

Faith Networks

A Newsletter for Cooperation in the Churches of God

February/March 2010

No More Waste!

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Quick: When was the steam engine invented? Think carefully. You probably learned this in fourth or fifth grade history. No peeking ahead allowed...

Got an answer in mind? Good.

If you said 1700 or 1800 something then you are absolutely...

Wrong.

The first steam engine was a device developed in Alexandria, Egypt, in the early first century AD by a Greek whose name is given variously as Hero or Heron or Heronas. It was called an *aeolipile*, and some variation of it probably existed even before the time of Hero. It was a cylinder with two curved outlets sticking out on each side. When it was filled with water and heated the resulting steam made the cylinder spin. It was small and it was rudimentary, but it demonstrated how steam could be used to make something move.

This first steam engine was never used for anything other than a novelty in the temples of that time.

Apparently no one thought about using the power of steam to operate ships, or if they did the idea was quickly squashed. People thought that steam was nothing more than hot air. The ancient world depended largely on slave labor, so there was little incentive to develop more efficient methods of locomotion, and perhaps religious and other cultural taboos stifled further development of the technology. If someone had been more open to the idea, and if they had possessed the necessary tools and expertise, there may have been steamboats on the Mediterranean almost 2,000 years ago. But those are big ifs. The bottom line is that the cultural infrastructure was not in place for the development of steam power at that time, so the potential use of steam power was wasted.

One attribute of a world which does not practice God's way is waste.



Waste of talent, waste of resources, waste of lives. This happens on a large scale in war. We rightly honor those who have given their lives in the defense of freedom, but at the same time it is appalling to think how many lives, both military and civilian, have been needlessly lost because of wrong decisions at crucial moments in history. How much talent and innovation did the world lose when more than 60,000,000 people died in World War II? And of course the same thing is true of the wars fought since then and the ones fought now.

How much human potential is lost because of the quiet holocaust of abortion in this country? How many scientists, artists, and leaders are lost because of lives cut short while still in the womb? In the second resurrection God will correct what has been lost, but for now we are left with incredible waste simply because His laws regarding sexual activity and the sanctity of life are not heeded.

Human potential is wasted because of oppressive government, be it political or ecclesiastical. The devastation and loss of life in Haiti as a result of the recent earthquake there was in large part the result of poverty caused by exploitation first by colonial masters and later by corrupt politicians in Haiti itself. The problem is not just with Haiti. Most of the human race has rejected God's way throughout history, and the result has been a monumental waste of human potential everywhere. Haiti is just an extreme example.

Human potential is wasted even within the family. How many of us have fallen prey to the can't-do-that or shouldn't-try-to-do-that message we received from those around us as we were growing up? Sometimes the message was spoken in words and sometimes just with an attitude or a smirk or a sneer. Sometimes the message was thought to be for our own good. But in every case it chipped away at potential. Think back on your own life. Wasn't it refreshing and exhilarating when someone actually encouraged you to excel and use your talents?

Jesus said that He came so we might have life and have it more abundantly. Part of a more abundant life means using one's talents and living up to one's potential. It means that society as a whole casts off oppressive government and religious taboos that have nothing to do with God's way and begins to implement creative policies and solutions that work to solve our problems. It means that innovation and creativity are not stifled simply because of superstition and cultural attitudes, as happened with that first steam engine so long ago.

The good news is that the human race has accomplished as much as it has in spite of the waste. The good news for you personally is that whoever you are and wherever you are you can start living up to your potential immediately. And the best news of all is that when the government of God is established on this earth, every man, woman, and child will do the same. Imagine what the world will be like then! [FN](#)



No matter what the level of your ability, you have more potential than you can ever develop in a lifetime.



~ James T. McCay

Faith Networks is a voluntary effort by a group of individuals interested in promoting cooperation among the Churches of God and encouraging healthy relationships both within congregations and between them. Resources have been made available for the initial stages of Faith Networks by members of the Church of God Cincinnati.

