



Eternal Perspectives

We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen...

Winter 2006

Suspicion was understandable in Timbuktu. Nothing could be trusted here.

To the Ends of the Earth by Stephen Saint

Timbuktu—the setting for a young American's strangest adventure

Note from Randy Alcorn:

January 20 is the release date of the motion picture "The End of the Spear," the story of the five missionaries murdered in Ecuador in 1956 and the primitive tribespeople who killed them. January is also the fiftieth anniversary of this event, which God used to send out literally thousands of missionaries around the world. In light of this, I asked Steve Saint if we could publish the following article.

For years I'd thought Timbuktu was just a made-up name for "the ends of the earth." When I found out it was a real place in Africa, I developed an inexplicable fascination for it. It was in 1986 on a fact-finding trip to West Africa for Mission Aviation Fellowship that this fascination became an irresistible urge. Timbuktu wasn't on my itinerary, but I knew I *had* to go there. Once I arrived, however, I discovered I was in trouble.

I'd hitched a ride from Bamako, Mali, 500 miles away, on the only seat left on a Navajo six-seater airplane chartered by UNICEF.

Two of their doctors were in Timbuktu and might fly back on the return flight, which meant I'd be bumped, but I decided to take the chance.

Now here I was, standing by the plane on the windswept outskirts of the famous Berber outpost. There was not a spot of true green anywhere in the desolate brown Saharan landscape. Dust blew across the sky, blotting out the sun as I squinted in the 110-degree heat, trying to make out the mud-walled buildings of the village of 20,000.

The pilot approached me as I started for town. He reported that the doctors were on their way and I'd have to find another ride to Bamako. "Try the marketplace. Someone there might have a truck. But be careful," he said. "Westerners don't last long in the desert if the truck breaks down, which often happens."

I didn't relish the thought of being stranded, but perhaps it was fitting that I should wind up like this, surrounded by the Sahara. Since I arrived in

Africa, the strain of the harsh environment and severe suffering of starving people had left me feeling lost in a spiritual and emotional desert.

The open-air marketplace in the center of town was crowded. Men and women wore flowing robes and turbans as protection against the sun. Most of the Berbers' robes were dark blue, with 30 feet of material in their turbans alone. The men were well-armed with scimitars and knives. I felt that eyes were watching me suspiciously.

Suspicion was understandable in Timbuktu.

Nothing could be trusted here. These people had once been prosperous and self-sufficient. Now even their land had turned against them. Drought had turned rich grasslands to desert. Unrelenting sun and windstorms had nearly annihilated all animal life. People were dying by the thousands.

I went from person to person trying to find someone who spoke English, until I finally came across a local gendarme who understood my broken French.

"I need a truck," I said. "I need to go to Bamako."



Steve & Ginny Saint

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*All my life,
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but think the
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capricious...*

Eyes widened in his shaded face. "No truck," he shrugged. Then he added, "No road. Only sand."

By now, my presence was causing a sensation in the marketplace. I was surrounded by at least a dozen small children, jumping and dancing, begging for coins and souvenirs. The situation was extreme, I knew. I tried to think calmly. *What am I to do?*

Suddenly I had a powerful desire to talk to my father. Certainly he had known what it was like to be a foreigner in a strange land. But my father, Nate Saint, was dead. He was one of five missionary men killed by Auca Indians in the jungles of Ecuador in 1956. I was a month shy of my fifth birthday at the time, and my memories of him were almost like movie clips: a lankly, intense man with a serious goal and a quick wit. He was a dedicated jungle pilot, flying missionaries and medical personnel in his Piper Family Cruiser. Even after his death he was a presence in my life.

I'd felt the need to talk with my father before, especially since I'd married and become a father myself. But in recent weeks this need had become urgent. For one thing, I was new to relief work. But it was more than that. I needed Dad to help answer my new questions of faith.

In Mali, for the first time in my life, I was surrounded by people who didn't share my faith, who were, in fact, hostile to the Christian faith—locals and Western relief workers alike. In a way it was a parallel to the situation Dad had faced in Ecuador. How often I'd said the same thing Dad would have said among the Indians who killed him: "My God is real. He's a personal God who lives inside me, with whom I have a very special, one-on-one relationship."

And yet the questions lingered in my mind: *Did my father have to die?*

All my life, people had spoken of Dad with respect; he was a man willing to die for his faith. But at the time I couldn't help but think the murders were capricious, an accident of bad timing. Dad and his colleagues landed just as a small band of Auca men were in a bad mood for reasons that had nothing to do with faith or Americans. If Dad's plane had landed one day later, the massacre might not have happened.

Couldn't there have been another way? It made little impact on the Aucas that I could see. To them it was just one more killing in a history of killings.

Thirty years later it still had an impact on me. And now, for the first time, I felt threatened because of who I was and what I believed. "God," I found myself praying as I looked around the marketplace, "I'm in trouble here. Please keep me safe and show me a way to get back. Please reveal Yourself and Your love to me the way you did to my father."

No bolt of lightning came from the blue. But a new thought did come to mind. Surely there was a telecommunications office here somewhere; I could wire Bamako to send another plane. It would be costly, but I could see no other way of getting out. "Where's the telecommunications office?" I asked another gendarme. He gave me instructions, then said, "Telegraph transmits only. If station in Bamako has machine on, message goes through. If not..." he shrugged. "No answer ever comes. You only hope message received."

Now what? The sun was crossing toward the horizon. If I didn't have arrangements made by nightfall, what would happen to me? This was truly

the last outpost of the world. More than a few Westerners had disappeared in the desert without a trace.

Then I remembered that just before I'd started for Timbuktu, a fellow worker had said, "There's a famous mosque in Timbuktu. It was built from mud in the 1500s. Many Islamic pilgrims visit it every year. But there's also a tiny Christian church, which virtually no one visits. Look it up if you get the chance."

I asked the children, "Where is *l'église Évangélique Chrétienne*?" The youngsters were willing to help, though



Randy Alcorn (center) at the Christian Booksellers Convention with family members of Ed McCully and Nate Saint (two of the five missionaries who were killed in Ecuador), along with Mincaye, one of the tribesmen who killed them.

they were obviously confused about what I was looking for. Several times elderly men and women scolded them harshly as we passed, but they persisted. Finally we arrived, not at the church, but at the open doorway of a tiny mud-brick house. No one was home, but on the wall opposite the door was a poster showing a cross covered by wounded hands. The French subscript said, "and by His stripes we are healed."

Within minutes, my army of waifs pointed out a young man approaching us in the dirt alleyway. Then the children melted back into the labyrinth of the walled alleys and compounds of Timbuktu.

