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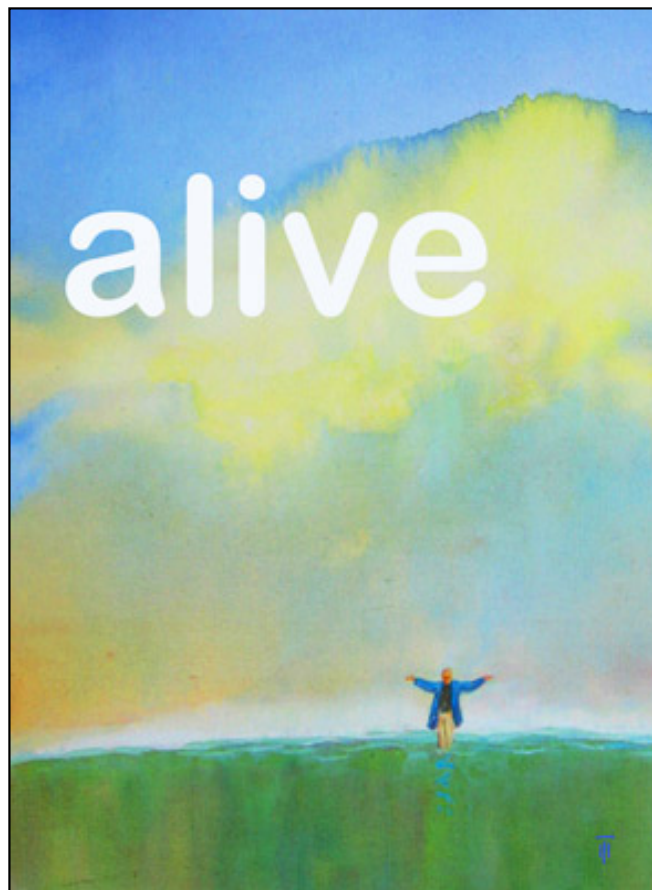
Living Bulwark is committed to fostering renewal of the whole Christian people: Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox. We especially want to give witness to the charismatic, ecumenical, evangelistic, and community dimensions of that renewal. Living Bulwark seeks to equip Christians to grow in holiness, to apply Christian teaching to their lives, and to respond with faith and generosity to the working of the Holy Spirit in our day.

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Awesome Splendor - watercolor by Jamie Treadwell

Question Mark?

by Paul Jordan

When I was a student I often found myself at parties with other students. Sitting around, playing guitar, drinking beer, laughing, listening to music.

The patter at such parties was usually not profound. It was mainly fun. Joking. At times, various ones of us would formulate opinions and make outrageous statements. Sometimes we'd argue with one another until we realised we didn't quite know what we were talking about. Someone would capsize the conversation with a joke and we would dissolve into laughter. Laughing at the joke, the situation, ourselves.

Occasionally however I came across someone who was different. Someone who conversed. Someone who put questions in front of me. Where are you from? What do you think? Where are you going? Someone who seemed less interested in the chatter but personally interested in me.

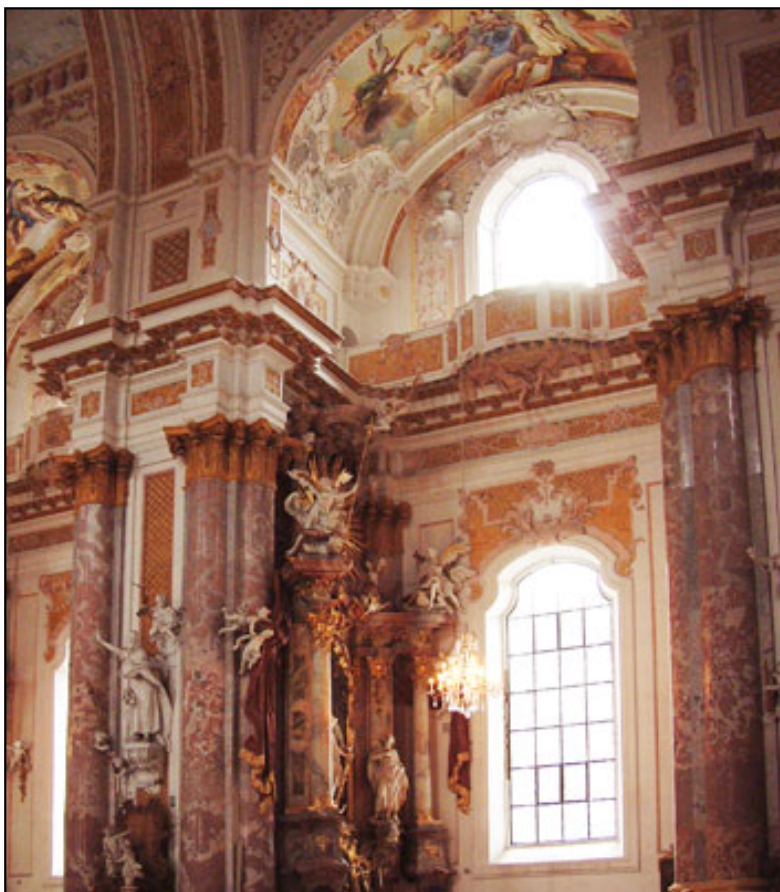
Perhaps you know those people. People who don't give answers or opinions but give questions. People whose very lives are question marks. People who, when you look at them, you can't help but wonder: 'What makes this person tick?' They have a hope and they are always ready to account for it. Have you ever met someone like that? If you

have, you would know because you would have examined your own life as a result. What is my life about? Good question.

The painting drew me in, the first time I met it. It was like meeting one of these people. The image was strange. What is taking place in this painting? It was clear to me there was something holy about it. Because it was like nothing I'd ever seen before.

And it had something to do with God.

I desperately wanted to know what was going on with this man in the painting. What was going through his head? Why was he here? Alone? Gazing up to the heavens. What was it that he had that I didn't? He seemed so still. So at peace.



Baroque style church interior - Munich, Germany

A few months ago I was in an 18th century church in southern Germany. It caught the end of the ostentatious baroque era. It's impressive. One of those churches that as you enter, you can't help but feel that you are walking into a new reality.

Awesome in the true sense of the word.

Hugely ornate. Maybe too much some might say. Colour and gold and paintings and frescos. One is almost taken aback — like in a throne room of old.

