

*WHERE THE WHITE EAGLE FLIES Volume 3*



ESSAYS BY CHARLES ELLSWORTH SMITH

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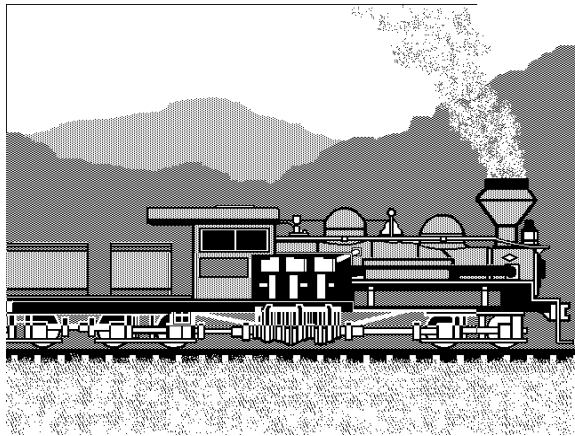
UPGRADING

FORGIVEN

WHERE MY CARAVAN HAS RESTED

## INTERRUPTIONS

August 1993



Years ago in order to drive from my home to my office, I would have to cross a train track. Most days I would successfully navigate this route with no problems. But now and then, usually when I was in a big rush, the train would come. As soon as I saw the lights begin to flash and heard the clanging bell, I would be tempted to put the accelerator to the floor and cross before the black and white wooden arms would block my path. Because I had given my heart to Christ, I tried to obey the law; so I would somewhat begrudgingly stop while somewhere from 10 to 100 cars would go by at five miles an hour. Sometimes I would grow extremely agitated and it would seem to take forever for the train to pass. A voice would speak in my mind,

"You're wasting time, you're wasting time, you're wasting time!" All I could see was a train and I felt trapped, like a tiger in a cage. I felt like screaming

"Let me out."

I was discussing this problem with a dear friend of our family. She said,

"I have to travel that same route every day. When I see the train coming I begin to praise the Lord. It means that I have an opportunity for uninterrupted prayer. It's a time for fellowship with my Father in heaven."

I was immediately convicted by what she said and realized that this working mother of three did not have the same freedom in her schedule to pray as I did and she looked forward to any time of sanctuary she could find. The train became a sovereign intervention in her busy life to bring her rest from her labors. The situation that was producing anxiety in me was freeing her to worship God. I had my priorities upside down and inside out.

That dear sister, Phyllis Johnson died of cancer a year later. At the time I thought it a terrible loss. I now believe God saw a heart that wanted to be with Him. We can be with Him, we can praise Him, petition Him, intercede and worship Him anytime any place. We have access to the Throne of Grace. Even while the train rolls slowly past we can find mercy for our failures and grace to help in the hour of need.

I'll never know what Phyllis shared with Jesus during those moments but I do know she built a relationship with Him that endures forever.

## Memories

September 1993

My mother is 88 years old. My sister, who does a wonderful job of caring for her had gone on vacation and Mary and I had arrived in Boston to care for her. When we first saw her, because her memory is slowly fading, it took her a minute to realize who we were. Because of her age mom was used to sleeping most of the time. Our challenge was to get in touch with mom's spirit so that we could have fellowship.

I have been writing a book about my childhood and my mother, of course, was central in my life during those years. Before we got to Boston we had determined that the best way to love mom was to read her sections of the book. Each time we saw her we would begin with a Psalm, then read a story, and conclude the visit with prayer. About the third day into this process of finding common ground my mother spoke up and said

"I'm remembering I've forgotten so much."

As her memory was focused we could talk about those years in great depth and as a consequence mom was much more alert in the present. We began to enjoy one another's company and we would all anticipate the next visit.

As I reflected on our visit it became evident to me that if we forget who we have been before God we can fail to remember who we are. If we lose faith in who we are the future can seem dark and foreboding. Sleep and dreams can look like the way of escape. It is so easy to forget the wonderful things that have happened in our lives. Our newspapers are full of the evil and our memories seem so short when it comes to retaining blessings. We've forgotten so much. Our lives should consist of possessing the blessings we've been freely given by God. Often Satan convinces us to forget the simple things that bring contentment in favor of money, sex, drugs, power or any of a hundred things just beyond our reach. Paul writes "Godliness with contentment is great gain," yet contentment eludes so many of us. Some of us begin to play the lottery and hope for the big cash out that will solve all our problems. Just like the rich man who was going to tear down his barns and build a pleasure palace, it's hard for us to realize that any day could be the day our soul is required to leave this place. We are visitors in the earth, strangers and pilgrims passing through. There are things we must remember and many things it would be best to forget. Satan likes to turn them around so that we concentrate on accumulating information and forget about loving one another as Christ has loved us. We have received an inheritance that is eternal. We have a precious and powerful life to share with those around us, yet our memories fail us because so many of us are asleep, trapped in our dreams and not in the purpose and vision of God. When we are jarred from our sleep by the Holy Spirit it is our opportunity to remember who we are. Revival is simply the awakening of a sleeping church. When we are fully awake we shall see Jesus face to face. In the mean time like my mom let's remember the former things, the good things God has worked into our lives and return to our first love. Then, like my mother, we will remember we have forgotten so much and determine to never lose our way again.