The young man was handsome, with dark skin and flowing robes. But there was something inexplicably different about him. His name was Nouh Ag Infa Yatara; that much I understood. Nouh signaled he knew someone who could translate for us. He led me to a compound on the edge of town where an American missionary lived. I was glad to meet the missionary, but from the moment I'd seen Nouh I'd had the feeling that we shared something in common.

"How did you come to have faith?" I asked him.

The missionary translated as Nouh answered. "This compound has always had a beautiful garden. One day when I was a small boy, a friend and I decided to steal some carrots. It was a dangerous task: We'd been told that *Toubabs* [white men] eat nomadic children. Despite our agility and considerable experience, I was caught by the former missionary here. Mr. Marshall didn't eat me; instead he gave me the carrots and some cards that had God's promises from the Bible written on them. He said if I learned them, he'd give me an ink pen!"

"You learned them?" I asked.

"Oh, yes! Only government men and the headmaster of the school had a Bic pen! But when I showed off my pen at school, the teacher knew I must have spoken with the Toubab, which is strictly forbidden. He severely beat me."

When Nouh's parents found out he had portions of such a despised book defiling their house, they threw him out and forbade anyone to take him in; nor was he allowed in school. But something had happened: Nouh had come to believe what the Bible said was true.

Nouh's mother became desperate. Her own standing, as well as her family's, was in jeopardy. Finally she decided to kill her son. She obtained poison from a sorcerer and poisoned Nouh's food at a family feast. Nouh ate the food and wasn't affected. His brother, who unwittingly stole a morsel of meat from the deadly dish, became violently ill and remains partially paralyzed. Seeing

God's intervention, the family and townspeople were afraid to make further attempts on his life, but condemned him as an outcast.

After sitting a moment, I asked Nouh the question that only hours earlier I'd wanted to ask my father: "Why is your faith so important to you that you're willing to give your life?"

"I know God loves me and I'll live with Him forever. I know it! Now I have peace where I used to be full of fear and uncertainty. Who wouldn't give up everything for this peace and security?"

"It can't have been easy for you as a teenager to take a stand that made you despised by the whole community," I said. "Where did your courage come from?"

"Mr. Marshall couldn't take me in without putting my life in jeopardy. So he gave me some books about other Christians who had suffered for their faith. My favorite was about five young men who willingly risked their lives to take God's good news to stone age Indians in the jungles of South America." His eyes widened, "I've lived all my life in the desert. How frightening the jungle must be! The book said these men let themselves be speared to death, even though they had guns and could have killed their attackers!"

The missionary said, "I remember the story. As a matter of fact, one of those men had your last name."

"Yes," I said quietly, "the pilot was my father."

"Your father?" Nouh cried. "The story is true!"

"Yes," I said, "it's true."

The missionary and Nouh and I talked through the afternoon. When they accompanied me back to the airfield that night, we found that the doctors weren't able to leave Timbuktu after all, and there was room for me on the UNICEF plane.

As Nouh and I hugged each other, it seemed incredible that God loved us so much that He'd arranged for us to meet "at the ends of the earth." Nouh and I had gifts for each other that no one else could give. I gave him the assurance that the story that had given him courage was true. He gave me the assurance that God *had* used Dad's death for good. Dad, by dying, had helped give Nouh a faith worth dying for. And Nouh, in return had helped give Dad's faith back to me.

(The article originally appeared in Guideposts, January 1991.)



Steve & Shaun Saint (left) in the village

EPM Information:

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A Father Visits His Son's Killers

by T. E. McCully, Father of Ed McCully

"If we shoot the Aucas, we will send them to hell; if they spear us, they will send us to glory."

On November 9, almost six years from the day Aucas slew his son with four other missionaries in Ecuador, T. E. McCully of Wheaton, IL, visited the Aucas in their own village. He wanted to personally visit the tribe who had confessed their guilt in slaying the missionaries—all of whom now confessed belief in Christ.

Four Auca women said that the missionaries could have shot down the Auca men and saved their lives.

I believe they reasoned thusly: "If we shoot the Aucas, we will send them to hell; if they spear us, they will send us to glory."

These five brave men said more. "If we shoot the Aucas, we will put missionary work hundreds of years behind." If one had been shot, it is doubtful if the Aucas would have been reached with the gospel.

I believe these five said more than this. "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou eternal Son of God, maker of heaven

and earth, if You loved us enough to die for us, surely we ought to love You enough to die for You."

These five young men, though dead, are speaking and saying to us "How much do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you love Him enough to die for Him?" Oh, He may not ask us to die for Him. But do we love

Him enough to *live* for Him? Do we love Him enough to be faithful to Him?

As we prepared to leave the Aucas, they followed us to the airstrip. Rachel interpreted as I offered a word of prayer for the Aucas. I thanked God for the privilege of visiting these people whose lives had been changed by the gospel—the gospel that had been given to them by Betty Elliott and Rachel Saint, two brave soldiers of the cross.

It may never be my privilege to see the Aucas again on this earth, but because five young men believed it was better to die with a conviction than to live with a compromise, I shall walk the streets of gold with the men who killed my son and his four colleagues.



Barb Youderian & daughter Beth, Marilou McCully & son Steve, Marge Saint & son Steve, Olive Fleming, Elisabeth Elliot

END OF THE SPEAR

In theaters January 20, 2006

Mincayani is born into the most violent society ever documented by anthropologists, the Waodani in the eastern rainforest of Ecuador. As he grows he learns what every Waodani understands, he must spear and live or be speared and die. Mincayani's world changes when he and his family kill five missionaries: Nate Saint, Jim Elliot, Ed McCully, Pete Fleming, and Roger Youderian. This incident propels Mincayani's family group down an extraordinary path that culminates in them not only departing from violence, but also caring for the enemy tribe they had once violently raided.

Nate Saint's son Steve was a boy when his father and friends were killed. He returns to the Waodani as an adult and finally learns from Mincayani what happened during the last minutes of his father's life. Together Mincayani and Steve find that what Nate accomplished in his death gave them both a new life and Steve's family becomes part of Mincayani's family.



Desperate To Be Free by Randy Alcorn



Question:

I have been having an online affair with a woman I have never met. (Since my teenage years I have struggled with the sin of looking at pornography.) I am a Christian and active in my church. My wife has no idea this has been going on. I have deceived my wife, my family and my church because none of these people know my struggles. I am too ashamed to tell them. Should I confess to my family and church? Should I get rid of my computer? How can I be free from this burden? Will God forgive me? Please help. I am desperate to be free.

Answer:

By all means, confess to your wife and ask her help. Immediately and irrevocably cut off your relationship with this person online. That's a non-negotiable. If you are a follower of Christ you must do this, and do it right away. Bare your soul to your wife, confessing this and not protecting yourself by leaving out what would make you look bad.

