

February 2011

Lighted Lamp Magazine



Matthew 5:14-16 (NKJV)

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

“Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

**Lighted  Lamp
Magazine**

Contents

Articles:

6 A Conscience Void of Offense

4 Contentment In Waiting

18 Missions

16 Room Cleaning

12 The Certainty of Christ's Return



Photography by Isaac Swanson

Poetry:

15 Planetary Motion

10 Unknowing, Unafraid

Regular Features:

23 Prayer Page

Mission:

To encourage and strengthen Christian teens to love and follow God with their whole hearts, souls, and minds; and to glorify God.

Editor:

Priscilla Carsten

Writers:

Cassandra
Kristin Carr
Mark Fowler
Rebekah M.
Tabitha Hope
Margaret Neufeld
D. Veritas

Photographers:

Isaac Swanson
Scetty

Cover:

"Sunny little French village" by
Scetty

Contentment in Waiting

by Kristin Carr

“Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” -1 Timothy 6:6(NKJV)

In the context of the above verse, “contentment” is being used in regards to being content when it comes to wanting more things such as money, clothes, books, or other possessions.

However, I want to use that verse in regards to the contentment that we, as Christians, need to find in waiting. Finding contentment in waiting has been one very hard and very long lesson for me to learn (and I am not done learning it). By God’s grace, I have been able to be more content this past year of my life than I ever have been before. Yet I still have a restless feeling about me, a longing to do what God has been calling me to do for years: foreign missions. For around 6 years now, I have felt the call to be a foreign missionary, and I have always taken that call very seriously. As the years have gone by, and as my desire for the mission field has grown, it has been harder and harder for me to remain content in waiting. I always felt that I

needed to go and be a missionary right then, and if I couldn’t, then everything else was just miserable for me. I let my discontentment in waiting in that area affect almost every single area of my life. That is not how a child of God should handle discontentment. A child of God should find and strive for contentment in Him. And through Him, we should be content in every area of our life, because He put us there. See, I was so focused on going and being that missionary, fulfilling that calling, that I was letting things go by in my life that I should have been cherishing and finding contentment in.

The calling that God has given us (whether that be a calling to be a missionary, a calling to be a wife/husband, a calling to be both, or a different calling) is a wonderful thing, and we should have a great passion and longing to pursue it and do what He has called each one of us to do in life. But it seems that too many of us (myself included) are often times so easily brought to discontentment when we are not able to pursue our God-given calling quickly enough. I always thought that it wasn’t wrong for me to be discontent in not being able to pursue the calling that God gave me. My discontentment in wanting to pursue my calling was not selfish; I wanted to do it because I love my God and I wanted to give Him the glory through the fulfilling of my

calling. I wanted others to know and love Him and give Him the glory that He so undoubtedly deserves! While there is nothing wrong with that pure desire, there was something wrong with my discontent. I was failing to look at the bigger picture. Yes, my motives were good, but the results were not. Being discontent with having to wait to fulfill the calling God gave was not glorifying to Him. I'm pretty sure there's a reason why I haven't set one foot on a foreign mission field by now. Do I want it? Absolutely. Actually, not to sound too extreme, but my heart is not here; it is in whichever country God places me in. I have such a passion and such a longing for that foreign mission field that I undoubtedly know God has called me to it, but God has not blessed me with the fulfillment of my calling as of yet. I handled that by immersing myself in discontentment. What does that say about what I think about God's sovereignty, and about His perfect timing? Is our God not all-sovereign? Does He not have perfect timing for everything? Will He not bless each one of us with the fulfillment of our calling in His own perfect way, and in His own perfect timing? You bet He will! I have been able to find so much contentment in just asking myself those questions and knowing Who my God is and that He knows what is best for me. In that I have found contentment. Trusting in the fact

that our all-sovereign God has a reason (and a very good reason) why we must wait, has given me much contentment, and in doing so, helped me handle waiting in a way that glorifies Him.

There's yet another valid question to ask ourselves in regards to this, though: what can we be doing with our time now, while we're waiting, to help prepare ourselves to fulfill our God-given calling? I can't fully explain to all of you that might be reading this how God has so greatly used that one, simple question to help me. He has used it so much to help me find contentment in every day life while I'm waiting. All I have to do is look around me and see the things and people that God has placed in my life to prepare me for the fulfilling of the calling that He has given me. I've just had to look. That's it. I've just had to look and see with the eyes of someone fully content in Him and His timing for everything.

