

The Heartbeat of 
The Remnant

January/February 2011
Volume 17 Number 1



LEVIATHAN REVEALED!

SEE PAGE 18

The Remnant

Publisher

Charity Ministries
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Ephrata, PA 17522

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The Heartbeat of the Remnant is published bimonthly by Charity Ministries. Subscription is available upon request, at no cost. *The Remnant* is financially supported by the gifts of God's people as they respond to the promptings of His Holy Spirit. We request your prayerful consideration of this need.

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C O N T E N T S

3 FROM THE EDITOR

4 GOING BEYOND

13 THE BURGER KING CHURCH

14 SAYING "NO!" TO MR. WORRY

17 INSIDE AND OUT

18 SELF—THE MONSTER

24 VIRTUOUS GIRLHOOD FROM
THE BIBLE

25 PETER RIEDEMANN'S CONFESSIONS

29 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS AND
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

32 SECRET SIN

32 UNTRIED FAITH

33 THE SEDITIOUS SERMON

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



Going Beyond

The spiritual journey of Amy Carmichael

Introduction

Reading the story of the judges and kings of Judah and Israel, one finds a history of hills and dales. Some of the leaders of Israel took God's people on a downhill journey, low, so low that one wonders how they could grovel in the dirt and still retain any sense of integrity about themselves.

Others soared to the clouds; faithful shepherds who dared to do such things as depose their own mother as queen or cut down the family idols and burn them, for the glory of God. Those were revival days! Were we to graph out the whole history, the result would look something like a distant mountain ridge, with its silhouette against the bright sky making a line that moves randomly up and down. So went the kings and prophets, some higher, some lower.

And so go we.

The story of Amy Carmichael is one of climbing toward the clouds. Her life and work is one to be admired, and emulated. But ...

As with the judges and kings who marched God's people in an upward way, there are sometimes little phrases of sadness pasted into the story, usually beginning with "nevertheless," "but," or "howbeit." Just one example among many is found in 2 Kings 14:3: "And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his father." The next verse contains another of those sad conjunctions, "howbeit": "Howbeit

the high places were not taken away." We thus see Amaziah as one who overall had a positive rating, guiding God's people forward. Yet ... the bottom line is that he could have done better. How God will judge all those things, I dare not say. I am happy to leave those things in His hands.

Such is the life of Amy Carmichael. We shall see a general upward move, and in certain aspects, standing head and shoulders above the general run of Christianity; even standing among giants, if you will. We look up to her.

Howbeit—we at *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* are obligated to use that sad word—we wish that a few things could have been better yet. One example would be her unveiled head in public, in her younger years at least. Or perhaps the fact that while she seemed to live out nonresistance in her personal life, she fellowshipped with those who did not.

Like with Amaziah—who generally did well, but who did not take away the high places—we will let God judge Amy according to the light she had and the light she rejected. We are responsible to walk in the light we have, in our life and our environs, teaching and holding others accountable to that light.

We say all this as a sort of "disclaimer" concerning Amy Carmichael. While her life in general is to be admired, and in some aspects reaches beyond ours, we are obligated to say that—according to the light we have at the present—there are a few of those sad "buts" and "howbeits" in her walk. That said, we are going to focus for the moment on what she did, the "yes and amen" parts of her life.

And we do that with one goal in mind: so that her life may show us a couple of the "buts" and "howbeits" in our own life. May we all be ready to "go beyond" our present walk, into the very fullness of the character of Christ. May her story let a little bit more of His light into our life. It is too late for us to shine more truth into Amy's life, but it is not too late for her life to shine into ours, taking us—hopefully—beyond our own "howbeits"!

Irish girl by the sea

The little "spade and bucket" town of Millisle in Northern Ireland cradled the future missionary in its sandy beaches and country lanes. Born into a family of solid Presbyterians, Amy Carmichael was blessed by a firm upbringing. Yes meant yes, and no was no. If Amy or any of her six younger siblings tried to define "yes" as "no," or "no" as "yes," the discipline was meted out, and while the sting was yet there, the offender was required to politely thank the trainer.

But they were happy days, as disciplined childhood days usually are; riding horses on the beach, watching the sea birds in flight, or swallowing a dozen plum seeds. After all, the nursemaid—trying to deter the child from eating the stones—had told Amy that a tree would grow out of her head for each stone she swallowed. Amy reasoned that it would be nice to have plenty of fruit within easy reach, and so quickly swallowed twelve! Such are childhood days in a secure, happy family!

At twelve years of age, she was sent to England to attend a Methodist boarding school. For a child coming from a loving, secure home, the homesickness was just short of devastating. The years at the school were some of Amy's worst, as far as obedience was concerned. In her autobiography she lamented to her "children": "If I told you much about those years, it would not help you, for I was not at all what I want you to be."

About three years later, she came to understand that although she had known about Jesus' love from childhood, she had not "opened the door" and surrendered to let Him into His throne room—her heart. On that day, she did so.

The family soon ran into financial difficulties which necessitated her recall to Ireland. Three years later, her father contracted double pneumonia and quickly passed from this world. Amy was 18, a young lady, now living with her family in Belfast, a small city, but the largest one in north Ireland.

Beyond girlhood

Paul spoke of childhood in the following manner, being a man: "When I became a man, I put away childish things." This process usually does not happen in one night, but as boys and girls mature in their minds, they begin to lose interest in tractors and dolls. Unfortunately, very few adolescents bypass the folly of the teen years, and more unfortunate is the fact that modern society encourages adolescents to stay adolescents as long as they possibly can. But Paul probably included what we call adolescence when he spoke of "childish things." For young ladies, adolescence is a time of awakening femininity, a time when pretty clothes, socializing within cliques, and an embarrassing consciousness of outward appearance stand supreme in their thoughts. A few in every generation are not blown over by the storm, but most girls are, in some degree or another.

After her father's death, Amy seems to have been one of those who weathered the storm better than normal. It probably had to do a lot with purposeful decisions she made, choosing to fill her life with good works, rather than wasting precious time chitchatting with friends on the latest "look." But one experience in particular was a life-changer for her.

Coming home from church service one rainy morning, she and her brothers saw an old, haggard-looking "bag lady" tottering down the street. For whatever whim of impulse it was that hit them, she and her two brothers grabbed the old lady's heavy load, and taking her by the arms helped her down the street, the wind blowing her raggy clothes like a bunch of tacked-on feathers.

It wouldn't have been so bad ... except they were now headed back up the street they had just come down, and "everyone"—so to speak—in the "uppity" church saw them helping the poor lady along. It was an embarrassment to the courageous young people, facing all those "respectable people" with the old "bag lady." But a strange thing happened while they were passing a beautiful fountain in the middle of the street. Amy heard a voice quote 1 Corinthians 3:12-14:

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

Amy looked around to see who had spoken. Nobody was there. She wrote:

I said nothing to anyone, but I knew that something had happened that had changed life's values. Nothing could ever matter again but the things that were eternal.

Amy returned home and closed herself in her room, to meet with God. God was calling her further on; beyond the folly that coincides so often with feminine adolescence.

Beyond nominalism

Amy began to pour herself into blessing others less blessed than she was. Determination in a dress might describe her. She tutored school boys. She went into the poorer sections of town and gathered children, then brought them home for a children's meeting. She began a work among the so-called "shawlies," lower-class girls and ladies who could not afford to buy the snazzy hats that the "higher" class ladies wore, so they went about with a shawl wrapped around them. She helped her siblings with their school lessons.

Then came her introduction to Keswick. The so-called Keswick meetings were the British counterpart of the American Holiness movement, but with a slightly different twist. While the Holiness movement in America emphasized a second work of grace that supposedly eradicated sin in a person, the Keswick meetings put more emphasis on total consecration. That said, without going into the intricacies of the doctrine, the Keswick movement (also sometimes called "Deeper Life") represented a gathering of the more serious end of Protestant believers in the British domains.

When Amy was just shy of turning 19, she was invited to Scotland, where she attended a convention being held "on Keswick lines." She confesses that for "months, perhaps

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knew
that
something had
happened that had
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were eternal.

years,” she had been “longing” to know more about living a holy life. At the close of these meetings, a phrase pierced her heart and would not let her go: “O Lord, we know Thou art able to keep us from falling.”

She was taken for dinner shortly after, and someone complained about the mutton chops not being cooked fully. Amy wrote later, “Whatever does it matter about mutton chops? *O Lord, we know Thou art able to keep us from falling.*”

But it was more than sentimentalism. God *was* calling her beyond nominalism, beyond just being a nice, moral, churchgoing young lady. She tells of the following incidence:

Soon after that shining day [of the meeting mentioned above] I went home to Belfast. The long time of being “in mourning” for our father was over. So my mother took me to a shop to buy coloured things,¹ and among them was to be an evening dress. That meant something exceedingly pretty. It meant that once more I would be going to parties and spending time in all sorts of pleasant ways. Suddenly I felt I couldn’t do that. To my startled mother I said so. The shopman came and unrolled his loveliest materials, his loveliest colors too, and my mother, looking rather pained, apologized for troubling him and we left the shop.

A photo of Amy as a child reveals a family very much “in mode,” with lots of lace and adornment. For Amy to take a step into plainness of dress was to take a step out of her culture and out of the nominal Presbyterian norms. But God was calling her, and to not follow would mean a severance in the relationship with her Lord!

And remember, she was but 18 years old.

Home missions

For the next couple of years, Amy’s life was wrapped up in what may be called “home missions.” I doubt she made any conscious decision to dedicate her life to “home missions,” it is just that Amy was initiating what would become a lifelong “habit”: wherever she was, she reached out to those around her, be it Belfast, London, or India. One strange phenomenon seen too often in youth is a zest for foreign missions, but without much evidence in being pained for the needy souls in their neighborhood.

Amy began a work with girls in Belfast that eventually grew to needing enough room for 500 people. It was here

¹ European custom was to wear black for a certain length of time after a death in the family, as a sign of mourning.

that, as a very young lady, she took up the course that she would follow for financial needs for the rest of her days: never ask anyone for material things, except God.

A few years later, she and her mother and one sister² were invited to England to help at Manchester City Mission. A short quote from Amy will suffice for this time of her life:

The training in that slum work was splendid in every way. [The head of the mission] had no patience with people who weren’t ready at a moment’s notice to do whatever was required. If you worked for him you had to be ready. You had to learn to use odd minutes to prepare. You had to learn to do without a quiet room for preparation.

The D.O.M. and foreign missions

“The Dear Old Man” (D.O.M.) they called him. He was Robert Wilson, one of the leaders of the Keswick meetings. Robert was born a Quaker (he was later was baptized, contrary to Quaker teaching), but was a seeker of deeper things than a mere denominational creed. As his wife and daughter and one son had died, and Amy was about the same age as his now deceased daughter, he unofficially “adopted” Amy. Amy spent a lot of time on his farm, taking the place of his daughter, with her mother’s consent. It was this channel that opened the door for Amy to enter foreign missions, since Robert—as Chairman of the Keswick Mission Committee—was respected enough that his recommendation carried a lot of weight. He gave his recommendation for Amy as one of the first missionaries of the Keswick missions. It was from Robert Wilson that Amy began to sign her name, Amy *Wilson* Carmichael.

Amy was all set to join the China Inland Mission of Hudson Taylor (whom she had met personally), but “at the last minute” a doctor said her health was not good enough and the whole thing fell through. The D.O.M. then lined her up to join a mission in Japan, and Amy sailed “in faith,” expecting to be accepted there. A letter awaited her in China granting that permission, and she sailed on for Japan.

At this point in her life, a small incident occurred that again challenged Amy to “go beyond.” She was with what was perhaps the most zealous group of Protestants in Eng-

² Her brothers had all immigrated to America and South Africa.

Yes, Lord.

The only two words written on the wall of Amy’s room in Japan.

land in the late 1800s, the Keswick movement. In fact, one could almost describe Amy as the cream of the crop among them. Yet as she and another missionary walked along the seashore in Japan, Amy received a startling piece of information. Amy wrote:

As we walked along the seashore she mentioned casually something which led to an astonished question from me. And then she said—and the words chill my very heart—“You don’t mean to say you think that all missionaries love one another?” Of course I had thought they did. I had never dreamed they didn’t.

Amy was “blown away,” as we might say in our colloquial English. But like the little scene that occurred by the fountain in the street with the bag lady some years previous, this little scene was to be a provocation to move further on in her Christian walk. Although it would take some years to bring it into reality, that day something was forged in her spirit. She continued, saying:

Was such a life of love lived *nowhere*? And I did earnestly ask for the love about which our Lord spoke on the evening before He suffered.

Yes, it is good to be dedicated to a cause, a good cause, like missions. Yes, one can sell all and dedicate themselves to the most remote unreached people group in the world. But if they don’t live out John 17:21, “that they all may be one,” what does it avail? Some Hindus are very devoted folks; they have been known to pour gasoline over themselves and light themselves into a fireball, becoming a crisp ... in total consecration and devotion. Muslims have stepped into the cockpits of airliners and rammed them into buildings, dying in devotion to their cause.

Is there something beyond the total consecration that, for example, a Keswick convention offers? Was God glorified when missionaries leave all and sail for Japan, only to not love their fellow missionary once there?

It was sometime during this phase of her life that Amy wrote the following words. While they have a strong tinge of total consecration to them, was Amy perhaps pondering the lack of brokenness, in the last sentence?

We profess to be strangers and pilgrims, seeking after a country of our own, yet we settle down in the most un-stranger-like fashion, exactly as if we were quite at home and meant to stay as long as we could. I don’t wonder apostolic miracles have died. Apostolic living certainly has.

In her autobiography, Amy tells of another incident that happened in Japan, a sort of wake-up call. She and others had entered a room with an idol and several devout Buddhists. In the course of the ensuing conversation, Romans 5:10 was read: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled,

Across the will of nature
Leads on the path of God;
Not where the flesh delighteth
The feet of Jesus trod.
O bliss to leave behind us
The fetters of the slave,
To leave ourselves behind us,
The grave-clothes and the grave!

We follow in His footsteps;
What if our feet be torn?
Where He has marked the pathway
All hail the brier and thorn!
Scarce seen, scarce heard, unreckoned,
Despised, defamed, unknown,
Or heard but by our singing,
On, children, ever on!

Amy Carmichael

we shall be saved by his life.” Upon hearing these words, the sincere Buddhist responded:

True, true, it must be true. Buddha died; we know it. How can he help us, who live today? He may say, ‘Be good’; the power to obey he cannot give.

The man then pondered the last phrase, “saved by his life,” and continued, looking Amy straight in the eyes:

If this be so, you are as an angel from heaven to us; but if it be so, we want to see it lived; can you show it to us?