I would advise you to get rid of your computer. That's much less radical than cutting off your hand or gouging out your eye (Matthew 5:29,30), yet it is an attempt to honor Christ's call to take radical measures to separate yourself from recurring temptation.

One other possibility is to put the computer in a living area with the screen visible to others in the room. Have your wife set up the password for internet access, not tell you that password, AND agree to not leave you alone in the room after having brought up the internet. However, if you find yourself attempting to get around this, then internet access should be cut off. If you are tempted to bring home pornographic images on disc, etc., then get rid of the computer entirely. Scripture nowhere tells us to have a computer, but it does tell us to flee from sexual temptation (1 Corinthians 6:18)...not to hang around it and just set ourselves up for falling again.

When you confess to your wife it will be painful for you both, but you MUST do this. James 5:16 says, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

However, you need to do more than confess to your wife. You should have one or more godly men to whom you confess this and have them ask you regularly, perhaps daily at first, "How are you doing?" You must be ruthlessly honest. I would also confess to one of my pastors, and ask for his accountability too. This is humbling, of course, but in my experience no one who tries to dig out of this by himself

ultimately succeeds. We need the Lord, but we need His people to help and confront and ask and stand with us.

You must develop a whole new thought pattern of godliness, meditating on Scripture and guarding yourself from the kinds of images, TV shows, movies, etc., that will take you down.

Yes, God will fully forgive you. No question. But you will face difficulties and temptations that will make change a rough road. That's why you must take radical steps and get lots of help.

I recommend the links below from our website. If you are to access them, of course, you will need your wife's assistance if you follow the counsel I'm giving. Don't use the need to access these as a rationalization for delaying confession. You need to do that as soon as possible.

Helpful Online Resources

Articles on sexual purity can found on our website at www.epm.org/resources-sexual_purity.html, including:

Sexual Purity: What You Need To Know and Do (designed for teenagers,

their parents and youth workers): www.epm.org/articles/sexpur.html

Strategies To Keep from Falling: www.epm.org/articles/leadpur.html

Ministries that Help with Sexual Addictions:

BraveHearts: www.bravehearts.net

Pure Life Ministries: www.purelifeministries.org

New Life Partners: www.newlifepartners.org

(Help for wives of sexual addicts)

Pure Intimacy: www.pureintimacy.org

Stone Gate Resources:

www.stonegateresources.org

Be Broken Ministries: www.bebroken.com

Setting Captives Free:

www.settingcaptivesfree.com/home



Website Filters and/or Website Accountability Sites:

BSafe Online (internet filter): www.bsafehome.com

S.A.F.E. Site: <http://lmi.gospelcom.net/safe.html>

Covenant Eyes: www.covenanteyes.com

X3watch: www.xxxchurch.org



If abortion is made illegal, would tens of thousands of women again die from back-alley and clothes hanger abortions? by Randy Alcorn

Please Note: In order to conserve space, footnotes are not included in this article but are marked with an asterisk and may be found in ProLife Answers to ProChoice Arguments by Randy Alcorn, pages 407-448.

For decades prior to its legalization, 90 percent of abortions were done by physicians in their offices, not in back alleys.

Fifteen years before abortion was legal in America, around 85 percent of illegal abortions were done by "reputable physicians in good standing in their local medical associations."* In 1960, Planned Parenthood stated that "90% of all illegal abortions are presently done by physicians."* The vast majority of abortions were not done in back alleys but in the back offices of licensed physicians.

Were these doctors "butchers," as prochoice advocates claim? The majority of physicians performing abortions *after* legalization were the same ones doing it *before* legalization. Neither their training nor their equipment improved when abortion was decriminalized. Either they were not butchers before legalization, or they continued to be butchers after legalization. It cannot be argued both ways.

It is not true that tens of thousands of women were dying from illegal abortions before abortion was legalized.

Former abortion-rights activist Bernard Nathanson admits that he and his cofounders of NARAL fabricated the figure that a million women were getting illegal abortions in America each year. The average, he says, was actually ninety-

eight thousand per year. Nonetheless, the abortion advocates fed their concocted figures to the media, who eagerly disseminated the false information. Nathanson says he and his associates also invented the "nice, round shocking figure" for the number of deaths from illegal abortions:

It was always "5,000 to 10,000 deaths a year." I confess that I knew the figures were totally false, and I suppose the others did too if they stopped to think of it. But in the "morality" of our revolution, it was a useful figure, widely accepted, so why go out of our way to correct it with honest statistics? The overriding concern was to get the laws [against abortion] eliminated, and anything within reason that had to be done was permissible.*

Research confirms that the actual number of abortion deaths in the twenty-five years prior to 1973 averaged 250 a year, with a high of 388 in 1948.* In 1966, before the first state legalized abortion, 120 mothers died from abortion.* By 1972 abortion was still illegal in 80 percent of the country, but the use of antibiotics had greatly reduced the risk. Hence, the number dropped to 39 maternal deaths from abortion that year.* Dr. Christopher Tietze, a prominent statistician associated with Planned Parenthood, maintained that these are accurate figures, with a margin of error no greater than 10 percent.*

However, suppose that only one out of ten deaths from illegal abortion was properly identified. This would mean that the number of women dying the year before abortion was legalized would be less than four hundred, still only a fraction of the five to ten thousand claimed by prochoice advocates.

The history of abortion in Poland invalidates claims that making abortion illegal would bring harm to women.

Dr. John Willke writes,

Poland, along with the rest of the Iron Curtain, Eastern Europe countries, was occupied for 44 years by Russia. Russia legalized state-paid abortion in the first three months of pregnancy. What are the official figures of the numbers of abortions performed annually during those years in Poland? In 1960, it was 150,400—in 1965, 168,600—in 1970, 148,200—in 1975, 138,600—in 1980, 138,000—in 1985, 135,500. By 1990, with the advent of the Solidarity independence

The vast majority of abortions were not done in back alleys but in the back offices of licensed physicians.



movement and the influence of Pope John Paul II, the number of abortions had declined to 59,417. This was a spontaneous movement.

It was at this time that abortion was made illegal in Poland except in the most exceptional cases. What was the result? Willke continues,

In 1998 the total number of induced abortions in Poland was 253. What were the reasons given for these? To save the "life and health" of the woman—199; for "fetal impairment"—45, for rape or incest—9.

