

From the Editor

“Do you feel that!” asked my coworker with surprise. As she spoke, I looked around the library and noticed that the whole room was slightly shaking back and forth. Soon we all realized that we were experiencing an earthquake. It was my first. It was small, only a 5.9 on the Richter scale. The epicenter was also pretty far away, at a city in Virginia, right outside of Washington DC. Not much damage occurred, but the feeling was strange, one that you don’t soon forget.

A week later another stirring thing occurred as Hurricane Irene came through, tearing up things from the Outer Banks to New York City. But even more upsetting than shaking buildings and closed beaches, a week before the earthquake the European and American stock markets took a dive that seemed to signal once again of an approaching economic crisis. Truth is ... the economic picture probably caused more quaking than both the earthquake and hurricane combined.

I ponder my response to all of this. Why is it that when one of these little tragedies occur I feel a strange sense of anticipation or eagerness? You know? I wonder about myself sometimes. On one hand I think, “Isn’t it a bit sick to get excited about the end of the world?” There’s something morbid about getting enthusiastic about oncoming catastrophic disasters or getting animated about seeing a graph of the Dow Jones that resembles a barrel going over the Niagara Falls.

Events like these perplex me. I genuinely hurt over the suffering that is experienced by people, resulting from these catastrophes. I wish there was more that I could do to help. On the other hand, during these times I feel a strange, renewed hope to keep watching for the coming of my Lord. I’m reminded of Jesus’ warning about His coming: “And what I say to you, I say to all, Watch!” Mk. 13:37

So I’m watching ... and I get a bit eager. However, being a student of history, I realize that through the centuries almost every committed group of Christians have felt this way. Many spoke about the imminent return of

Christ. But that doesn’t stop me. Jesus’ words are still the same: “And what I say to you, I say to all.”

I’m part of that “all”—now it’s my turn. In saying that, I notice that when I keep looking down the road watching, sometimes I start seeing things. At times I question if what I am seeing is really there or not. In the desert, thirsty travelers, seeing an oasis in the distance, desperately ask themselves, “Is this real, is this a mirage, or is this just a cruel hallucination?” Both a mirage and a hallucination can be disappointing. But they say that there is an important difference between a mirage and a hallucination.

A hallucination is merely a figment of someone’s imagination—there is nothing real about it. A mirage, however, is a reflection of something real—it’s just further ahead than originally thought. As I watch the signs of the times, I watch trusting that Jesus meant what He said. I watch and realize that if this is not the final day, than at the very least it is a mirage and not a hallucination. It is a reflection of something real. It is simply further ahead than I originally thought. The kingdom—in its fullness—is coming.

In preparation for that day, God told us that He wants to purify us. It seems that with me, most of the times it takes more than an earthquake to do it. The writer of Hebrews put it this way: “Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.” He. 12:26-29

I thank God for that grace spoken of here. I need it when He strips off those “things that are shaken.” I long for the coming of the Lord, even if that coming causes me some groaning and travailing. Paul says that the whole of creation is groaning right along with me: “For

we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Ro. 8:22-23 The earthquakes, hurricanes, and stock market crashes—right along with the emotional upheavals of my life—are all part of that anguish of the “whole creation that waits for the full redemption.”

One of the things I need to include in this issue is to announce that the magazine is now under the publishing oversight of Ephrata Christian Fellowship. Charity Christian Fellowship and Ephrata Christian Fellowship are no longer continuing a joint media ministry. I would rather not mention it, but I think it is appropriate to be transparent to the readers.

I also wish I could say that I am unmoved by the events that led to this change. However, to be honest, I am very disappointed. I do want to say, however, that I am thankful for those who continue to bless and support this ministry. The staff of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* is committed to producing a magazine that upholds truth and encourages the church to be radical followers of Jesus Christ.

It seems that there is a lot of shaking going on these days in many churches and Christian circles. My prayer is that the church will hear what God is saying to us during these challenging times. As God shakes away everything that can be shaken, let us all hold on to our only true anchor—Jesus Christ. Let us allow Him to create His “kingdom which cannot be moved.” Maranatha—Lord come quickly!

In this issue, we take a look at a good, thorough confession made by a bunch of preachers of days gone by. What would happen if the ministers in our land openly confessed and repented? Would the flock follow? Then we take a deep look at the life of John Kline, a man who gave himself to serving the flock, even ultimately giving his life rather than quit serving.

For the Sisters’ Corner, we look at how marriage is like gardening, weeds and all. And sprinkled throughout the magazine are shorter articles, including the reasons why Christians have refused to let a TV in their homes . . . with a few probing questions as to just how different TV is from the Internet.

We hope that this issue of *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* will cause you to lift up your head amongst earthquakes, hurricanes, and crashes, both physical and spiritual! ~Bro. Dean