

SERVANT



GOD IN THE DETOURS

BRIAN DOERKSEN
ON FINDING
HOPE IN FAILURE
AND GRIEF

UNEXPECTED WEAPON

JON OHLHAUSER ON THE
DEADLY DART OF MISPERCEPTION

FAMILY MATTERS

OF BILLS, ILLS, SPILLS
AND WILLS

BEYOND TIME

ELLEN VAUGHN'S STORY OF TERROR
TURNED TO ETERNAL TRIUMPH



I always enjoy reading the stories of God's grace and love in the Old Testament Scriptures and am challenged as I wander along with God's people while they witness miracles, face testing, and grow in their faith. Over the years, one particular story has caught my attention. It moves from Numbers 32 through the 22nd chapter of Joshua.

After assessing their situation, two-and-a-half tribes of the nation of Israel petitioned Moses for permission to settle on the eastern side of the Jordan River. While granting their request, Moses stipulated that they must still join their brothers in the conquering of God's promised land on the west side of the Jordan. Eight years were invested in this commitment before the tribes were released from their obligation and allowed to return to their home east of the river.

As these tribes reached the Jordan and were about to cross over, they "built an imposing altar" as a token of remembrance so that the tribes settling on the west would not forget about their brothers on the east. But "when the Israelites heard that they had built the altar on the border of Canaan and Gelimoth near the Jordan on the Israelite side, the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them."

IF ONLY THEY HAD CHECKED THEIR PERCEPTIONS BEFORE SHARPENING THEIR SWORDS, THE ENTIRE MISUNDERSTANDING COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED.

"How," they demanded, "could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from the Lord and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now?"

What was designed as a sign of commitment and relationship with God was perceived as such a severe departure from the Lord that the western tribes armed themselves and prepared to massacre their brothers who had obviously turned back from their commitment to Jehovah. If only they had stopped to check their perceptions before sharpening their swords, the entire misunderstanding could have been avoided.

Unfortunately, the problem with Christians acting out of mistaken perceptions still exists as a significant stumbling block in the Body of Christ today. At times I, too, have been quick to judge before learning the truth.

This past summer we received notice that a Christian organization had come to the erroneous conclusion that Prairie had departed from our solid, historic commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of his Word. Taking snippets of commentary from our material—and without checking its accuracy or context, or going to the source—the organization pronounced on its web site (for all to read) that Prairie was traveling down a path of apostasy. (It reminded me of when our founder, L.E. Maxwell, was accused of owning two Cadillacs. The truth was, he had cataracts!)

Let me assure you that PBI remains true to its historic belief in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the truth and authority of Scripture. In fact, our statements of faith and mission are clearly laid out on our web site. Had this organization simply paused to verify their perceptions I am confident their objections would not have been posted.

Regardless of this specific situation, I have been reminded again of

how easy it is to repeat the mistakes of the western tribes in our walk with God and other believers. Acting hastily on un-informed perceptions damages God's purposes in three ways. First, it consumes extreme amounts of time and energy to correct and reverse the damage—time and energy that could be better used for more constructive purposes. Second, it accomplishes the work of God's archenemy without the enemy having to raise a finger. Lastly, it defames the name of God as people who confess a common relationship with the Almighty are observed to be in battle against one another.

As he commissioned his disciples for Kingdom work, Jesus challenged them to be "wise as serpents yet gentle as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Satan is a crafty enemy who will use whatever means possible to derail or diminish the work of God, even pitting Christian against Christian. Let us be wise and gentle in our relationships with each other and when it 'appears' that a fellow believer is out of step with the truth of Jesus Christ, let us make sure we check our perceptions before we sharpen our swords. **✚**

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Letters

My husband and I wish to thank you for our favorite magazine. I've meant to write for years, but the last issue finally prompted me to. Each time *Servant* arrives it brings fresh insights and challenges. Bill Hybels' words have reminded me to love not the things of this world, but its people—as Jesus did. Your alumni stories make me wish I had attended Prairie, and Phil Callaway's humor always leads to something far deeper. Keep it up.

• **EDITH FENWICK**, CHICAGO, IL

I was dismayed to see a leader in the “church growth movement” featured in *Servant*. To feature Bill Hybels' accomplishments in a non-analytical way seems to give tacit approval of his “market driven” methods. So to get more people to attend your “boring” church services you decide to canvass everyone in the area, (professing Christians and non-Christians alike) to find out what the people in the community would like. If you then adapt your church services and activities accordingly to please them you will get a crowd, no doubt, but it will be a “mixed multitude.” This attractive pragmatic idea is sweeping the Christian world. TV-and-entertainment-addicted “Christianity” is changing dramatically, rapidly phasing into the “scarlet woman” of Revelation. Everything that is happening around us today is not just rosy and funny. We need much more than “Christianity lite” to sustain us now.

• **HOWARD CAREY**, HEMET, CA

Thank you for *Servant*. I am a director of missionary personnel and often visit our missionaries overseas. My wife can no longer go with me since she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and is now undergoing chemo after a major operation. Philip Yancey's article “Disappointment With Prayer” is where we are determined to overcome. Thanks for putting it in at the right time. His discussion on the third stage was right on.

• **DAVID SAND**, SEQUIM, WA

FROM THE EDITOR: Several perceptive readers took us to task on our Meditation by Sue Monk Kidd. Writes **BRUCE STICKLEE** of Barrie, ON, “*Online* is in the practice of quoting a variety of people

from all sectors of society, many of whom I am sure you are not in agreement with. The quote by Sue Monk Kidd appears to be quite acceptable and may even give encouragement to some people. I have done some research of Ms. Kidd and suggest that *Servant* be more circumspect in whom they quote.” The quote was written back in 1987, when Sue was a Baptist Sunday School teacher. Sadly, she has departed from the orthodox teachings of God's Word, teachings that Prairie has and will continue to stand for. As editors, we do not support her current beliefs and are saddened that she has chosen to embrace a message other than the one she previously taught.

MORE FROM THE EDITORS: After publishing letters from readers in response to a photo we ran of Rebecca St. James, we have received a landslide of support for her ministry. “Rebecca is very tastefully dressed,” writes **MARTINA HALWASS**. “If I had girls in school, I would be quite happy if they copied Rebecca's dress, rather than their friends' styles. Let us look at the fruit, not the packaging.” **CANDICE QUIST-POTTER** was more blunt: “Perhaps it would please the readers of *Servant* if she wore a burka and head covering for her next interview.” **ROD SISSEL** observed, “Now that we have reached the nations for Christ, solved world poverty and made great strides in the fight against AIDS, we can turn our attention to a shirt.” **SHARON MAHOE** emailed us to say, “Style, culture and the time and place must be factored into these things. It is arrogant and self-righteous of us to assume that one is more holy by choosing to wear loose and dowdy clothing. Read the article again and thank God for Rebecca's devotion to him.” The letters caused **GORD DAY-JANZ** to reread the interview. “I found a woman who is so passionate about her faith that she chooses to live it out in some pretty amazing ways,” he writes. “Last fall my wife and I heard her at the Franklin Graham Festival in Winnipeg. We were impressed with Rebecca's boldness in talking about forgiveness rather than revenge; her sense of grace rather than being judgmental. I think we all could learn from her.”