In summary, then, here we have a large nation that, for four and a half decades, had abortion-on-request, paid for by the state. Certainly, the practice of abortion in Poland had become deeply ingrained. Then came independence and a law that took the total number of abortions down to 0.004% of what they had been, and this contrary to all predictions by government agencies, the media, the UN and Planned Parenthood. To perhaps everyone's surprise, there have been 25% fewer miscarriages and 30% fewer women dying compared with what it had been while abortion was legal. In the latest annual report, 21 women died from pregnancy-related problems, with none listed as dying from illegal abortions.



These are firm statistics. The facts above have been annually reported and heatedly discussed by the Polish parliament, its ministries of health, labor, social welfare and education, as well as by mass media, nongovernmental organizations and anyone else interested in the problem.

If abortions are again forbidden, will illegal abortions, with all of their alleged tragic consequences, take their place? Certainly in Poland the answer is in—it is a resounding *no*. In fact, the women in Poland are clearly healthier now, from a gynecologic and obstetric standpoint, than they were when abortions were legal.*

Women still die from legal abortions in America.

Abortion is normally not life-threatening to the mother. However, the fatality rate is much higher than many prochoice advocates admit. For instance, a widely disseminated prochoice video produced in the late 1980s states, "By 1979 the Federal government could not identify a single woman anywhere in this country who died of abortion."*

This is an amazing statement, since many sources document a number of deaths from legal

abortion. According to the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, "the New York City Department of Health reported seven legal abortion-related deaths that occurred between 1980 and 1985. The cause of death in all cases was attributed directly to general anesthesia."* (These were seven deaths in a single city.) There were four abortion-caused deaths in a single Florida clinic between 1979 and 1983.* In 1986, four doctors and researchers presented a study of no less than 193 deaths by legal abortion between 1972 and 1985.* One researcher has uncovered the tragic cases of some 300 women who have died as a result of legal abortion.*

Since public health officials stopped looking for abortion-caused deaths after abortion was legal, the opportunity to overlook or cover up abortion-caused deaths is now much greater. A former abortion clinic owner says, "A woman died because of an abortion at our clinic, but the public never heard about it, and it wasn't reported to the authorities as abortion related."* When the *Chicago Sun-Times* investigated Chicago-area abortion clinics in 1978 it uncovered the cases of twelve women who died of legal abortion but whose deaths had not been reported as abortion-related. Twelve unreported

deaths from abortion in one small part of the country is a revealing number when the official statistics indicated twenty-one deaths from abortion *in the entire country* the previous year!*

Statistics on death by abortion are dependent on the voluntary reporting of abortion clinics, who have much to lose and nothing to gain by doing so.* What makes abortion-related deaths hard to trace is that the majority of the deaths do not occur during the surgery but afterward. Hence, any number of secondary reasons are routinely identified as the cause of death:

Consider the mother who hemorrhaged, was transfused, got hepatitis, and died months later. Official cause of death? Hepatitis. Actual cause? Abortion. A perforated uterus leads to pelvic abscess, sepsis (blood poisoning), and death. The official report of the cause of death may list pelvic abscess and septicemia. Abortion will not be listed. Abortion causes tubal pathology. She has an ectopic pregnancy years later and dies. The cause listed will be ectopic pregnancy. The actual cause? Abortion.*

Statistics on death by abortion are dependent on the voluntary reporting of abortion clinics, who have much to lose and nothing to gain by doing so.



In his novel *Prophet*, Frank Peretti masterfully portrays the web of deception and complicity surrounding legal abortion and its dangers.* Family members, doctors, the media, and political figures all have vested interests in this cover-up. Six weeks after finishing the first edition of *ProLife Answers*, I attended the funeral of a woman who

died in a hospital after "treatment" at a Portland abortion clinic. There was no media coverage indicating the place of her surgery or her cause of death.

Legalized abortion has resulted in fifteen times more women having abortions. This means that if it is fifteen times safer than illegal abortion, the number of women dying remains the same. Writing in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, Dr. Dennis Cavanaugh stated that since abortion has been legalized, "there has been no major impact on the number of women dying from abortion in the U.S.... After all, it really makes no difference whether a woman dies from legal or illegal abortion, she is dead nonetheless. I find no comfort in the fact that legal abortion is now the leading cause of abortion-related maternal deaths in the U.S."*

If abortion became illegal, abortions would be done with medical equipment, not clothes hangers.

One woman told me, "People must think women are stupid. If abortion were illegal and I wanted one, I sure wouldn't use a clothes hanger." Since 90 percent of pre-1973 illegal abortions were done by doctors, it's safe to assume many physicians would continue to give abortions. "Self-help" abortion kits are being widely promoted and distributed by pro-abortion groups, who have vowed they will step up their efforts if abortion is made illegal again.* Sadly, many women would continue to have abortions. But the "many" might be a quarter of a million rather than one and a half million. The result would be over a million mothers and babies annually saved from abortion.

Clothes hangers make effective propaganda pieces at prochoice rallies, but they do not accurately reflect what would happen if abortion were made illegal again. Clothes hangers would be used for baby clothes, not abortions.

We must not legalize procedures that kill the innocent just to make the killing process less hazardous.

The coat hanger argument is valid only if the unborn are not human beings, with commensurate human rights. Typically those appealing to the emotions through use of this argument completely avoid the real issue, since it is easier to talk about coat hangers than dead children.

From the child's point of view there is no such thing as a safe, legal abortion. It is always deadly. For every two people who enter an abortion clinic, only one comes out alive.

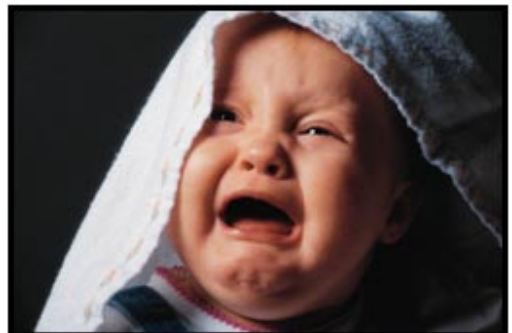
Rape is a horrible attack on an innocent human being, so we do not attempt to make rape safe and legal. We do not try to make kidnapping or child abuse safe and legal. If abortion kills children, our goal should not be to make it as safe and legal as possible, but to provide alternatives and legal restrictions that help avoid it in the first place.

The central horror of illegal abortion remains the central horror of legal abortion.

Unfortunately, every horror that was true of illegal abortion is also true about legalized abortion. Many veterans of illegal abortion, however, do not realize this. Instead, they cling to the belief that all the pain and problems they suffered could have been avoided if only abortion had been legal. They imagine that if their abortions had been legal, their lives would somehow be better today. Instead of recognizing that it is the very nature of abortion itself which caused their problems, they blame their suffering on the illegality of abortion at that time.*

Abortion is horrible primarily because it is a process in which instruments of death invade a woman's body and kill her innocent child. Neither laws nor slogans nor attractive waiting rooms nor advanced medical equipment can change the nature of abortion. What it is it will always be—the killing of children.

