



The Remnant

You must
stop examining
spiritual truths
like dry bones!
You must break
open the bones
and take in the
life-giving marrow.

-Sundar Singh



The Remnant

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C O N T E N T S

- 3 FROM THE EDITOR
- 4 SOCIAL NETWORKING -
A BLESSING OR A CURSE?
- 9 TOOL? OR TOY?
- 10 BONDAGE IN FREEDOM
- 13 THE CHRISTIAN'S BILL OF RIGHTS
- 14 AS JESUS LOVED
- 15 TRUE PATRIOTISM
- 16 FACE THE BATTLE SINGING
- 18 MADE ALIVE BY THE BLOOD!
- 21 DID YOU KNOW?
- 23 THE SISTERS' CORNER -
A SERVANT'S ROLE
- 28 "YOU WON'T FIND THOSE
HERE ..."
- 30 SEEDS OF THE KINGDOM
- 33 THE BOOK SHELF -
ONLY A SERVANT
- 34 GOD'S PEOPLE KEEP SINGING -
ODE TO THE KING

From the Editor

I heard at work last month that the President of the United States, Barack Obama, was recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Many people were shocked by the news; especially when they found out that the nominations for the award concluded only three months after he became President. Many asked, “So what did he actually do to merit an award of bringing peace to the world?” I heard that someone in the news replied that he won simply because he was not ex-president George Bush!



Finally, the crew at the Nobel Peace Prize office said that it was because Barack Obama, in such a short time, changed the “attitude” of the world into one of “hope.”

As a card-carrying member (spiritually speaking) of the Kingdom of God, I don’t take part in American politics and elections. Additionally, I like to show respect and even pray for them “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” (2 Ti. 2:2) So in some ways, I guess I should be happy that the President won this award. But it concerns me.

There are two things about this “spirit of world peace” that concerns me. First of all, I can’t help but be concerned when the world talks about “global peace.” I’m reminded of the superficial peace gained in Judah

during the time of Jeremiah. “They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.” (Je. 6:14) The other thing about this is that it’s a bit of a global thermometer to the way they feel about the fighting, poverty, and wars of the last century. The way I see it, if a leader need only to say the word “hope” and the whole world collectively cheers, what does that say about the desperate hunger of a people emaciated from a spiritual diet of death and destruction. Oh brethren, it is time for the true message of hope—from the eternal Prince of Peace—to feed this hunger! It’s the only thing that will.

Locally here, Mike Atnip and his family made it safely into town, and he has been busy at work here on *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*. He told me a few days ago that that he was volunteering to help bring the magazine back to its former bi-monthly status. I took him up on his offer. So pray for us as we endeavor to follow the Spirit of God in what we should say and what we should print. It is our prayer that you will be richly blessed by this issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*.



~Dean Taylor

Social Networking:



A Blessing or a Curse?

Aaron Hurst

Looking for ... our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Titus 2:13-14

The Christian life is not just a little bit of “receiving Jesus as my Savior,” and then going on to live my own life the way I want. It is being delivered from—separated from—all iniquity and from “*this present evil world*” and the spirit of the age of this present evil world. Glory to God!

I believe in the doctrine of separation; but we had better get it straight. We must have separation “unto God” first, or we will get all confused in trying to work out our being separated from the world. If we do it in man’s wisdom, our separation will come out weird. Then those around us will say, “Those people are weird, and what they are doing in the name of Christ does not make any sense.” And that is sad, but this happens sometimes.

But I want to hasten to say that in the day we live in, when we are separated unto God—in a society that is rejecting God—we are weird in their eyes! And we are indeed peculiar in that sense of the word. The world says, “You people look like you came from another century.” Well, praise God! We DO belong to another kingdom! And we have another king, and His name is Jesus! And we live by His law, and we love His law, and His commandments are not grievous. Rather, they are joyous, and a blessing, because God has hid-

den in those commandments, “... *to do thee good.*” (De. 8:16) Oh, what a joy to be a child of God!

Let’s consider, first of all, the following words, which speak to me as a minister:

Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. (Ez. 33:1-7)

“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.” (He. 13:17)

I want to be, as it were, a father in this article. Pull up a chair, and let’s just have a little “fireside chat.” Hopefully we can gain some wisdom from the Word of God, and look at our present day and age and make some applications, so that we may be delivered from the snare of the devil.

Today we live in a world where there are many things clamoring for our attention, in a society where there is a lot of “noise.” Many things cry for our attention, and the advertisements are getting bolder. The “noise” level is rising, demanding our attention, trying to move us away from the simplicity of the Gospel. The song says it well,

*My soul be on thy guard,
Ten thousand foes arise,
The hosts of sin are pressing hard,
To draw thee from the skies.*

Perhaps you are saying, “OK, it says ‘the hosts of sin.’” Well then, let me speak plainly: “The hosts of *entertainment* are pressing hard.” Or, “the hosts of *pleasure*.” Or, it could be summed up by saying, “the hosts of *other things*.” Today, we could also say that the number has increased from when the hymn-writer penned the words. We could easily say, “My soul be on thy guard, a hundred million foes arise ...”

There are literally millions of websites and multitudes of social networks, all of them clamoring for our attention. What I see as the greatest danger for the child of God is the call of these things for the control of our mind, thoughts, and emotions—in short, our heart. They are striving to gain the upper hand of our meditations.

I am jealous over you, brethren, with a godly jealousy. “*I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*” Now, there may not be a lot of evil in some of the things I will be addressing, although I truly

believe that there is an almost inherent evil in certain cases. And the bottom line is, anything is very evil that draws us away from a sincere, wholehearted devotion to Christ. The devil is very subtle. He will not come to throw a bunch of things in our face and say, “I want you to forget God, and I want you to lose your fervor for the Lord Jesus.”

We would respond, “No way!!”

But he is more astute than that, and holds forth to us something that can seem to be a comfort, joy, or blessing. We look at it and say, “Oh wow!” We are enamored and amused and curious about all this new technology.

I want to warn us and exhort us. I have had the privilege of hearing some testimonies of people who have “been there, done that,” but who are now leaving those things behind and are conforming their life to the example of Christ. It would do us well to sit up and take notice, and not remain ignorant and naive and say, “Wow ... all these new things! I can connect with everybody, everywhere. I can have all kinds of interaction and relationships!”



But he is more astute than that, and holds forth to us something that can seem to be a comfort, joy, or blessing.

Well, some people I know who have gotten saved have said, “This thing has got to go. My Facebook page, my MySpace page—I now belong to Jesus!” So much so, that they felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit when they tried to log back on. They felt within themselves, “If I am going to be a sold-out servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, I have to lighten my load. I must lay aside the things that beset me and hinder me in my walk with Jesus.”

2 Timothy 3 starts off with, “*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves ...*” A lot of social networking and blogging is focused on whom? Me! I! The way it works is that you set up *your* personal profile, who *I* am, what *my* personal hobbies are, what *my* interests are, what music *I* listen too, what videos *I* am watching, what activities *I* enjoy. It is essentially all about *me, myself, and I*. “*Men shall be lovers of their own selves*”, just like the Bible says.

In other words, they will be utterly self-centered in the last days. This is exactly opposite and diametrically opposed to the life of a Christian, who is to deny himself and take up the cross and follow Jesus. This whole thing goes straight against a holy life and robs us of what belongs to God. Psalm 1:1 starts off by saying, “*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.*” I am telling you, there is a lot of ungodly counsel in the social networks! Those places are full of people who do not love Jesus, and people who are deceived and who teach another gospel and another Jesus.

On these networks, you can be the “cool dude” and flow with the “in” crowd, and have barrels of fun. Then add, “Oh, by the way, I am a Christian.”

This whole thing is more subtle than if it were straight poison. The best way to kill someone slyly is not to give him a whole cupful of straight poison. You only put about three percent into his juice, hiding it so that he cannot smell it nor taste it. Then when he unsuspectingly drinks of it, the poison does its sinister deed. And so that old serpent the devil is inserting his poison into a lot of things that are presumed to be good.

And sad to say, a lot of mainstream “Christianity” is drinking it. Then we wonder why we are so anemic in our walk with God, and why we do not see more of the glory and power of God in our life.

Perhaps you are saying, “Brother Aaron, this is radical ...” Well, Jesus said, “*And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*” Mt. 5:29

Social networking very easily leads us into self-exaltation. No, it doesn’t have to. But it makes it easy. The sly part of the whole thing is that it doesn’t happen immediately and we think we are getting away with it, “doing pretty well.”

Next, we will look at the aspect of scorn. A lot of scornful speech is found in the social networks. Back in Psalm 1:1, we find the following phrase: “*nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*” Shall we purposely hang around scornful speech?

Moving on to another dangerous aspect, we come to addiction. It is so easy for networking to become a habit. Ev-

ery day, I just *have* to log on and see what my friends are doing. They are all posting new things every day, and I *have* to keep mine updated, to keep up with the crowd. So these things become an avenue that Satan uses to rob us of our heartfelt devotion to Christ. Paul said, “*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.*”

Perhaps some of you are saying by now, “Come on now. There is nothing wrong with these things. All things are lawful. You are making a law out of it. There are a lot of good things in the social networks.”

Yes, all things are lawful. But, we will finish that verse: “*all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*” Many people testify that they have been seduced by the power of social networking and the blogosphere. It indeed may be lawful, but ... is it drawing me closer to Jesus?

Jesus said, “*These are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.* (Mk 4:18-19)

I did a little study on “lusts of other things.” This phrase means “the distractions of the age.” What is one of the major distractions of our age? Internet! The World Wide Web. Millions upon millions of websites with oodles of information, and people are sitting at their computers, wasting away their time. Other things are indeed choking the Word of God so that it doesn’t bring forth fruit. How tragic!

Can we not take an honest look at what we are facing in our age? “*Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*” (He 12:1) This means, let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance and unnecessary activity. Why? Because we are running a race!

If I can behold the face of Jesus, and be changed from one glory to another, why would I want to sit and gaze into the “face” of a computer? Are we selling ourselves out cheap?

It may seem contradictory to say that I used the Internet to gather some of the information in this article. Yes, the Inter-



It is so easy for networking to become a habit. I just *have* to log on ...

net can be used in a good way. But I tell you, that the spirit behind a lot of the social networking, blogging, and even e-mail and texting is not good.

Consider what Albert Mohler has to say:

Facebook marked its fifth anniversary on February 5, setting a milestone for social networking as a cultural phenomenon. Just five years ago Harvard undergraduate Mark Zuckerberg launched the site and service. Just as Facebook celebrated its fifth anniversary, it passed rival MySpace in registrations.

Together, MySpace and Facebook report over 280,000,000 registered users. Those services, first popular among high school and college students, are now joined by Twitter, a micro-blogging service. Together, these represent nothing less than a major social movement.¹

We as the church of Jesus Christ have to take a look at these “major social movements” and new technologies and use God’s wisdom to discern how these things are going to affect us. How are we going to handle these things? The generation coming on knows nothing of life before texting, e-mail, blogging, and other new phenomenon of the 24/7 social networking. Some people take the stance that we need to set all kinds of checks and balances in place and proceed forward.

But I am not too sure about that approach. The question is, do I really need these things at all? Will it make me a better Christian? Will it make me a truer disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? Shall I try to control the monster, or would it be better to shut him out completely?

“It’s an everlasting source of entertainment,” exclaimed one author. “Everybody is on it. ... It is so easy to just bounce from page to page, photo to photo. It is mindless and distracting.” These words are from an author who takes the position that we need to put some safeguards in to control it. He continues, saying, “It has the potential to drain the vitality out of our relationship with the Lord.”

What should our posture be concerning something that has a strong potential to draw me away from God and fill my mind with other things?

I have to wonder just how many people can we have a meaningful, deep, heart-to-heart, Christian relationship with? I fear people are substituting modern social networking for real relationships. They are indeed, “logged on,” but “spaced out” to their common brother/sister who is sitting right next to them. We were created for real person-to-person relationships; to meet together as brothers and sisters.

¹ <http://www.albertmohler.com/?cat=Blog&cid=3248>



Brethren and sisters! Warning!! I see a serpent!

The Bible says, “*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.*” (He 10.25)

Think about it! For thousands of years, the only way to have social interaction was to meet together. We talked with our neighbor over the fence. We knew who they were. We loved our church family. We loved sitting around the living room and sharing family time together ... before everybody had their own text message coming in on their own cell phone, and their own little thing to do and their own networking accounts.

