

The Evangelical Protestant The Magazine of the Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church

SUMMER 2012

FIRST ISSUE 1917

BREAKING NEWS!

US War Dead
1775-Present
1,343,812
Wounded
1,529,230
Film at eleven. Ed.

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Freedom Isn't Free..But Salvation is!

Poetry As Therapy

Rev. Dr. Thomas Peavy

For PTSD

Can our Experiences become the Materials from which Healing begin.

As I continue to explore areas related to Compassion Fatigue and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder I have thought about how our life experience, the narrative we live and the expression of that narrative come to make a statement of who we are. Looking at this from the perspective of scripture I am drawn to the Psalms and the language of those people of scripture. According to Dennis Bratcher in his article Introducing the Psalms from the Christian Resource Institute, Psalms are about people and in more modern time are seen as spiritual "pick-me-ups." When we

look at the Psalms the messages go much deeper and address the range of human emotion and existence. Psalms are both poetry and prayer and a means by which people express deep human emotion and profound insight. The Laments that cry to God from distress, pain or sorrow and those of Thanksgiving that express thanks and praise to God along with others Psalms are the language of the poet.

When we look at the Psalms we look at the experience of another and at poetry. When we look historically, we find poetry can be traced back to early man and there is evidence that this poetry was used in the healing process. For centuries the link between poetry and healing remained obscure; however, the Father of American Psychiatry, Dr. Benjamin Rush,

introduced music and literature as effective ancillary treatments. In the early 1900's, Eli Greifer, a pharmacist and poet began an effort to show that a poem's didactic message has healing power. "Poetry Therapy" developed out of this movement to understand the healing aspects of poetic expression. This movement has continued, and today there are several institutes or training programs that offer training in Poetry Therapy.

I would like to propose that we as Ministers may use our poetry, writing, life experience and prayer to foster personal development of ourselves and others. What I often see is the wounded Pastor, church worker, parishioner, or person I encounter in my daily work as a Community Chaplain who shares a troubling life event.

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Evangelical Protestant Church (GCEPC) Inc.,

Lutheran Evangelical Protestant Church (LEPC),

GCEPC "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from works; for it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2: 8

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The Evangelical Protestant Journal "Kirchenbote" (Church Messenger) was established in 1885, Gustav Schmidt became editor. In 1917, the German Evangelical churches in the Pittsburgh area began publication of a monthly entitled The Evangelical Protestant. (Archives Smithfield UCC)
 Members may reproduce and distribute this issue.

We Believe

1. The Holy Scriptures, in the original tongues, is the inspired and inerrant word of God. (Matthew 4:4, 2 Timothy 3:16,17) 2.

2. There is one God, eternal and self-existent, Creator and Ruler of the universe, and manifested through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (John 1:18, Matthew 3:16-17) We are Trinitarian.

3. Jesus Christ is truly divine and truly human having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. (Matt.1: 18)

4. Jesus Christ died on the cross and shed His blood as a Sacrifice for our sins; He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High.(1 John2:2)

5. Humankind was created in the image of God, but fell into sin causing separation from God.(Gen. 3:1-24)

6. Salvation has been provided through Jesus Christ for all; and those who repent and believe on Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life and become the children of God. (John 1:10)

7. Water baptism identifies us with the death and burial of Christ and that we should

arise to walk in newness of life (Matthew 28:19-20)

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

AMEN.

Bishop's Page



Good morning, FB Friends!

That is how many of us start our day; myself included when time allows. I have enjoyed getting to know many people from all over the world via social media as well as keeping up with family and friends. It is a marvelous tool for ministering encouragement to others and speaking the truth of the Bible to those who may need to hear the now relevancy of the Scriptures.

I wonder what the Apostle Paul or John the Revelator would have to say about today's modes of communication that are so vastly different from their own. These men of God traveled many miles by foot, donkey, cart, ship to carry God's Word to the nations. They along with many others risked life and limb to spread the message of the Good News. They endured persecution and hardship but continued in their call and received God's blessings and abundant provision.