Perhaps another thing that has made me wake up to the horridness of discontentment is the fact that time flies by. Our lives on this earth are very short. We shouldn't be spending them in discontentment in waiting for something; we should take the time while we're waiting and use it. We should make the absolute most of it

Continued on page 9➔

A Conscience Void of Offence

by Rebekah M.

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” (Acts 24:16 KJV).

There are three types of consciences:

- 1) A good conscience - when we know when we have sinned and humbly make confession
- 2) A guilty conscience - when we know when we have sinned and hide it. This leads to a dead conscience.
- 3) A dead conscience - when we don't even know when we have sinned. We have deadened, or dulled our conscience, putting it to sleep. Paul speaks of those with seared (cauterized) consciences.

It is ever so important in our relationship with God that we maintain a clear and pure conscience before Him. What is the most important thing in life? Our eternity. The life that goes beyond this world. What we need is the eternal life of God. What is that eternal life of God? As Jesus said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus

Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3 KJV).

Read I Peter 1:18-19 and Romans 3:24-25. When we realize how indebted we are to God, it should motivate us to clear up our offences!

Read I Peter 3:16-17, Titus 1:15, and 2 Corinthians 1:12. What do these verses tell you about why you should maintain a clear conscience?

Read I Timothy 4:2 and I Timothy 1:19 and review Titus 1:15 and I Peter 3:16-17. What can happen if you don't maintain a clear conscience?

When we harbor sin, we not only open the door for the enemy to come in, but we also put a blockage between ourselves and God. Read Revelation 12:10. The devil is the accuser and wishes to accuse us and make us doubt the blood of Christ, and one way he does it is by reminding us of past sins. If he can convince us that he still has victory over us, then we have lost. When we stand firm in Christ's victory then we are standing by faith in God, who is on our side!

David was a man who always sought to maintain fellowship with God and to restore the relationship, clearing out any sin and blockage.

After David sinned with Bathsheba, he wrote Psalm 51, a prayer of repentance and brokenness. David never took his relationship with God for granted but sought God with all his heart.

I encourage you to read and study Psalm 51:1-19 carefully. We can learn so much from David and how he prayed.

- 1) David knew he had a dirty heart and inconsistent spirit.
- 2) David knew and feared that God might take His Spirit from him, as God had done to Saul
- 3) David wanted to be an example of God's restoration and turning back to God.
- 2) David understood clearly it was not sacrifice or slaughtering that atoned his sin. David knew that repentance, brokenness, and seeking God were key.

Read and examine Psalm 32:1-11, a contemplation of David.

- 1) David knew how blessed it was to be forgiven by God
- 2) When David hid and kept his sin hidden, he experienced physical, mental, and spiritual anguish.
- 3) When David confessed his sin, YHWH forgave him.
- 4) Those who seek God while God still may be

Romans 3:24-25 (NKJV) being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

I Peter 1:18-19 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

I Peter 3:16-17 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil

Titus 1:15 To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

II Corinthians 1:12 For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

I Timothy 4:2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

I Timothy 1:19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck,

Revelation 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

Titus 1:2 in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I John 5:11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

found, He will hide, preserve, and deliver.

5) David sought a teachable and not hardened heart, a heart that was obedient to God's leading.

6) David ends in a shout of joy!

Read Psalm 19:12-14. David is warned by God's commandments and statutes, and begs God to guard him from secret mistakes and presumptuous sins. He wishes to be holy, perfect, and innocent. He seeks that the words of his mouth and the meditation of his heart be pleasing to God.

Let us learn from David and always clear our wrongs before God.

Read Titus 1:2, I John 1:9, and I John 5:11. When we confess our sin before God, what promise do we have from God?

It is also important to have a clear conscience before man. Matthew 5:23-24 says, "If, then, you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother holds whatever against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go, first make peace with your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (The Scriptures 1998+). If you have offended someone, Scripture is clear that you must first be recon-

ciled, ask forgiveness, and repent so that you can be useful and pleasing to God. Ask the Lord for strength to carry through with your commitment by asking forgiveness from anyone you have wronged.

