holy, God-led "we."

As a writer much wiser than I once said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" □

# A Singing Heart

by Rachel Weaver

***“I will sing unto the LORD  
as long as I live:  
I will sing praise to my God  
while I have my being.”  
Psalm 104:33***



*Here are some true examples of what a song can do.*

- ☞ I was in the middle of the airport, but there it was—the distinct sound of singing. I looked around and a gentle looking, middle-aged woman was singing softly as she waited for her flight. She was singing a hymn that I knew and it cheered my heart and blessed my day. I told her so and it blessed her day.
- ☞ He made his living at house repairs and went to all kinds of homes in the course of a week. He also heard all kinds of things at the homes where he went, but today, as he worked he heard a lovely harmony coming from the window over his head. Inside that window two young girls were singing as they did the morning’s dishes. Instead of the fighting and scolding that he often had to listen to, he was treated to uplifting singing. The workman left that place inspired to train his children to sing like that. What a testimony those two girls had even though they did not know it.
- ☞ Two men bent over their dying mother in the nursing home. They had watched beside her bed through the long, lonely hours of the night. The young nurse who came into the room, sensed their sadness and began to sing softly as she cared for the woman. Tears slipped down their cheeks and they relaxed visibly in the comfort of the old hymn. The elderly woman opened her eyes, smiled sweetly at her sons and then she was gone to her Maker. “Thank you, oh thank you for making Mother’s last moments so sweet,” said the one.
- ☞ A mother and her four children were picking strawberries in a large pick-your-own patch. As they worked, they sang together sweetly. They often did this to pass the time as they worked. When they stopped for a bit to exchange their full bowls a lady nearby begged them to keep on singing. “I love to hear those old songs.”
- ☞ She was keeping someone’s baby and it was wailing fretfully for its mother. No one seemed to be able to calm it, so she took the sobbing child into her arms gently and began to sing softly as she walked back and forth. Gradually the sobs subsided and the little one snuggled down and went to sleep.
- ☞ The children were arguing, the baby was fretful and I was feeling uptight. It was time for supper

to be ready and I had not even started it. My husband would be home soon and I was not ready! The Spirit prodded me gently. “Sing. Be joyful. Bless the Lord.” I did not feel like doing that at all. I wanted to cry, but I began in obedience. As I sang, my heart lifted and I noticed an amazing thing. The two arguers had stopped arguing and begun to sing. One of them picked up the crying baby and hushed her gently. The whole atmosphere had changed in just a few minutes—all because I started to sing.

## What Does The Bible Say About The Use Of Song?

The Word is full of singing and praise to God. The Psalmist, David, was a man who knew what singing and praise to God could do for the heart and the spirit. He overflowed with song. His book contains more references to singing and praise than any other book of the Bible. David experienced lots of hard times. He went through major trials. I think that this is one of the reasons that he sang. I believe that he learned through suffering that one of the ways to keep his faith intact was to sing to his God.

*“But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night.” Job 35:10*

*“Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart.” Isaiah 65:14*



God is a wonderful God. He deserves our praise and worship and adoration. I believe that He designed singing as one way to worship Him. Remember that Lucifer the archangel was a beautiful music maker, singer perhaps. But he fell from heaven because his heart was lifted up in pride. He was not worshiping the Master. Let us use the voice that God made to bring honor and glory and worship to Him.

When singing praise from the heart, the heart is lifted up to its Maker. The Spirit of God inhabits the praises of His people. “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel” (Ps 22:3). It is this Spirit that gives us the joy that we need to face each day. He is our Comforter.

*“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.” Isaiah 61:3*

We have learned this through hard experiences. Recently we sang our way through the longest, most difficult, four years of our lives. The Lord met with us and ministered comfort to us while we were singing. Sometimes in the darkest times, when we did not know where to turn for help, we would simply sing. The Spirit would lift our hearts and comfort our spirits and we could go on again. I remember one day, especially. I had gone with the older children and some of their friends to minister to some grieving families who had lost children through the Amish schoolhouse shooting. My own heart was very sad

**I wanted to cry, but...  
As I sang, my heart lifted and I  
noticed an amazing thing.  
The two arguers had stopped  
arguing and begun to sing.  
One of them picked up the  
crying baby and hushed her  
gently. The whole atmosphere  
had changed in just a few  
minutes—all because I  
started to sing.**

because of a child that was straying. As we sang songs of comfort to those grieving families, God did a work in my own heart and the tears flowing down my cheeks were healing for my own soul. Another time in the middle of the darkest time, I was having a hard time getting hold of faith. The Lord reminded me that He was able to do anything. He could fix my problem as easily as He had done any miracle in the past. I responded to Him, "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief." As I sat in the song service that Sunday morning, He arranged for the songs to be all about His power, His greatness and His holiness. Tears flowed all through the singing as the Spirit ministered faith to my heart. That morning the Lord did something in my heart that I cannot explain. Faith arose and the enemy was conquered. I knew that God had heard my prayer and that He had answered and would continue to answer.

*"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."  
Psalm 30:5*

*"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy".  
Psalm 126:5*

I have often watched in amazement as songs that we were singing touched hardened hearts and tears coursed down the cheeks of sinners. This especially happens when you take children with you to minister in song. The song of a pure child will touch a chord deep within the heart of a sinner and point him to God in a way that nothing else can. Take your children with you to rescue missions or hospitals and nursing homes and minister in song. It will be good for your children and a real testimony to others.

*"Our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them." Psalm 126:2*



**I have often watched in amazement as songs that we were singing touched hardened hearts and tears coursed down the cheeks of sinners. The song of a pure child will touch a chord deep within the heart of a sinner... in a way that nothing else can.**

## The Power Of Christian Song

There is something about a fine old hymn  
That can touch the heart of a man:  
That can reach to the goal of his inmost soul  
Such as no mere preaching can.

It's more than the tune of the song he sings  
And it's more than the poet's rhyme—  
It's the Spirit of God working through those things  
That gives them their power sublime.

So we thank you, Lord, for the power of song  
May we use it again and again  
As we seek to save from a hopeless grave  
The souls of our fellow men!

~ Author Unknown

Singing not only comforts and cheers our hearts, but as we sing we can help to cheer, comfort and encourage others. Have you ever been having a difficult time and then heard a song that so inspired you that it changed your attitude for the rest of the day? I think that is what Paul meant when he said, "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). This is part of the ministry of the saints. You can minister like this in your home, mothers. You do not need to step out of your doors to do this valuable work. If you sing to the Lord and encourage your husband, he will be better

able to affect the world that he touches in his workday. If you sing and encourage your children, you will have a happier atmosphere with less bickering and quarreling.



**Try singing when you are struggling with a temptation to sin. Lift your voice in a song, particularly one that pertains to your struggle, or just praise the Lord in song and it will help you gain the victory. Teach your children how to do this kind of battle, too.**

Did you ever notice that when you sing, others usually join in? Singing is rather contagious. When a mother sings her children will often join in, especially if she does it often. If it is an unusual occurrence they might only stop and listen, but even that is helpful. Make singing a regular part of your daily work. You will all feel better. David says, in Proverbs 17:22, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.” This medicine costs nothing and comes from a sanctified, satisfied, surrendered heart. “But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee” (Psalm 5:11). I think that the Lord must love to hear us sing. I love to hear my children walk around the house singing joyfully. It makes my day. God, who created us, must have the same pleasure, when our hearts and minds are lifted heavenward in singing. “And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.” (Ps 107:22). Sometimes it is a sacrifice, humanly speaking, to sing when you feel like crying or whining. But always, the dividends are greater than the sacrifice. And always it produces joy in our hearts.