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Book Review:
Mistaken Identity: Two Families, One Survivor, Unwavering Hope
By Don and Susie Van Ryn; Colleen, Newell, and Whitney Cerak; with Mark Tabb



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On April 26, 2006, a driver of a semi-trailer truck fell asleep at the wheel, crossed the median, and struck a van belonging to Taylor University in Indiana. That accident killed five people in the van and injured four others. This accident would later receive much national attention, becoming the story for a two hour *Dateline NBC* documentary, and part of the *Today* show.

Taylor University is a Christian-evangelical university of about two thousand students. Students come there because they want to attend such a Christian college.

What made this event so newsworthy is that one college student (Laura Van Ryn) was assumed to be a survivor; while another student (Whitney Cerak) was assumed to be dead. Laura and Whitney look very similar. Whitney, the real survivor, had serious disfiguring injuries and was left in a coma, and thus the Van Ryn family did not realize that a mistake had been made. To compound the problem, Whitney's family did not wish to remember what their daughter looked like after the accident, so did not make a visual identification of the body. They also had a closed-casket funeral.

In the meantime the Van Ryn family all but moved to the hospital to support and care for the girl they assumed was their daughter, Laura. And not until "Laura" was out of her coma for awhile did the truth come out. She said her name was Whitney, and wondered why "false parents" were taking care of her.

More traumas would now occur as the Van Ryn family members would have to go through the grieving process over the loss of their daughter.


The Cerak family would get their daughter back, but not exactly the same girl because of changes her brain injury produced in her personality. The two families have become good friends, and support one another.

What makes this story significant are the Christian values expressed and practiced by the two families. Those involved with the families have been moved by the way they openly demonstrated those values. That, in fact, is the reason for the book, since the families place a high value on privacy.

The book shows what can happen to anyone, and how the families turned to prayer and trusted God to bring them through all their traumas. If I have any criticism of the book, it is that it only shows everyone reacting in strictly positive ways. It is hard to believe that no one in either family ever responded with less than perfect reactions to the situation. It would be helpful to us and would *humanize* things if at least a few of those poor reactions were included in the book.

After Whitney returned to college the next year, she felt she was under some great obligation to become something super-special for God. That feeling was precipitated by students making statements to her along the line of, "God must have something in mind for you or you would not be with us." Such sentiments made her feel uncomfortable and pressured.

Then a student friend (Brad) talked to her about Elijah fleeing to the wilderness, where God comes and speaks with him. (1 Kings 19) A great windstorm occurs, then an earthquake, then a fire—and God is in none of these. God then speaks to Elijah in a still, small voice.

Whitney concludes: "I realized that instead of thinking that my life has to be some big windstorm or earthquake for God, perhaps I only have to let Him whisper gently through my life. That story made me realize I don't have to accomplish some giant thing for God. If I'm just a camp counselor who makes the difference in the life of one person, or if I'm just a mom who loves her children and tells them about Jesus, that's enough. It took a little while, but I finally figured out that God's purpose is for me to let Him do whatever He wants in my life, big or small. Being a part of writing this book may be the last 'big' thing I ever do, and I'm fine with that." 

Mistaken Identity:
Two Families, One Survivor, Unwavering Hope
By Don and Susie Van Ryn; Colleen, Newell, and Whitney Cerak; with Mark Tabb
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The REAL Government of God



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It's all about power. Some say it's about money, but Dale Carnegie, who came from a family with both, said that money was only a tool to obtain power. Power, he wrote in his bestselling book *How To Win Friends and Influence People*, is man's strongest drive.

A psychological study of men working in the corporate structure revealed an interesting insight into human nature. The experiment offered subjects a choice between a pay raise or a promotion which included a new office with a brass nameplate and title on the door. With few exceptions they took the promotion. The researchers concluded that for the majority of people money is less important than power.

Yet studying the lives of great men reveals a fascinating fact. One of the simple yet profound truths of life is that great men reject power in order to serve. Conversely, base men choose power over service.