In our work a day world if we are not careful we lose the per-

sonal content of what it is to carry the Gospel message. What it means to touch lives every day through personal contact. Although we can reach around the world via air waves and "all kinds of waves" there is still nothing like sitting down with someone who is in need of encouragement and being God's instrument for His purposes in that individual's life. Jesus the Savior and Man of God delighted in individual contact and still does though many times he was thronged by crowds pushing in to hear His message and experience His Presence. He knew how to provide for a crowd with two fish and five loaves of bread. He knew how to position Himself on the Mt. of Beatitudes so that His message could be best heard and comprehended.

We work and partner with other ministries and believers to reach people around the world. We try to take advantage of the tools at our disposal for ministering the Gospel message. We also make sure that we touch people's lives in meaningful ways that are near to us and within our local reach. We want to be life changers and life facilitators for those who trust us as God's ministers to share Him with them. In this issue of the EP Magazine we are featuring ministries that do just that; touch lives where people live every

day. We are unique in our ministry vision in the EPC/LEPC in that we believe that there are many forms of ministry. Our God is very creative and Jesus knows how to create venues for His message just as He did while living on earth before ascending to Heaven. We are here to assist His vision and cooperate with Him in His mission to spread His message to His world in whatever way He chooses.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of the EP Magazine. If you have a vision for ministry and would like to know more about our faith community of the EPC GCEPC LEPC please contact us and let's talk. We want to know what God is saying to you about sharing His message and Mission.

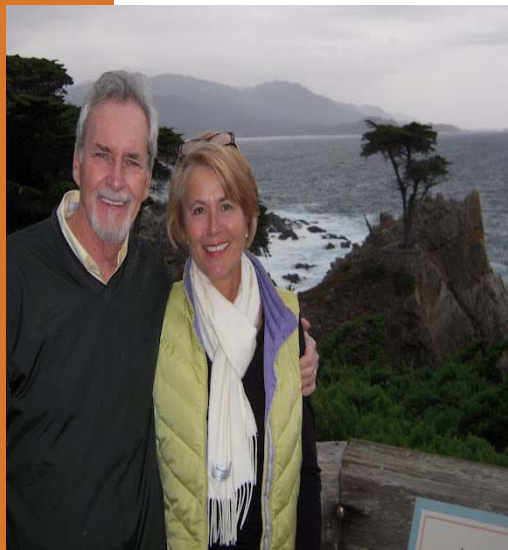
It is the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to be witnesses for Christ Jesus, the strength, the boldness, ability, and the confidence to carry the Message both near and far. God's peace and blessings to you as we come to the end of the Easter season and anticipate Pentecost.

Bishop Nancy Drew



My greatest desire for all of our ministers is that they would have a close walk with Our Lord, learning His ways, hearing His voice, knowing Him.

Glorifying God, Serving Airmen



Rev. Russ Almeida has been serving as Associate Pastor at 1st. Missionary Baptist Church of Clarksville, TN.

Reverend and Mrs. Russ Almeida

Rev. Russ Almeida and his wife Margaret have been inn keepers and servants of hospitality through their Bed and Breakfast in Clarksville, Tennessee, "home of the Screaming Eagles."

For the past seven years, The Magnolia House, a Georgian style home located in the historic district of Clarksville has been a place of ministry to those who found their way to its doors. Those who arrived not only received gracious accommodations and good food but experienced the Lord's pres-

ence and ministry through Russ and Margaret.

In 2008 the Almeida's began hosting weddings in the beautiful home and gardens. Rev. Almeida has performed more than 100 marriages as an LEPC Minister through their pre-marital counseling, wedding and hospitality ministry.

Our Lord Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. He saw to it that the wedding hosts and participants had enough wine to last through the celebration that sometimes lasted as long as seven days. Jesus knew the importance of such gestures and how it would affect those who were in attendance.

When Jesus visited Simon the Pharisee for dinner He chided Simon for failing to show Jesus love through hospitality saying, I came into your house.. You did not give me any water for my feet, You did not give me a kiss..You neglected the courtesy of olive oil to anoint my head. Jesus then turned and commended the woman who had done all of these things. (Luke 7)

Many of those married at the Magnolia House were military men or women. Most of them with the 101st Airborne; many military heroes who have served our country. Some with more than one tour of duty in foreign lands on behalf of America and her citizens for the cause of freedom. Some of those weddings are featured in photos in this article.