Read James 5:16. It is important to seal our confession before God, and before man, that our sinful self is dead and all our past deeds have been washed away. This releases us entirely from all condemnation of the evil one by declaring our victory in Christ, confessing our past sins, renouncing them, repenting of them, rejecting them, and keeping accountable with our authority (like our mom or dad).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer says in his book, *Life Together*, "God can only meet us on the condition of truth. He Himself is truth, and He will not meet us on the basis of phoniness or pretense. His grace is available, copiously and freely, but on the condition of truth alone. That is why so many Christian lives remain fixed at an unhappy level. They do not meet Him on the level of truth because they do not meet the saints on the level of truth. We can measure the truth of our relationship with God by our relationship with men. If it is deceitful, phony and secretive there, and withholding and unloving, then we are not to presume to think that our relationship

with God is somehow better or separate. The two are inextricably joined together. It is our relationship to men that unmasks us, and it is our relationship with men that is the true requirement and reveals our condition before God.”

Today I encourage you to seek to maintain a conscience void of offense before God and man, that is, to keep your accounts before God straight. Always repent and seek his face.

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

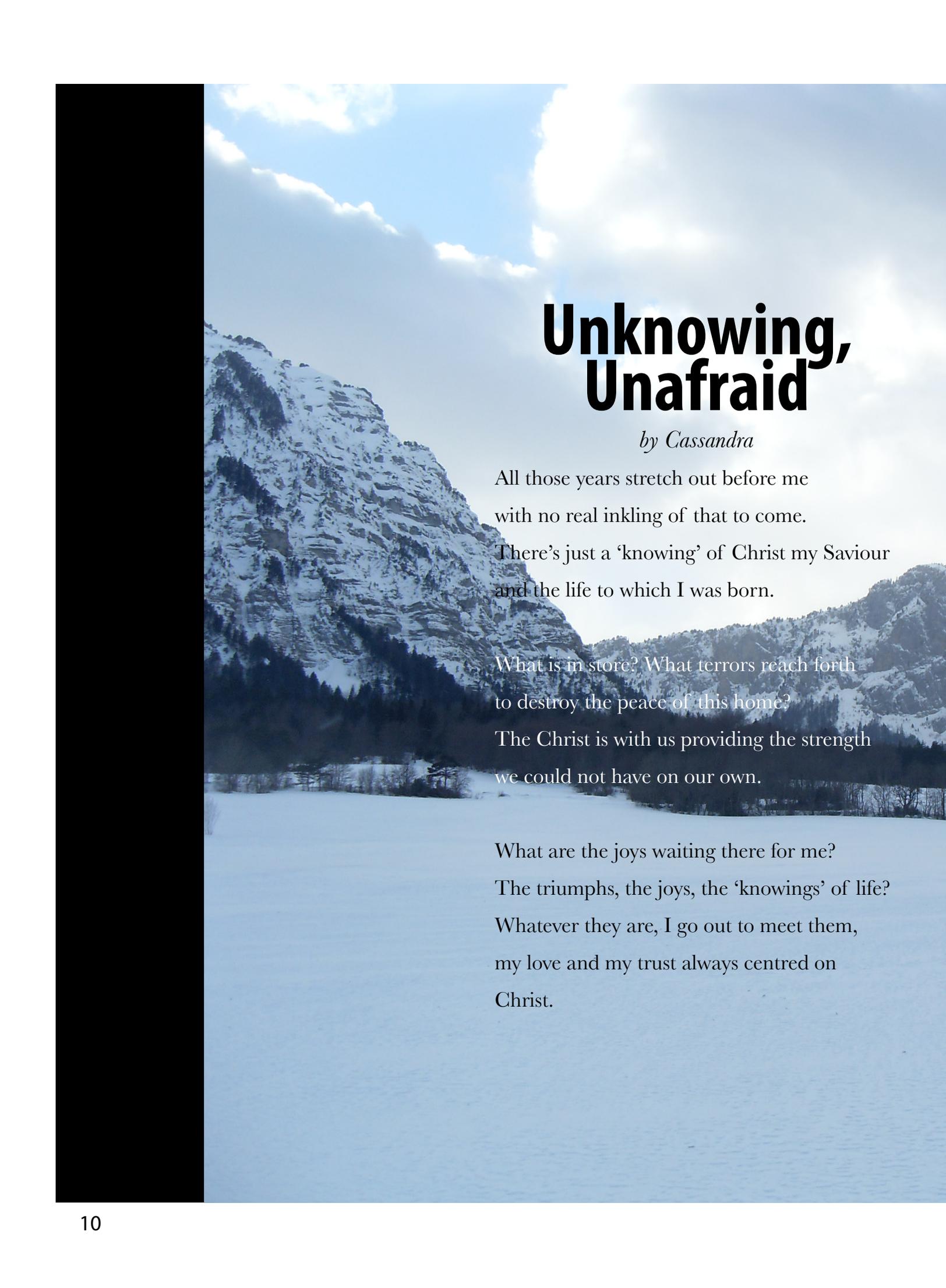
(2 Corinthians 1:12 KJV).^o

Contentment Cont.

for God’s glory. When the time comes for us to really fulfill the calling that God has placed on each one of our hearts, we will be able to take what we learned from the time we waited and apply it to our calling. I will never know for sure how exactly God plans to use all of the things in my life now, during this time while I’m waiting, for when I am serving Him on the mission field. I can take a few guesses, but only He really knows, and I do know one thing for

certain: He will use them.

Let us all have a zeal and a passion for doing and fulfilling what God has called us to do in life, but let us also be content in waiting for it to come. Let us be content in knowing that God will make it come when He wills it to. And while we’re waiting, let us all gain from what we have now. Let us not overlook it in discontentment, but let us all learn from and truly cherish all of those simple day-to-day things with the knowledge that God will use them for His glory and our good. Let us be fully content in Him.^o



Unknowing, Unafraid

by Cassandra

All those years stretch out before me
with no real inkling of that to come.

There's just a 'knowing' of Christ my Saviour