It's unusual to find a mirror in a church but there is a mirror in this church. It is located right in the middle of the centre aisle and is fixed on a huge hinge.

For some time I was looking at this mirror. It was a fine piece. Quite beautifully made. Mounted on an ornate wooden frame. I wondered for a moment what its purpose was.

Then for some reason, my focus happened to shift slightly. What I saw was no longer the mirror itself but the reflected beauty of the intricate paintings of the ceiling.

I understood. That is the purpose of the mirror. To reflect. To make it easier for me to admire the frescos without straining my neck.

Perhaps I should do that more often. I meet people every day. I seldom think to see the reflection of the Creator in them. Perhaps I should also see the Creator's fingerprints on my own life.

The man's arms are outstretched.

I wonder if he is offering back to God what belongs to God.



Look at the man in the picture again. No matter how hard you try, you can't get away from the fact that his eyes are on the heavens. He's looking upwards. His mind is on that which is above. Not on the earth.

The Bible says that Christians are really living for another homeland. Christians live with their eyes set on the things that are above. It's almost like this life is just a short childhood. It's like waiting in the airport terminal. True life begins when you get home.

It's amazing. But I find that if I manage to look up and fix my eyes on the heavens, and if I believe, I notice a new stillness. I notice that my concerns and fears somehow take on a different light and I find myself longing more and more for the summit.

Life is passing quickly after all.

[Paul Jordan is the Associate Regional Youth Program Director of [Kairos](#) in Europe and the Middle-East, the international youth program of [The Sword of the Spirit](#). This article is excerpted from Paul's new book, *Alive*, published by the European Region of the Sword of the Spirit, (c) copyright 2007. Used by permission of the author.]

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Transfiguration by Raphael

Eternity's Bright Vision

*poem and reflection on the transfiguration of Christ
by Jeanne Kun*

*And he was transfigured before them,
and his face shone like the sun,
and his garments became white as light.*

My frail and fragile frame cannot contain you yet, O Lord.
Seeing but your shadow takes away my breath
and a glimpse of your splendor overwhelms me,
your burning beauty engulfing me like fire.

More of you I cannot bear to see,
though my heart longs for that day
when I shall gaze upon you face to face.

And so I ask you:
Pepare me for eternity's bright vision.

Purify my eyes
that I might behold your unveiled glory.

Cleanse me of my sin
that I might stand upon your holy mountain.

And fortify my soul
that I might endure the full force of your radiance

and wholly satisfy the claims you make on me.

Flashes of Glory

Jesus' mysterious transfiguration took place shortly after Peter's profession of faith and Jesus' first prophecy of his death. Jesus went up to a high mountain to pray and took his three closest friends with him. (Luke 9:18-36)

Did Jesus allow Peter, James, and John to glimpse his glory so that they would be able to bear the adversities and dark times to come with greater fortitude? "The great reason for this transfiguration," St. Leo the Great suggested, "was to remove the scandal of the cross from the hearts of his disciples, and to prevent the humiliation of his voluntary suffering from disturbing the faith of those who had witnessed the surpassing glory that lay concealed" (*Sermon 51*).

Surely the memory of those moments with Jesus on the mountain must have comforted the bewildered apostles as they grieved after Jesus' death – and later strengthened them as they passed through other difficult moments in their lives. Years afterward, Peter still vividly recalled this profound experience, writing to his fellow Christians, "We were eyewitnesses of his majesty ...for we were with him on the holy mountain" (2 Peter 1:16-18).

Peter, James, and John were weary after the long ascent up the mountain. In spite of their fatigue, they "kept awake" as Jesus prayed – and were blessed to see his transfiguration (Luke 9:32). We too must struggle against falling spiritually "asleep" so we don't miss those "flashes of God's glory," as author Louise Perrotta calls them, which shine "into our ordinary surroundings." While they may not be as spectacular as Jesus' radiance on the mountain, they are "little transfigurations that God offers to anyone who is 'fully awake' to their transforming potential" (2004: *A Book of Grace-Filled Days*, Loyola Press).

[Jeanne Kun is a noted author and a senior woman leader in the [Word of Life Community](#), Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA. This poem and reflection are excerpted from Jeanne's book, *God's Promises Fulfilled*, 2006, published by The Word Among Us Press. This book can be purchased from [The Word Among Us](#). "Eternity's Bright Vision" Copyright 2006 by Jeanne Kun. Used with permission.]

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Man's Mind in God's Perspective – Part II

How can we transform our mind from a secular stronghold to a place inhabited by the Spirit of God?

by Bruce Yocum

Bruce Yocum is President of Christ the King Association and a member of the International Executive Council of [The Sword of the Spirit](#). This article was originally published in New Covenant Magazine, March 1977. Bruce states that he would write this article somewhat differently today, but he is happy enough to let us reproduce it in its original form. [See the [June '07 Issue for Part I](#).]

FORMING THE CHRISTIAN MIND

Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind
(Romans 12:2)

The Christian mind doesn't just happen to people. It doesn't arrive at baptism, and it doesn't come simply because we want it to. In fact, it won't develop without a great deal of effort on our part. Where do we begin? What can we do to transform our mind from a secular stronghold to a place inhabited by the Spirit of God?

Disciplined Servants

We can begin by resolving to view our mind as our servant rather than as our master. God gave us our mind so that we could think, reason, and know him. He intended that we use it to help establish order in our lives. But because our mind plays such an important role in helping us regulate our activities, and because the intellect is so exalted in our day, it's easy to assume that the mind is the master of life. We must dismiss that view and determine that our mind will serve rather than control us.

Discipline plays a key role in developing a truly Christian mind. In *The Wisdom of the Desert*, a collection of sayings from the hermits of the early church, a young hermit approaches an older one and asks for advice on how to handle the many distracting thoughts that fill his mind. The elder tells the younger to go outside, hold open the garments around his chest and catch the wind in them. When the younger says that this is impossible, the elder hermit tells him that, likewise, it is impossible to keep distracting thoughts from entering the mind. but, he adds, "Your job is to say no to them."