“Can you show it to us?” Could Amy and her fellow missionaries show indeed that Jesus had the power over self and sin in this life? Not just a sister over here and a brother over there, but a body of believers “showing the life of Christ”?

The next part shows the gold in Amy. Instead of patting herself on the back and telling herself that she was sent to Japan for the very purpose of showing it to the old man, she asks herself a startling question:

Was I sent to Japan partly that I might hear [that question]?

She continues, saying:

Some of you know how, when this Fellowship³ was being shaped, an old man in the [Indian] village of S—— asked me the same question and in almost the same words. ‘We have heard much of your preaching,’ he said, ‘*can you show us the life of your Lord Jesus?*’

God was calling Amy once again ... to go beyond.

³ Dohnavur Fellowship, which she was basically responsible for shaping.

Decisions, decisions, and more decisions

In some churches, being “spiritual” is to go to church meetings, or have private devotions, and experience something “uplifting” or “inspiring” that will propel the believer on. While such experiences do occur, real spirituality is attained by simply choosing the spirit over the flesh in everyday situations. From the time of her experience at the water fountain—which began when she *chose* to help a poor old lady—Amy was continually confronted with little decisions, and big ones, that defined her path later in life.

Late in her life, Amy shared that on two different occasions she had received letters from would-be suitors while a young lady. Laying it out before the Lord, she felt God saying to her, “No, no, no. I have something different for

A chance to die.

Amy’s response to someone who asked her what missionary work was like.

you.” And so Amy settled for singlehood. She would devote herself to His cause. These proposals are mentioned here since they seem to have occurred in the time from her first starting to Japan to her entrance into India a couple years later. Young, totally dedicated, very physically attractive, extremely intelligent, talented ... one can wonder that not more than two spiritual young men would have been interested. But Amy’s heart seems to have simply rested secure in what God had called her to. If she struggled with the matter of marriage, she kept it hidden. In fact, the details about the letters from the suitors were put into her autobiography late in her life, but then she had them pulled out before publication.⁴ It was only from the girl transcribing for her—she later told others—that these details are even known today.

Did she battle with it and hide it well? Or did she simply “get over it”? We will probably never know. But one thing is absolutely clear: she never flirted or carried herself about in a way that drew attention to herself. If she had, there would have certainly been more than two suitors in her line.

She refused to wear jewelry and makeup (and she wouldn’t let her girls wear any, which caused her trouble with some of the other missionaries in India), and dressed very modestly; it is doubtful that any man saw much of her legs higher than her ankles, unless by accident.⁵ And al-

⁴ And even then, her autobiography was not intended for general publication, but for the Dohnavur Fellowship only.

⁵ In the 1800s in the USA, it was known that a woman could be arrested for public indecency if she showed her ankles in public (at least

though she adopted the native dress style in both Japan and India, she was not afraid to adapt it to meet her standards of modesty: she added a blouse to her sari, for example, when the style of sari in her area did not cover her well enough.

In the same tone, she was not fond at all of photographs of herself, and only on very rare occasions did she permit someone to photograph her. In her early days, she would scratch her face out of group photos. And not one picture of her was ever put into the many books she authored. No, she did not promote herself in dress or action, and so she did not have to deal with hordes of young men proposing to her, beautiful as she was. A meek and quiet spirit and dress saved her a lot of trouble.

Then came decisions about telling the truth. When a fellow missionary wrote home the story of a Muslim girl, in which the girl did not end up getting converted in the story, the author was asked to send home positive stories, so as to not discourage supporters of the mission. Again Amy was forced to make one of the “little” decisions in life; should she tell the truth, or embellish stories to make the mission look good? She resolved to always speak things as they really were. And a few years later, when she released her book, *Things As They Are*, it was a shocker for the supporters. In fact, the original publisher asked her to revise it; it was too negative. Amy simply stuck the manuscript in a drawer. About two years later, others found out about it and published it. The hidden immorality of the temple girls that she exposed was almost too hard for people to believe. Yet that book, and subsequent letters and books sent out, was one of the impetuses to exposing and ultimately making illegal the traffic of children.

It all started with a decision. Amy wrote:

And that night I resolved that if I ever had to write a story I would not change one word to please anybody. God helping me, I would be very careful about [telling the] truth.

In another small incident, she received a truth about life that would guide her for her remaining days. The “I” in her arose one day when an associate acted “unfair and curiously dominating.” She described what happened next:

“... the word came [from God], ‘See in it a chance to die.’ To this day that word is life and release to me ... a chance to die to self in every form.

She chose to die that day, and on hundreds of occasions in the next five decades. Yes, the church services were doubtless inspiring to Amy, but her spirituality came from choosing the Spirit over the flesh in the everyday incidents of life.

in one town). I am not saying that it needs to be that way, but it goes to show how far our society has slipped.

Beyond “revival”

Poor health had forced Amy out of Japan.⁶ But within a couple of years, she was in India, working with the “fiery” Thomas Walker. At 30 years of age, she formed a little evangelistic band of women and went from village to village trying to reach into the hidden lives of the Indian ladies. But before that happened, another “life-changing” incident occurred.

In a monthly “social evening” (Amy secretly abhorred these social times) among the missionaries, someone asked what she thought was a shocking question. Did any of the missionaries there know of one single “national” worker among them that would continue his work if he did not get paid to do it? Amy wrote later:

There was dead silence. The lady near me was busy matching her silks. All the others went on with what they were doing. Not one, so far as I could see, was astonished or shocked by such a question. At last one of the men said, ‘I must confess I don’t.’

But I felt as if a thunderbolt had fallen in the midst ...

Did anyone work out of pure love for the Lord? Not that Amy felt financial recompense was wrong ... but what

kind of results come from people who are in the “service of the Lord” for money? Amy does not raise the question, but one has to wonder if she wondered how many of the missionaries themselves would continue on out of pure love for the Lord.

I don’t know if by this time Amy could have articulated it, but a vision was beginning to rise within her. A vision of ... brotherhood. A vision of a body of believers joined together in one accord, bound by the cords of a fiery, holy love. She was in her late 20s. She was a missionary, sent out



Walker of Tinnevelly was a fiery evangelist who served as a “big brother” to Amy in India, giving her encouragements and faithful rebukes.

⁶ She had what was called “Japanese Head,” which I am not able to find information on. In another place, she called it “acute neuralgia.” Neuralgia is a condition in which the nerves send pain signals to the brain when in fact there is nothing causing pain. In short, the person feels pain for no known reason. In any case, strong sunshine on her head worsened her condition, and she was known to faint, and suffered physical weakness for many months.

Crossing the sea does not make any woman a missionary in spirit, nor does it turn soft iron into steel. Spend much time at Calvary before you come. Look at that love, look and look till you can say to Him, “Yes, Lord, anything.”

-Amy Carmichael, to a potential coworker at Dohnavur

by a “revival” movement.⁷ But something was missing. What was that “something”?

In order to learn the Tamil language better, she went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Walker. At this point, she began to experience a little of that “something.” Her initial dislike for “Walker of Tinnevelly” was soon overcome as he taught her. Amy found a “big brother” in him, one with whom she could experience “iron sharpening iron.” He was forthright at times, telling her that she was too “headstrong, following her own desires rather than the Holy Spirit.” But such reproof could be received, as it came from one whom she knew was watching for her own good.

After joining the Walkers in a new outreach effort, Amy and her little band of women began to evangelize, while Mr. Walker did the same with a group of men. They would travel to a new area, set up a camp of tents, and spread out to do personal witnessing in the surrounding villages. The ladies would work with women and children, while the men would focus on the men in the villages. In the evenings, they would sometimes have a joint service or street meeting.

At this point, Amy began to see the realization of her dream. In the beginning, she gave her helpers the usual pay, and a *batta*, the extra stipend for every night spent away from home. But then the blessed day came; her helpers brought their *batta* to the dining room table and poured it out. Amy was delighted. She wrote:

They told me that they had not needed it and did not want it. At that time this was a new thing. A new love had been kindled in those hearts—they glowed. Thereafter it was never, “How much can I get?”, but always “How much can I give? How much can I do without, that I may have more to give?” ... Can you imagine with what a joy we worshipped the Lord together?

Not too long after, the Indian sisters began to lay aside their jewelry. This was a deeper matter in their culture, since their jewels were a status symbol, more so than in our American

⁷ The mission she was with when the preceding incident occurred was not a “Keswick” mission, but the Keswick movement had sent her.

society. A woman's jewels were her dowry. And although the Hindus respected and admired that decision, some other missionaries "threw a fit." But Amy was beginning to experience what she had longed for since that day by the seashore in Japan—true sisterhood, a fellowship that went beyond nominalism and even revivalism. A fellowship, not of individuals seeking God on their own, but of being knit into one and seeking God *together*.

The mystic Amy

Amy was a voracious reader. Her own letters and books are filled with quotes from a wide array of authors. One person said of her that she would often sit at the table for a meal with a book, and excitedly say, "You just have to hear this ..." And she would then read out loud an inspiring quote or section.

It is likely that Amy drew, in her early days, most of her deeper inspiration from books. Her own depth of spirituality was beyond many of her counterparts, and so those



Two helpers and a few of the rescued girls

By the time Amy had died, more than 1000 girls had been rescued from a life of forced immorality in the temples or other bad circumstances. Note the enlarged earlobe of the helper on the right. Many heavy jewels would have once dangled there. A good number of the rescued girls later stayed on as helpers in the mission. Below, a group of girls rescued from a life of vice enjoy a happy game.



with whom she labored could not provide the fellowship she needed. It is interesting to note that many of the quotes in Amy's books are from "mystics." A "mystic" is someone who strives for a personal relationship with God, a "mystical union" of spirit-to-Spirit unity with God. In medieval times, many of the mystics were Catholics who found refuge in the cloistered shelter of the monasteries. When one monastic order would degenerate, it seemed another would arise to challenge the worldliness of the day. To Protestants and Anabaptists, seeking for spiritual stimulation from a Catholic seems to be a bit "over the top," but the fact is that in medieval times the monasteries were places where sincere seekers of Christ ended up—there just weren't a lot of options in those days!

Names like Richard Rolle, St. Francis of Assisi, Raymond Lull, Madame Guyon and others show up as quotes in her books. It seems clear that Amy was trying to cultivate a spirit-to-Spirit, intimate, personal relationship with Jehovah.

It is unlikely that Amy knew much of Anna Nitschmann,⁸ the Moravian, but both Amy and Anna seem to have appreciated the emphasis on mystical union with Christ, and experienced it. And yet both seem to have doubted whether—while union with Christ is essential and wonderful to experience—the "life of Christ" was supposed to be kept cloistered up in a monastery somewhere. Is union with Christ only an individual thing? And is there not more to "church life" than a bunch of individuals who meet occasionally to exhort one another to a closer union with Christ? What about the union one to another? What about a corporal expression of union with Christ?

Beyond mysticism

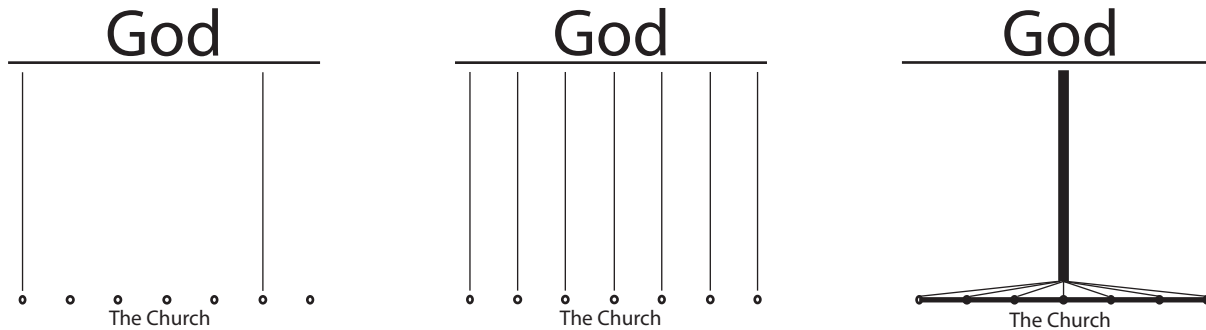
The year was 1916. World War I was raging in Europe, and another war in America was starting to flare up, the social war; atheist Emma Goldman was arrested for promoting birth control.

In the south of India, there was war as well. But this was not fought with guns. At stake was the testimony of God and the souls of men. The soldiers needed grouping. Many young girls had been rescued from the temple service, and some of them had chosen to follow Jesus. Amy wrote:

We had at that time seven Indian girls who were seeking to live a life of unreserved devotion, a life without fences. ... Something was required to unite and fortify them. Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the wood and strengthened his hands in God. We needed to meet one another in Jonathan's wood. We did meet there; we shaped ourselves into a group, and called ourselves "Sisters of the Common Life."

⁸ The story of Anna coming up soon in *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*, Lord willing!

Which graph represents your congregation?
Which one should represent it?



See the next page for an explanation ...

... The name “Sisters of the Common Life” came from the Brotherhood of Common Life, founded by Gerhard Groote of Holland. The Brothers worked with their hands and gave themselves to the training of “such as sought, apart from the evil about them, a pure and godly life.” Communion with God and laborious work filled their days. They lived a common life, but they lived it with God for men.

“They lived it with God for men.” Finally! The pieces fell into place. A sisterhood of those who were dead to this world, but alive to God, showing the life of Christ to the world about them by a united service to the poor and needy. Yes, mystic union with God ... but more! That “mystic union” was also one with another! Service—united, heartfelt, joyful, and downright practical “doing good,” just like the Master who “went about doing good.” Amy expressed it this way:

We were still learning how to take our towel;⁹ and when we found the translation, “Put on the apron of humility to serve one another,” (1 Pe. 5:5) we wondered if the apostle, as he wrote, thought of that day when the Lord of lords took a towel and fastened it on himself like an apron.

Amy felt like most of the teaching about Mary and Martha is wrong. Jesus did not reprove Martha’s service, but her fussing. Serving others is spiritual.

The little group of sisters met regularly to read the Bible and the spiritual writings of others. Amy summed up the goal: “to be spiritually ready to go all lengths with their Lord.” This meant practical “going.” So much so that the sisters had the reputation, when a task needed done, of “Ask her [to do it], she is a Sister of the Common Life. She will do it.” And promotion? That word “means more work, harder work.”

⁹ Referring to washing feet, but not as a mere “ordinance,” but rather a way of life.

A sort of “Confession of Faith” was drawn up, which between 20 and 30 of the Dohnavur girls ended up subscribing to as time went on:¹⁰

My Vow.

Whatever Thou sayest unto me, by Thy grace I will do it.

My Constraint.

Thy love, O Christ, my Lord.

My Confidence.