and the life to which I was born.

What is in store? What terrors reach forth
to destroy the peace of this home?

The Christ is with us providing the strength
we could not have on our own.

What are the joys waiting there for me?

The triumphs, the joys, the 'knowings' of life?

Whatever they are, I go out to meet them,
my love and my trust always centred on
Christ.



Photography: "Weakness of Man against Power of God" by Scetty

The Certainty of Christ's Return

by D. Veritas

The great New Year's celebrations have come and gone, and we are stepping out into the New Year. With this holiday, most people make some type of resolution. Many choose to lose the weight gained at Christmas, work out more, study the Bible more, drive better, or one of a whole host of other positive ideas that I cannot even list here.

Yet, in spite of the wonderful ideas and good intention given out by these people, I highly doubt that even 90% percent of those who make a New Year's Resolution keep it throughout the year. Furthermore, I imagine that some of those who do keep their resolutions have cut corners somewhere.

Do I think that New Years Resolutions are a bad idea? No. I believe resolutions are wonderful because the New Year is one of the few times when we attempt to raise ourselves to a higher standard. However, I am sad at the fact that so few of us are able to keep our promises. It has come so far, that when most people hear the

word "resolution," they think of a promise that will be broken.

Thankfully, however, God does not break His promises. Whereas we might not be able to follow through, He is all-powerful. In Genesis 18:14a (NASB) when Abraham and Sarah didn't believe that they would have a son, God said, "Is anything too difficult for the LORD?" A year later, they had a son. What Isaac's birth says in action Matthew 19:26b puts into words: "with God all things are possible."

As Christians, our entire lives rest on God's promises. We are promised that the Bible is true, that God exists, that God created the world in six days, that we are created in God's image, that man committed the first sin, that God promised a Savior, that this Savior came in the body of Jesus Christ, that He died for our sins, that He rose from the grave, that He rose into Heaven, and that He promised us that He would come again and take us to Heaven with us.

Were the Bible false, were these promises false, there would be no religion of Christianity. There would be no Christ.

And yet, even if the first ten promises are true and are fulfilled but the last promise is broken,

the promise to take those who believe in Him to heaven, there is absolutely no reason for us to live as Christians.

Should we go around, doubting the authenticity of the last promise, and living pagan lives just because it hasn't been fulfilled yet? No!