Over the centuries the task has remained the same. Our job, too, is to learn to say no to distracting thoughts, and to discipline our mind by turning it to the subject at hand. If we're at a prayer meeting, it's time to direct our attention to the Lord. If we're talking with a friend, our thoughts belong with our friend in that conversation. In every situation, our mind should operate solely on the concerns that belong to it. If anxiety or fear arises, if wayward thoughts assail it, the mind should cast those cares upon the Lord in surrender to him.

Our minds should be like good soldiers, ready to obey our commands and, when necessary, ready to engage in battle to rout the enemy. Mental discipline isn't an arbitrary element of the Christian life, it's a strategic weapon in enabling us to free our minds for the Lord. Like any weapon, the more we use it the more skilled we'll become in handling it.

An Active, Open Mind

A common obstacle to forming a Christian mind is fear of using our mind, based on a conviction that the intellect hinders the spiritual life. Our mind, however, as a tool given us by God to be actively used in building his kingdom. An idle, empty mind is of little use to the owner or to God. Moreover, an empty mind, unoccupied by the things of God or other concerns proper to the task at hand, is likely to fall prey to distracting thoughts or thoughts planted by the evil one.

Not only should we actively use our minds, but we should enjoy using them. At the same time, we should discipline our minds to think within the limits set both by our mental ability and by God's call for our life. We shouldn't strain to think grander, more complicated thoughts than come naturally to us. On the other hand, we must resist the temptation to become discouraged or feel inferior if our mental faculties fall short of our intellectual ideal. It boils down to a question of stewardship. God has entrusted our minds to us and we should be using them with vigor and enthusiasm, knowing that if we are sub-mitted to him, he will guide us in using them as he intended.

Further, it is imperative that we share our thoughts and concerns with the Christians around us. A reluctance to open our minds to others can leave us at the mercy of confusing, anxious, fearful thoughts that could be quickly dispelled by a word of truth from a brother or sister. If we're married, we should share our thoughts willingly and freely with our spouse. Our minds should be open to those who are in authority over us, and to mature Christian men and women in our prayer group or community. We can trust that they will be able to tell us when our thinking is out of line and help us to discipline our mind so that it is truly our servant.

A Mind Formed by God's Word

A mind filled with the word of God is a solid defense against the snares of the world, the flesh, and the evil one. "I have laid up your word in my heart," Scripture says, "that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11).

Formed by God's word and relying on his promises, the mind is quiet, receptive, and open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. It reaches out to God and welcomes his truth in Scripture, prophecy, and teaching. The mind that is immersed in Scripture will easily apprehend the mind of God and is well on its way to becoming a truly Christian mind.

Finally, we can train our minds for the Lord by limiting our exposure to worldly influences. Do we rigorously monitor the information that we allow to enter our minds and the minds of our children? What magazines and books do we read? Why do we read them? If they claim to be Christian publications, are we reading them critically, with an eye to whether or not they adhere to the truth? Do we exercise discernment when deciding what movie we'll see or what TV program we'll watch? How do we spend our free time? It is vital to our spiritual health that we honestly confront these and similar issues, seriously examine the role various influences play in our lives, and then take action against those influences that militate against the formation of a Christian mind.

THE MIND IN PERSPECTIVE

A discussion of the characteristics and formation of the Christian mind is sure to prompt some accusations of anti-intellectualism. People assume that when a person talks about disciplining the mind he is asking them to stop thinking. Not at all. The Lord gave us our minds and he expects us to use them. The intellect is a gift from God — a good, valuable part of his creation. But the Lord also expects us to view our minds in the proper perspective and to accept the fact that above everything else, we must use them to cling to God. There's nothing anti-intellectual about that stance, it's simply a statement of the highest priority confronting the mind. When we have established that, then all the other things to which we should apply our minds assume their places.

“Be Transformed by the Renewal of Your Mind”

The mind can help us come either to eternal life or eternal death. Scripture tells us that “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Scripture exhorts us, “Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind” (Romans 12:2). We are warned to “put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds” (Ephesians 4:22-23). The way we discipline and use our mind is a decisive factor in determining whether it is the territory of Satan or the stronghold of God. We can decide whether our mind will produce death or abundant life for ourselves and those around us.

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Facing Poverty

reflections on a micro-mission trip to Mexico

by John Hughes

Eight Americans (Gringos from the USA) and eight Mexicans, all affiliate members of [The Servants of the Word](#), an ecumenical missionary brotherhood of men living single for the Lord, traveled together on a micro-mission trip to some of the poorest areas of Mexico. John Hughes, from Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA recounts the experience and what he learned about the face of poverty.

[John plays soccer with a group of boys from the orphanage in Naco, Mexico]

Sitting in *Denny's* restaurant in Tuscon, Arizona — enjoying a nice dinner, none of us felt good. I had come down with some Mexican illness the past day. We were all tired, getting ready for our "red-eye" flight home to Michigan, and most of us had school or work to look forward to in the morning.

Our discontentment, however, wasn't rooted in any of these things.

The tone of our re-cap discussion was sober — we had each been reflecting on our experience of the mission trip and what the various highlights were. Brendan Murray, one of the affiliate members of our eight-man American team, somberly reflected, "You don't necessarily come away from a mission trip like this feeling good about yourself."

He was right.

To be sure, it's not as though we didn't have our share of fun on the trip: scaling a volcano, a "close encounter" with a pair of wild boar, a few rowdy games of soccer with the lively orphans at Naco, Mexico, and a big Lord's Day celebration with the Servants of the Word affiliates from Mexicali, Mexico, were among the many highlights of the trip. On another level, our times of prayer together with our Mexican brothers were particularly anointed by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It was amazing to experience a bond of brotherhood and unity in the Lord, in spite of our coming from different cultures, languages, and church backgrounds.

Indeed, taking a four-day weekend in January and turning it into a full-scale mission trip is, in itself, quite an adventurous endeavor. After a brief stop in Ejido Cuauhtemoc on the way to Agua Prieta, Mexico, however, our adventurous spirit was replaced by one of powerlessness.



[Joseph Mathias plays with orphans]

Crippled by high unemployment and extreme poverty, this village is painful to look at. Lean-to shacks and poor excuses for houses stood quietly in the bitter wind, surrounded by trash and an occasional three-legged dog. We visited one particular family — a mother and her seven children — bringing sorely-needed warm, donated clothes, blankets, nutritious food, and some chocolate for the kids.

