

Summer 2006

It is truly a privilege to write this newsletter. It is a privilege because of the hearts of its readers, many of which I have know for years and have come to love and appreciate beyond words. Some of you I have never met, but the joy of knowing that we will someday meet (either here or there) adds a hop to my step that can only be explained in terms of Jesus. Thank you for pursuing truth, rejecting mediocrity, and loving Jesus enough to live by His life. Kim, Benjamin, and I stand amazed that God would give us such an army of folks to love us, pray for us, and stand with us in such interesting times.

I often scan over our mailing list, asking our Lord to bless every person or family included there. I do so because I understand the pressures of our day, the constant onslaught of darkness against light, error against truth, and good against the excellent. We are not alone in the struggle, for the saints who proceeded us experienced the same to varying degrees. Therefore, I have concluded that the life of faith, the greatest adventure known to man, the supreme privilege presented to the human race, is experienced to the fullest by a very interesting group of individuals—those who have come to love and enjoy “war.” Consequently, if you are uncomfortable in a fox hole with bullets flying over your head, you are in for a very long and arduous ride as a follower of Jesus Christ. Why? Truth is a sword, an infinitely energized weapon capable of revealing reality while unmasking superficiality. Nothing is hidden from it—never has been and never will be. And guess what? It is a weapon that belongs to the redeemed (Ephesians 6:17), a weapon used of the Lord to accomplish the impossible while the believer rests in His promises (Hebrews 4:9-10). What an adventure!

Kim and I have had a very interesting year. It has been one of the best ever, one in which we have observed the value of truth from an entirely new perspective (Thoughts From the Hill will give more detail concerning the subject a little later). The result is that we appreciate to a much greater degree those who have stood in past for that which cannot be compromised. It has caused me personally to dig deeper into the lives of those who have paid the ultimate price (intense persecution and sometimes personal death) for that which they deemed essential. In fact, I was recently stopped dead in my tracks by a verse relating to Jeremiah’s call as a prophet—“And if you extract the precious from the worthless, you will become My spokesman” (Jeremiah 15:19). Have you considered that the prerequisite for Jeremiah’s calling was the ability to extract that which is precious from the abundance of foolishness and worthless having its way in his day? Am I capable of living as such? Only if I have the truth as a grid through which everything entering my mind is scrutinized and tested.

We have been blessed to teach the truth to many wonderful people. Please pray that we can better extract the precious from the worthless as we pursue His calling upon our lives.

Family News

Kim, Benjamin, and I have had an “eventful” year. First off, Kim experienced chest pains last spring, and after an arteriogram, was told they were not heart related. We are not yet sure what happened, but she is much better and back to here regular routine. She remains my confidant and faithful friend, and for that I will be eternally grateful. It would be impossible to articulate what she means to Benjamin and me. She is probably the most selfless person I have ever known, low maintenance, and always for the underdog. And she is married to me, a man hoping to be more like her in the years ahead.

Benjamin, who is now 10 years old, is doing well and enjoying the summer. In the past few months he has hunted turkey, played as much as he can in our creek, played Upward Basketball, worked with me here on the farm, mowed the ministry grounds as well as Grandma and Grandpa Warren's yard, played baseball, played with the kids of the families who have visited the ministry, and played and swam with his friends who live locally. He so enjoys living here on the farm and hopes someday to farm on a fulltime basis. He is a very big boy and a load of fun. He also greatly enjoys getting time with his grandparents on both sides of the family.

I turned 60 this month, and my Birthday party was much fun. In fact, I on purpose got up early that morning and ran three miles to see if anything had changed. Since I lived to tell about it, I guess things are pretty much the same. I have been blessed beyond measure, and look forward to what lies ahead. To be able to do what I enjoy most, and do it with my family and so many wonderful friends, is a gracious gift from God. No doubt about it! Ministry News

In our last newsletter I mentioned that the potential for ministry here is greater now than at any time in the past. Since then we have watched the Lord open new doors while solidifying some of what has been occurring here for years. I will try to describe what He has done, and I trust you will hear me doing this strictly to His glory.

First off, we will have a variety of groups visiting for retreats and camps over the next few months, all of which have heard of the ministry through word of mouth. How humbling it is to see the Lord bring them down our gravel road with a hunger for truth. We have church groups, par church organizations, people off the streets—of all ages, all of which have the same need, the need to know what it means to live by Christ's life. In fact, we just completed our summer camp (13 to 18 year olds) and it was one of the most encouraging weeks ever. In case you are wondering, there remains a large number of youth in America who have a passion for Jesus. They came from New York, North and South Carolina, Texas, Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee. You would have been greatly encouraged had you been a fly on the wall and heard what flowed from their hearts during their stay here.

