



# Jesus Alive Today

Empowered by the Spirit to experience and express the Living Jesus so many come to know Him

Final Edition

Newsletter of Renewal In Missouri (RIM), Sept. 2005, Issue #60



## RIM To Close . . .

18 years ago this Fall several dozen LCMS pastors and laymen gathered to pray about how to impact the LCMS with the good news of the Holy Spirit's work in our age. We decided to begin a new ministry that would work within the LCMS in a positive manner. I was chosen to be Director of what became *Renewal In Missouri* (RIM).

God has richly blessed RIM's ministry these 18 years! Hundreds of pastors and wives have been strengthened for ministry at our retreats. Our dialogues with Synodical leaders resulted in agreement in all theological areas where there had been disagreement. RIM sponsored many conferences and seminars across the country, and the fruit from those continues in the lives of individuals and congregations. This final edition (60th) of the RIM Newsletter contains a collection of articles from these 18 years . . . "The Best of RIM." During these years we have published over 710,000 Newsletter copies. Also, many thanks to Ted Jungkuntz our chief proof reader all these years.

We will never see (this side of heaven) all that God accomplished through RIM. The Charismatic Renewal was a sovereign world-wide movement of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The movement has waned somewhat in this country, but many positive blessings continue. The Holy Spirit is still moving in Christ's Church! There is now more worship and praise in the churches. Millions have been "baptized with the Holy Spirit" to receive power to share the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ through *word* and *wonder* in a world in desperate need of Jesus. There also is a greater openness to spiritual gifts like healing, etc.

RIM's "season" appears to be over and we close RIM down not with a sigh of failure, but with rejoicing for all that God has done and for the privilege of being used by him these many years. Most of those who began RIM are now in their senior years. It seems time for new leaders to develop new

ministries under the direction of the Holy Spirit. This decision is the consensus of the leadership team after months of prayer.

RIM has been a vital part of my life of serving the Lord, and I will truly miss the ministry and the fellowship with so many wonderful people of God. I want to thank all who have prayed for RIM and supported us with financial contributions. I also praise God for the "Leadership Team" (Don Miles, Ferd Bahr, Paul Koehn, Jim Bredeson, John Sproul and Gene Goldsby) who have been a tremendous help since 2002.

Our plan is to close RIM at the end of 2005. During 2006 I'll continue to coordinate the "Congregational Prayer Network" and the "Prayer Letter" in addition to personal ministry to pastors and congregations, etc. I will also be serving on the "Lutheran

*Renewal*" board of directors as well as pastoring a mission church in Rome, Wisconsin. If you are a financial supporter of RIM, please continue to do so till the end of 2005. After that I encourage you to redirect your giving to *UEMI, Lutheran Renewal* or *ARM*. (see information elsewhere). For other RIM articles, please visit <renewalinmissouri.homestead.com>.

It has been a "good run" as they say. To God be all the glory! This is not a time to look back and yearn for the "good old days," but to "press on" into God's future (see my article "Pressing On With Jesus"). Till we meet again, either here or together in heaven . . .

Rev. Del Rossin  
(Acts 4:12)



And now, the best of RIM . . .

## Pressing On With Jesus

As I move ever closer to my 70's, I remember Bible teacher Bob Mumford saying, "I don't want to end up a grumpy old man sitting in a rocking chair on my front porch." Well, neither do I. As a senior citizen, St. Paul had a lot to say about "pressing on with Jesus" even though he could have "retired." Listen to the urgency of the great apostle! "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on . . . one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-13).

Previously Paul laid the foundation that he knew Jesus as his Lord by faith not works. It is too easy to "rest on our laurels" and lose our zeal to live for Jesus and the salvation of lost

people. This *pressing on* contains "urgency," much like that of a runner straining to win the race. We must not compare ourselves to "slow runners" or count our spirituality as superior or be content that we are just "in the race."

We are not running in **A** race but in **THE** race. We are not saved **BY** running the race but **TO** run the race. What is the essence of this race?

Paul didn't "press on" just to build spiritual racing muscles; no, Paul "pressed on" so that he could reach sinners in a demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power so that they might "know" Jesus also. His number one motivation was to "get others into the race by grace."

(continued on page 12)

# God Desires That We Overflow In . . .

*Keys for the Missouri Synod to be ABLAZE with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.*

## Dynamic Worship

**“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs” (Psalm 100:1-2).**

We believe that the Church is called to join with “angels and archangels and all the company of heaven” in celebrative, inspiring worship and praise of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Since God’s powerful and dependable Word and Sacraments are always central in Lutheran worship, we expect their fruit to be manifest in a continuing renewal of congregational worship life. While the style of worship in LCMS congregations is diverse, there are four beliefs about worship that we of RIM hold in common:

The **presence** of God in dynamic worship is Trinitarian. RIM’s mission statement: “*Experiencing and expressing the reality of God in the living Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit*” reflects our desire to glorify and proclaim the Triune God, who has “*the glory equal, and the majesty coeternal*”- (Athanasian Creed).

The **pattern** for dynamic worship is the Bible. We advocate no pattern or style of worship as normative other than that which Scripture reveals. “*We believe, teach, and confess that the congregation of God of every place and every time has the power, according to its circumstances, to change such ceremonies in such manner as may be more useful and edifying to the congregation of God*” (FC, Epit. X, 4; Tappert, p. 493).

The **power** of dynamic worship is the Means of Grace. In worship, God acts upon us, and only then can we respond to him as he has inspired and empowered us. God has not promised to bless us according to the fervor of our singing, clapping or prayer. He is ready to meet us through Word and Sacrament as we arrive for worship, and any genuine blessing that is received comes because of his love and mercy for sinners, expressed in Jesus Christ.

The **purpose** of dynamic worship is missional. We do not plan or conduct worship that has as its purpose the preservation

of the status quo, pacification of the loudest member, or entertainment of a target audience; rather, we recognize God’s purpose to be our strengthening and equipping, that we may be sent into the mission field in which we live (Eph. 4:7-13).

**Luther:** “*After the Word of the Gospel has been preached and the voice of rejoicing has sounded forth, there follows the discernment of spirits and the distribution of the gifts of the Spirit of which 1 Cor. 12:4 speaks*” (LW AE Vol. 16, p. 130).