The next day, while I was at the height of my sickness, I remember thinking: soon I'll get better and go home to central heating, clean warm clothes, a college education, and a future. The orphans in Naco and the kids in Agua Prieta won't have a story like that. How easily we forget these simple realities!



Most people hear a lot about poverty, and many are roughly aware of how big a problem it is. When one comes into direct contact with those whom it affects, however, everything changes. When one gives poverty a face — scruffy and unwashed — things come into clearer perspective. Namely, it's not about us and our weekend of philanthropy, or the stamp on our passports, or our "goose bumps experience" of seeing an orphan smile.

As one member of the team later commented, maybe the Lord leads us to do this kind of work so that we wrestle with these questions, and let the painful reality of a broken world sink in. God wants us to realize our own helplessness in these situations, lest we begin to rely on ourselves. Furthermore, we may reflect on the great poverty we knew before we found the ultimate treasure hidden in the field (Matthew 13:44), for which we have given all of our lives.

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Christ in Gethsemane - painting by [Michael O'Brien](#)

Emotions: Resources for the Christian Life

How can emotions contribute to our growth in holiness and service of God?

by Steve Clark

THE PLACE OF EMOTIONS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Like us, Jesus could get excited about good news. St Luke tells of an occasion when the disciples returned from a mission and reported that evil spirits had been cast out and people had been healed. When he heard this, Jesus “rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, ‘I offer you praise, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because what you have hidden from the learned and the clever you have revealed to the merest children.’” (Luke 10:21).

Jesus did not turn to his disciples with a wise, understanding look on his face and say calmly, “Yes, that’s very good news.” Instead he did something a little undignified—he rejoiced. The Greek word means literally “He leapt for joy.”

The fact that Jesus is God did not put him above human emotions. He was “true God and true man,” and as a man, he experienced everything that is part of being human, including emotions. Repeatedly in the Gospels, we see him responding with real feeling to the situations he was in.

Bad news as well as good news, made an impression on him. After Lazarus’ death he came to Bethany and was met by Lazarus’ sister Mary. “When Jesus saw her weeping, he was troubled in spirit, moved by the deepest emotions.

‘Where have you laid him?’ he asked. ‘Lord come and see,’ they said. Jesus began to weep” (John 11: 33-35).

He knew about the resurrection—fact, he was just about to raise Lazarus from the dead. But instead of commanding everyone to stop crying and rejoice, Jesus was moved with sorrow and cried. He responded in the right human way to a close friend’s death and the family’s grief.

Jesus’ response to the rich young man also showed real human warmth. When the young man told the Lord that he had kept the commandments all his life, “Jesus looked at him with love and told him’... come and follow me” (Mark 10:21).

The Lord even experienced fear; the same kind of fear that we sometimes do. In the garden of Gethsemane, “Jesus went down on his knees and prayed in these words; ‘Father, if it is your will, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done.’ And an angel appeared to him from heaven to strengthen him. In his anguish he prayed with all the greater intensity, “and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to he ground” (Luke 22:42-44).

Despite his fear, however, he chose to lay down his life out of love. Emotions were a part of Jesus’ spiritual life, but they didn’t rule him. He was able to obey God regardless of how his emotions were going at any given moment. What determines how he did things was not how he felt but his love for God and his neighbor.

The Lord wants us to have the same mastery that he had, the same ability to handle our emotions in the circumstances of our lives. While most of us could probably look back over the last several hours and find good evidence that we are not yet like the Lord Jesus, this means simply that we are eligible for salvation. God gives grace to us in our need because it is his desire that the life and character of Jesus be formed in us.

SOME WRONG APPROACHES

The key to getting our emotions to work positively as they did in Jesus’ life is to approach them as neither our enemies, nor our masters, but as our servants.

Tiger in the Basement

A farfetched little story illustrates one wrong way to relate to our emotions—regarding them as enemies. Suppose you were to come home one day and discover a tiger in your basement. You would probably be afraid; you would close the basement door and get a dresser against it as soon as you could. But that would not solve the problem. The tiger would begin to roar, and you would think; “Oh oh, what will the neighbors think? They’re going to want me out of the neighborhood as sure as anything if they find out I have a tiger in the basement.” So if the lady next door asked about the roaring, you would probably reply, “Roaring? What roaring?” Meanwhile, your fear of the tiger would grow worse. “If it ever gets out,” you would think, “it’s going to tear up the house.”

We sometimes take this “tiger in the basement” approach to our emotions. Perhaps we have a problem of uncontrollable anger; maybe sexual feelings make us feel guilty, or bitter about the way our marriage is going. Whatever the emotional reaction might be, it seems dangerous to us, and we want to close the door on it and hope nobody notices it. If somebody asks us, “Why are you so anxious all of a sudden?” or, “Why don’t you want to talk about your husband?” we tend to deny there is any problem.

Needless to say, repression does not work. When tigers are hungry they roar; so do repressed emotions. They can show up in hostility toward people, in an inability to get along with certain types of people, in bitter or anxious humor, in feelings of depression or frustration.

Stern Disciplinarian

A second way we can treat our emotions as enemies is the “stern disciplinarian” approach. We distrust our emotions, we suspect that they are up to no good, so we, take a very strong hand with them. We clamp down on them. We’re determined not to let them move an inch.

What happens if you're a strict disciplinarian in the classroom? To a certain extent you may be able to establish order. But sooner or later you will find yourself with some rebel kids. In fact, stern disciplinarians often have the worst discipline problems because they provoke a kind of rebellion. Often, if we relate to our emotions simply in terms of willpower and strict control, our emotions will rebel. Things can get worse rather than better.

Driftwood

The opposite approach—letting emotions be our masters—is very popular in American society today. One way this happens is through the “driftwood” attitude. It goes like this: “Yesterday I felt pretty happy . . . this morning I woke up depressed . . . there isn't very much I can do about it. . . maybe it will go away later on. . . maybe if I take a drink it will help. . . possibly some-thing good will happen and I'll feel much better. . .”

A person with this attitude tends to be subject to moodiness and depression, to outbursts of temper, to fits of irritability, or other such things.

