

Heart*Cry*

MAGAZINE

PROVIDENCE, WAR, & GOSPEL MISSION

A photograph showing the silhouettes of four people standing on a dark, sloping hill or rooftop. They are looking towards the right, where a bright, hazy sunset or sunrise is visible. The sky is a warm, golden-yellow color. The silhouettes of some buildings are visible on the left side of the hill.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
UPDATES FROM
SOUTH SUDAN, USA, INDIA, ROMANIA, AND GERMANY

GREETINGS

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I hope and pray that this edition of the HeartCry Magazine finds you well and growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Having been bought by the blood of the Lamb and called into fellowship with God, let us press on to lay hold of that for which also we were laid hold of by Christ Jesus—conformity to His character and service to His will. The Apostle Paul wrote it this way:

"I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:12-14).

We must reach out to the world and labor with all our might in the advancement of the Great Commission. Nevertheless, we must always remember that our usefulness to the Lord

is dependent upon our conformity to Him. We are to be witnesses in word and deed, and our proclamation of the gospel must also be a demonstration of the life and power of the gospel. Let us always maintain a biblical balance between faithful service in the cause of Christ and personal devotion to the spiritual disciplines that are necessary for conformity to Christ. On the one hand, let us continue to pray for, support, and labor in world missions. On the other hand, let also study the Word, pray, unite with a biblical local church, and sit under the pastoral ministry of biblical elders. May we be true reflections of Christ and useful tools in the hands of God!

Your brother,

Paul Washer

PROVIDENCE, WAR, & GOSPEL MISSION

By Don Currin

In Matthew 24:14, Jesus said, "This gospel must first be preached throughout the world and then shall the end come." Since Christ charged His disciples with the Great Commission, He has decreed ways to perpetuate the message of redemption throughout the world. Charles Spurgeon said, "The keys of providence swing from the girdle of Christ." And His wisdom is displayed in the ways He exposes the world to the gospel.

When one considers how the Lord of the Harvest promotes the gospel message, he or she might think of Him sending His servants to remote parts of the world. This is what many exclusively conclude when pondering how He fulfills His mission of global evangelization. But this is only one of His pre-determined ways.

Besides commissioning individuals to go into the world and preach the gospel, the Lord also displays His wisdom in carrying out His mission through the printed page. What more

adequate illustration of the old axiom, "the pen is mightier than the sword," than that literature that has introduced past generations to the work of Jesus on the Cross? How often has God chosen to redeem sinners through gospel literature? But God's providence is still not limited only to a gospel call or a ready pen.

Another divinely orchestrated way is exposing mankind to the gospel through technology. Could anyone question the impact social media has made as an effectual means of evangelizing unreached people in our day? With incalculable swiftness, social media has taken the world by storm. And one of the unique ways providence has enabled our generation to understand the message of salvation is through the modern film industry. Accounts have been confirmed of not a few young people who have learned the English language—which ultimately led to a saving comprehension of the gospel—by watching American movies.

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"They who had no news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand." - Romans 15:21

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Still another noteworthy method God has chosen for kingdom-advancing purposes is martyrdom. Tertullian's statement, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church," has rung true in a world that hates Christ.

Persecution and death witness to the sacrifice of Christ before a watching world. And there are few ways that are more powerfully used to extend the gospel than the killing of His people for righteousness' sake.

One cannot ponder Christ's sovereign acts which have promoted gospel mission without citing revival and spiritual awakenings. Church history is replete with accounts of how the Lord of the Church did not leave "Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). During those times, the saving knowledge of the good news has triumphed to the salvation of multitudes of men and women. Furthermore, it has been during seasons of the gravest spiritual darkness that God has given His people times of refreshing as a means of restoring their testimony before lost humanity. Interestingly, many spiritual awakenings were catalysts for some of the greatest mission movements in world history—resulting in an abundance of conversions, large numbers of believers being called to the mission field, the birth of biblical training

institutions, and the incessant publication of gospel literature.

Every way our sovereign Lord disperses His gospel throughout the world is a tribute to His omnipotence and wisdom. By sustaining every providential means by the word of His power, He will assuredly fulfill His mission. And this even includes the method of war.

It is quite amazing to hear and read how God has orchestrated global conflicts for the furtherance of the gospel. To behold such narratives through the lens of providence moves one to respond with resounding enthusiasm with the Apostle Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Considering the apostle's theological astuteness and how experientially acquainted he was with God, it is surprising how he can be at a loss of words to describe the sheer splendor of providence. It is significant that he uses the word "depth" to speak of the vastness of God's riches in His wisdom and knowledge to carry out His plan.

In Italy a few years ago, a missionary told me the story of how God used Allied soldiers who were Christians, while stationed in Sicily during World War I, to share the gospel with the residents. The outcome was the conversion of a number of Sicilians and the birth of Evangelical churches. After I recently asked for more details on the account of this marvelous working of providence during the war, the missionary wrote back to me, "It's truly inspiring to meditate on the way God's providence works itself out in

the context of war. No setbacks, no surprises, no chance...every detail perfectly scripted to bring glory to Almighty God through Christ."

In the biography of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, author Iain Murray provided the minister's perspective on war:

"War, said the preacher, was not to be viewed as the interruption of personal convenience and of enjoyments of life. Something far more serious was in-

emerged out of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. On December 7, 1941, Captain Mitsuo Fuchida led the infamous Japanese assault that triggered the participation of the United States in World War II. The years following the aftermath of the war, Captain Fuchida retired from the military and began to farm in his native land. During his time as a farmer, he would almost daily experience a foreboding sense of death. His own words from his book, *From Pearl Harbor to Calvary*, reveal



involved. War is divine judgement upon the very lives which men pursue; it is permitted 'in order that men may see through it, more clearly than they have ever done before, what sin really is' and thus be led back to God."

Sovereign God is committed to divulging His Son's redemptive work to the world. And He ordains times of war to do it. When Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 3 that there is a time for war, the text presupposes that it is God who appoints times to disperse the good news amid conflict.