Pastor Russ shared his thoughts regarding the young men and women of the military that he has had the opportunity to minister to and perform their marriages.

"Margaret and I are continually amazed by the bravery and dedication of these young people, Russ said." "The staff sergeant in the picture (my back to the camera) asked for a service for vow renewal and stood with his beautiful wife and 2 young sons during the ceremony. "

"When I read the words of renewal, he and his wife both had tears in their eyes and I could barely finish the ceremony. He didn't say anything about his military service but his father did. This staff sergeant had already survived 13 combat jumps in Iraq and Afghanistan and was headed back for a 3rd tour in a few weeks."

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“Where do these young men and women come from? How is America continually blessed with these heroes? I'll never know but God does. He knows every hair on their heads and the sacrifice they make. I ask that the Church be in a continual prayer of thanksgiving and protection for everyone of these incredible men and women serving our country.

They are the ones I want to be honored in this article. Many of those pictured in this article are serving in Afghanistan as I write this note.”

“Sometimes, especially during major campaign years, we hear much negativity about our country and what we have or have not done. I'd like to focus on some government employees that do it right, over and over again. Where ever we send them and whatever we ask them to do, they rise to every occasion. The men and women of our Armed Forces- May God bless and keep each and every one.”



Vows Renewal Ceremony

“We are retiring and have sold our bed and breakfast in Clarksville, TN after 7 years of amazing blessings at the Magnolia House.”

I'm including some pictures. One picture is our whole family in front of the Magnolia House and the other five are of some of the military weddings I've officiated.”

Pastor Russ and Margaret will be relocating to their new home in Bonita Springs, Florida after spending the summer in Maine. He has a B.S. from Rhode Island College and 2 years Seminary with the good fathers at Our Lady of Providence Seminary in Warwick, RI. He is also a Vietnam veteran, having served in Thailand and the Republic of South Vietnam. He has been credentialed with the EPC GCEPC LEPC since 2004.

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Rev. Russ Almeida has been serving as Associate Pastor at 1st. Missionary Baptist Church of Clarksville, TN.



THE MAGNOLIA HOUSE BED AND BREAKFAST Circa 1940

“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

Colossians 3:23-24

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Russ and Margaret Almeida and family in front of the Magnolia House. Russ and Margaret are in the center.



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Rev. Russ Almeida performing marriage ceremonies at The Magnolia House



Poetry As Therapy

Rev. Dr. Thomas Peavy

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At times I find that many of these people have a wonderful story to offer but lack the understanding that they can write their story and find clarity and healing from their words. Most often, the person believes they must have some credential or gift to write. They may believe that words must rhyme and that sentence structure must pass an academic test. I have learned that the story must be in the voice of the person who lives the experience and that these false tests simply muffle the voice that needs to be heard. My effort is to encourage these individuals to tell their story in written form and to keep it, reread it and edit it as time passes. In this process the story is reframed and clarified each time it is read and edited. The rereading and editing allows pain, sorrow, joy and the host of feelings around an issue to be viewed in time and along with prayerful understanding can lead to resolution of an issue. May He give us the gifts we need to tell the story of life events and may they be used for His Glory and the healing and comfort of His children and ourselves.

For your reading I will offer two efforts I have made in the past to clarify my feelings and hopefully bring comfort to those suffering. The first writing was to my lifelong friend and his wife who lost their teenage daughter in an automobile crash while the mother was driving. I call the first selection "The Thief." The second offering "A Name to Remember," is a part of my personal journey to come home from a war time experience and heal. May my words be pleasing in God's sight and a light of understanding for those who may express their life experience.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Peavy

The Thief

A thief came suddenly
and took a precious thing,
your child's life and the joy it brings.

The world just stopped
surely she can't be gone
someone so precious the one you have
loved so long.

Your heart is broken
your tears run warm like a summer's rain
your mind struggles to make sense of this
pain.

You have lost a brightness
that cute little smile, the voice, energy and
tenderness
of your very special child.

You are saddened, you are enraged
yet your manner is composed
you hurt so very deeply, no one really
knows.

I stand and I watch you
I struggle with my tears.
I recall this lasting friendship over oh so
many years.