Amateur Psychotherapist

A second, more subtle way to let emotions run your life might be termed the “amateur psychotherapist” approach. “I don't understand what's going on inside of me,” a person says to himself. “All these emotions are erupting within me. Why, I was driving along this morning and I saw this parking place and another car pulled in front of me—and I got furious. Why did I get furious? Is there some hidden, awful thing in my life that I haven't discovered? How can I possibly handle missing a parking place until I've uncovered the real dynamics of my psyche?”

This approach has a “spiritual” variation. “What I need before I can live a Christian life is inner healing. If only somebody would pray over me, I'm sure I'd be able to see somebody get a parking place and it wouldn't bother me at all.” The person looks for inner healing as the one thing that will get his life straightened out.

Clearly, introspection can sometimes be very good. Sometimes a psychological counselor can be a great help. Certainly, inner healing can sometimes be exactly what a person needs. But we do not need to act as though some sort of psychotherapy or inner healing process were the only key to our spiritual progress. If we take this approach, we become passive and are always looking for something to happen to us to remove our problems.

EMOTIONS OUR SERVANTS

The Lord wants us to approach emotions with the knowledge that they are meant to be—and can be—our servants. He did not give us our emotions so that we could have emotional problems. Nor did he create emotions for our own entertainment. He gave us emotions to enable us to live and serve him as human beings.

Emotions are natural ways our bodies mobilize for action. Fear, for instance, is given us so that we will avoid danger. If we were without fear we might get into some big trouble. Anger can be very helpful—it moves us to overcome obstacles that stand in the way of what is right, it helps us overcome difficulties we have in doing what God wants.

For most of us there are ways emotions are not our servants: we get fearful at all the wrong times, our anger is irrational, our desires sometimes help us, but sometimes are our greatest difficulties. But the Lord wants to teach us how to bring our emotions to obedience.

Our emotions will never be perfectly willing servants. But emotions can be changed so that they generally support us and obey us.

In a lot of ways, emotions are like animals; in themselves they are not rational. A wild animal does only what it wants to do, and therefore is almost useless to a human being. A whole stable full of wild horses will not make a farm operate any better.

But wild horses can become servants, they can be brought to obedience. They can be tamed. Taming does not mean taking the life out of them. An animal can be tamed while preserving all its vigor and strength. But once it is brought to obedience, it can serve.

Even tame horses have to be handled; a person needs some lessons in controlling them. But there is a big difference between controlling something that has been tamed and something that is still wild—whether horses, or emotions.

THE LOVING RESPONSE IS PRIMARY

What can we do to get our emotions to function as servants in our Christian lives? The starting point is deciding to put the loving response first in each situation. The basis on which we act must be: What is the loving thing to do? We need to trust that God has given us the power to respond in a loving way. If we do this, our feelings will come along. Emotions become supportive when we do not put them first. When we do put them first, we find they do not move our Christian life forward.

Therefore, part of learning to deal with our emotions is learning how to handle the different relationships and situations in our lives. We need to learn what the loving response is in any given situation, so that we can make it the basis of our actions. We need to receive a great deal of the Lord's wisdom.

The corollary of deciding to act in love is recognizing ways that we are not yet doing so. We need to call sin, sin.

Someone who is touchy and reacts badly to things he does not like, we sometimes describe as "very sensitive." We avoid looking at his behavior as sinful. We say of someone who loses his temper easily that "he is freer to express his emotions than other people are." We might excuse the behavior of someone who gets up grumpy in the morning by saying, "that person just has a harder time starting the day."

But wrong actions and emotions will not change so long as we excuse them. The Lord wants us to acknowledge wrongdoing for what it is.

TAKE THE ACTIVE APPROACH

Scripture tells us in different ways that we must take an active approach to our Christian lives rather than passively waiting for everything to get better. We need to put off the old man and put on the new man, to walk in the new path, to crucify the flesh and its desires (see Galatians 5, Colossians 3). We ourselves must do some things if our emotions are to become supportive of our lives as Christians. When we see something wrong in our lives, we need to say to ourselves, "I don't want that to be there, and from now on I dedicate myself to seeing that it ceases to be a part of me."

When we are at a "safe distance" from a problem, we might assume that we want to change. But when we come face to face with a particular fear or desire, we can discover within ourselves a resistance to change. Therefore an important step toward freedom is wanting to be free and deciding that the problem must change.

Finally, we need to learn how to exercise authority over our emotions.

St. Paul writes, "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:24-25). Sometimes we talk about putting to death the old man as something which should happen in the future. In a certain way that is true. But St. Paul says that those who belong to Jesus Christ have already crucified the flesh with its passion and desires. There has been a fundamental change. We have become new creatures.

Before us are two options: we can approach our Christian life knowing that there has been a fundamental change, that we have received the power to live the Christian life; or we can approach our lives as if we have not become

new creatures, as if the power isn't there.

Probably most of us have some problems handling our desires and emotional reactions such as guilt, anger, and fear. Some of these difficulties will be fairly easy to handle; some may have a very strong grip on us and will require special counseling from another person. But almost all of us have at least one problem that is “in between”—something fairly serious that we will have to struggle with for some time, but which will not call for special counseling.

We may be afraid of such a problem. We may be afraid to talk to anyone about it, or even to let ourselves be conscious of it. We may want to keep the tiger down in the basement. But the Lord wants to give us enough faith to look at something wrong in our lives and to say peacefully, “I have a serious problem. But Jesus is Lord and I belong to him. He has made me a new creature. He will enable me to handle it.”

This faith in the Lord is the key to solving the difficulties we have with our emotions. As we can probably tell from our experience, we do not become like the Lord mainly through our own efforts but through living in a relationship with him and with his people. We need a faith approach, not a willpower approach, to getting our emotions to serve our Christian lives. We need to center on the Lord and what he will do for us, not on our own striving.

It is important for us to do the right things—to receive the Lord's wisdom, to repent of sin, to learn to exercise authority over our emotions. But these do not amount to a formula for self-change. Rather they are ways that we cooperate with the Lord, and his transforming power in our lives

[Steve Clark is President of [The Sword of the Spirit](#). This article was originally published in *New Covenant Magazine*, December, 1976.]

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LIVING BULWARK sources of strength and renewal for Christian life and mission

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Journey to Covenant Community

"from Brussels ...to Brussels with family and community in between"



by Jean-Francois Collet

Dr. Jean-Francois Collet is a Belgian scientist who does biochemistry research at the Catholic University of Louvain in Brussels, Belgium. In 2004 he received the prestigious BAEF Alumni Award for excellence in scientific research. He and his wife, Claire and their three children live in Brussels.