Another encouraging thing that has transpired is that Grace Walk Radio (www.gracewalk.org), with Steve McVey (author of the book titled Grace Walk), called and asked if they could air our Romans, Hebrews, and The Gospels From a Jewish Perspective series on their website. The Gospels From a Jewish Perspective is presently being aired three times daily, at 2:30 am, 1:30 pm, and 11 pm CST, for the purpose of reaching an international community. Their emphasis is the "life" message, so check them out.

We are very excited about Dr. Norm Geisler and Dr. Frank Turek's visit to western Kentucky. These men are two of the leading apologists of our day. Dr. Geisler disciplined Ravi Zacharias and is presently teaching apologetics at his school in Charlotte, North Carolina. Dr. Turek is an author, in fact, he and Dr. Geisler coauthored I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, an interesting read indeed. They will be staying with us and leading a study here on Friday evening, September 8. They will follow with a seminar at the Murray State University campus, September 9. You are welcome to join us and stay here free of charge. Just let us know if you are interested. You can secure a room here on the hill by emailing us at contact@lifeonthehill.org. or calling 270-437-4172.

We have for years had men's retreats, women's retreats, singles retreats, couples retreats, but never family retreats. However, Kim and I, for some time now, have desired that entire families

visit during specified times of the year. Rick and Donna Underhill have agreed to organize our first family retreat which will take place the weekend of August 4-5, 2006. They have invited a few families to “test the waters,” so after this pilot retreat we will open our facilities to other families as well. Please do not feel left out if you were not contacted. Rick and Donna have organized everything concerning the weekend and I am sure they will be contacting you in the future if you should desire to attend.

We need to announce that we are officially changing the name of the ministry to The Hill. It should be an easy transition since I have made reference to it as such since we began.

Some Events to Consider Attending on the Hill

August 22, 2006 Tuesday night Bible study begins at 7:00 p.m. The book of Isaiah. Babysitting available. **September 1-2, 2006** Two-day school. Topic: Romans 1-8. **October 20-22, 2006** Annual fall retreat for men and women, both single and married.

For more details concerning ministry information, you can go to our website at www.lifeonthehill.org. As always, this newsletter is posted there as well.

A Word of Thanks

Jesus said that if we seek the kingdom first that all things would be added to us. As to whether or not we are seeking the kingdom first, only God knows, but the fact that all things are being added to us is a certainty. I cannot emphasize enough the miracle we have lived here on this hill. When you have figured it all out, please write us and fill us in. We haven't a clue as to how it has been done and why we have been so privileged to watch it being done for so many years. Your friendship is not only priceless, but eternal. Therefore, we of all people are most blessed!

THOUGHTS FROM THE HILL

No event has issued a personal wakeup call like the event which I will “attempt” to describe. It was the ultimate litmus test, the result of which rocked me at the core as I consider how far we have strayed as a nation. If after reading the following you can conclude that we remain a nation which heralds the truth, you might need to rethink your position.

A few months ago I received a call from a local high school principal asking if I would agree to speak at his school's graduation ceremonies. I was honored that he would call, especially since several of the students graduating would be either children or grandchildren of many of my friends. I was also honored because of the man I knew the principal to be, a man well respected in the community and a fellow believer. I asked if there were parameters to the subject matter I might address, to which he replied, “no.” He said I had twenty minutes and a free reign to say whatever I deemed necessary.

The thing I knew going in was that I needed to be sensitive to the environment and honor the students who were graduating. They did not need a sermon (chapter and verse), but they needed to hear something that would encourage them as they faced the world of their day. In the next paragraph I will begin writing as though I were presenting the speech to you, but understand that it was addressed to a student body of over two hundred and an audience of approximately four

thousand. Because I very seldom write my speeches, what follows is not an exact replica of what I stated, but a partial reproduction. Here we go!

It am honored be with you tonight. You have paid the price to be here, having completed the requirements necessary to graduate and pursue your dreams. In fact, sitting where you are confirms that you can process information and draw conclusions, validating that you are thinkers. Don't you love to think? Isn't thinking fun? It should be, for your generation has accessible to itself the largest information bank of any previous generation. As a result, each of you has developed a world view—a grid through which you run everything that stimulates your senses and penetrates your mind. This world view is what you use to define for yourself what you deem to be truth and what you deem to be error. In 1964, when I graduated from high school, we called this “perspective,” or “what made a person tick,” but your generation has labeled it “world view.”