Brethren and sisters! Warning!! I see a serpent! I see a subtle serpent with an evil motive; a motive of stealing my heart away from my Lord and also from my wife and my children and my brothers and sisters in Christ. By what manner? By being connected online with someone off in another state or even country. Danger! Danger!

Yes, in the “old days” we wrote letters to faraway friends. But it was different. You took time to write a letter, then you had to wait for the reply. It was generally a serious thing in which you put some effort.

So just what other pitfalls are involved in social networking?

The number one danger is that it robs God of your heart devotion and love. So some think, “OK, if I can balance this thing properly, it is fine.” I would suggest such a person to go on a “fast” for a month, and take all the time spent on social networks, and invest it in reading the Word of God and reaching out to real people (not their profiles) in face-to-face relationships. See what happens! See if at the end of the month you find yourself saying, “I was blinded!” Or, “I was deceived!”

For another thing, it distracts us from true brotherhood. It is so easy to pose as someone on a network somewhere; somebody different than what they are in real life. It is so easy to post up a profile that does not really represent who you are. Someone from the other side of the world may look at that profile and have no idea that it is not really who you are. And, they can then build a profile that is not real. By viewing each other’s profile, both sides begin living in a fantasy world.

Next, we have to come to terms with the foolishness. *“Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind? Should he reason with unprofitable talk? Or with speeches wherewith he can do no good? Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.”* (Job 15:2-4) Should a man fill his belly with the “east wind”, that is, empty vanity? Should we partake of the foolish, childish aspects of the social networks, like “Johnny just threw a snowball at Freddy! Would you like to snowball him, too?”

Another pitfall of social networking is that some folks seem to try to fill a void in their life by “connecting” to all kinds of people. The more they connect with others online, the more they “zone out” with the people right next to them. There is less accountability that way.

Next, we need to consider how it draws us into other things, just like we do when reading the news on CNN. First we just read the headlines, then we click on the link to the story, and soon we are thinking all day long on how terrible the world is, instead of meditating on how beautiful my Jesus is and how He can save souls.

How do people get started on these things? Curiosity and peer pressure have a lot to do with this. You know, “every-

body is doing it.” It’s the current “cool” thing to have a cell phone on your belt and a Facebook account.

But consider what one author says: “Facebook is a loaded gun when it comes to temptation.” Flirting, sensual photos ... and you have no control over what others upload. They are “evil communications”, and they “corrupt good manners!” And all so accessible!

Should we just try to tame this monster? Or should we make application to the verse that says, *“make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”* (Ro 13:14) And, *“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes.”* (Psalm 101:3)

Another man—who I think claims to be a Christian—said the following: “I have not figured out how to control this thing. I wrestle with it all the time.” Then he continues, “But should we abandon it for all the good that is in it, all the potential?”

That same man probably has a TV in his house, and would likely say, “We control it. We watch good programming, we limit the amount of time we watch it; and, yeah, we are offended at the

commercials—sensual, wicked, and defiling commercials—that pop up, even in the “Christian” programs. But we control it.”

I don’t think that is the correct approach. I don’t think we will like the fruit of that. As fathers, we wrestle with these things every day, trying to keep up with who are my children’s online friends, and what are these friends putting into my children. And dad is “up to here” trying to keep up with several children and all their accounts and “friends”. Is it possible? Then the children start getting ruffled, “Pop, you are acting like a policeman, looking into all our networks and chat rooms!”

But we do not trust the flesh, so we have to say, “I love you son/daughter, but I don’t trust the wicked flesh; neither mine nor yours. And I don’t trust the medium of this age; the spirit of this age is permeating through this whole online atmosphere.”

Yes, it is ensnaring its millions. Isn’t it about time that the church of Jesus Christ awakes? *“Awake to righteousness, and sin not.”* (1 Co 15:34) This whole thing is a design by the master deceiver to fill our minds so full that we have no time to meditate on God. No time to talk face to face with



Facebook is a loaded gun when it comes to temptations.

each other. So many of this generation now growing up are growing up retarded. Pardon me for being frank, but, they are. They do not know how to hold a meaningful conversation with a person. They do not know how to really bare their heart in a relationship. They wander aimlessly, without a purpose; they are confused, drifting along in neutral ... and log on, to let come what may. TV, Internet, games, and movies by the scores. And not just simple movies; but evil, demonic, witchcraft movies: movies straight out of hell! And the games are sometimes worse than the movies. The current American generation is growing up with these types of things as their prime source of learning.

Well, what will this technology do to us? What will it do to my family and our relationships? I urge you, fathers, please take warning. May we each watch jealously over our relationship with our heavenly Father.

This article is based on a message preached by Bro. Aaron Hurst at Charity Christian Fellowship (Note: it is not an exact transcription). You can receive a free copy of this message on cassette or CD by writing to Charity Gospel Tape Ministry, 400 W. Main St. Ste. 1, Ephrata, PA 17522, or calling 1-800-227-7902. Ask for message #4201. Or it can be downloaded in mp3 format at <http://www.charityministries.org/audio/4201.mp3>



Tool? Or Toy?

I trust you would rebuke me.

I mean, if I let my son Daniel use that humongous chainsaw for a toy, you would rebuke me wouldn't you?

660 Stihl chainsaws are a very efficient tool for milling logs like the one Daniel is standing on. In about six minutes, I could cut off a board 22 inches wide by eight feet long.

But you need not rebuke me: I never let Daniel play with that saw, other than to hold it up for the picture perhaps. Faster than you could say "Be careful with that saw, son!", it could rip off a little boy's leg. In fact, that saw was so powerful that I was almost afraid to run it myself!

I say all this to make a point: tools are tools, and toys are toys.

The Internet can be a useful tool. I myself have used it to find a manual for my wife's sewing machine, got a good bargain for a vehicle on an online auction, located hard-to-find parts for small engines, and other practical uses.

But just like I did not let my son play with the 660 Stihl, I do not let him play with the Internet. Never. Period. Faster than you can say, "Be careful with the Internet, son!", he could click into something that would rip apart his innocent little heart.

I am tacking this little piece at the end of the previous article on social networking as a plea for all of us to take a serious look at Internet use. Are we using the Internet as a tool, or as a toy?

Let's get real practical: If you would suddenly drop off all Internet use, would the kingdom of heaven feel any loss? Or would it feel a gain?

These are the questions we all need to ask ourselves. And, when we are through asking them about Internet use, we need to just keep right on going into other areas of our life.

I challenge all of us to "clean house" of everything in our life that we, as adults, are using as a toy, and not a tool for the advancement of righteousness, peace, and joy. ~Mike Atnip



Rick Hess

In April 1992, an angry resident of Sanilac County, Michigan, wrote a letter to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. He was announcing his rejection of the “Corporate State of Michigan and the United States.” He was denying his citizenship and their authority over him. And, he was expressly revoking his signature on any hunting or fishing licenses that they had asked him to sign, which he viewed as contracts that fraudulently bound him to the government. Three years later this man would become known to the world: Terry Nichols, friend and accomplice of Timothy McVeigh, who bombed the Oklahoma City Federal Building.

These men subscribe to a very unique set of beliefs. Their system of beliefs arose in the 1970’s, out of the anti-establishment movement, developing more fully in the 1980’s into anti-government movements. There are various groups with varying degrees of involvement in anti-governmental actions, from vigilante groups, White Supremacist groups, to groups that profess to be churches (some closely paralleling Anabaptists in certain ways), as well as Islamic and pseudo-Jewish groups. Their doctrines are promoted by tracts, vigilante courts, seminars, and shortwave radio, as well as Internet “Schools of Common Law” and preaching.

Their tactics vary greatly. Obviously, most of them do not blow up buildings, but in varying degrees they despise and deny the secular government’s right to have authority over them. They believe they are standing for their rights; they are “freedom fighters,” using many tactics against the “great beast” of the US government. Typically they reject driver’s licenses, mandatory auto insurances, vehicle registrations, Social Security numbers, birth certificates, marriage licenses, and even the use of ZIP codes! They are known for using all sorts of methods to hinder the government, such as employing fraudulent liens, lawsuits, bogus financial instruments, fake auto ID’s, misuse of IRS forms, threats to government officials and their families, and various financial scams ... even occasionally to armed standoffs with the police. They call themselves by different names: Sovereign Citizens, The Posse, Ambassadors of Heaven, or most often ... Freemen. They would say they are true patriots, standing for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Some would say that only Yahweh is their authority and Him alone will they obey.

Really, none of these things are altogether new.

I’d like to jump back 2000 years and ask a few questions to stir our memory. Who were the Zealots? Why did they end

up not following the Lord Jesus Christ? Why did they, for the most part, miss the salvation that God had sent for them?

The Zealots were a fanatical right-wing sect who were alive and well when Jesus was teaching and preaching in Israel. They were a political party of the Jews who (along with many others) despised the Roman dominion over them. They were very nationalistic, militantly opposing the Roman government. Their name means “Jealous” or “Zealous” in the Aramaic language. They were self-professed followers of Levi and Simeon (who avenged their sister’s rape upon Shechem), Phinehas (who speared a Jewish man and Moabite woman for their fornication, staying the plague in the camp), and Elijah (who slew the 850 prophets of Baal and Ashteroth).

They believed they were truly devoted to God and His laws alone. Though they held some similar views with the Pharisees, they were distinctly different on a few points. Zealots felt it was treason against God to pay tribute to Rome, since God alone is Israel’s King. They were willing to use any method of guerilla warfare to fight for Jewish independence. Although they were His contemporaries, sadly, the majority of them never accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and God-sent Messiah!

Their movement eventually degenerated into a band of cut-throats called Sicarii (*dagger-men*, in Latin). Their increased fanaticism provoked the Jewish-Roman war of the first century. In 66 A.D., they attempted to take full control of Jerusalem. This led to the horrible siege and destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Roman general Titus in 70 A.D. This was what Jesus had warned would come to pass (Matthew 24), before he was crucified outside the city walls. The last Zealot stronghold was the highly fortified Masada, which fell to the Romans in 73 A.D. when some 900 Zealots committed mass suicide, rather than surrender to the Roman authorities.

Why, when the Zealots were so desirous to serve God and to know and do His will, did they miss becoming followers of the only true Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ?

The problem was that they had a totally false concept of what freedom is in the Kingdom of God. Like many other similar movements since that time, this false belief became a mighty stronghold in their lives. They failed to understand that true freedom comes when:

- I am submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ;
- I am submitted to Him in all my ways;
- I am subject to earthly authorities when I am not asked to disobey Christ;
- Like Jesus, I accept suffering for being obedient to the Father, patiently.



Masada, pictured above, was a Zealot fort near the Dead Sea. The name Masada comes from a Hebrew word meaning “stronghold.” Are we building strongholds upon false conceptions of God, strongholds that will some day fall like Masada did?