A happy meeting at Tiberiade

My wife Claire grew up in a French village close to the German border. I grew up in Brussels, Belgium. Our common path started in April '94 during an Easter celebration at the Belgian [Community of Tiberiade](#). After our wedding in 1997 at the end of the summer, Claire moved to Brussels.

Claire and I grew up as Christians. We both had a personal prayer life; we were involved in Franciscan renewal groups and in several other church-related movements. With Tiberiade, I had the wonderful opportunity to go on an ecumenical pilgrimage from Assisi in Italy to Sarov in Russia. We were joined by Orthodox brothers and sisters and, on our way from Italy to Russia, we prayed together for the unity of the church.

Yearning for Christian community

After we got married, Claire and I got involved with youth groups in Brussels, being responsible for the pastoral care of about 150 young boys and girls. At the same time, a desire for community started to grow in our hearts. Paradoxically this desire was both vague and clear. We did not know what we were longing for, but we knew it was something different from the communities we knew in Belgium. We prayed for it, asking the Lord to show us what he wanted.



In 2000, I got my PhD in biochemistry and shortly after that we decided to look for a place for a postdoctoral job. At a meeting in Leeds, I met an outstanding scientist from La Jolla, California who invited me to join his lab in sunny home state California. Although it was very tempting to take this job opportunity, we were not at peace with it and we continued to pray for discernment.



In May 2000 I heard of a good lab in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA. So I sent an email to the group leader; he called me back less than an hour later and it immediately became clear to Claire and I that this was the place where we were supposed to go. At that time we did not even know where Michigan was, and we had no idea that there was a Christian community such as the Word of Life. [See related article on [Word of Life](#).] We got word of it a week before we left Brussels. Someone gave us the email address of Bruce Yocum. I sent Bruce an email to ask him a few questions about the community in Ann Arbor. Bruce replied that he was not in Michigan anymore and suggested we contact Ed Conlin. We did not know it, but the Lord was discretely tying a spiritual knot that would impact our life far more that we could have expected.

Word of Life community in Ann Arbor

The day after we landed in Michigan, Ed came over to our new place. We could not believe our ears when we heard that Ed had spent several years in Brussels and was fluent in Flemish and in French, the two languages spoken in Belgium. On our first Sunday in Ann Arbor, Ed took us to the [Word of Life](#) afternoon community meeting. Although we had to adapt to the way they prayed, we quickly sensed that this community was the answer to our prayers. This was what we were longing for! A few months later, we got baptized in the Holy Spirit. I have to say that it did not change our life overnight. However, it progressively made us enter into a new and deeper relationship with Christ. We stayed in Ann Arbor more than 3 years; our time in the community has been a real blessing for Claire and me, and also for our 3 children. It really renewed us and, importantly, gave us a vision. We now knew that community life was possible!

Jerusalem Community in Brussels

Strengthened with this vision, we decided to move back to Belgium where we joined the [Jerusalem](#) community, a multilingual and multicultural community which is part of the same network of international communities as Word of Life in Ann Arbor. When we first went to Jerusalem, the community was recovering from difficult times they had experienced in the 1990s. However, we were deeply moved by the faithfulness and commitment of the community members we met. It quickly became obvious to us that the Lord was at work in the community, bringing new life to it. After three years in Jerusalem, we feel blessed to belong to this community and to humbly take part in its rebuilding. We are convinced that Ann Arbor was for us the best way to go from Brussels to... Brussels!

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Cottages in Trees - watercolor by Jamie Treadwell

Home: Our Abiding Place

by Jeanne Kun

Home is where the heart is

The simple word “home” has a strong impact on us. For most of us thoughts of home are agreeable and pleasant, evoking images of warmth, shelter, rootedness, safety, security. Home is where the heart is. It’s that place of our origin, a haven, a resting place, the spot where we know we belong, the place we call our own, a source of refreshment to us. To feel “at home” is to be at ease, on familiar ground. Home: our abiding place.

And so the idea of going home is usually a welcome one; with fondness and anticipation we make that trip. The statement, “you can’t go home again” has a sharp poignancy about it.

With a realization of these many aspects of home, it becomes significant that Jesus extends this particular invitation to us: “Abide in me!” (John 15:4), or, actually using our image, the Jerusalem Bible reads, “Make your home in me.”

The Lord is our shelter, refuge, and resting place

More than any earthly home, it is Jesus himself who is our shelter (Psalm 91:1), our rock and refuge (Psalm 62:7), our dwelling place (Psalm 90:1). He offers himself as our resting place (Matthew 11:29), our refreshment. We have

a sure confidence of belonging to him, and he even allows us to claim some “ownership” of him, too: “My beloved is mine, and I am his” (Song of Songs 2:16). As we grow into a deep, intimate relationship with Jesus, we find ourselves more and more at ease and on familiar ground in his presence. As with our home, “where our treasure is, there too will be our hearts” (Luke 12:34). And we look forward to finally arriving at our “homeland” in heaven (Philippians 3:20).

What a rich comparison there is in seeing Jesus as our home. Even our most appealing notions or most pleasant experiences of our earthly homes pale in the light of Jesus as our true and lasting abiding place. A wealth of insight lies before us in this concept for our prayer and reflection.

“Make your home in me”

But we can find even more in this comparison as we search the Scriptures further – more to thrill us, more to excite us, more to move us to an active response to Jesus’ invitation. While inviting us to make our home in him, Jesus went on to say he wants to make his home in us: “Make your home in me, as I make mine in you” (John 15:4). In other words, Jesus requests that we make a place to receive him, to welcome him, where he can take up permanent residence with us. Earlier in his gospel, John expressed the same idea this way: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), or, more literally, “pitched his tent among us” – made his dwelling place in our midst.

How can we respond to such a request? And such an offer! What can we do to make more of a place for Jesus to enter into our lives? Perhaps the most concrete action we can take is to embrace the Word who dwells among us – to get to know the Word made flesh by getting to know the spoken and written word of God in Scripture. St. Paul gives us advice that is finely tuned to our analogy: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16). Again, the translation that the Jerusalem Bible offers strongly underlines the image: “Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you.”