## Vibrant Faith

**“I want to know him and the power of his resurrection” (Phil. 3:10).**

The Christian life is to be characterized by an awareness and expression of the life-changing and life-giving presence of Jesus Christ. This is the heart-beat of vibrant faith . . . a desire to know Jesus more fully and intimately. The Holy Spirit works this desire through a faith that clings to God’s declaration of “*not guilty*” for the sake of Jesus. He also draws us into a deeper relationship with the Savior so that we become more like him. In this process of sanctification, he molds our wills, directs our ways, and guides our thoughts and words to be in greater harmony with heaven.

Thus we believe that the Church needs to be Biblical in “experience” as well as in doctrine and worship. The New Testament Christians “knew” Jesus in a personal-experiential way. They believed that the crucified, risen and ascended Lord Jesus was present by his Spirit in their lives. The Holy Spirit who brought them to faith through the Gospel, continued through that faith to empower them with a full spectrum of gifts for a cross-marked ministry within the Church and out to the world. To such a faith the Lutheran Reformers recalled us and such a faith we seek as the Spirit’s gift to our generation . . . the faith into which we were baptized.

**Luther:** “[faith] is a divine work in us that transforms us and begets us anew from God, kills the Old Adam, makes us entirely different people in heart, spirit, mind and

*all our powers, and brings the Holy Spirit with it. Oh, faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, so that it is impossible for it not to be constantly doing what is good*” (FC SDIV, 10; Tappert, pp. 552-553).

## Bold Witness

**“So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders” (Acts 14:3)**

In response to the Jerusalem authorities command not to speak in the name of Jesus, Peter and John said, “*Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard*” (Acts. 4:19-20). Bold witness given by the Holy Spirit creates in the believer a “holy disregard” for the world’s opinions and threats. A witness that is muted because of concern about what some might think is not the full-voiced witness that God would desire.

One that hungers to be a bold witness to the saving grace in Jesus Christ takes his/her cue from the Apostle Paul: “*I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes; first for the Jew, then for the Gentile*” (Romans 1:16).

We believe that a primary focus of the Holy Spirit in the Church is a mighty empowerment for witnessing to the truth which brings the lost into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus gives us his Spirit not only to help us grow but to equip us to “go” . . . to the lost throughout the world and boldly show them the Way, go to the deceived and boldly show them the Truth, go to the sick and the dying and boldly show them the Life. This boldness from the Holy Spirit Jesus instructs us to prayerfully seek (Acts 1:8; 4:29-31).

**Luther:** “*We have no other reason for living on earth than to be of help to others. If this were not the case, it would be best for God*

to kill us and let us die as soon as we are baptized and have begun to believe. But he permits us to live here in order that we may bring others to faith, just as he brought us. But as long as we are on earth, we must live in hope" (LW AE, Vol. 30, p. 11)

## Fervent Prayer

*"After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31).*

We are to seek God as we pray. We also are to seek his power. James says quite directly, "You do not have because you do not ask God" (James 4:2). There is no magic formula to prayer. We cannot manipulate God by our prayers, yet it is quite clear in Scripture that prayer is heard and responded

to by God.

Prayer is expectation and this is where fervency enters the picture. Do we expect God to answer? "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). Does it matter if we pray? Clearly the answer is yes. Do we always get what we want? Of course not. But God desires that we fervently pray and he has the power to answer prayer today just as he did in Bible times . . . he is alive and well among his people today! Fervent prayer, then, is simply an expectant and trusting communication with our loving God.

Because the Holy Spirit enters into an ongoing relationship with us from the time of our baptisms, we also can hear God when we pray **because we are baptized**. Do we really believe what we teach about baptism? Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I

know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). There are numerous examples in Scripture in which God speaks to believers. Think of Ananias to whom God spoke in Acts 9; or Philip, whom God directed to go south on a certain road in Acts 8. The same fervent prayer was evident in St. Paul's life. Now is the time for fervent prayer. Now is the time to seek God fervently and to hear clearly what he is telling us.

Luther: "But because he is God, he also claims the honor of giving far more abundantly and liberally than anyone can comprehend - like an eternal, inexhaustible fountain, which, the more it gushes forth and overflows, the more it continues to give. He desires nothing more from us than that we may ask many and great things of him. And, on the contrary, he is angered if we do not ask and demand with confidence" (The Book of Concord, Large Catechism. p. 447, 56, Fortress, 2000).

(March 2003)

## Jesus Will Not Fail You

*I was born a Jew and never knew Jesus before these events*

One year ago, on December 14, 1997, I was baptized at Saint Johns Evangelical Lutheran Church. That day was an event unto itself, as the struggle between what my heart was telling me and what my mind was saying, put me into a state of utter confusion. I'm sure you could say the fight was between Jesus and Satan. As it turned out PRAISE GOD, Jesus won, as inevitably he always does!

I attended a healing service the night before led by Bruce Carlson. I truly believe that through their prayers Jesus healed my body as well as my heart that night. I was going to have surgery shortly for what was thought to be cancerous tumors. The surgery went well and the tumors turned out to be benign.

The first few months, I was on a "Honey-moon" with Jesus. I couldn't get enough of his Word, and I wanted to be at church or in fellowship as much as I possibly could. There weren't enough hours in the day to express what I was feeling. Little did I know that Jesus was taking inventory of my life and had decided that there were certain things that had to be dealt with.

I didn't know then that our Heavenly Father will let certain things happen to you in order to "Create in you a pure heart." I had much unconfessed sin, and because of that Satan had a clear hold on me. It came out in much anger towards my brothers and sisters in Christ and most of all against myself. I felt myself backing away; after all who wants anyone to know about all the horrible things you have done in your life?

This was devastating for me. It seemed like everything was going to be taken away from me. Of course that was Satan speaking. It completely overtook me at our last "Alpha" retreat. All the good things I had been feeling were gone! I wanted out. I didn't want to be there. How could anyone love me, especially God?

However, the love and understanding that has been shown to me by Joe Vee, Ann Fischer and Pastor Bill was a testimony to the true love of Jesus Christ. He had chosen them to work through as the rest of my brothers and sisters prayed for me . . . for me the one who was so undeserving.

They prayed over me quite intently on several occasions, and I'm told I fought against the prayer strongly. I don't really remember much about it, all I do know is that I wanted to get out of there. But I know now that the power of Jesus was at work through their prayers, because at the last prayer session the terrible things I had previously been feeling left me instantly.