## FACE TO FACE AGAIN

October 1993



Dinning 2

Washington Irving wrote the story "Rip Van Winkle" about a man who falls asleep for twenty years only to wake up and return to his home and find everything changed. There's a stage play called "Brigadoon" about a town that appears only at certain times and you step through time into this enchanted place. We all have dreams and thoughts about our childhood and the people we knew, the comrades we spent so many wonderful hours with. It is like a land far off that we once knew but because of time, circumstance, and distance we can no longer return.

Three weeks ago I was sitting on my deck enjoying the last days of summer when an overwhelming feeling came upon me to contact my childhood friend, Billy Bonser. I could not recall spending any quality time with Billy since I was eight years old. That means over forty years had passed since we had been together and almost thirty years since I had been in Toledo, Ohio, where I was born. The feeling I described continued to intensify until, after prayer, I became convinced it was the Lord. I went to the phone, looked up Toledo information, and found Billy's number. The phone rang and the answering machine came on. "This is the Bonser residence." came through the line as a very mature and professional voice told me to "leave a message and we will be back to you as soon as we can." About an hour later my daughter answered the phone and it was Billy. We were both astonished as we tried to communicate after forty years of silence. We began talking about Hopalong Cassidy and Robin Hood. "Do you remember" and "can you believe" began bouncing back and forth. As we were making the turn into a long conversation, I said, "Listen, Bill, instead of talking all of this through now what do you say to me coming to see you face to face in three weeks." Brigadoon began to appear.

"Let's do it," Bill said.

I'm going to Boston anyway and I can stop in Toledo on my way back."

The dye was cast.

Three weeks later, after finishing my business in Boston, I caught the plane for Toledo. I had called Billy's number that morning and talked to his wife Dorothy. We were both very excited and tried to describe ourselves to the other for the airport meeting. "I will be dressed in blue and green."

"I have a gray beard and gray outfit," (suitable for a Portland resident.)

I switched planes in Chicago and the small shuttlecraft droned to our destination. I recognized Dorothy instantly, even though I had never seen her before. We went to lunch and got caught up on who we were and what I was there for. She seemed like a little kid, excited to be part of this adventure, leading Rip through his old town. She took me to my preschool, to the bend in the Maumee River I remembered, and lastly, to my old elementary school where my mother had taught seventh and eighth grade. As we walked down those corridors together Brigadoon fully arrived. I was in another time zone. There were the same halls, pictures, and stage, etc. where so many of my mother's choirs and drama

productions had taken place. There was the principal's office where I got more than one spanking. There was the cloakroom where we stood when we were bad. It was like this place was frozen in time

As we looked out a window we saw Bill looking for a way into the building. We hurried to the front door and let him in. The same face plus a mustache was looking deeply into mine. And there was the same wonderful smile that had always made Billy so special. We seemed to know each other at the deepest levels in an instant. Here we were back in school again, walking the corridors, remembering teachers and friends. Dorothy had to leave and Bill took me down the old streets past my house, past the old Filtration plant, past my friends' houses, and finally, to his house which was located adjacent to the same large piece of inner city property his father's and grandfather's houses were on. Soon we were walking through the places where our childhood dreams were played out. That's where we played cowboys, that's where we snuck a cigarette, that's where I imagined *Peter and the Wolf* was played out, which Basil Rathbone had read so authoritatively. The sunlight was streaming through the trees upon us as we made the deep connection between 1948 and 1993.

We visited Bill's mom, Maxine, as she lay in her bed partially paralyzed, and we were so delighted to see each other again. Yes, we were on the same journey, after all. We weren't two-dimensional figures plucked down for a short time and then removed from the game of life. We were real, living, eternal souls whose lives were forever intertwined. The room we were in was dark. It felt a little like a scene from a Victorian novel as the three of us for a moment were reunited in time. The house was so still, the grand piano so silent. This woman, Maxine, lay in her bed perhaps to never significantly get up again. But we belonged together. Neither time nor distance had overcome us.

Soon I was sitting outside telling Bill the story of the intervening years and he then told me of his pilgrimage. It was time for dinner and the three of us drove through the ghost town of inner city Toledo. Most of the businesses had moved to the suburbs and the town felt abandoned. As we returned to Bill's, I had that deep urge, again, to call others I had known there. I called Bill's sister Mary Alice, and then called our old friend June. When June heard who I was, she was so excited she came right over to Bill's. There we were Bill, Dorothy, June, and myself, our lives intertwined again. June asked me to share how I became a Christian. After I shared the amazing and wonderful story June had to leave. Dorothy played a Chopin waltz on the piano, and I a tune I had written called "Memories." The room was filled with the presence of God. Dorothy retired and Bill looked at me and asked if I could explain an aspect of the resurrection of Christ that was not clear to him. For the next half hour we opened 1Cor. 15 together and explored that wonderful truth. "If Christ be not risen our faith is in vain" but He is risen and "because He lives we live also." Jesus was knocking on the door very strongly as we turned out the lights and went to bed.