(Randy Alcorn, excerpted from ProLife Answers to ProChoice Arguments [Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2000], pages 173-178)



From the child's point of view there is no such thing as a safe, legal abortion. It is always deadly.

Letters to EPM

My helicopter pilot son was shot down in Iraq 2-27-91. He had sent us a letter to be opened only if he did not come back.

"Well, if you have to open this up, please don't worry about me. For once I know something you don't, what Heaven's like."

His words have traveled far—giving millions a hope for Heaven. I have been collecting "heaven" books all these years. Thanks for the best book of all about heaven, your book *Heaven*.

S. L.

I wanted to let you know how *Safely Home* has impacted our lives and our small town here in Florida. It has revolutionized my thinking and changed my life. I had my husband read it and he was so moved he bought a copy for all of his 40 employees for Christmas. As a result of that several have shared it with others in their church. One employee just this week read the book and emailed my husband thanking him for giving him the book and saying the book had completely changed his thinking.

I shared the book with my pastor who bought copies for our church library and from the pulpit has encouraged our congregation to read the book. He also shared the book with another local church that is ministering in China. All the members of the church were encouraged to read *Safely Home* and all the China team members were required to read it. One of their members who went to China last spring with his family to live lost a 1 year old daughter to an infection after only being in China for 2 weeks. They read the book and have now returned to China after 3 months.

Our family was impacted also. I had my older children read the book. This summer God allowed us to go on our first mission trip to Haiti. I do not think we would have had the burden if we had not read *Safely Home*. God is using your book to change people's thinking and perspective about missions, life and priorities. I would guess over 100 people have read *Safely Home* here.

M. L.

I am well-pleased with this book *The Purity Principle*. Indeed it's a book that everyone should have. Again and again Christians need reminding of their purity. I know for me it's been an ongoing battle. I will always keep to heart this point: It is easier to avoid temptation than to resist it.

K. R.

I have conducted nearly 200 funerals in my 60 years of ministry...from former football players and coaches to strangers from 3 funeral homes. After reading your book on Heaven, I'm sorry I didn't have it on my desk at the beginning of my ministry.

The questions you answer with scripture are the hard ones! They are hard because they are difficult to build a doctrine on, with so few references. Obviously our Lord did not want us to spend too much time in bypass detours or majoring in the minors.

I'm planning at age 88 to open a series of counseling offices that are willing to check credentials of people who are not sure of their destination.

I told my wife tonight at dinner, "I feel like after the big TV personalities have shared with the multitudes, there ought to be some corners in the harvest field that need to be harvested." That is where you will find me, "occupying till He comes."

I will be working with 12 ministers of Bible teaching churches in 10 Gold Coast cities. I will order your book on heaven for each of them as soon as we get some money in for this ministry. Your book *The Treasure Principle* emptied my bank of one million; now I have to keep a close watch on my budget!

Your book on *Heaven* is great. I love you for God's gift in breaking new bread for evangelists.

I. E.

I am a family physician in Canada and a follower of Jesus Christ. I was recently given a copy of *Does the Birth Control Pill Cause Abortions?* I was trained in the 1980s and believed that the pill worked by preventing ovulation. After a month of study and prayer I have decided to stop prescribing all forms of hormonal contraception.

I met with my non-Christian associate today and she was reasonably receptive to my decision. I need to discuss the decision with my staff and then begin implementing this in my practice. I have scheduled a meeting with my pastor to discuss this with him as well.

I wish to thank Randy Alcorn for his thorough research and dedication in this area which has been instrumental in bringing me to this very important decision in my life. May our Lord continue to bless your ministry.

H. C., MD



*"It is easier
to avoid
temptation
than to
resist it."*



Doug & Margaret Nichols

Giving Honor to the Little Man of Mindoro for the Glory of God!

By Doug Nichols, *Director of Action International*

Margaret and I began our ministry in the Philippines in 1970 on the small island of Mindoro. As new missionaries, we were discouraged. We not only struggled to learn a new language and a new culture, but we also had no income for three months. In fact, we did not even

have one dollar.

Early one morning during a typhoon, Margaret shook me awake and groaned in pain. "Doug, my side hurts!"

I ignored the wind and rain blowing against our little house and jumped out of bed. Flipping through our medical book, I decided she might have appendicitis. But how could I find a doctor at this time of night? Perhaps the neighbors could help. When I woke them up at 2 a.m., they told me of a Christian Filipino doctor who had a small mission clinic about 15 kilometers away. When they let me borrow their scooter, I wrapped Margaret up and put her on the back.

I drove slowly in the pouring rain, trying to miss the potholes in the muddy dirt road. About 4 a.m., I knocked on the doctor's door. Even though Filipinos are friendly and hospitable, I was nervous at the reception we might receive at that hour.

A small man in his nightclothes opened the door. He smiled graciously and asked, "May I help you?"

"Doctor," I said, "my wife seems to be seriously ill. Can you please help?"

After examining Margaret, the doctor announced that he needed to operate for appendicitis right away. We laid her on a table, and I held a lantern while he gave her a spinal shot and performed an appendectomy.

The doctor wanted to watch Margaret closely in case of infection, so we cleared a space and set up a bed in his storeroom. For five days, this little doctor and his assistants cared for Margaret. They even fed us, as we were penniless. While Margaret rested and slept, I helped at the clinic by cutting grass, sorting

medical supplies, helping with record keeping, sharing the Word of God, and caring for patients.

When it was time to leave, we were embarrassed over our lack of funds. "Doctor," I said, "you've saved my wife's life, and we're so grateful." Jokingly, I added, "I have no money to pay now, but I can give you my watch, my wedding ring, and the gold in my false teeth. But seriously, how can I pay you?"

This loving, gracious man took my hands in his, looked up at this tall new missionary and said, "Brother, there is no charge. The Lord brought you to my country to serve my people in the name of Christ, so I can serve you. There is no charge, brother, no charge!"

Margaret and I left that little out-of-the-way clinic no longer discouraged but with a renewed love for Christ, His work, and for the people He had called us to serve. Because of the kindness, graciousness, and compassion of this little man from Mindoro, we have been able to continue in ministry for 35 years.

Recently, I spoke to a church of 2,400 people in Metro Manila, Philippines. The title of my message was, "Don't Just Stand There, Put on Something," based on Colossians 3:1-14. As I spoke about the garment of kindness that we should put on, I told the story about the little doctor of Mindoro. I then said, "It has been 35 years since I have seen that doctor—until this morning. Ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce Dr. Romeo Santiago, the godly little doctor from Mindoro!"