God is good and faithful, he will forgive you for all your sins no matter how terrible you might think they are. All you have to do is ask. He will never desert you. This is not only a feeling I have but a fact, you see I was born a Jew and never knew Jesus before these events. He has shown me much mercy, and as far as I can see, performed a miracle in me. I am free, free to worship and adore him, free to live my life according to the words and teachings of Jesus Christ.

I don't know what God's plans are for me, but if you believe in him and trust completely, he will not fail you.

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(February 1999)

# Wake Up, The Muslims Are Coming



“Wake up!” Martin Luther warned Europe, because the Turks, the fanatical followers of Mohammed, were threatening Europe.

Today, Christian leaders are crying, “Wake up!” to believers around the globe. Five spiritual powers war against Christ Jesus’ goal of establishing God’s Kingdom on earth. They are Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Communism and Materialism.

Each of these forces is gigantic, but I believe Islam is the greatest of these giants. Islam means “surrendered to God.” Muslims confess one God (Allah) and Mohammed, as his prophet. Communism has proven a failure, but Islam marches on stronger than ever with 50 million new Muslims yearly.

## Wake Up World!

Islam is experiencing tremendous growth. Its followers have increased by more than 500% in this century. The number of Muslims in the western world has doubled in the last ten years. By AD 2020 there will be 1.2 billion Muslims or 25% of all people on earth.

From its beginning, Islam has been a religion with great missionary zeal and fervor. Now Islamic nations, especially those in the Middle East, declare, *“In the next 50 years, we will capture the western world for Islam! We have the men to do it; we have the money to do it; in fact, we are already doing it!”*

## Wake Up America!

*“We’re wide awake now,”* millions of Americans said after radical Islamic terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon, September 11 of last year. Today you will find a strong Muslim presence in 22 major cities from coast to coast. But the majority of Americans are unaware or apathetic towards this quiet invasion. Many Americans are too busy with their own lives, too secure in their own beliefs, and too confident in our democratic system to care about what an Islamic minority is or can do in the United States.

However, new headlines alert us more and more to wake up. In March of 1996, Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the radical black anti-government organization, The Nation of Islam, called for a million African-American men to come to Washington. We

saw the results on television. Awesome! Islam is the fastest growing power among African-American men today. World famous athletes proudly confess Allah as their God and Mohammed as their prophet. In our prisons, black Muslim inmates aggressively “evangelize” the other prisoners there.

Still, most Americans are unconcerned and little effort is made to reach out to Muslims living near us with the Gospel of Jesus.

## Wake Up, Church!

One large Muslim conference in Los Angeles proudly announced its goal of winning 50-75 million Americans to Islam. Many estimate there are 5-6 million Muslims in the United States now. Islam already has more followers than the Presbyterian or the Episcopal Church. Muslims in the USA outnumber the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod two to one! Islam will soon become the second largest religion in our nation. In a single year New York City Muslims listed more than 8,000 converts; Wash. DC, 15,000.

## Wake Up and See the Invasion!

Today there are at least 1,200 mosques in America, at least one in every state. Most of them have been founded in the last ten years, many with Islamic oil money. (In 1900, there were no Muslim organizations in America.)

165 Islamic schools, 426 Islamic associations, and about 90 Islamic publications are now at work in the USA. Again, the majority of these endeavors are funded by oil-rich Islamic nations who oppose America.

These organizations and mosques are dedicated to follow Mohammed. Martin Luther said of Mohammed that he, *“denied that Christ is the Son of God, denied that he died for our sins, denied that he rose again to bring us to life, denied that through faith in him, sins are forgiven and we are justified, denied that he will come as the judge of the living and the dead (although Mohammed does believe in the resurrection of the dead and the day of Judgment), denied the Holy Spirit, and denied his gifts.”* (Ewald M. Plass, *What Luther Says*, Vol. 2, page 962.)

## Wake Up And Witness!

We must begin to witness the truth of the Gospel of Jesus to Muslims. Experienced missionaries suggest six ways to witness to Muslims:

1. Pray. Muslims pray to Allah 5 times a day. Show them we are a godly people and pray also. Muslims use memorized prayers. We use memorized prayers but we can also talk to God as a friend. Muslims can’t do that. Spend time each day praying for Muslims.

2. Show Christian love. Muslims are people. Don’t think of them as terrorists or poor or unreachable. Open your heart and home to Muslims. Show respect for their culture and customs. Practice “friendship evangelism.” Muslims will resist the traditional “plan of salvation” because our biblical words have different meaning to Muslims. Don’t argue; you may win the argument but lose the person. A Christian man should not talk to a Muslim woman about personal matters. Find a Christian woman who will befriend the Muslim woman. Then she will be free to discuss her fears and concerns with another woman.

3. Give your personal testimony. It is better to tell your experiences with God than debate theology. Your personal testimony can impact Muslims and make them hungry for similar blessings from God. They believe Allah is so holy and far above them that he is unknowable. They are amazed to hear how God answered your prayers, guided you in decisions, forgave your sins, and healed you.

4. Give a reason for the hope that is within you (1 Peter 3:15). Dialogue as Jesus did with the Samaritan woman (Jn. 3). Patiently explain how to deal with sin and how to receive forgiveness of sins through Christ. Because words like sin, salvation and blood atonement have different meanings to a Muslim (in fact the whole idea of a personal relationship with God is unthinkable to them), you must be willing to explain repeatedly without frustration.

5. Give them a copy of the Bible in their language. Some want an English/Arabic side-by-side translation because they want to learn English. Explain why the Bible is unique. Know your Bible and show respect for it as God’s Word. (A Muslim would never put the Koran on the floor.) Point out Scripture verses during your discussion. But don’t argue. Let the Holy Spirit convict them through the written Word of God.

(“Muslims” . . . cont. from p. 4)

6. Pray that the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit will be evidenced through your life. Muslims believe in the supernatural. As we live in faith, backed by a godly life and prayer, the Lord will often do signs and wonders through us to confirm his Word. We hear more and more wonderful reports from missionaries in Islamic nations. They tell of Muslims coming to faith by the Word of God confirmed by healings, deliverance from demons, and dreams and visions from God. Sometimes even an angel or Jesus himself visits them. I can believe these reports, because I have also heard similar reports as I talked to converted Muslims at the Agape Bible School in Almaty, Kazakstan, and to new believers in Russia.