HOW TO REACH US: EMAIL SERVANT@PRAIRIE.EDU, LEAVE A BRIEF MESSAGE AT 1-800-221-8532, OR WRITE US THROUGH THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE. LETTERS MAY BE EDITED FOR SPACE AND CLARITY.

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PUBLISHER PRAIRIE BIBLE INSTITUTE PRESIDENT DR. JON OHLHAUSER EDITOR PHIL CALLAWAY ASSISTANT EDITOR PAT MASSEY DESIGN SCOTT FRANK

SOURCES FOR NOW YOU KNOW, PAGE 8: 1. Unicef/*Newsweek*, July 2, 2007; 2. *Medical News Today/Men's Journal*; 3. *New York Times*; 4. Pew Research Center survey; 5. CNN/Opinion Research Corp; 6. Rospotrebnadzor, Russian's consumer protection agency; 7. www.viva.org; 8. Craig Branch, *Veritas, Troublesome Movements in the 21st Century*. For more, see www.christianitytoday.com/outreach/articles/americanchurchcrisis; 9. David T. Olson, *The American Church*; 10. *Harper's Index* • Cover photo: © Scott Frank 2007 • *Servant* (ISSN 0848-1741) is published three times a year by Prairie Bible Institute, a non-profit educational organization founded in 1922. Prairie's primary mission is to enable the Body of Christ to reach the world with the Gospel of Christ. *Servant* is dependent on the gracious gifts of Prairie alumni, donors and friends. Its purpose is to edify, exhort and encourage today's Christian. Third class mail, return postage guaranteed. Change of address notices, undeliverable copies send to *Servant Magazine*, Box 4000, Three Hills, AB, T0M 2N0. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Printed in Canada. Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. Moving? Send us your old and new addresses.



real issues

WHEN COMMUNITY CALLS



The holidays had come and gone and I was finally catching my breath after the rush of the Christmas season. With the new semester just getting underway, most of the kids in our youth group were back to school and things were about as quiet as they get for a full-time youth pastor.

Then the phone rang. It was the principal from a nearby high school. A 16-year-old student had just died of a rare infection that she had somehow contracted over the Christmas break. Her fellow students were devastated. Could our youth ministry team come to the school and offer support to some of the grieving teens? And could we also help them put together an assembly?

We were still in the midst of arrangements when a second student from the same school was suddenly killed in a car accident, creating a flood of confusion and grief that threatened to overwhelm the school. Again the call came and we found ourselves knee-deep in broken-hearted teens, parents and faculty, helping to prepare a memorial service that would honor not one, but two precious young lives. The emotional overload was almost overwhelming, but at the same time we were gratified by a level of trust that allowed us to share this critical time with the school community.

Thinking our team had surely reached its crisis quota by now, I was taken aback when the principal of another high school approached me just weeks later to tell me that a second car crash had taken the life of one of *their* teenagers. Could I explain the purpose of memorial services to the student body at their assembly and lead the ceremonies as they planted a tree of remembrance? And would I be willing to pray with the students?

Though I struggled to know what to say to such a mixed crowd, I was deeply aware of the incredible opportunity that was mine to come alongside these families, teachers and students and reflect the love of Christ in this tragic situation.

In the days following I pondered how it was that my team and I—all Christian youth leaders—had been not just permitted, but warmly invited to become so intimately involved with a community in crisis, many of whom would never ordinarily turn to the church for anything. Why did they call on us when the police, grief counselors and social workers were already doing an admirable job?

THE EMOTIONAL LOAD WAS ALMOST OVERWHELMING AS WE FOUND OURSELVES KNEE-DEEP IN BROKEN-HEARTED TEENS.

The simple truth was that we had made it a priority to become a visible and active part of the youth culture in our community. We had helped coach teams, hosted leadership events at the schools and High School Graduation ceremonies at our church. We had sponsored community-wide Student Appreciation Nights, run after-school homework clubs, and led PE classes. We were known for being team players when it came to working with teens. In short, we had learned that we needed to be there *before* a crisis in order to be there *in* the crisis.

A youth pastor can quickly find the days filled with tasks like finding kids to help in the nursery or cater the Seniors' banquet,

organizing fundraisers, being a disciplinarian, "fixing" the spiritual lives of church teens, and meeting parental expectations. With all of those demands, it may be tempting to view community involvement as the *least* effective way to invest precious time. But Jesus makes no idle claim when he tells us that "Whatever you have done to the least of these, you have done to me" (Matthew 25:45). There is something about keeping an open hand toward the community at large that also opens doors to the heart when the crunch comes.



We had been called on in the wake of tragedy, but more often we had shared the joys of the teens in our community

Though I speak as a youth worker, it is the same for all of us. When we view the needs and hurts of others with compassion, making ourselves available to do what we can, God is honored and his Kingdom expanded.

My colleagues and I have been called on to help in the wake of suicide, gang fights, eating disorders, vehicle accidents and other tragedies, but more often we have been a part of school celebrations, graduations, PEP rallies, and sports events where we have shared the joys of the teens in our community. There is nothing more God-honoring for a believer than to be viewed as an asset by those who also teach and otherwise invest in the lives of young people.

As someone who longs to see teens grab hold of the good news of the gospel and make it their own, I have learned that the most important move I can make is to step outside the four walls of my church. As I take Matthew 28:19 to heart by going into *all* of my community, I find that barriers are breached that may have yielded no other way. **E**

AL MERTES HAS WORKED WITH TEENS SINCE 1977. HE IS THE CHURCH AND MINISTRY DEPARTMENT CHAIR AND PROFESSOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY AT PRAIRIE BIBLE COLLEGE.



A LEGACY
BEYOND

ELLEN VAUGHN

HOLY
BIBLE

It was January 1968, and Vietnam rumbled with the thunder of war. It had begun quietly, years earlier, when a radical student called Ho Chi Minh first embraced Marxism. Now Ho and his generals held North Vietnam. His guerillas terrorized the south, where South Vietnamese and US troops sought desperately to stop communism's march on Indochina.

Bob and Marie Ziemer and their fellow missionaries were noncombatants; the tribespeople told the Viet Cong how these Americans had painstakingly learned their language, how they ran a leprosarium, clinic, church, and school and welcomed all in the name of Jesus. Still, the missionaries walked lightly. Five years earlier three colleagues had been taken captive by the communists and disappeared. Another had been shot in a highway blockade.