Another example of the propagation of the gospel in war is a story that

the plaguing thoughts that tormented his mind:

"Whenever I thought of my past, I could not help but think of the mystery of my survival. Why was I still alive, when men all around me had died like flies in the four years of conflict? I was gradually led to think in terms of a Creator—God. I came to feel ashamed of my former godless idea that man's own power and ability were his own trustworthy guides."

In the process of considering a way of making Japan a peaceful nation, Captain Fuchida desired to warn peo-



ple in a potential book he considered titling, *No More Pearl Harbor*. But in his preparation, he said, “There must be an assurance among men of the transforming of the power of hatred to the power of true brotherly love.” The former Japanese commander concluded that the problem could only be resolved around a person, which led him to ask himself the question: “Who... could accomplish the task of banishing suspicion and war? My mind turned toward God, the Creator of all things.”

Amazingly, God opened Mitsuo Fuchida’s heart through a series of providential events that led to his conversion to Christianity. By a glorious stroke of divine providence, he would inquire of a friend, who was a former Japanese lieutenant, about how his American captors had treated him while being detained in a prisoner-of-war camp. He reported that he was treat-

ed fairly well, but added this most encouraging story:

“Something happened at the camp where I was interned which has made it possible for us who were in that camp to forego all our resentment and hatred, and to return with a forgiving spirit... After the end of the war there came to the camp a certain American girl. Her age, I would judge, was about twenty. She began to minister to the Japanese war prisoners with her whole heart and strength.

As she went about the camp, she said to us, ‘If there is any discomfort or any need that you have, let me know. If it is at all possible to help in any way, I would like to do so.’

She looked after our sick with such tender and loving and conscientious care that all our hearts were touched.

About three weeks after the girl first came to the camp, one of the prisoners asked her, ‘Why are you so kind to us?’ Her unexpected reply was, ‘because my parents were killed by the Japanese Army.’ We were amazed.

The moral code that we had been taught was that the murderer of one’s parents becomes a sworn and irreconcilable enemy! We could not understand how anyone could return kindness for that!”

The girl’s story of Christian love had a significant impact on the Japanese prisoners in the POW camp.

And the lieutenant’s account was a contributing factor in the conversion of Mitsuo Fuchida.

When we consider the ways the Lord of the Harvest composes to circulate the gospel throughout the world, we must not overlook any of His providential acts. There are various agents He employs to perpetuate gospel mission, and war is often one of them. Whether it is a foreboding sense of eternity while engaged in the conflict, the verbal witness of soldiers on the field, or the demonstration of gospel forgiveness in a POW camp, global warfare is often divinely decreed to promote throughout the world the message of Christ and Him crucified. And in the aftermath of war, God is notorious for turning enemies into emissaries, derelicts into delegates, and adversaries into advocates for the truth of the gospel!



CHRIST'S HIDDEN POWER IN SOUTH SUDAN

By Sean R.

Meeting Joseph

In mid-September, we received a somewhat unusual phone call at the HeartCry office. An African ministering in South Sudan was in the area and asked if he could stop by the office. Though hesitant and perhaps a bit skeptical, we invited him to visit. After all, I have prayed for South Sudan for many years, and it is not every day that someone from there is in our neighborhood.

A couple of hours later, I met Joseph, a warm and eloquent Ken-

yan who managed a Christian radio station in South Sudan. In the course of the conversation, Joseph explained that he had been sent to South Sudan by a church in Nairobi whose pastor is faithful, respected, and friends with HeartCry's Kenyan leadership. My caution melted away. Here was a kindred brother, who was likeminded in doctrine and practice—and who had actually been converted through one of Paul Washer's online sermons!

He told an amazing story of a Christian radio station in South

Sudan, started by Canadian Reformed missionaries who then passed it on to his management. In time, Joseph saw the growing need to train pastors in their region. When they hosted their first conference for pastors and church leaders, over five hundred showed up! They brought their own food and slept on the ground, and many sat on the ground in the blazing heat to hear the Bible taught (as there were not enough chairs).

The next year, the radio station was running short of funds to pay staff and fuel the generator that powered the radio transmitter. Rather than ask the West for help, Joseph and the staff appealed to the local villages. Did they appreciate the teaching ministry of the radio station? Would they be willing to give to keep the station on the air? At the next conference, eight hundred

pastors came! Even more shocking, the eight hundred churches in this war-torn area of subsistence farming had raised an equivalent of \$20,000 to fund the radio station!

Would you believe these village pastors complained about the conference? Yes, they complained that the conference was only for two days!

Why not have a week-long conference? They would pay more. They did not mind sitting or sleeping on the ground. They could bring their own food.

An Amazing Opportunity to Help

As you can imagine, we were moved by stories of such spiritual hunger. Joseph's pastor in Nairobi confirmed that the stories were indeed true, using the word "sterling" to describe Joseph's life and ministry. Joseph did not come to HeartCry asking for money. He came asking for help with teachers for the conference.

After just a few emails, we had pastors in Zambia and Kenya jumping at the opportunity and begging to go. In the end, Ben Nkausa of Lusaka, Zambia, and Sam Odeny of Oyugis, Kenya, were chosen for this wonderful task. Ben taught on the qualifications of an elder, and Sam taught on biblical church membership.



Last week, I received a summary report from Joseph on the conference. He gave some background on the region, explained the content of the conference, and shared some encouraging fruit after the conference.

Regional Background

"Aweil East and the whole of northern Bahr el Ghazal region has been very badly affected by war in the past, due to its proximity to Sudan," Joseph writes. "There is hardly anyone in this region who has not lost a member of their family in the war. We are grateful that since 2015, when twelve bombs were dropped in this area, we have not experienced any further aerial attacks. Diseases and starvation, however, continue to oppress the people.

"We are thankful that, due to these circumstances, people are turning to God and seeking His face. They want to know Him. There are about 900,000 people that live within the area of our radio coverage; about 95% of the pastors have never been to Bible School. They have mainly learned God's Word through the radio and in their local churches. There is only an average of two Bibles in every congregation."



2019 Pastors Conference

Joseph reports, "Our vision with these conferences is a healthy gospel-centered church for every community in Aweil and beyond. For this reason, all the topics that we cover during the conference are geared toward the spiritual growth of the church. This year, our topics were: biblical conversion, biblical church membership, discipleship at home and church, adorning the gospel of Christ as believers, and the qualifications of elders.