When you study Jesus’ teachings, it is not hard to see why the Zealots could not follow Jesus while still in their stronghold of false belief. Consider the following areas where Christ’s teaching contradicts the “Freemen” mentality:

1. Jesus’ birth, in fulfillment of the ancient prophecies, was at Bethlehem, due to his parent’s submission to the Roman census and taxation. (Luke 2:1-6)
2. Jesus said: “Blessed are the meek.” Matthew 5:5
3. Jesus said: “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Matthew 5:9
4. He blessed them who accept persecution patiently. Matthew 5:10-12
5. He taught that it was important not only to accept the authority of the Roman soldier who asks you to carry his pack for a mile, but to volunteer to take it a second mile! Matthew 5:41
6. He gave all His followers the calling to “love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; bless them who despitefully use you and persecute you.” Matthew 5: 43-48
7. Regardless of popular belief, He said that *these are qualifications for being called the children of God!* Matthew 5:45
8. He taught that the things that are truly valuable are not on this earth. Matthew 6:19-21

9. He gave His followers a formula of how we should respond to every other person when He said, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Mt. 7:12

10. He told all of His followers that if He is truly their Lord, these things will be a part of their lives. “Not everyone that sayeth unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Mt. 7:21

11. Jesus commended a Roman centurion for his great faith and contrasted it with the Jews’ unbelief. Mt. 8:5-13

12. Jesus taught to “flee,” not resist persecution. Mt. 10:22-28

13. The test of true love for Christ is in our willingness to “take up the cross” of submission and forbearance. Mt. 10:37-39

14. Jesus’ declarations to Peter “the freedom fighter”:

- When he rebuked Jesus for talking about his crucifixion: “Get behind me, Satan.” Mt. 16:21-28
- When he instructed Peter to go pay tax for both Peter and himself. Mt. 17:24-27
- When he reproved Peter for using the sword to resist his arrest. Mt. 26:51-54

15. Jesus consistently taught that His kingdom is not like the world’s kingdom in operations. Mt. 20:25-28

16. He told the Jews who were trying to trap Him in his words “Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s”: Pay your taxes! Mt. 22:17-22

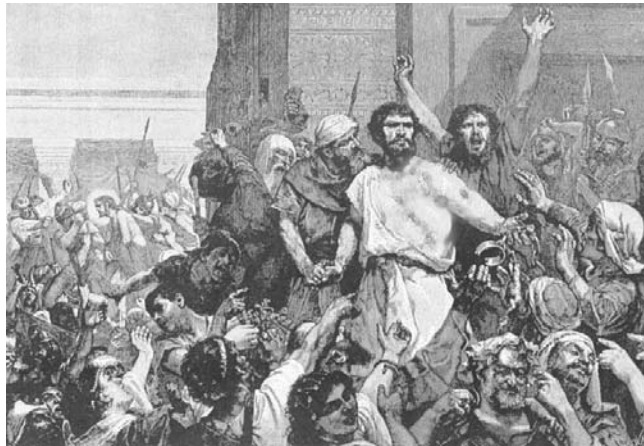
17. When Jesus taught His followers that Jerusalem was going to be destroyed, He warned them to flee, *not* fight for it. Some notable historians tell us that when Jerusalem fell, there was not one Christian left in it. They apparently obeyed their Lord!

18. Jesus’ open declaration to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” Jn. 18:36

19. Jesus did not resist Judas, His betrayer, even though He knew of his plot against Him.

20. The last command Jesus gave was for His followers to go into all the world and preach to every tribe, nation, language, and people group. Not only that, but baptize them and *receive them as equals* into the kingdom of God. The early Church understood this well: Jews didn’t become Gentiles, Gentiles didn’t become Jews; they both needed to be born again and be converted to become Christians under the New Covenant. Matt. 28:18-20

All this was unthinkable to the Zealots, whose “stronghold of false doctrine” blinded them to believe that God only speaks Hebrew, only accepts Hebrew culture, only saves Jews, and only desires Israel as a nation.



**ONE OF THE GREATEST REASONS WHY THE
ZEALOTS DIDN'T CHOOSE JESUS WAS THAT THEY
HAD ALREADY CHOSEN ANOTHER "SAVIOUR":
BARABBAS.**

One of the greatest reasons the Zealots didn’t choose Jesus was that they had already chosen another “saviour”: The man Barabbas, who was chosen for sedition (rebellion to government authority) and murder. His name ironically means:

Bar = “son of” and abba = “the father”.

When the crowd was crying “Free Barabbas!”, they were saying “We choose the son of the Father!” But God has only one begotten son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and for Him they cried “Crucify him, crucify him!” They followed a deceiver, a false deliverer, a false Messiah. Their end was death,

destruction, and bondage to sin, self, and Satan ... and for those who never repented, an eternity in Hell.

So, what should I do if I realize that I have believed a lie and have allowed myself to be influenced by the Zealots of our day?

1. Repent and submit to the rightful Lordship of Jesus in your life! “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,” and no witch is right with God!
2. In this day of easy-believism and cheap grace, you may need to be genuinely born again, surrendering your all to our resurrected Lord. Have you ever seen yourself as hopelessly lost, without a single plea before the crucified Lord Jesus? If your life still belongs to you, you are not one of His!
3. Believe His word! “Submit yourself to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that

do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free; and not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, but as servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the King.” 1 Pe. 2:13-17

4. Recognize that God is the final authority, who raises up whom He will and puts down whom He will. Remember Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, etc. Many times God uses the ungodly to chasten His people.

5. God has established earthly government and authority. The home, church, employment and the government all establish order in society; the opposite is chaos and anarchy (which is really every man being his own lord). Ro. 13:1-14

6. Be ready to make godly appeals to the government when asked to do what is against the Lord’s will for us.

7. Be ready to suffer like Jesus did, patiently, resigned to die, if needed to fulfill the will of God the Father. 1 Pe. 3: 8-18

May God bless you with the true freedom of the sons of God!



Rick and Cherry Hess live near Myerstown, Pennsylvania, where he works as a Research & Development Cook at Dutch Valley Foods. They have 11 children ranging in age from two months to 29 years old. Two sons are married, one son has gone to be with the Lord, and a single daughter is serving in Haiti. Seven of the children are still at home. Rick and his family attend Harmony Christian Fellowship, which meets in the Myerstown area of Lebanon/Berks County, Pennsylvania.

Rick and Cherry along with their family have been blessed to serve in Haiti (1997-2000) and still enjoy going back to visit and encourage the church there. He currently helps stateside with the committee of H.I.M., Harmony’s mission outreach to the Sichela tribe of Rukwa Valley in western Tanzania. Rick enjoys preaching the gospel, organic gardening and farming, studying history—especially of the church—and their three grandchildren (included in the above picture).

The Christian’s Bill of Rights

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Thus reads the preamble of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America. But how reads the preamble of the “Consitution of the Kingdom of Heaven?”

Certainly, all men are equal. And equally certain is the fact that all citizens of the kingdom of heaven have rights, even while living as foreigners on planet earth.

All citizens of the kingdom of God have the right to:

1. Death to self. Let no one—in any way, shape, or form—take this liberty from you! Cling to it with the last ounce of your strength.

2. Servanthood. Being the place of highest honor in the kingdom of God, seek diligently for ways to serve those around you. Let them be the head, and you be the tail. This is an absolute right in the kingdom of God, and let no one snatch it from you.

3. The pursuit of holiness. This unalienable right is given to all men, by God the Creator. Guard it carefully, young man!

Now, let’s look at the wording to the preamble of the Declaration of Independence of the Kingdom of God:

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Christians are reborn equal, that they are regenerated by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Death to self, Servanthood, and the pursuit of Holiness.”

Brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus: Declare your independence from the galling chains of Satan, self, and the flesh! Break those chains of bondage and begin to exercise your rights as citizens of the kingdom! Rejoice!!





As Jesus Loved

I thought I knew how to love
but I found
that I really didn't.
I was just giving my love
to those who loved me back—
to the clean children,
the respectable folk,
the well-behaved teenagers,
the obedient ones;
but I didn't have any real feeling
for the runny-nosed dirty child
next door,
or for the quarrelsome old man
across the street
who played his radio
so maddingly loud.
So God had to admonish me—
and He did.
He showed me to my shocked surprise
that I was passing by
on the other side,
that I wasn't really walking
in His footsteps at all;
because when Christ
lived on our earth
He ate with publicans,
and sinners,
He talked with the woman
at the well,
He humbly washed
His disciple's feet,

and He loved sinners everywhere—
the tax gatherers
the prostitutes,
the doubters,
the hungry,
the untouchables of His day,
He loved them all.
Through my tears I saw
that I was not really following Him at all;
and then I understood
that if I wanted to be His disciple
and bear His name,
I must be willing to give up
my selfish convenient little world
and mingle with the lost ones—
minister to their needs,
heal their wounds,
share their sorrows,
and offer a cup of water
in His name.
I must love as Jesus loved;
for unless I do,
how are the lost and lonely ones
around me
going to believe
that God loves them—
if they cannot see
His love in me?
How, tell me,
how are they ever
going to know? ~Viola J. Berg

A Letter on True Patriotism

Dear Friend:

Allow me to say that it excites both my wonder and concern that a Christian minister such as yourself should think it worth his while to attempt political reforms. When I look around upon the present state of the nation, such an attempt appears to me to be no less vain and foolish, than it would be to paint the cabin—while the ship is sinking! Or to decorate the parlor—while the house is on fire!

When our Lord Jesus was upon earth, He refused to get involved in disputes or politics, “Friend, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?” (Luke 12:14) “My kingdom is not of this world! If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight!” (John 18:36). God’s children belong to a kingdom which is not of this world; they are strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and a part of their Scriptural character is that they are the “quiet in the land.” (Psalm 35:20)

Satan has many contrivances to amuse people and to divert their thoughts from their real danger!

My dear sir, my prayer to God for you is that He may induce you to employ the talents He has given you, in pointing out sin as the great cause and source of every existing evil; and to engage those who love and fear Him (instead of wasting time in political speculations, for which very few of them are competent) to sigh and cry for our abounding abominations, and to stand in the breach, by prayer, that God’s wrath may yet be averted, and our national mercies prolonged! This, I think, is true patriotism—the best way in which people in private life may serve their country.

I consider the ungodly as saws and hammers in the hand of the Lord. So far as they are His instruments, they will succeed—but not an inch further! Their wrath shall praise Him and be subservient to His designs!

If our lot is so cast that we can exercise our ministry free from stripes, fines, imprisonments, and death—it is more than the gospel has promised to us! If Christians were quiet when under the cruel governments of Nero and other wicked persecutors, when they were hunted down like wild beasts—then we ought to be not only quiet, but very thankful now! It was then accounted an honor to suffer for Christ and the “offence of the cross!”

Those are to be greatly pitied who boast of their ‘liberty’—and yet they do not consider that they are in the most deplorable bondage as the slaves of sin and Satan, under the curse of God’s law and His eternal wrath! Oh! for a voice to reach their hearts, that they may know their true and dreadful state—and seek deliverance from their horrific thralldom! May you and I labor to direct them to the one thing, which is absolutely needful, and abundantly sufficient.

If I had the wisdom or influence to soothe the angry passions of mankind—I would gladly employ them! But I am a stranger and a pilgrim here in this world. My charter, my rights, and my treasures are all in heaven—and there my heart ought to be. In a very short time, I may be removed (and perhaps suddenly) into the unseen and eternal world—where all that now causes so much bustle upon earth will be of no more importance to me than the events which took place among the antediluvians!

In the hour, when death shall open the door into eternity—many things which now assume an ‘air of importance’ will be found as light and unsubstantial as a child’s dream!

How crucial, then, is it for me to be found watching, with my lamp burning, diligently engaged in my proper calling! For the Lord has not called me to set governments right—but to preach the gospel, to proclaim the glory of His name, and to endeavor to win souls! “Let the dead bury their own dead—but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God!” (Luke 9:60) Happy is that servant whom his Master finds so doing when He returns!

As you have forced me to respond—both duty and love have obliged me to be faithful and free in giving you my thoughts. I recommend you to the care and blessing of the great Shepherd and Savior; and remain for His sake, your affectionate friend and brother,

John Newton

Author of the hymn *Amazing Grace*, John lived during the politically tumultuous times of the American Revolution. It should be noted that his call to be “the quiet of the land” should not be taken as a call to do nothing. Rather, we are called to cease from political ambitions, and to throw our energies into the spiritual realm, in which we are to be heaven’s storm troopers!

Face the Battle Singing!

Lewis Beachey



Jehoshaphat was in sore distress. What to do!? The Ammonites, the Moabites, and the people of Mount Seir had ganged together against the children of Israel. 2 Chronicles 20:3 reads: “*And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord ...*” They took this confrontation seriously. Jehoshaphat went into the house of the Lord, before the new court, to plead with God for His help. Had not God said that if evil should come upon them and they came into the sanctuary and called on Him for help that He would help them?

Verses 12-20 portray the anguish he finds himself in: “*O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee....Then upon Jahaziel ... came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation; ... And he said, ... Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s. ... Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: ... set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you ... And they rose early in the morning, ... and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established*”

Notice what happened next. As they were going out to the battle, they sang and praised God! Such faith! The account goes on to say that when they started singing and praising God, God caused their enemies to fight against each other, and they were so smitten so that not

one escaped. The children of Israel did not have to do a thing but simply trust the Lord, then gather up the spoil.

Now, what about us? We do not have the Moabites to fight against. We do not have swords as our weapons. Who or what is our enemy?

Peter tells us to be careful and vigilant because the devil goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The devil goes about to destroy and to kill. We *do* have an enemy! But do we have such a faith in our hearts that it causes us to **face the battle singing**?