Thou art able to keep that which I have committed unto Thee.

My Joy.

To do Thy will, O God.

My Discipline.

That which I would not choose, but which Thy love appoints.

My Prayer.

Conform my will to Thine.

My Motto.

Love to live; Live to love.

My Portion.

The Lord is the portion of my inheritance.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee more faithfully; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Thy will, O Lord our God.

Dohnavur Fellowship

As time went on, various situations with mission organizations pressured Amy into breaking all official ties with the European organizations that had originally sent her and her helpers to India. From that point on, Dohnavur was like a family. Whatever came in to support the work was used as needed, where needed. Clinging to her early resolve to never ask or hint for funds, the work among the temple

¹⁰ Although the majority were Indian sisters, a few Europeans joined the “Sisters of the Common Life.”

About the graphs on page 11 ...

These three graphs represent Amy's stages in life as she advanced in her walk.

The first one is nominalism. In a nominal church, there are sometimes—but not always—a few people who have a vital relationship with God. The rest of the congregation goes through the motions of “church,” usually seeing “church” as an obligation or a great way to have social interaction with friends and/or family.

Next is revivalism. The goal of revivalism is to bring each individual into a vital relationship with God. Each man or woman is expected to have a personal relationship with Christ. These congregations definitely have a zeal level that exceeds nominalism, and are usually very evangelistic and missions-minded. The Keswick movement that Amy associated with would be a good example of revivalism.

And the third? The last graph represents what we will call koinonia. Koinonia is the Greek word that is translated as “fellowship” or “communion.” The German word “Gemeinschaft” would fit it well. But how does this graph differ from the second one?

In a koinonia church, each individual has his/her own relationship with God. But as you notice, this fellowship also extends through the body horizontally. And the relationship with God of each individual is also intimately tied to the relationship of the rest with God. The individual then experiences fellowship with God in conjunction with, and through, the body. Individualism is abolished.

Koinonia is experienced in both spiritual and material ways. Spiritual gifts and edification flow freely among the believers, as well as material sharing one with another. If one member fails, he/she is intimately tied to the rest and is supported, and cannot so easily “drop out of the scene” as in the middle graph.

George Whitefield saw hundreds and thousands of conversions in his evangelistic campaigns. But he lamented that his converts were “like a rope made out of sand.” They were simply individuals who did not adhere one to another. Thus his preaching in the American colonies had little results as far as establishing enduring congregations.

Amy Carmichael and the Sisters of the Common Life achieved the close community represented by the last graph. Although Amy probably never read many Anabaptist writings—they were not available in English in her locality—she achieved the koinonia that early Anabaptism preached and strove for. In the words of one Anabaptist, “One cannot go to heaven unless he goes with his brother.” The life of Christ cannot be manifested in the body, if there is no body!

May the koinonia of the saints be with you all! ~

girls—which numbered over a total of a thousand rescued by the time Amy died—was financed solely on unsolicited donations and hard work by Amy and her helpers. Amy acknowledged that the stark “unromantic” realities of her mission kept many young missionaries from joining Dohnavur Fellowship. After all, washing the dirty diapers of a dozen babies, every day, does not appeal to many prospective missionaries.

Amy never recruited help from the USA. Her reasons were twofold: 1. She did not know of anyone in the USA whom she could trust with the vetting process for candidates to her mission. 2. She said Americans were not ready for such deep commitments as were required for the Dohnavur Fellowship. Obviously, this generalization does not fit every individual in North America. But she seems to have understood that the American infatuation with personal rights was a real hindrance to Holy Ghost fellowship. “My rights,” entertainment, and the whole spirit behind capitalism clash with the foundation on which Dohnavur was constructed.

Amy recounted the time that one helper suddenly showed up with a Bible in her hand, and “with her church-going smile” announced to Amy that she was taking the opportunity to spend an hour or two “doing the Lord’s work.” She left to attend chapel services in the village ... and never came back.

At another time, Amy received a letter stating that the writer “had no interest in anything but evangelistic work.” Amy’s response? “Well,” wrote Amy:

One can’t save and then pitchfork souls into Heaven (there are times I heartily wish we could). And, as for buildings: souls (in India at least) are more or less securely fastened to bodies. Bodies can’t be left to lie about in the open ... What then is to be done?

Amy did what needed to be done. She shared the truths that would save the soul, and she took in the girls that needed a shelter over their bodies and built them a house. Sometimes that meant her own tired hands stacking the bricks.

Living it out

About a decade before the Sisters of the Common Life materialized, Amy had written:

Sometimes I wonder if God will ever give me a comrade, who will be such a comrade: utterly other-worldly, utterly single-hearted, utterly consumed. Don’t think I mean that I am myself! I fall far short of my own standards. But this is what I want to be, and that is what we must be if we are to stand the strain and conquer.

From nominalism, to revivalism, to mysticism, to Sisters of the Common Life; thus Amy Carmichael grew in her walk with God. While Dohnavur Fellowship was not perfect,

Amy did find the answers to those nagging questions in her earlier life. The one in Japan: Can missionaries love one another and manifest the life of Christ to the society around them?

Yes! Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-35 became a reality in Dohnavur. Even before the Sisters of the Common Life came into being, Amy's mother visited India and wrote the following astounding words:

An atmosphere of love and obedience pervades the compound, and in this large family of over thirty [people], varying in ages from 34 years to a babe of nine months, I have not seen an angry look, or heard an impatient word. A set of more loving, unselfish women and girls and children could not easily be found. The secret, I think, is that everything great and small of all

kinds is done for God, and to please Him, and in the consciousness that Jesus is present, and that He may come today to take them to Himself.

Enough said!

Summary

At 61 years of age, Amy stepped into an outhouse in which the hole had been misplaced towards the front of the building, instead of toward the rear. The resulting fall sent her to convalescence for a few weeks.

Or so everyone thought.

She would never fully recover. In fact, for the next 20 years she was for the most part bedridden. But she continued her good works, doing a lot of writing—books, letters, and

Continued on page 16

The Burger King Church

I think one can sum up one of the root problems of the modern Evangelical concept of the church with a single trip to Burger King. I'm envisioning the one off the turnpike on the way to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. It's a big one. It is made of big stones and has a nice, high, cathedral-like ceiling. If it's your misfortune to eat there, after you pay your small fortune and sit down with your family at one of those little tables, take a minute and look around. It kind of reminds me of a modern American church.

Think about it ... There you all are, table after table, all fellowshiping and doing the same thing. There is a sense of unity. You seem all together—but are you? The truth is, of course, that the unity is an illusion. What we are seeing is an accidental association.

That's right; the gathering is an accident. Everyone there is heading in different directions. That nicely-dressed man in the middle is heading to Pittsburgh on a business deal. That family sitting over there all plugged into their own personal iPods is heading to Chambersburg to see their grandmother. And that pitiable lady there in the corner, looking through old bags, is heading to Philly in a vain search of a new life.

There we all are together ... but our meeting is an accident. There is no possibility that tomorrow all of us would be there again. We are all—individually—doing something there completely separate from each other. Our "fellowship" is merely an accident.

That is the modern American view of the church. Pentecost gave us more than that: a community of brothers, unified by the Spirit, inspired with a common purpose and persuasion. This was the church that turned the world upside down. And that's no accident!

Be on purpose. Share your lives with your brethren and allow the Holy Spirit to manifest the Kingdom of God with meaning. ~Dean Taylor

Consider, now, you and your congregation. Does it resemble the intense and intentional fellowship that the Dohnavur Fellowship experienced? Or is it more akin to a Burger King Fellowship, where each one "has it his way"? Are meetings "accidental gatherings" of individuals each ultimately going his own way, or is it a gathering of people with a clear direction and purpose?



Saying “No!” to Mr.



By Mike McDaniel

We will borrow from John Bunyan’s literary practice of personifying human characteristics and give names to some familiar faces. First is the act of fretting—we will call him *Mr. Worry*. Do you ever worry about things that have happened, or might yet happen in the future? Or perhaps, about some upcoming event or meeting? Do you worry and fret over business or the poor economy or the political system? There seems to be no end to things to worry about. I remember the old phrase “Don’t go borrowing trouble!”

Isn’t that what we are doing when we give our minds over to *Mr. Worry*? Another old saying is “troubles, like babies, grow larger with nursing!” Are you guilty of nursing your troubles today? Jesus said “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Mt. 6:34 Amen! Every day brings cares, and to anticipate future cares is only to double them. God gives us grace for one day at a time. That grace enables us to just say “No!” to Mr. Worry!

Closely akin to *Mr. Worry* is his cousin *Mr. Anxiety*. He wants to burden you with doubts and fears and stress. The best deterrent to *Mr. Worry* and *Mr. Anxiety* is *Mr. Trust*! More specifically, trust in God rather than in self. Why place your trust in your own feeble abilities, when you have a Creator God who is more than able to meet all of your needs? Trust in God brings confidence and peace, while trust in self brings great anxiety! Jeremiah 17:5 say this: “Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.”

Let’s prayerfully consider the following passages in Scripture about worry and anxiety:

- Proverbs 12:25 “Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.”

When we are loaded down with cares and stressed out, our hearts are *heavy*. There is a cloud over our heads when *Mr. Heaviness of Heart* is around! He brings gloom and doom, and great despair. The tragedy of this is that when we are mired in depression, we are in no condition to help others. Our countenance reveals to others our poor attitudes and gloomy spirits. The best medicine for melancholy is *cheerfulness*. Our heavenly Father knows this, and always has “a good word” for His children in these times. For example, Psalms 55:22: “Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” The good word of God, particularly the gospel, is designed to make hearts glad that are weary and “heavy-laden.” Mt. 11:28

- Proverbs 14:30 “A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.”

A cheerful and contented heart, free from pride and envy, is the best medicine. Envy is one of those sins that eats us up spiritually, and can have a very real impact on our physical health as well. *Mr. Cheerful* is always ready to chase away *Mr. Envy*! Matthew Henry noted the following:

The foregoing verse showed how much our reputation ... [and] health depends on the good government of our passions and the preserving of the temper of the mind.

1. A healing spirit, made up of love and meekness, a hearty, friendly, cheerful disposition, is the life of the flesh; it contributes to a good constitution of body; people grow fat with good temperament. 2. A fretful, envious, discontented spirit is its own punishment; it consumes the flesh, preys upon the animal spirits, makes the countenance pale, and is the rottenness of the bones. Those that see the prosperity of others and are grieved, let them gnash with their teeth and melt away, Ps. 112:10.

- Proverbs 17:22 “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.”

Our disposition and attitudes in life affect us not only spiritually, but physically as well. Medical research has proven that there are many adverse effects of bitterness and stress on the physical bodily functions. It is quite amazing how much we damage ourselves physically with stress and anxiety. Worry and stress leads to *rottenness of the bones*, or osteoporosis, which is the deterioration of the bone. Conversely, our spiritual and physical man is favorably affected when we possess a joyful, trusting, and thankful spirit. There is less stress on the heart, and it takes fewer facial muscles to smile than it does to frown! When we are stressed, we

are more susceptible to diseases and colds, as our body's immune system is actually weakened. A merry heart is truly a spiritual blessing, and blesses others. We need to spend much time with *Mr. Joyful!*

- Matthew 6:25-34 “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.”

Regarding the areas of worry and anxiety, Jesus addresses a key source of our worries—the so-called “necessities of life.” Men especially worry about this because they are called to be providers for their families. As I write this, I realize that some may have lost their jobs due to the current economic downturn. I recall that some of the most stressful times in my life were those when I was between jobs and worried about providing for my family. I leaned upon my “own arm of flesh” and trusted in my own strength and looked to my own ability to land a good job, rather than placing my trust in God to provide. Jesus gives a very good lesson here on trusting God for these things. It is a time for faith rather than for worry. Again, we see the absolute

necessity to call on *Mr. Trust!* I am reminded of the words of an old hymn:

Why should this anxious load,
Press down your weary mind?
Haste to your heavenly Father's throne,
And sweet refreshment find.

- Philippians 4:4-9 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.



When we lose our joy, Mr. Self-pity comes along and encourages us to get a wrong focus on self, rather than on God and others.

According to verses 4 and 6, what should we do instead of worrying? Paul says that we should rejoice in the Lord. We need to have a long chat with *Mr. Thankful!* In verse 6, he says that we should not be careful (anxious) for anything, but pray to God with much thankfulness. If we are anxious, then we are worrying and not trusting God. If we do not have joy, it is because *Mr. Worry* and *Mr. Faithlessness* have robbed us of our joy. When we lose our joy, *Mr. Self-pity* comes along and encourages us to get

a wrong focus on self, rather than on God and others. That always leads to *thanklessness!* Paul says, “but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God!” “Every thing” includes the current trial or temptation that we are going through, since God uses these times to develop our character.

What does Paul say, in verse 8, that we should let our minds dwell on? Paul encourages us to think on all those things that are *true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report.* In short, to think on all that is virtuous and praiseworthy, because these are worthy of our thought life. As we dwell on these godly things, we have no time to dwell on worri-

some thoughts that drag us down into depression! The more we fill our minds and hearts with “good,” the less room we have for “bad.”

In verse 9, what does Paul say we should do with things we have learned here? We are to incorporate these character qualities into our lives. Paul says we should “do” them! “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, *do!*”



Mr. Worry, Mr. Anxiety, Mr. Fear, Mr. Self-Pity, Mr. Discontentment, and Mr. Depression will come calling.

We must make the conscious decision to put “shoe leather” on these verses, and walk them out in our daily lives. If we do not, then our old enemies *Mr. Worry, Mr. Anxiety, Mr. Fear, Mr. Self-Pity, Mr. Discontentment, and Mr. Depression* will come calling.

And finally, according to verse 7, what does Paul say will be the outcome of this kind of lifestyle? Paul says that “... the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” And in verse 9, he closes by saying “the God of peace shall be with you.” Praise the Lord! When we think on those good things, and do them, He will give His children peace!

The above passages are ones that are very familiar to us all. However, the lessons they present are extremely difficult to incorporate into daily living. Satan is always seeking ways to make us discontented, stressful, and fearful. He wants us to worry and fret and lose sleep over our circumstances! I must confess that I do not always have that merry heart or that peace that passes all understanding, because Satan diverts my gaze away from God and onto *self!* When that happens, I am unable to provide what only God can provide, and I get stressed and become fearful and worried, and I totally lose my joy! This causes my countenance to fall and people to see and sense my discouragement.