"Pastor Ben and Pastor Sam witnessed firsthand how hungry our people are for God's Word. They taught at the conference, at the military barracks, at school, and at church on the Lord's day. What a blessing it was to have them here!

"Of the 905 pastors who attended, about 150 arrived at our compound the night before the conference. They all slept outside, waiting anxiously for the conference to start in the morning.

The next morning, there were about 250 pastors at the gate by 6:30 AM. Even though it was drizzling for about an hour in the morning, this did not seem to bother them. They were eager to be admitted into the conference grounds.

"Pastor Ben spoke on the qualifications of elders, which seems to have cut into their hearts by the grace of God. There were a few women attending who have planted churches and are leading them. We are very thankful that they received the message very gracefully. There were several questions asked on how women who have planted a church can hand it over to faithful men to lead."

What a testimony! It must have been on that day that I received this WhatsApp message from Joseph: “Pastor Ben arrived with a powerful teaching on qualifications of elders. He preached for an hour and fifteen minutes, then answered questions for an hour, then discussed one-on-one with individual pastors for another hour. Such a blessing to us in South Sudan.”

Joseph continues, “The pastors who attended reported to us that this conference was one of the best that we have had. They pleaded with us to increase the frequency of our conferences, promising to support financially. They are already collecting money to bring to us again this year to support the radio ministry. We plan to divide them into groups of fifty and to start holding ten-day Bible classes where they can learn more on the basics of Christian faith. The conference and daily radio programs are not enough! The Bible classes will be a great follow-up on the conferences and radio programs.”

It was not only preachers who benefited from the conference. The conference speakers also had opportunity to visit the local army barracks and preach three times—first to the top-ranking general in the region, then to a morning assembly of the troops, and finally to an organized evangelistic workshop!

Post-Conference Fruit

Joseph also wrote of some encouraging fruit that began to appear almost immediately:

“Two days after our 2019 pastors’ conference, I was very encouraged to find a group of seven soldiers (military officers) seated under a tree discussing the sermon that Pastor Ben gave. Only one of them had attended the conference, and he was already passing the message on to the rest. Five days later, I met a pastor who had just ar-



rived from a village ninety kilometers from our station. He did not attend the conference, but came reciting what had been taught at the conference. He told me that the pastors who attended from his area have been talking a lot about the different subjects, and that’s how he learned so much of what was taught.”

Please pray for Joseph and the radio station in Aweil as they continue broadcasting the gospel and biblical truth in the border region of Sudan and South Sudan. Pray for these 900+ pastors who show a remarkable hunger for sound doctrine, that they will conform their churches to the truth they are learning!



By Sean R. - Middle East

During my recent Middle East trip, I was blessed to spend time with Lucas. Lucas is from a Central Asian nation devastated by tribal warfare and radical Islam. For his family’s safety, Lucas was forced to relocate to another country in the region. He is part of a very healthy church and under the care of biblical elders. While pursuing a degree in theology, Lucas also maintains two Facebook pages in his native language. One page focuses on gospel content, while the other offers apologetics material. These Facebook pages have over 20,000 followers, and some months they receive over 100,000 visits!

Lucas is also using technology to train house-church leaders in his home country. He meets with a core group of ten or twelve leaders on a weekly basis using a video call. A few times per year, when possible, he brings those leaders to his current country of residence for a week-long intensive training. This summer, he even took the risk to travel back to his home country to train these men.

Altogether, Lucas and the leaders he is training are connected to thirty house churches, each averaging about ten members.

Out of this leadership training, two men have already completed a nine-month pastoral internship in Lucas’s church; a third man is currently in the internship. Lucas told me this intern’s remarkable conversion story:

Ari was a university student in the capital city. He visited Lucas’s Facebook page and was intrigued by Christianity and wanted to investigate further. Ari went to the library and asked if they had a Bible. The librarian slapped him! “Why do you want that stupid book?” he asked. Ari left in fear, but continued to visit Lucas’s Facebook page.

Eventually he asked for a Bible through the page. Lucas responded through Facebook, and Ari flooded him with questions. In time, Lucas concluded that Ari was genuinely seeking answers. He contacted a friend in the capital and asked him to take a

Bible to Ari. The friend wrapped up a Bible in gift-wrap to look like a birthday present. He took it to the university cafeteria and left it with a worker, saying that his friend would come to get his gift. At last, Ari had his hands on a Bible!

The more he read, the more questions about Jesus he had for Lucas. After more time passed, Lucas connected him with the house church in the capital. Ari professed faith in Jesus Christ and was baptized! From the beginning, he was extremely committed to the church, never missing a meeting. In addition, he met with the elders every week for discipleship. This eventually led to Ari attending one of the one-week training sessions and then his participation in the pastoral internship.



Please pray for Lucas, Ari, and the little house churches in their country. They are constantly in very real danger and ready to die for Christ. Also pray that these house churches will grow under Lucas's biblical instruction before false teaching gains influence in their land.

THE UNREACHED IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

By Sean R.

When you hear the terms “Muslim refugees” or “Muslim immigrants,” what comes to mind? What emotions do you feel? Does your mind immediately run to the political bickering between the President and Congress of the United States? Do you fear that Muslims are quietly infiltrating Europe and the U.S. to carry out terror attacks or someday impose Sharia law?

Is it possible that some refugees and immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East have evil intentions? Yes. For the American church, should politics and personal security govern our thoughts and feelings about these people groups? No. As followers of Jesus Christ, the Scriptures alone command authority over our thoughts and feelings.

Regarding immigration and refugees—are these incredibly complex issues? Absolutely. Should the U.S. government exercise wisdom and discretion in protecting their citizens? Of course; they are called by God's common grace to do so.



But once these refugees and immigrants from Muslim nations live in our communities, Jesus leaves us no loopholes or wiggle-room in loving and doing good to them—even those who may harbor hostile intentions. He commanded us to love our enemies and do good to those that hate us (Luke 6:27-28).