George Houssney, Editor of Reach Out to the Muslim World, says, “*On the day of Pentecost, there were people from many lands, including Libya, Turkey, Egypt, and the Middle East. They were in Jerusalem by God's providence to hear the Gospel and carry the good news back to their nations. Today, each American city is a modern Jerusalem. We must see the influx of Muslims to America as both a challenge and an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to them and through them, to the entire Muslim world.*”

Islam's emblem, the crescent, is shaped like a moon in its first or last quarter. As I watch the moon, I notice that it is increasing or decreasing. I ask you, “Is Islam growing or decreasing?” All the evidence says that it is increasing rapidly. Islam wants to be like the full moon reflecting its light over the whole world.

We Christians have the cross of Christ Jesus as our emblem. This cross reminds us that Jesus Christ lived, died, rose, and is coming again. He is the full-orbed Sun that gives greater light than the moon. He does not change like the moon. His light will increase and grow brighter until he comes again to manifest his victory to us, to the Muslims and to all peoples. God has sworn by himself, “*To Jesus, every knee shall bow to the glory of God the Father*” (Phil. 2:10). It will be so because he said so. Let us do our part.

(February 2002)

Dr. Arthur M. Vincent  
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## Quotes

*“Jesus Christ is not valued at all until he is valued above all.”*

“Christ became a curse for us to remove the curse from us.”

*“If God brings you to it, he will bring you through it.”*

“The Christian life is victory in the conflict, and there is no victory without conflict.”

*“Forgetfulness of self is health.”*

“Feeding on God's truth will keep you from swallowing a lie.”

*“Stop telling God how big your storm is, instead tell your storm how big God is.”*

“Don't expect God to do by miracle what he has told you to do by obedience.”

*“Praise is the thermometer of your enjoyment of Jesus.”*

“There is nothing more to salvation than Jesus, but there is more to Jesus than salvation.”

*“God accepts us where we are, but he doesn't want to leave us there.”*

“Truth divorced from experience is always subject to doubt.”

*“Jesus must be alive in people, so that more people can become alive in Jesus.”*

“The Holy Spirit is **RESIDENT** in every Christian, but he wants to be **PRESIDENT.**”

*“What I believe will determine how I act, and how I act tells the world what I believe.”*

“Life with Christ is an endless hope, life without Christ is a hopeless end.”

*“If we pray more and criticize less, we'll have less to criticize.”*

Blessed are those who expect little, they shall never be disappointed.”

*“The measure of God's love is that he loves without measure.”*

## Note to RIM Givers

We thank you for your faithful support, many of you for a long time. Please continue to send your contributions to RIM through the end of 2005. After that we encourage you to re-direct your giving to the excellent ministries below:

**LUTHERAN RENEWAL:** Director: Rev. Paul Anderson

A ministry network supporting individuals, congregations, and pastors (mostly Lutheran), who desire the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. Done through conferences like the annual Holy Spirit Conference in St. Paul, weekend missions, counseling and consultations, newsletters, a seminary and a network of churches. Contributions to: Lutheran Renewal, 2701 Rice Street; St. Paul, MN 55223-2200.

**UEMI (United Evangelical Mission India)** USA leader: Rev Don Miles  
Church planting ventures by lay evangelists modeled on Jesus' method with his disciples. They have presented the Gospel in over 3,000,000 homes, planted 490 churches and have established eight orphanages. Contributions to: UEMI, P.O. Box 2534, Tulsa, OK 74101.

**ARM (Advancing Renewal Ministries)** Director: Dr. Art Vincent

Training and supplying missionary materials for national missionaries in many countries of the world. Dr. Art and his wife Nancy maintain a network of missions that has impacted thousands with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Contributions to: Advancing Renewal Ministries, Inc., 11616 Sir Francis Drake Dr., Charlotte, NC 28277.

# Living In Victory

Chapters seven and eight of Romans teach us something crucial about our victory over sin and death in this life. It is not a victory such that we will no longer experience temptation, fall into sin, or are perfected in holiness. Paul speaks of his personal battle with the sin that indwells him and controls the members of his body. He cries out to be set free. So far this does not sound like victory at all, yet there is a very real victory for us over sin in this life, a victory in spite of the struggles against our sinful flesh and our defeats at the hand of sin. Our victory over sin is through faith in Jesus Christ. Victory is based not on performance but on God's forgiveness through the merits of Christ and our acceptance of that forgiveness by faith. We do not always live in victory over sin, yet our victory need not be affected by our defeats. Sin may take control over us at times, but it need not have the power to destroy us. We are or can be forgiven. The law which we break no longer necessarily condemns us, since Jesus has fulfilled it for us. Sin need no longer bring upon us a death sentence because Jesus has died for us! *"Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Cor. 15:54-57).

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## Exercise your baptism daily, even minute by minute by contrition and repentance.

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The ultimate reality of this victory is that sin can do to us what it will and we can still stand. It cannot necessarily destroy the eternal life God has given us. We can live unburdened by guilt and unafraid of punishment. Freed from sin's mastery over us, we can now offer ourselves as slaves to God as instruments of righteousness. The same bodies that were under the control of sin now have a new master. There is a new principle now at work within us that overcomes the old principle of sin and death (Rom. 8:2). God in fulfillment of prophecy has given us a new heart, a new nature, and his own Holy Spirit to indwell us. We have a new life to live! It is a life to be lived, a victory to be experienced now as well as in the glories of heaven!

I offer the following suggestions from the Word of God which, if put into practice, will help you experience in daily life the reality of your Christ-won victory over sin. May they be an encouragement to you until you see him

at the victory celebration and are like him!

**1. TRUST THE WORD OF GOD!** *"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"* (Rom. 8:1). According to Paul in Romans 6, when you were baptized you were baptized into Jesus. You are in Christ! Trusting this fact there is no condemnation. Say this verse over and over again until its truth overcomes your doubt. You are not condemned! So when you lose a battle with temptation, stop condemning yourself. Repent and trust the Word of God – not your own word. Trust that God's judgment is more accurate than your own. Accept the truth that his grace is sufficient for you (2 Cor. 12:9), and do not wallow in guilt, which is Satan's will for you. When you accept this guilt, you surrender to a defeated enemy and allow him to carry you away from your freedom in Christ into slavery again. Christ took your guilt away on the Cross, remember? His grace is there to hold you in the victory until you are home out of danger! Grace is there to make it impossible for you to lose the war even if you lose some battles. Encourage yourself with this knowledge and live it! We confess that our sins are forgiven and our guilt removed. Let's start living like it and stop allowing a defeated enemy to cripple us with guilt!