Philippians 4:4-9 is a passage that I visit often in these times, and it is dear to me. It is a *rhema* verse that I use to combat thoughts of fear and anxiety (along with 2 Co. 10:4-5). I have long known about the detrimental effects of worry, stress, and anxiety on the physical body and can attest to that. And yet, I worry! I believe the strength to maintain that cheerful joyful spirit is to *abide in the Vine* and let the Holy Spirit bear this fruit in my life. I certainly fail when I attempt this on my own. It is futile to try to “tape the fruit” onto the branch. And yet, the Bible says we must make a conscious decision to walk in the Spirit and not the flesh. We must send *Mr. Worry* and *Mr. Anxiety* packing, and not invite them to dinner!

If you find yourself in the “worry” business these days, then it is time to look to the Lord and find relief. Trust in Him who is more than able to comfort you. Jesus invites you: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Mt. 11:28 His shoulders are broad, His heart is large, and His compassions run deep. ~

Note: While this article recognizes that spiritual needs can cause physical illness, it does not endorse the idea (which some popular “healing ministries” hold) that every physical illness is the result of some personal sin.

Continued from p. 13 - Amy Carmichael

little notes to her girls and helpers. On January 18, 1951, Amy slipped off into her final rest. The work at Dohnavur continues to this day, albeit with natural changes.

This little article can in no way cover all the aspects of Amy’s life and spiritual journey. But my hope in sharing it is to catch the general course of her life ... always stretching herself beyond her present experience and that of those around her.

The end result was a fellowship of sisters that embodied the call of the kingdom of God: a group of people that devoted themselves to very purposeful good, a testimony that Christ can change an individual and a group. Fellowship with God, and fellowship one with another. And perhaps the latter—genuine fellowship one with another—is what will astound the world more than an individual relationship with God.

Can missionaries love one another? Can the life of Christ be made manifest in a whole body of believers, and not just an individual here and there? Can a Japanese Buddhist or an Indian Hindu—or a North American drug dealer—look at the church and see a manifestation of the character of Jesus?

Amy Carmichael and the Sisters of the Common Life proved it so! ~Mike Atnip

NOTE: The drawing with the title is based on a photograph of Amy when she was 57 years old, in 1925.

VOICES FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

Inside and Out

Tertullian (c.160 – c.220 AD)

It is not enough that God know us to be chaste: we must appear so before men. Especially in these times of persecution we must accustom our bodies to the hardships which they may likely be called to suffer.

Perhaps some woman will say: “To me it is not necessary to be approved by men; for I do not require the testimony of men: God is the inspector of the heart.” We all know that; provided, however, we remember what the same God has said through the apostle: “Let your integrity appear before men.”¹ Why is that? So that evil may have no access whatsoever to you, and that you may be an example and testimony to the evil. Furthermore, what does it mean to “Let your works shine?”²

Why, moreover, does the Lord call us the light of the world; why has He compared us to a city built upon a mountain, if we do not shine in the middle of darkness and stand out in the middle of them who are sunk down? If you hide your lamp beneath a bushel, you must necessarily be left quite in darkness, and be bumped against by many. The things which make us bright lights in the world are these—our good works. Besides that, whatever is good—provided it be truly good—does not love darkness. In fact, it joys in being manifested, and exults over the very mockeries which are made at it.

To Christian modesty, it is not enough to be modest, but must *appear* modest also. For modesty should be so great in measure that it flows out from the mind to the clothes. It should burst out from the conscience to the outward appearance; so that even from the outside it may be seen what is furnishing the inside.

For those delicacies that tend (by their softness and effeminacy) to “unman the manliness”³ of faith are to be dis-

carded. Otherwise, I doubt if the wrist that has been used to wearing a pretty bracelet will endure wearing handcuffs! I know not whether the leg that has rejoiced in the anklet will permit itself to be squeezed into the leg shackle! I fear the neck, surrounded with pearl and emerald nooses, will give no room to the broadsword!

Wherefore, blessed sisters, let us meditate on hardships, and we shall not feel them. Let us abandon luxuries, and we shall not regret them. Let us stand ready to endure every violence, having nothing which we may fear to leave behind. It is these things which are the bonds which hinder our hope.

Let us cast away earthly ornaments if we desire heavenly. Love not gold; the substance in which are branded all the sins of the people of Israel. You ought to hate what ruined your fathers; what was adored by them who were forsaking God. Even then we find gold is food for the fire.⁴

But Christians always, and now more than ever, pass their times not in gold but in iron: the scarves of martyrdom are now preparing: the angels who are to carry us are now waiting! Do you go forth to meet them already arrayed in the “cosmetics” and

“ornaments” of prophets and apostles; drawing your whiteness from simplicity, your ruddy hue from modesty; painting your eyes with bashfulness, and your mouth with silence; implanting [as earrings] in your ears the words of God; fitting on your necks the yoke of Christ?

Submit your head to your husbands, and you will be enough adorned. Busy your hands with spinning; keep your feet at home; and you will “please” better than by arraying yourselves in gold. Clothe yourselves with the silk of uprightness, the fine linen of holiness, the purple of modesty. Thus painted, you will have God as your Lover! ~

a showy lifestyle will take the strength out of faith.

⁴ Exodus 32, where the gold of their ornaments was burned in a fire.

Modesty
should burst out
from the conscience to
the outward appearance;
so that even from the
outside it may be seen
what is furnishing the
inside.

¹ Philippians 4:5, ² Corinthians 8:21, and Romans 12:17.

² Matthew 5:16

³ That is, take away the real strength of. Here, Tertullian is saying that

Three times in the first two chapters of the book of Job, we find that Job was called a “perfect and upright man.” And two times God even comments that “there is none like him in the earth.” Job loved righteousness and hated evil. There was not another man his equal in all the earth.

God chose to take away everything this man had, except his life and his wife. And even then, his wife did not have courage to continue on in the Lord. He lost his possessions, his family, and his health. All this happened to the best man on the earth, one who had no equal.

This raised a lot of questions in the minds of Job and his three friends. For many chapters in the book of Job, Job and his three friends try to make sense of all this. We might say that they tried to “figure out God.” Isn’t that the same thing we try to do today? We have discussions and brothers meetings, trying to get to the bottom of God and understand the “whys” and the “hows” of God. In this same way, Job and his three friends spend many chapters trying to figure out God.

But they could not seem to get to the bottom of the whole thing. One thing that impresses me with all those discussions they had is that so much of what those four men said was so right. But yet, not quite.

We find ourselves so many times in the same situation when discussing God. We are so right in what we say about God, but at the end of the day, we are not able to live them.

After Job and his three friends had pretty well discussed everything they knew about God, and still had not come to an agreement, the Lord begins to speak to Job out of a whirlwind. This speech of God is found in chapters 38 and 39. For the sake of space, we will not print it here. But to summarize it, God showed Job just who He was. Job’s response? “Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.”

Job basically says that if he had understood who God was, he would have never said what he had just said to his three friends. In modern English, he might have said, “I would have kept my big mouth shut.”

In chapters 40 and 41, God continues His speech to Job by telling him about two monsters, behemoth and leviathan. Now God was showing Job who Job really was. Before, He had revealed to Job who God was. Job, after seeing these things, humbles himself even further, saying, “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

These two responses from Job—keeping his mouth shut and abhorring himself—were not happening in all the previous chapters. Neither Job nor his friends were truly humbled, and their mouths were running, so to speak, faster than they could think. A lot of good things were being said.

But when Job saw who God was, he said, “I will put my hand over my mouth.” And when he saw himself, he said, “I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

Self—The

Based on a message pre



We—as individuals and as congregations—are up against a monster called “Self.” This old monster seems to just hang around like a shadow everywhere I go. When I went to Bolivia, he followed me there. And now that I am back in the USA on a visit, he followed me back!

God is self-sufficient. He has no need of man, although He loved man and asked him to be with Him. A lot of the questions God asked Job out of the whirlwind started with the phrase, “Where were you when I (did this or that) ...?” He didn’t need Job to make anything.

Self wants us to be like God: self-sufficient. But God asks Job to prove and see if he can do anything without Him. In fact, He asks Job to deny Self. In chapters 40 and 41, God asks Job many questions about these monsters, like, “Hey Job, can you put a rope around his tongue and pull it out?” God was essentially asking, “Can you control your tongue without my help, Job? Can you lock him up in a cell?” And many other similar questions.

No, we cannot do that, without God. Now we can tend to think that Self only has sway in the unbelievers. I wish that were so! Self likes to come to church. He shows up ev-

Monster

ached by Alfred Amstutz



ery Sunday morning! And if you are not careful, when you deny Self some time, Self will be there gloating in the fact that you denied Self so well! He is a monster that shows up everywhere.

Many people have thought that once they had their incredible conversion they would never have to do with Self again. There is an element of truth in that: Self will be taken care of by God when we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. But believe me, when I walked up here this morning to preach, the old monster wanted to come along!

He is such a monster that you and I have no sword of our own that can take care of him. I have been disgusted time and again with all the monsters that show up in television and movies. I have thought that if people could really come to grips with the terrible monster of self, it would shake them up ... it shakes me up!

This monster often makes me want to quit being a disciple of Jesus, because there is no church system, no church doors, that can bar him out. He comes right in with people when they come in. Churches try to come up with some kind of system—conferences, nonconferences, rules, no rules—

and in spite of all the various church administrations, Self is right there. He shows up right in brothers meeting! And before you know it, the heat rises and things are coming out of mouths that shouldn't. It is like it says in verse 21 of chapter 41: "His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth." Then it continues saying that he has a stiff neck and his heart is "firm as a stone." You know, it's like the attitude that says, "Nobody is going to tell me what to do! And if you really want something done right, just ask me!" Those are some of the attitudes of Self.

Self will show up in brothers meetings and begin to "kindle coals" and burn. James says, "The tongue can no man tame. It is a fire, a world of iniquity." James is really just describing the tongue of this monster, the monster that no one can handle on his own strength.

Paul describes this monster in Romans 7. If you do not stay close to God, you will soon be doing things you really don't want to do, and the things you want to do, you can't. Self is right there to get the best of you. What an ugly monster that we see in Job 41.

Now, I don't get a picture that Job had done anything wrong to "deserve" his calamities. He loved righteousness and hated evil. And yet God had to show him that there was a monster in his life that Job was unable to overcome on his own. And up until Job saw that monster as God portrayed it to him, I don't think Job fully realized how big he really was. But when he fully realized, he could only say, "I abhor myself."

Brothers and sisters, if we could come together and genuinely see ourselves, and abhor our Self, the blessings of God would break out in such a way that we could not stop them! But I struggle every day of my life with this monster, and I often do not really see Self for who he really is. In fact, I often think he is a pretty nice guy, at least better than a lot of the other people around.

In chapter 41, there are a number of questions God asks Job about this monster:

- Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn? (Can you catch him and pull him around like a fish on a hook?)
- Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee? (Does he ever meekly ask you what he should do?)
- Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? (Will he ever surrender on his own to be your servant?)
- Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens? (Can you tie him up in the life of your little girls so that they can control the Self inside them?)
- Shall the companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants? (Can you catch

him and eat him? Or does he catch and eat you?)

- Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears? (Can you kill him on your own?)
- Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more. (If you try to conquer him on your own, you will become so discouraged you will quit after a while.)

Self is so nice if you don't fight him that you will be tempted to try to just take him into your life as a helper—after all, he treats you so nicely! He looks out for you so well that it makes it very comfortable to just let him go and live with him.

When I look at all the inroads of Self, in different parts of the world and in all kinds of people, I have to admit that I am tempted to just lift up my hands and say, “We're sunk! He's a monster, neither you nor I nor Job have any sword to finish him off with.”

I have contemplated much on how there have been so many wonderful conversions, and yet after a while this monster finds a way to get back in. He doesn't need to wait to come back in until you have committed some terrible immorality. He doesn't need to wait to come in until you have purposely told some really black lies. He can make his entrance right while you are discussing the deep things of God. How can that be? By discussing the deep things of God for a wrong motive. Because, “If I win this argument, look who I will be! I will prove to everybody that I was right and they were wrong.” And all that happens in deep discussion of spiritual things—Self is right there!

So far, things have been pretty negative in this article. Let's look at the good news now. God told Job concerning behemoth, “he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.” And in Isaiah 27:1, we find the following announcement: “In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.”

When I become discouraged and God has shut my mouth and there is nothing more to say, I can be like Job when he abhorred himself. I can humble myself and all at once the picture changes and the blessings of God begin to fall, as on Job's life. God's sword will “approach unto him,” and God will divide His inheritance with His saints.

And, in our case as Christians, we will receive a lot more than “double” and a lot more than another 140 years on earth—it will be eternity with God!

Meditating upon this whole scene in Job, and the state of the church and even my own life, it came to me in the following sentence: We have been saved from downtown Broadway, but are lost in the woods.

The church in general knows that it needs to be saved from what I will call “downtown Broadway,” the filth of the world that goes on in dark places, hardly without any shame. We know that the church needs to be delivered from such slut, and there are many awesome testimonies of people delivered from that kind of a lifestyle. But sadly, too many are now “lost in the woods.”

By the phrase “lost in the woods,” I mean a calm, peaceful place, with just trees around. Now we know that there is nothing wrong with trees in and of themselves.

And it seems as a church we are more likely to just wander around in the “trees of complacency” than to know where we are going and what our goal is. Thinking of being lost in the trees, my mind goes to all the things that God has provided on the earth that we humans use and enjoy. A lot of beautiful things that I will call “trees.”

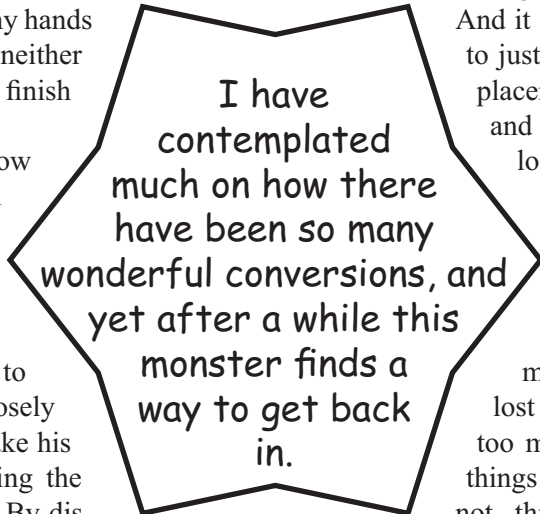
My point is that if you get too many “trees” in your life you will get lost among them. It has happened to me too many times in my own life. So many things come into my life. And no, they are not things from “downtown Broadway.”

They are just trees, beautiful trees. Awesome trees. A peaceful place to be. But they are so many that I find myself going around in circles in all the trees, not really sure where I am going. So many trees ... so many things to enjoy in life. And sometimes I get this uneasy feeling—“I am not getting anywhere! I had better do something about it.”

But then my mind goes back to when I was saved from “downtown Broadway.” And I console myself, “That is all God really wants, isn't it? He isn't too concerned if I am going in circles, as long as I am among these beautiful trees, is He?”