*“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Ps 16:11*

Singing should be the natural overflow of the Christian’s heart. “And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD” (Psalm 40:3), and Isaiah 12:3 “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” A redeemed heart is a happy heart. This does not mean that you will never have trials, but even in

your trials, you will find the comfort of the Holy Spirit available, and singing is one way that He uses.

*“And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”  
Isaiah 35:10*

Try singing when you are struggling with a temptation to sin. Lift your voice in a song, particularly one that pertains to your struggle, or just praise the Lord in song and it will help you gain the victory. Teach your children how to do this kind of battle, too. “And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten” (2 Ch 20:22). When God’s children were struggling, praise brought the victory. Today, He will do the same for you. Never forget that you have this weapon at your disposal.

I have been privileged to have been exposed to singing as long as I can remember. I went to a school where a cappella singing was taught very seriously. Everyone knew how to sing and the whole church was deeply involved in singing. My mother loved to sing and had a beautiful alto voice. I loved to sit in church and hear her singing her part. She not only loved to sing and sang as she worked, but she encouraged us to sing while we did the dishes and swept the floor. By the time we were ten and twelve we were singing in harmony, ourselves. When I left home and began to work for others I discovered that not nearly every family was a singing family. To my disappointment, very few mothers were singing mothers. Since I was a mother’s

helper, I saw the direct impact that this made on the families that I worked for. I noticed that a singing mother made a singing family and a singing family was usually a happy family. This so impacted me that I made a commitment to the Lord to be a singing mother if He ever gave me children. He did give me nine children over the space of the next 21 years. I have not always been faithful to my commitment, but I have tried to sing as I worked and played with our children. I sang as I rocked my babies to sleep and we taught our little ones to sing, too. We sing at the table and before we go to bed at night. We sing when we are happy and we sing when we are sad.

We go singing for others and have friends here to sing with us. It is, perhaps, our favorite thing to do. We prefer singing together to listening to tapes and CD's. One of the reasons for this is that so often the tapes that we get of others singing are lacking in the power of the Spirit. They are nice, a cappella music but more entertaining and perfect than inspiring. My husband often says that God has made the most beautiful instrument that was ever created. The human voice is able to do so much, and when you couple the voice with a happy heart you have a special instrument of praise.

I like to teach singing to groups of children and watch their enthusiastic response, even children who thought that they did not like to sing. Singing together in a group is a great way to help your children become enthused about singing. Sing in a group, sing as a family. Love to sing! Do it from the heart!

The Christian faith is a singing faith: if our hearts are full our singing will be full. Singing should come naturally from the overflow of your heart, but sadly enough, many Christians do not sing much. Perhaps it is because you are not aware of what singing can do for you and

your family. Perhaps it is because you do not feel like you know how. Hopefully I have inspired you to sing by now. But if you feel like you do not know how, here are a few suggestions:

- ☉ Find a friend who knows how to sing and is willing to share. He could teach you the basic rudiments of singing very easily and then spend a bit of time each week helping you to sing well.

- ☉ If you do not have that available, you can send to Christian Light Education for their music course to learn the basic rudiments. Sit down as a family and do the lessons together. When you have learned the basic information, then purchase a number of good hymnbooks, like the Christian Hymnary (available at [www.homefirespub.com](http://www.homefirespub.com)). Go to [www.charityministries.com](http://www.charityministries.com) and get their congregational worship tapes to help you as you follow along in the hymnbook. This will accustom you to how it should sound as you sing. It will also help you to sing and as you sing more you will sing better. Singing is like anything else: the more you do it, the better you get. This exercise will help you get closer to the Lord if you do it to worship Him.

*“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” Eph 5:19*

And finally:

*“I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.” Psalm 14:33*



**My husband often says that God has made the most beautiful instrument that was ever created. The human voice is able to do so much, and when you couple the voice with a happy heart you have a special instrument of praise.**





# Feeding Sheep or Amusing Goats?

*by Charles Spurgeon 1834-1892*

**A**n evil is in the professed camp of the Lord, so gross in its impudence, that the most shortsighted can hardly fail to notice it during the past few years. It has developed at an abnormal rate, even for evil. It has worked like leaven until the whole lump ferments. The devil has seldom done a cleverer thing than hinting to the church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them.

The church has gradually toned down her testimony, then winked at and excused the frivolities of the day. Then she tolerated them in her borders. Now she has adopted them under the plea of reaching the masses.

My first contention is that providing amusement for the people is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures as a function of the church. If it is a Christian work, why did not Christ speak of it? "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). That is clear enough. So it would have been if He had

added, "and provide amusement for those who do not relish the gospel." No such words, however, are to be found. It did not seem to occur to Him.

Then again, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers...for the work of the ministry" (Eph. 4:11-12). Where do entertainers come in? The Holy Spirit is silent concerning them. Were the prophets persecuted because they amused the people or because they refused? The concert has no martyr roll.

Again, providing amusement is in direct antagonism to the teaching and life of Christ and all his apostles. What was the attitude of the church to the world? "Ye are the salt" (Matt. 5:13), not the sugar candy—something the world will spit out not swallow. Short and sharp was the utterance, "Let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. 8:22). He was in awful earnestness.

Had Christ introduced more of the bright and pleasant elements into His mission, He would have been more popular when they went back, because of the searching nature of His teaching. I do not hear Him say, "Run after these people, Peter, and tell them we will have a different style of service tomorrow, something short and attractive with little preaching. We will have a pleasant evening for the people. Tell them they will be sure to enjoy it. Be quick, Peter, we must get the people somehow." Jesus pitied sinners, sighed and wept over them, but never sought to amuse them.

In vain will the Epistles be searched to find any trace of this gospel of amusement! Their message is, "Come out, keep out, keep clean out!" Anything approaching fooling is conspicuous by its absence. They had boundless confidence in the gospel and employed no other weapon.

After Peter and John were locked up for preaching, the church had a prayer meeting, but they did not pray, "Lord grant unto thy servants that by a wise and discriminating use of innocent recreation we may show these people how happy we are." If they ceased not from preaching Christ, they had not time for arranging entertainments. Scattered by persecution, they went everywhere preaching the gospel. They turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). That is the only difference! Lord, clear the church of all the rot and rubbish the devil has imposed on her, and bring us back to apostolic methods.

Lastly, the mission of amusement fails to effect the end desired. It works havoc among young converts. Let the careless and scoffers, who thank God because the church met them halfway, speak and testify. Let the heavy laden who found peace through the concert not keep silent! Let the drunkard to whom the dramatic entertainment has been God's link in the chain of the conversion, stand up! There are none to answer. The mission of amusement produces no converts. The need of the hour for today's ministry is believing scholarship joined with earnest spirituality, the one springing from the other as fruit from the root. The need is biblical doctrine, so understood and felt, that it sets men on fire.



*Divorce  
and also  
Remarriage  
in the  
Early Church*

**Marriage, Divorce, and  
Remarriage**

(Part 5)

*by Dean Taylor*

After the death of the apostles, Christianity continued to grow and flourish, even though it was beset by poverty and persecution. When we read the writings of the early Church, we enter a world that is in some ways very different than ours. Persecution and ridicule helped to keep the Church free of converts who would come merely to seek worldly advantage. Closeness to the apostles was strength. Some churches could even speak of the times when the apostles actually sat in their midst and explained the ways of Christ.

Language was also an advantage. Their faith was one that was “handed down,” more than one that was determined merely by studying ancient languages and trying to guess the root meanings of words. I find it kind of funny when I read of some university professor today, claiming that the ancient Greek plainly—and—emphatically says something, and then find out that the very people who lived in ancient Greece said just the opposite. With this advantage, the early Church often cuts through many of our longstanding facades and institutional excuses.