**2. LET YOUR MIND DWELL ON GOOD THINGS.** Phil. 4:8 calls us to fill our minds with those things which are right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and worthy of praise. How much of what enters your mind through your eyes and ears meets this standard? How much of your day is spent thinking thoughts of anger, lust, deceit, selfishness, anxiety, etc.? The results of such sinful thoughts will be sinful words and actions if we let these thoughts remain. The best defense is a good offense! Actively fill your mind with excellent things. Memorize Scripture, read it along with Christian literature at regular opportunities during the day. Keep God's Word at your job, in every room in your house, and in your car. Fill your life with Christian music, Christian teaching on audio and video tapes, Christian decorations at home. Evaluate what you read, watch on TV, and listen to on the radio. Think of how you can surround yourself with godly influence. It will make a difference in your spiritual life.

**3. PRACTICE DAILY CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE.** In other words, nip sin in the bud! When you catch an evil thought, confess it as sin, receive the Lord's forgiveness, rejoice in it, and turn away from

the sin. If you are like me, this will keep you busy, but the time invested is worth it as you see sinful patterns of anger, depression, lust, etc. destroyed in you because they were stopped in the beginning stage. Sins of thought will not be allowed to grow into sins of word and deed.

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## Thank God always, even if you don't "feel" like it.

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Remember the words of Luther's Small Catechism concerning the significance of baptism: *"What does such baptizing with water indicate? It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever."*

Exercise your baptism daily, hourly, even minute by minute by contrition and repentance. The power of your baptism is the very power that breaks the hold of sin in the name of Jesus Christ! Use it! Use it constantly! You cannot exhaust it.

**4. PUT ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD.** Eph. 6:10-17 lists the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, the shoes of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, as the full complement of God's armor. In the morning, first thing, or perhaps as you are getting dressed, in a prayer of faith take salvation, righteousness, truth, etc., as divine protection. Dwell on the significance of each piece for a few seconds asking the Holy Spirit to show you how you might use them that day. Do not go out into the daily battle without your armor.

Add to this armor the garment of praise (Is. 61:1,3) that Jesus came to give you. Obey the command of 1 Thess. 5:18 to give thanks to God in all things, even if you don't "feel" like doing it. It is the right thing to do, always! Jesus is Lord of all. He works all things for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28). Praise and thanksgiving to God are expressions of trust in God and remind us of his love and power, and they keep our minds off the wind and waves and on Jesus Christ. They are a great defense!

(August 1991)

Rev. Kenn Cobb  
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# C. F. W. Walther and Christian Experience

There are people who regard themselves as good Christians although they are spiritually dead. They have never felt a real anguish on account of their sins; they have never been filled with terror on account of them, and have never been appalled by the thought of the hell which they have deserved, have never been on their knees before God, bewailing with bitter tears their awful, damnable condition under sin. Much less have they wept sweet tears of joy and glorified God for His mercy. They read and hear the Word of God without being specially impressed by it. They go to church and receive absolution without feeling refreshed; they attend Holy Communion without any inward sensation and remain as cold as ice. Occasionally, when they become inwardly agitated because of their indifference in matters concerning their salvation and because of their lack of appreciation of God's Word, they try to quiet their heart with the reflection that the Lutheran Church teaches that the lack of spiritual feeling is of no moment. They reason that this lack cannot harm them and that they can be good Christians notwithstanding, because they consider themselves believers.

However, they labor under a grievous self-delusion. **People in that condition have nothing but the dead faith of the intellect**, a specious faith, or, to express it still more drastically, a lip faith. They may say with their mouths, "I believe," but their

heart is not conscious of it. No, indeed; a person who cannot say, in accordance with Ps. 34:8, that he has tasted and seen that the Lord is good must not regard himself as being in a state of true faith. Moreover, the Apostle Paul says, Rom. 8:16: "*The Spirit indeed beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.*" Can the Holy Spirit bear this witness in us without our feeling it? The witness in court must speak loud enough for the judge to hear. The same is necessary in this case. According to God's Word **any person who has never felt the testimony of the Spirit that he is the child of God is spiritually dead.** He can offer no testimony in his favor and does wrong by considering himself a Christian nevertheless.

Again the apostle says, Rom. 5:1: "*Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Objective peace, established through the shedding of Christ's blood, exists prior to our justification. Accordingly, the apostle must be speaking of a peace that is sensed, felt, and experienced.

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul writes, Rom. 14:17: "*The kingdom of God is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.*" The joy of which the apostle speaks is not worldly, or carnal joy, but spiritual joy. A person that has tasted all the other joys except the last, is spiritually dead.

The examples of the saints recorded in the Bible corroborate this point. We behold them continually aglow with the praise of God because of what He has done for them. That presupposes that their hearts were conscious of the mercy which the Lord had shown them. Could David, without an inward experience, have exclaimed: "*Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases*"? He certainly had a lively feeling of these matters when he spoke those words.

Lastly, ask any person who has all the criteria of a true, living Christian whether he has experienced all the things of which he speaks,

and he will answer in the affirmative, telling you that, after experiencing the terror which God sends to the sinner whom He wants to rescue, he had an experience of the sweetness of God's grace in Christ. He will tell you that his heart is melting within him at every remembrance of his Savior's love. Again, he will also tell you that, spite of the fact that he knows he has obtained grace, he is frequently seized with fright and anguish at the sight of the Law.

Note, then, that our statement that no one must base his salvation and his state of grace on his feeling does not mean that he can be a good Christian without having experienced any feeling in regard to religious matters. That is not what we teach. Let me offer a pertinent testimony of Luther, who differed, for instance, from Melanchthon by being anything rather than a sentimentalist, which Melanchthon was in the highest degree. Melanchthon based his joy on his feeling; but no matter what Luther's feelings were, he clung to the Word.