Taking Scripture to heart

This image helps make real one of my favorite (and to me, most helpful) ways of approaching Scripture. I often think of Scripture and relate to it in terms of “making it my own.” To me, that means not only reading Scripture, but taking it in, loving it, embracing it, pondering it, allowing myself to be molded and taught by it, obeying it, having it as my fingertips and in the front of my mind; in short, becoming so familiar with God’s word that I can really say that I’ve made it “my own” – my way of thinking, my way of life, my guide, my nourishment.

One doesn’t build a house or home overnight. Nor has Scripture instantly become my own. It has only been with daily patience, daily discipline, daily prayer for insight into the word of God, over years and years, that this familiarity has been growing, that the word of God is truly finding a home in me. And there have been many days of being hard put to find the time to read Scripture; or while having the time, no desire has risen in me for this reading. But little by little, gradually but steadily, Scripture has pervaded my life, has taken a hold of me, and is finding that place in me that God desires and yearns for. It is being written on my heart.

Make a worthy home for the Word of God

In Old Testament times, the God of Israel gave his people a way of holding onto his word to them. The direction he gave to them so long ago has been relevant, meaningful, and effective for me as I have striven to let the word of Christ find a home in me. Urging the Israelites to prize his word, Yahweh said, “These words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

May you, too, write the word of God on the doorpost of your house. As you make your home in Christ, may you also make a worthy home for his word in your heart.

[Jeanne Kun is a noted author and a senior woman leader in the [Word of Life Community](#), Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA. This article originally appeared in *God's Word Today*, May 1991. Used by permission of the author.]

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Transfiguration by Raphael

Beholding his Glory

with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration

by Don Schwager

Shortly before the war between Israel and Hezbollah in the summer of 2006, I had the opportunity to visit southern Lebanon. My guide was [Archbishop George Bakouni](#) from Tyre who took me with a group of friends to the region of Mount Hermon, the tallest peak which today borders Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. For me the journey was a spiritual pilgrimage, because I believe that Mount Hermon is the place where Jesus took three of his beloved disciples and was transfigured in glory before them as he spoke with Moses and Elijah. What is the significance of Jesus' transfiguration for us today?

The mountain of God

Jesus often went to a lonely place to pray – to seek solitude and sanctuary away from the crowds. His favorite place in Jerusalem was the Mount of Olives which overlooked the temple mount. Matthew, Mark, and Luke recount an extraordinary encounter which took place on a high mountain when Jesus was transfigured before three of his disciples – Peter, James, and John. Moses and Elijah also appeared with Jesus and spoke with him. Why Moses and Elijah? Like Jesus both Moses and Elijah went to a high mountain to seek the face of God and to hear his voice.

The scriptures speak frequently of the mountain of God. God's people are called to worship at his holy mountain (Psalm 99:9). Isaiah says: "*Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths*" (Is. 2:3). "*Why look you with envy, O many peaked mountain, at the mount which God desired for his abode, yes, where the Lord will dwell for ever*" (Psalm 68:16).



view of Mount Hermon from southern Lebanon

"Jesus led them up a high mountain"

We do not know for certain where Jesus was transfigured with Moses and Elijah. It very likely was on the peak of Mount Hermon, the highest mountain which today borders Israel, Lebanon, and Syria. Both Matthew and Mark in their gospel accounts tell us that Jesus journeyed north from Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee to the city of Caesarea Philippi just before his ascent to a high mountain (Matt 16:13; Mark 8:27). Caesarea Philippi is located at the southern base of Mount Hermon. This is the place where Peter first confessed Jesus to be the *Christ* (the Greek word for *Messiah*) – *God's anointed One*, and where Jesus revealed his purpose to build his church and to go to Jerusalem to die and to rise again (Matthew 16:18-21).

And Jesus went on with his disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Eli'jah; and others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." (Mark 8:27-29)

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves; and he was transfigured before them, and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Eli'jah with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus. (Mark 9:2-4)

When Moses met with God on Mount Sinai the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God (see Exodus 34:29). Paul says that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness (2 Cor. 3:7). In this incident Jesus appeared in glory with Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel, and with Elijah, the greatest of the prophets, in the presence of three of his beloved apostles.

What is the significance of this mysterious appearance? Jesus went to the mountain knowing full well what awaited him in Jerusalem – his betrayal, rejection and crucifixion. Jesus very likely discussed this momentous decision to go to the cross with Moses and Elijah. God the Father also spoke with Jesus and gave his approval: *"This is my beloved Son; listen to him."* The cloud which overshadowed Jesus and his apostles fulfilled the dream of the Jews that when the Messiah came the cloud of God's presence would fill the temple again (see Exodus 16:10, 19:9, 33:9; 1 Kings 8:10; 2 Maccabees 2:8).

"Beholding the glory of the Lord"

Luke's gospel tells us that while Jesus was transfigured, Peter, James, and John were asleep (Luke 9:32)! Upon awakening they discovered Jesus in glory along with Moses and Elijah. The Risen Lord Jesus invites us to behold his glory too! But it is all too easy to miss God's glory and action in our lives because we are asleep spiritually. There are many things which can keep our minds asleep to the things of God: Mental lethargy and the "unexamined life"

can keep us from thinking things through and facing our doubts and questions. The life of ease can also hinder us from considering the challenging or disturbing demands of Christ. Prejudice can make us blind to something new the Lord may have for us. Even sorrow can be a block until we can see past it to the glory of God.

Are you spiritually awake? Peter, James, and John were privileged witnesses of the glory of Christ. We, too, as disciples of Christ are called to be witnesses of his glory. Through the eyes of faith, we too, can behold his glory and be transformed by it. Do you seek his presence with faith and reverence?

We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).

“Lord Jesus Christ, keep me always alert and awake to you, to your word, action, and daily presence in my life. Let me see your glory and be transformed by it.”

[Don Schwager is a member of [The Servants of the Word](#) and the author of the [Daily Scripture Reading and Meditation](#) website.]