This part of the message has strengthened ever since I have been on my visit back to the USA. I have visited different churches and family. My heart was burdened by the conversations I have had with people, not those living in “downtown Broadway,” but people who have been saved from there. They are saying, “Nobody is interested in the church anymore, no one wants to join. The young people laugh at the church, even mock.” Those telling these things seem to not be able to figure it out.

As I consider this, it seems to me that the problem is that so many that have been saved from Broadway are now lost in a self-centered life in the woods—lost among the many



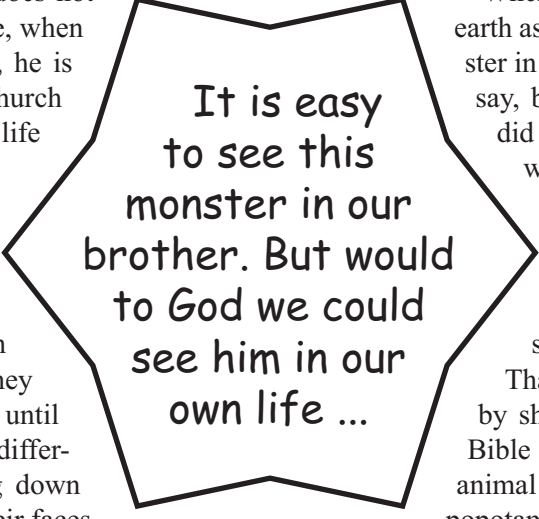
I have contemplated much on how there have been so many wonderful conversions, and yet after a while this monster finds a way to get back in.

beautiful trees. The monster of Self does not bother them in the same way as before, when they walked Broadway. Nevertheless, he is still there! He walks right into the church doors with them. He has filled their life with beautiful trees!

The end result is a powerless Christian life. One that the youth look upon and say, "I don't want anything to do with that. Unless I can see something that has more depth than that, I am not interested." So they head downtown to enjoy themselves until somebody can show them something different. At least something is happening down there. But I can tell by the looks on their faces that they really are not enjoying themselves in all that excitement. But what else is available?

Lost in the trees ...

As I say all these things, I want everyone to know that I am not pointing fingers. I see Self too much in my own life, and at times I could understand why nobody would want to fellowship with me. When I thought I had Self licked, there he showed up again. The only thing that gives me courage to continue on is a fresh look at Jesus.



It is easy
to see this
monster in our
brother. But would
to God we could
see him in our
own life ...

When I look at Jesus while He walked this earth as a man, I cannot one time see the monster in His life. Jesus has some hard things to say, but the monster is gone. The monster did not have his way in Jesus' life. And when I look up and see our perfect Example, I am not sure how it happens, but I feel courage rise again in my heart ... and I am ready to go on!

The Bible says, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God."

That is what God wanted to do with Job, by showing him those monsters. Now my Bible has notes that suggest what kind of animal behemoth or leviathan were; a hippopotamus or whatever. I don't know if there ever was a literal animal like what chapters 39

and 40 describe or not. Some people think so, others don't. I can imagine that God would have created an animal just like that, just so Job and we could understand who we really are. He created a lamb to show us the character of Jesus, so He could have created a special creature to show us who Self is.

It is so easy for us as Christians to get ourselves into the mentality that we pretty well have this thing of being a Christian wrapped up and figured out. If anyone asks us a

About the cover picture ...

Obviously, the picture on the cover and at the beginning of the article is a fabrication. However, the base photo is a picture of a real iguana, with teeth, fire, lightning, and smoke added, as well as a doctored eye.

What did the real leviathan look like? Was it a real animal? We know of no species today that fits the following description given in Job 41:12-24:

I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion. (13) Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle? (14) Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about. (15) His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. (16) One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. (17) They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered. (18) By his neesings [sneezings] a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. (19) Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. (20) Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. (21) His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. (22) In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him. (23) The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved. (24) His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

Notice the underlined sections that describe his teeth, eyes, nose, and mouth. Either the species has died out, or God was only using symbolic language to speak to Job. Whether there was (and still might be in some remote corner of the earth) such a species is sort of beside the point, as the article points out. Leviathan seems to be a picture of an animal that man is incapable of controlling. Hence, the portrayal of Self. Leviathan has even been linked to the beast portrayed in Revelation 13, which arose out of the sea (with the beast arising out of the earth being behemoth), which every man has to conquer or be a slave to.

Whether or not you think that leviathan was a real animal—or whether he signifies Self or not—I trust that you can make the application in this article of dealing with the self-life.

Leviathan or not, Self is an ugly animal! ~

question, we have the answer. Would to God we would have more experiences—and I can't tell you how to manufacture this—where our mouths would be stopped. It is so easy to have a lot to say and to have the answers ... and "it is obvious that the church over there doesn't have the answers." So we separate ourselves from everybody who doesn't have the answers, and pretty soon Self has us convinced that our only course is to stick it out by ourselves somewhere until our years are over.

It is easy to see this monster in our brother. But would to God we could see him in our own life, because it is only in our own heart that we can do something about him. And if we successfully deal with him in our own life, that would provide an example for our brethren who need an answer to him in their life. We need examples of people who have not only been delivered from "downtown Broadway," but delivered from the Self of the peaceful woods.

The only place I have found that this monster does not want to hang around is when there is humility around. If you begin to confess who and what you really are, he won't hang around! And when you begin to confess like Job did, and abhor yourself, he won't hang around, and the blessings of God will begin to fall.

If we will just back up and look at the incredible conversions that we have had, when we were saved from "downtown Broadway," you will find that element of humility there. Many times young people (and older ones as well) want to get converted. And they try, and pray, and seek. And it seems they can't come through. They feel like they are almost there, but they can't quite attain. Then one day they come to God, their life is in shambles, a total mess. And they confess to God, "God, my life is a mess, and I can't get anywhere. All I am able to accomplish is to make it worse. God, would you please help!"

The final end of leviathan

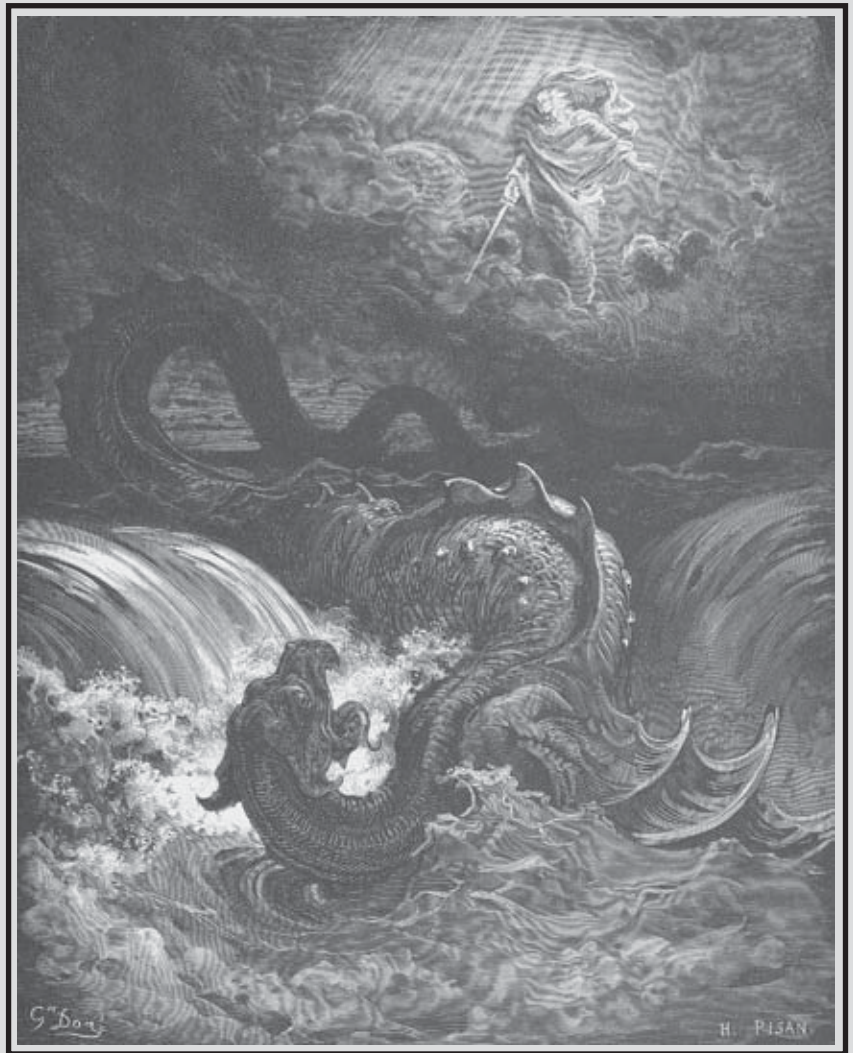
In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

Isaiah 27:1

Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

Ps. 74:14

Right: A woodcut by Gustave Doré (1832-1883) depicting the coming of the Lord to kill the monster that man is incapable of conquering. What a Saviour!



And when that level of humility is reached, all at once God is there! And the blessing falls and the conversion happens. The person gets excited and is ready to tell everyone, "I have been saved!" And he begins to share his testimony as to how God has saved him.

And the next thing you know, the old monster comes along and whispers, "You have the answer. Now you can tell everyone what it is all about and that you have the answer." And before you know it pride enters and the monster has robbed the blessing. Now they feel that they have the answer, and that they can run their own life again. Now they don't feel the great need of God and that they are a total failure anymore.

The result of God showing Job who He was and who Job was left Job abhorring himself in sackcloth and ashes. Totally dependent upon God. And God's blessings could then fall. But for Job to get there, it cost him. It cost him everything but his wife and his life, and even his wife was not really with him.

Now we would like to experience Job's latter blessings without having to pass through what Job did. We want to get there without having to feel the great need we have, and without having to really say, "I abhor myself."

But it will not happen to you or I if we try to sidestep the lowliness. The monster says, "That is such a low road. You cannot afford to walk around like that. You will never make it. Lift yourself up! Pull yourself up! Get your act together! You can do it!"

But the blessings do not fall.

In the last verse of Job 41 it says this monster is "a king over all the children of pride." What is the opposite of pride? Humility.

God has chosen to put this thing called humility in the Christian life and has chosen to only bless in that atmosphere. You may be the most financially successful person around, but if you do not have humility, it is not the blessing

of God. In fact, it would be the blessing and mercy of God if the same thing that happened with Job would happen with you. It is only in humility that God has chosen to bless and give victory.

And if you have achieved "success" and "victory" outside of humility, it is not the real thing. Such "success" and "victory" is associated with another king, not King Jesus. It is the king called Self, and he is king over all the children of pride. This usurper "beholdeth all high things"—he loves things that the world holds high!

I wish I could give you a "pat" answer that if you just put this or that church administration in place, then the monster will be taken care of. Just do this and that, and it will all turn out right in the end. It will not help you just to change churches. The monster will meet you over there. It will not help you to get another preacher. The monster doesn't leave you when you get another preacher. In fact, Self could arise stronger, since we think we now have the best preacher around.

When we begin to think we have it all figured out now, and that we would really like to tell everyone else just how it is, beware ... like the Pharisees, who had the answers. The Pharisees were not lost in the woods, they were lost in the words! Incredible! They could quote the Bible by memory ... but they were lost in the many words.

But if we will take a fresh look at the life of King Jesus and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and stay there, He has the answer and He wants to bless. And He will do just that! ~

Alfred and Carolyn Amstutz and family moved to Bolivia 11 years ago. This message was preached by Bro. Alfred on a visit to the USA. Alfred and his family currently live near Huacareta, in the Department of Chuquisaca, where Alfred milks a few cows and tries to preach the glorious gospel of the kingdom so that others may experience the power to overcome leviathan and walk in humility with Jesus.

Is leviathan your king?

The last thing God told Job about leviathan strikes sobriety into my soul (Job 41:34b): "he is a king over all the children of pride."

That translates into this: if you are a proud person, leviathan is your king. He tells you what to do, and you obey. He dictates what clothes you must wear to meet the approval of your peers, and you obey. He reminds you how to behave in a crowd, and you obey. He will not let you walk in humility, so God is compelled to resist you and withhold His grace from you. You belong, not to the kingdom of God, but to the kingdom of leviathan.

Sobering?

All those who are part of God's kingdom on earth will reign eternally with Him. All those who refuse the Lord's salvation from leviathan will suffer the same reward as he will suffer from the sword of the Lord.

Is proud leviathan your king?

Or is the humble Jesus your king?

Whom do you obey in the everyday decisions of life, like which one to purchase, what to put on, how to interact in a group, what words to use? He whom you obey is your king.



That they may teach the
young women ...

Virtuous Girlhood from the Bible

By Barbara Ste. Marie

And she said unto him, My father, *if* thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth. Ju 11:36

Jephthah's daughter is a beautiful example of nonresistance and submission. Please read the whole passage in Judges 11:29-40, which is not printed here to save space.

Jephthah, after receiving the Spirit of the LORD, makes a vow to the LORD. He vows to consecrate or offer as a burnt offering to the LORD whatsoever comes out of his house first to greet him when he returned from the battle. The LORD delivered unto Jephthah the victory, and he returned to his home. Jephthah was met by his only child, who had heard of the victory and came to greet him in joy with music and dancing. At that moment, the full impact of his vow hit him, and he rent his clothes.

The Authorized Version of the Bible has an alternate reading for "and" in verse 31. It can also be read as "or." Therefore, his vow could be read as "whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me ... shall surely be the Lord's *or* I will offer it up for a burnt offering."

Besides the story of Abraham and Isaac, God never asked for human offerings and condemned those who offered up their children to Moloch. (See Leviticus 20:1-5.) I believe the intent of Jephthah's vow was whatever could not be offered as a burnt offering would be consecrated or devoted to the LORD for His service. Jephthah told his daughter that he had made a vow to the LORD that he could not go back on. Then he must have relayed to her the extent of his vow and what it meant for her, because she answered "do unto me according to your word," because the LORD was faithful.

Jephthah's daughter knew that in being consecrated to the LORD's service, she would never marry or have children. (For a woman to be barren or never have children was a reproach in Israel.) Her father's name and line would die

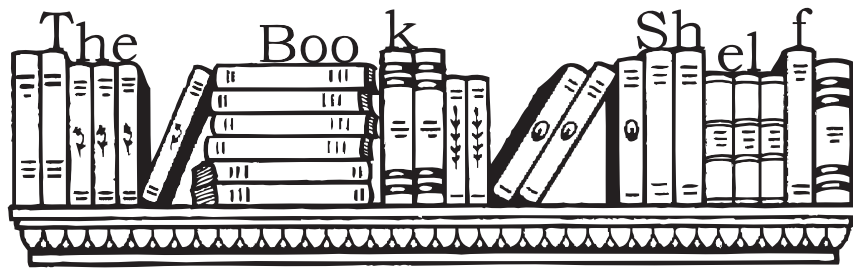
out with her, his only child. Yet she willingly and cheerfully submitted and obeyed her father. There is no hint of resistance in her answers or actions.