I struggle with what to say.
I really don't know what to do.
So, I'll just hold you two in my
arms and say,
I'll be here for you.

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Poetry As Therapy

Rev. Dr. Thomas Peavy



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A Name To Be Remembered

Peavy Thomas M.
I rubbed your name from the wall
Specialist 4 U.S. Army
you heard your country call

I stood in the rain and watched
the droplets fall
Your life was given
the price I paid was small

Peavy Thomas M.
the tears down my face do flow
You a resident of California
hometown San Diego



I stare and I wonder if we should ever meet
perhaps a chance encounter
upon some heavenly street

Peavy Thomas M.
I was there as *you* were too
you in Army Green and
me in Navy Blue

I question why my life was spared
when the answer to *you* was no
We each died in different ways
in Vietnam long ago

From one who went as *you* did
to a land we didn't know
Your name lives on with me
I am PEAVY THOMAS O.



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Thomas O. Peavy





Who is my Mother, Who is my Brother? Mark 3:33

*"God places
the lonely in
families."
Psalm 68:6a*

I presently work for Christian Heritage, a ministry that does many things, but especially providing foster care for over 300 children and youth in Nebraska. I am a Foster Care Specialist, and am also involved in the Fatherhood Initiative, working with youth offenders at the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center at Kearney, run by the State of Nebraska. My background includes experience in business, corrections and the ordained ministry (LEPC) – all of which helps me in this noble work.

I work closely with foster families who face many challenges caring for foster youth, who come from difficult and/or dysfunctional family environments. My interaction with the foster parents includes encouraging them in their work and in their faith.

I also work with the children and youth, an enjoyable, challenging, and rewarding endeavor. My duties include attending court, team meetings (where therapists, state officials, attorney's and others meet to discuss cases), record-keeping, reports, and much more.



My work at YRTC includes working with the staff Chaplain, where we teach classes on relationships, fathering issues, and more. All the youth are adjudicated, meaning they have been court-ordered to the facility for rehabilitation and/or treatment, in hopes they will change. We thank God for the opportunities He gives us to work with these youth, and share our faith in Christ.

It is wonderful working in a true domestic mission field, and I thank God for the ways He lives through me to share my faith and His love with many children and youth.

Soli Deo Gloria

Rev. John M. Haase, ThD



Rev, John and Barb Hasse

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Christian Heritage Central Office – Kearney, NE (where I work)



Founders: Gregg & Lisa Nicklas

History of Christian Heritage (an edited excerpt)

In 1979, the Lord gave Gregg Nicklas a vision of providing Christian homes for Nebraska's abused and neglected children. Meeting the needs of these children led to his resignation from a successful marketing career with IBM. On June 26, 1980, Christian Heritage was legally born.

Gregg and Lisa Nicklas became foster parents in December 1980 and within a year had served seven foster children in their home. The following September, Christian Heritage opened its first group home for boys. A second home was opened to care for girls in January of 1985. In early 1987, Christian Heritage received a child-placing license and began providing foster care in private homes.

In 1998, central Nebraska (Kearney) was facing a need for additional residential programs and the Department of Health and Human Services issued a Request for Proposal for two new children's homes, to which Christian Heritage responded and was selected. The ministry's first capital campaign was implemented to raise \$1.2 million, and God faithfully provided. Fourteen acres were purchased and two children's homes and an office building were constructed without incurring debt - a testimony to the faithfulness of God.

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Christian Heritage opened additional homes in Eastern Nebraska in 2001 and 2004. Foster care services were expanded into Omaha in 2002 and into central Nebraska in 2007. In each service area, we are honored to have competent, professional Christians serving children and families.

As of 2012, Christian Heritage has begun its expansion into the Western Service Area, which includes McCook, North Platte, Scottsbluff-Gering, Chadron, Alliance, Ogallala and more.

Thirty years of serving children. Thirty years of seeing the faithfulness of God transforming of lives. Thirty years of having the privilege of working with faithful followers of Christ.