On the other hand, the early church was in many ways very much like we are today. A casual read through the book of Corinthians reveals that the early Christians certainly were not immune to the problems of worldliness, compromise, and sin. The early Christians clashed with their culture—and that clash came with many hard situations that forced the Church to seek the face of God.

And just as we are today, they were just regular men and women. Their words are not Gospel, authoritative, or inspired. In their day, as much as in ours, the words, life, and calling of Jesus stand without comparison or exceptions. Regardless of the changing times and opinions of men, the Word of God stands forever.

That said, the closeness to the apostles, the natural understanding of ancient languages and cultures, the purification of persecution—not to mention the sheer antiquity of their age, makes the early Church an invaluable commentary, to say the very least.

**Divorce—and also—Remarriage**

A few pointers in early Christian theology will help in understanding the ancient view of divorce and remarriage.

First, the early Church saw marriage as a lifelong, unbreakable bond until the death of one of the partners. You can’t miss this point and understand their view. Modern discussions about divorce and remarriage never seem to grasp this point.

The modern Christian frequently cries out, “Can’t my sin be forgiven?” The answer is, “Of course, Jesus can forgive your sin.” However, the modern mind misses an important point. The problem preventing the person from considering a second marriage is not the “sin” per se. Yes, the sin must be dealt with and repented of. However, as the early Church saw it, the actual barrier preventing the new marriage is not the “sin,” but rather the fact that the person is still married in the eyes of God.

To enter into another marriage would have been serial polygamy to the early Church. Jesus said, “Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” Today we ask, “Why does Jesus call the remarriage ‘adultery’ if the woman is legally divorced?” The early Church answered that it was called “adultery” simply because the woman was still married in the eyes of God—regardless of what divorce procedure she went through.

Second, the issues of divorce and remarriage are looked at as two separate entities. The title of this article is a bit clumsy to stress this very point. In our modern understanding, justification for a divorce also grants justification for remarriage—the early Church would disagree. As the Apostle Paul said, “But and if she depart [divorce], let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband” (1 Cor. 7:11). As we will read, the early Church did at times allow for separation. However, this understanding would harmonize with Paul’s teaching that the separated person was expected to “remain unmarried.”

When the early Church is considered as a whole, a conspicuous unity is seen considering the subject of divorce and remarriage. Heth and Wenhem, in their book *Jesus and Divorce*, say, “To list those who hold that remarriage after divorce is contrary to the gospel teaching is to call a roll of the best-known early Christian theologians...In all, twenty-five individual writers and two early councils forbid remarriage after divorce” (p. 38).

## Hermas

Heth and Wenhem tell us that the earliest Christian teaching on divorce is found in *The Shepherd of Hermas*.



## Hermas allowed for separation because of adultery, but like the apostle Paul, required that the man remain single in hopes of his wife’s future repentance.

Many of the early Christians quote from this work. In this book, Hermas is seen as a man questioning his heavenly guardian about what a man should do if he learns that his wife is guilty of adultery and persists in it.

I say to him, “Sir, permit me to ask thee a few more questions.” “Say on,” saith he. “Sir,” say I, “if a man who has a wife that is faithful in the Lord detect her in adultery, doth the husband sin in living with her?” “So long as he is ignorant,” saith he, “he sinneth not; but if the husband know of her sin, and the wife repent not, but continue in her fornication, and her husband live with her, he makes himself re-

sponsible for her sin and an accomplice in her adultery.” “What then, Sir,” say I, “shall the husband do, if the wife continue in this case?” “Let him divorce her,” saith he, “and let the husband abide alone: but if after divorcing his wife he shall marry another, he likewise committeth adultery.” “If then, Sir,” say I, “after the wife is divorced, she repent and desire to return to her own husband, shall she not be received?” “Certainly,” saith he, “if the husband receiveth her not, he sinneth and bringeth great sin upon himself; ... For this cause ye were enjoined to remain single, whether husband or wife; for in such cases repentance is possible.

Here it should be noted that Hermas allowed for separation because of adultery, but like the apostle Paul, required that the man remain single in hopes of his wife’s future repentance. He even quoted Paul in 1 Cor. 7:11 as support.

## Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr was an early convert to Christianity around the year A.D. 130. Patristic scholars suggest that Justin is quoting from some kind of ancient catechism. Whatever the case, Justin has some pretty strong words against remarriage. Commenting on the need for Christian chastity, Justin teaches on the different uses of the words “adultery,” as used by Jesus. Justin mentions Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” warnings, as well as His teaching from Matt. 19 concerning the “eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven”. After discussing the problem of lust, Justin brings up Jesus’ words on remarriage saying:



**So that all who, by law, are twice married, are in the eye of our Master sinners... those words “twice married”...literally translate “double marriage,” or rather—bigamy. These are some challenging views for our modern times.**

*“And, Whosoever shall marry her that is from another husband, commits adultery. And, There are some who have been made eunuchs of men, and some who were born eunuchs, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake; but all cannot receive this saying.*

*“So that all who, by human law, are twice married, are in the eye of our Master sinners, and those who look upon a woman to lust after her.”*

Look at those words “twice married” that I underlined. They are from the Greek words (διγαμία ποιούμενοι), which literally translate “double marriage,” or rather—bigamy. These are some challenging views for our modern times. Notice that he said that even though “by human law” the divorce was accepted, in the eyes of God it was sin.

### Athenagoras

In A.D. 177, Athenagoras from Athens wrote, “A plea for the Christians.” In this writing he says that a Christian:

*“Should either remain as he was born, or be content with one marriage; for a second marriage is only a fair-seeming adultery. ‘For whosoever puts away his wife,’ says He, ‘and marries another, commits adultery’; not permitting a man to send her away whose virginity he has brought to an end, nor to marry again.”*

In this statement, Athenagoras states that he recognizes that his culture is allowing remarriage so he called it “fair-seeming adultery.” Others have translated this statement as, “for a second marriage is only auspicious.”

### Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria, teaching some kind of a catechism class around A.D. 194, speaks out strongly on marriage saying:

*Now that the Scripture counsels marriage, and allows no release from the union, is expressly contained in the law, ‘Thou shalt not put away thy wife, except for the cause of fornication;’ and it regards as fornication, the marriage of those separated while the other is alive. ... ‘He that taketh a woman that has been put away,’ it is said, ‘committeth adultery; and if one puts away his wife, he makes her an adulteress,’ that is, compels her to commit adultery. And not only is he who puts her away guilty of this, but he who takes her, by giving to the woman the opportunity of sinning; for did he not take her, she would return to her husband. (Stromata, 2:24).*

When debating against several heretical groups that were renouncing marriage altogether by quoting Jesus’ words on becoming eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven, found in Matt. 19:9, Clement defends the passage. He says that the passage is obviously teaching about what a man should do if his wife leaves him because of fornication.