George Washington is called the "Father of Our Country" not just because he was our first president (the Continental Congress had several presidents before him), but because he epitomized the spirit of the fledgling nation. He rejected power not once but at least three times—at the end of the revolutionary war, when he resigned his military commission and returned to Mount Vernon, when he declined an appointment to office so the country could have an elected president, and again at the end of his second term, when he refused to seek a third term.

Maybe the greatest tribute came from his chief adversary, King George III. The king asked his American painter,

Benjamin West, what Washington would do after winning independence. West replied, "They say he will return to his farm."

"If he does that," the incredulous monarch said, "he will be the greatest man in the world."

Possibly the most revealing assessment was written by the historian Matthew Spaulding. His insightful comments reached into the soul of our first President when he wrote "...his project was to found a self-governing nation, a constitutional republic. It is here that we see the brilliance of Washington's statesmanship..." Did you catch that? His project was to found a nation that was self-governing.

By contrast, a defeated and exiled Napoleon lamented the significance of it all when he said: "They wanted me to be another Washington." How different the world would be if Napoleon had been the Father of America.

In England there was a 6-year period of time between Charles I and Charles II during which the country had no king. The hubris of Charles I caused Parliament to remove his head, after which they offered the crown to Oliver Cromwell who refused it, saying the country could be ruled by Parliament. After six years Cromwell realized that a corrupt Parliament was even worse than a corrupt king, so he became Lord Protector of England until his death 5 years later. The inscription on his tombstone reads, "Christ, not man, is King."

The political process in America is revealing a country in crisis over this very concept. But the problem is at its core spiritual. As a Christian I believe that corruption on the surface reflects deceitfulness in the heart.

A healthy Christian Church could offer hope for the nation. But the Church is sick. And the sickness is a consequence of Christians whose desire for the reins of power overrides their submission to the Will of the Holy Spirit.

When the Prophet Isaiah wrote about the hubris of the King of Babylon many scholars believe he was actually describing the spirit of Satan. He called him the bright and morning star who was fallen from heaven.

“You said in your heart, ‘I will go up to heaven. I’ll raise my throne above the stars of God. I’ll sit as king on the mountain where the gods meet. I’ll set up my throne on the highest slopes of the sacred mountain. I will rise above the tops of the clouds. I’ll make myself like the Most High God.’” (Isaiah 14:13-14 NIV)

“CHRIST, NOT MAN, IS KING”

—Inscription on Oliver Cromwell’s Tombstone

Lust for power is an alluring siren song capable of capturing the hearts of even sincere men. When the disciples of Jesus quarreled over which was the greatest he took them apart from the crowd and warned them, “You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.” Adam Clarke translates, “They tyrannized and exercised arbitrary power over the people.” What a perfect description of the history of man’s rule.

Jesus continues, “But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Matt 20:25-28)

Six-thousand years of history has shown a consistent pattern of men grasping for power to rule over other men. But there is one shining exception. The most compelling example the world has seen is of God who came down from heaven and showed man how to live.

Even so the disciples had a hard time seeing God in Christ. “Lord, show us the Father. That will be enough for us,” said Philip. Jesus answered, “Don’t you know me, Philip? I have been among you such a long time! Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. So how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:8-9 NIV)

Paul admonished the Philippian’s “You should think in the same way Christ Jesus does. In his very nature he was God. But he did not think that being equal with God was something he should hold on to. Instead, he made himself nothing. He took on the very nature of a servant. He was made in human form. He appeared as a man. He came down to the lowest level. (Philippians 2:6-8 NIV)

There is a world to come in which the laws of God will be written on the hearts of men rather than tablets of stone. The convicting of the individual conscience will be more powerful than the coercion of armies. The precious few who follow His example now will shine bright in that world. [FN](#)

Hope for a Caterpillar



The little girl stood in awe of the butterfly that landed on her mother's hand. Her mother stood very still, and the girl reached out and touched it. This was an amazing event to her. All around us butterflies were flying. My wife and I were visiting the *Butterfly House* in St. Louis.