Actually, many Muslims immigrate to the U.S. simply for better economic opportunity or to escape the devastation of war in their homeland. Jesus spoke to that as well, commanding us to love our neighbor, and then told a parable of cultures antagonistic to one another to illustrate what He meant by “neighbor” (Luke 10:25-37). There is no greater act of love than giving the gospel to a perishing sinner. So, with the Apostle Paul, we ought to feel constrained, compelled, and controlled by the gospel to plead with our new Muslim neighbors to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:11-21).

That is exactly what a church in the Detroit community of Hamtramck is doing. Last month, I had the unique privilege of visiting Grace Baptist Church in order to see their gospel work among Yemeni refugees. I must admit that, after only a couple of days in Hamtramck, I had never felt so disoriented in my own country. On every street walked men in traditional Middle Eastern robes and women covered in black from head to foot. The shop signs were in English and Arabic. At sundown, the call to prayer rang out from the local mosque. More than once, I had to remind myself that I was in Michigan, not the Middle East.

Several years ago, Pastor Jay attended seminary in Detroit. During

his time there, his heart was stirred for the African-American community in Hamtramck. Grace Baptist Church was eventually birthed in his home. As refugees from the war-torn Arab nation of Yemen continued flooding into the community, Jay saw the urgent need to engage them with the gospel. In His good time, God sent Sam.



Sam's heart was heavily burdened to reach Muslim immigrants in the U.S. with the gospel.

He had come on a short trip to Detroit with an organization doing mostly humanitarian projects. One day, Sam was in a park in Hamtramck evangelizing when he met Pastor Jay. Their hearts were quickly united; as their relationship grew, God's calling and direction became clear. Sam and his family moved to Hamtramck to help Grace Baptist evangelize Muslim immigrants.

After a while, it became obvious that Sam's efforts would be greatly enhanced if he spoke Arabic. His family spent the next thirteen months in Alexandria, Egypt, as Sam devoted himself to learning Arabic; and he



continues to dedicate hours each day to improving his language skills. Sam now serves as an elder in Grace Baptist Church; their evangelistic zeal, mingled with sincere fellowship, is beautiful to behold. Several young adults have actually moved into Hamtramck and joined the church with the specific intent to reach Muslim immigrants with the gospel.

The church is out in their community two or three nights every week, weather permitting, proclaiming the gospel. Pastor Jay and others lead outreach to African-Americans, while Sam heads up evangelistic outreach to primarily Yemeni refugees. The Sunday morning congregation is beautifully diverse! A group from the church goes to a local park where Yemenis socialize every evening. Some of them interest the children in an activity while a few men and women fan out to engage Yemenis in discussion. On the Sunday night of my visit, the church actually met in the park to sing and preach a short gospel message in Arabic.

It is no surprise that the work has gone very slowly. Most of the men willing to talk only offer the usual objections to Christianity. The local imams love to argue. Very few have shown sincere interest, though one teen joined us at Pastor Jay's for pizza and a birthday celebration. That young

man has heard the gospel many times now.

Open resistance to the church's efforts has recently been growing. A couple of men consistently argue with Sam or harass those with whom Sam tries to dialogue. And, yes, there have been veiled threats. Sam has been told, in essence, “Back in our country, we know how to deal with people like you.” As you can imagine, it is not easy for Grace Baptist to go on week after week, year after year, witnessing the gospel with no visible fruit in a cultural context that is unfamiliar and sometimes hostile.

They long to see an indigenous Yemeni church someday in Hamtramck, and it all starts with one coming to faith in Christ. I am reminded of the words of one of HeartCry's Romanian pastors regarding the refugee crisis in Europe. He said, “For centuries, Christ has been telling us to go to them, but we were afraid and did not go. So now He has brought them to us!” Please pray for Sam, whom HeartCry has just begun to support so that he can devote himself to this important work among Yemeni refugees. Pray also for his family, for Pastor Jay, and for Grace Baptist Church as they seek to be faithful gospel witnesses to the unreached people group that God has placed in their own backyard.

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We're looking forward to sharing with you these stories of how God is using ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things across the globe!

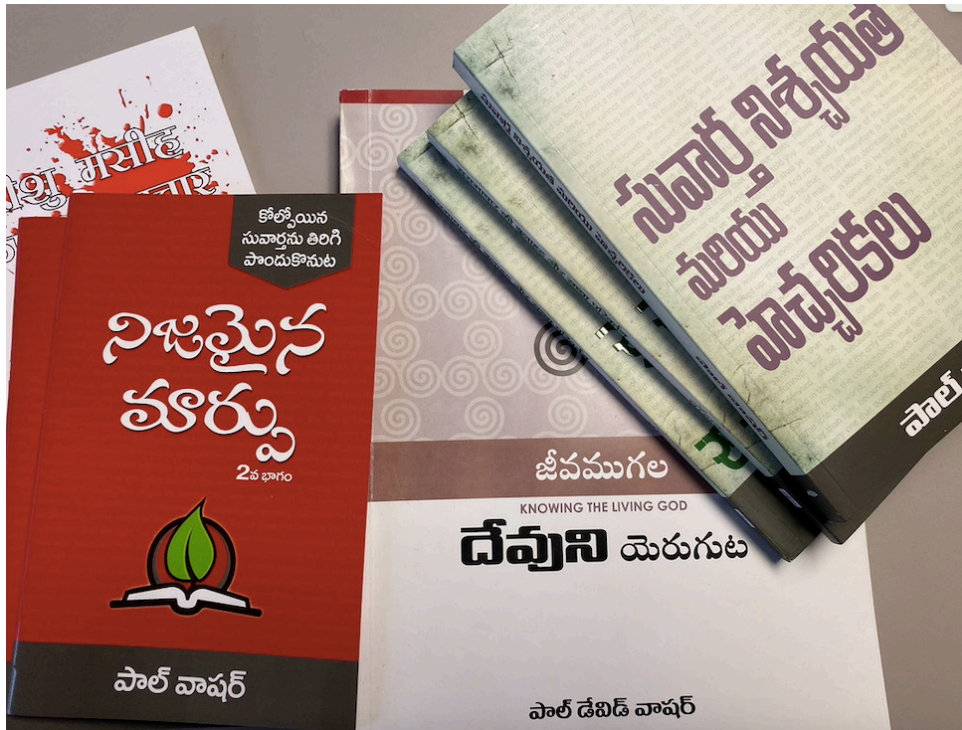
THE HIDDEN IMPACT OF TRANSLATED BOOKS

By Jeff S. - India

Most of Christian ministry is hidden from public view. Yes, you have the public proclamation of God's Word several times a week; but even that, I would argue, is the fruit of hours of private study and personal prayer. In fact, most of the impact that the Christian minister has is even hidden from his own view. Who knows the number of people who have been affected by tracts handed out or simply through gospel-centered conversations? Who knows how many times pastors have preached a message seemingly unimpressive to their own ears, that has an eternal impact in the life of another—perhaps even impacting thousands for the kingdom. The fruit of a man's labor for the Lord is often hidden—from those who view his public ministry and from himself. Truly, a minister will never understand the full weight of his work on this side of eternity.