*“Not all can receive this saying. There are some eunuchs who were born so, and some who were made eunuchs by men, and some who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven; let him receive it who can receive it,” they do not realize the context. After his word about divorce some asked him whether, if that is the position in relation to woman, it is better not to marry; and it was then that the Lord said: “Not all can receive this saying, but those to whom it is granted.” What the questioners wanted to know was whether, when a man’s wife has been condemned for fornication, it is allowable for him to marry another (Stromata, Bk. 3, Ch. 6)*

### Origen

Origen, another philosopher-turn-Christian, speaking sharply against remarriage said:

*Just as a woman is an adulteress, even though she seems to be married to a man, while a former husband yet lives, so also the man who seems to marry who has been divorced does not marry her, but, according to the declaration of our Savior, he commits adultery with her (Commentaries on Matthew 14).*

Even after the age of Constantine and his legalizing of Christianity in A.D. 312, the doctrine remained strong. Stephen Wilcox, in his article, “*The Authoritative Teachings of the Early Church on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*,” offers an impressive summary of the teachings of the early Church, and outlines the writers which spoke explicitly on that point. His summary goes beyond the Constantine era. However, I think the consistency and force of the later writers bears witness to the uniformity of this doctrine. Ironically, most of these later writers are venerated, even by modern Reformed theologians today. Quoting Stephen Wilcox:

### **Summary of Early Church Doctrine on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage 90 A.D. – 419 A.D.**

*If a spouse persists in adulterous behavior and there is no other alternative, the marriage relationship can be terminated by the innocent party (Hermes, Clement, Jerome, Augustine).*

*Spouses that are divorced for any reason must remain celibate and single as long as both spouses live. Remarriage is expressly prohibited (Hermes, Justin Martyr, Clement, Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine).*

*To indulge in lust with the mind is to be guilty of adultery of the heart (Justin Martyr).*

*Whoever marries a divorced person commits adultery (Hermes, Justin Martyr, Clement, Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine).*



***“Marriage and affection with a remarried spouse while a former spouse lives is the sin of adultery.” “Marriage is a lifelong covenant that will never be invalidated by God while both parties live.”***

*Whoever contracts a second marriage, whether a Christian or not, while a former spouse lives is sinning against God (Justin Martyr, Ambrose).*

*God does not, and the Church must not, take into account human law when it is in violation of God’s law (Justin Martyr, Origen, Ambrose).*

*God judges motives and intentions, private thought life and actions (Justin Martyr).*

*The marriage covenant between a man and a woman is permanent, as long as both husband and wife are alive (Clement, Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine).*

*It is a serious offence against God to take another person’s spouse (Basil).*

*The Church must charge all persons who are in possession of another living person’s former husband or wife with adultery (Basil).*

*Marriage and affection with a remarried spouse while a former spouse lives is the sin of adultery (Hermes, Justin Martyr, Clement, Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine).*

*It is a serious mistake to believe that it is simply one’s right to divorce a spouse and take another. Even though human law may permit such a thing, God strictly forbids it, and cannot, and will not honor it (Clement, Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine).*

*Anyone who follows human customs and laws regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage, instead of God’s divine instructions should stand in fearful awe of God Himself (Clement, Ambrose).*

*All lawmakers, in and out of the Church are warned, to their peril, to hear and obey the Word of the Lord in regard to His commands on marriage and divorce (Ambrose).*

*Christians are to stop making excuses and trying to find justification for divorce and remarriage. There are no valid reasons acceptable to God (Jerome, Augustine).*

*A marriage is for life. No matter what a spouse turns out to be, or how they may act, what they do or don't do, or the sins they commit, the covenant remains fully in effect. A remarriage while a former spouse lives is not marriage at all, but sinful adultery. God does not divide the one flesh relationship except by physical death (Hermes, Clement, Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine).*

*Marriage is a lifelong covenant that will never be invalidated by God while both parties live (Hermes, Justin Martyr, Clement, Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Augustine).*

*It never has been lawful, it is not now lawful, and it never will be lawful to divorce and remarry. To say and do otherwise is to worship*

*and adopt the adulterous superstitions of a different God than the one to which we have to do (Augustine).*

How often we hear the cries and pining supplications for a return to early Christianity! How often we beat our chest and ask God “how long” before we will see revival in His Church like the days of old! How frequent do we amuse ourselves with complaints about “liberal influences” within the Church as we fashion ourselves the brandish of conservative crusaders! Are our conservative Christians today holding onto biblical truths, or just shifting a few paces behind the world? I remember hearing an old man once say, “I used to be in the middle of the road—but the road moved.”

Brethren, the road on which marriage, divorce, and remarriage has traveled has moved considerably throughout the ages. We can raise our head and dismiss the early Christians as fanatics, ascetics, or heretics; but when we find ourselves chipping away at the very foundations on which we stand, we might just find ourselves shouting from a crumbling facade... “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps. 11:3) □

#### continued from page 5, *Are You Asleep?*

may have been. Come as you are: unfit, unmeet, unprepared as you may think yourself—you will gain no fitness by delay. Come at once: come to the Lord Jesus Christ!

How indeed shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation? Where will you appear if you make light of the blood of Christ, and do despite to the Spirit of grace? It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, but never so fearful as when men fall from under the Gospel. The saddest road to hell is that which runs under the pulpit, past the Bible, and through the midst of warnings and invitations. Oh, beware, lest like Israel at Kadesh, you mourn over your mistake when it is too late; or, like Judas Iscariot, find out your sin when there is no space for repentance.

Arise, and call upon the Lord. Be not like Esau: sell not eternal blessings for the things of today. Surely the time past may suffice you to have been careless and prayerless, Godless and Christless, worldly and

earthly minded. Surely the time to come may be given to your soul.

Pray, I beseech you, that you may be enabled to put off the old ways and the old habits, and that you may become a new man. I yield to none in wishes for your happiness, and my best wish is that you may be made a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is a better thing than riches, or health, or honour, or learning. A man may get to heaven without these, but he cannot get there without conversion. Verily if you die without having been born again you had far better never have been born at all. No man really lives till he lives unto God.

I leave my question with you. The Lord grant that it may prove a word in season to your soul. My heart's desire and prayer to God is that you may be saved. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Arise, O sleeper and call upon God. There is yet hope. Forsake not thy mercies. Do not lose thine own soul. □





# MONSTERS OF CRUELTY

*by James Meikle (1730-1799)*

**N**ow that I am a father, and know the **affection of a parent**—would I not defend from every danger—would I not bestow every truly good thing—would I not implore every blessing—on my tender children? Would I not nourish their infant state—correct and educate their childhood—inspect, reprove, and admonish them in youth? Would I allow the dear little creatures—to play with sharp pointed knives—to frolic on the brink of a rapid torrent—or dance around a pit’s mouth? Would I permit them to eat deadly berries—or to put a cup of poison to their tender lips? However indulgent, would I allow them to disobey my commands? And if they labored under any disease which threatened their precious life, what pains or expenses would I spare to procure them relief? If assured that a physician lived somewhere, who could heal them without fail—would I not send to the uttermost corner of the land? would I not travel to the ends of earth?

But, hear me, O parents! If our concern for our children ends only with their bodies—we are **monsters of cruelty!** Would we pluck them from fire and water—and yet permit them to plunge into the fire of hell, and lie under the billows of Jehovah’s wrath? Will we snatch from them sword, pistol or knife—and allow them to wound themselves to the very soul, with sin? Will we chastise their disobedience to us—and wink at their spitting in the very face of God, by open acts of sin? Are we fond to have them educated and well-bred—and yet let them live in the neglect of prayer, which is the highest disrespect that can be put on the Author of our being?

In a word, is this the sum of our kindness, is this the height of our concern for our dear children—to see them happy in time, flourishing in the affairs of this life—though they end up being miserable beyond description through eternity itself? Will their bodily pain excite our sympathy, and will we do all in our power to have their diseases healed—and yet have no concern that their souls pine under sin, and they suffer all the pangs of hell? Will we not bring them in our prayers, to the Physician of souls, to the Savior of sinners?

I have but one request for all of my children, and that is—that they may fear and serve God here—and enjoy him forever! No matter though they sweat for their daily bread—only let them feed on the hidden manna! Let them toil and spin for their apparel—but let them be covered in Christ’s righteousness! How would I count my house renowned, and my family ennobled, if there sprang from it—not wealthy princes or kings, (let potsherds of the earth strive for such earthly vanities)—but pillars for the temple of God in glory—who shall dwell in the presence of the King of kings—when time is no more!