Bill and I spent the next morning remembering the most amazing stories of our childhood. Wordsworth once said, "The child is father to the man." Jesus said, "Unless you become as a little child you cannot enter the kingdom of God." I began to feel what this trip was about. Brigadoon was really the Kingdom of God. Jesus was looking at two men with the mystery of boyhood locked inside. He was leading us back to the innocence and simplicity that had made our lives so special. As boys we had shared our deepest dreams and feelings. Now we were doing it again. The apostle Paul wrote, "I fear as the serpent beguiled Eve by his subtlety that your minds be corrupted from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ." Having been a Pharisee and persecutor of the brethren, he knew there had to be an inner heart change that is preciously guarded or else coldness and aloofness to the tender side of life sets in. Paul further wrote, "When was a child I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now

we see in a mirror dimly (in a riddle) but then face to face; now r know in part but then I shall know fully just as I also I have been fully known. But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."(I Cor.13)

As Bill and I said goodbye that morning, the childish things of our youth had been gone over, laughed over, and cherished. But a greater person had entered our relationship, one who was always there, but we had not recognized. His love had walked the miles and years between us. Now we were more fully known than ever before. And we knew each other more fully than ever. God is love. Don't ever doubt it or let a cold heart diminish it. "Eye has not seen nor ear heard the things that God has prepared for them that love him, but he has revealed them to us by the spirit." Jesus had revived the love of two childhood friends because " God is love. No shadow of turning can exist in Him."

How can he (a man) avoid what he doesn't know is going to happen? Eccl. 8:7 Living Bible



If I had only known this trial would occur I would never have left home today." I have had this thought more than once. Sometimes I am like the Monday morning quarterback who can tell everyone what should have happened after the event, a lot of preaching can be like that. The truth is none of us knows from day to day what is going to happen. God supplies his prophetic word to tell us of the future and gives us principles to follow in order to get there. But we live one day at a time. We pray and plan and try to order the events in our lives but having done all that we can, we have to leave what really happens in God's hands.

Often I assume I know what will take place in a given day and I struggle to make things happen in my pre-set time frame. This approach can take me quickly to Ulcerville, U.S.A. To be at rest within, I must be free from anxious thought. Someone said, "I'm not worried about the beginning and the end, it's the in between that bother's me."

Trials are part of the in between. If I avoid one, another is waiting. The question is not how to avoid but how to overcome whatever I encounter on the way to heaven. As we enter a New Year I will try to remember I have Eternal Life through faith in Christ. There is no clock to beat in the Kingdom of God but there is a Good Shepherd to follow, a Mighty King to obey and a Gracious Father to love.

Can I avoid what I don't know is going to happen, of course not. James tells us to "welcome trials as friends." I am thankful for what you Lord have planned. Therefore I rest in You.

# REVOLUTION

" Say you want a revolution

March 1993

We all want to change the world" J. Lennon

Commander



I was looking for a pair of pants at the Mall so I wandered into the clothing store and found myself face to face with Art the salesman. Art is 55.

" Just describe what you want to me," he says, putting his hand to his forehead.

" They're a wool blend, not thin, tweedy looking," I say as I look about the room for some example of what I am talking about.

" Do you want pleats? "

" No," I say.

" You can't find those anymore," he says. "It's what I like to wear, but the men's industry is becoming like women's clothing, always changing, and you simply can't find the old standbys anymore."

" That reminds me of a tape I heard about baby boomers" "boomers have no product loyalty. They seem to be caught up with the love of change compared to the pre WWII generation that had product loyalty. You know, once a Ford always a Ford."

Art countered with a discussion on the pitfalls of American life.

I replied that " we were once a melting pot society but now we've become a smorgasbord and the pie lovers are fighting with the cake lovers for their rights in the cafeteria."

Art conjectured that things weren't going well for our country and suddenly asked, " Do you think we are heading for a revolution? "

" It could be that we are, but I believe the revolution begins inside by receiving Christ."

It was time for Art to wait on the next customer. One thing seemed clear as I reflected on this conversation: to change the outward visible life, you must effect change in the inward life. If an enemy wished to overcome a powerful people he must first weaken their spiritual life. . . .

After WWII there was a sense of euphoria. After all we won, now let's live it up. The prevailing attitude was "let's give our children a secure life with the conveniences that are the fruit of victory." Suddenly, cloned suburban housing developments sprang up to accommodate the emerging boomer generation and industry retooled to equip these assembly line castles. I can remember the bulldozers and the chainsaws turning the rolling countryside to mounds of dirt. Then the contractor would level the ground, put up houses and plant grass. After you moved in, the county would come along and plant a tree by your sidewalk. These scrawny little toothpick poplars and stamped out houses replaced the root systems and outstretched branches of hundreds of years of American heritage. It's as if we were saying, let's uproot what we have been, and what holds us together and replace it with superficial surface life and hasty material gain.



About this time Americas' love affair with plastic began. Everything from plastic tile to "plastic man" appeared on the economic horizon. With the post war economy already in full swing, we were ready to embrace the assembly line at the deepest levels of our national life. The only problem was everything and everyone began to look alike. As radio and TV helped us tune in on the same things conformity to outward forms replaced the creative diversity established through years of small business, small churches, small farms and close-knit families. As commitment to materialism and superficial sameness increased, so did complacency in our national spiritual life.