So as the war escalated, the missionaries made evacuation plans. If the fighting became too intense they had an escape strategy in place. For Bob Ziemer, this go-or-stay tension was difficult. What did it mean to really trust God—yet to also take reasonable defense measures? He and his partners were ready to die for the gospel, if need be. On the other hand, God had stopped the mouths of lions and he could protect them from any danger.

In 1947, Bob, a no-nonsense German from Ohio had sailed for French Indochina with his wife and settled in Ban Me Thuot north of Saigon, deep in the central highlands. The area was home to spirit-worshiping tribes, the largest of which was the Raday clan. As the Ziemers and their fellow missionaries learned the language and spent time among the people, many found Christ and freedom from the spirit world.

One day Bob traveled to a remote village to visit a small church. He had just arrived when the pastor took him aside and insisted that he leave. Though everything seemed quiet, Bob headed back to the mission compound. The roads were rough and one bridge in particular was slow going. Had he overreacted?

A week later Bob talked to a government official.

“You were lucky the other day,” the man told him.

“Why?” asked Bob.

“You know that bridge you crossed? The Viet Cong had rigged it with explosives. The next car that went over it was blown to pieces.”

Bob knew it wasn't luck that had saved him. His times were in God's hands. He just didn't know when that time would be done. So he deliberately set about to make sure that the work in Ban Me Thuot was firmly in the hands of the local Christians.

First, Bob finished translating the Bible into the local Raday dialect. He worked late into the nights by the light of an old gas lantern and by the end of January, 1968 he had sent his translation off for printing. The church and school were now under the leadership of a trained Raday pastor and the leprosarium was run by local Christian professionals. Bob's objective was, by God's grace, accomplished.

A ceasefire was in place between the People's Army of North Vietnam and the South Vietnamese and American troops. Thousands of soldiers were on leave. Civilians took to the streets, shooting off fireworks to celebrate Tet, their sacred New Year.

In the midst of the festivities, however, disguised Viet Cong soldiers made their way into the south.

Thousands of undercover troops were armed and in place when the communists' Tet Offensive exploded with an unbridled ferocity that made it one of the most horrific campaigns in modern military history.

At the mission compound in Ban Me Thuot, missionaries Bob and Marie Ziemer, Ed and Ruth Thompson, Leon Griswold and his daughter Carolyn, and nurses Ruth Wilting and Betty Olsen were in their homes. A U.S. helicopter base was four miles away, a South Vietnamese army base just behind the compound. And Highway

14—a key Viet Cong target—split right through the middle of the mission property.

On Monday night of the Tet week, the missionaries fell asleep to the pop-pop of firecrackers. Early on Tuesday they woke to the pops of small-arms fire and artillery. Communist soldiers rapped on the door of the small home Carolyn and her father shared and a few minutes later there was an enormous explosion.

The Ziemers could hear moans coming from the wreckage. But now the battle outside was at full tilt: communist attackers were coming up from the valley below them with tanks and artillery. South Vietnamese soldiers were moving across the compound as their own tanks rolled along the highway. To go outside would mean getting caught in a deadly crossfire. When light dawned, the men ran to the Griswold home, desperately pulling wood and plaster aside to get to Carolyn who had a badly broken leg and internal injuries. By the time they got to Leon, he was dead.

The battle raged all day. The nurses ran through gunfire to get blood from the clinic and set up Carolyn and some wounded believers in the servants' quarters. Bob and Ed put up a white flag for the communists to see and dug out the garbage pit behind the Thompson's house to serve as a makeshift bunker. They painted an SOS on an old door to signal American pilots, unaware that the U.S. base was pinned down by artillery fire. Meanwhile communist troops continued their assault on the South Vietnamese tanks and infantry just down the highway.

Wednesday evening the missionaries huddled in the Ziemer home watched as the Thompson house was blown apart. The group moved to the servants' quarters and then to the garbage pit as the shooting intensified. Raday Christians jumped in with them. At dawn Ruth and Betty ran to the clinic for more medical supplies. As Betty

What did it mean to trust God? Were their times truly in his hands?

tried to get a car to drive Carolyn to a hospital, she was surrounded and dragged away.

The Ziemers' house exploded as Viet Cong soldiers filled the clearing and Bob knew he had to get his injured friends out of there. He scrambled from the bunker, hands in the air, shouting to the soldiers in their own language. They responded with a barrage of gunfire.

Ruth ran toward the bunker as the soldiers shot her repeatedly. She fell in on top of the Thompsons and Marie Ziemer. The Viet Cong advanced. As Ed Thompson raised his hands in a gesture of surrender, crying “Mercy!” a blast of machine gun fire and grenades ripped through the pit.

On the campus of Wheaton College, the Ziemers' son Tim answered a knock on his door to find the chaplain standing there. Hearing that his father had been killed in the attack on Ban Me Thuot and his mother taken prisoner, Tim went out alone to walk in the snow. He thought about the incident on the explosive-rigged bridge: his dad had felt so clearly that God had protected him, that it wasn't yet his time. Bob had worked hard to make the ministries at Ban Me Thuot self-sufficient so they would run well for Christ even if he was gone.

And now he was.

A call later confirmed that Tim's father and colleagues were dead along with the Christians who had taken shelter with them. His



small churches in Vietnam in her memory. We didn't specify any particular location.

When I received word in the mail about the first church, there was a map and photos of the congregation, slender, dark-haired, radiant with the love of Jesus. Then I looked at the map. In the central highlands, a red circle marked the town where Mom's church would be built. It was a name I'd known since I was eleven years old.

Ban Me Thuot.

At about the same time, I met a man named Tim at my church and discovered it was his father who died in that mission compound.

Today Rear Admiral Timothy Ziemer is a decorated Vietnam veteran and naval officer. He was also CEO of World Relief and now heads the President's Malaria Initiative, managing a \$1.5 billion program designed to cut malaria deaths in fifteen needy nations.

"Christ modeled how to live in time," Tim told me. "He went to the poor and suffering." Tim has tried to do the same. He's a strategic thinker like his father. He's also propelled by his mother's legacy. "I've been with spiritual leaders all over the world," he says,

Bob scrambled from the bunker, hands in the air. The soldiers responded with a barrage of gunfire.

"but it's the example of my mother—an ordinary farm girl—that has showed me most powerfully what it means to know the Savior and trust him completely."

Today, Tim still has no answers to the core questions. Why did God allow the deaths of Bob Ziemer and the other missionaries, the terrible persecution of so many Vietnamese believers? But one thing *is* clear. While America's military mission in Vietnam was unresolved, his parents' spiritual mission wasn't deterred. Today, in Vietnam—an officially communist nation—the church has grown exponentially, watered by the blood of its many martyrs. In those central highlands near Ban Me Thuot where there were once only spirit-worshippers, there are at least 400,000 followers of Jesus. Many are the spiritual grandchildren of those who gave their lives and made a difference for time and eternity.