**“O my soul. I am pained in my very heart.”  
God is complaining here. “My people have not known Me.”  
He says that His people are foolish, and the essence  
of their foolishness is that they do not know Him!**

# When God Complained

*by Don Kistler*

**F**or us to understand God, He must speak to us in anthropomorphic terms. When He speaks to us of anguish, He must explain it in a way that we can understand. In Jeremiah 4:19-22, we have God crying out as if He were a human being: “O my soul. I am pained in my very heart.” God is complaining here. “My people have not known Me.” He says that His people are foolish, and the essence of their foolishness is that they do not know Him! It is also strongly stated in this passage that the source of all their problems was their ignorance of their God. Much is made of what happens in Acts, when Paul says that he saw the shrine to “the unknown God,” but it is to be feared that this passage describes many so-called Christian churches in our day, not just the heathen temple in Paul’s day!

In a recent World magazine article on the top 100 selling “Christian” books, only 4 of them were remotely about God, Christ, or salvation—and that is being extremely charitable! You can hear God evaluating the state of affairs today: “My people know financial concepts; they know love languages; they know pop-psychology; they know how to express their ‘needs’ to each other; they know how to give hugs to women; they know how to deliver themselves from demons, how to loose themselves from oppression, how to take weight off, how to make decisions, how to bind Satan, how to claim this and that,

how to cast out demons. They know a thousand peripheral things, but they do not know Me!”

We seem interested in the gifts, just not the Giver. We are more interested in what God can do for us than



**We are more interested in what  
God can do for us than in Who He is  
in Himself... “If we only love God  
for what He can do for us,  
we really only love ourselves.”**

in Who He is in Himself. Jonathan Edwards once said quite accurately, “If we only love God for what He can do for us, we really only love ourselves.” The amazing thing is that God has revealed so much of Himself to us,



not only in His Word, but in His very creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God,” said the psalmist. But we study astronomy without seeing the wonder of the God who makes it all so amazing!

God has revealed Himself in His Word over and over again. But we see it as a self-help manual rather than as God’s revelation of Himself. There is much in the Scripture that can help us, but the focus of Scripture is not us and our problems, but God and His glory!

God reveals Himself and His character in His names. Each of His names reveals something of His character. His activity reveals something of His character. We are told: “He made known his ways to Moses, and his acts to the sons of Israel” (Psalm 103:7).

The narratives of Scripture tell us how God does things, and from that we can deduce much of His character. But we do not seem to be very interested in the character of God, just the “goodies” of God. Yet we are commanded to “grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.” We are commanded to love God with all of our mind. The knowledge of God is so much an issue that God summarizes all of eternal life with these words: “For this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

Eternal life is knowing God and Christ. It is knowing about them as much as it is knowing them. You wouldn’t give two cents for anyone who said they wanted a relationship with you, but weren’t interested in who you were! And neither does God. Compare the attitude of most professing believers today with that of Paul, who declared, “I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” What a contrast! Hosea says this on God’s behalf, “Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the

LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land” (Hosea 4:1).

There is no truth, and there is no mercy in the land. Why not? Because there is no knowledge of God in the land. These are inseparable items. Only to the degree that there is knowledge of God in the land will there be truth

or mercy. Second Peter 1:2 says that grace and peace would be multiplied to us through the knowledge of God. In fact, “everything that pertains to life and godliness comes through the true knowledge of him who has called us” (2 Peter 1:3).

Through the true knowledge of God, which presupposes that there is a false knowledge, comes “everything” that has anything to do with life or godliness. Physical life and spiritual life all have the true knowledge of God as their source, and everything that has anything to do with either of those two things! Is it any wonder then that God says His people are foolish for not knowing Him?

The Hebrew there carries with it the idea that the people are not just silly, but they are morally deficient; and then He adds that they have no understanding. They are totally ignorant of doing that which is pleasing to God. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they do not know. The idea of foolish or stupid here also carries with it an obvious arrogance; they are not only foolish, they are not only ignorant, they are

not only stupid, but they are arrogant in their ignorance, which calls to mind the words of Paul: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools!” Look at all that God has done to reveal Himself, and how aggressively man has rejected that knowledge. Paul tells us that God has put the knowledge of Himself within



**Through the true knowledge of God... comes “everything” that has anything to do with life or godliness. Is it any wonder then that God says His people are foolish for not knowing Him? “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools!”**

*continued on page 27*



# BEWARE OF THE SCRIBES AND THE PHARISEES!

*Faith and works as seen by early Anabaptist martyr, Michael Sattler, in 1527*

## Pharisees

**T**herefore, when one speaks of justification through Christ, one must also speak of that faith, which cannot be without works of repentance—yea not without love, which is an anointing. For such an anointed faith, which is given to one from the resurrection of the dead, is the only Christian Faith, and is reckoned unto righteousness (Rom. 4).

Again, when one speaks of works, one must preach not, after the manner of the work-righteousness, the works of the law but the works of faith. That is a turning away from works, creatures, and your own self, through faith in Christ the crucified one. Not as what man can do *from himself*—but what he really can do in the power of faith. Which thereby are not man's works but God's since the *willing and the ability* to turn to God are not of man but the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Who turns aside neither to the works righteous who:

- Promised blessedness or the forgiveness of sins, through work done without faith, i.e., through that which, in one's works one thinks is one's own; thus they turn aside to the left and lead others that way,
- Preaching works in such a way that they think no more of faith, and which neither to see nor to hear anything about faith, that is necessary to salvation, so that all their works are lime plums, i.e., ceremonies without faith.

**Verily, blessed be he  
who remains on the  
middle path.**



## Scribes

Nor to the side of the scribes, who although they have forsaken works, they turn aside to the right, and teach in the name of the “gospel” a faith without works, and take the poor obedient Christ who:

- Had no place to lay His head (Luke 9)
- Who speaks without complaint or self defense, (Luke 22),
- [Who said] “nevertheless, Father, not my will but thy will be done”

[These scribes] take Him as their satisfaction, but will not hear what He says:

- “Come, follow me” (Luke 9).
- “He who does not forsake all that he possesses, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14).
- “He who would follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8).

Yes, the Father must also be a fanatic to them, when He says, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I take satisfaction; hear Him.” They make of Christ, after His humanity, what the pope has made out of the saints, namely a golden calf. Following the precedent of the Jews, that is they confess Christ as the son of David and then deny Him, yea, call Him a fanatic, since God’s Word and Son was sent into the world, to manifest the obedience or righteousness of His Father not alone in words but also in works, so that all who would believe in Him should not perish in their death, but be delivered from death.

All of their preaching and fruits are like prickly thistles. They say much about faith and yet know neither what Christ nor faith is. They reject works without faith in order to raise up faith without works. □

*continued from  
page 25,  
When God Complained,  
by Don Kistler*

every man, so that all men are without excuse. Paul says that God’s invisible attributes are clearly seen. He then explains that ignorance of God is a conscious choice that men have made. He says, “Though they knew God, they would not have God in their thoughts.” Now, before you can not have God in your thoughts, you must have God in your thoughts.

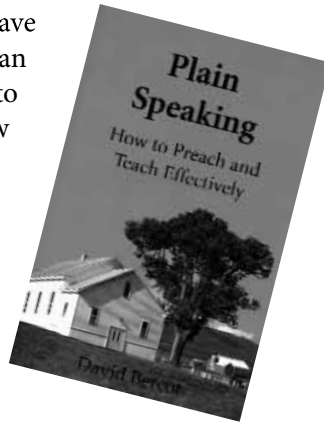
So atheism is a conscious choice on the part of wicked men to eliminate the knowledge of God from their consciousness. Atheism is not an intellectual thing; it’s a moral thing! Repeatedly God says, “They have rejected knowledge.” We don’t know God because it’s not important to us to do so. It is far more important to us to know ourselves than to know God. But it is a conscious choice, and every last one of us is without excuse.