C.F.W. Walther: *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* (St. Louis: CPH, 1929), pp. 195-197. (emphasis added)

(May, 1992)



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# Living On The Edge For Christ

True or False? The safest place to be is in the center of God's will.

Of course, you say, isn't that where God wants me to be? Not on the edge of His desires – too risky. Not outside His plan – simply sinful. You're right if the emphasis is on the "center." What if we asked: Is the center the SAFEST place to be?

Little David of Goliath-felling-fame was in God's will when he faced the giant, but how safe was he? Brushing off the scorn of his older brothers, refusing to wear the king's armor and facing an adversary twice his stature, which made more noise – his knocking knees or the rattling stones in his pouch? "Am I a dog that you come to me with a stick?" growled Goliath. With one swing of his sword David would be no more; with one smooth stone, the giant wasn't! Was that battlefield safe?

Vicious felines breathing down his neck. Human carcasses dotting the landscape of the large pit. Chosen to be fast food for royal lions. Safe haven for Daniel? "Nice kitty," he whispers, as miraculously they lay at his feet all night –not because they weren't hungry, but because Daniel was dangerously secure!

"Safe" conjures up the notion of comfortableness or ease while God never promised us an easy passage. Safety can be misunderstood as a haven of no tension, pain or conflict. Yet Jesus himself – speaking to those walking in his will –said "*in this world you will have trials and troubles, but cheer up, I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33). You might not be safe, but I'll make you wonderfully and dangerously secure!

---

*Where is God calling  
you to go?*

*What is He nudging  
you to do?*

---

Five times flogged severely, three times beaten with rods, once stoned (with rocks, not drugs), three times shipwrecked, in danger from rivers, bandits, and his own countrymen, knowing hunger and thirst, being cold and naked, Paul didn't live a safe missionary life. "If we are thrown into the

*blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it . . . but even if he does not . . . we will not serve your gods*" said the three boys as they walked in God's will into the furnace. Ask my sister Julie, who smuggles Bibles and study materials into communist China or better yet, ask the underground pastors to whom she delivers the goods – prison, poisoning and running for their lives yet their secure attitude is: All they can take from me is my earthly life!

Are we so familiar with Christ that we practice safe boundaries so we're not disappointed, instead of stepping out of the safe zone into exploits that only God can accomplish? Do we really believe HE can do anything so WE can entertain godly risks daily? Teacher Beth Moore says that our calling is to awake each morning and bring pleasure to God by saying "Yes, Lord!" and then live out the rest of the day discovering what His directions are. That might be wonderfully dangerous, but we'll be divinely secure! We might contend that we are willing to die for Christ's sake, but are we willing to live – really live! – for Him?

The one who never walked out of God's will discovered that wasn't the safest place to live. His enemies tried to kill Him as a two year old. They attempted to murder Him at age thirty for preaching and healing and loving the unloved. Finally, they did beat Him, nail Him, stab Him and extinguished His life. The dangerously secure life of Christ, whom God brought back from the dead, is not only a model for our existence, but the source of our power for the exciting foray into living on the edge, in the center of His will, for the furtherance of Jesus' life!

Where is God calling you to go? What is he nudging you to do? Fear will keep you safe, satisfied and stifled. Comfortableness will keep you from stepping out and prevent you from being all that God wants you to be. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego depended upon the faithfulness of God to keep them secure: "*When you walk through the fires, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze*" (Isaiah 43:2). Paul was "*perplexed but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed*" (2 Corinthians 4:8, 9) because underneath him were the "*everlasting arms*." Daniel received "*authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to*

*overcome all the power of the enemy*" (Luke 10:19). And the martyrs in China found their ultimate security when they woke up in the heavenly arms of Jesus!

What exploit can you and Jesus attempt this week that might not be safe, but wonderfully, dangerously secure? Remember: The will of God will not lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you!

(July, 2003)

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## From the Lutheran Confessions . . .

*"As soon as the Holy Spirit has initiated his work of regeneration and renewal in us through the Word and the holy sacraments, it is certain that we can and must cooperate by the power of the Holy Spirit, even though in great weakness. Such cooperation does not proceed from our carnal and natural powers, but from the new powers and gifts which the Holy Spirit has begun in us in conversion."* – Book of Concord, FC SD II, 65; AC XX, 27-34.

*"After the Word of the Gospel has been preached and the voice of rejoicing has sounded forth, there follows the discernment of spirits and the distribution of the gifts of the Spirit of which 1 Corinthians 12:4 speaks."* – Luther's Works, AE, Vol. 16, p.130

*"Since the Holy Spirit dwells in the elect who have come to faith as he dwells in his temple, and is not idle in them but urges them to obey the commandments of God, believers likewise should not be idle, still less oppose the urgings of the Spirit of God, but should exercise themselves in all Christian virtues, in all godliness, modesty, temperance, patience and brotherly love, and should diligently seek to 'confirm their call and election' so that the more they experience the power and might of the Spirit within themselves, the less they will doubt their election."* – Book of Concord, FC SD XI, 73

# A Biblical Look At “Optional Extras”

“Extras optional,” – When you’re thinking of buying a new automobile, you may consider the “stripped down” model only or you may consider buying one with at least some of the optional extras. It seems as though this mentality has crept into the Christian Church and many Christians want a “stripped down” version of Christianity – one which will do the basic job of transporting a person in due time to the safety and comfort of heaven but without any of the supposed optional extras which simply seem to push the price of the trip out of the range which a person is willing to pay.

When Jesus promised his disciples that they would be “baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:4-5, 8), it didn’t sound too much as though he was offering them an optional extra to take or to leave, depending upon whether they merely wished to “get to heaven” as cheaply as possible or whether they wished the optional equipment which could be used for witnessing to others while on the way.

Or was Jesus’ command to “make disciples of all nations” optional – one we are free to take or leave depending upon how the “spirit” moves us? And was his promise, “lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20), optional on both his part and ours?

So we have to ask whether the idea found in our English word “optional” is one which is taught in the same way in Holy Scripture. Webster’s dictionary says that optional means “involving a choice: not compulsory.” Is this idea found in the Bible?