A butterfly begins as a caterpillar. Nobody would ever believe by looking at a caterpillar that it could transform into a different kind of life form. When the insect is still a caterpillar, it exists only for itself. Its purpose in life is solely to eat, and not be eaten. The caterpillar does this with great efficiency, but it may destroy plants in the process.

Then something incredible begins to happen to the caterpillar, and it attaches itself to a vine or twig and hangs upside down. The following describes what happens with a developing monarch butterfly:

“While the caterpillar hangs upside down, it molts for the last time. Its skin splits from head to tail. The caterpillar wriggles free of its skin ... once the caterpillar is free of its old skin, a hard case forms around its body. The case is called a chrysalis. The insect inside the chrysalis is now called a pupa. The caterpillar's body changes completely inside the chrysalis. It dissolves, or breaks down, into a green liquid. Butterfly parts such as wings start

*forming in this soupy mixture. ... By the second week, the chrysalis is clearer. ... you can see the pupa starting to change into a butterfly. When the chrysalis becomes totally clear, the butterfly is ready to emerge, or come out of its case.”**



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The new butterfly hangs there for several hours while he pumps blood into his new wings. He moves those wings and strengthens them. When the wings are strong enough, he flies off. The butterfly now begins his new life and flies from flower to flower eating nectar. In the process he transfers some of the flower's pollen to other plants, which fertilizes them. Without even thinking about it, he is now making new plants and participates in creating life, whereas once he only lived for himself and had no capacity to do anything differently.

A caterpillar has a certain amount of beauty, but he must be transformed to do any life-giving. He may wish he could do more noble things, but he can't.

Neither can we humans unless we become a “new life form.” And we have no power within ourselves to do that. Nonetheless, there are individuals... and churches... that attempt to bear Godly fruit through their own efforts, without realizing that won't work.

Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life (John 12:24-25).”

We have to be transformed by Christ and become a new creature. What we have been must die, and a different type of being must arise. The power to do that must come from God; it cannot come from us. It is a work God does. We can't do life-giving work unless we have Christ living inside us. All attempts to do so by human power and church "programs" are futile. More is involved than changing human habits. Jesus said:

"... No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:4-5)."

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Rom 12:2)"

When Jesus lives in us, we are different! A person with the life of God in him is not a "new, improved" human being. It is far more than that, for he is literally a new creature. He is just as different as a caterpillar is to a butterfly.

In John 20:19, the disciples were hiding out for fear of the Jews. But just a short time later in Acts 2, the disciples are transformed by the Holy Spirit and face the crowd forcefully and fearlessly. Many of the Jews in that crowd are then converted.

Jesus has chosen us to bear fruit (John 15:16). But fruit has to be more than numbers. There are many churches that get new members by various programs, but sometimes lose as many people as

they get. The real fruit of the Holy Spirit is changed lives, and the character of such fruit is described in Galatians 5.

A caterpillar can't by himself become something that he is just simply not. Something must happen to him that dramatically changes him into a different creature. That new creature (a butterfly) somehow automatically gives life through his normal, day-to-day activities. We can't produce Godly fruit either unless Christ literally lives in us.

It is interesting that a monarch butterfly begins its changes in a liquid.


"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Rom 6:4)."

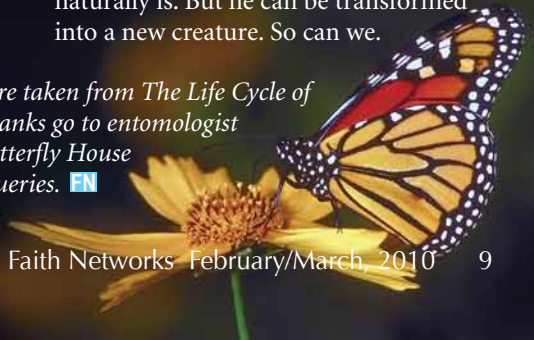
A butterfly does not immediately appear as soon as a chrysalis forms, but the changes become gradually visible. We too do not become like Christ all at once, but we will gradually develop, and others will be able to see the changes.