Our problem is self-induced and our wounds are self-inflicted. What are we to do? We are to “press on to know the Lord.” We must confess the sin of self-imposed ignorance and turn from it. And then we must give ourselves to know not just facts about God, but the God of the facts. How does He think? How does He act? Why does He act that way? What does that tell me about His nature and character? Let us be determined to know God, for this is eternal life. □



# Plain Speaking

Most professing Christians today have the mistaken notion that a man needs to go to seminary in order to be an effective preacher. However, the New Testament Christians had no seminaries. Yet, they raised up effective preachers and teachers all the same. As David Bercot argues in his most recent book, *Plain Speaking*, the Holy Spirit can use ordinary Christian men today to preach and teach—just as He did back in the first century.



Bercot attends a church that has no seminary-trained ministers, just as do many of our readers. Yet Bercot believes that the quality of preaching in churches like ours should not be one bit inferior to that of conventional churches with professionally trained ministers. If anything, it should be better.

However, if we are honest, I think we would all have to admit that too often this isn't the case. We've all heard many excellent sermons and devotionals in our churches. But, we have also heard many rambling messages with no clear theme or goal, delivered in unenthusiastic, monotone voices.

Bercot argues that only three things are needed for a man to be an effective preacher:

- 1 The anointing of the Holy Spirit
- 2 The *desire* to learn to preach
- 3 Some basic teaching in how to prepare and deliver an effective message.

The purpose of *Plain Speaking* is to help provide that requisite basic teaching in how to prepare and deliver effective sermons and devotionals.

Bercot's book primarily focuses on the *practical* aspects of preaching and teaching. But Bercot makes it clear that the functional steps to becoming an effective speaker are secondary to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life as a Christian and as a speaker. You can master

the practical aspects of public speaking, but without the power of God, you won't be an effective preacher.

Bercot encourages the reader to make preaching a constant subject of heartfelt prayer. He calls on men everywhere to fall on their faces before God and implore Him to enable us to master each of the basic components of preaching.

## Is It “Unspiritual” to Train?

Bercot discusses the fact that some Christians have the notion that it is somehow “unspiritual” to train as preachers and teachers. They imagine that reliance on the Holy Spirit means we don't need any further training to become effective preachers.

But was that the approach Jesus took? Not at all. He selected his twelve apostles near the beginning of His ministry and personally taught and trained them for years before He turned the leadership of the church over to them. He sent them out on preaching trips so that they could gain experience. He gave them lengthy, specific instructions when He sent them out, and He received their feedback when they returned (Matt. 10). His apostles had *both* the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the needed training.

Dependence on God does not mean that we Christians do nothing ourselves. We depend upon God for our food and sustenance. But that doesn't mean we don't have to work for our needs. Nor does it mean that we refuse to receive training in our various trades. Likewise, dependence on the Holy Spirit for our preaching doesn't negate the need for training.

It's similar to David's combat with Goliath. David was a man of valor who was mighty in the Spirit of God. When he went out in faith to fight Goliath, he was depending upon the power of God, not his own strength. Yet, he didn't just rush out to confront Goliath unarmed, hoping maybe that God would strike Goliath dead with a lightning bolt or something. Rather, he armed himself

with a sling, a weapon that he had mastered through years of practice.

As soldiers of God, we are often confronted with the giants of our age. We must depend upon the power of the Spirit to vanquish these giants. But like David, we should never fight the enemy unarmed. One of our primary weapons is our preaching. Let's be sure that we master this weapon as well as David mastered the use of his sling.

## The Basics of Preaching

Much of *Plain Speaking* sets forth the nuts and bolts of preaching and teaching. Bercot divides his time almost equally between the mechanics of *preparing* a mes-

sage and the mechanics of *delivering* a message. There are review questions at the end of each chapter, making the book ideal to use in a church school or home school setting. Some of the topics he covers are:

- Having a goal
- How to find illustrations
- Organizing your material
- Learning to speak from an outline
- Maintaining eye contact with your listeners
- Speaking with enthusiasm
- Handling speaker's fright
- Prophetic preaching
- Listeners' pet peeves



<b>Plain Speaking is available from:</b>	<b>Scroll Publishing Co.</b>	<b>Home Fires Publishers</b>
<i>Class discounts on multiple copies are available.</i>	PO Box 41 Amberson, PA 17210 (717) 349-7033	PO Box 256 Reamstown, PA 17567 <a href="http://www.homefirespub.com">www.homefirespub.com</a>

### 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2008 Financial Report

*Due to near-record low donations in June, along with expenses that were higher than average, the financial resources of the Tape Ministry and "The Heartbeat of the Remnant" have again been depleted. We appreciate your prayers and the financial support that has allowed us to offer our materials free of charge. Your continued support is appreciated.*

—God Bless You!

*The Heartbeat of*  
  
**The Remnant**



*Charity Ministries*  
[www.charityministries.org](http://www.charityministries.org)  
 A Ministry of Charity Christian Fellowship  
 and Ephrata Christian Fellowship

**04/01/08 Beginning Balance**      **\$14,977.92**

**Receipts**

Tape Ministry Donations	\$26,712.77
Remnant Subscription Donations	\$6,882.90
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$33,595.67</b>

**Disbursements**

UPS & Postage	\$4,072.27
Tapes, Albums, CD's & Labels	\$12,501.04
Equipment & Software Purchases	\$231.32
Equipment Maint & Repairs	\$0.00
Mailing & Office Supplies	\$341.66
Rent	\$2,250.00
Telephone	\$745.04
Website Development & Maintenance	\$1,561.63
Building Improvements	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	\$286.70
Payroll Expense	\$20,000.01
Books & Catalogs	\$0.00
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$5,940.83
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$47,930.50</b>

**06/30/08 Ending Balance**      **\$643.09**

**Difference**      **-\$14,334.83**

# THE PRAYER MEETING IS DEAD!

by Greg Gordon

*A Call For Renewed Dependence Upon Apostolic Prayer*

## APOSTOLIC PRAYING

As we look to the biblical account of the book of Acts we see the striking theme of prayer throughout its testimony. We see in it apostolic prayer that depends on God, that is desperate before God. The Church was founded in prayer; it began at a prayer meeting in the upper room in Jerusalem. The Church began in prayer, was sustained in prayer and continues in prayer to this day. If a people are not praying they are straying. If prayer is not paramount and prominent then we are paralyzed and powerless. “We live, move and have our being in God”, in communion and prayer with God. When we begin to see a drift from the success of the book of Acts in our modern day Church attempts we will also see a straying from this foundational principle of prayer.

There was prayer with unity: “these all continued with one accord.” There was praying with the Spirit: “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” There was praying with godly fear: “fear came upon every soul.” They prayed daily: “they continued daily with one accord.” They prayed with thanksgiving: “Praising God.” Their prayers were answered: “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” They prayed with authority: “but such as I have I give thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” They prayed in uni-

son: “they lifted up their voice to God with one accord.” They prayed with expectation: “grant unto thy servants.” They prayed with belief: “and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul.” They prayed continually: “we will give ourselves continually to prayer.” They prayed desperately: “as they stoned Stephen, calling upon God.”

Oh to realize and understand that the Church of God is a praying Church. Prayer is everything: without it we fail. Leonard Ravenhill spoke to this situation in the modern day Church in these words: “The ugly fact is that altar fires are either out or burning very low. The prayer meeting is dead or dying. By our attitude to prayer we tell God that what was begun in the Spirit we can finish in the flesh.” Never has the most important work been left to so few. There needs to be a reviving of some aspects of prayer in the Church in our day, namely, praying with urgency, prayer that is effectual and to pray persistently. All of such characterize the spirit of prayer found upon the apostolic believers in the book of Acts.