After WWII therefore, the temptation was to escape the spiritual conflict and embrace the material comfort. As a result, two curious things happened. During the Eisenhower years, God was added to the pledge of allegiance and prayer was removed from the public schools. We traded outward form for inward power and hardly anyone objected.

One of the most dangerous places any nation encounters is after a victory. Pride tends to assert itself and blindness quietly falls in line. After Gideon's' marvelous conquest with only a handful of men, he refused the place of rule [Judg.8.23] saying, "the Lord will rule" but unwittingly led the nation into idol worship of the golden ephod he had made from the spoils of victory... Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon after a wonderful prophecy regarding his place amongst the nations, built a golden idol to himself. Once a nation becomes focused on its idols only supernatural intervention can awaken it. Gideon's' family was destroyed by materialistic idolatry. Nebuchadnezzar was turned into an animal like creature for seven long years before he was delivered from his pride.

The generation that had not known the war grew up on the shallow materialistic life of the fifties. When the sixties came, young people were ready for a spiritual challenge. JFK caught the mood with the creation of the Peace Corps; however peace was not to be. Assassination and foreign war was soon to topple the budding Kennedy dynasty. As MLK, JFK, RFK, Malcolm X and others were gunned down, and our cities erupted in violence, we began to understand again that a shiny veneer would not sustain national spiritual life or prevent the inward sickness emerging.

Young people by the millions "turned on, tuned in, and dropped out." They began to seek to find the inner life with the aid of drugs. They soon discovered a revelation. There is a spiritual world, and in this world are all kinds of beings, including ones self. We had become so materialistic that our publications were considering whether God was dead and our teachers were certain there was no devil. As a result of our ignorance, demons began to inhabit many young people who were not prepared for this sudden inward journey. Some got lost in those places and never returned. Some found gods to bow down to, new to them, but familiar to past generations. Everyone talked about the need for a guru, a master, and a teacher to lead them into this brave new world. There was talk of a new age coming. We were encouraging one another to reject reason and embrace intuition, emotion and sexual freedom.

Instead of freedom however we traded pot for cocaine, LSD for angel dust and more recently, cocaine for crack cocaine. Yet out of this incredible confusion, people were rescued by the thousands. The press called it the "Jesus People Revolution." The basis of this revolution was Jesus teaching, "A man must be born from above to see the kingdom of God." [Jn.3.3] We discovered there were two kingdoms in the earth, Gods' and Satan's' and these realms were at war for the souls of men. Those of us who had wandered in a drug induced slumber or felt that Christianity was archaic, awakened to a new reality. Jesus Christ himself is the great revolutionary leader of human history but religion based solely on outward form can be the greatest deterrent to that revolution.

Wherever Christ and the power of his spirit are being released, religious establishments and governments are reformed or overthrown. From the Caesar's to Karl Marx, men have known this well, which is why they have feared the message of the Messiah. However they only saw the outward effect of the message not the inner revolutionary King. To

hear not only the message but understand it, the soul of man must receive the messenger into his or her inner life. The individual believer then becomes both the message and the messenger.

By the time the 80's arrived, the pendulum for many had swung back to a more conservative approach. Having rejected drugs and weird spirituality, it was time for self-indulgence to arise as the goal of life. "Take care of number one, you owe it to yourself" and other slogans appeared. Stress became a national disease that must be escaped at all costs. The gospel that was preached was often materialistic and self-oriented. Jim Bakker, the TV evangelist, recently asked forgiveness from prison for teaching this self-seeking gospel.

Thus in 40 years, one biblical generation, Americans were brought, through satanic strategy, from a victorious people who had laid down their life for freedom to a nation in bondage and debt. "Will we have a revolution," Art asked? We've already had one in our national life. We forgot what our forefathers knew. We have a deadly disease. Sin is destroying us and we refuse to recognize its' power in favor of materialistic and psychological bandages. Those who love Christ have a revolutionary cause to preach, teach and demonstrate the Kingdom of God. This is a difficult task as the Kingdom of God does not come with observation, and materialistic man cannot see it. Often we create well-meaning substitutes for the Kingdom and miss the King, as the 1980's have evidenced.

The Kingdom of God comes with authority [exousia]. This authority is derived from an overcoming life where the King is present. When Jesus emerged from being tempted of the devil he was walking in authority. Jesus went through his wilderness in 40 days. Israel took 40 years, one generation.

The Kingdom of God comes not only in word but also in power [dunamis]. If there is true spiritual authority {the presence of the King} true spiritual power {dynamite} will be released and we will see the revolutionary Kingdom at work in America.

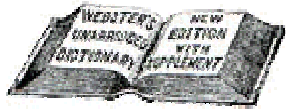
#### I. Repent of known sin

What must we do for this revolution to revive in our land?