A caterpillar also has simple eyes that see only light and dark. It finds its way by using its tentacles. But when it becomes a butterfly, it has compound eyes that see colors and patterns on flowers that even our human eyes cannot see. In a similar way, the apostle Paul wrote that there are things a spiritual eye can see that the natural person can't (1Cor 2).

The words of scripture are very deep. Those words can become even deeper when we see them illustrated in nature.

A caterpillar can't help what he naturally is. But he can be transformed into a new creature. So can we.

**Information and quote for this article are taken from The Life Cycle of a Butterfly, by Bobbie Kalman. Special thanks go to entomologist Chris Hartley of the Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House of St. Louis for answering this author's queries. *



2 Peter Series - Part 5 of 7: Train to be Godly

What are you training to be?

From birth, we want our needs to be met. In fact, our lives depend on someone else meeting our needs. We want Mommy, Daddy, and everyone else in our small world to do what we want immediately. Our only concern is the self—which is appropriate for a helpless infant.

If we have loving parental care, our needs are met for food, cleanliness, comfort, and companionship. As we develop, our parents or guardians begin to teach us that we need to become aware and considerate of the needs and comfort of others. We learn to be social. We model ourselves after the example our parents set for us.

We eventually become able to take care of ourselves. Many people grow beyond self-care to wanting to help meet the needs of others.

There is another stage of maturity beyond this social awareness which is spiritual awareness. We learn there is a God. Those who hear and respond to the Good News of Jesus have found the way to know that unseen God. If we want to be disciples of Jesus, we must train to be godly. (1 Tim 4:7-8) Godliness does not come naturally to us.

New Christians, like infants, are concerned about meeting their own spiritual needs. They depend on people to teach them how to live a Christian life. And that is appropriate for that stage of a new spiritual life.

But God wants his children to mature beyond that early stage. (Heb 4:11-14) By keeping our attention focused on our Heavenly Father, we imitate his character

and his values. We mature beyond that early stage into responsible, faithful members of God's family. (2 Peter 1:5-7)

How can we know God the Father? Jesus told us that if we have seen him, we have seen the Father because the Father lives in him. (John 14: 8-12) We can see Jesus in the four accounts of his life, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John of the New Testament. We can know what he taught through the entirety of the Bible, both the Old Testament and the New. He is the Truth, the Way, and the Life. When we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus we are practicing godliness.

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. (Heb 12:2)

Godliness is keeping the mind and heart focused on God and doing everything to please God. Pleasing God is the goal of a Christian.

Further more then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. (1 Thes 4:1)

God is providing whatever we need to grow into maturity so that we are no longer infants spiritually. (Eph 4:11-15) When Jesus returns, our transformation will be complete. We will be like him as God intended from the beginning. (1 John 3:1-3; Gen 1:27) [FN](#)



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CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

Memorial Day Family Retreat

Friday, May 28 through Sunday, May 31

It is never too early to begin planning for the 2010 Memorial Day Family Retreat. We have now completed arrangements with the good folks at the Radisson Hotel in Branson, Missouri, located at 120 South Wildwood Dr. The special Group rate is available for 3 days before and after event dates until April 29, 2010, at which time the rates may change. All room rates are a flat rate for 1-4 persons. For reservations call 1-800-395-7046 and be sure to mention you are with Christian Educational Ministries or go to <http://www.radisson.com/cemmem> to make your reservations on line.

€89.00 - Double/King Room

€105.00 - Leisure Suite

€145.00 - Presidential Suite

Additional housing is available across the street with Thousand Hills Golf Resort <http://www.thousandhills.com/>. Call 1-800-697-9472 Ext. 1, for special Christian Educational Ministries Group rate of:

€85.00 - Queen Suite

€119.00 - One Bedroom Condo

€149.00 - Two Bedroom Condo

€223.50 - Three Bedroom Condo

For more information, contact Larry Watkins at (903) 839-9300 or by e-mail at lsw@cemnetwork.com, or <http://www.borntowin.net>

India Trip

Two years ago, the Cincinnati COG congregation hosted a day-long seminar about mission work and God's command to His people to Go Forth from their comfort zone to do His Will. We learned that the commission from Jesus is found in the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. I sat and listened and saw from the Bible that indeed, God has been consistent.