## URGENT PRAYER

We are to pray with a sense urgency. God has reminded me of a quote from a book by Chuck Smith which says: “Today, we are living in desperate times. Yet, the Church is not desperate before God in prayer.”

If anyone looks at the state of the world and of our lives in the light of Scripture and church history there definitely is something wrong. We are not living with a sense of urgency for the lost, for our lives to be radically devoted to God, and for God's kingdom to come to this earth. When our Lord Jesus prayed the words: "Thy Kingdom come," they were not words that were placid, but rather they were a fervent desiring of this thing to actually happen, and for the words just prayed to actually move that reality closer.

Prior to the Welsh revival outbreak in 1904 God was moving and speaking to many hearts. One of those hearts was of Rev. Jenkins in Wales. Here is an account of this preacher: "The Rev. Joseph Jenkins had been deeply concerned about the lack of anointing in his own preaching, which compelled him to desperately seek a deeper life in Christ. Andrew Murray's book, 'With Christ in the School of Prayer' came into his possession and moved him greatly at this time. He became increasingly burdened by the indifference among the Christians around him and the apathy of the young people in his own church. He exhorted them earnestly to obey the Spirit." This preacher caught the urgency of the hour and condition of the church. This burden and urgency needs to have its outlet in prayer, praying earnestly for the moving of God's spirit.

This hunger to pray for God's working in our hearts and in the lives of others really needs to be practiced. Personally the Lord has given me these two prayers as my own heart's cry for this reality to happen: "Teach us to be praying men," and the prayer, "Kindle the altar of prayer again, Lord." Oh for a praying church, urgent to see God move on behalf of man. "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none." (Ezekiel 22:30). The apostles had a sense of urgency in their prayers. They experienced distresses, troubles, persecutions, yet they prayed with urgency to God. They prayed believing it was the last hour and the night was fast coming upon them. Do you sense the urgency of the hour?

## EFFECTUAL PRAYER

We are to pray believing that it is effectual. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Does that

smart? Are you seeing answers to prayer? or are you not "diligently" seeking Him? Jesus gives the edict out to his disciples, "Seek, knock, ask and ye shall!" Not you might, but "ye shall." What comfort that gives us that we serve a God that if we call out to Him, He will hear and answer. God is waiting for His church to call upon Him with faith, believing that He will answer and effectually work on behalf of the prayers of the church. God has not left the church to work on its own but rather that we are



**"The ugly fact is that altar fires are either out or burning very low. The prayer meeting is dead or dying. By our attitude to prayer we tell God that what was begun in the Spirit we can finish in the flesh." ~Leonard Ravenhill**

to depend wholly on Him and that dependence is to be through the agent of prayer in the life of the church.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." In simple vernacular it was said that Elijah was just like us in every aspect and if we pray we can have the same results as Elijah. Notice that the prayers of the righteous man availeth much, not the prayers of the backslidden Christian or the unbeliever. Praying "fervently" shows to God that the prayers and things prayed for matter to us and that we believe they can be answered. To show affection and emotion in prayer is somewhat required if we are

looking to this text as our guide-map to effectual prayer. Ah, for one hundred praying Elijahs again to shake a city for God to be glorified. Are we just seeking for prayer that avails or “avails much”? Aren’t we criminal, brethren, having such a small conception of what God can and wants to do in our generation? Oh Lord, allow our praying to be effectual!

## PERSISTENT PRAYER

We are to pray persistently. The radically sold out brother Singh in India declared many years ago to a sleepy church: “Some people become tired at the end of ten minutes or half an hour of prayer. What will they do when they have to spend eternity in the presence of God? We must begin the habit here and become used to being with God.” The Church of God was making persistent petitions to God on behalf of the Apostle Peter who was in jail. The Scriptures are recorded as saying: “but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.” All-night prayer meeting to God for their beloved pastor! Not relenting till God moves and does the miraculous. Our prayers are not near to these. When is the last time you heard of a group of people covenanting to pray till they see God answer? Oh for persistent praying, for Holy Ghost men filled with a holy stubborn persistence.

How much depends on this type of prayer and how lost it seems amongst us! Hear the saintly Samuel Brengle on this much needed type of prayer: “The great battles, the battles that decide our destiny and the destiny of generations yet unborn, are not fought on public platforms, but in the lonely hours of the night and in moments of agony. All great soul-winners have been men of much and mighty prayer, and all great revivals have been preceded and carried out by persevering, prevailing knee-work in the closet.” Oh, dear reader, will you answer this call to “work”? Yes prayer is work and only those that are willing to soil their knees will be in the apostolic category with God. Consider the tradition of

the Apostle James praying till his knees were like camels with massive calluses and lumps. Oh he ruined his knees for God, he died to his ambitions to be the next sport athlete or marathon runner. He ran on his knees in prayer counting the cost.

## THE SACRIFICE OF TIME

John Mott gave this challenge before a student convention: “The men that will change the colleges and seminaries here represented are the men that will spend the most time alone with God... It takes time for the fires to burn. It takes time for God to draw near and for us to know that He is there. It takes time to assimilate His truth. You ask me, How much time? I do not know. I know it means time enough to forget time.” Are we going to count

this cost or are we so busy with the things of the world that we cannot afford the time for God? Leonard Ravenhill stated in his old age: “The one thing I know I can say is I gave God my time.” Hear the admonition from the scholarly Horatius Bonar: “Up, then, with speed, and work; Fling ease and self away—This is no time for thee to sleep—Up, watch, and work, and pray!”

“A young man in Bible school offered to help David Wilkerson years ago when he was ministering on the streets of New York City. Wilkerson asked him how much time he spent in prayer. The young student estimated about 20 minutes a day. Wilkerson told him, “Go back, young man. Go back for a month and pray two hours a day, every day for 30 days. When you’ve done that, come back. Come back, and I might consider turning you loose on the streets where there

is murder, rape, violence and danger...If I sent you out now on 20 minutes a day, I’d be sending a soldier into battle without any weapons, and you would get killed.” And herein is where the reading stops and we “go forward on our knees.” May God give each one that reads this a sense of the divine responsibility to pray aright and fully as that which pleases God. Apostolic praying needs to be our possession in these terrible days. □



**When is the last time you heard of a group of people covenanting to pray till they see God answer? Oh for persistent praying, for Holy Ghost men filled with a holy stubborn persistence.**





# Zwingli —Reformer

*by Glendon Fox*

In a previous study of the Reformation in Switzerland, we looked at the birth of the Anabaptist movement, and the Schleitheim confession. Remaining was the question as to how fellow-Christians could become so intensely alienated that they would actually resort to murder in an attempt to resolve the issue. This has led me to a study of the life of Huldrych Zwingli. I do not want to make him the scapegoat for the dissension, but rather try to learn from his victories and his failures.

Huldrych Zwingli was born on January 1, 1484 in Wildhaus, Switzerland to a family of farmers. His father was the local magistrate. Zwingli was a scholarly young man, and his father and uncle saw that he was given a good education in the nearby village of Bern. His father sent him to Vienna to finish his studies after several Dominican monks from Bern attempted to persuade him to join their order. He graduated with a Master of Arts degree in 1506.

After graduating, he served ten years as the pastor of the church at Glarus. Zwingli became involved in politics, solidly on the pope's side, and even served as chaplain in the military for several mercenary campaigns, as Glarus seemed to be a center for recruiting these "hired" troops. However, the exposure to the horrors of war convinced him that the mercenary system was immoral, unless the troops were being hired by the pope. His fiery denunciations of this trade across the pulpit was not received very well from the members of his parish who were involved. As the political atmosphere in Glarus turned against the pope and in favor of the French, Zwingli, the papal politician, moved to Einsiedeln.