However, as you “think” and continue to develop your “world view,” your world view cannot violate the following principle—“the fundamental law of thought is the law of noncontradiction.” In other words, if what you believe contains contradiction, it is non truth, it is error. Therefore, if $A=B$, and $B=C$, then $A=C$. We also know that $2+2=4$, not 5, because $2+2=5$ is a contradiction. Therefore, no matter how sincerely or passionately someone teaches that $2+2=5$, he or she is sincerely and passionately wrong. There is little doubt that none of us would have darkened the doors of this building had the architect who designed it began with the presupposition that $2+2=5$. For sure, he may have designed one building based upon that mindset, but I dare say that anyone would have hired him to design a second.

I say all of this to make a point. When you leave this high school there will be those who say to you, “There is no such thing as an absolute.” However, in making this statement they have stated an absolute, creating a contradiction and validating their error. Postmodernism is running rampant in our society, a mindset that deems absolutes as taboo and nonexistent. However, we have just proven that postmodernism is taboo in itself and has no foundation on which to stand.

When I graduated from high school I owned a world view (perspective) much different than I possess today. It was different because I lacked wisdom, wisdom being the correct use of knowledge. Let me explain.

There are four terms that I defined in 1964 as follows: (1) Wealth—The ability to do anything I wanted to do whenever I wanted to do it; (2) Notoriety—Doing something well enough that everyone in the country knows who you are; (3) Power—Putting my thumb on others for the purpose of having them accomplish my desires; (4) Success—This was a term that I had difficulty defining because success is basically a synonym for fulfillment, and the people who were labeled as successful were in many cases grossly unfulfilled.

However, some thirty-two years ago, and ten years after high school, I began pursuing truth—“absolutes” in other words. I desired to know truth above anything else in life. The reason I possessed such a passion was because I saw the majority of the world as ill-equipped to give adequate answers to the tough questions of life. As a result of my journey, my world view has changed and I define the previous four terms as follows: (1) Wealth—Being content with what you have; (2) Notoriety—Living your life without fanfare or public acclaim, never promoting yourself or your agenda, only to have society realize after you are gone that everyone should have known what you were about; (3) Power—Serving others; (4) Success—Basically a synonym for fulfillment, is realized only after properly defining the first three terms.

In my pursuit of truth, I have discovered that it is found only in a Person, a Person who is invisible, a Person who claimed to be the way and the truth, and His name is Jesus Christ. I have studied the major religions of the world and found Him to be without equal—the only one capable of answering the tough questions of life void of contradiction. And just think, He is my best friend and confidant, in fact, my very life.

I have an old ABA basketball with me for the purpose of illustration. I was offered \$1,800.00 for this ball only a year ago. Obviously, it has lost its color, is flat, and is basically worthless in most circles. However, the man who offered me such an inflated price knew something. He understood that it possessed worth because of the individuals who had touched it—people who knew more truth about the game of basketball and how to apply that truth than anyone alive. They were men like Julius Erving, George Gervin, George McGennis, and others who were the best of the best. My point is this. If we will but allow possessors of truth to speak into our lives (touch our lives), in the end we will possess worth, and at the same time, be an example of what truth can do in the heart of its possessors. I would encourage you to enter into the pursuit of truth and the corresponding adventure of faith. Again, thank you for your time and willingness to make me a part of your special celebration. After I finished my speech, I had no idea that a local TV station had filmed it. When I returned home, I began receiving calls from individuals who stated that they had seen me on the 10:00 pm News. What I had not realized was that the same TV station had interviewed both the principal and a portion of the senior class beforehand about my coming as a “religious speaker.” I did not personally see the broadcast, but was told that the only portion of my twenty minute speech aired was as follows: “In my pursuit of truth, I have discovered that it is found only in a Person, a Person who is invisible, a Person who claimed to be the way and the truth, and His name is Jesus Christ.” I found it interesting that the only segment aired was my statement containing the name “Jesus.”

What I took away from this experience was priceless. First off, I saw a principal walk out on a limb, put his name and neck on the line in having a “religious speaker” address his senior class. He is to be commended. God is already honoring that decision and will continue to do so in the future. I also saw the local interest this generated, even resulting in a newspaper writing a very solid story about what had transpired. One of the greatest things I have learned, however, is that many who saw the broadcast viewed my speech (and the fact that I would use the name “Jesus”) as an act of bravery. Please don’t misunderstand what I say in response. I have been very encouraged by all who have given me positive input and greatly appreciate their hearts and concern. But this, more than anything else, has shown me where we now live in America. Since when does using “the name” in a public setting indicate that an act of bravery has been witnessed? Would Paul would classified it as such or would he have laughed at the thought (2Corinthians 11:24-33)? Think about it, and as you do, walk on!

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