



NEW LIFE NEWS

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TWO BOOK REVIEWS

By Katherine Meek

My mom belongs to a book club and frequently gives me books to read. I was intrigued and thankful for the two books I recently read not just because of the excellent writing, but because they were thought provoking and informative, opening up a whole new world.

Reading these two books helped give me a bigger picture of the whole situation and keep things in perspective. It was also convicting to see someone sold out to a cause and "losing his life that he might save it."

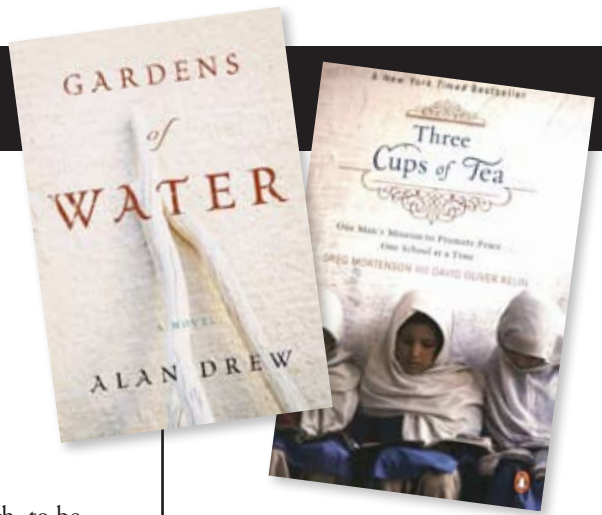
The first book, *Gardens in Water* by Alan Drew is a fictional story of a Muslim family, who are Kurdish, living in Turkey. (Apparently being a Kurd is like being a second-class citizen in Turkey.) Added to this is a catastrophe, an earthquake, which makes them homeless. They are forced to go to a shelter which "seemed" (not explicitly said, but was inferred by their behavior) to be run by Christians. The story is about this family's experience as they interface with fellow Kurds/Muslims in the shelter and the Christian community, specifically a Christian father and son, who had lived above them as neighbors before the earthquake. There are many issues raised, and it is informative to see things from a male Muslim's viewpoint. I decided to see if anyone had written a review and found the author had his own web site. I contacted him and asked questions. I wanted to know what his

purpose was in writing the book, and to my surprise he replied to my e-mail.

"My purpose for writing this book is complicated, and I'm not sure I can articulate it. That's why I wrote the book, actually. I wanted an American readership, though, to be presented with a sympathetic character that didn't like them. I wanted readers to see that perhaps someone like Sinan has justifiable reasons for his anger and suspicion. This is a political story, to me, a measure of criticism for imperfect American foreign policy." —Alan Drew

This book did give me insight into the religion/traditions held by Muslims and how they might interpret others' actions. As the author said, "It is complicated" and therefore thought provoking.

The next book *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin is a non-fiction book about a man who grew up with his parents in Tanzania. They were Christian missionaries. As an adult he becomes a nurse who is passionate about mountain climbing. One trip, he attempted to climb K-2. Due to circumstances he lost his guide and stumbled into a village whose residents nursed him back to health so he could get down the mountain and back to safety. In this area the people are predominately Muslim. They didn't ask for anything in return, but he wanted to do something for them. They told him they would like a school for girls. He vowed he would return and help them build one. The real-life drama unfolds as he tries to keep his promise.



It is never said directly whether he is a Christian, but by his actions I was reminded of Luke 6:35-36. "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High for He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful." Mortenson was driven to meet the needs of these people at great sacrifice to himself. Through the telling of his life and work in caring for these people, I learned and now understand, in part, what it means to be Muslim. I also learned to a greater degree who the Taliban are and the meaning of madrassas.

After hearing the "Voice of the Martyrs" presentation on the persecution of the church and Christians, it is difficult to "love our enemies" and easy to hate Muslims. Not only that, but listening to our news day in and day out about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, can add to that hatred. Reading these two books helped give me a bigger picture of the whole situation and keep things in perspective. It was also convicting to see someone sold out to a cause and "losing his life that he might save it." ❧

CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY AND THE BALLOT BOX

By Dave Kocher

Two candidates are facing off in the fall election, and their political machines are working overtime to take the lead. As you listen to the “talking heads” say the race is all but over, you ask yourself, “Should I even vote? What difference does it make?”

Every election cycle presents fresh challenges to us as followers of Christ and citizens of our country. We must avoid apathy and work to maintain our Christian convictions and mission. We can do this by reading up on the ballot propositions, researching the candidates’ positions, and then casting an informed vote.

Here are some reasons why thoughtful and prayerful participation at the ballot box is the duty of every Christian voter.

1. All authority belongs to God, and He has given us authority as caretakers and decision makers in His world. We are stewards with a responsibility to make godly decisions in every area of life, includ-



ing the political arena, and to promote the common good with our vote. As citizens of this country, we are blessed to have a representative form of government that allows us to vote and have an influence on our laws and the office holders. We dare not squander this responsibility.