Zwingli's travel as chaplain brought him in contact with churches in other areas. He realized they taught and practiced some things differently than what his church fathers had taught him. He continued with his priestly

duties at Einseldeln, devoting himself to much study. As he studied church history, he realized that many traditions and superstitions had crept into the church. The church in his day was quite different than the church he was reading about several hundred years earlier. Through his studies, he became convinced that the Bible was the ultimate and only source of truth.

(This may seem like a very obvious fact to us, but it was revolutionary in his time. The writings of the church fathers had become the source of church doctrine in his day, and the Bible was considered hardly relevant anymore. But let us be careful in our condemnation of these poor souls. It is human nature to preach the portions of Scripture that agree with our beliefs, and ignore, in the pretense of lack of understanding, the many verses of Scripture that are in opposition to our practices.)

Zwingli did the right thing. He took the Word of God and read it through again and again. It is said that he knew the letters of Paul by heart. And as he read, and studied and prayed, God's Word slowly became alive to him. He realized that he was a sinner before an almighty God, he realized that all the ceremonies and religious observances and all his good works could not save him, and he realized that it is only when we give up our own feeble efforts, and place our trust in the mercy and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we can find salvation and a true relationship with God our Father.

Yet Zwingli found it quite difficult to completely die to his flesh. While priests were required to take a vow of celibacy, the immorality of the clergy was so rampant that it was considered normal and even unavoidable for priests to behave promiscuously. Sadly, Zwingli was no different. He justified himself by considering it a small thing and something all men struggle with. Then, just as now, impurity in act or thought, was taken lightly. But God does not take it lightly. Jesus clearly said that no adulterer will enter into heaven. And as always, when a man falls into impurity, his sense of spiritual discernment is blurred. However, God is a patient God, and for quite some time Zwingli kept right on preaching and ministering and to all observers everything was just fine.

People soon noticed the power in Zwingli's preaching and writing, and he was invited to Zurich to become the stipendiary priest. On his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday he preached his first sermon in Zurich. He announced, to everyone's surprise, that he would be abandoning the practice of teaching an assigned lesson for each particular Sunday. He began reading and expounding the Bible, chapter by chapter, beginning in the book of Matthew. This was revolutionary! Despite the wide-spread belief that if he or his parishioners studied the Bible too much they would

become deceived, Zwingli taught from the words of Jesus, while the other priests were preaching from the writings of the pope and church fathers.

He boldly preached against moral corruption, laziness, and high living, and had no qualms about denouncing corrupt individuals from the pulpit. He rejected the veneration of saints and relics, questioned the divine institution of tithing, and asserted that unbaptised children were not damned. While some opposed him for questioning the teaching of Rome, most of the common people loved his teaching because they were starved for truth, and the rulers loved him because his teaching gave them more power and freedom from Rome.

In August 1519, the bubonic plague struck Zurich. The plague was so severe that one in four people died. Everyone that could afford to evacuate did so, but Zwingli remained in the city and continued his pastoral duties, visiting and ministering to the sick and dying. In September he also caught the disease and nearly died. While he was ill, he penned the poem "Pestlied". The last verses read,

*Thy purpose fulfill:  
Nothing can be too severe for me.  
I am thy vessel,  
for you to make whole or break to pieces  
Since if you take hence  
My spirit from this earth,  
You do it so that it will not grow evil,  
And will not mar  
The pious lives of others.*

In those early days in Zurich, Zwingli would often meet together with a group of his zealous young followers. He challenged them not to believe or teach anything that they could not back up with Scripture. They talked about what the church must have been like in the book of Acts. A church made up of only born-again believers who were sincere in living a holy life, following the teachings of Jesus literally.

The bold teachings of Zwingli soon found their way to the church rulers, and Zwingli was called before the city council. In this debate, and in the next several to follow, Zwingli was allowed to continue to preach from the Bible as he saw fit, but they were not willing to act on many of his proposals so quickly. Because he viewed the city council as the proper authority of the church, and being a logical and intelligent man, he reasoned that the best way to bring about change was to be patient and work with the church.

The radical, left-wing group of the Reformers, later known as the Anabaptists, was increasingly alarmed by how much Zwingli was willing to compromise with the city council for the sake of keeping peace. How could he continue serving communion to those who did not even know what it meant to be born again? How could he allow idolatrous practices to continue in the church just because the council did not want to stir things up too much? And most of all, how could the Bride of Christ be wed to the ungodly civil rulers? These young radicals believed that to tolerate or participate in anything that contradicted the Word of God was to deny Jesus. They did not reason things out or ask all the what-ifs; they just stepped out and did what they believed to be right regardless of the cost.

It was painful to Zwingli to see these young men blatantly turning their backs on his leadership. It seemed they did not appreciate all the time and effort of the past several years he had put into teaching them. They were stubborn and rebellious, he decided, and would have to be taught a lesson.

Zwingli also recognized the danger this outspoken, motley group posed to his movement. Their bold, reckless actions could cause the whole movement to be annihilated just as the Donatists years earlier. If they were allowed to spread their doctrine of a separate church and state government, the authority of the city council could be threatened. He was sure the government of Zurich, much less the Catholic states around them, would never tolerate reform of this sort. He realized that if he were to keep his position as leader of the church in Zurich, he would have to distance himself from these radicals.

He began his censure of this little group by severely reprimanding them from the pulpit. He portrayed them as proud, pernicious troublemakers, sons of Satan. The Radicals retorted back with accusations equally severe. The lines had been drawn and the battle had begun. Even though Zwingli admitted he agreed with them on all

major doctrines such as salvation through faith in Christ (although the Radicals would have put more emphasis on a clear new birth experience), it was their divisive ideas of distinguishing between the true believer and the unsaved that could not be tolerated.

Zwingli then requested a public debate with the Radicals. The city council sided with Zwingli, but these young men could not be swayed. Zwingli decided that these men must be forced to submit. But to his dismay, imprisonment, fines and banishment from the city only seemed to incite these men to spread their ideas more. In desperation, he decided that it were better for a few men to die rather than for many to be led astray by their doctrines. But as the streets of Europe ran with the blood of the Anabaptists, as they were now called, this despised and mistreated church continued to grow.

But the Anabaptists were not the only ones to

cause Zwingli trouble during this time. When Zwingli's reformation caused the canton of Zurich to withdraw from the Roman Catholic diocese and abandon many church traditions, five cantons surrounding Zurich created a league to defend themselves from Zwingli and his followers. A few cantons also formed a league with Zurich. In 1529, a reformed pastor was captured in one of the

**These young radicals believed that to tolerate or participate in anything that contradicted the Word of God was to deny Jesus. They did not reason things out or ask all the what-ifs; they just stepped out and did what they believed to be right regardless of the cost.**

Catholic states and was executed. An infuriated Zwingli declared war on the five states. A battle was narrowly averted due to the intervention of Hans Aebli, who pled for an armistice. However, the armistice did little to bring peace to either side.

On October 9, 1531, the five Catholic states declared war on Zurich.

Zwingli and his men rushed out to battle, and in a battle that lasted less than an hour suffered an awful defeat. Zwingli and many of his co-pastors were among the 500 men slain that day. And so the words of Jesus were fulfilled, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." □

*The Heartbeat of*  
**The Remnant**

**Charity Christian Fellowship**  
PUBLICATION OFFICE  
400 W Main St Ste 1 • Ephrata, PA 17522

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit  
US Postage  
PAID  
Ephrata, PA  
Permit #105

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me after Thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.*

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Search me and try me, Master, today!  
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now, as in Thy presence humbly I bow.*

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Wounded and weary, help me, I pray!  
Power, all power, surely is Thine! Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.*

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Hold o'er my being absolute sway!  
Fill with Thy Spirit 'till all shall see Christ only, always, living in me.*