The devil, our enemy, has many tactics he uses to fight against us. One of them is to instill a false comfort into our heart. For example: We may be very diligent about having our regular devotions and prayer (and that is good), but are the hearts of the fathers toward the children and the hearts of the children toward the fathers? I know of a situation where the children and the father cannot communicate, but since they are very serious about having their regular devotions, etc., they experience a measure of comfort.

But sin can be things we do not call generally call sin. If I as a father am not drawn to my children, like Christ is to us, is it not sin? We need to be like Christ; not be just religious. If we see we have failed, it is not enough to only admit it, though that is good, but we need to experience victory in Christ. Jehoshaphat realized he could not stand before his enemies, but what gave him the victory? Do we experience victory like Jehoshaphat? Where is victory?

“*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*” (Eph. 6:12) That is our en-

emy—not flesh and blood, like in Old Testament times. We wrestle against spiritual wickedness.

Our battle is deeper than flesh and blood. There is a spiritual wickedness involved. Satan comes through our thoughts, through our flesh, and through our body that is fallen. Satan tries to stir up the sin that is in our fallen body. But Paul tells us to mortify our members that are on the earth. (Col. 3:5) That is our warfare.

Jesus said it is not that which goes into a man that defines a man, but that which comes out of our hearts. Bitterness and all those things come from within—from the heart—and we have a **battle to wage against the enemy**. This ties in with Ephesians 6:12 concerning wrestling against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places.

To do battle with such an enemy, Paul admonishes us to put on the whole armor of God so we may be able to withstand against the wiles of the devil. (Verse 11)

How do we battle with such an unseen—yet keenly felt—enemy?

We are familiar with the rest of the chapter of Ephesians 6. It says we are to have our loins girt with truth, have the breastplate of righteousness, have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and “*above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*” Such an armory!

But what if we are indifferent? Complacent? Luke-warm? Do these words give a picture of a man doing battle? What would have happened if Jehoshaphat had been indifferent and complacent when the enemies came against him? There would have been no victory! And neither will we experience victory if we do not take this spiritual battle seriously.

Let us consider our lives seriously. What are we fighting? How do we think we can quench the fiery darts? Jehoshaphat was utterly aware that “*we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do ...*” Do we find it that way

in our experience too? That we have no might? But Jehoshaphat did not stop there. He says, “*But our eyes are upon thee.*” Let us look to God also. Through faith in the blood of Jesus, we too can experience victory in our battle against sin—or the spiritual wickedness we find in our hearts. “*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*”

What did faith in God cause the children of Israel to do? It says they sang as they went to battle! Is not that a beautiful picture of faith? Does our faith in God cause our hearts to sing, even as we face the battle? Or do we shrink and cringe in defeat? “*And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*” (1 Jn. 5:4) Paul was told, “*My grace is sufficient for thee.*” (2 Co. 12:9)

God has provided us with all that we need to be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. (Ro. 8:37) Not only can we be conquerors, but our faith in God can cause us to face the battle singing, knowing we have the victory already.

So how is it in our lives? Are we confessing Christ, yet our lives deny the power thereof? Like the situation that was mentioned earlier concerning being religious, yet the heart of the father was not towards the children, neither the children’s towards the parents? There was no communication between them. There was anger and fear. Through all this time, they claimed to be walking in faith, yet they were not doing battle with the spiritual wickedness in their hearts. Faith is not merely a confession. A faith is not a true faith unless it brings forth fruits: unless there is an overcoming through the blood of the Lamb.

Where are we in this? Are we merely professing Christ, yet continuing to live in our lusts (and neglecting the warfare)? Oh, we may not want to go as far as some people. We surely would not say like “eternal security” people that you can go to heaven even if you murder someone (because, according to this doctrine, you cannot fall away). But just in “small” ways, we al-

-Continued on p. 22

Does our faith in God cause our hearts to sing, even as we face the battle?

Made alive by



You may have seen one of those bumper stickers that says “Christians aren’t perfect, just forgiven.” I don’t know about you, but those bumper stickers sadden me.

From all appearances, we have been suckered into believing that the central theme of the Gospel is forgiveness of sins. Just ask ten people what the whole essence of Christ’s coming can be summed up in, and at least nine out of those ten people will probably blurt out: “For the forgiveness of our sins!” To refocus our attention, in this article I would like to put our magnifying glass over the blood of the Lamb.

The bloody religion

Christianity is a bloody religion, no doubt about it. Yet the very essence and reason it is bloody is often grossly misunderstood. For example, let’s start by asking the “silly” question, “What is the blood?” Simple, right? Yet, I am afraid we may have missed an important point by not stopping to ponder on verses such as Deuteronomy 12:23: “Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.” The letter of this commandment is clear: the red liquid that flows in the veins of animals is not to be eaten. The point is, the blood contained that essence or substance which we call *life*. We really stretch our minds to grasp just what life is and consists of, but we all know that if you drain the blood out of a being that has blood, life ceases in that being. Therefore, God spells it out to us that if a person eats blood, he is partaking of the life of the animal or person that it once flowed in.

Did you catch that?

Let me repeat it: whoever eats blood is partaking of the life of the animal or person that it once flowed in. This is the key that unlocks the mystery of our bloody religion!

Let’s jump now right smack into the middle of a New Testament scene. We are in Judea, Capernaum to be exact. There is a large crowd of people listening to a Master. The crowd is composed of Jews, who have been strictly forbidden to never eat blood, this being one of the key points of their law; a point which they are vigorous to defend. Yet, listen to this Master as He spells out his teaching:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.”

Imagine the blow! Telling a bunch of Jewish people that they had to drink blood—His blood, to be exact—to have life! No wonder many of the listeners said “This is a hard saying ...” and that many of them “went back.”

Had I been in the crowd, I probably would have “went back” also: “Telling us that we have to drink blood to live? And more specifically, His blood? I’m out of here! This guy’s crazy! There is nothing more contrary to the Law than that!”

However, Jesus was not crazy. He, in fact, was actually giving an understanding of why God had prohibited the eating of blood. God had forbidden the eating of any other blood, for the simple reason that He wanted His people to

drink only one certain blood ... the blood of the Messiah! The only source of life, the only life that God wanted humanity to partake of, was that life that was in His only begotten Son! (1 John 5:11)

In this lies the secret of the blood: the blood is the life. If we partake of the blood, we are partaking of the life, or spirit, of the giver of that blood. And the Mosaic prohibition stands clear now: Don't partake of any spirit other than the Spirit—the life—of the Messiah!

Blood in the Holy of Holies

Turning yet to another Mosaic law (Lev. 16), we see blood once again, this time flowing out of goats and bulls. The scene is the inner chamber of the sanctuary, the place where no one was allowed to enter, except the high priest. Summing up the sequence of events, the animals were killed, and their blood was taken by the high priest and sprinkled over the contents of the room; which contents consisted of the ark, or box, of the covenant, and its lid, called "the mercyseat." Part of this "mercyseat" consisted of two angels facing each other, with

wings outspread and touching on the tips.

The "secret" of the inner sanctuary was that God, Jehovah, wanted to live there, between those two outstretched wings. There was no image of God in that room, as God's likeness could not be fashioned by anything created. He just had that area between those cherubim as "His space."

Now, let's stop to consider. What did the tabernacle represent, but a human (1 Cor. 3:16)? And what did the inner room signify, but the very spirit of man? In man's spirit was the box of the promises, which contained tokens of God's existence and law—Aaron's rod that budded, a pot of manna, and the stone with the commandments. This ark symbolizes the conscience of man, in man's spirit. Right above that was the area where God's presence was supposed to dwell.

God made man's spirit for a purpose; it was to be His special dwelling place! But there was a problem: sin! God is pure, and it is utterly impossible for Him to dwell where willful sin exists.

The root problem

But the problem goes back deeper than our willful sins. It goes back to the very first man, Adam. God created Adam, giving him a free will and a law to live by. God, knowing Adam's possibility and temptation to sin, warned Adam: "The day you eat of the tree will be the day you die."

We know the story. One day Adam did disobey. And on that day, Adam died. No, he did not die a physical death on that day, but he died in his spirit: God's Spirit left that inner sanctuary.

Death is not a substance or essence like life is. Death is simply the absence of life, the same way darkness is the absence of light. The only way to create darkness is to remove light. And the only way to create death is to remove life. And when God—Who is Life—moved out of Adam's spirit, Adam died, on the very day that he sinned. When the human spirit leaves the body, the body dies. When God's Spirit leaves the human spirit, the human spirit dies; this is called spiritual death.

As a consequence of that first sin, all of Adam's descendants are without God's Spirit automatically reigning in the inner sanctuary, their spirit. God is with babies and children, but He does not force His will in them (which is why even small babies manifest a sure selfishness). They are not led of the Spirit. Thus, because of Adam, all of humanity is born degenerated. (1 Co. 15:22)

Now the good news! As in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive

again!

How does this happen? With the blood of the atonement (the word literally means "at-one-ment", two separated things made one once again) sacrifice!

The blood of the atonement animals was drained out of them, and that blood was taken to the inner sanctuary and sprinkled on the ark. Now for the "secret", the very kernel of the Christian religion: the blood did not—as many suppose—merely purchase forgiveness from God, IT GAVE LIFE TO MAN'S SPIRIT! The life that was in the atonement sacrifice was drained out of the animal, and transferred to the inner sanctuary. It was—using modern medical terminology—a heavenly "blood transfusion," a conferring of the life of the one to the other. Who was our "at-one-ment," our

By the **Blood!**

propitiation (Ro. 3:25)? Jesus the Messiah, of course. He was killed. His life, His blood, was taken out of Him, and put into us, enlivening our dead spirit once again. It was a new birth of our spirit (Jn. 3:6); a giving of life; a regeneration or remaking; a renewal. In a word, it was a salvation, a salvaging of a formerly dead item, by giving it life once again.

Read carefully the following verses:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting forgiveness. (Jn. 3:16)

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no forgiveness in you. (Jn. 6:53)

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal forgiveness, and this forgiveness is in his Son. (1 Jn. 5:11)

Did you read them closely? Is so, you will have noticed that I misquoted them, quite on purpose. I actually quoted them as many people understand them, or better said, misunderstand them. Jesus did not shed his blood on the cross to merely purchase an eternal forgiveness for our sins, He died so that His blood—His life, or spirit—could be transferred to us! Now read them again, replacing the word “forgiveness” with the real word: “life!”

Saved by the blood

Saved by the blood! But how does that blood save us? Like this:

Suppose I am an impatient man. What can conquer my impatience, but patience? But I find I have no patience to drive out my impatience. So, along comes Jesus and offers to give me, as an undeserved gift, His patience. He pours it into my spirit, and my impatience is conquered, driven away.

Or, suppose I am bound in bitterness. What can deliver me but a good dose of forgiving love? But, alas, I have none

within myself. Here comes a man, the man Christ Jesus, and He has plenty of love to spare. So He takes some of that love that He is filled with, and sprinkles it into my inner being. His love sets me free from my unforgiveness!

Finally, suppose I come to the realization that the underlying cause of all my sin is an impotent spirit. Yes, my spirit is willing and desirous to live righteously and holy, but simply impotent, unable to perform that which it desires. God does not live in my spirit; it is dead, devoid of that “Life-Which-Is-Eternal.” What can save me? Nothing but the blood—the life—of Jesus!

In faith, I turn to Jesus. By means of faith, I receive that blood which gives life. My spirit revives! I am free! My dead spirit is resurrected to newness of life! Praise God for the blood of the Lamb!

Yes, the first Adam was made a living soul, but the second Adam, Jesus Christ my Lord, was made a QUICKENING (life-giving) spirit (1 Co. 15:45). The very kernel of Christianity is LIFE, not forgiveness.

Paul wrote to the Galatians (3:21), “*Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*” Notice what he points out as the supreme weakness of the Mosaic law: it could not GIVE LIFE. Earlier in the chapter, he had asked them a simple question (v. 2): “*This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*”

The question was, in other terms, what opened the door for you to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit: faith, or circumcision and sabbath-keeping? It was faith, of course. But what I would like for us to ponder on is how Paul equates salvation with that “receiving the Spirit.” It was the Spirit of God coming into the heart of man that which liberated mankind from sin. This Spirit is the life-blood of Christianity. This Spirit was the gift, totally unmerited, given to man. In a word, the Spirit was the grace that brought life.

Jesus
died so that
His blood
—His life, or spirit—
could be
transferred
to us!