She could have said "no" and demanded her personal rights. She could have said she was not her father's property and he had no right over her life. She could have run away. But these are all fleshly responses, not the way a disciple of Jesus Christ "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2) should respond. We should obey parents (Ephesians 6:1) and authorities (1 Peter 2:13-15). The only time we could not obey is if it would go against God's laws. That is why I believe Jephthah was not going to sacrifice his daughter as a burnt offering.

Jephthah's daughter totally surrendered her will to the LORD's will. She asked only for two months to grieve her barrenness, and to focus on her new future. She needed a small amount of time to adjust her focus and desires from being a wife and a "mother in Israel" (all Jewish maidens in Israel, who understood prophecy, probably desired to be the mother of the coming Messiah) to wholly and faithfully serving the LORD; possibly in the tabernacle like Anna served in the temple in Luke 2:36-37.

After her time spent in the mountains with her companions, she returned and the vow was fulfilled: "and she knew no man." The Scriptures say that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament (possibly meaning, talk to) the daughter of Jephthah. Nowhere does it say that she afterward lamented or complained about her situation; the Scriptures leave us with the example of her being completely nonresistant and obedient.

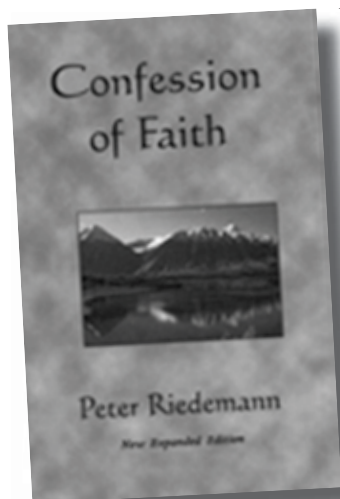
O LORD, that we as daughters of the Heavenly King may be as Jephthah's daughter! ~



Peter Riedemann's Confessions

A book review by Dean Taylor

A young converted shoemaker turned Anabaptist missionary and pastor, Peter Riedemann seemed to have lived tirelessly in sharing and living his faith. Traversing literally thousands of miles, writing songs and letters, visiting churches, working as a pastor, and publishing books, he helped shape the early days of the Anabaptist movement. Besides his pastoral letters and a few songs written from prison, Peter Riedemann is remembered today because of two books that he wrote while in prison. Both of his books are works explaining the faith of the early Anabaptist movement to outsiders. His first book, written from prison in Gmunden, Austria, is published today under the title "*Love is Like Fire.*" His second and most significant, written from prison from the little German town of Wolkersdorf, is published simply under the title "*Confession of Faith,*" or an older publishing under the more denominational sounding title "*Peter Riedemann's Hutterite Confession of Faith.*" Historically, Peter Riedemann is also known for being (next to Jacob Hutter) as the second founder of the Moravian/Tyrolean Anabaptists, which later became known as the Hutterian Brethren. Perhaps because Riedemann was a labeled a Hutterite instead of a Mennonite, he and his works remained virtually unknown to the English-speaking world until 1950.



The disclaimer

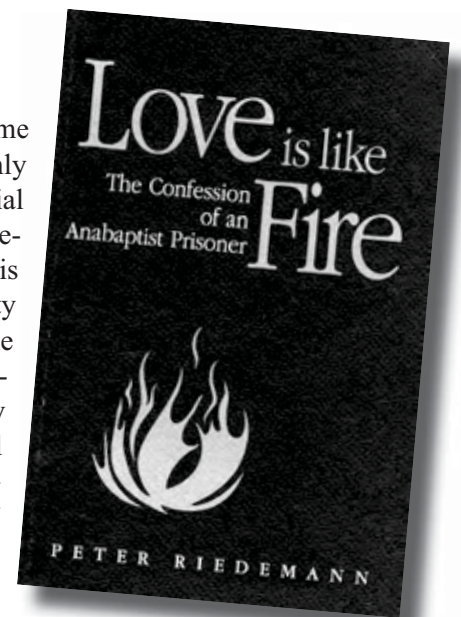
As we do with most of our books, I think it is fair to mention some of the things about a book that could be seen as

controversial by some of our readers. Certainly the most controversial thing surrounding Riedemann's writings is his concept of community of goods. After all, he was a Hutterite. However, this point only takes up a very small part of his writings—about one page out of a 170-page document. Even those few passages could still be beneficial for defending the general practice among Anabaptists for charitable relief and radical sharing of material goods.

Second, Riedemann presented a view that it was wrong for Christians to pay what people in his day were calling a "war tax." I'm not sure how to feel about this one. In keeping with Romans 13, I believe in paying all taxes. So this seems a bit odd to me. Thankfully, today most of our taxes come lumped together in a nice package. Who knows, perhaps it would look different if someone was coming around today demanding money specifically for building a nuclear missile to blow up Iran? I don't know ... I just thought it worth mentioning in the disclaimer.

A positive statement

Right from the first chapter of any of his books one quickly senses a different tone than that of many of the other early Anabaptist writers. With many of the others, I often feel that one thing lacking is a more positive expres-



sion of their faith. Written on the run, defending themselves against a false accusation, or having to scratch out a few lines through the terrible conditions of dungeon life made many of the Anabaptist writings come off as defensive or polemic. Having the luxury for careful editing or even the chance to make meaningful analogies to express their heart in a devotional style was uncommon in the early days of the Anabaptist movement. It is here that Peter Riedemann shines most. Riedemann was a very spiritual, expressive, and passionate writer. A longing for Christ and total dependence on the Holy Spirit flows through every page. Riedemann captured the devotional style. He comes off more like an Andrew Murray than a Menno Simons.

Riedemann started to write his first book in 1529 while imprisoned in Gmunden, Germany. He finished it approximately in the year 1532 shortly before he escaped from that prison. During his early years, Riedemann had fellowshipped and studied with some of the most gifted Anabaptist leaders of his day. After his escape from prison, he threw his lot in with the newly-forming Hutterian Brethren in Moravia. The brethren quickly recognized his gifts, and the next year they sent Riedemann out as a missionary, in 1533. In that same year he was again captured and put into prison until 1537, this time in the town of Nuremberg. After his release he traveled as a missionary and did pastoral work until he once again landed in prison around the year 1540, where he wrote his second book.

While in prison, Riedemann took advantage of a few privileges that other Anabaptist prisoners never had. While it is true that his books were written from a castle dungeon, as far as dungeon life in the 1500s went Riedemann had it better than most. The Protestant ruler of this area, Philip of Hess, did not allow the Anabaptists of his region to be executed. So while Riedemann was imprisoned he was allowed some privileges—like writing. Many scholars think that these “Confessions of Faith” were actually written in answers to questions that Phillip of Hess had personally asked him.

Orthodoxy

One of the most obvious things you quickly notice about “Confession of Faith” is that he presents the faith following the lines of the ancient Apostles’ Creed. Some have suggested that he did this to prove the orthodoxy of the Anabaptists to Philip of Hess ... who knows? Whatever his motive, the beauty of this approach was that it presents the early Anabaptist faith based on one thing—their understanding

of God. Just as A. W. Tozer said over 400 years later in the opening line of *The Knowledge of the Holy*, “what comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us,” Riedemann’s theology flows from his view of God Himself. However, flowing from this creedal approach, Riedemann rescues the Apostles’ Creed from a mere head knowledge by insisting that this ancient faith must affect our life—or it is vain. As he wrote, “no one may truthfully ascribe such glory and honor to Christ unless he has experienced this victory in himself.”¹

Clear salvation

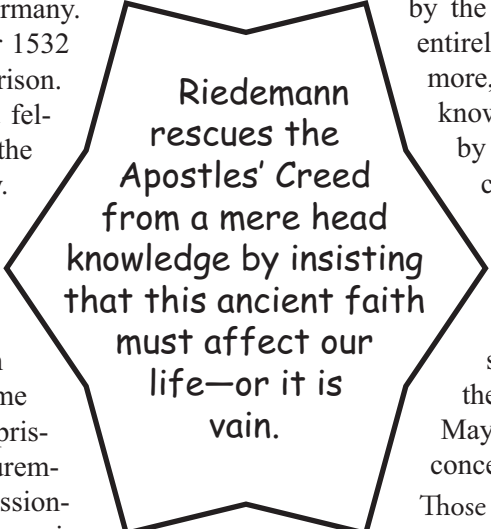
Pouring through almost every topic is Riedemann’s passionate appeal that the Law has been replaced by the Spirit and grace, and that salvation is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, this salvation *cannot* stop with a head knowledge, but is always made manifest by a changed life. Riedemann argues very convincingly that *by faith* this salvation brings a great confidence and even an assurance of our salvation. Riedemann’s careful balance through these often controversial topics surrounding salvation theology is refreshing. Under the chapter entitled “How People Again May Find God and His Grace,” he writes concerning remorse about our sin:

Those who want to repent with all their heart must first feel genuine remorse for their sins.

Remorse, however, means first recognizing how wrong, evil, harmful, and destructive sins are. Otherwise, repentance cannot endure, and still less can the sinner receive grace. True remorse follows the recognition of sin and is the basis on which people feel repugnance and horror of their sin. Yes, they even loathe themselves for being guided and controlled by sin for so long ...²

Speaking of how the Spirit prepares our hearts for salvation, Riedemann says:

What does the Lord say? ‘No human shall see me and live!’ Therefore, when God starts to speak in us, something must begin to die. We must hear, see, taste, and feel the Lord God in the countenance of Jesus Christ. All of this must happen before such construction can begin.³



Riedemann rescues the Apostles’ Creed from a mere head knowledge by insisting that this ancient faith must affect our life—or it is vain.

1 Peter Riedemann and John J. Friesen, *Peter Riedemann’s Hutterite Confession of Faith: Translation of the 1565 German Edition of Confession of Our Religion, Teaching, and Faith, by the Brothers ...* (Herald Press, 1999), 67.

2 Ibid., 95.

3 Ibid., 174.

Following the spirit of remorse, Riedemann says the Spirit leads us to repentance:

Remorse, then, leads to true repentance, and repentance means to humble and submit oneself before God, to bow down, and to be ashamed because of one's wickedness. This shame brings about a genuine return, so that one hastens to God, cries aloud, and prays to him for forgiveness and grace."⁴

After surrendering to Christ, Riedemann writes that God's salvation is real and life-changing. He, along with other early Anabaptist writers, insisted that salvation goes beyond mere mental assent. He offered beautiful analogies of how the nature of Christ is infused or poured into our hearts, giving us life and spiritual power. He even argues that this salvation gives us a real assurance of our hope in heaven:

He has given us a new birth to an imperishable hope, grafted us into his divine nature, and after we believed the gospel, sealed us with his promised Spirit. This Spirit now accomplishes *everything* in us, eradicating and destroying the sin that we have by nature so that what is good, true, and holy, which he brings with him and plants in us, may take root and bear fruit.⁵

Speaking of the incarnation and the receiving of the divine nature of Christ, he writes:

Through his actual strength and activity, Christ leads us to be partakers of his nature, character, and being. ... Christ is our righteousness and goodness. He is our life; we ourselves do not live, but Christ lives in us. Christ is our resurrection, our salvation, and our all in all. We also believe that Christ's incarnation means that we can be transformed. His suffering and death are salvation and life for us. In Christ we truly have everything.⁶

He [the Holy Spirit] also teaches and guides us, assures us that we are children of God, and makes us one with him, so that through his work, we are made part of the divine nature and character. We experience his work within us in truth and power in the renewing of our hearts. God be praised! In God we have absolute certainty that he has drawn our heart to him and made it his dwelling place.⁷

Christ is the root and the vine, and we are grafted into him through faith. Just as the sap rises from the root

and makes the branch fruitful, so the Spirit of Christ rises from the root, Christ, into the branches and twigs, to make them all fruitful. The twigs are of the same nature as the root and bears its kind of fruit.⁸

Christ has given us his Spirit, which joyfully and without compulsion accomplishes God's will within us.⁹

Speaking of the assurance of our salvation, but yet our continual need of God's grace, Riedemann said:

Leaving everything else, we cleave to him and depend on him with absolute certainty that we can acknowledge that everything we have comes from God. Since God's nature and character is eternal life, he has made us partakers and sharers of himself by sealing our faith with his Holy Spirit, which is the security of our inheritance. Through his grace, for which we praise him, we experience his works in us, and this makes us certain of all his promises.¹⁰

Spirit and church

As with his view on personal salvation, Riedemann speaks of the church as completely dependent of God's Spirit and grace. Pointedly, Riedemann also argues that the true church is only made up of the company of those who are born again and walking in the Spirit and truth:

The children of God, however, become his children through the unifying Spirit. Thus it is evident that the church is gathered through the Holy Spirit; the Church has its being, and continues to exist, through the Spirit. There are no churches apart from those which the Holy Spirit gathers and builds.¹¹

The church of Christ is a pillar and foundation of truth and continues to be that. Truth itself is expressed, confirmed, and put into action in the church by the Holy Spirit. Thus, whoever endures and submits to the working of the Spirit of Christ, is a member of this church. Whoever does not want this and allows sin to rule over them, does not belong to the church.¹²

Real Spirit-led ministries

Speaking of the pastors and missionaries of these Spirit-led churches, Riedemann writes of the absolute necessity for the anointing of God in order to have a real ministry:

⁸ Ibid., 97.

⁹ Ibid., 100.

¹⁰ Ibid., 64.

¹¹ Ibid., 77.

¹² Ibid., 78.



Just as the sap rises from the root and makes the branch fruitful, so the Spirit of Christ rises from the root, Christ ... to make them all fruitful.

⁴ Ibid., 96.

⁵ Ibid., 61.

⁶ Ibid., 75.

⁷ Ibid., 76.