At the conclusion of the seminar, Brian and Stephanie Smith gave a short presentation about an opportunity to do mission work in India. After spending six hours in a seminar learning about doing mission work, my reaction to Brian's call to service was an immediate rejection of that opportunity. There was no way I could go, I told myself. Work, kids, time, and money.

No sooner had I put the notion out of the realm of possibility for myself, than my two youngest daughters volunteered to go. My gut instinct was to talk them out of it, tell them they needed to wait until they were older before taking on such a commitment. The idea of them going to the other side of the world, as young as they were, to a dangerous and destitute place to preach the Gospel in a decidedly hostile environment, made my chin hairs go white. Of course they had God on their side ... and a Divine finger searing my conscience with the lessons

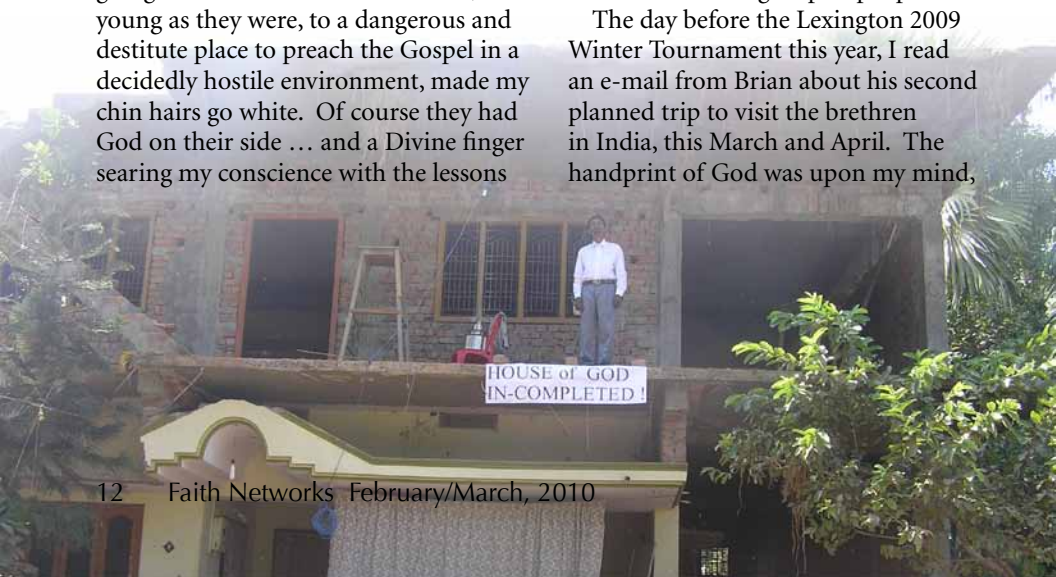
learned at the seminar that weekend. I had to learn to let go and trust that God would watch over and protect them as they did His work. At the time, it was the hardest thing I ever had to do.

Despite my own personal reservations and fears, I was astounded by what that group accomplished. For the first time in our church culture I was able to see what God could do with each of us firsthand in proclaiming the Gospel and serving brethren in another land. And it was all done without expensive radio and television programs, magazines, and booklets. It was done by sets of loving hands and feet that were willing to get personal and proclaim the gospel face to face with people who may have never heard the name of Jesus Christ. I was moved to tears over the testimonies of the MI8 team and all the pictures and video that they brought back. I saw what the prayers and efforts of brethren who supported them were able to accomplish with such a small group of people.