Perhaps you see the picture now. Our atonement was sacrificed, and His blood was then sprinkled into our inner sanctuary to bring it to life. Yes, we were forgiven ... but much more happened with that blood than forgiving us. We were made alive by it! Consider what some of the early church writers had to say concerning the blood giving life:

*Ye therefore, clothing yourselves with meekness, become the imitators of His sufferings, and of His love, wherewith He loved us when He gave Himself a ransom for us, that He might cleanse us by His blood from our old ungodliness, and **bestow life on us** when we were almost on the point of perishing through the depravity that was in us. [Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians]*

*He has **renewed us by the quickening of His blood**; to bring us anew to paradise, to open the*

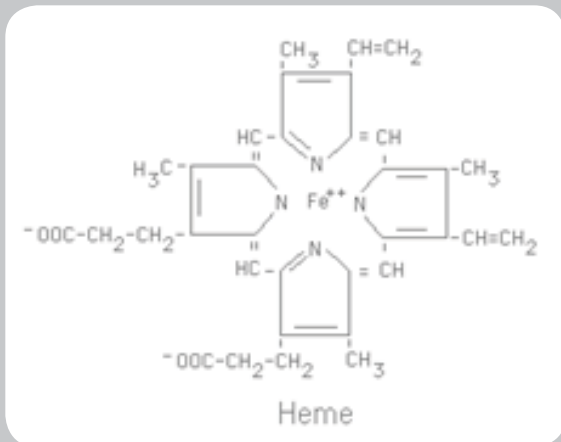
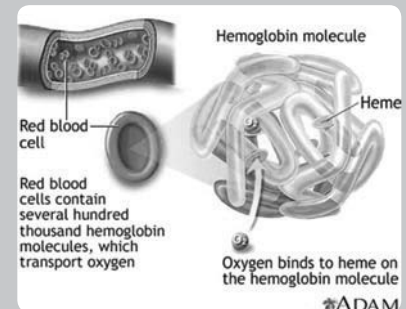
kingdom of heaven, in the faith and truth of His promise! [Cyprian]

*Those adversaries, those blasphemers, those who were always enemies to His name, if they repent of their sin, if they acknowledge the crime committed, He receives, not only to the pardon of their sin, but to the reward of the heavenly kingdom. What can be said more patient, what more merciful? Even he who has shed Christ's blood is **made alive by Christ's blood**. Such and so great is the patience of Christ; and had it not been such and so great, the Church would never have possessed Paul as an apostle. [Cyprian]*

For all this was done that the Lamb and Son of God, that taketh away the sins of the world, might, of His own will, and for us, come to His saving Pas-

Did you know?

During anesthesia school I had some pretty detailed classes on anatomy and physiology. Interestingly, when studying the anatomy of a blood cell I found out that in the middle of every blood cell there is a lot of squiggly little molecules called hemoglobin. It's this stuff called hemoglobin that moves oxygen from the lungs to every part of the body. Well, on the end of these squiggly little hemoglobins is a thing called a "heme group." When looking at pictures of this "heme group," I discovered that right in the center of this "heme group" is a cross. Going further, right in the center of that molecular cross is an Iron atom (Fe).



Well, when the blood passes into the lungs, it goes through a very thin layer—so thin that it actually allows an oxygen molecule (O₂) from the air to connect with that Iron atom. This process brings “breath” to every part of the body. (Now, I don’t want to take this too far, you have to bear with me—anesthesia school can be pretty boring!) As I saw this, the whole thing made me meditate on the passage found in Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” In my boring Anatomy class, my mind wandered to ... “Where is that place in human anatomy, ‘between soul and spirit?’” In Greek, the word *spirit* literally means *breath*; and the heme group is the very spot

where “breath” connects with us. In this way, the blood—by bringing breath—actually brings life to every part of our body. And just for fun ... I later found out that most historians believe that the nails used to crucify Jesus on the cross were made out of Iron (Fe)—the very thing that is at the center of all of this amazing stuff. ~Dean Taylor

sion ... and that those who bought Him might for thirty pieces of silver covenant for Him who, with **His life-giving blood**, was to redeem the world; and that Christ, our passover, might be sacrificed for us, in order that those who were sprinkled with His precious blood, and sealed on their lips, as the posts of the door, might escape from the darts of the destroyer ... [Methodius]

Only life can cure death!

What exactly does the life of Christ—His blood—do for us when it is sprinkled into our spirit?

- Provides forgiveness of committed sins (Eph. 1:7)
- Purges the conscience from dead works (Heb. 9:14)
- Makes us holy (Heb. 13:11)
- Makes us upright, just (Rom. 5:9)
- Makes it possible to be reunited with God (after all, God, who is Life, cannot mix with death) (Rom. 3:25)
- Redeems (purchases) us from Satan, sin, and spiritual death (Acts 20:28, Col. 1:14, Eph. 1:7)
- Purges sin out of the heart (1 John 1:7)
- Perfects our doing of good works, things that are well-pleasing to Him (Heb. 13:21)
- Gives us power over Satan (Rev. 12:11)

In summary

Back to that bumper sticker mentioned earlier: “Christians aren’t perfect, just forgiven.” Is that true?

As we have seen, it is not the truth. Christians are more than “just forgiven.” Their spirit is given life by the blood of Christ!

Yes, Christianity is more than a matter of “forgiven” and “unforgiven.” Christianity is a matter of being dead or alive. Paul told the Ephesians (2:1), “*And you hath he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*” There we were, ly-

ing in the vomit of our own wretchedness, striving to perform works of life, but without life. Imagine a dead bird trying to do the works of a live one, trying to fly in the heavens! Now imagine a dead tree trying to produce Golden Delicious apples. Next, try to imagine a man devoid of God’s Spirit—spiritually dead—trying to produce the fruits of the Spirit!

It will not happen. And this spiritually dead man can ask forgiveness 1000 times a day, but that will not produce the desired fruit. What can save him from his death?

The blood, the life, of the crucified Messiah! Only life can cure death!

Yes, Christianity is a matter of life or death. Has your spirit been made alive by the blood of the Lamb?

~Mike Atnip

This article is based on a chapter of a book on the same subject that the author is writing, called The Gospel of the Kingdom.

-Continued from p. 17, Face the Battle Singing

low ourselves to walk in the lusts of our flesh. Do we easily excuse ourselves and perhaps subconsciously think, “Yes, it is good to repent, but if you do not, well, that is okay, too. It does not really matter that much. After all, I believe Jesus died for me”?

Do we really believe what the Bible teaches? It says, “*For the wages of sin is death ...*” (Ro. 8:23) and, “*verily, verily I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*” (John 8:34)

We may truly experience the new birth, but then it is so easy to get caught up with the cares of life, riches, wives, farms, and other interests, so that we soon grow lukewarm. This is a grim state because we are not serious, and often do not see the need of repentance, and gradually fall away. But the Lord can give us victory through Jesus. The Lord fought for the children of Israel. Christ is the victory that quenches the fiery darts of Satan for us. If we do not have this faith that quenches the fiery darts, we are still in sin’s grip.

Does our faith in the blood of the Lamb cause us to face the battle singing?

This article is condensed from a message preached by Lewis Beachey, a minister in the Believers in Christ congregation located near Lobelville, TN.



That they may teach the
young women ...

A Servant's Role

Rachel Weaver

What is a servant's heart? This question can best be answered by a look at our Master's life. Jesus came to earth, leaving the glories of Heaven and life with the Father to *serve* us. He lived it out every day in a very practical way, perhaps just so that you and I can understand and see the reality in the call to serve. First, He obeyed the Father. *"I must do the will of Him that sent me."* Jesus implicitly carried out every order in loving obedience. He could never have done this without communion with His Father. We follow Him as He spent time alone in prayer and meditation after especially busy and trying times. Why? So that He could know the will of His Father which was in Heaven. Then, filled with the fullness of the Spirit, He would go out and serve some more, just pouring Himself out for others. He could never have served so untiringly if He had not been in touch with God. Finally, He returned all the glory and praise to the Father which sent Him.

As I think of the calling that you and I have, what could be more apt than the word "servant"? We are called *"by love to serve one another."* We wash, cook, clean, nurse, teach, sew, and more. We are servants in our home, servants of the Most High God. Does that title shed a new light or glory into your calling? Indeed it ought to!

Sometimes I think that we lose sight of the respectability and the nobility of our position. We forget that it is a very important calling. Motherhood is a calling of love—to our Father and to those around us. Too often we see it as drudgery and thankless work. It is not. It is a privilege we have received, a service to our Master, an overflow of our love. Modern Christianity and the feminist movement have made light of the role of a servant. It is no longer popular to serve another, but instead, self-glorification and self-serving are lifted up. Motherhood is put down, and a career is flaunted as the only way to have purpose and satisfaction in one's life. Women are placed on an equal level with men, and husband and wife loyalty—and servanthood that goes along with it—has long been out of style.

We have been insidiously influenced. We have been taken unawares with the doctrines of equal rights and sharing household chores and parenting. We are deluded and blinded and frustrated and we do not know why? Sometimes we find ourselves resenting being tied down all day, every day, with a never-ending string of duties and expectations. Why? We have lost sight of true servanthood, true love, and the joy of our calling.

“So often the busyness of the moment, the tyranny of the urgent, pressures us into forgetting the reality of Christ It is not God who loads us until we bend or crack with an ulcer, nervous breakdown, heart attack, or a stroke. These come from our inner compulsions coupled with our pressure of circumstances If the Christian [mother] is too busy to stop and take spiritual inventory and receive his [her] assignments from God, he [she] becomes a slave to the tyranny of the urgent. He [She] may work night and day to achieve much that seems significant to himself [herself] and others, but will not finish the work that God has for him [her] to do.”¹ Often we are so busy “serving the Lord” in our families that we do not take time to put Him first anymore. No wonder we feel drained! We are depending on our own strength instead of His.

One writer has said that as believers become increasingly skilled and active in the work of the Lord, many actually begin to spend less time alone with God. As a result, their ministry becomes a product of the flesh and is shallow and ineffective. The solution to this problem is to take time to restore our intimacy with Christ, not only for our sakes, but also for the sake of our ministry. This time does not need to come from hours alone, though that is wonderful, but from close communion with God as we live out our day.

Sisters, our good service is first to live completely for Christ, then to serve our husbands and our families. I have seen this very problem of activity reproduced in myself and in many other sisters’ lives. In the name of order, organization, and homeschooling, we tend to spend less and less time communing with God, excusing ourselves because we are busy servants. This produces a frustrated servant that cannot impart peace and joy to her family. Without the continual fountain of the life of Jesus bubbling up within us, our water stagnates and our fountain dries up.

Oswald Chambers says, “Spiritual exhaustion comes through service, and whether or not you are exhausted will depend on where you get your supplies You have to be nourishment for other souls until they learn how to feed on God. Be careful that you take the time to get your own

¹ Hummel, Charles E. *The Tyranny of the Urgent*, Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1967. pp. 11-12

supply, or before long you will be utterly exhausted. Has the way in which you have been serving betrayed you into exhaustion? If so, then rally your affections Continually go back to the foundation of your affections and recollect where the source of power is. Your supply comes from the God that saved and sanctified you. All my fresh springs shall be in thee.” *“The everlasting God fainteth not neither is weary.”* Is. 40:28

As I read this I was really challenged. It is our responsibility to feed our sheep (our children) until they can begin to feed themselves. It does exhaust our own supply unless we take time to drink deeply from the ever-springing fountain of the Word. A true servant is supplied and ready to meet the demands that come to his life. *“My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* Php. 4:19



Meeting the needs of our growing families requires the heart of a servant; otherwise we will become bogged down with the many, many petty things that the daily routine requires. These things, although mundane, must be done, and a servant’s heart will see them as an opportunity to bless and fulfill the needs of others. We will stop looking longingly out of our windows and wishing that we could be serving God in another capacity. We will find ourselves increasingly contented and fulfilled as we see the fruit of our labor: happy husband and contented children. What if we have never arrived at this point, or if we have slipped away into frustration and exhaustion, and our husbands are just as haggard and weary as we are; and our children are bickering and discontented? Surely there is an answer to this dilemma in the Word of God? I find it here: *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.”* Mt. 6:33

Stop a bit and come aside for a short time, longer if you can, and confess your neediness and your lack of contact and communication with Jesus. Oh, He knows it already, but tell Him anyway! Then finding forgiveness and freedom in your spirit, rise and soak yourself in the Word. Obtain a precious promise and hold fast to it throughout the day. If your mind and body are tired, too tired to even concentrate on your reading and meditation, then you need to stop and

rest physically. This is often difficult for a busy mother of little ones. Start by taking a nap while the little ones sleep. Let the dishes, the floor, and the laundry go for a bit, and go refresh yourself physically. This pays big dividends. Go to bed when the babies go, for a few nights, until you catch up. My husband often says that it is hard to feel spiritual when your body is run into the ground. When you have regained a measure of physical rest, your mind will be clearer and the truths that you read will stick better. Look for ways that you can impart them to those you serve. In this way the Word will not only live for you, it will become alive for your children as well.