1. Repent of loving the outward form of godliness
2. Receive and focus upon the unseen Kingdom
3. Invite the authority of King Jesus into our relationships by
  - a. Spending valuable time with Him
  - b. Walking in the light myself
  - c. Standing against a divided kingdom and for unity working through love.
4. Expect and be available for acts of power that will awaken His beloved bride.
5. Commit to be a watchman aware of the times and seasons

Caesar knew he had a revolution on his hands and he could not stop it. No one can today, not governments, not political groups, not assassins, or Satan himself. It is up to Gods people to REMEMBER. " Greater is HE that is within you than he that is in the world.

# Time and Eternity



March 14, 1994

Yesterday I went to the airport to meet my friend Al. It took me a while to find him. Every now and then I saw someone who looked like him but when I was able to see their face it wasn't Al. Finally I saw Al talking to someone. His distinctive mannerisms told me at once it was he. God had made only one. We found a table, ordered some soup, and began to talk about the technological age comparing its seemingly unending options to the Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. We agreed with the prophet Daniel's observation, spoken thousands of years ago, that knowledge will be on the increase at the end of the age.

Inertia describes the concept that once something is in a given state (motion or stillness) it tends to stay in the state that it is already in unless acted upon by an outside force. Knowledge is being stored and codified more accurately than in any previous age. Thus the body of knowledge is growing as the principle of inertia works upon it.

Norman Mailer, the American author stated, "Time is the connection of new circuits." Knowledge is on the increase incrementally as circuits are connected globally. The speed by which these circuits are connected and the rate that knowledge can then travel is determining the rise and fall of corporations and consequently nations. While this is happening, without the average person's understanding or participation, many traditional ways of earning a living have come to an end.

Some of us find ourselves disconnected from the emerging global economy. Others, who attempt to keep up with what is happening, find themselves being left behind in the dust as one new invention supplants another. Even specialists cannot keep up with advances in their own field as new sub fields are created. Only last week major discoveries were reported regarding the movement of our solar system that is causing astronomers to reassess much of what they have been teaching. As knowledge seems to accelerate, two well-trod paths remain distinct. The choice of how we are to live still lies between time and eternity

Solomon said of time,

*"The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,  
Nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of skill, but time and chance happen to them all."*

Paul, the apostle, describes the eternal call in this way,

*"For you see your calling brethren, not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak to shame the mighty and base things and things despised and the things which are not to bring to nothing things that are." The eternal can often appear weak while the temporal seems so strong.*

Paul had already written, *"The world through wisdom did not know God."* What is this wisdom that doesn't acknowledge the creator? Could it be the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil? Is it in fact time-chained knowledge? Worldly wisdom has the potential to interconnect, Internet, and interface our minds until the excitement over what we find can replace the still small voice of God.

Like Nimrod at the tower of Babel, man with his time bound belief that he is evolving into a higher form is echoing those words,

*"Come let us build for ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens. Let us make a name for ourselves lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the earth."*

Let us never forget that the serpent appeared near the tree.

As computer language becomes the translator of international planning, the Lord could respond as He did to those men of Babel.

*"Indeed the people are one and they all have one d language and this is what they begin to do. Now nothing they imagine to do will be withheld from them."*

As young people replace interpersonal play with an impersonal computer games, an invisible mind power begins to lead them into the screen as if satisfaction, success and conquest can be found hidden in its bytes and a circuits. At one level mastering the technology is good training for the future and at another it is seductive, beyond human control.

The scriptures teach that in the last days it will be h as the days of Noah. People will be conducting business as usual right up to the time of divine judgment. Genesis 6 tells us that in Noah's day, man's imagination was evil continually and God saw there was great wickedness in the earth.

Technology today is providing the shell through which this imagination can expand and travel. Technology can give us wonderful helps and advances and at the same time become the vehicle that destroys us. Not only can drugs manipulate our imagination but also sorcerers of today can take us places via movies and video that we could not individually conceive. The result is a pooled imagination that seems real because it is shared by so many. As enough people imagine the same thing, fantasy can become reality. We can all talk about Star Trek, Sesame Street, or Robo Cop as if the characters were real people. Even news comes to us via images carefully selected by those who are "making" news.

Solomon goes on to write in Ecclesiastes 9:12, *" For man also does not know his time, v Like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, So the sons of men are snared in an evil time when it falls suddenly upon them."*

Even the gentlest masters of this technology, like Jim Henson, are here one day and gone the next. No matter how beautiful the fantasy we all must face eternity. What are we to do? The apostle Paul describes the l answer to this problem in I Cor. 1: 21.

*"For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the t message preached to save those who believe."* Save from what?

Noah means rest. This prophet of God, in the midst of a continually wicked generation, was able to walk anxiety free, saved from the wicked imagination that was dominating the rest of the earth. From this rest Noah was able to hear God speak to him. .

*“The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of Gopher wood, make rooms in the ark and behold, I myself am bringing the flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life and everything that is in the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you and you shall go into the ark (and your family).”* Genesis 6

Not only did Noah follow through, hear and do, and build the ark over a period of one hundred years with the aid of his family, but he also preached a message that was perceived as foolish to his generation because its emphasis was upon eternal values. No one outside his family, no one of all the population of the earth, received it. They mocked him. What perseverance, what foolishness. Could the violence and wickedness of Noah’s day be rising again in our time? Could a pooled imagination be forming that perverts the innocence that God intends us to have?