Paul wrote, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

Christian Heritage



Website: www.chne.org



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The scope of foster care in Nebraska and the United States

In the State of Nebraska, when the safety of a child under the age of 19 is in question, the state may intervene to assess what the best course of action is to take. During that time, if the child must be removed from their home, a foster home may be used to provide a safe location for the child to stay. Children enter the foster care system for a variety of reasons:

- abuse or neglect
- drug use in the home
- death or incarceration of parents
- home disruptions such as separation or divorce
- mental health issues
- dysfunction in the home

In 2008, 4,620 children were involved in the foster care system in Nebraska. Most of these children were placed out of their homes into a foster home.

State of Nebraska Foster Care Statistics

- Nebraska has one of the highest rates in the nation for children placed in out-of-home care, at 19 per 1,000.
- On 12/31/2008 there were 4,620 children in foster care in Nebraska. Of these, 56.4% male, and 43.6% female.
- During 2009, 2,883 were reunified with parents.
- 491 children adopted in 2009.

National Foster Care Statistics

The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) (www.acf.hhs.gov), says that on September 30, 2009, there were an estimated 423,773 children in foster care in the United States. During FY 2009, an estimated 276,266 exited foster care. Of them:

- 51% were reunited with parent(s) or primary caregiver(s)
- 20% were adopted
- 15% went to live with a relative or guardian
- 11% were emancipated
- 3% had other outcomes, including being transferred to another agency, running away, and death.
- They had spent an average of 22 months (median: 13.7 months) in foster care.

Meditation

By Bishop Jessica Johnston, Spirit Soul and Body Ministries

Meditation is a posture, a part of who we are and a daily routine with the Lord. The spirit is thirsty and hungry for spiritual food. We have spiritual food in the Word of God.

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.” Psalm 1:2

- “But his delight” - His pleasure; his happiness. He finds it in the truth of God.
-
- “In the law of the Lord” - The law of Yahweh - any part of a divine revelation.
-
- “And on his law” - On his law, or his truth.
-
- “He meditates.” - he thinks of it; he strives to understand its meaning; he takes pleasure in reflecting on it. It is not easily put away, or treated with indifference, but he keeps it ever before his mind, and has satisfaction in doing so.
-
- “Day and night” - continually - as day and night are the whole of time.
-

The meaning of this is: he does this habitually by disciplining his mind in order that he may do it; he takes time to do it - setting apart portions of each day, withdrawing from the cares of life, so he may refresh his spirit with divine truth; he does this in the intervals of the day, during work, times of leisure - having a constant subject of reflection to which his mind easily reverts, and in which, through the cares of life, he finds relaxation and comfort; and he does it in the wakeful hours of night, when sick on his bed or for any other reason.

Paraphrased from Barnes Notes on the Bible Commentary

Healing Scriptures for Meditation

By Jesus' stripes I am healed. (1Peter 2:24)

It is God's will that I prosper and be in health, just as my soul prospers. (3John 2)

The Lord is my healer: (Ex. 15:26)

Jesus came that I may enjoy life and have it overflowing abundance. (John 10:10)

As I serve the Lord, sickness is taken from my midst. (Ex. 23:25)

Healing is one of God's benefits. (Ps. 103:3)

Jesus is the serpent of the pole lifted up in the New Covenant for my healing and deliverance. (John 3:14)

God sent His Word and healed me. (Ps. 107:20)

I pay attention to God's Word, for it is life to my body and health to my flesh. (Prov. 4:20-22)

God gives me good and perfect gifts. He has no sickness or disease to give me. (James 1:17)

As I submit to God and resist the devil, he must flee from me. Sickness and disease must flee from me. (James 4:7)



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Meditation

By Bishop Jessica Johnston, Spirit Soul and Body Ministries

Jesus is able and willing to heal me. (Matt. 8:1-2)

Jesus can heal me through my believing, receiving, and speaking His Word or through the touch of another believer who is empowered by the Holy Ghost. (Mark 16:18)

Jesus paid for all sin and sickness at Calvary. (Matt. 8:17)

Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Heb. 13:8)

Because the Lord is my refuge and habitation, no evil nor plague shall come nigh my dwelling. (Ps. 91:9-11)

I am redeemed with the blood of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:19)

I am justified by faith, not by works of the law. (Gal. 3:13)

Jesus redeemed me from the curse of the law. (Gal. 3:13)