As you seek God first, into your heart will flow rivers of living water. And when His water fills you, you are full. When you are full, it will splash out. You will smile more, sing more, and bless the Lord more. Your face will shine with the contentment and peace of His blessing on your life. As you still your heart daily before God, He will give you wisdom to deal with some of the frustrations that you face in your mothering. You will find more patience to deal with interruptions, grace available to smile when you are tired, and consistency to correct and train as you go through the day.

These character qualities will grow and be refined in you as you walk in Him, and you will be amazed to discover that as you come in line with the Word and the Master Servant, your family will begin to walk more circumspectly. God has called us to be servants in our homes. We are to reverence our husbands calling him “Lord,” just as Sara revered Abraham. If we only use the right words and our spirit is wrong, we are not faithful servants. We must, by our whole life and actions, respectfully serve our husbands.

How do we do this in a very practical way? First, our desire must be to meet the needs of our husbands in every way that God has planned for us. We need to seek God about this. When we are so tired and tense that our hearts and our desire are not for our husband, we cannot support or satisfy him as God has planned for us to do. We find ourselves wishing not to have to reach out and meet his needs. We excuse ourselves. We are mothers of many chil-

dren. We serve all day long. We think, “What about me? Do I have any rights?” God has spoken much to me along this line as I have gone through my busy years of mothering. If we are to be “*heirs together of the grace of Christ that our prayers be not hindered,*” then we must share ourselves totally with our husbands, laying down every right. It is in and through this committed sharing of body, mind, and heart that we can really become co-laborers.

Then we must lay down all the expectations that we have for our husbands. Lay them at the Master’s feet and turn our hearts up to him for examination. Let Him do His perfect work in and through us. We cannot change our husbands, nor are we accountable to God for our husbands’ needs. You and I will need to give an account for what we think and do. Often as we truly release our husbands, a sweetness comes into our lives that was not there before.

And to our surprise, we discover that we are beginning to receive the desires of our heart. Perhaps God is just waiting for us to get out of the way so that He can do His perfect work. This servanthood is not the docile, mindless service that feminists portray it to be, but rather a joyful desire to meet our husband’s needs and to be a partner with him in all that he has to do.

What a difference this would make if we always went out of our way to meet our partner’s needs! The wise king knew this as he penned the words, “*As in the water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.*” (Prov. 27:19) He was not referring to the husband and wife relationship, but it fits there! Take an interest in your husband’s business or his work projects. Support him in what he is doing if at all possible. He needs it. He labors long and hard to meet the needs of the family, no matter how simply. Bless

him for this. Notice when he works with the children and be thankful.

Women tend to get in the rut of wishing that their husbands would do more, and in so doing they become so unthankful that they do not even see the good that their husbands do accomplish. Purpose in your heart to bless your husband for the good that he does. Our husbands need the water of praise



Our husbands need the water of praise to keep their heads up, just like a flower needs water.

to keep their heads up, just like a flower needs water. And, as you start looking for positive things, you may be surprised to find that he really does much more than you ever guessed. Your thankful heart will gender a grateful spirit in your husband and it will return again to bless you. One translation of Proverbs 12:25 says, “*A word of encouragement does wonders.*” It really does!

God then calls you to serve your children by constantly pointing them to Jesus. He says, “*For of such is the kingdom of heaven.*” Mothers, this is kingdom work! But it can only be done properly as you joyfully respond to the situations around you. You may feel that you have no role model. Your mother always yelled at you, and your friends struggle with the same problems that you have.

Dear friend, do not forget the role model that you have been given. Jesus Christ is our example, and through His Word and the Spirit He will guide you into all truth. So often we tend to make excuses for ourselves and fail to really seek God. Hidden in the Word are all the exhortations that we need to maintain a Spirit-filled servanthood. But we must come there to eat regularly. Jesus must be our friend, our teacher.

Serve your children by teaching them to put God first. Teach them by your own consistent example to take time daily to read the Word and pray. Teach them to pray for others, and not just for their own needs. Teach them to praise and be joyful. If you are a mother of a large family and swallowed up in the daily round of duties, this may need to be done in a conscious way. One older mother blessed me as she shared that she sets her kitchen timer to remember to stop and praise God during their school day.

Try it! Stop in the middle of your day amidst the frustrations and bless the Lord with your children. As you include them in your time of blessing, you will set a framework and a foundation for future blessing in their lives! Teach them to serve others joyfully. Do this by being a joyful, relaxed hostess and sharing together as a family to get the meals and the house ready for guests. Do not hurry and scurry around until you are all frustrated and in bad spirits. Begin early and have fun working together. Make simple meals, but teach your children how to arrange

them neatly and serve them attractively. Children love to help roll the napkins and arrange the fruit on the platter. As they get older they begin to add to your own ideas, and you serve together in a special way.

Find books in the library that give you lots of colorful ideas about how to serve simple things attractively, even on a limited budget. Serve your children by teaching them to appreciate nature and all that God has made. You need to enjoy this yourself, or you won't be able to transfer the same appreciation to them. I have special memories of my dad taking us on nature walks and turning over the rocks to look at bugs and other critters. We hiked over rocks and sat by bubbling streams. I had my own pressed flower collection and a large collection of beautiful moths and butterflies.

We have shared this love with our children. Even when they were very tiny I would take them by the hand and we would wander out into the woods and pick up leaves or tiny bouquets of flowers. We would stop and listen to the birds and try to see them. When they were older, we took longer excursions and began to climb rocks and collect things. Sometimes we would have a museum, and sometimes we would make miniature dishes out of acorn caps and cups. What a fun way to serve your child. He will never, never forget it!

Teach them the proper use and appreciation of music and art. Sing with them. Color with them. Learn to draw with them and make cards and scrapbooks for sick family and friends. The older children have many memories of going into old folks' homes when they were age 10 and under and singing at the bedsides. Both they and the elderly enjoyed it. I have to confess that I do not do this as much as I once did. These things cultivate a servant's heart and are lots of fun!

Serve them by teaching them to work! You and they will never regret it. They will work for you and they will learn a discipline they will appreciate for the rest of their lives. Play games and sing as you work together. Talk and share hearts as you work together. You have a chance to learn a lot about your child's innermost thoughts as you work side by side in a non-threatening situation. Some of the best talks our children have had with me are when I am working with



**Make simple meals,
but teach your
children how to ar-
range them neatly
and serve them
attractively.**

them. This is why I choose to work with my children instead of just giving them jobs to do.

Sometimes when I see mothers that spend lots of time on the road, the phone, the computer, or their projects, I wonder if they have really cultivated a servant's heart. I wonder if they know that their children would probably work so much better if they would just take the time to set the example that they want the children to follow. I wonder if they know that they are missing the good talks, the fun times, and a child who is developing a servant's heart.

Once again, more is caught than taught. Serve them by creating memories for them. Teach them how to have good times, even at the expense of normal, daily routine. You see, in large families the workload is so big that we could always find work to do. It is never done. So if you want to have a special time, you may have to let some cleaning or something go for a day or two.

Take the time to have a celebration of family togetherness and love. You can do this with a special meal, a treasure hunt, or a game night. Often our good times consist of simply sitting together in the evening from 6:45 to 7:30 and reading a good book out loud.

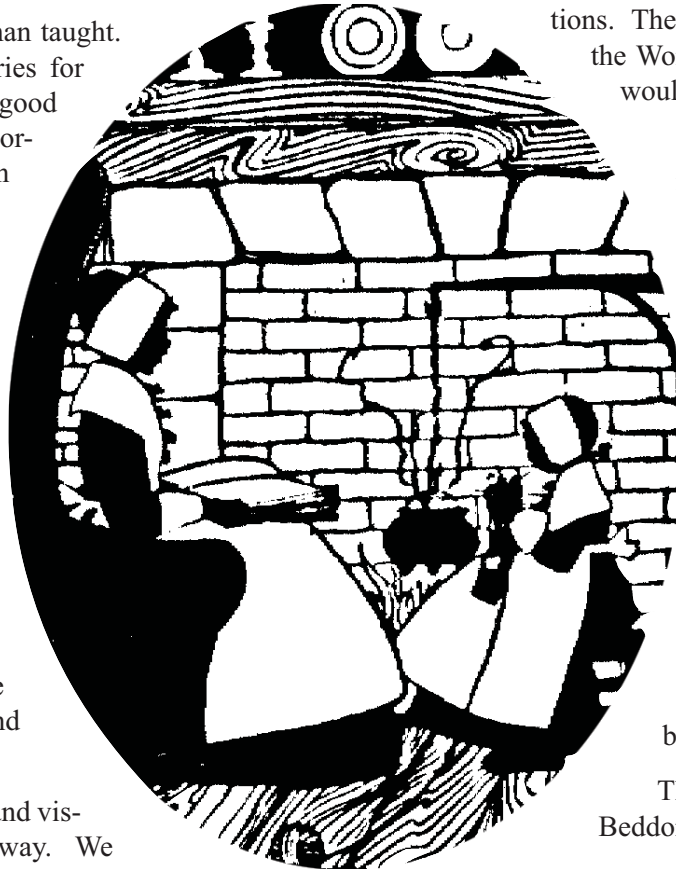
We have read so many books and visited so many countries in this way. We have met missionaries and other famous people. We have gone places we could never hope to go as a family. We have been in floods, smuggled Bibles, and visited concentration camps. It is one of our favorite things to do. It is a way I serve my family.

Time to sit and chat is special too. And it does take time. It is a service that you cannot measure in this life. It is the bridge of communication that builds trust and inspires confidences. It is the door to opportunities to instill precious values and teach truths that could otherwise not be imparted. It is probably one of the simplest, yet most difficult ways, to meet your young person where he is.

Why? Because it is best done in the quiet and alone from the rush and bustle of the day, and that ideal time seems to be when the little ones are tucked in for the night. It seems that it is just as important as rocking your teething baby to sleep.

Indeed, it provides much of the same security to a youth who is struggling to set his values and understand what his place is. Here the heart of a servant lays down the right to sleep. What fellowship! What a blessing! What friendships are strengthened and what bridges are built!

There are countless more ways to serve, to share yourself with your family, and build in them the life of Jesus so that they may serve Him better. Lest you become over-anxious and feel like you can never attain, remember this: A servant only follows his master's directions. Therefore you must seek and find in the Word and before the Lord what He would have you to do for your family.



He would not have you worried, hurried, and harried, trying to follow something I have laid out. He would have you “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.*”

You will serve your family best if you are happy and peaceful. You may not ever do all of the things that I have mentioned here. They are not all necessary, but it is necessary to have a happy, joyful heart of love that flows from being in touch with the Master.

The song below, by Benjamin Beddome, says it so well:

Love is the Fountain Whence

*Love is the fountain whence all true obedience flows;
The Christian serves the God He loves and loves the God
He knows.
He treads the heavenly road and neither faints nor tires;
That generous love which warms his breast with fortitude
inspires.
No burden seems so great, no task so hard appears,
But this he cheerfully performs and that he meekly bears.
May love—that shining grace—o'er all my powers preside,
Direct my thoughts, suggest my words, and every action
guide. ~*

“You won’t find those here ...”