There is a picture of a seventy-year old woman in tennis shoes. Under the picture the caption says,  
“When the going gets tough, the tough keep going.”

Noah kept going through it all, as did Abraham, Samuel, David, Paul, and a host of others. In this day when church life for many has become a steeple-chase, God’s ~ people racing from steeple to steeple chasing the elusive ideal that somewhere all our needs will be met. In a day when technology often times determines the time and way in which we gather. In a day when we are so filled with anxiety that prayer disappears from our daily lives. In a day when the law of sowing and reaping seems to be suspended in favor of credit card financing that lets us buy when we have not earned. In a day when all that is wrong within us can be blame shifted to others and many, believing they are being freed, are brought into greater bondage. In a day when computer generated mail sends us a letter to our Christian name and our nickname, both asking for funds for a distant electronic project as if we were holy schizophrenics. In a day when we can fax our tithe to a glass house viewed through a television tube while we play with the channel selector that switches us over to the latest football game, deodorant commercial, or soap opera. In a day when preachers in three- piece suits tell us that God measures success by the treasure we store up in earth. In a day when the Church of New Age Visualization borrows 70% of its theology from the mega church down the road and soon becomes a mega church itself, is it any wonder that people are confused?

Credence Clearwater Revival said,

“ There’s a Bad Moon Rising.”

Indeed Babylon the Great, the Mother Of Harlots is rising out of the depths of time locked waters. Babylon, which means confusion, is gathering her sons and daughters to herself.

What about the White Linen of the saints? What is it? Where is it? What about the invisible treasure we are to store up in heaven. Do we have faith to put temporal rewards aside for eternal habitations? Perhaps the answer is too simple to believe. Christ is the wisdom of God, Christ is the power of God, and Christ is the righteousness of God. Paul said it this way,

*“For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear as the serpent beguiled Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is in Christ.” 2 Cor. 11:2&3*

Solomon mentions repeatedly that all achievement in this time bound world is vanity but he also said,

*“For those who believe, He has put eternity in their hearts.” Ecc.3: 11*

Paul adds, *“ I would know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” 1 Cor.2: 2*

Christ is eternity in our hearts.

Jesus said, *“Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”*

Many of His disciples, when they heard this said. *“This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?”*

Jesus continues, *“It is the (eternal) Spirit who gives life; the (time bound) flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”*

Is he not saying that time chained works cannot be taken with you when you leave this place. In the end they profit nothing? Spiritual life is eternal. Storing up treasure in heaven is the result of a commitment to eternity.

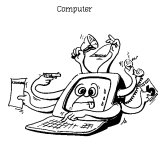
As many of the disciples withdrew from Jesus, He asked the twelve disciples.

*“You do not want to go away also, do you?”*

Simon Peter answered Him, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” {John 6: 53,54,60,63,67&68}*

# Upgrading

October 1994



One sunny day in January I came home from the computer store with a new program. I quickly inserted it into my hard drive and discovered that I did not have enough memory to import the new program and furthermore my computer wasn't fast enough to run it. The only way I could use the program I purchased was to upgrade my computer. At first I was upset.

'What a dummy', I thought,

"I'm going to take this program back and forget it."

For years my old computer served adequately with problem programs that got us by cheaply and we endured frustration and adapted to its errors. Now in order to move on I must spend time and money to achieve my goal. I must be willing to sacrifice old programs I was familiar with for what I believed would result with the new. In between I must face *down time*.

As I thought it through I realized the computer was only the outward lesson I was learning. It came down to this. If I accept my deficiencies as permanent and continually adapt to them, I become, like that outmoded computer, locked in a place in time, running the same old programs and my message becomes less and less communicable. When I believe that perfection is in my future and my spirit needs to change by seeking the master technician, He will heal my memory and help me to advance. I have found that impoverished memory, that is MEMORY THAT IS STUCK IN THE PAST and can't move on, is usually caused by unforgiveness, bitterness, hatred, lust or some work of the sinful nature. When I am stuck in sin I become like that outmoded computer, unable to receive new life and revelation that God wishes to give. I can't fix myself but I can repent and ask the master technician for help. Just like the earthly repairman, I must pay a price. Sometimes when He is rebuilding my spirit, like a computer motherboard, I don't function for a period of time.

The first step in rebuilding is tearing down. This can come directly at His hand or through the hands of His less experienced helpers. David at the time of the census chose to fall into the hand of God rather than man. When rebuilding begins, it certainly doesn't appear edifying and in fact is usually painful and embarrassing. You see the power has to be unplugged. One can feel lost, alone, foolish and obviously powerless until the juice is restored. It's at this point that God told the apostle Paul regarding a distracting problem in his life that *My grace is sufficient*.

When we pray, *cleanse me from my secret faults*; we are inviting a rebuilding from within. *Unless the Lord builds the house they labor in vain that build it*. How often we read or sing that Psalm not understanding that THE BUILDER NEVER STOPS.

Now and then when I am in a mall or a supermarket I can hear a band, the *Byrds* singing from Ecclesiastics, *To everything turn, turn, turn, There is a season turn, turn, turn, and a time to every purpose under heaven. A time to build up a time to tear down*.



