

From the Editor

A few weeks ago I received an interesting email. Somehow, avoiding my spam filter, this email was from a sheet music company that I had ordered from years ago. The music company sent out a news report about a man named Eric Whitacre, who had the idea to create an internet-based “virtual choir.”



The composer utilized a total of 185 individual singers from 12 different countries, all singing to themselves through their computer microphone. Whitacre collected the results and stitched together a “choir performance” via computer software and the internet. I watched the “performance” and I had to admit that it was impressive. Young people from China, Puerto Rico, Switzerland, America, and more, all singing in a simulated panorama that almost resembled a mass choir—it almost sounded like one too. Impressive, yes, but somehow it also seemed a bit scary to me.

Lately, the marketplace is spending a lot of time advertising with phrases like “staying together,” or “getting connected.” They tell us that through the marvels of silicon gadgetry we now have whole new ways of “staying close.” I disagree.

As a perfect example of just how ridiculous this is all getting, I hear that Facebook and Twitter now both have a command that allows you to virtually *jab* your electronic “friend.” Twitter called theirs a “nudge.” Facebook has affectionately entitled their little cyber harassment a “poke.” I’m scared to imagine what they will think up next. A loner-type from Canada once even suggested to me the idea of a “virtual church,” complete with online communion.

It seems that built into every human soul is a genuine desire for real and meaningful community. Sharing lives, connecting hearts, and experiencing real love is built deep within us. Simulated choirs and cyber pokes may be technically impressive, but they are not human. Tears, frowns, a kiss, a tender touch, or even that feeling you get in your chest when your singing with all your heart are all real. These things will never be replaced by a microchip or on-line families.

The trick is that, most of the time, real relationships are hard. But when you look at the life of Jesus, it seems that somehow this “getting along” has something to do with what it’s all about—“that the world may know that thou hast sent me.” Jo. 17:23 John the Baptist might have been a voice crying out in the wilderness, but Jesus chose to fulfill His design by gathering around him an intimate group of people. Let’s not trade the design of God for cyber-society and simulated brotherhood.

In this issue we have several articles that challenge us to experience meaningful fellowship. We have published a small spiritual biography of Amy Carmichael in



her quest to escape Burger King Church and find genuine sisterhood. The cover article deals with one of the biggest enemies to brotherhood, self. And then we have a sincere plea for a return to kingdom Christianity and its theological centerpiece, titled “The Seditious Sermon.” The other major article is a book review of Peter Riedemann’s major writings, an early Anabaptist who also found the blessed experience of brotherhood through the Lamb that was slain.

God bless you as you read this issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant!* ~Bro. Dean