Those who have been on the mountain with Christ and have seen the tabernacle with all its adornments and furnishing, they and only they are able to know how to do the work to please him whose dwelling it shall be.¹³

If anyone is to go out [as a missionary] for the Lord, he must be chosen by the Lord and endowed with his power; he must feel that power working in him. Above all, he must let the Lord's power rule over him and lead him. ... Christ will not permit a messenger to go out who is not first clothed with the power of his Spirit. Those who feel this power will heed the command of their Lord, who has sent them.¹⁴

Kingdom-based missiology

The goal, calling, and desire of Peter Riedemann and these radical brethren was Christ and His kingdom. His heart beat with the heart of Christ with his appeal to manifest God's kingdom on earth. This Kingdom-based missiology caused these early Anabaptist communities to pour out their lives in missions, even in the most difficult times of war and persecution. What's more, when they built these missions they understood that disciplining them in all of the teaching of Christ was what was expected of them. They believed Jesus actually meant it when He said, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

The Son does what he sees the Father doing. When the Son wished to create a new humanity, or to renew humanity in the likeness of its Creator, he also wanted to do everything in the proper order.¹⁵

Since they cannot preach without first being sent, it is certain that God, in giving them his command to go out, puts his word in his messengers' mouths. The Lord himself testifies to this when he says, "I have put

my words in your mouth. I have set you over nations and kingdoms, to uproot, pull down, and destroy, and then to build and plant anew." Therefore, all who have not been sent have no word from God. They only have what they have stolen from the Scriptures or from one

another. That is the main reason God's commission is necessary. It is not enough that they were sent; they also had to know the purpose of being sent, and what they had to do. Christ commanded them to do his work, saying, "teach all nations," and "Preach the gospel to every creature."¹⁶

Love

One last thing about the book that I feel I just have to mention. Through both of his books, Riedemann constantly speaks about the power of love. It is love, he teaches, that makes all this spiritual life work.

There is a particular point that Riedemann makes about love in the brotherhood that I don't want us to miss. He argues that the oneness and unity that the brotherhood is to have flows from our understanding of the Trinity. This "community of the Trinity," spoken of by Christ in John 16 and 17, forms the model of unity and love for the brotherhood here on earth. Riedemann used this concept of love so much that his first book has actually been named after it—*Love is Like Fire*. That title came from his inspiring analogy of a man building a fire from sticks. He says that when you first start building the fire, almost any size of stick can snuff it out. But as the fire grows, it can get to the point that even whole trees or houses can't stop it. That's the way love is.

Let it burn! ~

Peter Reidemann's Confessions can be purchased at www.hbbookcentre.com, or by writing to Hutterian Brethren Book Centre, Box 40, MacGregor, MB, R0H 0R0, Canada. *Love is Like Fire* can be freely downloaded at <http://www.plough.com/eb-ooks/loveislikefire.html>

¹⁶ Ibid., 186-187.

LOVE IS LIKE FIRE

Love is like fire, which goes out before it really ignites if one puts too much wood on it, as those who work with it know. But once it really flares, the more wood one puts on it, the better it burns, so that even houses and whole forests are burned. But when there is no more wood, however, it dies and grows cold. It is the same with love. When it is first kindled in a man, small troubles and temptations smother and hinder it; but when it really burns, having kindled the man's eagerness for God, the more temptations and tribulation meet it, the more it flares, until it overcomes and consumes all injustice and wickedness. But when love is not practiced, when the man grows lazy and careless, it flickers out again; the man's heart grows cold, faith declines, and all good works cease. Then the man stands like a withered tree fit for the fire, as Jesus himself says. Love flows from faith; for where there is no faith there cannot be love, and where there is no love there cannot be faith. The two are so entwined that one cannot be pleasing to God without the other.¹

¹ Peter Riedemann, *Love is Like Fire: The Confession of an Anabaptist Prisoner* (Plough Publishing House, 1993), 25-26.

¹³ Ibid., 175.

¹⁴ Ibid., 184.

¹⁵ Ibid., 186.

Questions & Answers and Letters to the Editor



For the last year or so we have not included any letters to the editor in the magazine. Thanks to all who have written, offering encouragements, corrections, questions, and plain old disagreements about what we have published. In this issue, we will include a couple of questions and concerns (some were not addressed specifically to *The Heartbeat of the Remnant*, but touch on the issues we have touched). This provides an avenue to discuss the issues at hand so that even those who were too timid to write can partake of the responses. Keep writing us! ~

Why the swords?

Q. My question is this: how do we answer a person who gives us Luke 22:36 in answer to the verses such as ‘love your enemies’? “Then said he unto them, But now, he that has a purse, let him take it, and likewise his bag: and he that has no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.” I would appreciate your thoughts on this topic.

A. Concerning that verse, if it were the only one in the Bible, it could easily be seen as a call to arms. But, take notice of the scene in which one of those two swords are used, and of the fact that Jesus said two swords are enough.

Now, why were two swords enough? Precisely because Jesus was not planning on using swords for a defense, but in fact, as a way to show that He did not need swords. When the sword was used, and an ear lies upon the ground, the work of the sword was finished ... and Jesus then *healed* the damage of the sword. How could He better have shown His attitude towards using a sword than to fix the damage done by one used in His defense, and by telling Peter to put it away? Yes, Jesus needed a sword on that occasion to show that He *could* have used one if He had wanted. Had there been no swords on the scene, others could have accused Him of not using the sword only because there was none available to Him. But with two swords on the scene, and at least one of them in very active duty, Jesus says, ‘Put that thing away ...’

It becomes absolutely established that Jesus does not use swords in self-defense! How could He have established that so clearly, if no swords would have been on the scene? That is why Jesus needed the swords ... to clearly establish that He had absolutely no desire to use them. They were avail-

able, but He essentially said, “No, thank you. My kingdom doesn’t need swords for defense.”

The rest of the Scriptures are pretty clear about nonresistance and are unanimous against resisting evil with evil. For that reason, I think we can only conclude that Luke 22:36 must be looked at as described above. ~

Why Anabaptists?

I want to say thank you for all that you people have done and for the many ways that you’ve reached out to the world around you. My wife and I have been blessed many times by your publications and your tape messages. However, I’ve been deeply troubled by your emphasis on the distinction between so-called Anabaptist doctrine and Evangelical doctrine in the last two issues. As someone who has experienced both camps, I can tell you they both have their full set of issues and problems. I would never say that Evangelicals have it right, to be sure, there are many things they don’t have right. But I can say with equal certainty that the Anabaptists don’t have it together either. I don’t believe that it really matters to Christ. What really matters is whether or not we are doing what His word says. Please stop acting like there’s something special about the Anabaptists. There’s only one special thing, and that’s Jesus Christ. There’s a whole world of people out there who need Christ and as long as they see the infighting and finger pointing within what they see as the church, they won’t be interested. Christ’s body has been sliced and diced up into indiscernible pieces over myriads of ‘doctrinal issues’ that in my opinion are insignificant. Christ said that the world would know we are His by the love we have for each other. I have close friends in both camps and can have equally deep fellowship with either one. Please lock arms with all people who genuinely love Christ and want to do what He says and ignore the fictitious lines that have

been conjured up by our finite and fallen minds. Please just tell the truth from the Word of God and let the chips fall where they may. Don't draw extra-biblical distinctions.

Respectfully, A brother in Christ
P.S. Please remove us from your mailing list.

Reply: The reason why we at *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* use the Anabaptist writings so often is quite simple: In all our studies of church history we recognize the Anabaptist revival as having achieved the closest return to apostolic Christianity as any revival that has happened. A perfect movement? No! Do we worship the Anabaptists? No! Are we ashamed to lift the Anabaptist movement up as an example from which we can learn from? No!

And the reason why we publish articles like we have, comparing Anabaptist and Evangelical doctrine, is actually spelled out in your letter: many people fail to see that there is a great foundational difference between the 'camps,' if you want to use that term.

If the 'doctrinal issues' were truly 'insignificant' as you write in your letter, then we are truly in error to be focusing on them. But it is for this very reason that we *do* focus on them; they *are* significant. In fact, very significant. Perhaps the following, excerpted from a newsletter written by Bryce Geiser of Caneyville Christian Community in Caneyville, KY, will make a point:

A few days later, we ... went to Carrolton, Kentucky, to a gathering of Plain or ex-Plain people, sponsored by Michael Pearl.

Michael began the 3-day session by telling us that he had spent many hours in the Plain church meetings, "stinking, hot, and seemingly endless," being bored to death by our preachers. Now it was his turn, and he intended to get revenge. He gave us a schedule of seven meetings totaling around 15 hours of preaching.

Could Michael do it? Indeed he could. He could hardly stop talking when the time was up. And what did he talk about?

Well, Michael is as close to a modern-day Martin Luther as you can get. We spent hours going through Romans and the Protestant "faith alone" doctrine, but we were never bored. Mike is an

entertaining speaker with clear and firm grasp of his subject. We liked him.

I was glad for the chance to spend most of three days trying to understand Protestant theology.

I was surprised at how little I disagreed with the actual words he preached, and yet how vehemently I disagreed with his summaries and conclusions. Perhaps our greatest disagreement was the way we approached the New Testament. Michael wanted us to skip past the four gospels, ("that's Old Testament stuff") and start at God's "premier" book to the non-Jewish people, the book of Romans. Romans was, for Michael, the window through which he saw the rest of the Bible. Romans was, in fact, the Gospel.

In sharp contrast, for us Anabaptists the teachings of Jesus and his announcements of the Kingdom is the actual Gospel. We see the Gospel as the 'turning upside down' of our lives and inviting us to participate in the kingdom struggle. We read Jesus' accounts of end-time judgment and believe it to be a judgment of fruits and works, not theology.

Michael doesn't agree. "Our salvation is based on grace, through faith alone and not of works." Period. All that stuff about not swearing, not resisting evil people, doing violence to no man, and so forth belongs to a works-based salvation.

By the end of three days it was clear to me that Martin Luther had distorted the gospel message and robbed it of its fruitfulness. Not so much by the exact things being said, but by an overall imbalance of Scripture and a gross misunderstanding of what the Gospel message was.

I watched for my chance to question Michael in a nonthreatening setting between meetings. Finally, on the last day, I found him outside all alone.

"How is it," I asked, "that there can be absolutely no works in salvation when the Bible includes such things as 'calling upon the name of the Lord' to be saved? Even simple belief itself is called a 'work' by Jesus in John 6:28-29. 'What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' My brain, my mouth, my 'giving up'—are they not the works of my organic body?"

I was surprised at how little I disagreed with the actual words he preached, and yet how vehemently I disagreed with his summaries and conclusions.

By the end of three days it was clear to me that Martin Luther had distorted the gospel message and robbed it of its fruitfulness.

Michael is never stumped. “Those are what we call non-meritorious works,” he said. “That’s not what we mean; not what Romans means when it speaks of works.”

Oh ... Maybe we aren’t so far apart as our etymology suggests. If we could find different words, would our worlds draw closer? But then I think of the crisp advice given by John: “Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.”

... [Evangelicalism] has adopted a way of believing the Bible which ultimately becomes friendship with the world and its values. The way of the cross, so central to Anabaptist theology, does not dominate their doctrine and thus does not cramp their lifestyle either.

... By faith we believe that these moments, this transitory work, is being reserved in heaven ready to be revealed in the last time. It is the fervent desire of this community to be fellow-builders of His Kingdom, inviting His will to be done *on earth* as it is in Heaven. Is it too childish to imagine that we work to restore one small farm [on which live several families in Christian brotherhood] in these short years, for the Kingdom?

Isn’t this our missionary work? To give our lives to the struggle, the glorious struggle, of regaining territory taken by the enemy? To forsake all, and to copy the heavenly things of Christ’s kingdom in this life on this earth in very real and tangible ways?

As the economics of the nations totter and local communities disintegrate, we see an opportunity for Christians to explain the far different economics of Christ’s Kingdom, and to show glimpses of what could be *if* brotherhood and equality would triumph.

What can we at *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* say about those who call the four Gospels “Old Testament stuff”? Or practicing the Sermon on the Mount as “a works-based salvation”? Or having a “Gospel” that does not include the necessity of taking up the cross and following (obeying) Jesus? What can we say, other than what the Apostle Paul said?

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Ph. 3:18

And yet, as Bro. Bryce explains, the actual phrases being used and the Scriptures being quoted by Evangelicals are the same ones that the early church and the Anabaptists used ... but they came to entirely different conclusions than what the Protestant Reformers came to. Thus, an Anabaptist and an Evangelical can both say “We are saved by grace, through faith,” and mean something entirely different. They can both sing the same hymns, in the same church pew and in perfect harmony of voice, and yet be on entirely different wavelengths spiritually.

So as long as we continue to see the influx of Protestant doctrine destroying God’s remnant here in the 21st century, we will continue to publish articles exposing the error. It is the firm belief of the editorial staff that this influx is one of the biggest dangers in our settings. ~

Quit [act] ye like men

Q. When does a boy become a man?

A. I would like to consider the testimony of the apostle Paul: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” 1 Co. 13:11

So when does a boy become a man? When he puts away boyhood! I feel driven, compelled in all kindness

and in no condemnation to anyone, to say the following: As long as you want to be a child, you can be one. If you want to be a man, you can become a man.

I want to touch on the area that has become an idol in many young people’s lives: playing. I play with my two and four-year-olds. We push a ball around on the floor. I probably don’t do enough of that with them as I should. But, I think if you are going to become a mature man in Jesus Christ, you will want to put the ball down. Bro. David Cooper shared in his personal testimony that when Jesus became the center of his life, playing took on another perspective; he no longer wanted to play.

One of the things that helps people determine when a boy has become a man is by how much playing he does, how much drive he has for play in his life. I have to bless the young person who wrote on his application for Youth Bible School: “I am weary of volleyball in our circles.” I think that is because it has reached a point where it has become an idol in the life of many youth. People are more given to playing than seeking God; they are more concerned



If you want to become a man, put the ball down!

about how much playing they have in their life. They are more concerned about playing than about going deeper with God. You cannot go deeper with God while you are playing, while you are worried about the ball or worried about who gets this point. You cannot go deeper with God when you are concerned about who wins this game. You will not become a man that way.

If you want to become a man, put the ball down!

[This question was given for the Panel Discussion at the 2010 Youth Bible School at Ephrata Christian Fellowship. Bro. Dean Stump gave the above answer.]

What options are there?

Q. Bill married Susie, and after several years they divorced. Both of them remarried. Later Susie came to Christ and after a while realized that she was living in adultery. She separated from her adulterous marriage, but her second husband wants her back really bad, and her first one has no interest in reconciliation. What are her options?

A. There is only one option that we can offer, and it is called taking up an ugly, painful, and [to the world looking on] disgraceful cross, and following Jesus in denial of what the natural man/woman craves by nature. In her case, it is to “remain unmarried or be reconciled” to her first husband.

It is not easy for us to offer such a painful option; we wish we could offer an easier path. But all we have to offer is what the apostle Paul called “the preaching of cross.” Yet in the end this comes out best, even though the cost and pain in the beginning is great. Paul continues by saying, “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” 1 Co. 1:18

The reason Paul could call taking up the cross “the power of God” is because when we submit ourselves to following Jesus, cost what that may, God will pour out grace into our lives to bear that cross until He decides—He and not we—to exchange that cross for a glorious resurrection.