If the King is taking care of our business, then we are free to invest ourselves fully in *his* business and can fling ourselves with abandon into God's work. Even when we come to our end, he will not let us go. Like God's servants throughout the centuries, we have the freedom to be extravagant with our very lives. **S**

Taken from *Time Peace*, copyright 2007 by Ellen Santilli Vaughn. Used by permission of Zondervan.

mother was badly wounded, but alive. When the Viet Cong pulled Marie from the garbage pit, both eardrums were punctured from the explosion and she was groggy and slippery with blood. Just yards away, she saw her husband. The AK-47 rounds had hit his upper body and he lay suspended across the cord of the compound clothesline, still breathing.

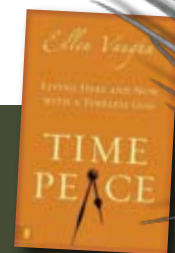
Marie begged the soldiers to let her go to him but they would not. Waving their guns, they propelled her forward. Weak from loss of blood, she kept her eyes on Bob as long as she could. The next day the Viet Cong decided Marie was of no use; she was just going to die. They dumped her by the side of the road where she lay for hours until a young Roday believer found her and took her to a local hospital.

Bob Ziemer loved life, but he was ready for death. And when it came he was too busy caring for others to ponder the fact that his day was drawing to a close. Suddenly, it was time. As Bob hung over that clothesline, his blood pouring out on the earth, he saw for a moment the swirling green of the jungle canopy, heard the staccato of gunfire, the shouts of the soldiers, his wife's sweet voice.

The swirling slowed. Then, suddenly, clear as the Light all around him, in the brilliance of a thousand suns, he heard the joyous welcome: "*Well done, my good and faithful servant!*"

When I was a young girl, the story of the missionaries who died in Ban Me Thuot grabbed my heart. I remember my mother crying about their sacrifice. How they chose to live in time and the legacy they left for eternity have stirred my soul ever since.

When I traveled to Vietnam a few years ago, I was humbled by the believers there. I told my mother how their faith in Jesus had brought them through times of terrible persecution. She smiled, with tears in her eyes. So after Mom's death it seemed right to use part of the money she left behind to build several



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world update

CHINA CHINA CRACKS DOWN ON RIGHTS BEFORE OLYMPICS Christians throughout China fear tough restrictions on their freedom to worship in the coming year following the launch of a government crackdown ahead of the August 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. They report a shortage of Bibles, even in cities where Bibles previously were readily available. There are reports of ongoing house church raids and arrests, and an unprecedented number of foreign Christians have been expelled from China in recent months. As preparations continue for the 2008 Olympics, critics around the world are calling China to account for ongoing human rights abuses—including religious freedom abuses.



INDIA GOVERNOR OBJECTS TO 'ANTI-CONVERSION' BILL Governor Ekkadu Narsimhan of Chhattisgarh has objected to excessive government control and a religious double standard in a state "anti-conversion" amendment bill proposed by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. Raising objections to two provisions—obtaining permission from the district administrative head before any conversion, "and allowing people to return to Hinduism and not treating this as conversion," he has reportedly referred the bill to the state law department for assessment. Anti-conversion laws are supposed to curb religious conversion by force. But Christians and rights groups say that in reality the laws obstruct conversion generally as Hindu extremists invoke them to harass Christian workers with spurious arrests, physical attack, and incarcerations.



TURKEY VIOLENCE AGAINST TURKISH CHRISTIANS ON UPSWING Turkish Protestants have reported increasing attacks and threats since two Turkish Christian converts and a German Christian were tortured and killed at Zirve Publishing House in Malatya on April 18. The director of Radio Shema, a Christian station in Ankara, said that since the Malatya murders, at least three times a month men have come to the station's door and threatened workers. In Antalya, Pastor Ramazan Arkan said he is pursuing four court cases against a construction worker who began threatening church members in May and one member of his flock was assaulted after a church service. In spite of the murder of Catholic priest Andrea Santoro in February 2006, the ritual slayings in Malatya, and other incidents, Turkish president Abdullah Gul told a Council of Europe gathering in Strasbourg, France, "There are no attacks targeting Christians in Turkey."



FACE TO FACE



RHONDA BYRNE, author of *The Secret*, informs readers that they are God: "You are God in a physical body. You are Spirit in the flesh. You are Eternal Life expressing itself as You. You are a cosmic being...all power...all wisdom...all intelligence...perfection...magnificence. You are the creator, and you are creating the creation of You on this planet.... The earth turns on its orbit for You....The birds sing for You. The sun rises and it sets for You. The stars come out for You....Take a look around. None of it can exist, without You. No matter who you thought you were, now you know the Truth of Who You Really Are. You are the master of the Universe...the heir to the kingdom...the perfection of Life. And now you know *The Secret*."



Author and Bible teacher **DON WHITNEY** calls this "the heresy of heresies. Her 'Secret' is nothing less than Satan's original lie in the Garden of Eden...The problem with *The Secret* is that it focuses our hope selfward, not Godward. It is all about self-empowerment, self-fulfillment, and getting whatever we want....'The Secret to everything' (to use Byrne's term) is God Himself. And God...has been revealed in Jesus Christ, 'in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Colossians 2:3). God has freely told us in the Bible everything we need to know about discovering the unlimited 'treasures of wisdom and knowledge' found in Christ. And He remains an unknown Secret only to those who will not look for Him there."



T.C. HAM, Professor of Old Testament at Prairie Bible College smiles. "I am master of the universe? I knew there had to be good reason for my hectic schedule!" he says. "But wait! How did I create myself *before* I was created? Logical fallacies notwithstanding, Byrne is selling sunshine to a world darkened by sin and suffering. But the sunshine is a deadly ray. Job pleads with God in the midst of his pain, 'Remember now, that You have made me as clay' (Job 10:9). With patient mercy, God listens to Job and all of his many laments, then finally answers him: 'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?' (Job 38:4). Job needed a reminder that he was not God. Byrne will one day have the same. Her claims, like all lies, lead us away from bowing before the one true God."

NOW YOU KNOW

In Sweden, 1 in 30,000 women die during childbirth. In sub-Saharan Africa: 1 in 16

Average life expectancy of an American male: 77.6 years; of an NFL football player: 55

Price of a venti mocha at a Starbucks in Moscow: \$8.98. Same cup in New York City: \$4.71

Percentage of Americans who say they'd be less likely to vote for a presidential candidate who does not believe in God: 61

Americans who believe gays and lesbians could not change their sexual orientation. In 1998: 36%. In 2001: 45%. In 2007: 56 percent

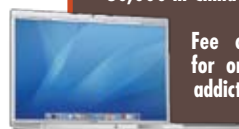
In 1990 the average Russian consumed 5.4 litres of alcohol annually. Today: 15 litres

300,000 children around the world are now fighting in 30 separate war zones

If the present trend continues, by 2010 11.7% of the U.S. will be attending church, down from 20.4% in 1990

Everyday there are 175,000 new Christians, 30,000 in China alone

Fee charged by a psychologist for on-line treatment of internet addiction, per minute: \$1.50



Sources listed on page 3.