2. We are called to do good when it is in our power to do so. The issues of our day

challenge Christians to more seriously than ever consider their choices at the ballot box. The true positions of candidates are often obscured. The long-term consequences of ballot measures are not always obvious or understood. As we prepare to vote, we should seek God’s wisdom and guidance so that our ballot choices will, to the greatest extent possible, work for good.

3. There are serious consequences when Christians disconnect from the political process. Such neglect will most certainly result in tyranny by the uninformed and the ungodly. While it is yet day, we can actively be salt and light in the world by being responsible voters. We can have a moral impact in the political arena as we faithfully participate in the process at every opportunity.

Don’t miss out on the great privilege of voting. See you at the polls! ☛

BEAUTIFUL FEET *By Thadd Davis*

My feet have a long way to go before they are described as “beautiful” (*Is. 52:7 and Rom. 10:15*) and while on the way, I have learned a new phrase that frames what I think Paul’s readers understood. Laura and I have recently been encouraged by our organization and convicted by the amount of time spent walking to and from class, to use our feet more intentionally. Call it “prayer walking” or “spiritual mapping,” the point is to use them boots to pound some pavement and honor God along the way, or even go out of the way to honor Him. As Isaiah reminds us of the reasons for the messenger’s good news, “Your God reigns,” I think we all too often make destinations the major goal and miss opportunities to be messengers along the way (*Is. 52:7*).

Many times I have used everyday moments to send brief prayers of thanks or intercession, but those small prayers unfortunately reflected my small view of God. Paul brings Isaiah’s quote into deeper context, from battle messenger to Gospel disciple. We have incredible life redeeming news to spread amidst the continuing battle for hearts and minds. Of course, I need to pray for these souls entangled in the battle and engage, befriend, and convey to them that Jesus has not left Germany.

Greater Europe Mission’s emphasis on spiritual mapping encourages us to shift the way we see our normal routes to work, school, or the store to be as if Googlemaps could overlay a spiritual landscape. We seek to be more observant of people in their spiritual context of everyday life, which can be difficult as many westerners have divorced their public life from almost all things spiritual. Check out www.gemission.org/Pray/ for information on GEM, Prayer for Europe, and an upcoming virtual prayer tour of Europe on Oct 23rd!

As part of spiritual mapping prayer tunes us into the Spirit’s guiding, the Gospel fuels us forward, and the compassion of being face to face with neighbors, new friends, shopkeepers, or strangers allows for more open and honest communication over time. Whether it is walking or running along normal routes, sitting in parks observing people’s reactions, or intentionally seeking people with whom God has already begun even the smallest conversations, our time can be more effectively used for the Gospel with prayer in mind.

Only with this beautiful message come the beautiful feet pressing on regardless of distance or location. I have been convinced by the Author and initial messenger of the Gospel, Jesus Christ, that my meager prayers for the unsaved Germans I pass every day will be heard, and I need to use my feet to bring the message to them, physically in their space, culturally and linguistically. ☛

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WOMAN'S ANNUAL RETREAT

By Susan Bugbee

I heard Valerie Shepard speak one Saturday in December 1994 to 40 or 50 “retreating” women at Torrey Pines Inn. She was then a young mother with eight young children, and in the process of home schooling them all. The retreat was entitled “Freedom in God’s Presence,” and she shared her favorite verse (at the time): “...In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quiet and confidence shall be your strength...” (*Isaiah 30:15*) Rest? Quiet? With eight children? She was a living reminder that being “...in thy (God’s) presence is fullness of joy...” (*Psalms 16:11*)

I reread my journal entry for the day following the retreat and was encouraged once more by my reminiscences. Part of it read: “Valerie talked about the multitude of things we think we have to do, and we think these are all good and worthy things, even the mundane have-to-do’s. Then Lord, we come to You and ask You to get it done.

When we fail, we look to You again and ask how come You weren’t there. Valerie reminded us to pray, ‘Your list, not mine, be done O God!’”

Valerie is the daughter of missionary parents, Jim and Elisabeth Elliot. When Valerie was a baby, her father and four other missionaries from Plymouth Brethren were killed in Ecuador by the Waodani tribe, with whom they were attempting to share the Gospel. Later, when she was three, she went with her mother to live with the Waodani people. She left Ecuador when she was eight, but still feels connected to the missionary project. There are several books and movies depicting the trials and glorious work of God in that place. A couple of my favorites are the film “End of the Spear” and Elisabeth Elliot’s book *These Strange Ashes*, which describes in colorful prose her missionary work in Ecuador before marriage to Jim. See Deborah Creedon



in the library for other suggestions. Valerie and her husband Walt are missionaries in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Dear Ladies, I pray that your list (and God’s) includes fellowship with other women at Pine Valley, October 31–November 1. Come hear Valerie speak on “Walking by Faith, in Prayer.” You will be blessed! Pick up a flyer and make your reservation today. For more information, check with Denise Tidwell, Ruth Thomas or Janine Power. ☪

NEIGHBORHOOD EVANGELISM By Gary Pavlovich

“How beautiful are the feet of them that bring the Gospel of glad tidings...” —Romans 10:15b

We have the opportunity to meet and greet our neighbors with worship invitations and Gospel tracts on the Saturday before the First Sunday fellowship meal every month when we invite the community to come worship with us at New Life.