In the New Testament Jesus gives us an option: “No one can serve two masters, for either...or...” (Matt. 6:24). Again, he says: “If any one comes to me and does not hate...he cannot be my disciple” (Lk. 14:26). And then twice more Jesus submits conditions, which, if they are not submitted to, have as consequences that a person “cannot be my disciple” (Lk. 14:27,33). There’s your option: you can either be Jesus’ disciple and render him complete submission, or you can choose not to do so, but then you cannot be his disciple, even though you might “come to him” (Lk. 14:26). Jesus allows no one to remain his disciple merely “up to a point,” a kind of “so-far-but-no-further disciple.” It’s either-or. You can’t “come” to Jesus without “going” where Jesus goes - and that is always to the cross where the old self with its “options” dies and the new self begins, which wants nothing

but the Lord’s “options” to be done in its life.

The Apostle Paul, says: “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:25). But maybe this is just an option. Perhaps we can live by the Spirit but at the same time have self-conceit, provoking of one another, and envy of one another (Gal.5:26). But Paul says: – no way! “Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:7-8).

Your option is not to live, and then to either walk or not to walk. But rather, your option is either to live and to walk, or it is not to walk and to die.

The Bible, in other words, is full of options, but not the options for which our flesh yearns - the old “to-eat-our-cake-and-have-it-too” option. The options of the Bible deal with life or death, heaven or hell, cold or hot. “Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:15-16). Jesus does not give us the option of becoming Christians and then of either maturing or not maturing.

Are the fruit of the Spirit, then, optional – something we are free to produce or refuse to produce (Gal. 5:22-24)? Paul does not see them as optional but as necessary. Either we produce the fruit of the Spirit or we do the works of the flesh. But if we do the latter, he says, we “shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal.5:18-21). That’s our option.

Or are the gifts of the Spirit optional – something we are free to pray for or to disregard if we are so inclined (1 Cor. 12:27-31; 14:1-5)? In no way does Paul suggest that they are optional extras for an elite cadre of Christians only.

The mission which the Lord Jesus has given to his body (the Church) is a mission which calls for “varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit” and “varieties of service, but the same Lord,” and “varieties of working, but...the same God” (1 Cor. 12:4-6). We should not try to crowd God off his throne by dictating which gifts we will find acceptable and which we find stupid and unacceptable, given our “natural” capabilities (1 Cor. 12:7-11). Perhaps there is a sense in which we can say that these gifts are not necessary for salvation,

if by salvation we mean that which is begun in us through justification by faith alone. But **faith**, though it **alone** receives and effects such salvation, never **remains** alone, but it is always busy expressing itself in obedience to its Lord; and its Lord says, “Ask, and it will be given you...how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him” (Lk. 11:9-13).

How could “faith” at this point refuse to ask or how could “faith” take matters into its own hands and say, “I’ll gladly take those gifts which match my intelligence and my sense of proper decorum, but I will never ask for anything so inappropriate to my personality, nor so useless to the “body” as a whole, as the so-called “gift of tongues.” What kind of a “faith” would speak thus to the Lord who alone calls faith into being?

What is at stake when “faith” claims such “options” for itself is nothing less than the lordship of Jesus Christ. Whether or not we receive the gift of tongues or any other gift is an option lying not with us but with the Lord. Yet “faith” will discover its Lord’s options not by passively waiting for the Lord to thrust a gift upon it, but by asking, seeking, knocking, and earnestly desiring “the spiritual gifts” (Lk. 11:9-13; 1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1). Not to yield that option specifically to our Lord by asking as he has commanded us to ask is to claim options for ourselves which our Lord has never granted to us.

“Options and the Bible.” – The option which the Bible offers us is either a blessed submission to him who is already our Lord or a disastrous rebellion against him. The option does not include the possibility of only partial submission, but only full submission (which requires repentance and forgiveness) or denial. Ignorance, of course, is not denial, but how much longer will our Lord allow us to plead ignorance? To choose to remain ignorant is not an option our Lord gives us - not when through his holy apostle he with great insistence says: “NOW CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS, BRETHREN, I DO NOT WANT YOU TO BE UNINFORMED” (1 Cor. 12:10).

This is no mere “optional extra.”

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(November 2000)

# Help! My Paradigm just changed

Jim called me on return from his third missionary stint overseas. He said, “Paul, I’ve had a paradigm shift.” I could detect a smile in his voice, and I knew what he meant. We had talked about life in the Spirit at seminary. Jim had been more cautious than open. But God had moved on his heart, and his worldview changed dramatically. So did the paradigm of millions of others after Pentecost started hitting mainline churches in the sixties.

## A paradigm is . . .

- A perception
- A coat hanger
- A wineskin
- A way of viewing reality
- A part of our belief system

Jesus gave two illustrations of change: a new patch on old clothes and new wine in old wineskins. In both cases, putting the two together brings disruption. Jesus was referring primarily to the change from the old covenant to the new covenant, but several truths surface from His parables that can be applied to change in the kingdom:

1. There often exists a built-in conflict between the old and the new. An old institution will likely have difficulty receiving something new.
2. The longer the old has existed, the more calcified it will tend to be. New movements can expect some conflict with old movements. If there is no problem with the old, that may be a problem.

A paradigm is helpful. It enables us to know where things fit. It gives us a hook to hang things on, a context for the text. But it is harmful when God wants to give us a bigger picture. A paradigm can keep us from seeing new things. It’s hard to view the new covenant out of old covenant eyes. God is always changing us. That is what sanctification is all about. We are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory. But old patterns of behavior and ways of thinking resist a new paradigm. And the bigger and more pervasive the paradigm, the harder the challenge to change it.

Think of the disciples: their worldview didn’t allow Gentiles in the family. God had to bust through their paradigm. Some paradigms are limiting; others are wrong. Some have a paradigm that says, “Important things happen at church.” You think God wants to change that one? “Thinking outside the box” means going beyond our view of reality, outside our

normal way of operating. Paradigms can paralyze because they hinder us from seeing things in a new and creative way.

Change is not optional. Status quo literally means “the state in which” or “the existing condition.” The Kingdom is dynamic because the God who never changes is always on the move. That is exciting and uncomfortable. We want to settle in with what is rather than what might be; it is safer and more comfortable. As an alternative to true change, we try tweaking an old system or idea or structure. But as a pastor friend told me when we were starting our seminary. “A new paradigm cannot be started out of an existing paradigm.” That made sense.