QUOTEWORTHY



"Oh, how horrible our sins look when they are committed by someone else!"
CHARLES SWINDOLL

"Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future." **DAVID JEREMIAH**

"I am a Jew, and every single one of my ancestors was Jewish. And it does not bother me even a little bit when people call those beautiful lit up, bejeweled trees Christmas trees. I don't feel threatened. I don't feel discriminated against. That's what they are: Christmas trees. It doesn't bother me a bit when people say, 'Merry Christmas' to me. I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto. In fact, I kind of like it...It doesn't bother me at all that there is a manger scene on display at a key intersection near my beach house in Malibu. If people want a creche, it's just as fine with me as is the Menorah a few hundred yards away. I don't like getting pushed around for being a Jew, and I don't think Christians like getting pushed around for being Christians." **BEN STEIN** in a CBS Sunday morning commentary.



At the age of 66, **PAUL ANKA**, who has penned 900 songs, including such hits as "Put Your Head on My Shoulder," and "My Way," admits that he is thinking more of a "higher power" than ever before. "There's a side of me that's very spiritual," he told *Up!* magazine. "You can get caught up in the business and lose sight of the bigger picture. You can't lose sight of how small we really are."

"Christ is not one of many ways to approach God, nor is he the best of several ways; he is the only way." **A.W. TOZER** (1897-1963)

RECOMMENDED

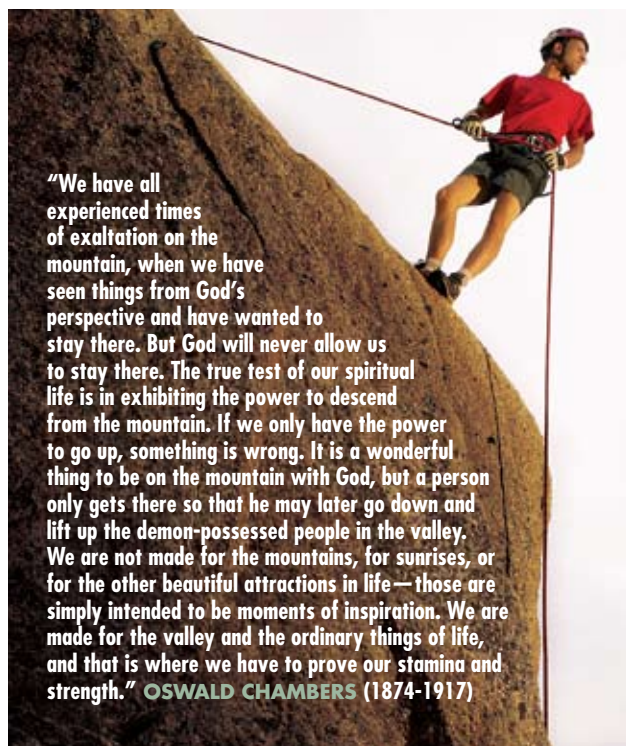
CHRIS RICE: WHAT A HEART IS BEATING FOR (Eb+Flo Records). From the opening track, "So Much For My Sad Song," Chris Rice reminds us of the joy of life, the wonders of love, and the miracle of redemption.



KELLY WILLARD: PAGA! (Autumn Records). Named after the Hebrew word meaning sacrifice for the purpose of intercession, *Paga* is a welcome return of one of Gospel Music's most memorable voices. After nursing her mother through Alzheimer's, losing a marriage and a daughter to suicide, Willard writes with conviction and sings with passion of the Savior whom she loves more than life.

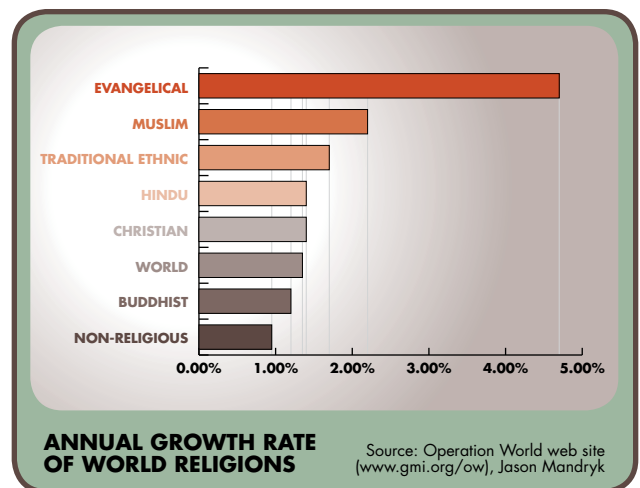


MEDITATION



"We have all experienced times of exaltation on the mountain, when we have seen things from God's perspective and have wanted to stay there. But God will never allow us to stay there. The true test of our spiritual life is in exhibiting the power to descend from the mountain. If we only have the power to go up, something is wrong. It is a wonderful thing to be on the mountain with God, but a person only gets there so that he may later go down and lift up the demon-possessed people in the valley. We are not made for the mountains, for sunrises, or for the other beautiful attractions in life—those are simply intended to be moments of inspiration. We are made for the valley and the ordinary things of life, and that is where we have to prove our stamina and strength." **OSWALD CHAMBERS** (1874-1917)

JUST THE FACTS





GOD IN THE DETOURS

BRIAN DOERKSEN

From the time he was a teenager Brian Doerksen knew his life focus would be to create music for the glory of God. Sometimes described as one of the founding fathers of modern worship, Brian has garnered international recognition that includes *Best Worship Project 2001 Praise Awards from Worship Leader Magazine*, the *International Award in 2003 by the Gospel Music Association in America* and *Worship Album of the Year* and *Male Soloist of the Year* by Canada's People's Choice Gospel Music Awards in 2005. While his songs, including *Come, Now Is The Time To Worship*, *Faithful One*, *Refiner's Fire*, and *Hallelujah (Your love is amazing)*, have become classics in the church, this soft-spoken musician prefers to keep a low profile while creating a window for others to look through and see Someone greater. We talked to Brian about his newest album, *Holy God*, and what can come from the dark times of life.

Servant: Is your new CD any different from what you've done in the past?

Brian Doerksen: I usually record my worship albums live. But because of the subject matter I wanted this one to be more reverent and in the studio it's completely still. The record label and the publisher were a little nervous because the trends in the modern worship movement are toward hype and spectacle. But I'm not moved by that. I'm moved by truth and transparency. So I just took the risk.