Dean Taylor



An interesting thing happened last month here in Lancaster County. The day was September 11, and an apparently patriotic elderly gentleman went into Good’s Store looking to purchase a few new flags to adorn his lawn—as a kind of “9-11” memorial. When he couldn’t find any flags in the store, he asked one of the sales clerks why they didn’t have any flags. He didn’t like the answer! In a statement to the Lancaster newspaper, the man reported:

*“After looking for some time, I inquired as to where they (US Flags) were kept. The clerk and then the manager’s answer astounded me. I was told, ‘... we don’t sell those here and we never will’. ‘You won’t find THOSE here ...’ the little girl at the register said as she wrinkled her nose. I was confused, so I pressed further and asked why. I was told firmly by the manager ... ‘We are a conservative Christian store and we don’t take sides; having American flags does that.’ He echoed what the female cashier said when I said ‘sides to what?’ and answered: **“That would be patriotic, and we don’t get involved in the***

*whole state and country thing.’ When I reminded him that he operates a business in America and relies on Americans to purchase his ‘Goods,’ and that Americans are in harm’s way NOW protecting his rights to worship freely and sell his ‘Goods’ in a capitalistic and free society, he said: **‘that may be, but we’re not part of that.’** ‘Oh, really?’ I said. When I asked who owned the operation he reluctantly told me a gentleman by the name of **Burkholder** and those are his policies/beliefs. I left the \$66.00 worth of merchandise at Customer Service.” (Quoted from lancasteronline.com—bold print is from the original.)*

This incident quickly caught the attention of local radio, newspaper, websites, and even the local television station as they all came to this little Mennonite-owned variety store to get “the story.” If this young sales clerk would just have said something like “they’re sold out” or “I’ll check on it,” the guy would have probably just gone away. Commendably however, she shared her convictions. Impressively, in spite of all the media attention, the store never backed

down. When I heard about it, I sent an encouraging email to their manager. Through that, I had the opportunity to meet the owner, Ken Brubaker. As we talked, I discovered that there were actually several things that the store refused to sell—such as Santa Clauses, jack-o-lanterns, and even girl’s pants! It was a blessing to see a business with some integrity. A few days later, I had the opportunity to come to their management board meeting to address their management staff. Given the opportunity to speak to them, I blessed them for their stand, and encouraged them to keep it up.

America, like all countries, has many idols. The flag—to many—is certainly one of them. Paragraph (j) Section (8) of the US Flag Code states: “The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing.” Sound scary? I think so. After continual attention and pointed questions, Good’s Store released their official position to the newspaper and to all that inquired. Here it is:

We do not sell the American flag because of our Anabaptist faith (Mennonite, Amish, etc.), which holds to the belief and interpretation of the New Testament teaching of love for our enemies, non-violence, and non-participation in war. (Matt. 5:38-39; James 5:5-6; I Peter 3:13-18) Because the flag often represents support for military ac-

tion as the solution to world problems, both the prior and the present generation of owners have chosen not to sell the flag. We believe that the freedoms that we enjoy are a privilege and a blessing from God, and believe it

is our duty to support our civil government in following its laws and paying taxes where not in conflict with our interpretation of the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ. We also acknowledge that by choosing this as a principle of our faith and conviction, we may have to suffer for our faith if God chooses it to be so. We desire to live as faithful followers of Jesus Christ in our community according to our interpretation of the Bible. Finally, we want to affirm our respect for those who differ with us on this and other matters of faith.

Well said, Good’s Store! I hope that your stand encourages other businesses to let their convictions permeate even their business life. Oh, and just one more thing—I found it interesting to read the feedback from folks posting on the Lancaster paper website, concerning the article about Good’s Store not selling the flag. Some of the patriots seemed pretty upset that they were not able to purchase their flag at Good’s Store. One writer reassured them, however, “I’m sure Walmart will sell you a flag—made in China.” ~



I discovered that there were actually several things that the store refused to sell—such as Santa Clauses, jack-o-lanterns, and even girl’s pants!



SEEDS OF THE KINGDOM

Seed Sower Award



*The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. Mt. 13:24
And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. He. 10:24*

In this series, we intend to highlight the work of those who are currently busy introducing the seeds of righteousness, peace, and joy into this sin-filled earth, with the hopes that at least a few lives will receive the Word and be eternally changed. The purpose in turning the spotlight on these works is not to glorify those men and women who are actively advancing the kingdom of God, but rather to stimulate YOU, the reader, into doing YOUR part in YOUR corner. Neither is the purpose meant to be that of asking the readers to donate financially or personally participate in these projects, although that is certainly an option in some cases. Take these ideas, tweak them to fit your situation, and begin to plant the kingdom of God in your environs. The inclusion of any person or church in these articles is not an endorsement by *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* of every doctrine and practice that the spotlighted individuals or churches may represent in other areas of their life. As well, the spotlighted person/group may not endorse all aspects of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*.

In this issue, we are going to look at a ministry to the poor. On the header of their newsletter, The Society of the Good Shepherd uses the verse from Mt. 25:40 "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." As I have watched this ministry through the years, I really believe that this has been their heart: to minister Christ in an entire way to people who would be considered "the least of these." The following is based on an interview with David Bercot, who started this ministry.

(The Heartbeat of the Remnant) To begin with, perhaps you could tell us what the Society of the Good Shepherd is, and what you are doing in Honduras.

(David Bercot) We are a Christian ministry that makes interest-free, small business loans—often called micro-

loans—to Christians in Honduras; to either help them start a small business, or in most cases provide them with more capital to grow, since down there you cannot borrow money from a bank unless you are already wealthy.

(THR) Interesting! Where did the idea for this whole thing get started?

(DB) Well, it is interesting how it got started. It would go back to 1987. I was practicing law full-time, and my wife and I decided to take a vacation. She had been to Jamaica as a girl, and I suggested that we go there and just have some time together. So we did that. We found the first day that we didn't really like hanging around the hotel because of the rock music and beach atmosphere. Taking a walk, we ended up sitting on some boulders, and a man approached us and started a conversation. It ended up that he was a taxi driver, and so we arranged for him to drive us around the next day for X amount of dollars for the day.

The next day when he picked us up, he had to drop by his house for some reason, and we had the opportunity to see the extreme poverty that he lived in. His house was a shanty, with open drainage running close by. So we got in a conversation, as I was curious how he could ever afford to buy a taxi. It turns out that he did not own the taxi, as did none of the other taxi drivers around. The drivers would rent the car for so much a day, and at the end of the day he paid the owner his rental fee, and kept whatever profit he made—if he made any. I realized that this guy would never be able to “get ahead” by this system. There wasn’t much profit margin for the driver, just enough for him to “scrape by.”

So my wife and I got to talking, and we began to wonder if there would be a way to retire from my job and return to Jamaica and help these struggling taxi drivers and other workers with loans that they could pay back after a few years and eventually own their own taxis and break out of the grinding poverty. It wouldn’t be a handout. We saw they were ambitious, hardworking people, but the system was against them.

So we made plans to return in a few months to actually do this, but it turned out that we decided Jamaica was too tourist oriented, and we then chose Honduras.

(THR) Now when you were there in Jamaica, and you saw that scene, obviously something called compassion rose up in your heart. Had you at that point ever heard of something like micro-loans before?

(DB) At that point I had never heard of that before. Now I am not saying no one else was doing it, but that I had never heard of it myself. It just struck me how that in their situation there was no way to obtain any capital to get started. The rich would always control things. Before we went to Jamaica, I had just spent a year reading the early church writings, and had noticed how they talked about having a fund set aside to help people in prison, a shipwreck, bury the poor, or whatever; whether they were Christians or not, they were helped. Most of my life, when I thought of Christian ministry I thought in terms of evangelism. I am not downplaying that, but Jesus in Matthew 25 talked about ministering to the poor, and I wanted to get involved because this is the witness to what Christianity is all about. Jesus put this love in us, that when we are born again, we love people ...

(THR) Amen!!

(DB) ... and want to help them.

(THR) So do you believe Jesus meant it—you don’t spiritualize it—when He said what He did in Matthew 25 about the questions He is going to ask on judgment day?

(DB) I honestly do believe so. I look at Jesus as saying what He means, unless it is obviously a hyperbole. To me, it’s like the illustration that I have used before of a college

professor. He says tomorrow we are going to have final exams, and I am going to be real nice and tell you the questions. And furthermore, I am going to tell you the answers that are expected. Then all the students say, “Ah, he’s lying. That’s not what he’s going to ask. He’s going to ask other questions.” But it is crazy, because people do that exact thing with what Jesus said in Matthew 25.

(THR) So, after you started in Honduras, did the ministry grow faster or slower than what you expected?

(DB) It started off very slow. We made a lot of mistakes at the beginning. Microloans were a new thing, and we offered to work with some others who were already doing it, but some of those had unbiblical agendas like helping women start businesses to be able to be independent from their husbands. I wanted to help build strong families, not pull them apart.

In the beginning, a lot of loans we made didn’t get paid back. Now, these loans did help the people; and maybe there was sickness or something that made it so the loan didn’t get paid back, but we are not going to drag them into court or something like that. Over the years, we have learned what kind of businesses work and what will not.

(THR) As time has gone on, do you now have other people partnering with you in this ministry?

(DB) Yes, over the years others have slowly joined in, and God has taken care of all of our needs. When we posted what we were doing on the Internet, many others have found out and have joined in with us.

(THR) Amen.

(DB) The money comes in, and the needs are there. Like this rural health clinic, run by the government. The roof was leaking, with no money. They only had a one-room maternity clinic, and one certain weekend they had eleven



While the Society of the Good Shepherd focuses on microloans, they do not pass by opportunities to bless in other ways, such as fixing this needy roof on a clinic.

births, and so on. So we just published it in our newsletter and the funds came in. This was not our regular work, but something we ran into being down there.

One of the criteria that we have for helping folks—and it doesn't have to be this way, it is just that is our way of operating—is that the recipient has to be a Christian who is already putting the kingdom of God first. We help a lot of pastors, which in turn helps the whole congregation by allowing him to have a small business that his family can help him in, and then he in turn has more time for ministry.

(THR) I can't help but think of the analogy that Jesus gave us, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed."

(DB) Yes.

(THR) Now one of the things that people are often afraid



You think you are helping some poor person, but Jesus is saying "That's me!"

of in charitable ministries is dependency, or making "rice Christians." But it seems that the emphasis of your ministry is to prevent that kind of thing.

(DB) Yes. One thing is, we have not advertised. We try to keep it a "secret." We have a board of directors taken from men of local churches, Hondurans. Unfortunately, they have the unpleasant job of telling a lot of people "no." It is only committed Christians that we are helping, so there is no danger of making "rice Christians," since these are people who already have a track record. We talk to their pastors,

neighbors, etc. before we make the loan. Plus, we examine the business reality, and the need. It may be a "safe" loan, and they would be needy compared to an American, but we could maybe help someone needier.

(THR) One of the whole purposes of this "Seed Sower Award" is to inspire other people. What are some things that you see as possibilities down there, not exactly what you are doing perhaps, but ideas for others to pick up on?

(DB) Well, something that somebody else is doing, which we just learned about the last time we were down, is starting a nursing home. Now here in the U.S., that might have a bad connotation. But down there, sometimes the families don't want the elderly people, or if they need medical care, the families cannot provide it. And, there is no place for them to go; no Social Security, etc. And some of these people just wander in the streets until they die. So this man built a little nursing home and takes these people in, free of charge, where they can spend the rest of their days in a happy environment. It's nothing fancy, but it's not degrading. This is the very type of people that Jesus was talking about. You think you are helping some Honduran, but Jesus is saying, "That's me!"

(THR) That's right!

(DB) There are so many things one could do, that is just one of them.

(THR) Now, you published in your newsletter about helping to add the wing on to the rural health clinic. What was the response down there to the new wing?

(DB) Oh, wonderful! One of the things the brothers did while building was each morning one of them would give his testimony and they would share literature. So everybody knew that this was coming from Christians, and through that some even gave their life to Christ. Even the director of the project, a hard-working man who was also the mayor of the town at one time, but had no time for Christ, had a real change of attitude towards Christians. So it has been exciting to see these things. And we are not doing it to "manipulate" things, or to draw attention to ourselves. We just wanted to help the people.

(THR) Amen! What would you say is the biggest need that you have right now with your ministry?

(DB) Our ministry is flowing along very well. There is only so much that one person can do. I take care of one town, and another brother has volunteered to take care of another nearby town.

People could do this same thing anywhere. They do not have to do it through us, or we would be glad to help somebody. We are not trying to build some great big ministry.