We must understand that this Godly process is a part of the normal Christian life. When Peter denied Jesus he remembered later that the Lord told him he would experience the sifting of Satan. God used this in his life to tear down strongholds of self-righteousness and replace them with power dependency. When God switched the power back on at Pentecost, Peter was restored, rebuilt and released. It was then that Peter experienced the depth of the love of Christ as He preached his first anointed message, saw the Holy Ghost minister, saw three thousand repent, laid hands on the sick and watch them recover.

When the power is reconnected under the authority of the master technician restoration is for a season complete. When this power is channeled to the purpose of God, increase comes as Peter experienced on the day of Pentecost. Often in ignorance I have taught and been taught to employ new programs in church life without first submitting to the hand of the Builder to make room in my heart for the new program. That can be like forcing an unconverted person to behave like a converted Christian. Peter could not help denying Christ but when he was converted this New Man strengthened his brethren and never denied his Messiah again. Peter and one hundred nineteen I others had tarried in Jerusalem while God was preparing them for power from on high. If we fail in this upgrading the result can be self righteousness masquerading as authority, thinking we have something in our heads that we have I not yet experienced in our hearts. Too often we try to do the work of the kingdom without the power of the King. True authority, I am learning, comes from a spirit that has I been rebuilt and restored by the risen Christ and a heart that makes room for the master programmer, Christ himself.

# Forgiven

March 1995



I'm still not certain what caused my neighbor's silence. He stopped speaking to me for seven years. In the beginning we got along fine. We would talk regularly as we both worked in back of our houses. Sometimes we would talk about the neighborhood, sometimes about God. R was usually angry with someone on the block and would describe his or her faults at great length. While I tried to change the subject, I had a creepy feeling that inevitably, my turn would come.

R had incredible mood swings, but I tried to stay away when he was acting weird. Things went pretty well until my children began inhabiting the back alley. R considered the alley his territory. Eventually they got to him just because they were kids and he began grabbing my children and swearing at them. I remember getting in R.'s face over his treatment of my son when Abe was about seven.

About a year later we recommended someone to housesit for R. while he was away. That was a big mistake. The irresponsible house sitter may have been the last straw for R. Whatever the reason, the time came in our relationship that not only did R. not speak to me, but he took every opportunity for years to swear at, and generally pester, any young people playing basketball in my back yard. Strange things would happen over those years. For instance, one day I was sitting at the kitchen table when the voice of R. came over my household intercom. He was having a conversation with someone about an intercom install at his house. It really blew his mind when I came on the intercom to tell him our households had just gotten connected. He gave me no reply and he never came back on. Occasionally, I would try to greet him at the grocery store or out in the alley. Once taken by surprise, he did give a "Hi" back until it suddenly registered on his face that he shouldn't be talking to me.

R was truly a troubled soul. You could hear him working and swearing and being generally obnoxious much of the time. On the other hand, you could see him helping neighbors and at times fixing a bike for a neighborhood child. Every now and then you could even hear him singing a hymn.

A few years back, R. created a mulcher of his own design. He rode out in his truck; collected limbs, leaves, and assorted parts of trees, and ran them through his mulcher daily; filling our quiet neighborhood with the unmuffled roar for as much as 3 hours at time. If I was on my deck or had friends over, we would have to go inside to hear. At times, I was tempted to call the noise control unit, but kept having this check that I was simply to commit it to God in prayer.

One day, about a year ago, my son was out in our back yard when R. began swearing at him. In the middle of the tirade Abe said, "R. I want to ask you a business question. Is that OK?"

R, clearly startled, replied, "Well, if it's really business."

"Our lawnmower has not been working right for a long time and I thought since you have a small engine repair business you might be able to repair it."

"Let me see it," R. replied.

Within a few minutes R. was looking at our lawnmower, diagnosing the problem and offering to fix it for no charge. Abe came inside to check with me and I felt this was God working so I said, "Go ahead."

Every time Mary and I prayed together over the last year we had prayed for R. We had asked the Lord to reconcile us and to bless R. and bring him into the kingdom. In the first few years we lived across from R., I had shared about Christ with him and we had some good discussions. I knew somewhere inside him he believed.

It wasn't long before our lawnmower was running like a top. Abe suggested that R. might want to start talking to me again, but R. said he wasn't ready for that yet.

About two weeks later, R. came by to check on the lawnmower. He asked me how it was running and I told him about a little problem. He immediately adjusted it and I thanked him. The ice was at last broken!

We went along slowly rebuilding our relationship. He began to tell me how much he loved my children, how he respected them, observed their work habits, and was really fond of my sons in law. He would regularly watch them as they played basketball out back. Now, instead of nasty comments, he would come by and encourage them while they played.

In September, we began to notice loaves of bread being left on our back deck every Friday. It turned out R. had been gathering bread and distributing it to the poor. He was doing other good works around the neighborhood. R. was also suffering from heart problems which sometimes left him short of breath. I would see him occasionally walking with a cane. As Christmas approached, I got very busy and it wasn't until the day after that I saw R. again. Abe was leaving for work and R. waved to him. As Abe pulled out, I walked over to R. and handed him a little wallet-sized calendar with a scripture message on it.

"Merry Christmas," I said.