Dr. Romeo Santiago

Dr. Santiago was sitting near the front. His daughters had heard that I was speaking that morning and had brought him from bed rest, since he had been in a Manila hospital for various physical problems.

When the doctor staggered to his feet with the help of a cane and his daughters, the church erupted in thunderous applause. The congregation wept and continued to applaud. The pastors immediately went to shake his hands, and people encircled him, embracing him and thanking him again and again. It was a wonderful outpouring of praise to God for this doctor's faithful Christian life.

You, too, can reach out to others with simple acts of kindness in Jesus' name for His glory.

God, in His gracious and sovereign will, encouraged over 2,000 people in their Christian walk with this simple story and in personally meeting Dr. Santiago, who has served God faithfully for many years.

Dear friend, you may never be so honored. You may not have even ten people applaud your name, but you will never know the impact of what simple acts of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, forbearance, and love will have on the gospel to God's glory to the ends of the earth.

Because of the kindness of Dr. Santiago, Margaret and I were encouraged to remain in the ministry. You, too, can reach out to others with simple acts of kindness in Jesus' name for His glory. Who knows? Perhaps 15, 25, or 35 years from now someone will say to you, "Remember when you helped me? Your kindness so encouraged me in my walk with God that I have served Him for many years. Thank you so much. To God be the glory."

If you would like to give to this worthwhile ministry, you may write a check to:

Action International

P.O. Box 398

Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043-0398
425-775-4800, www.actionintl.org

(You may also give your contribution through EPM. 100% of designated contributions go directly to the ministry noted.)

Is God Safe? by Randy Alcorn

In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, volume I of the *Chronicles of Narnia*, one of the children asks Mr. and Mrs. Beaver about Aslan the Lion, who is a figure of Christ:

"Is Aslan quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."

"That you will dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver. "If there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or just plain silly."

"Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver; "don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? Of course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."

God is good. But until we understand the truth that He is not safe, that He is not under our control, until we come to grips with the truth of His uncompromising holiness, we will never begin to grasp His amazing grace.

God is not a genie, under our control. He is the master. When we fancy ourselves masters, it can be intimidating to agree to being a servant. Christ is in charge of the universe whether or not we recognize Him—but when we do, we honor Him by submitting to His lordship.

In many passages of Scripture, God calls upon us to fear Him. But once our sins are confessed He says we can warmly embrace Him, come to Him as "Abba, Father" (meaning Papa or Daddy). We can come boldly before His throne with the access only permitted to the King's children. We still fear Him, but in a way that does not diminish our love for Him, or His for us.

When my daughters were growing up they knew my love for them, but they were also very nervous when they knew they'd done something I wouldn't approve of. If you come to know Christ you will fear Him, yes, but because you will love Him wholeheartedly, and sense His love for you, the fear will not be a distant and distressing thing.

Ecclesiastes 8:13 says, "Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them." Fearing God is in our best interests. If you have not accepted Christ's gift of salvation, you are still an enemy of God (Romans 5:10), and you have every reason to fear. If you died today you would go to Hell rather than Heaven.

We all must fear. But if you fear God, you need fear no one and nothing else, even the devil. If you do not fear God, you will ultimately end up fearing many things besides Him.

*Until we come
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THE CHRONICLES OF
NARNIA
THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

**Opening in theaters
December 9, 2005**



*The tomb is
not a blind
alley; it is a
thoroughfare.
It closes upon
the twilight,
but opens upon
the dawn.*

—Victor Hugo



What Resurrection and the New Earth Will Mean

by Randy Alcorn

The biblical truth that we will live forever as resurrected beings in a society of resurrected beings, on a resurrected Earth, with our resurrected Lord, has implications that invite speculation. So I will speculate some here. But I believe it is well-grounded speculation if we understand the biblical doctrine of resurrection and the New Earth.

Reflecting on his life's work, Victor Hugo spoke of anticipating his future work in Heaven. I love what he said:

I feel within me that future life. I am like a forest that has been razed; the new shoots are stronger and brighter. I shall most certainly rise toward the heavens the nearer my approach to the end, the plainer is the sound of immortal symphonies of worlds which invite me. For half a century I have been translating my thoughts into prose and verse: history, drama, philosophy, romance, tradition, satire, ode, and song; all of these I have tried. But I feel I haven't given utterance to the thousandth part of what lies within me. When I go to the grave I can say, as others have said, "My day's work is done." But I cannot say, "My life is done." My work will recommence the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes upon the twilight, but opens upon the dawn.

I'm convinced that Hugo was right in saying that every Christian's life's work, though not always his or her vocation, will continue on the New Earth.

After all, our calling to glorify God will never end. It applies as much here and now as it will then and there, and it will likely be fulfilled in many old ways as well as new ones.

To borrow Rick Warren's book title, surely the purpose-driven life does not end at death, but rather becomes more rich and fulfilling and UNIMPAIRED in the world to come than it's ever been.

In *The Biblical Doctrine of Heaven*, Wilbur Smith suggests, "In heaven we will be permitted to finish many of those worthy tasks which we had dreamed to do while on earth but which neither time nor strength nor ability allowed us to achieve." This is an encouraging thought. It saves us from frantically thinking that we have to do it all now, or from giving up in despair because of the limits of time, money, and strength, and the duties that keep us from certain things we'd love to do.

James Campbell took comfort in this same idea:

This throws some measure of relieving light upon the painful mystery of a life brought to a sudden close in the fullness of its power. In the presence of such a tragedy we instinctively ask, Why this waste? Is all the training, discipline, and culture of this choice spirit to be lost? It cannot be; for in God's universe nothing is ever lost. No preparation is ever in vain. There is need up there for clear heads, warm hearts, and skilled hands.... If some kinds of work are over, others will begin; if some duties are laid down, others will be taken up. And any regret for labour missed down here, will be swallowed up in the joyful anticipation of the higher service that awaits every prepared and



willing worker in the upper kingdom of the Father.... He will allow no heaven-born hope to be put to shame, but will bring to realization life's brightest visions.

We are told in Revelation 22 that we will serve God and reign with Christ forever on the New Earth. What will it be like to perform a task, to build and create, knowing that what we're doing will last? What will it be like to be always gaining skill, so that our best work will always be ahead of us?

Because our minds and bodies will never fade and because we will never lack resources or opportunity, our work won't degenerate. Buildings won't last for only fifty years, and books won't be in print for only twenty years. They'll last forever.