This is especially true when it comes to translated works, such as books, pamphlets, articles, subtitled videos, and the like on the mission field. Consider a book, for example. When an English-speaking pastor comes across a resource that has left a mark on his ministry and wants to share this resource with those who do not speak English, no one but his family typically sees the sacrifice he makes to go word by word, line by line, translating it. No one sees the struggle of taking well-defined theological terms in English and attempting to translate them into a language that does not have a correlating word. No one sees the personal frustration or how many times the pastor was on the edge of dropping the work altogether. No one sees the late nights, the neglected sleep, the months and possibly years of labor. No one sees the additional times of editing, going back through the ma-





terial again and again to recheck the spelling and grammar. No one sees the proofreaders, the negotiations with the printer, the struggle to design a cover, or the personal sacrifice to finance the work. For the most part, it is hidden from the public.

It truly is a labor of love. It is a labor of desire, hoping to see others changed by this resource as well. Still, even after the book has been printed and promoted to friends, family, and fellow-laborers in the field, there are many unknowns.

Is it received? Is it making a difference for a pastor or church? Or is it just sitting on the shelf collecting dust and wasting away? Has the labor over the last months or years been in vain? As stated above, for the most part, the impact is hidden and will never be known on this side of eternity.

However, there are times when the Lord delights to show you some of the fruit of the labors. Such was recent-

ly the case with Samuel B. in South India, who was recently contacted by Pastor Balu, who had received several resources. He writes:

“As a young pastor with good theology but lacking experience in pastoral ministry, I initially found it very hard to survive and failed in forming and constituting the people gathering as a church. I had several bitter experiences with believers as well as unquenched war between unbelievers and believers regarding biblical purity, membership, authority, charismatic gifts, unity, and leadership—in large part, due to misguidance by previous leaders. But I thank God for taking me there.

“With all of my struggles, I happened to attend an inauguration of a Reformed Baptist Church and had the opportunity to talk with Pastor Samuel B., who was very kind and generous. He understood my struggles and gave me a few books which he translated

into the Telugu language: *The Gospel's Power and Message, Knowing the Living God*, and two booklets titled *True Salvation* (Parts 1 & 2) by Paul David Washer; and *Seven Certain Signs of True Conversion* and *Church Membership in the Bible* by Peter Masters.

These books helped me teach and conduct workshops and Bible studies with my people. I thank God for this amazing help through Pastor Samuel, who has a tremendous ability to translate strong and biblical books into the Telugu language.

I am praying and hoping that these and upcoming books will be a biblical beacon of light by the seashore to guide, strengthen, encourage, and establish biblical truth among Indian church pastors and people who have been traveling through the never-ending, unbiblical waves of this world in order to reach the solid ground of biblical truth.”

While we entrust the impact of these resources into the hand of the Lord, knowing that He will use them according to His purposes, we do rejoice in letters such as this. It is humbling, knowing that the small, unseen work of man is being used to produce great things in the kingdom of God. We might not see the whole picture. We might not see the person who finds one of these books in a random shop years after our passing and

is affected. We might not see any of those who have truly benefitted from the spreading of this seed among the people. Nevertheless, we are encouraged and do praise Him for allowing us to see even one piece of fruit; and with that we can say, it is enough. It is enough, knowing the one has been helped.



STOIENESTI, ROMANIA

George serves as a missionary in Stoenesti, where he evangelizes and works with youth. After pressing through many difficult trials years ago, he and his wife Dana have become pillars of steadfastness in their commitment to Christ. The church in Stoenesti began in 2007, and George has developed other missions in the area since then. George's outreach has included developing a social project in Stoenesti for feeding, clothing, and providing medicine for the poor. Recently, he has also been asked to help a church in Draganesti. George and Dana have two daughters.

MISSIONARY SPOTLIGHT

George Serban

Testimony of Conversion

My name is George Serban. I was saved in 1998 when God had mercy on me. I grew up in an Evangelical church until I was fifteen years old. Then I had to move away to go to another school. This meant that I found new friends who did not love God, and I began to distance myself from God's Word. It was then that I tasted the bitterness of this world and its immorality. But then, God showed me His sweetness and beauty. He told me, "I paid a price for you, and you are Mine. If you continue in this, you will be disciplined." These words went through my heart, and I answered His call.

In 2003, God called me to go to Bible school, because I needed to be

prepared to serve Him well. I knew He was calling me to ministry. It was hard, but I had to choose between an easy life of following my own interests and a life lived for the highest purpose: serving Him. I chose His will, and I have seen His guidance in our ministry of serving Him ever since. I consider it a privilege to be His worker! In this moment, my ministry is being carried out in Stoenesti. My vision is to see churches planted in all of the neighboring villages. I know we will not be able to do these things through our power, but only through the power of the God who sent us.

September Update

I am thankful to the Lord for the gift of life, the health He gives us, and the gift of spiritual life through Jesus

Christ—the foundation of our faith. He always forgives and guides us and is with us in the ministry that we are doing in His Name. He is our Savior, and we want Him to shine more and more through everything we do. We pray that we would not steal from His glory and that we would be humble and dependent on Him and His grace.

God gave us the grace to serve Him on different occasions in different places as we have been involved in street evangelism, visitation, children's ministry, and several evangelistic events in our mission area. We had a Vacation Bible School for children where they learned Christian songs and lessons about God. We pray that the Lord would open their hearts to understand His ways and to take His Word to their parents.