Is there a theme running through it?

The album is a call for us to return to the holiness of God and really dwell there. A sub-theme would be the husband heart of God, yearning for faithfulness from his people. He longs for us to return to him saying, "The world can't satisfy us; you alone can do that."

How did it all come about?

Usually in January I try and spend time just being quiet and saying, God, I've got my ideas for the year; what are yours? In that quiet place I began singing every song on the holiness of God that I could think of. When I had exhausted them all a new melody began to come and I just sang that and wept in his presence. Then I began thinking, how does a holy God act? He's transcendent, the Almighty who creates and commands and forgives. It's the incarnation, he redeems, the nail-scarred lamb. And to what end? God romancing, pursuing, restoring, transforming—they're all action words.

How do we get past the distractions of a noisy culture intent on drowning God's voice to a fresh realization of his holiness?

When we suffer loss, when we don't get what we want, or go through hard times, our culture encourages us to deal with suffering through denial or distraction so we don't have to think about the deeper questions. I love the model of the Psalms where biblical lament is woven throughout. We remember what God has done in the past and who he is, but we're incredibly honest in the moment. The Psalmist asked why is this happening, God? And then he looked forward to the future saying, "I know your character well enough to trust you. One day there will be deliverance." But there's a cost to this deliverance. It requires honesty and transparency and sacrifice. Most of the time we're not willing to pay that price.

You've experienced lament earlier in life than many.

I met my wife in high school and we got married when I was 19. From the beginning we dreamed about having a big family. We thought we were invincible. Then our first one arrived and another daughter a year and a half later, then a son a year and a half after that. We were on a roll. Then we began to notice that Benjamin wasn't developing normally. By the time he was almost four we realized something was seriously wrong and discovered that he had Fragile X syndrome,

the most common inherited cause of global mental impairment and autism. Right then we also learned that Joyce was expecting twins, plus we were in financial difficulty with a musical we were trying to launch. We ended up losing our house and over a million dollars from people who invested money in the project. It was an intensely stressful time.

How did people respond to you?

When the diagnosis came back and the musical collapsed, it was amazing how quickly everyone scattered. I prayed for deliverance but it didn't come and I think that made me more acutely aware of the laments in the Psalms. Have you ever actually heard a song that honest at your church? Likely not. So either something was really wrong with the psalmist or somehow we have bought into a culture of denial that's not biblical.

Could you write during that time?

After the musical collapsed we were offered a job in London, England to train musicians and songwriters. Right after we moved there, during the darkest point, I was out walking and praying one morning and I heard, "Come, now is the time to worship," just like that. It's not meant to be grand and triumphant. When Jesus spoke about worshipping in the spirit of truth, he was talking to an outcast woman in her deepest shame. "Just as you are" means I can come even in my doubt and confusion. I can bring who I am. Our time in London began a wonderful new season of life and ministry and we were amazed at the goodness of God in not writing us off. His grace is so much wider and higher than our failures and detours.

GOD'S GRACE IS SO MUCH WIDER AND HIGHER THAN OUR FAILURES AND DETOURS.

What about your family?

Doctors advised us against having any more children but we believed there was another baby for us. We shared that with our prayer partners and they agreed to pray that God would give us a healthy son. But nine months after he was born we found out that Isaiah had the syndrome as well. That rocked our world. I wanted to resign from public ministry but Joyce and I felt a strong leading that I was to continue with a 'limp', sharing God's heart through music and leading worship not just from a place of strength, but a place of weakness. God was allowing us to share some of the pain of a broken world.

How does all of this affect the success of your ministry?

I don't like the word 'success.' It feels so loaded with the world's values. My own personal life goal is not to be successful but to be faithful. 'Faithful' doesn't mean that I'm just making it, still here but miserable. Holiness and faithfulness are not dour concepts. They're actually full of life. My goal is faithfully loving God, faithfully loving my wife as Christ loved the church, faithfully being there so that my kids know who I am, and then trusting God with the broader things like my career. That's difficult, because opportunities come along that would greatly increase the influence of my music. But when I look at the work and all the time I'd be away, I just have to say no. There's only one of me, it's all my family has. If I try to become more like Jesus, more godly, well, God's a success. I'm not opposed to blessing or wealth or any of those things. I'm just opposed to seeking them as the goal.

Tell us more about your marriage.

God says in the Ten Commandments, you shall have no other gods before me. His husband heart invites us to a covenant relationship, saying you were made to forsake all others and be devoted to me. Nothing reflects the response to that initiative more than the relationship between a husband and wife so in some ways it needs to be the most protected, revered relationship on the planet. Joyce and I have a weekly date night because if we keep connecting and building our romance then our children will benefit too. Some things are important so we plan them into the regular rhythm of our life.

Then quarterly we go away for a romantic overnight getaway and once a year we go away for a week and just hang out because we believe it's vitally important in our relationship. We've heard that over 80% of couples with disabled children divorce. Joyce and I decided years ago that we weren't going to be part of that statistic.

What has helped you stay together?

When the musical collapsed and we found out about the handicaps, instead of putting those issues between us we decided to find a way that they would bring us together and bridge our two different worlds. We're very different. She's not even into music. She'll go to a concert with me and about half way through I'll feel this weight on my shoulder. So we go to fewer concerts than I'd like and we try and do some things that Joyce really likes that aren't my first choice. We try and meet in the middle. Marriage is saying, "I'd really love to do this but I'm willing to let that go if it's not going to be life-giving to you." I talked to a well-known worship leader who's single and does about 150 concerts a year and I knew he just couldn't fathom my world.

Would you trade him places?

I wouldn't. I love the music but some people get lost in creativity and lose their family in the process. It's not worth it. Yes, you die to yourself, but you come out the other side to a delight that's so much deeper than doing only what you want.



The Doerksens: "By the time Benjamin was almost four we realized something was seriously wrong. He had Fragile X syndrome, the most common inherited cause of global mental impairment and autism."

WE BELIEVE IN THE REALITY OF ETERNITY AND THAT GIVES US HOPE FOR THE PAIN OF TODAY.

In the midst of the trials you've been through, what gives you hope?

There is joy in our hearts as we imagine our boys in heaven, walking up to us, looking us in the eye like they don't really do now and saying thank you for loving us, for changing our diapers. In eternity these things are going to seem utterly momentary and we'll be enveloped in gratitude and love. The reality of eternity gives us hope for the pain of today. Music can take that truth that sometimes feels distant and bring it to bear in your heart and mind and help keep your eyes on where you're going. That's one of the reasons I offer up songs that help me remember and maybe they'll help somebody else.

When the last song has been written what do you hope people say about you?