The blessings of Abraham have come upon me. (Deut. 28:1-14)

Jesus legally redeemed me from the bondage of sickness and disease and every other work of the enemy. (Luke 13:10-17)

Jesus bore my grief's (sicknesses) and carried my sorrows (pains). (Is. 53:4)

Jesus was wounded, bruised, and beaten for my sins, sicknesses, and diseases. (Is.53:5)

I discern the Lord's body and receive all that He has provided for me, including healing for my physical body. (1Cor.11:23-30)

I am diligent to pray for my brothers and sisters in Christ that they may become all God has called them to be. (1Cor. 11:23-30)

To touch Jesus is to be made whole. I touch Jesus today through prayer and faith. (Mark 5:25-34)

The resurrection power of Jesus Christ flows from my tongue as I speak words of life. (Prov. 18:21)

I have been given authority in the name of Jesus to speak to the mountains that I face. As I command the mountains of sickness, despair, hopelessness, and lack to be removed in Jesus' name, they must go and be replaced with the fullness of God's blessings. (Mark 11:22,23)

Because I meditate on the Word of God day and night, God's prosperity and success are overtaking me in all realms of life. (Josh.1:8)

The measure of faith God gave me is growing by leaps and bounds. (Rom. 12:3)

Because my faith is growing, nothing is impossible unto me. (Matt. 17:20)

Jesus is moved with compassion on my behalf. He wants me healed because of His great love for me. (Matt. 14:14)

Satan cannot dominate or oppress my life, because Jesus came to set me free. (1 John 3:8, Acts 10:38)

Just as God's grace was sufficient to cause Paul to overcome all of Satan's buffeting, God's grace causes me to overcome Satan's buffetings. Christ Jesus causes me to triumph in every area of life. (2 Cor. 12:9,10)

I will rise above anything and everything the devil throws at me. Nothing can keep me down, for I am more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:35-39)

Today I will rise to new life from the depression and prostration in which circumstances have kept me.

(Is. 60:1)

Jesus is the author of abundant life, while it is Satan who steals kills, and destroys. (John 10:10)

The days of my life are seventy years-and if by reason of strength eighty. (Ps.90:10)

Long life is mine because I obey and honor my parents in the Lord. (Eph. 6:1-3, Ex. 20:12)

My obedience to the Lord prolongs my life. (Prov. 10:27)

"Come to Me"

All who are Weary and Burdened.

Jesus knows
what you are going through.

Your days may be dark
and your nights may be stormy,
but Jesus knows
and says to you,
"Come to Me!" Matt. 11:28-30

He will not allow you to be
tempted or
disappointed
beyond what you are able to bear.

Then come to Jesus!
His strength will preserve you.
His presence will bless you.
His love will make you glad
that you are His!

**"Come to Me,
and I will give you Rest!"**

Poem by Ken Pilcher, Jr. © All Rights Reserved / www.faithclub.org - Art by Del Passan

Grace for Grace: How Our understanding of Grace Influences Our Walk

By Bishop David A. Church, PhD

How many times have we been out and been approached by someone asking for spare change? Do we give without judgment? Or do we consider that that the person may buy liquor or drugs? Do we think within ourselves that the person will squander the gift?

Situations as this happen thousands of times a day, people finding themselves in dire situations and seeking help from others. Our society in America places people in two classes- those who are successful and failures, or the modern term "losers." We look as these people as bringing their situations upon themselves. We blame them for making bad choices in finances, in relationships, and in life in general. We berate them as drug addicts, drunks, as people too lazy to become successful who'd rather spend their lives in riotous living to borrow from the story of the Prodigal Son. We Christians look down our noses at them, at least on a subconscious level if not blatantly.

What makes us different from them? Is it our talents? Is it because of our ability to make the right choice? Why did we choose to follow Christ? Are we better than the proverbial "them"?

The Scriptures teach us that there is nothing in us that is good. Our works of righteousness are as filthy rags. There are none that seek God, and there are none who are right-

eous, not a single one of us. If we are really born again we realize that it was only by the grace of God that we came to a saving knowledge of Christ. Why did we come? What brought us to the point of belief? GRACE!!

Romans 5:8 states "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Isaiah 64:6 states "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away."