Who will go? Families with children, young adults, and the “seasoned by reason of age” are invited to knock on our neighbor’s doors armed with a smile, love in your heart, and an invitation in hand.

We meet in the New Life Church parking lot Saturday morning at 10 a.m. A short prayer is made for His Glory, our joy, and the salvation of our community. We convoy to a pre-selected area near the church and form into groups of two to three, depending on our number, and are led by a veteran of the Gospel, usually Randy Dykstra, Christopher Miladin, Joseph Randall or myself. We return to the church parking lot before noon.

Our purpose is to fulfill our Gospel commission to spread God’s Word by simply introducing ourselves, the church, and more importantly, Jesus Christ. The approach is sincere, friendly



and non-confrontational. We arm ourselves with no “canned” sales pitch. We all were once on the other side of that door, and God has brought us by His Spirit using someone just like you.

The experience is personally rewarding. Many have testified after their first outing feeling tentative and nervous at first only to meet an old friend, make a new friend, or be warmed by the surprisingly open-minded person standing before them. Rude responses are rare, but occasionally happen.

We have seen the Lord use everyone regardless of age, gender, experience, or shyness of personality to reach many at the door each and every outing. We are only accountable to sow the seed and God brings those to fruition as He chooses. Another way to view it is that we are called to be faithful, not successful. Success is His purpose and work. Many saints throughout the ages have testified to their conversion by a tract or a few words spoken. Remember the means of Charles H. Spurgeon’s conversion?

Our dress is casual, in accord with the weather, and our hearts are always warm, often on-fire when we finish!

I encourage you and your family to experience a blessing by joining us on the first Saturday of every month. ☪

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. —Philippians 4:8

THE NUNEZ FAMILY

by Marlys Nunez

Hello! We are the Nunez family. Alex, head of this gang, owns his own massage therapy business and is an Holistic Health Practioner. I am a home schooling mom. We have five children: Troy (23), who attends church elsewhere and is an engineering student at Cuyamaca College; Christiana (21), who is a fourth year nursing student on a five-year track at California Baptist University in Riverside; Francesca (19), who is our resident artist and works at Sea World as a caricature artist; Steven (18), who just graduated from high school and will be working on his general education at Cuyamaca College for transfer to obtain a degree in landscape architecture; and last, but not least, Tristan (13), who is now the sole student in our private home school.

After 15 years at our previous church, Alex and I suddenly realized that we had been trying to fit our square peg into a round hole. My heart was heavy at the thought of starting over. New Life Presbyterian Church was our first visit on what we imagined would be a protracted quest for a church.

From the first Sunday at New Life we were amazed at all the healthy,

We enjoyed substantive conversations with all of you. (We learned about reformed theology and decided it was biblical!)

positive things going on at New Life and were filled with excitement and hope. As the weeks went by our excitement only grew, and we never considered looking anywhere else. We had so many questions, and we didn't want to miss a sermon or a soup night. We enjoyed substantive conversations with all of you. (We learned about reformed theology and decided it was biblical!)

We truly feel that God has blessed us and encouraged us, nourished and edified us through the teaching and fellowship we have experienced here. Our hearts are full, and we are so glad to be accepted into the membership at this church. We desire to be "iron sharpening iron" to our mutual benefit and growth. Thanks to each of you for warmly welcoming and accepting us. 🍷

WHO AM I, LORD?

By Dorothy W. Sage

Who am I, Lord, That You should have selected me— Before the origins of time? It is a mystery far great For this feeble mind to comprehend I am overwhelmed with gratitude— That your love encompasses even me. Your love is so bountiful to one So undeserving. Oh, Christ, let me not be ashamed of your name. Oh, Jesus, let me ever bow my knee to You. All Glory be to You, the Father, Son, And Holy Spirit. 🍷

THRICE BORN

By Diane Henderson

It's such an odd place to be Void of words "God's Sovereignty." Words like "Covenant" and "Grace," Swallowed up, somehow misplaced. Not condemned, yet not complete. No firm place to set my feet. Now, raptured from silver fog I'm led by the Words of God. His family drew me in, I've been born again, again. 🍷

ON THE SABBATH

"Sometimes I have loved the peacefulness of an ordinary Sunday. It is like standing in a newly planted garden after a warm rain. You can feel the silent and invisible life. All it needs from you is that you take care not to trample on it.

—Gilead by Marilynne Robinson