This is exactly what happened with a girl who used to attend our children's meetings.

The change that took place in her made her mom very curious. Her daughter obeyed her no matter what she asked her to do. So she thought that we had done something to the girl. She came to church very angry one day. After a few minutes, she stood up and said she had come to fight with us, but she realized she actually needed the Lord!

She asked us to help her know Him. This is how the Lord can use a child to bring a change in the parents' lives!

What an example and testimony of God's power!

A missionary family—a couple with three children—moved to Stoenesti this month to open a new mission point in the village of Berindei. They stepped in this new path through faith. Please pray for them! We are also praying for them and seeking support for their livelihood so that the ministry in Stoenesti and Berindei can go further. Thank you for praying for this family and for their needs!

We also had a project for helping the Roma community in Stoenesti this month. While they are simple and poor people, they need the Lord and His salvation so much. We prayed for a sick woman from this community and also prayed for someone to come who can get involved in this ministry. They are open to listen to God's Word, but how can they hear it without a preacher? "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest."

November Update

I have been involved in ministry in Buzau County this month with other missionaries. I met busy men, working in their gardens, taking care of their physical needs; but I did not see the need for God in them. Maybe they did not understand how much they need Him. Maybe some of them have never heard the gospel, or maybe they just do not believe that God can help them. I pray that these people will believe the gospel when they hear it and then remain in its teaching, so that the light of it would shine into the darkness of their lives.

I visited a family this week and, as I was sharing the gospel, the lady said, “You frighten me when you speak so urgently. You speak of death and sin... Come on, things are not that bad! I don’t like that you are so direct.”

They say that this is the preacher’s problem: that they do not say exactly as things are. People like to hear that God is good, loving, and tolerant—that He allows me to sin without punishing me, because He is good and forgiving. But the God of Scripture is also just; He punishes sin and commands all people to repent! I would rather not be popular and tell people the truth that can set them free than to tell them stories they like to hear in order to be popular. I prefer to be rejected and God to be received

children. I preached the Word at the baptism service; at the end, I invited those who wanted to know God better to come forward so we could pray for them. In the congregation was this lady’s sister-in-law. She came forward to say she wanted to be with Jesus and to give her life to the Lord. We prayed for her, and the church rejoiced! Please pray for her, that her testimony would prove sure and that her faith would be steadfast. Pray that her husband, children, and neighbors would be won for the Lord.

December Update

I pray that the Lord would help each of us understand that all the resources that we need are found in knowing Him and in the calling He has given us. When we understand this truth, we

will not refuse to serve by saying that we are not capable. We must never forget that He is our source and that, if He calls us to a specific ministry, He will also empower us for that ministry. He will give us everything we need, for all resources are in Him. I have been living this experience for about thirteen years now, ever since I recognized that the Lord was calling me to serve Him and to

do things that were too great for me, such as preaching His Word, which is fruitless without His power. We pray that He would convert people unto His own glory each time we preach the gospel.

With God’s help, we have started an evangelistic project with the church.

We do street evangelism every Saturday. It is a real challenge, as it takes many of the believers out of their comfort zone. Still, we believe that in this way we can reach new people with the gospel. We pray that our church would make disciples that will multiply and send other missionaries on the mission field.

We have weekly small groups meetings with evangelistic and discipleship purposes in three different towns. Through these meetings, we try to integrate new people into the local church. Many mission points have started this way.

I preached about the Lord Jesus’ life and ministry in November. All the men who preach in the church made this decision together and met to prepare the messages. The people in the church testified that the Lord had spoken to them through these messages, and they have shared how they have applied God’s Word.

For instance, we had a sermon on the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus teaches about our attitude toward those who are mean to us. He teaches us to be good to them, which can bring them to repentance. A sister



shared with us about her experience with a man who took something from her. She remembered what she had learned from the sermon and did something good to that man. Immediately, she felt both a freedom from bitterness and a strength to do good. God is good, and He is working! Bless His Name!

We have prayer meetings each Wednesday night and are happy to experience the joy of having our prayers answered. We also have been active in visiting and helping poor families. Please keep praying for us!

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by many people. This is what we have been called to do. The preaching of the gospel is accompanied by rejection and humiliation.

By God’s grace, we had a baptism in one of our churches. A 38-year-old woman has turned to the Lord. She has an alcoholic husband and five

STREET EVANGELISM IN ROMANIA

By Emanuel Ivan

HeartCry missionary Emanuel Ivan and his wife Camy have been members of Providence Church of Brasov while preparing to plant a church outside the city. They daily demonstrate gospel kindness in their endeavors to present the gospel in their community.



I have been involved in the evangelistic ministry in Brasov. Therefore, I would like to share with you about several of the people who were more open to God's Word, so you can pray for them.

Sorin Prodan and I talked to Grigore, a man in his 50s who had a wrong idea about sin. He believed that sin was only killing and robbing. So as long as you are able to see to your family and job, there is no problem. I believe that this is the greatest battle in the man's heart and mind. If he could understand the seriousness of sin and

its consequences, his immediate desperate cry would be, "Lord, save me!" The devil has managed to camouflage sin and to make it appear not so serious. The problem is that believers don't treat sin seriously anymore either. Paul said, "I discipline my body and keep it under control." Isaiah, when in the Lord's presence, understood who he was and who those around him were. Only God's glory and holiness will help us have a clear view of sin and of the way in which we can be set free. So, we shared the gospel with Grigore



and believe that only God's Spirit can make him aware of his sinfulness and need for salvation.

We also had a very good discussion with four high school students. They listened to the gospel, and then they asked us questions. Sorin and I tried to answer those questions. It was so obvious that they did not have clear direction and believed that they would be saved if they did good works. We challenged them to read the Bible and to put their trust in the Lord to be saved.

We met a young couple and had a good discussion with them. We asked them if they believed that sin was a serious issue that our society was facing. They said, "Yes," and also agreed that they were sinful as well. I asked them if they knew what the solution was to this situation, explaining they would have to pay for their sins eventually. I shared with them that the Lord Jesus had paid for their sins and that they only had to put their trust in Him.