Our eyes were blind to our actions and lifestyle, and the only way we knew we did wrong was because of the Truth written upon our hearts. And we did not seek out Jesus! He sought us out, the one lost sheep out of the flock. Why? GRACE!!

Ephesians 2:8-9 states "8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

By GRACE we are saved through faith, and according to Paul even the faith we ex-

ercise is a gift, an unmerited gift from God to effect our regeneration, or rebirth. There is nothing of us to which we can boast. So why do we treat others without the same grace shown to us?

God went seeking for us at our worst. He washed us in His blood knowing full well that we would blow it and choose to live by the flesh over and over, and yet forgiving us innumerable times as we came back in repentance. Because of this grace bestowed upon us, how should we live and act towards others? The Lord's Prayer gives us the answer: forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us. We are to show the same grace towards others that God shows us. And we also must look at how we deal with those asking alms as a test of our own faith, to deal with others out of love and grace as we were shown by Christ. Who knows, we may be giving to an angel sent by God to test our walk and talk.

Grace, Grace,
God's Grace

Grace that that
will pardon and
cleanse within

Grace Grace,
God's Grace,

Grace that is
greater than
all our sin

Words Julia H
Johnson
(1849-1919)



Who is the HOLY SPIRIT?

By Bishop Nancy Drew

HE is that amazing Presence that comes when we worship. He is that Truth giver who bears witness that we are the sons and daughters of God. He is in the wind. He is the breath. He is the voice of thunder. He is the quiet whisper. He is the rushing water and the gentle stream. He is the One who walks in when everyone else walks out.

Please notice that the above question asks "Who" and not "What." Some churches still speak of Holy Spirit as "it." That would be like saying "John Smith, it.." It is not appropriate to refer to a person as an "it." It would also be considered disrespectful in most, if not all venues. We believe that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are One as the three person Godhead of the Trinity. We are Trinitarians. This article is not going to be a theological treatise but more an introduction and an explanation of "Who" Holy Spirit is in reality as revealed in the Scriptures. For many years many churches ignored this dynamic person of the Godhead as if He was insignificant when He is in fact God.

As we approach Pentecost we celebrate the sending and coming of Holy Spirit to us as believers in Christ Jesus. In Matthew chapter three we see that Jesus sets the example of baptism by water but we also witness the coming of the Holy Spirit to Jesus. Jesus saw the Holy Spirit come and light on Him like a dove and at the same time heard His Father's voice commending Him as His Son. Jesus received Holy Spirit from His Father. Holy Spirit then led Jesus into the desert where He was tempted by Satan. Holy Spirit was with Jesus. Jesus wanted Holy Spirit to be with us and told us that He would come and to wait for Him because then we would have power to be His witnesses.

Just as the Holy Spirit came to and was with Jesus, Jesus also said that He would ask His Father and Holy Spirit would be sent to us as well. The Holy Spirit would not only come but He would be with us forever. He would be our Counselor. He is the Spirit of Truth and would lead us into all truth. Every truth that we need to know Holy Spirit knows and leads us to it and through it. The Holy Spirit is with us and in us as believers. We are able to know Him. Holy Spirit knows us and desires to fellowship with us. Is that not amazing!

As a teenager, I laid in bed in the dark praying, asking God what to do? As far as I knew I had not ever heard God's voice. I did not know if God still spoke or not. That night I heard one word and it changed my life. That was the Holy Spirit. That was His power. In an instant everything becomes different when He arrives and shows Himself in our lives. I did not know it then but Holy Spirit had been praying for me. Now, He was revealing God's will for me and giving me the strength to carry it out. The next morning He continued to guide me. He had people and circumstances all arranged and I just moved into His stream and He carried me. That is Holy Spirit. He is the revealer of truth. He is the guide, the teacher, the comforter, the way shower. Holy Spirit knows the perfect will of God for us. He intercedes for us in accordance with God's eternal will for us and God's specific plans for each of our lives. He prays for us. I love that He prays for us!