Whenever God makes any promise, it is good. This is where our promises and God's promises differ. God will always keep his promises.

While Jesus was here on earth, preparing for the Crucifixion, His most talked about message was His death and resurrection. But the second most mentioned message was how He would come again, and take to Heaven all of the true Christians.

In John 14:3, Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

Jesus promised a place in Heaven for all His disciples. Some may doubt that He will actually do this, but think of it this way. Call to your mind all the sins that you have ever committed. Now, multiply that number by several billion,

the number of people that have ever lived. Can your mind hold all that? Mine cannot. My sins alone are enough to weigh down anyone for a lifetime, not counting the rest of the world. And yet, Jesus loved the world so much that He took that huge, nearly infinite number of sins; and took the guilt for them. His love was so great as to wipe out that enormous debt! If He loves us that much, He surely loves us enough to take us to live with Him in Heaven.

Many times in the Bible, Jesus told His disciples that although not even He knew when He would come again, He would come again. In Matthew 24:42-44, Jesus gave instructions to His disciples about remaining ready for His coming. "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming... For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will." Jesus made sure that this promise was deeply ingrained in the apostles before He ascended into Heaven. In Mark 16:15-16 He said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."

Jesus taught the lesson well; because all throughout the letters to the early Church we find ref-

erences to Jesus' second coming. In particular, many people look at the first letter that Paul wrote to the Thessalonians; chapter 4, verses 16-17. "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words."

The last scripture that I often look to when I am thinking of Jesus' return is Revelation 20:7-10. Although John writes the whole book of Revelation in pictures and symbols, we can see here that Satan gathers together all the hosts of the earth in defiance of God. And God answers by defeating him and throwing him into the lake of fire, with all of his followers. There, in a few simple verses, is the second coming of Christ.

Many books are written about this battle, Armageddon, in which Satan is defeated. However, I do not worry about this battle. You see, in spite of the enormous army that Satan summons, the thousands upon thousands of soldiers, he cannot stop the second coming of the Messiah. In spite of his hardest trying, Satan can never stop Jesus from coming back for us and taking us home with Him. Jesus is so powerful, and so

dedicated to keeping His promise, that there is no question about the battle.

Revelation 21:3-4 says, "And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

No more mourning, or crying, or pain. Doesn't that sound wonderful? Don't you long to be there now? I do. And one day we will be; because, be assured, Jesus will fulfill His promise.

Maranatha! 🙏

A photograph of a crescent moon in a dark, starry sky. The moon is bright and curved, with a small dark spot on its surface. The background is a deep, dark blue-black with some faint, wispy clouds or nebulae.

Planetary Motion

by Tabitha Hope

If I could wander through the distant climes,
Those skies which case the burning stars,
Somehow, alone with space and time
I'd catch God's hand which seemed so far.

If I could seek out the rising sun,
And walk through lanes of studded white,
If, in the world of swirling dawn

Where comets flash with eerie light,
Somewhere, by being so far from earth
I'd find all the secrets God dropped behind
I'd trace out the mysteries of death and birth,
And future and present I would unwind.

Heaven---so close--yet remote and clear
Mocks me with clandestine powers of God;
Still, through the veil of clouds I'd peer
Head in the planets, and feet on the sod.

Room Cleaning

by Margaret Neufeld

I have a secret. I don't like organizing. Now don't get me wrong. I like having things clean and organized. I'm actually very picky about such things as cleanliness. I just don't enjoy doing it. So how do I avoid the chore?

Well, it just so happens that in my room I have a dresser, filing cabinet and nightstand with a total of fourteen drawers. So, as you may already have guessed, when I'm not sure what to do with something, it gets stuffed into whatever drawer is closest or seems most convenient. Overall, my living space usually looks pretty neat. My bed is made and laundry—be it dirty or clean—is put away. I try to keep the rest of my surfaces fairly uncluttered, although it's not always like that. I dust, vacuum the carpet and take out garbage if necessary on a weekly basis. Overall, things usually look pretty good. But if you start poking around and opening drawers, my room isn't quite as neat as it first appears.

