

New Name Ministries
P.O. Box 11694
Fort Worth, Texas 76110



Insider's View

By David Duremus

Unity is Kingdom

At my workplace two friends are stationed within twenty feet of one another, but their political views are 180° apart. One likes talk radio and is happy to share his views; the other detests the format and considers such sharing an intrusion. At the group home where I re-entered society after prison, two ministry brothers in leadership nursed a personal grudge for months that became so acrimonious one eventually left the ministry. In my own family, a recent holiday gathering was spoiled because remembrance of offense long past brought two siblings to an angry verbal exchange.

My work, my ministry, my family:

continued next page



From the Father's Heart

By Pastor Jon Cordeiro

The Everyday Gift of Christmas

I grew up conflicted about Christmas and most holidays due to family dynamics and the resulting wounds that skewed my perceptions. This didn't help much when raising a family with a bride who wanted me to share in the joy of being together during these times of making memories. Somehow, the memories I had, overshadowed my ability to make and accept new memories. So, I walked with an emotional limp for many years.

With Christmas only a few days away, I look around my house and appreciate the few decorations set about the house, no elaborate lighting or Christmas tree, just the peace of personally knowing the Christ of Christmas. My appreciation of what He has done for me and others far exceeds that which I have for twinkling lights and well adorned trees. Though, I do like to connect the beauty of those lights to the scripture that speaks of our Father in Heaven being the Father of Lights. *Father of Lights*

I know that many struggle during this time of year due to being estranged from their families and loved ones physically.

I used to struggle as an adult due to never being connected emotionally to my family as a child, at least not in a healthy way. I'm sure I'm not alone in this.

So, how are we to contend with the sorrow in our hearts when we can't be with our family or have such sorrow from past hurts that we can't wait for the holidays to pass? For me, I had to forgive those who wounded me, including myself. To do this I had to humble myself and receive the truth about myself and my perspectives. It's amazing how much our perspectives can change of ourselves and others when we get real with ourselves; extending grace to others is a lot easier when you've learned to do the same for yourself.

WHAT WE FOCUS ON IS WHAT WE'LL SEE. WHAT ARE YOU FOCUSING ON?

Being raised in an atmosphere of judgement that promoted performance for acceptance I became very good at manipulating others to get what I wanted. But, what I wanted, wasn't really what I wanted; I didn't know the love of the Father, the Peace of the Prince or the power of the Holy Spirit back then. In short, I didn't know what I didn't know! Who Knew!? I sure didn't!!!

Rejection used to really rock my world. I would pour on the people

Father's Heart
continued

pleasing performance and sell myself short repeatedly to get what I "wanted" – which looking back now I know was true love. I had a God shaped hole in my heart that hurt no matter what I did. My best answers only brought me greater sorrow and deeper resentment. Unforgiveness and bitterroot judgement became my closest friends. Performance became my bench mark for value and I objectified myself and others seeing life as only a game to get what I "wanted".

The long and short of it is that I was all about me (even when playing the martyr) and self-preservation kept me in bondage. When you're wounded, the tendency is to protect yourself from getting hurt worse. The problem with this protocol is that you can also prevent yourself from getting healed.

IF YOU DO WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS DONE, YOU GET WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS GOT.

As part of my testimony, I tell folks that I received the gift of desperation. This was the best gift ever, because it led to my salvation. I'm still unwrapping this gift with the help of the Holy Spirit, today. And, still discovering how much my Father in Heaven loves me. Learning how to enjoy the freedom that I've received through Christ's obedience comes one victorious challenge at a time.

Father's Heart
continued

Today, I'm more excited than ever about what my challenges are going to bring about. Not just for me, but for others. Today, I live for the King, and His Kingdom, not mine. I realize that Christmas isn't one day, it's every day!

Newcomer's View
The First 30
By Jesse Thompson

My first 30 days out of prison have been a whirlwind of activity. I will say right off, the first day is very stressful. For most of us, we face a very long bus ride to our destination, and at the end of it, you will have a real headache. But also, when you reach home you will be made to feel so welcome, and there will be Brothers here who are really glad to see you and they can't wait for the opportunity to get to know you. Also, there will be a cake here with your name on it. For me, that was a shock. All of my needs were met right off. Clothes and so much food that even now, 30 days later, I'm still eating like crazy. In my house we have three scheduled family meals per week, but usually we eat together more than that. We are truly a family here.

It's natural to have questions about dealing with parole. I am on SISF, and it is by no means easy, but my support system here at Psalm 40 Ranch is truly second to none. The big deal is trying to remember to keep track of your hand held device that comes in addition to the leg monitor.