I have had people tell me that they question their salvation. Holy Spirit seals us in our relationship with Jesus. It is He Who keeps us with God and helps us to know God. He gives us the knowing that

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Who is the HOLY SPIRIT? *By Bishop Nancy Drew*

we are the sons and daughters of God. It is a supernatural event; a supernatural knowing. It is not something we get on our own. Holy Spirit gives this knowledge to us. No one ever has to say "I hope so" when asked if they are saved or if they know Christ. They never have to surmise. That is the Holy Spirit. He causes us to know. Just as He witnessed to who Jesus was, He witnesses to who we are.

A year before my father passed away, Holy Spirit let me know Dad would be going. He gave me time to prepare, to spend time, to get understanding. That is the Holy Spirit, our Comforter, our consolation, our peace. When we do not understand, we hurt, grieve, feel helpless. He strengthens and encourages us. He takes care of us. Everyone else may walk away, not be there when we need them but He never does. No matter what, He stays. He is with us forever; here and now, forever and eternal.

When we rely on Holy Spirit He will guide us and keep us from going in directions we should not take. HE knows timing. Many years ago I was in a church that I felt I should leave. I felt that I should leave by Spring. It was difficult. My heart strings were with the people. I hesitated. I should not have waited because when a disruption came to the church, I was hurt by it. That is the Holy Spirit- guiding us, keeping us safe. I learned an important lesson in that process. Holy Spirit walked me through, brought healing, and led me to greater things. He gives us wisdom and discernment. He is completely trustworthy. He loves us.

Holy Spirit is all powerful, all knowing, and omnipresent. He is a Person. He is God. He is not here for the world. The world cannot comprehend Him or see Him but as believers we can. Holy Spirit is here for us. We must honor Him for Who He is. If you want to know Holy Spirit or know Him better, just ask. He desires fellowship. He is deserving of praise, honor and love in return.

References: Matthew 3:16-17, Matthew 28:19, John 14:16-17, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Acts 2:32-33, Romans 8:27, Ephesians 4:30, Isaiah 63:10, Luke 10: 21, 1 Thessalonians 1:6, John 14:26, John 15:26, John 16:8, Romans 8:14, John 16:13, Acts 9:31, Galatians 5:22, Genesis 1:2-3, Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 12:13, John 3:5, John 15:26, John 16:7, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11,



The “Back Page”

Who is my Mother, Who is my Brother? Mark 3:33

Pastor Steve Bacon

I was adopted July 1951 from the Lutheran Home in Wauwatosa County Wisconsin. I was 10 months old and when my Mother and Father to be, walked in the room. I was standing in the crib smiling and I said “Momma”

Naturally they brought me home.

In July 1953 my Parents went back to Milwaukee and brought back my Sister and a red wagon for me.

I wasn’t happy with the attention she was getting so I pushed my



Steve & Teddy 9/28/1951

wagon down the driveway, out into the street and down the hill.

From the very beginning we were told that we were special, that Mom and Dad picked us out special and that God put us in the Lutheran home just for that purpose.

I was proud to be adopted and used to tell my friends that while they had no choice who their parents were, mine made a special trip to pick me and my sister out..

We were told that we were God’s children and when I was asked to do a genealogy report in fourth grade, I just brought in the Bible and pointed out that God had written it in Genesis and my family went back to Adam and Eve.

The teacher, Josie Peterson was my Mothers Aunt and she just smiled and said I did fine.

I never wanted to know who my birth parents were. I was just happy that they put me up for adoption instead of aborting me.

My Parents were Christians called Doris and Rich Bacon.

My Mother, Doris had 6 miscarriages and took in 5 foster children before being able to adopt. My Mother was my friend, my den mother and the prettiest woman I ever knew.

My Father Rich had me sit beside him every Sunday in church and took me to the park to hit me fungos and ground balls until his arms ached.

I was always told that Jesus was my Brother, God was my Father and the entire Christian community were my Mother, Brothers and Sisters.

My Dad passed away in 2002 and my Mother in 2006. They are with the Lord. Praise God!

Blessings,

Pastor Steve

From the Editor

Thanks for all of your contributions. Remember, for this magazine to be a success you must be the reporters. I will try and put it together in the best light and we will all praise God in the process.

May the blessings of Christ be with you all.

Pastor Steve



Is he done yet?

Evangelical Protestant Church(GEPC)Inc,

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