But recently I tired of trying to just make a quick fix of everything and shuffling through things, so this week I did a cleanout. It's a chore I try to do once or twice a year aside from my regular cleaning to keep my head straight. Oh, the trea-

asures I discovered! I never thought of myself as a hoarder, but there were many things that made me wonder "I still have this?" I took a trip down memory lane as I went through cards, invitations, notes and letters from friends, some of which were anonymous and I have no recollection of who they're from, but they made me smile all the same. I found a couple pieces of candy from over five years ago. I rediscovered school and graduation pictures, awards, my Grade 8 year book, and old journals.

I think our lives are often like our rooms or homes; they look great on the outside until you start poking around a little. Of course we all have bad hair days and acne breakouts and sometimes our clothing is mismatched, but for the most part, we can usually make it look like we have it all together. That is, until people start poking around, stepping on our toes, and tapping into our weaknesses. Very often, we have all kinds of things hiding away in our lives. Secret sins, bad attitudes, bitterness, unforgiveness, or a slandering tongue can all hide behind what appears to be the perfect Christian. It's not until we do a spiritual check-up, or room cleaning if you will, that these things come to light.

Like a room cleaning, these spiritual check-ups are something we don't enjoy doing and often

procrastinate with. They can get really messy and uncomfortable. Sometimes it means dragging a lot of junk out into the open. There are past events we'd rather forget, things in our lives that hinder us spiritually, and sins we never confessed or sought forgiveness for, to name a few. These cleanouts are often painful, but they are necessary. They're what keeps us healthy. Things can only hide for so long before they start to show and they usually have a tendency to poke out their heads at the most inconvenient times.

While I was thinking about this, I was reminded of something Elisabeth Elliot talks about in her book *Let Me Be a Woman*.

“We are the creatures of a great master Designer, and His ordering of our lives is sure and certain, yet many people live without any visible order or peace or serenity. The way we live ought to manifest the truth of what we believe. A messy life speaks of a messy—an incoherent—faith...

“The way you keep your house, the way you organize your time, the care you take in your personal appearance, the things you spend your money on all speak loudly about what you believe. “The beauty of Thy peace” shines forth in an ordered life. A disordered life speaks loudly

of disorder in the soul.”

I believe this is true. Our outward appearance and the way we keep our homes and organize our lives are all sharp reflections of what's inside of us. If our spirit is restless, we're never sure what we believe, and we don't know who we are, this will show in the way we conduct ourselves.

One of the things I learned while I was going through things in my room was that it wasn't that I had a lot of junk lying around that needed to be thrown out, but a lot of things simply weren't where they belonged or they needed to be neatly arranged. Very often that's the case in my life when I think through my priorities, activities, commitments, finances, and the way I spend my time. I enjoy sitting down sometimes to watch a movie, and there's nothing wrong with that, but if I'm doing that every night, I have a problem. It would take me away from family, friends, church and hinder my relationship with God.

Sometimes we need to sit down and assess these things. We need to take a good look at how we are spending the time and resources God has entrusted to us. We have to decide which ar-

Continued on page 22➔

Missions

by Mark Fowler

We each have our own perspective on missions, but none of us can deny that we who call ourselves sons and daughters of the Most High God all share a common responsibility to share the good news with others no matter where we might find ourselves, whether it be at school, at the mall, at work, or at church (especially at church!). Some think that people need to go study or do a ten day course to become missionaries or, like most Westerners I have come across, have the idea that coming to Africa will make missionaries of them and get the shock of their life to find out that we are not as undeveloped as the world portrays us! But to get to my point, the Biblical truth is that when we come to know God and when we become adopted in His family and receive salvation through Christ we AUTOMATICALLY become missionaries! We all receive the mandate given by Christ to go into all the earth and make disciples (Matthew 28). Yet the sad fact is that that is not what most of us are doing. We all have been put into different fields of ministry, some in other coun-

tries and others right in their very own homes.

The point is that we aren't just called to be lawyers, doctors, engineers, computer technicians or business consultants- we, as children of God, are first and foremost called to be missionaries! Now some of you might stop me and say "hang on, are you saying that we all are to go into the deepest part of the Amazon and live off of slugs and gill weed?" No, that is not what I am saying. What I am trying to get across is that sometimes children of God pursue their dreams selfishly and make that their number one priority instead of making God's will their number one priority. Yes it's okay to be a lawyer or a doctor- God is the one who chooses to bless us with these careers- but it is not your REAL job. Wherever we are, that is the mission field. I have heard a lot of Christians complaining about their work situations, and I was one of them! But we need to stop and ask ourselves if maybe God wants to use us to lead the people around us to Him or minister to them with our lives and our actions. You don't light a lamp and hide it underneath a bucket, remember? We are the light and we have a responsibility to shine it wherever we



go, always remaining plugged into the source: Jesus Christ.