Along with the HeartCry missionaries and pastors, I had the opportunity of helping the ministry in Pitulicea and the surrounding villages for two days. The Lord opened doors for the preaching of the gospel. We met a man who was eighty-five years old. He was sick and alone. We preached the gospel to him by God's grace. When he was

young, he was a hard-working man and quite rich. But his wife got sick, and he had to spend everything for her. He also had to sell almost everything he had. Brother Costel gave him a little money, and he started crying. There are so many people living in poverty to the point of not even having money to buy bread.

Then we met a teenage boy. He listened carefully to the gospel message, and then I prayed for him. Another young man in his early 20s listened to God's Word and asked us for a Bible.



The Lord had already started working in his heart through his roommate, who had repented while in prison. He told this young man that the Lord Jesus was going to come back to take His Bride and urged him to read the Word and repent; so this man started reading the Bible. He is close to the Kingdom—let us pray for him!

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THE EXPERIENCE OF AN AMERICAN WOMAN IN GERMANY

By Emily A.

Emily is an American young lady who recently moved to Frankfurt, Germany, and married a member of HeartCry missionary Peter Schild's church. Below, she shares her perspective on the church in Germany.

I thought it fitting, since I am an American myself, to write a report of the state of the church in Germany and how it differs from America.

I would like to share some of my personal backstory so you can understand what I was used to seeing on a normal basis before moving overseas. I believe this will give you a view of the stark differences and how much of a need there is in Germany. I also want to start by saying that even though the spiritual state of Germany is not good, God is still on the throne overseeing everything and is in complete control.

He is still building His Church in the midst of darkness, and in this we have hope.

I grew up in an area of America where there are religious people everywhere and a Baptist church building on nearly every street corner. I would say close to 75% of the population in my hometown and surrounding areas would call themselves Christians. Many of them would also attend a church of some kind. Most of the residents do not have a problem with the idea of God; many of them are even creationists and have their morals rooted in Christianity. Unfortunately, however, most congregations do not hold to the doctrines of grace, study church history, practice church discipline, or preach the importance of personal holiness and the wickedness of sin. As a result, the gospel being presented is

weakened and watered down. This has allowed deceived people to creep their way into normal Baptist churches—not to mention the many cults that are rising in popularity recently, many of which have roots in Christianity but in reality are less Christian than Islamic. It is very difficult to find a truly reformed Baptist church. I honestly thought the area from which I came was in desperate need of a reformation; and, truly, it is. However, I have come to realize that Germany has its own set of problems and may be worse off than America in several ways. Nevertheless, Germany is also home to a wonderful church filled with people who fear the Lord, and I desire to share my experiences with them as well.

Before I moved to Germany for marriage in early 2019, I was told many times about the dark spiritual state of the country and what to expect while living in such a place. I was pressed hard to think wisely and prayerfully about moving to this dark place before I agreed to marry my husband, who wanted to stay here to serve. I still had a very American mindset, however, and believed the United States needed more gospel light than Europe. Now, after living here for almost a year—being involved in street evangelism, seeing the culture, learning about the German government and politics, and so on—I can testify that this nation truly is in the darkness. This country, which God once shook during the Reformation, has completely forgotten what happened five hundred years ago. The majority of the people living here are not religious, are completely hostile to everything about the gospel, and would not identify with Christianity at all.

Many of them are flat-out atheists and mock the Bible. On the opposite side of atheism, about 30% of the population are Roman Catholic, which is the largest religious group. Another 30% are members of the official German Protestant Church, which has lost its life and faith long ago. Germany is the home country of liberal theology, and most of the Protestant churches are liberal in their teaching. The health, wealth, and prosperity gospel has come over from America and is infiltrating the charismatic churches. There are many Muslim refugees from countries around Germany who are migrating here to seek a better life. The false religion of Islam is growing and gaining popularity.



When we evangelize on the streets, many people do not even realize that there are churches outside of “state churches.” If you tell them you are a member of a “free church” (a church not connected to the state), they will often believe you to be part of a sectarian group or cult.

The number of Evangelicals (of any sort) in Germany is only around 2%. With only a handful of reformed Baptist churches in the entire nation, the need is great. To give some perspective: imagine an area roughly half the size of Texas, with three times the population of Texas, being only 2% Evan-

gelical. There are also no universities and very few seminaries that consider themselves to be Bible-believing. It is very sorrowful to ponder that the home country of the Reformation has fallen to this level.

On the flip side, however, Christ is continuing to build His Church in the midst of a crooked generation.

He has provided a few faithful churches in the area, with faithful ministers of His Word. My home church, the Evangelical Reformed Baptist Church of Frankfurt is among those upon which the Lord has bestowed His grace. With all the religious deception and liberalism here, it shines like a lighthouse. On average, there are around a hundred people who attend on Sunday, with about half of them being church members. The Lord has blessed us by sending so many guests to us. There are seven people desiring baptism at this time, and even more are seeking church membership. We are also home to a large variety of nationalities from across the globe. Very often, we have to have translators for visitors. I was amazed to see, even with the diversity of cultural backgrounds, how unified everyone was in the truth of the gospel. I was also astounded how traditional a Baptist church can be. In our Frankfurt church, we partake in the Lord's supper weekly, have relatively long expository sermons, have morning and evening services, and sing (300-year-old) songs as a group. Traditional services really have their own charm and certainly are, at times,

more biblical. It took some time to get used to the older way of doing things since I came from a culture that is very modern in the worship services.

In my personal experience, I have noticed a true desire and passion in our church and in churches that are likeminded to send people out and to support new church plants. There is more zeal for this than I have ever witnessed in American churches. Some American churches might support one missionary or have a youth group go to Africa or Haiti, but I have rarely seen or heard of elders really attempting to train up men for the purpose of planting a new church and truly equipping the saints. Here, it is prayed and greatly desired that the Lord would raise up sound men from among us for pastoralship. The pastors have started to allow some men from our congregation to preach. They work with these men one-on-one to train them to be faithful proclaimers of the Word, in hopes that one day they may be part of another church founded in this country. It is very encouraging to me to see how seriously this is taken. We hope the Lord will use this work to expand His own kingdom for His glory.