And so while we can only offer a cross to Susie, we are in fact offering her a glorious resurrection! Someday, when God decides it has been long enough, He will grant Susie the beautiful opportunity to experience something that no

one else can give her—beauty out of ashes. The only condition is that she faithfully carry the cross of Christ until that wonderful day. For there are no resurrections without cross-bearing. Humanity has been searching for 2000 years for a way to resurrect without first taking up the cross of Christ and allowing it to kill our natural instincts. But there is no other way. ~

Secret Sin

I let a little sinful thought
Dwell in my heart one day.
I meant to play with it awhile
And then send it away.

Of course I kept it hidden well
So none would ever know
That I had entertained a guest
Of character so low.

But do you know, that little thing
Just grew and grew until
It crowded out the good and true
And overcame my will.

No longer could I keep it hid
Nor could I bid it go;
Who would have thought that little thing
Could cause such bitter woe?

I had to take it to the cross,
To plead the Savior's blood;
And then at last my weary soul
Regained its peace with God.

O watch the “little things,” dear child.
Like seeds they're sure to grow,
Destroying true soul happiness—
How well, how well I know!

~Author unknown

Faith untried may be true faith, but it is sure to be little faith, and it is likely to remain dwarfish so long as it is without trials. Faith never prospers so well as when all things are against her: tempests are her trainers, and lightnings are her illuminators. When a calm reigns on the sea, spread the sails as you will, the ship moves not to its harbor; for on a slumbering ocean the keel sleeps too. Let the winds rush howling forth, and let the waters lift up themselves, then, though the vessel may rock, and her deck may be washed with waves, and her mast may creak under the pressure of the full and swelling sail, it is then that she makes headway towards her desired haven.

No flowers wear so lovely a blue as those which grow at the foot of the frozen glacier; no stars gleam so brightly as those which glisten in the polar sky; no water tastes so sweet as that which springs amid the desert sand; and no faith is so precious as that which lives and triumphs in adversity. Tried faith brings experience. You could not have believed your own weakness had you not been compelled to pass through the rivers; and you would never have known God's strength had you not been supported amid the water-floods. Faith increases in solidity, assurance, and intensity the more it is exercised with tribulation. Faith is precious, and its trial is precious too. ~Author unknown

The Seditious Sermon



E. Stanley Jones

Men need nothing in these modern days so much as they need a working philosophy of life—an adequate way to live. Loosed from the moorings that have held life, many are now adrift. They claim to be free. They have thrown overboard the chart, the compass, the steering wheel, and the consciousness of destination. They are free from everything—everything except the rocks, and the storms, and the insufferable absurdity of being tossed from wave to wave of mere meaningless emotion.

“I have no solution to the problem of life and of suffering, and I seem to be predestined to have no solution,” said an earnest Hindu to me. Said another, a Hindu professor, “I began to give up one thing after another and then I found that everything was gone, even my universe. I was also ready to give up myself and commit suicide. My life is getting duller and duller every day. It has no meaning. But maybe there will something work out of it. So far it has brought me nothing.” A chairman of a meeting in which I had spoken on a working philosophy of life said, “I have lived a long time, but as yet I have no philosophy of life, let alone a working philosophy of life. I am inwardly a chaos, full of clash and confusion, and I dare say that there are many of you here who are like me.”

There *are* many who are like him—increasingly so. Nor are they all outside of the Christian Church. The Christian is asking with increasing anxiety, and I believe with increasing sincerity, “What is the Christian’s working way to live?”

A brilliant lady in high society in the West, who had stumbled on the treasure hid in the field of human life, and had gone off and for joy thereof had sold all that she had to buy that field, said to the writer, “Now that I am a Christian, what are you going to do with me? How does one act as a Christian? What is the technique of being a Christian?”

I did not answer this penetrating question at once, because—well, I wasn’t sure, and the sincerity of the question demanded that I be sure.

Now, after months and years of brooding amid the storm and clash of things, I have come to the conclusion that what we call the Sermon on the Mount is the way a Christian will act, that it constitutes the technique of being a Christian—it is his working philosophy of life.

Among the many things which India has taught me are two outstanding: First, she compelled me to disentangle

Christ from the accumulations which the centuries had gathered around Him. It was a liberating experience to find one’s faith becoming simplified and centered in a Person.

For years I have walked in that liberty; but for several years there has been an undertone of questioning, and rather troubled questioning. The question was this: Yes, Christ is the center, and to be a Christian is to catch His mind and His spirit, but what main content should be in those words “Christ” and “Christian”? It is not enough to have the words. The deeper question is, what do we mean by “being centered in the person of Christ?” Because the answer varies, and varies vitally.

So India has taught me the second thing: the main moral content in the word “Christian” must be the Sermon on the Mount. India is forcing us to face anew the Sermon on the Mount. She insists that this is Christianity. No matter how much we may point to our creeds, she insists on pointing us to the pattern shown her in the Mount. The fact is that the Sermon on the Mount is not in our creeds. As the Apostles’ Creed now stands, you can accept every word of it and leave the essential self untouched.

Suppose we had written it in our creeds and had repeated each time with conviction: “I believe in the Sermon on the Mount and in its way of life, and I intend, God helping me, to embody it!” What would have happened? I feel sure that if this had been our main emphasis, the history of

Christendom would have been different. With emphasis on doctrines which left unaffected our way of life, the Christian Church could accept Constantine as its prize convert. And yet Constantine, after his alleged conversion, murdered his conquered colleague and brother-in-law Licinius; sentenced to death his eleven-year-old nephew, killed his eldest son, Crispus; brought about the death of his second wife; took the nails that were supposed to come from the cross of Christ and used one in his war helmet and another on the bridle of his war horse.

Yet he was canonized by the Greek Church and his memory celebrated “as equal to the apostles.” He talked and presided at the opening of the Council of Nicaea, which was called to frame a creed, and he was hailed as “a bishop of bishops.” Could this have happened if the men who had gathered there had made the Sermon on the Mount an essential part of the Creed? It had no place in it, so Constantine could be at home. What had happened was that the Chris-

What do we mean by “being centered in the person of Christ?”

tian Church had been conquered by a pagan warrior. And the church allowed itself to be thus conquered, for this ideal of Christ did not have possession of its soul. For the same reason, a bishop could kick another to death in the cathedral of Constantinople to prove his orthodoxy, and the Monophysites of Alexander could cry, "As thou hast divided, so shalt thou be divided," and then proceed to butcher those who believed in the dual nature of Christ in order to prove that the nature of Christ was one and indivisible.

These things sound strange to our ears, but it is only because the ideas of the Sermon on the Mount are reasserting their ascendancy over our spirit and are beginning to come back as central in the thinking of the Christian. Even now it is far from being an essential part of our Christian thinking. Even now, in many quarters, the orthodoxy of the creed is looked on as more essential than the orthopraxy [correct practice] of the deed. We have saluted this ideal, but have not taken it seriously. We have used it for polemic, but not for practice. We have done as the British officers did in one of the battles of the Sikh war: they shut up the commanding general in a high tower, locked the door, and then went out and fought the battle on their own principles. We have locked this ideal of Christ in high towers of reverence and respect and have then gone off to fight the battle of life in our own way, on our own principles—or lack of them—to our disaster.

The greatest need of modern Christianity is the rediscovery of the Sermon on the Mount as the only practical way to live. However, we have an undertone of doubt and fear that it is not workable. We feel that it is trying to give human nature a bent that it will not take; it is trying to force something on us for which human nature is not made.

Chesterton says that on the first reading you feel that the Sermon on the Mount turns everything upside down, but the second time you read it you discover that it turns everything right side up. The first time you read it, you feel that it is impossible; the second time, you feel that nothing else is possible. The more I have pondered on this way of life, the more I am persuaded that instead of all the moral impossibilities lying in the Sermon on the Mount, as we often think, the fact is that all the moral possibilities lie here, and all the impossibilities lie outside. We have become so used to other ways of living that this way seems out of place. It is like when I sat for a long time with my legs twisted under me, and when I got up to walk it was exceedingly painful to straighten them out and difficult to move along. I had sat in an unnatural position so long that the natural functioning of the legs seemed unnatural.

A wolf-child, captured near where I live in India, had lived with wolves from the age of two to the age of eleven. It ran on all fours. Its knee joints were stiff and enlarged from running in this fashion. It would eat only raw meat, and when it was put on a more civilized diet, it took dysentery and died. A human being had lived in a wolf environment on wolf principles, on a wolf diet for nine years. Human nature had so accommodated itself to it that it seemed the natural way to live, and our more human ways seemed unnatural. We have lived so long on the wolf-principles of selfishness and competition and strife that the Christian way of unselfishness, cooperation, and love seems to us a foreign way.

When I asked Mahatma Gandhi what we could do to naturalize Christianity in India so that it would cease to be a foreign thing ... he replied: "Practice your religion without adulterating it or toning it down," and he had in mind the Sermon on the Mount.

But nowhere has the gospel been more weakened and explained away than here. One commentator of modern days says that "we must not degrade the Sermon on the Mount by a grotesque literalism." No, nor must we denature them by an absurd spiritualizing.

Years ago when I asked Mahatma Gandhi what we could do to naturalize Christianity in India so that it would cease to be a foreign thing, among other things he replied: "Practice your religion without adulterating it or toning it down;" and he had in mind the Sermon on the Mount. It is Mahatma Gandhi's literal insistence upon this way of acting in gaining political freedom that has startled and challenged the whole Western world. He has proved that it is possible, and that is power. This fresh discovery, by a Hindu, of a truth long buried beneath the armaments of the fighting West has been one of the most important spiritual discoveries of modern times. We have now no alternative but to be Christian according to this pattern, or cease to be Christians in any effective sense at all.

A Moslem college professor arose at the close of one of my meetings and thanked me for saying what I had been saying, but urged me that I go to the West and preach this Sermon on the Mount to *them*, that *they* needed it. The applause that greeted his statement showed that the audience agreed. I replied that I would, but that human need and human sin were not geographical, that in a round world it is difficult to tell where East begins and West ends, that we are all in the same deep need.

While I believed my answer was true, nevertheless concerning the Sermon on the Mount there are just two great questions, one from the East and one from the West. The East asks, "Will you practice it?" And the West, "Can we practice it?"

Is it workable? The core of the religious problem of the world is just here. Dean Inge rightly says that if Christianity

cannot hold us at the place of ethical conduct—if it loses the battle at that place—then what is left is not worth fighting over. For, mind you, if the ethical side of our gospel is unworkable, then by that very fact the redemptive side is rendered worthless. The center and substance of the Christian’s ethical conduct is in the Sermon on the Mount.

If this is unworkable, then there is not much left. We must turn our conduct over to other ways of living and stand beside dead altars, repeating dead creeds. We have insisted that what we call Christian experience is an absolute necessity and that without that which Pentecost provides, we cannot be Christian in any vital sense. This is true. But it must be remembered that behind Pentecost lay the Sermon on the Mount.

Pentecost had the content of the Sermon on the Mount in it and therefore the power manifested was Christian. Pentecost divorced from the Sermon on the Mount is spiritual powwow instead of spiritual power. But this way of life has been toned down and made “safe.” The Marquis of Wellesley, a hundred years ago, said that it was “dangerous to send the Bible to India with its ideas of human equality, without the safeguard of a commentary.” The Marquis was right. The Bible, with its ideas of human equality, was dangerous to the kind of society that existed in India, organized as it was on caste. It was dangerous also to the kind of an empire that existed in Britain, organized as it was on the “right” of the white to rule.

The Sermon on the Mount seems dangerous. It challenges the whole underlying conception on which modern society is built. It would replace it by a new conception, animate it with a new motive, and turn it toward a new goal.

One day I was addressing an audience of Hindus and Moslems and was interpreting the Sermon on the Mount. Before me sat two Criminal Investigation Department men, secret service police taking down shorthand notes of what I was saying, to be sent to the government to see if anything seditious could be found in it. A Christian government sends Hindu and Moslem agents to find out if the Sermon on the Mount is seditious! It is! The ideas underlying the Sermon on the Mount are the charter of freedom to all men, of all races, of all climes, of all classes.

The secret police of the Modern Economic Order might have sent their agents to see if there is anything seditious against their Order in this Sermon. There is! This Sermon strikes at the whole selfish competitive idea underlying modern economic life, and demands that men cooperate in love or perish in strife. The Military might have sent their secret police to see if there was anything seditious against their methods in the Sermon. There is! The Sermon challenges

the whole conception of force which militarism holds, and would substitute the method of love. The churches might have sent representatives to see if there is anything seditious against them. There is! Denominationalism often expresses itself in ways that are not much more than a church race in competitive armaments. It would find the Sermon on the Mount seditious, for it demands that individuals and groups and nations lose themselves in cooperation that they may find themselves in a higher brotherhood.

The Sermon on the Mount was and is seditious. It finally put Jesus on the cross, and it will do the same for his followers who follow it in modern life. But it would not end there.

There would be a resurrection so great, so transforming in human living, that we would know by actual experimentation that it is the only way for us to live.

“We love the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount and the Christ of the Seamless Robe at

Calvary, but the Christ of dogmatism—No!” said a thoughtful Hindu to me one day. Are they different? Have the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount and the Christ of the creeds become different? If so, then the greatest task before Christendom is to bring them together. For no other kind of Christianity can lead this turbulent age.

A little man in a loin cloth in India [Ghandi] picks out from the Sermon on the Mount one of its central principles, applies it as a method of human freedom; and the world, challenged and charmed, bends over to catch the significance of the great sight. It is a portent of what would happen if we would take the *whole* of the Sermon on the Mount and apply it to the whole of life. It would renew our Christianity—it would renew the world. Our present-day Christianity, anaemic and weak from the parasites that have fastened themselves on its life through the centuries, needs a blood transfusion from the Sermon on the Mount in order to renew radiant health within it, so that it may throw off these parasites and arise to serve and save the world.

But will this ideal work? Is it practicable? Just here is the central area of our skepticism. We are not quite sure that the Sermon on the Mount is the sermon for the market. We are not sure, and an unsure place is an unsafe place.

We must go on or go back. We must be more Christian or less! ~

This article is a condensed version of the “Introduction” to the book *The Christ of the Mount—A Working Philosophy of Life* by E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973), a missionary to India. Some wording was rephrased to aid in readability. The use of this “Introduction” is not an endorsement by *The Heartbeat of the Remnant* of everything the book may teach.

The Heartbeat of

The Remnant

Charity Christian Fellowship

Publication Office

400 W. Main Street Ste. 1, Ephrata, PA 17522

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US Postage
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Permit #105

A cup of sweet water
cannot spill one bitter
drop, no matter how
suddenly jarred.

-Amy Carmichael