What is the purpose of missions?

Missions is for God's glory!! God wants His glory to be known throughout the universe and He chose to use us to do so.

Missions is embedded in the Character of God and interwoven in God's salvation plan. It started in the Old Testament and unfolded in the New Testament. God's plan has always been for ALL people since the beginning of time!! His heart has always been for the nations.

World missions

When we think of world missions we normally imagine skinny people in army helmets reaching out to cannibals in Timbuktu. Yet we all have a role to play when it comes to world missions and there are various ways we can get involved.

I want to give you a picture of where the world is, in terms of the Gospel. With the world's population at 7 billion and growing, how many are

Christians? How many still need to hear? Is the task of missions complete? To make this simple I'm going to paint you a virtual picture using ten people.

Christian

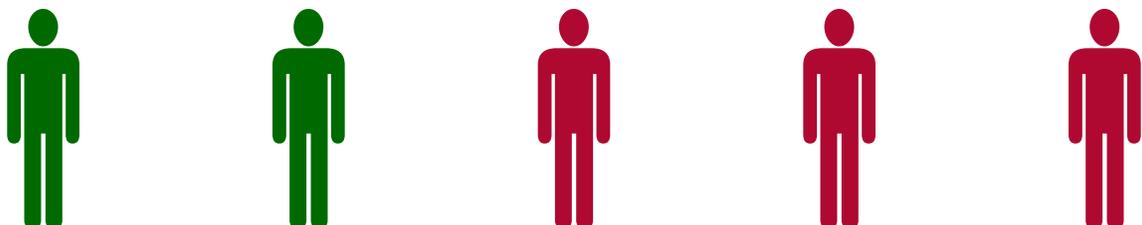
About 12% of the world's population is Christian meaning that 1 out of 10 people are born again, Bible believing, Evangelical Christians.

Nominal Christian

About 21% of the world's population is made up of nominal Christians, meaning that 2 out of 10 people would call themselves Christians because they go to church regularly or not so often. They say they are Christians, but have no real inward change with Christ dwelling in them. Do you have some of these in your congregation?

Reached Non-Christian

They represent 40% of the world's population, meaning that 4 out of 10 people are reachable; they have heard the Gospel message, but have rejected it and continue to hold to their former religions and beliefs. These are evangelized



non-Christians.

Unreached

27% of the world's population is unreached, meaning that 3 out of 10 people have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ clearly. They have no missionary or church near them, or no witness for Christ.

Now I want to ask a few questions. Where do you see yourself in this picture? In the reached group? In the committed Christian group? Or in the nominal Christian group? What should the committed Christian do to reach out to all these groups? What is your Church doing to reach out to them? Are the unreached included? What are you personally doing?

Where are all the missionary workers in this picture?

There are about 470,000 missionaries serving in the field today. Three out of 10 of these missionaries serve among reached non-Christians, 6 out of 10 with nominal Christians and Christians, and only 1 out of 10 are with the unreached. Note the great imbalance. Note that in the reached world there are the mission workers as well as the whole church. Note how the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Where are the workers going to come from to work in the unreached world?

So now you may be asking “now what can I do”, or at least I’m praying that the thought is crossing your mind because you can get involved and our Father wants you to get involved and experience the joy of leading someone to God or enabling somebody else to do so, so here’s what you can do:

1 Befriend a missionary. Make contact and develop friendships with people who are out and about on the mission field. It tends to get lonely and it is always good to know that there is someone praying for you. Maintain contact and respond regularly. It is encouraging when someone phones or e-mails just to say hi and that they are praying for me. It just lifts my spirit so much knowing that I truly am not alone.