That I was a faithful husband, father, and friend. And when people remember what they saw and heard of God in my life and my songs I hope they'll see that he became greater and I became less. **S**

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FRIEND OF THIEVES: STEVE CALLAWAY

**ANarchy
reigned at
the shelter that day.**

The street children descended on us in full-fledged fury. With the center understaffed and most of the workers more interested in being pals than parents, I soon found myself running from place to place putting out fires that rekindled with greater intensity whenever I turned to douse another.



**THE STREET CHILDREN
DESCENDED ON THE SHELTER
WITH A FURY. REFEREEING
THEIR CONTINUAL FISTFIGHTS
ALWAYS LEFT ME FEELING
LIKE THE BAD GUY.**

It was a mystery to me how a boy from rural Alberta could end up smack in the center of a Kampala slum, the only white face in miles. But there had been no doubt in my mind when I had answered God's call to "go ye therefore" and signed up with Action International Ministries for six months of service in Uganda, buoyed by visions of holy revival riding in my wake.

Reality shattered my brief deliberation as a fistfight broke out between Hassan and Geoffrey. Grabbing Hassan, I wedged my body between him and his adversary, a practiced maneuver that often came in handy with these kids. I frowned at Geoffrey and pointed toward the door. He knew the drill and stomped off obediently. Directing Hassan to the same door, I held on to him until his enemy was out of sight before urging him to follow suit.

Hassan glared at me. A glistening bead of blood made its way slowly down his upper lip. "You are not a Christian," he reproached me in his broken English. "You say that Jesus wants us to forgive and you send me to the street where they beat me."

To my left stood little Derek who had witnessed the entire scene. "Forgive him, Uncle," he entreated

with childish fervor and a face that would melt a heart of stone.

I bit my lip before I spoke. "Sorry, Hassan, you know the rules; they are the same for everyone. You fight, you leave. And I always forgive you; you know that. I'll see you tomorrow. Stay safe, okay?"

As I skirted through a narrow hallway that led to the cooking and bathing area, Hassan's accusation rang in my ears: "You are not a Christian. Jesus says to forgive." I swallowed the familiar lump of guilt that fought to consume my weary senses.

IT WAS A MYSTERY TO ME HOW A WHITE BOY FROM RURAL ALBERTA COULD END UP IN A KAMPALA SLUM, BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO DOUBT IN MY MIND WHEN I ANSWERED GOD'S CALL TO GO.

What am I doing here, Lord? I'm always the bad guy.

Entering the kitchen I gasped in dismay at the sight of a gang of boys wielding butcher knives and hacking away at avocados with assassin-like fury. Harriet, the shelter's cook, was nonchalantly humming and mixing ground maize called *pocho* in the corner. I wheeled on her and in a tone that reeked heavily of mock patience I inquired, "Harriet, did you give the boys knives?"

"They brought avocados, *Sebo*," she replied with an innocent yet wavering smile, "and they wanted to cut them up for the meal."

I couldn't believe my ears. "No, Harriet! These are street children! They use these things to stab people. What are you thinking?" With my anger banishing caution to the wind, I wrenched the knives from the protesting fingers of the children and returned them to their rightful owner. "Don't do it again, okay, Harriet?"

the cluttered little back road, dodging several speeding *boda bodas* in the process. Inside the church we found the children gathered in a semi-circle prepared to pounce on the many platters of *pocho* and beans laid out on the floor. Eddie, one of our staff members, finished giving thanks and chaos commenced.

After emptying my own bowl of the bland rations, I glanced at the clock. It was almost time. Running to unlock the back room where we kept our equipment away from prying fingers, I grabbed my guitar and Bible, then helped assemble the children onto makeshift benches. The uninitiated would assume this task to be rather straightforward, but in order to get forty street children to sit, unpleasant alternatives had to be invented. The Bible study commenced with Eddy patrolling the perimeter with a glass of water for those who were drowsy and Francis ready to pounce on any who were verbally inclined.

The children joined in enthusiastically as I played a few songs. Then, guitar safely placed to one side, I opened my Bible and began to share the story of Noah as my good friend Milton translated. Listening to me was the price they paid for meals and shelter. The proceedings were interrupted at frequent intervals by verbal outbursts and occasional sputters as Eddie applied the dousing treatment to unwary nappers. Then Sharif started an upheaval by driving his elbow into his neighbor's temple for no apparent reason. I had Francis direct him to the door. Sharif shot me a venomous look, then darted out onto the street. The lesson ended, I said a closing prayer and the kids immediately returned to their previous roguery.

Lord, why won't they listen?

As the afternoon wore on rain began to fall in a true African torrent, eliminating the possibility of a soccer game, much to the dismay of the children. So they settled down and slept instead. I

HIS EYES REFLECTED THE DESPERATION AND GRISLY REALITY OF HIS LIFE ON THE STREETS.



Why this, Lord? I didn't sign up to be an authoritarian.

I tromped back up to the area we called 'the church' where the children spent most of the day and realized that little Jorgie, who had previously been curled up on a mat in the fetal position and shaking violently, had emptied the complete contents of his stomach onto the cold concrete floor. "Do you want to go to the clinic now, Jorgie?" I asked. He mustered enough strength to look up at me with his blanched eyes and raise his eyebrows, a gesture that signified his consent. Lifting him to his feet I helped him across the street to a quaint little one-nurse clinic. There I observed the quick malaria diagnosis, then held Jorgie's hand as the nurse violently plunged the three-inch needle right up to the hilt into his little backside.

With Jorgie still groaning and nursing his wound we traversed

sat holding a weeping child who had pleaded with hope-filled eyes for me to take him back to Canada. His reaction to my gentle yet conclusive refusal was almost more than I could bear, for I was aware that the tears moistening my sleeve reflected the grisly reality of his life. When he left the shelter he would be forced to hunt around for anything he could use in summoning up a meal or some cheap drugs, the only comfort he knew. In his desperation he would most likely search through trash bins, the same ones used for his toilet, for any morsel to curb his gnawing hunger. Night would arrive and sleep would subordinate itself to the more important task of survival, for this child was fair game to unspeakable atrocities committed by the older boys and the threat of night raids from the police that would keep him ever on his guard.

I offered up a silent prayer: “O Lord, have mercy on this little boy.” Then I looked down and realized that he had wept himself to sleep.

I indulged in quiet reflection for several minutes, then roused the sleeping youngster and helped to coordinate the cleanup effort. I was standing on the sidewalk watching the last child, a boy named Jackson, return to his home on the streets when he spun around as if struck by a shocking revelation.

“Come with us, Uncle. Come to the streets,” he begged me.

I was taken aback by his innocent request, but knew it was an impossibility. I wouldn’t last an hour in his neighborhood. “I’m sorry, Jackson. I can’t.”

I forgot to, or when they offered me their food at lunch. They would steal from a passerby without giving it a second thought, but they would chase down anyone who stole from me or other shelter staff simply because they know we care. This speaks volumes about the rejection and abuse these children have suffered, but more poignantly it rings out an anthem, “Love covers all.”