To change our paradigm, we must be willing to say, “I don’t see the big picture. There is reality that exists outside my frame of reference. And I may be wrong in my view.” That is why Jesus said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” To repent is to change our mind, to look at God and reality in a different way. When we change our way of thinking, get ready – the Kingdom is about to break in with something new. It starts as a new way of thinking, but it eventually impacts behavior. None of us sees everything accurately. The more humble we are about our blindness, the more open we will be to the Spirit bringing a paradigm shift. (This movement was originally called a paradigm shift by Thomas Kuhn in his book, *The Structure of Revolutions*.)

Some people embrace such changes more easily than others. Entrepreneurs, pioneers, and visionaries spend a portion of their time in the future. They are always asking “what if” and “why not” questions. They are agents of change, and they bring breakthroughs. They think outside the box. Paradigm shifts create discomfort, even for people committed to change. The disciples took the Gospel beyond the Jewish community only after God messed with their paradigm. The instinct of self-preservation kicks in when we feel the insecurity of change. God wants us to be secure, but He takes us out of our security to bring us into new security. He knocks away our props because He wants us to experience the freedom of truth, not the freedom of our own constructs.

Leaders are responsible to help people with change, because paradigm shifts have winners and losers. For instance, in the contemporary climate, organists are often the losers, while drummers are among the winners.

Leaders need to understand the price that people pay for a paradigm shift and help them deal with the losses as well as celebrate the victories.

People different from us can help us with paradigm shifts because they view reality in a different way. Outside consultants help congregations to stretch their viewpoint. John the Baptist was a gift to the Pharisees, but they were unable to receive from him.

The old typically reacts to the new, but the new can react to the old in a damaging way as well. Those rejoicing in the latest new thing could be the next conservatives, when the new thing becomes the old thing. Those who judge the old may be subject to the same judgment. Bands in worship services are a fairly new reality but certainly not the ultimate reality. If our children toss out the bands and ask for unaccompanied music with candles, will we be able to adjust?

Timing is an essential ingredient of paradigm shifts. The old covenant was God’s provision for the children of Israel for a season. The prophets announced that the new was coming, but that didn’t keep people from resisting it. When it came, those looking for the Kingdom were able to embrace the change and walk out of the old and into the new.

Are there areas where you are resistant to change? Where might God be preparing you for change – even major change?

Here are some possible paradigm shifts we might want to think about:

- Pastoring is a gift, not an education. That means there are more pastors around than we may be aware of.
- Where’s the church? Where should it meet? What should it be doing? How does Sunday impact Monday? Is what happens at church more important than what happens out there?
- Have we finished the Reformation? How can the laity be released for ministry?
- What form should worship take? What ingredients? What is a worship service?

Bottom line: I am slowly learning, as a friend of mine says, to be comfortable with the uncomfortable. Because change is here to stay and because much of that comes from heaven, I don’t want to be a resister; I want to be an enthusiastic participant.

Rev. Paul Anderson (July, 2005)  
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## “Lord, Make Me A Worshiper!”

After coming home from church, I found myself reflecting about the service and all that had gone on. I began to think and meditate on just what a worship service really is all about. In so doing, I came up with some observations and questions:

### 1. In worship, I need to deal with MY “expectation level.”

What do I hope happens at a Sunday service? Do I REALLY want God to show up with all his grace, his glory, his power, his presence? Sometimes I am like that Chinese proverb, “*Blessed is he who expects little; he will never be disappointed.*” I need to see with my physical eyes and with the eyes of faith. Do I expect to be changed as a result of the Word or do I just want to be entertained? God’s Word should “work” in me, as I worship, and then continue to work through me as I enter my “mission field” on Monday.

### 2. In worship, I need to deal with MY involvement.

Too often in church I just sit and let all that goes on wash over me – the songs, the Word, the precious people around me, the prayers, the Lord’s Supper, the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is good, but maybe God would have me pray for someone today who looks dejected or sad. Maybe I’m to share a pertinent Scripture or an answered prayer

which will encourage someone and give hope and comfort. Am I available to God’s ability? Am I REALLY his hands, his feet, his voice? Do I WANT to be?

### 3. In worship I need to deal with MY challenges and deficiencies.

The longer I walk with the Lord, the more aware I am of being deficient as a Christian. All his gifts and graces are mine - - his forgiveness, his mercy, his love, his compassion - - each day that I repent and seek his face. How blest I am! What more do I need? Nothing - - from God. BUT I do “need” to give him away in service and witness to others. Often I don’t know how or I feel weak trying to do this. Each day I need to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit – not that I can “be” somebody, but that I would “give” to somebody.




Worship which is focused on Jesus and under the anointing and leading of the Holy Spirit, can be a part of equipping me to meet these challenges. I can truly be refired and relit to face this ugly, sinful world. I’ve been blessed through worship to be a blessing. I have received so that I can give (Jn. 20:22; 15:12; Matt. 25:29; Acts 20:35; and Luke 6:38). More and more I realize that I MUST see all of my life through the eyes of the Great Commission. It’s not only “*what God*

*will do FOR me;*” but also, “*what will God do THROUGH me.*” This requires a change of attitude, change of expectation, and a change of my worship whether it be public or private. ALL needs to be renewed and revitalized to come into alignment with God’s Holy Word.

Entering fully into worship begins that change process. Something in me needs to “move,” so that I just don’t do what I’ve always done. I need to be “divinely disturbed” during worship in my mind, my heart and my emotions. I need to be challenged to feel what God feels, hurt when he hurts and hate what he hates. TRUE WORSHIP can help me in these areas. My prayer is: “Lord, MAKE me a worshiper. Lord make ME a worshiper. Lord, make me a WORSHIPER!” And all this to the glory of the Name of Jesus!

(August 1994)

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... cont. from p. 1)

He pressed on to lift up Jesus for the whole world to see and be saved . . . that’s the purpose of the race.

You see, those who crucified Jesus did a great deed after they nailed him to the cross – they lifted up that cross for all to see. Jesus said, *“If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.”*



It is time to press forward (not look back) and see Jesus in our future along the race and at the “finish line.” He is not waving “bye, bye,” but he is beckoning us on to run with him. Jesus is alive today in your present and in your future. Be expectant for him to use you as you “lift up Jesus for all to see!”

This has been the urgent message and ministry of RIM. Hallelujah! Pray that it continues in your life, your church and in our beloved Synod.

(November 2004)

Del Rossin



## Renewal Resources

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