2 Pray for missions. Be consistent in this. Keep yourself updated on what is going on around the world and mobilize people to do the same. Know what to pray for and be alert for answers. Start a regular prayer meeting with fellow believers and pray for the nations. I have experienced this out on the field. When things were really at an all-time low, God would miraculously intervene in a situation because of people praying. Prayer is like a jet plane during war and the most valuable contribution you can

make.

3 Give to missions. Ask God how much He wants you to sow. Missionaries don't get paid for what they do and have to rely on the support of fellow believers to get by. In the end it is not for self-benefit but for the kingdom of God and this is a way you can become a part of that. We as believers have an obligation to support each other just like the first century church in Acts did. Our blessings are not just for ourselves. We are to ask God where we are to sow and be alert for opportunities to sow and to do so regularly. Even missionaries have an obligation to sow. What we sow is what we reap and God will see your heart and bless you for that.

4 And then of course you can go. God does call some of us into full time ministry abroad. It is normally a scary thought. Missionaries have to make a lot of sacrifices, give up good paying jobs, and give up being able to see their friends and families for long periods of time, being uncertain of the future and having to rely on other people for support. But you know what; if God has planned it for you and you step into His will, giving up your own plans and accepting His there is absolutely NOTHING that will hinder you. Yes, Satan will try but God is always faithful to His promises. I have found that

reaching out to the lost and the less fortunate and ministering to people from different cultures, backgrounds, and religions is the most fulfilling 'job' ever. Why? It is what God has made me for. If God specifically designed you for something (which He did) then you will experience tremendous joy when you surrender your own will and step into His, which is an extremely difficult process to go through. But God knows best and you will always be okay as long as you allow Him to be in control.

Matthew 24:14 (NIV, emphasis added)- And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to ALL NATIONS, and then the end will come.

The job is not complete yet, and until the Lord returns we need to be busy about God's plan for building His kingdom in all nations. What part does God want you to play? Are you involved already in bringing the Good News of the Kingdom to all nations? If not, ask God what He wants you to do.

In the end, God's plan for the nations will succeed whether we choose to be used by Him or not. God doesn't need us to praise Him and tell others about Him. When the Pharisees wanted Him to tell His disciples to quit praising Him,

Jesus said, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” (Luke 19:40b). But truth is that God WANTS to use us in His great plan. He wants us to share in His joy and in His kingdom of which we are stewards. In Revelation the apostle John was taken up to heaven and he saw people from every tribe and every tongue from every nation! So God’s plan for the nations is going to happen!

Now my question is, do you want to be a part of that? Do you want to enter heaven one day and have people you don’t even know come up to you to thank you for the difference you made in their lives when you supported a missionary, or better yet when YOU led them to the Lord? I challenge you to go out and be the light, wherever you go. A light that reflects His glory so that others might come to know the love of God and the fullness there is in a relationship with Him. And why are you able to do this?

Because YOU are a missionary. ☺

Cleaning Cont.

As we go through the busyness of our lives we need to focus on more, such as studying, cultivating relationships, or a personal devotional time and what needs to be laid aside for a time.

Room cleanings are necessary to keep our

homes in order. Likewise, it’s necessary to examine our lives on a regular basis to keep us clean and healthy. They’re both jobs you can procrastinate with, but quick fixes and ignoring problems only works for a short time. At some point, you have to do something, so you might as well deal with it sooner rather than later and keep moving forward. And just as a word of encouragement, my experience has been that these tasks are followed by feelings of great relief and satisfaction. ☺

Prayer Page

Many of us are blessed to live in a free country where we can worship as we please. It is easy to forget that Christians in some parts of the world are suffering for their faith in God. But Hebrews 13:3 (NKJV) says, **“Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.”**

At <http://www.persecution.com/public/restrictednations.aspx?clickfrom=bWFp-bl9tZW51> there is an interactive map that shows countries that are not open to the gospel, and tells more about the specific needs of Christians around the world who are facing persecution. I encourage you to look it up.

Sometimes we wonder if our prayers make a difference, but they do! One of God’s answers is recorded in Acts 12.

Acts 12:4-11 (NKJV)

So when he [Herod] had arrested him [Peter], he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, “Arise quickly!” And his chains fell off his hands.

Then the angel said to him, “Gird yourself and tie on your sandals”; and so he did. And he said to him, “Put on your garment and follow me.” So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter had come to himself, he said, “Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people.”