As I turned back toward the shelter to finish cleaning up the day’s mess, a man loitering beneath a shop awning hollered, “*Gwe, mukwano gwa bayaye, jangu,*” then motioned for me to join him. The locals always wanted to talk, but I rarely had the time.

“No, *Sebo,*” I shot back politely and smiled, for his words



STEVE AND FRIENDS: THE STREET CHILDREN TRUSTED THE SHELTER STAFF AND WOULD CHASE DOWN ANYONE WHO STOLE FROM US SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY KNEW WE LOVED THEM.

Steve Callaway with Kampala's children of the street.

“Stay with me, Uncle,” he pleaded once again, then grabbed my arm and attempted to pull me in his direction.

Tears welled up in my eyes as I looked down into his, so intent and illuminated by a hopeful longing. I didn’t know what to say, but I tried my best. “*Nkwagala nyo,* Jackson, and I will see you tomorrow, okay? Will I see you tomorrow?”

“Yes,” he answered hesitantly.

“I will pray that you stay safe, Jackson. Jesus loves you. Always remember that Jesus loves you and I do too.”

Reluctantly Jackson relinquished his hold on my arm, then turned and walked away. I watched his forlorn figure merge into the crowded city traffic with a sinking feeling in my chest. Would I really see him again? Anything can happen on the street.

Watch over him, Lord.

God must have known that his short-sighted servant needed some subtle confirmation, a sign that his labors were not in vain. As my heart was broken anew I realized the passionate appeal of this dear little boy reflected his undying trust in me. I had seen it in the way that Jackson and the other street kids would buckle up my bag when

brought an image to my mind. It was the image of a man who was known as the friend of the destitute and despised, the man I aspire to follow with my faltering feet. This subtle accusation, “*Mukwano gwa bayaye,*”—“friend of thieves”—was an encouraging reminder that my perfect Master’s love was shining even through the likes of me.

Milton and I would often go on long walks after the chaos of the day had come to an end and we never lacked topics for conversation. I was always inspired by his servant heart and his unique perspective on living.

“You know, Milton,” I said as we walked and talked together, “today was a good day. Don’t you think so?”

Milton smiled the most winning of smiles and looked me in the eye. “Thank you for coming all the way from Canada to love these children, my friend. God is doing great things.”

Indeed he was. ■

STEVE CALLAWAY IS IN HIS THIRD YEAR AT PRAIRIE BIBLE COLLEGE.

An advertisement featuring two men smiling. On the left is Phil Callaway, a man with a mustache and goatee, resting his chin on his hand. On the right is Dr. Jon Ohlhauser, a man with glasses and a goatee, smiling broadly. The text is overlaid on the image.

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family matters

OF BUMPER CARS AND HARPOONS



I've been hanging out in nursing homes a little earlier than I planned, now that Mom finds herself a permanent resident in this one-story unit a mile from our house. Here most of the inmates are aging gracefully. Like gold-medal figure skaters, they are gliding through the golden years, bringing joy to others (when they aren't sneaking salt into someone's coffee).

Then there are those who seem determined to seek vengeance by using their wheelchairs as bumper cars and their canes as harpoons. When the grandkids visit they spend the time whining about how the grandkids never visit. But they are the few. Most of the residents here believe that a mind-lift beats a face-lift any day.

Then there are those who seem determined to seek vengeance by using their wheelchairs as bumper cars and their canes as harpoons. When the grandkids visit they spend the time whining about how the grandkids never visit. But they are the few. Most of the residents here believe that a mind-lift beats a face-lift any day.



Tom livens up the nursing home with another Bee Gees flashback.

My grandfather Callaway was a combination of the graceful and the geezer. He loved a good laugh, but he also loved to talk about his ailments once the entire family had gathered around the dinner table and the food had been doled out. "So I remember when the doctors had to root through me and take out my spleen. Stayed awake for the whole thing. Watched 'em dig it out there all wrinkled and green. I asked 'em to pickle it for me. Put it in a jar. I kept it for years on the counter. Looked like a big hairy cucumber. Hey, where's everybody going? Mind if I eat your carrots?"

I once enjoyed an evening with a 75-year-old by the name of Donald Cole. Mr. Cole hosts a radio show and travels the country speaking. During our conversation, he mentioned to me that he runs several miles a day, which caught me off guard—like having a guy in a Smart Car pull up to a stoplight and challenge you to a race.

I got thinking about how nice it would be to jog when I'm seventy-five. Maybe it's something my wife and I could do together. She could drive me out of town and drop me off, it would give

purpose to my running. So I said, "Boy, I'd sure like to be running like that when I'm your age."

"Are you running now?"

I coughed slightly. "I...ahem...came third in a relay once."

"If you aren't running now," he replied, "you won't be then."

And it hit me that all of us are in training for the days to come. That if we are impatient, unkind, and unforgiving, we won't wake up at 65 to discover that people want to be around us. This made me wonder: *what kind of an old guy will I be?* And how do I live so my kids will want to visit me in the nursing home? By then I will have silver in my hair, gold in my teeth, lead in my feet, and lots of natural gas, but I won't be wealthy without friends.

I'VE BEEN WONDERING...HOW DO I LIVE SO MY KIDS WILL WANT TO VISIT ME IN THE OLD FOLKS' HOME?

The older people I admire are those who live life on purpose. People like Dave Epp. Dave taps on my mom's door twice a week and she's always glad to see him. After mourning the loss of his wife to cancer, Dave decided to use his pain, becoming a hospital chaplain, visiting those who can't get out, encouraging them, joking with them, and praying for them.

The older people I admire still have their sense of humor intact. They are reading good books, learning new truths and discussing things besides the weather. They smile more than they have reason to, laugh when they probably shouldn't, and talk to children and babies and pets. They know that unforgiveness is like drinking rat poison and standing around waiting for the rat to die.

I wrote down a few more things I admire in older people. It came out as a little poem and I showed it to my mother. She smiled her approval, so I pinned it to her bulletin board. Here it is:

You are not too old until you stop making new friends.

Until you start fighting change.

You are not too old until your past is bigger than your future.

Until you think the bad old days were all good.

Until you talk more of bills, ills, spills, and wills than thrills.

Until you begrudge the spotlight turned on a younger generation

And stop shining it on them yourself.

You are not too old as long as you can pray.

As long as you have the inner strength to ask

How can I spread hope around?

How can I get the most out of the years I have left?

How can I make others homesick for heaven?

You are young at heart until you decide you aren't.

I am happy to report that the poem is still there. So far no one has harpooned it with a cane. ■

PHIL CALLAWAY IS THE AUTHOR OF A NEW BOOK FOR CHILDREN. VISIT HIM ONLINE AT WWW.LAUGHAGAIN.ORG

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