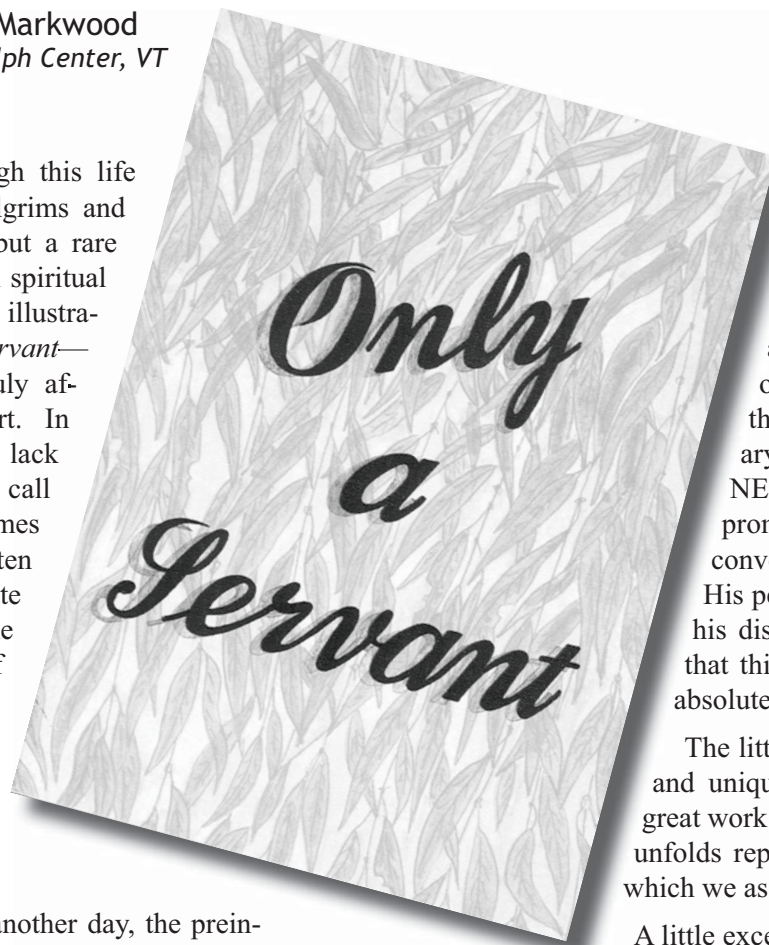
-Continued on p. 35



A book review by David Markwood
Little Flock of Christ, Randolph Center, VT

As we journey through this life here on earth as pilgrims and strangers, I find it but a rare occasion that a book of such spiritual quality and true Christian illustration—such as is *Only a Servant*—surfaces and finds itself truly affecting the cords of our heart. In this day and age we greatly lack examples of what we might call a biblically “perfect life.” (James 3:2) This little book that I often hold in my hand and distribute to others contains one of the few post-biblical examples of such a life, a life that I would deem as perfect in word and deed. To sum up such a life, I would simply repeat the title of this precious jewel—*Only a Servant*.

The story takes place in another day, the pre-industrial age, in a little Slovakian village, where broken relationships and broken lives intermingle one with another in broken ways. The story begins with the sudden appearance of a young and mysterious man whose name is Methodius Ruzansky. The character of this young man is the captivating core of this little book. Methodius is a “perfect” Christian illustration, because his Christianity is fully “missionary based.” He arrives in this little defunct hamlet with the sole intention of ushering in redemption. Methodius is truly a man of the Spirit of God; he so gracefully bears the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, LONGSUFFERING, gentleness,



goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. He demonstrates a life of both simplicity and mobility. He has a single mind and a single eye. He is full of the wisdom of God. He in the truest sense is a missionary, a preacher, a prophet, a NEIGHBOR. There is no compromise in the character and conversation of this young man. His personality, his temperament, his disposition, his faith, his fire: that this is his very moral fiber is absolutely inspiring.

The little village and all its diverse and unique characters in which this great work of redemption mysteriously unfolds represent every community in which we as the children of God live.

A little excerpt on the back of this little book sums up much: “Several mysteries are unraveled in this small volume, and Christ is honored. This story teaches valuable lessons that will challenge every serious Christian to evaluate his own role in this world, whether he himself is indeed only a servant.” I highly recommend this little book for the purpose of deep inner evaluation and inspiration, as well as for distribution.

Only a Servant, by Kristina Roy, may be purchased from Rod and Staff Publishers, P.O. Box 3, Crockett, Kentucky 41413. (606) 522-4348

GOD'S PEOPLE KEEP SINGING

Ode to the King

PSALM 24:7-10; 71:23
M. A., 2005

Mike Atmip, 2005; arr.



1. Je - sus, You are my LORD, King of na - ture re - stored, You con- quered all my love!
2. Your king - dom now has come, Your rule on earth be - gun, In my heart reigns Your love!
3. Hope like an o - cean wave Breaks the fear of the grave: A- bounds faith and true love!
4. Judg - ment streams o'er the earth, Dis- placed the na - tions' mirth With Your e - ter - nal love!
5. Truth is re - al - i - ty, Right- eous- ness giv - en me, I am made just by love!



I've ris - en from the dead, Beau - ty in ash - es' stead, I'm re - sur - rect - ed now!
Sa - tan has been cast out, Of grace there is no doubt, I now have o - ver come!
The lame leaps like a deer, The deaf ones now can hear, Ran- somed by Your own blood.
Van - i - ty flees a - way, Dark- ness re - pelled by day, Life springs out from the tomb!
The des - ert blooms a - gain, No more op - pressed by sin, En - liv - ened by Your word!



PUBLIC DOMAIN

I want you ...



... to send your songs, poems, and articles to *The Remnant* for publication. If this magazine is to truly be the "heartbeat" of God's faithful remnant, then it should include current samplings of what God is doing among His people. See the inside of the front cover for information on where to send materials.

-Continued from p. 32 Seeds of the Kingdom

You could pick any poor country on earth and do the same sort of thing. Even secular agencies—humanitarian aid groups—are doing microloans and finding it to be one of the most effective ways of helping the poor, rather than just giving handouts. Handouts just make people dependent, but this gives them dignity and independence.

(THR) Could you give us a close-up look at one person who has walked through one of these loans?

(DB) We have a number of excellent people, but one single lady comes to mind—Milagro. I don't know the name of her disease, but it has weakened her terribly and is extremely painful. She is really committed to Christ, and she leads ladies' Bible studies in her neighborhood. However, because of her health, she really is unable to work. Anyway, her father gave her an empty lot in the village of La Paz, where she lives. We issued her a loan so that she could build a duplex apartment there to rent out. She did that, and it worked out real well, and she paid off the loan. In cases like that, where persons prove themselves responsible, then we will make them a second loan, if there is a need. So she took out a second loan and is building more apartments. Now, she lives about an hour from the town we normally work in, so we asked her if she would be willing to be responsible to get the Society's microloan project germinated in her community. So that is how we got the other brother from Austin, Texas involved. He goes to La Paz now and works with Milagro and various pastors there. So we blessed her, and now she is involved in helping spread that blessing.

(THR) Well, praise the Lord! I think of the words of Jesus where He said that even if we give a cup of cold water in His name, we will in no wise lose our reward. I am blessed to hear this idea, which is the whole thought behind this Seed Sower Award: There are things that we can do. Jesus gave us His heart, saying that He had come to proclaim the good news to the poor, to set at liberty those in bondage, and heal the brokenhearted and similar things. It blesses me to see examples in which people can get ideas and see the seeds of the kingdom of God grow.

May God bless your ministry! It has been a blessing talking with you today.

(DB) It's been good to share with you also. ~

You can obtain more information about this ministry by writing to Society of the Good Shepherd, P. O. Box 122, Amberson, PA 17210,

Or, you can visit <http://www.scrollpublishing.com/store/newsletter.html> for a brief summary of the work.

3rd Quarter 2009 Financial Report

Thank you for your support!



07/01/09 Beginning Balance	\$43,344.36
Receipts	
Tape Ministry Donations	\$21,403.74
Remnant Subscription Donations	\$6,755.50
Total Receipts	\$28,159.24
Disbursements	
UPS & Postage	\$6,271.70
Tapes, Albums, CD's & Labels	\$11,903.39
Equipment & Software Purchases	\$1,782.39
Equipment Maintenance & Repairs	\$311.44
Mailing & Office Supplies	\$2,091.92
Rent	\$2,250.00
Telephone	\$711.50
Website Development & Maintenance	\$1,630.54
Building Improvements	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	\$229.52
Payroll Expense	\$18,272.34
Books & Catalogs	\$1,643.53
Remnant Publishing & Mailing	\$4,660.80
Total Disbursements	\$51,759.07
09/30/09 Ending Balance	\$19,744.53
Difference	-\$23,599.83

The Heartbeat of

The Remnant

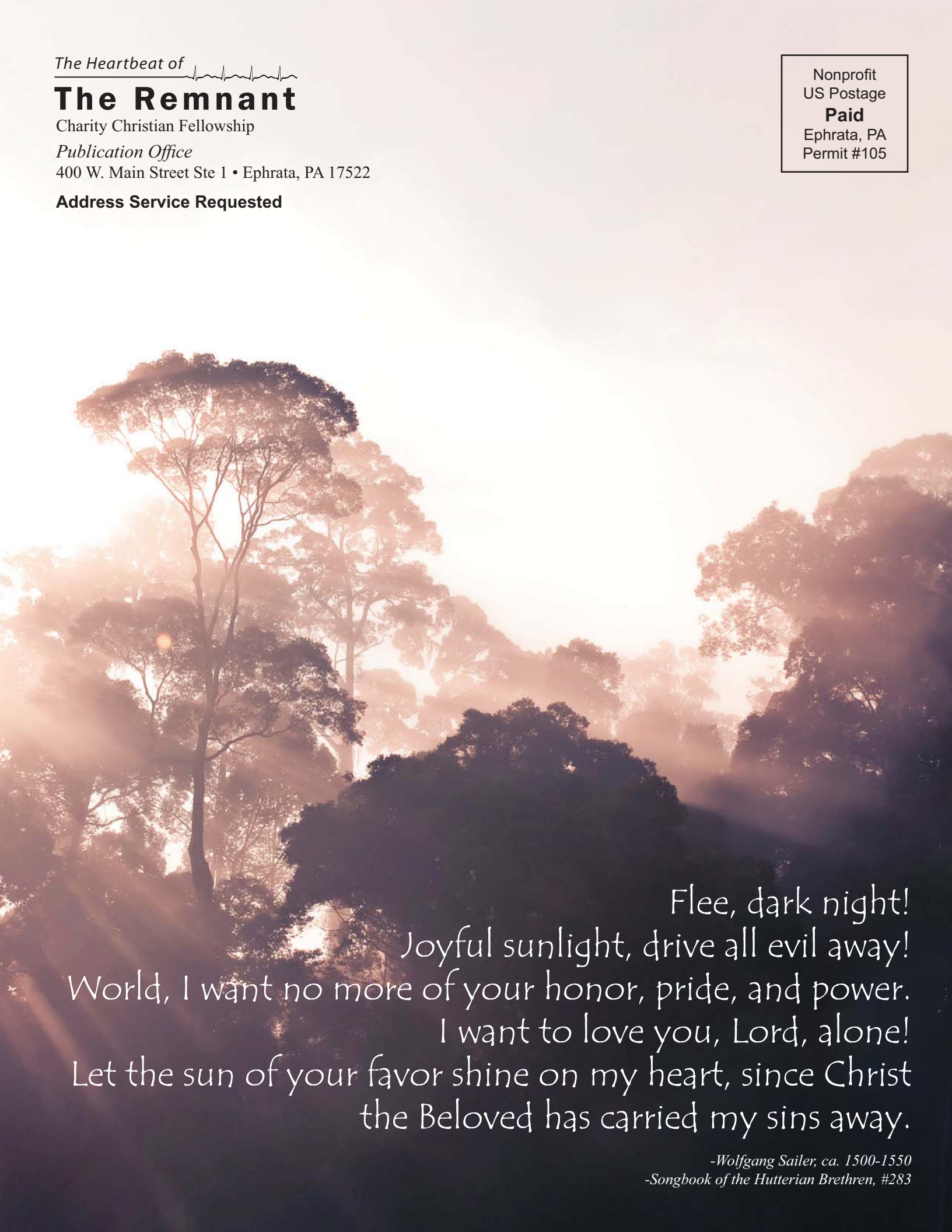
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Flee, dark night!
Joyful sunlight, drive all evil away!
World, I want no more of your honor, pride, and power.
I want to love you, Lord, alone!
Let the sun of your favor shine on my heart, since Christ
the Beloved has carried my sins away.

-Wolfgang Sailer, ca. 1500-1550
-Songbook of the Hutterian Brethren, #283