One day Nanci read me letters we'd never before seen translated, written in 1920 by her grandmother Ana Swanson to her family in Sweden. Ana suffered severe health problems. While she was in Montana, cared for by relatives, her husband, Edwin, was in Oregon, working and caring for their seven children day and night. Ana's letters tell how Edwin wore himself out, got sick, and died. Because Ana was too weak to care for

her younger children, they, including Nanci's mother, Adele, were given up for adoption to a number of families, split up from each other. Ana's letters reflect her broken heart, her nagging guilt...and her faith in God.

Nanci and I were overcome with tears as we read those letters. What tragic lives. What inconsolable disappointment and pain. Ana and Edwin loved Jesus. They once had great dreams for their lives and family. But poor health, misfortune, separation, and death forever stripped them of each other, their children, and their dreams.

Or did it?

As Nanci and I talked, we considered what God might choose to give this broken family on the New Earth. Perhaps they'll go together to places they would have gone if health and finances had allowed. Certainly Ana won't be plagued by illness, fatigue, grief, anxiety, and guilt. Isn't it likely their gracious God, who delights in redemption and renewal and restoration, will give them wonderful family times they were robbed of on the old Earth?

Perhaps the God of second chances won't merely comfort Ana by removing her grief for what she lost. Perhaps he will in some way actually restore what she lost.

Our God won't just take away suffering; he'll compensate by giving us greater delights than if there had been no suffering. He doesn't merely wipe away tears; he replaces those tears with corresponding joys. Hence, "our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

I believe the New Earth will offer us opportunities we wished for but never had. God's original plan was that human beings would live happy and fulfilling lives on Earth. If our current lives are our only chance at that, God's plan has been thwarted. Consider the injustice—many honest, faithful people languished in prison, while some dishonest and unfaithful people seemed to fare much better.

But God is not unjust, and this is NOT our only chance at life on Earth. The doctrine of the New Earth clearly demonstrates that.

Jesus said, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as

evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven" (Luke 6:20-23).

Jesus tells the hungry they'll be satisfied. Those whose eyes are swollen with tears will laugh. Those persecuted should leap for joy now. Why?

Because of their great reward in Heaven later. Heaven, he is telling us, will be a place where God will compensate for our losses here, by giving us corresponding gains there. Weep now? You'll laugh there. You'll have in Heaven what you lacked here.

In the parallel passage Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:3-5). Earth is the setting for God's ultimate comfort, for his reversal of life's injustices and tragedies. We will live on what we inherit—the Earth. All the blessings Jesus promised will be ours in the place we will live—the New Earth. God will bring Heaven to Earth.

I believe it's likely that on the New Earth Ana and Edwin Swanson and their children will be able to experience much of what they didn't on the old Earth. God promises to make up for the heartbreaks of this Earth. And he gives his grace in abundance, beyond all that we ask or think.

Are any of us living with the disappointment of unfulfilled dreams? In Heaven we may shed some dreams as secondary and unworthy, but other dreams we will still have, I think, only to find their fulfillment. Did poverty, poor health, war, or lack of time prevent you from pursuing an adventure or dream or going to some wonderful place? Did you never get

to finish building that boat or painting that picture or writing that book—or reading that pile of books? Good news. The New Earth will be a land of second chances. Worthy dreams, those from God, will yet be fulfilled, and far more new dreams besides.

Speculation? Some of it. But if you listen to the words of Jesus, weigh the far reaches of Christ's redemptive work, grasp the meaning of resurrection and the New Earth, and above all if you know the amazing grace and surprising kindness of our God...then in my mind these are dreams that we have every reason to believe will not only be met, but far exceeded.

(Randy Alcorn, adapted from Heaven [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004])



*I believe the
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Students of the Cross by Tom White, *Director of Voice of the Martyrs*

On February 19th, 280 Christian students were assaulted on their way to graduation. The graduates of the Emmanuel Theological Seminary and Bible College in Kota, Rajasthan, India, were beaten at the Koto train station by a militant Hindu mob (RSS) that was waiting for them. They were beaten again at the police station with iron rods and bicycle chains. The students were then robbed and forced to return home. The next day another group of 22 graduates were beaten and also forced to return home. Still, 4,300 came from across India, to receive their diplomas.

Former Emmanuel graduates have gone out to "swim" in the turbulent waters of a Hindu society that is hostile to Christianity, and they have planted 11,113 churches. They were not content to stand on the shore and have jumped into hot water because they dared to get involved for the sake of the Cross.

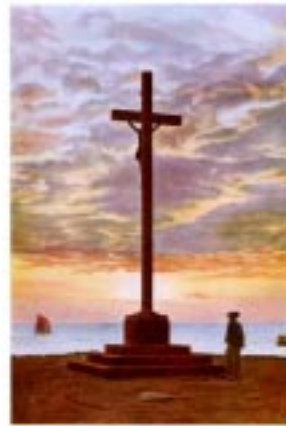
Two years ago 1,508 graduating students of Emmanuel College came from their satellite schools to graduate together in Kota. Standing side by side they made the following pledge:

- ❖ I stand with the apostle Paul in stating that "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain."
- ❖ I take a stand to honor the Lord Jesus Christ with my hands to serve all mankind.
- ❖ I take a stand to honor the Lord Jesus Christ with my feet to spread the gospel to all the ends of the earth no matter what the cost.
- ❖ I take a stand to honor the Lord Jesus Christ with my lips by proclaiming the Good News to all who hear and by edifying the Body of Christ.
- ❖ I take a stand to honor the Lord Jesus Christ with my mind as I meditate upon His Word and His promises to me.
- ❖ I give my earthly treasures and all that I possess to follow the way of the cross.
- ❖ I commit to love my family, orphans, widows, lepers, the wealthy and the poor the way that Christ loved the church.
- ❖ I surrender my will and life to His will and life.
- ❖ I commit to the service of the Lord by being a good steward of my time.
- ❖ I surrender this body on earth to the perfect will of Jesus, and should my blood be spilled may it bring forth a mighty harvest of souls.
- ❖ I pledge allegiance to the Lamb. I will seek to honor His command. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.

- ❖ Lord Jesus, Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- ❖ I love my India and my fellow citizens, and I claim India for Christ.

One spark at this 2003 service was a newly converted Christian young man who had carried his four-month faith back to his village. While sharing the joy of his salvation, he was persecuted by the whole village. Hopegivers International reports that the villagers tied pairs of old shoes around his neck, forced him to parade down the main road while they beat him, and then forced him to drink the urine of a cow. As a result of his lifting up Christ, 100 villagers became Christians.

Glenn Penner from our Canadian office comments: "These students understand that the real sacrifice for ministry comes not so much in the preparation of ministry but in the performance of it. They



understand that a cross-centered gospel requires cross-carrying messengers...Christians are not called to a lesser degree of involvement. Sacrifice for Christ is not theoretical. It is tangible. It is real. Go out, and make something happen."