The day before the Lexington 2009 Winter Tournament this year, I read an e-mail from Brian about his second planned trip to visit the brethren in India, this March and April. The handprint of God was upon my mind,



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and He would not leave me alone about this upcoming mission trip. I could not sleep, and my thoughts were filled with the question of “What if?” What if God actually wanted me to go? On top of those thoughts I received an e-mail from Pastor Chitti Gampala asking how my girls were doing, and that I please come to India. It was becoming a clear calling, but I fought it. I began looking for excuses to put the thoughts out of my mind including very real concerns about the loss of income in this economy.

My mind was awash with questions: “Where is your faith?” “Do you trust God?” So on New Year’s Eve I finally surrendered to the calling and committed myself to going to a place that, normally, I would never choose for myself to go. Japan or Germany—sure. But not India.

I have submitted to what I think is God’s desire for me in joining the 2010 mission trip to India. But I still need help - as does the Mission group. Four men will go on this mission trip in March: Brian Smith, Guy Swenson, Evan Manning, and me.

I ask for your prayers for us men and the mission God has in front of us to accomplish. Moreover I ask especially for prayer for courage and wisdom, and that I learn the lessons He seeks for me (and us) to learn. I also ask for financial help to get us there. I have committed to going, but do not have the financial



resources to do so on my own.

Jesus uses two words in Luk 11:9-10: “ask” and “knock.” Neither of those things am I comfortable doing. I’m much more comfortable washing feet than having my feet washed at Passover. Perhaps that is another lesson because it is not about me—it is about the work God has for each member of the body to do. Some are prayer warriors, some doers and workers, some speakers and teachers. Some can serve in body, and some in generosity. Still in all, everyone has their feet washed and everyone is involved in doing God’s work.

I hope that the next article I write for Faith Networks is to share a first-hand account of our work in India. [FN](#)

If you can help, please go to the Kardias Website at: <http://www.kardias.com/ministries/MissionIndia2010> for more information. Or you can sponsor one of the four of us by sending a check made out to “Common Ground Christian Ministries—India Trip 2010”. Mail the check to:
Kardias Ministries 694 Hohliier Ln. Avon, IN 46123

If you would like to view an online video of the work done in 2008, you can view it at: <http://smg.photobucket.com/albums/v339/INVAR/?action=view¤t=India-TheCallPart1.flv>

The Wisdom of Growing Old



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One of the concepts I have found in growing old is accepting it. There are many things I use to do but no longer can. But, there are other things I can do. With failing eyesight I have gone to large print and audio books. I can listen to an audio book and crochet the lap robes I make for a hospice - just finished the 107th since I started four years ago. In addition, I would like to share a few points on what I have learned as I've grown older:

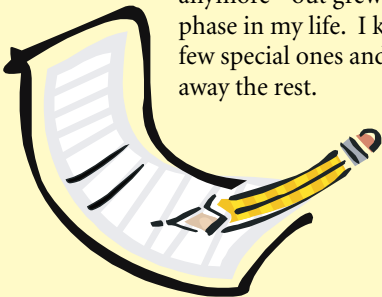
Be grateful for those who help you; pride will get you no where. When someone helps you, give them pleasure by allowing them to help.

Ask for help when needed. Others may see you struggle but not know how to help - tell them.

Smile a lot.

Keep your mind active. I spend a lot of time on my computer often going off on unexpected paths. I grew up out in the country, an only child for nine years and had no other playmates until starting school. My mother read to me every night and when I learned to read it has been nonstop. One habit is looking up words I don't know - the computer is great for that. Just type in "define _____" to get the meaning.

As for cleaning, give away all the things no longer used. Just before the holiday season is a good time. I had a collection of stuffed animals. Never looked at them anymore - out grew that phase in my life. I kept a few special ones and gave away the rest.



I also have found a lady who cleans my house once a month. It is expensive but worth it. Cut costs in other ways. For example, I no longer buy books when the library has all that I want or can get it for me. Most of the books I own have been sitting on bookshelves read only once and set aside. Eat out less. Get good quality ingredients and save on tips.