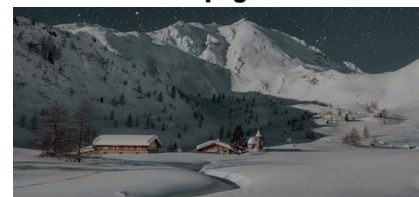
Insider's View
continued

these three are a large part of my life, where I dedicate my energy and draw my value. Yet our communion is often marred by dissent. How often I have thought, "Who needs the hassle? Better to not be involved, to mind my own business." But according to the word of God, that is exactly the WRONG response.

Mankind has a need for fellowship almost as basic as our need for food and shelter. It's how we're made. God spoke "...it is not good that man should be alone...", and in community we find safety and identity. But let conflict erupt within the circle and the communal bonds begin to stretch and fray. Seeing one's friends and family at odds---or worse, finding ourselves in conflict--is emotionally traumatic; the psychic and spiritual strain may cause a group to splinter, leaving individuals alienated and vulnerable.

But how can we avoid conflict, which seems so much a part of our nature? Essayist James Thompson writes, "Wherever Christians are faithful to the challenge of incorporating people of diverse backgrounds into the community of the Church, they will face inevitable tensions." So it seems that conflict resolution must be part of the task set for us by Jesus in His great commission to spread the Gospel. The proper action for mature men of God is not to flee conflict, but to confront and overcome it.

Continued next page



Newcomer's View

Please understand me; these folks ARE NOT PLAYING GAMES WITH YOU, and there are many rules that cannot be ignored. However, they do understand that you have to get a job and will work with you in this. At least for the first year you will have to fill out a schedule for all of your activities a week in advance. This is certainly inconvenient, but you will have plenty of experienced, in-house assistance. Strive to develop a working relationship with your parole officer. Demonstrate that you are serious about establishing yourself and remaining out of prison. There is no denying it; there is a great deal to accomplish during the early days of parole, and it can be intimidating. Do not let yourself get overwhelmed, and take on tasks one at a time. Your first priority is establishing yourself through proper identification documents, birth certificate, social security, driver's license. Everything else builds from these foundations.

In my case, I was able to get a job after only being out two and a half weeks. But if you are unable to find a job that soon please don't panic as it takes most people around two months. The important thing is for you to keep faith do the right thing and the Lord will do what He does best, and that's taking care of his people. I will continue this article in the next issue of our newsletter if God wills it. Parting thought: parole is difficult but not impossible, and it does get easier. You can do it.

Insider's View

continued

What a challenge! Jesus calmed the raging tempest with a word, but many of us are hard-put to overcome our own tempestuous emotions. Here the Bible provides a guide; the apostle Paul addresses this issue in his letter to the Philippians.

The ardent young church at Philippi found itself in turmoil, pulled almost apart by disagreement between two prominent members. Paul's response is not to referee the struggle; he doesn't take sides nor does he assign blame. But most importantly, he doesn't advise the women Euodias and Syntyche to separate from one another, to end conflict by avoiding it.

What Paul does do is truly inspired: he reminds them of the great common bond that brought them together in the first place, the grace and mercy of God in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. By following the example of Christ, by adopting the MIND of Christ (ch. 2), the church can attain proper perspective. That is, unity and harmony come through humility and concern for the welfare of others. Such behavior will confound the malice of the world and spread the Gospel truth! As one modern writer puts it, "The Church's oneness serves as an apologetic to non-believers, showing that Jesus is the Son of God, because such harmony among egocentric human beings is nothing short of miraculous."(David Gustafson, "Gospel Witness" pg 174)



Insider's View

But Paul goes one step further in conflict resolution. He calls on even those not involved in the conflict --- the " true yokefellow, he calls them --- to help the women overcome their schism and bind the wounds of the body. He calls on us, the middle, to use our ties with those on both ends of controversy as a means of holding the group together. The Spirit of God will give us the mind of Christ, strengthen and encourage us to be the bond amongst co-workers, ministry brothers, and family members.

Conflict will surely come, indeed is sometimes necessary and good. Paul himself didn't hesitate to confront Peter and other church leaders in Jerusalem (Gal. 2: 11-21) because "...they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel..." But if we would preserve the unity of our group, church, nation, family, we should dedicate and rededicate ourselves to our common purpose and diligently seek proper perspective to keep that purpose foremost in our hearts and minds. Sometimes family is messy and inconvenient, but it's what God gave us, and it's worth the effort.

My thanks to pastor Steve Cloer of Southside Church of Christ in Ft. Worth for his help and encouragement with this article.

Celebrate our New Arrivals

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Joe Greth | August 13 |
| Israel Charles | November 4 |
| Kenneth Tuttle | November 12 |
| Oliver Anderson | November 3 |
| Billie Lee | November 4 |
| Jesse Thompson | November 14 |