He looked at it, then his eyes began to tear and he hung his head. "No one called me on Christmas or came to see me. There must be something wrong with me," he said.

I was taken aback. I searched for something to say. "R.," I said, "I was over at Lloyd Center just before Christmas and as I came out of one of the stores I spotted this bell ringer sort of in a corner almost hiding behind her bell. I went over to her and caught her eye. As I slipped something in her pot I smiled at her and said, 'Jesus loves you.'"

As I said this I looked deeply into R.'s moist eyes.

"I hope so," is what she replied. As I was looking back at her I heard myself saying, I know so. No matter what you are going through, even in the deepest difficulties, Jesus always loves you. 'Have you invited him into your heart?' "

She looked back at me and said, 'Yes I have, but I'm not always sure He is there.'

"He said He would never leave you or forsake you,' I replied."

As I continued speaking to R, I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit just as I had when I was speaking to the Bell Ringer.

"You know, R., no matter how hard or lonely things get, Jesus understands."

R looked me in the eye. "HE knows about pain better than anyone. I'll tell you why." R paused and looked at me with authority. "When Jesus died on the cross he experienced more pain and loneliness than anyone before or since."

"You're right about that, R," I said excitedly.

*This man's not far from the Kingdom of God* I thought.

R went on to tell me how he had an incurable heart disease. His wife had left him some years earlier and he was very lonely. As tears formed again in his eyes he said, "I'm so thankful to have neighbors like you."

R reached out and gave me a hug. I was genuinely overwhelmed with the love I felt. I suddenly realized that this was my Christmas present from Jesus.

I didn't see R. for a couple weeks until one Sunday afternoon I was playing ball with my son, my two sons in law, and my son in law to be. R walked out of his garage. I walked over to greet him and held out my hand.

"We can do better than that," he said. Stretching out both of his arms he gave me a long deep hug. I felt sincerely forgiven.

*God answers prayer* I thought. *God truly answers prayer.*

## Where my caravan has rested

June 1995



It's been almost a year since my mother's Memorial service in Massachusetts. As I was preparing for that gathering I came across a letter from my mother. Near the end she quoted a poem.

*Where my caravan has rested, flowers I leave in the grass  
All the flowers of love and memory  
You will find them when you pass  
All the flowers of love and memory  
You will find them when you pass.*

The memorial service was held on my sister Sally's back deck overlooking the bay behind her house. You could see sailboats in the distance and a warm breeze danced in our faces. Sally had placed a vase of flowers on the patio table. Before I read the poem members of our family had shared about my mother's life. Those memories were like the flowers now sitting on the table. Our lives themselves like those flowers

Where my caravan has rested. . . . There had been beauty in my parent's life together. There had been kindness and thoughtfulness sown into our lives. Perhaps my sister and I were part of the flowers left on the grass, testimonies to the journey of our parents.

When we see the flowers mounting up in front of the bombed out Federal Building or flowers in the church on Easter Sunday, or flowers like a beautiful postcard as the backdrop for my daughter Gemela's wedding, I now realize we are making a memory. We are saying truth and beauty have met together in the lives of these loved ones. We are saying before all, "Our lives have meaning."

Sometimes we fail to see the testimony of a precious life until they are gone from us.

The caravan goes by but our minds are on other things. This was true of Jesus' life on earth. *He came unto His own and His own received Him not.* Jn. 1:12

He lived amongst us but we didn't realize fully who He was and is until He had risen from the dead and departed. Oh but what flowers He left in the grass. He's the one that told us that not even Solomon in all his glory was dressed as well as these flowers. He told us to consider these flowers, they don't worry about what they will wear or as one translation says, "They don't primp and shop." Their beauty depends on their contentment in what they have been made to be. What we leave for others to find is the beauty and contentment flowing out of our lives. And that is dependent on seeing His hand in all things. Before my caravan comes to a rest I must see His. I recall when Barbara Robert's (the former Governor of Oregon) husband Frank was about to die he said,

"Only two things matter Time and Love."

What we do with our time and the Love placed in our lives?

Some years ago when I would play guitar and sing on the street corner each Friday a woman would show up to sing with me. I don't remember her name. Each time she came she wanted to sing an old Hymn called *The Prettiest Flowers*. The gist of it was that if you think the flowers here are pretty wait until you see what God has prepared in Heaven.

The night after my mother died I had fallen asleep on our couch. It was after midnight and I began to feel this overwhelming love. As I forced myself awake I had a vision. My mother entered the room and walked over to me. She was no longer sick or old but mature and vibrant. I seemed to stand. She reached out and took me in her arms. I felt the love of God surrounding and enveloping me. I felt her say in that embrace "All is well, I am fine. I knew in an instant that she was with Jesus. As she left I wept, not with sadness, but at the beauty of her life and I wept because of the great love of the One who made us both.

Satan may want you to be worried, busy and unable to rest. Consider the lilies. Scripture tells us that in the end we will be like our creator. David puts into many of His Psalms the word Selah. Pause and rest meditate on these things. Even when sidewalks pave over God's creation, eventually the grass pushes up through the sidewalk.

*All the flowers of love and memory*

*You will find them when you pass.*