In my old 1966 *Random House Dictionary*, I found these challenging terms describing the word "involve": "the art of entangling, something complicated, to bring into difficulties, to absorb fully, concerned in an affair in a way likely to cause danger or unpleasantness, committed or engaged." Reading the list, it is easy to see why we hear the sentence, "Don't get involved."

Jesus was totally involved—in the temple, on the street, and in the dining rooms of the world. He calls us to carry our cross and swim out into society, fully engaged, or sink into a worldly sea of sameness.

It is human nature to flee unpleasantness, entanglement, complications. It is supernatural to walk to them and through them for the gospel. Demas, who helped Paul while he was in prison, later changed his mind and abandoned Paul (2 Timothy 4:10). He chose not to be involved. When I was imprisoned in Cuba, I met Pastor Noble Alexander, who while a prisoner for more than 20 years had secretly baptized more than 300 prisoners. The founder of our mission, Rev. Richard Wurmband, taught his Romanian youth group to give Gospels to the invading Russian soldiers.

These students understand that the real sacrifice for ministry comes not so much in the preparation of ministry but in the performance of it.

Do we swim out into society's waters, activating our entire body, involved in the process? Or do we stand on the shore and shout about the danger, afraid of sinking among the sinners?

Surviving or Sharing in Christ's Sufferings

As described in the book, *The Prison Poems of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, this German Lutheran pastor was speaking and writing in America in 1939, while back in his homeland, courageous Germans resisting Adolf Hitler were being executed. Bonhoeffer wrote in a letter that he must cancel his lectures, which were arranged to keep him safe in America, and return home. His uncle, General VonHase, had already been hanged.

Bonhoeffer was disappointed with his church, which was content to survive until the evil times were over, calling this a "self-preservation, as though that were an end in itself." A few Protestant and Catholic leaders protested Nazi brutalities before they gained complete power. The church in Germany, he said, had lost its power to proclaim the gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation to the world. He returned to Germany, was captured and executed, but his writings and the



spirit in which they were written remain with us. He disdained non-moral sympathy, or simply feeling bad about something but doing nothing about it. He called this a product of "religiosity" and hoped that it would not be a trait of his people.

In a letter from prison, he wrote the challenging statement, "It is not the religious act that makes the Christian, but the participation in the suffering of God in the world."

Like Jesus, he chose to carry his cross into a brutal godless tyranny, not by becoming entangled in their sin, but by engaging German minds with the gospel.

The Voice of the Martyrs, July 2005

You may contribute to *Voice of the Martyrs* by contacting them directly: *Voice of the Martyrs*, P.O. Box 443, Bartlesville, OK 74003, 918-337-8015, www.persecution.com. (You may also give your contribution through EPM. 100% of designated contributions go directly to the ministry noted.)

Bonhoeffer disdained non-moral sympathy, or simply feeling bad about something but doing nothing about it.

Newsletter Feedback

Would you help us in answering a few questions? We want to continue to improve the newsletter and need feedback in order to do so. Any help you can give would be appreciated.

Which section do you enjoy the most? (Rate in order, 1-6):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lead article by Randy | <input type="checkbox"/> A. W. Tozer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Q & A section by Randy | <input type="checkbox"/> Articles on social issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letters to EPM | <input type="checkbox"/> Articles on missions |

Additional Comments (including answers to the following): Do you usually read it? Do you give it to others? What do you like best? What do you like least? How could we improve it? _____

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Agent of Change by Edward E. Plowman

Before Rosa Parks was a civil-rights catalyst, she was a devoted Christian who memorized Scripture and taught Sunday school.

The world knew Rosa Parks as a civil-rights icon: the quiet, shy, unassuming seamstress who on Dec. 1, 1955, refused to surrender her seat on a Montgomery, Ala., city bus to a white man, as local law required. Her arrest led to a 380-day bus boycott, a U.S. Supreme Court decision that desegregated public transportation in the city, mass protests that catapulted Martin Luther King Jr. to fame, and wide-ranging changes in the social order.

That part of her story most everyone seems to know. But, unknown to many, before she was a civil-rights catalyst, she was a devoted Christian who memorized Scripture and taught Sunday school. In her own words, it was her faith that sustained her and mattered most throughout her life. She was convinced that God's power and love could overcome everything, including bigotry.

"As a child," she wrote in her 1994 devotional-style journal, *Quiet Strength*, "I learned from the Bible to trust in God and not be afraid." She added: "I felt the Lord would give me the strength to endure whatever I had to face."

Parks grew up in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), a denomination founded in Philadelphia in 1816 by Bishop Richard Allen, a former slave. Born in Tuskegee, Ala., she was baptized Rosa McCauley in 1915 at age 2. From childhood on, she read the Bible, prayed, went to church regularly, and loved singing hymns, she wrote. As an adult, she was a Sunday school teacher and superintendent at St. Paul AME Church in Montgomery, and she was responsible for preparing communion.

"I remember finding such comfort and peace while reading the Bible," she said. "Its teaching became a way of life and helped me in dealing with my day-to-day problems."

She also said her upbringing and Scripture taught her that people should stand up for what is right—"just as the children of Israel stood up to the Pharaoh."

She married a barber, Russell Parks, in 1932, and earned her high-school diploma the following year. She worked as a seamstress for a department store and as a housekeeper in Montgomery, kept up her church duties, and on the side did volunteer secretarial work for the local branch of the NAACP.

In the aftermath of her arrest and the bus boycott, threats and financial pressures mounted, and the couple decided in 1957 to move to Detroit. Despite her popularity and name recognition, Parks remained her modest, soft-spoken self, and joined a small congregation in the city, St. Matthew AME Church. She could have joined a large, prestigious church with a who's who membership list where "she'd be a reigning celebrity," former St. Matthew pastor Eddie Robinson told the *Detroit News*. She instead served unpretentiously at the small church as a home missionary and deaconess.

In 1965, Parks became a staff assistant to U.S. Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), where she remained until retirement in 1988. Her husband died in 1977.

Parks died at her home on Oct. 24 at age 92. President Bush described her as "one of the most inspiring women of the 20th century."

The night she died, officials at the Henry Ford museum in Detroit, a monument to motorized history, went into action. They moved the restored green, white, and yellow 1948 General Motors bus, the very one in which Rosa Parks stood up for what was right, to the center of the hall. They draped its sides with purple-and-black crepe the next day, and children flocked to visit.

Sitting where Rosa Parks had sat, high-school sophomore Megan McLean observed: "What she did changed everything."

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