My husband, Phil, taught me to not worry about what isn't done. My mother never worked outside the home so consequently dirty dishes never accumulated, beds were changed on the same day every week, everything had a place and everyone was in big trouble if they weren't. Then in the Air Force there were white glove inspections, Oh me! I well remember the first time Phil insisted I come to bed instead of washing the dishes. He said he'd rather see me happy and well rested than clean dishes in the cabinet. It felt so strange to let it be and I was uneasy about it. Just as he predicted, they were still there in the morning and the world didn't come to an end.

So don't worry about all the things on your "To do list" that aren't done at the end of the day. Prioritize. [FN](#)

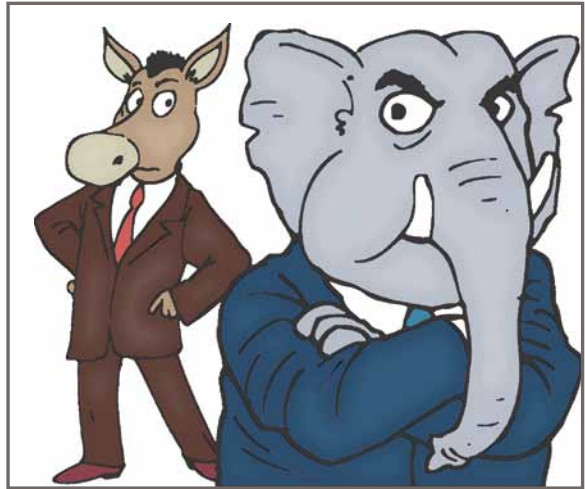
and convictions in order to effect a peaceful change in the body politic and ideally in the direction of the country.

I like that thought and believe it a legitimate one. But then I ask myself, if Jesus were a citizen of the United States today would he join the Republican Party? How about the Democrats, or the Libertarians, or Constitutionalists? I think not, but not because it is inherently wrong to be involved in politics and make common cause with those of like mind. Jesus refused membership with any faction because his purpose transcends politics. His purpose is to establish a better kingdom that is not of this world's order (Greek: *cosmos*, John 18:36).

It's doubtful that I'll join up again with either of the parties that once had my allegiance, or any other party for that matter, not because I'm Jesus, but because running for office is not my calling. I don't need any party's imprimatur on my backside, and I'm sure not going to give any party mine.

In the book *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*, author Joseph J. Ellis refers to "the monarchical principle," a phrase John Adams used to describe one of his bedrock views of Presidency. One might think that this implies autocracy, and perhaps to an extent Adams had that tendency.

But a Monarchical Presidency implied something more. Both Adams and Washington viewed the Presidency as an office above politics in the same way that the British Monarch is supposed to be above politics and thus not a member of any political party. The president was to be president of all the people and a unifying force for the nation.



That concept ended with Jefferson. Says Ellis,

"As Jefferson had understood from the moment Washington stepped down, the American president must forever after be the head of a political party." (p. 204)

That's the sad way the world will always unfold, but we don't have to play that game in order to be salt and light to the world. Political parties have their place, but don't let them own you. [FN](#)

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God Is Not a Republican

God is not a Republican. And He's not a Democrat either. From what I know of the Man, he has better things to do than to align himself with various factions vying for political power. Ultimately, he has all of that in abundance anyway.

It's instructive that even though Jesus held many positions in common with the Pharisees (resurrection of the dead, acceptance of all the Hebrew Scriptures and not just the Torah, belief in angels), he never once identified himself as a Pharisee. It is also instructive that he socialized with people from all backgrounds and factions, including Pharisees (Luke 11, John 3), Samaritans (John 4), people from Herod's household (Luke 8), Roman soldiers (Matthew 8), Gentiles (Mark 7), fisherman (Matthew 4), publicans (Matthew 21), Zealots (Luke 6), and anyone else who would hear his message.

As a self-described political junkie I have been tempted the past year or so to stop describing myself as an Independent and to affiliate formally with an established political party. As a practical matter, the party system offers a mechanism to join forces with others of like values



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