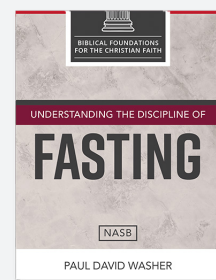
Ultimately, with anything we do here, all the glory goes to Christ. He has given this church grace to allow it to grow as much as it has. It is very uplifting to see that even in the midst of a culture that does not know God, God still gives grace and provides suitable men to preach the truth of His Word. This comes from a fellow American: pray for Germany. Pray that God would once again shake this nation and cause many to convert to Him for His glory, before it is too late for them.

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FASTING AS A RESPONSE OF THE HEART

By Paul Washer



*The following is an excerpt from Paul Washer's latest book, **Understanding the Discipline of Fasting**, the fourth installment of the **Biblical Foundation for the Christian Faith** series. As with its predecessors, it is a workbook designed for the reader to study with an open Bible in front of him or her. This excerpt is taken from a brief but important explanatory chapter near the beginning of the workbook. You can find this and other titles at heartcrymissionary.com/books.*

Fasting is the response of a heart that is so consumed with a certain desire or need that it foregoes temporal pleasures and even the necessities of life in order to seek the fulfillment of that desire. However, it is important to note that the passion or desire that consumes and drives a person to fast may be godly or carnal. Moses fasted for Israel's pardon because of his love for his people and his zeal for God's

glory (Exodus 34:27-28). David was moved by love and pity to fast for his dying son (II Samuel 12:15-23). Anna fasted in the temple out of devotion to God and a longing for the Messiah (Luke 2:36-38). In contrast, Saul's fear and self-pity drove out his desire for food (I Samuel 28:20). Similarly, Ahab was so consumed by his illicit desire for Naboth's vineyard that he would not eat (I Kings 21:4). Finally,

the Pharisees' desire for the glory of men drove them to fast twice a week (Matthew 6:16; Luke 18:11-12).

In the book of Psalms, there are two texts that will help us understand the nature of fasting and its motives. Although they do not directly relate to fasting, they demonstrate a key principle in fasting. The first text comes from Psalm 102:4, where the psalmist cries out, "My heart has been smitten like grass and has withered away, indeed, *I forget to eat my bread*" (emphasis added). Here we see that the psalmist's affliction and his desire to be free from it drove out mere temporal concerns. Food was no longer his delight; it did not even enter into his mind. The second text comes from Psalm 107:17-18, where we see the people of God suffering to such a degree that "their soul *abhorred all kinds of food*" (emphasis added). Their affliction was so great and their desire to be free from it was so intense that food was not just undesirable—it was abhorrent.

Their attitude toward food could be summarized by the question, "How can we even think of eating at a time like this?"

In both of the above texts, food was forgotten, even abhorred, because of affliction and the desire to be free from it. This cause-and-effect relationship is the foundation of fasting and can be applied to all sorts of needs and desires. We fast whenever a certain desire or need that God alone can supply drives out temporal pleasures and drives us to seek God.

- We may be so afflicted and so desirous of deliverance that we forget our food and continue in prayer to God.
- We may set aside food and temporal joys because God exposes a certain sin in our lives, causing us to sense the urgent need for reconciliation, restoration, and power to gain mastery over it.



- We may forget our food because of our zeal for God's name and because of the godless who reproach it.
- We may be so overwhelmed with concern for the purity of the Church or the conversion of the nations that we set aside food for the purpose of intercession.
- We may forget every thought of food and desire for temporal joy because of our satisfaction in God's presence and the joy of continued communion with Him.

In summary, the Christian may fast for all sorts of reasons. However, all true fasting shares one thing in common: we fast when a need, sorrow, or godly desire becomes so strong and all-consuming that we literally "forget our bread" in order to seek God in prayer.

The following illustrations may be helpful.

Suppose there is a man who has planned and labored for several years to travel abroad. Yet at the moment of his departure, his young son falls gravely ill. At that moment, the man does not regret the loss of a long-anticipated vacation; the very thought of it has been driven from his mind.

It has been pushed out by a far greater love and a far greater need. In a similar fashion, the Christian may forgo food and other temporal pleasures because of an overwhelming desire for

the healing of a fellow Christian, the evangelization of an unreached people group, or the welfare of an entire nation. He does not regret the loss of food, fellowship, or temporal delights; they have been driven out of his heart and mind by a greater desire.

Consider a son who has become aware that his less-than-virtuous actions have gravely dishonored his father. He fears the harm he may have done to his father's name. He is sick with self-reproach. He earnestly desires to make amends, to rectify his wrong, and to find his father and gain his pardon. He can no longer think of temporal joys, the fellowship of close friends, or the delights of entertainment and food. He must find his father, he must have a hearing, and he must be reconciled. Similarly, a Christian may become aware that his sin has

gravely dishonored God and may be filled with godly sorrow, indignation, fear, longing, and a desire for pardon. He cannot find peace or joy in any temporal pleasure until he finds God in prayer and is assured of pardon.

Imagine a wife whose husband is called to duty as a soldier in a distant land. At times, she so longs for him that she forgets or forgoes the daily routine of eating. Her desire for her husband's companionship drives out her desire for even her most basic needs and common pleasures. She reads over his letters, gazes upon photographs, and waits for every call. In those special times when her husband does call, the wife spends the entire day and evening on the phone with him.

The hours pass by unnoticed. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are missed without the slightest grief.

Her joy is so great that she retires to bed but can hardly sleep for thoughts of him. Likewise, the Christian may forgo food and temporal pleasures because of an overwhelming desire to seek God's presence in prayer, commune with Him, and read His Word.

Furthermore, there will be those special times in prayer when God manifests His presence in a special visitation and the Christian is engulfed in Him. All else is forgotten! Morning, afternoon, and evening pass as though they were only moments; and the Christian retires to bed with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

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"The world lives in a time of crisis. Christians alone are in a position to rescue the perishing. We dare not settle down to try to live as if things were normal."

— A. W. Tozer

"If by excessive labor, we die before reaching the average age of man, worn out in the Master's service, then glory be to God, we shall have so much less of earth and so much more of Heaven!"

— C. H. Spurgeon



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