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community anniversary celebration dinner

Word of Life

a community of disciples on mission

by Jon Wilson

To give the reader some historical background: [Word of Life](#), an ecumenical Christian Community, located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, takes its roots in the charismatic renewal which began in the late 1960s. In the fall of 1967 Steve Clark, Ralph Martin, Gerry Rauch, and Jim Cavnar, all Notre Dame University graduates, came to Ann Arbor to establish a student evangelistic outreach at the University of Michigan. Their work led to the founding of The Word of God, one of the first covenant communities, which formally began in 1970. In 1982 The Word of God helped to establish an international community of communities, called The Sword of the Spirit. When a leadership crisis ensued in The Word of God and The Sword of the Spirit in 1991, Word of Life was established with a number of families, single people, and The Servants of the Word, along with support from Steve Clark and other leaders in The Sword of the Spirit.

Beginnings

Ann Arbor is a booming town of over 100,000 inhabitants, including 40,000 graduate and undergraduate students. It's a pleasant place to live, but most students move on to jobs, careers, and families elsewhere around the country and the world. So why have a few hundred people, many originally intending to just pass through like the rest of their acquaintances, decided to make Ann Arbor their long-term home? In a city of casual friendships and transient relationships, what holds together a group including university graduates, married couples, children, singles, professionals and laborers, Catholics and Protestants, and a few internationals from India, the Philippines, Germany, and Costa Rica, to name a few? The answer is covenant community.

[Word of Life](#) began in 1991 as a result of some leadership difficulties in the Word of God. A number of its members were involved in the founding of the Word of God back in the 1970s and '80s. That is why the community keeps count of its anniversary dating back to 1971 when the first public commitments in the Word of God took place. [See

article on the [beginnings in the early 1970s of Christian Covenant Community](#).] For many years, Word of Life did not have a permanent name. When filing the incorporation documents in 1991, the temporary name used was Washtenaw Covenant Community, employing the geographical name of our county. No one realized we would retain that name for 13 years before deciding on our permanent name, Word of Life.

Currently the community numbers over 400 men, women and children—roughly 75 families, 180 children, and some 90 single brothers and sisters. We are truly a trans-generational community: one of our families has four generations who are members of Word of Life, and over 30 adult members are the sons and daughters of parents also in community. This continuity enriches our lives and gives us great joy and hope for the future.



community members meet on Sunday afternoons for prayer, teaching, and sharing

Mission and outreach

Our initial and longest standing community outreach is the [University Christian Outreach \(UCO\)](#) chapter at the University of Michigan. The Lord has blessed our hard work in this very secular environment; during the last few years in particular there has been remarkable growth in UCO. As the years go by and our own children grow up, many of these “community kids” are becoming active members in UCO here or in other communities.

Our second outreach is Detroit Community Outreach, which runs an outreach to inner-city youth called [YouthWorks-Detroit](#). About a dozen members of Word of Life live in the inner city and serve in the outreach. Their number more than doubles each summer as many youth in the Sword of the Spirit spend a “summer in the city,” serving as a generous presence there, especially with the kids.



children enjoy a hay ride at the annual community fall festival

Developments

As with most other communities in the Sword of the Spirit, we are heavily invested in the youth of the community. We have a team of married couples and young single people who oversee a very active high school program, while several other couples work with the younger aged children. Our youth are further blessed by their participation in [Kairos](#), the North American regional youth program of The Sword of the Spirit.

In an effort to spend more time together, we have divided up our members into “communal Lord’s Day Celebration groupings” which come together three to four times each year to celebrate the beginning of the Lord’s Day on Saturday evening with a communal meal. We are often packed in like sardines, but both adults and kids have a great time together! We continue to believe strongly that this rich time of celebration is an essential building block for accomplishing our goal of building a Christian culture.

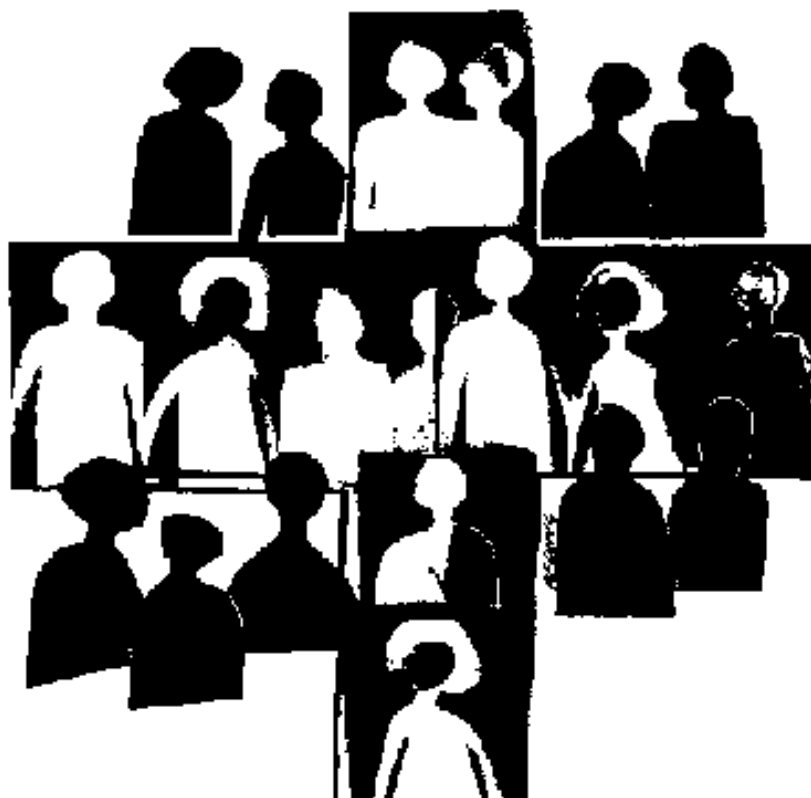
We have heard frequent words from the Lord regarding our name, Word of Life. As we reflect on the Lord’s intention in giving us this name, it is our earnest prayer that we both hold onto and hold out to others the Word of Life as we live out our daily lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.

[Jon Wilson is a coordinator of [Word of Life](#). He and his wife, Melody and their three children live in Ypsilanti, Michigan.]

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Called Together

Reflections on the beginning of covenant community in the early 1970s

by Don Schwager

I have lived in Christian community for over 40 years now and I have visited over half of the 65 covenant communities in [The Sword of the Spirit](#) worldwide. Why do we call our communities covenant communities? How did the covenant community movement begin? And what is its significance for today? I can't write as an historian or a theologian, but I can offer an eye-witness account of God's action in establishing covenant community and in his faithfulness to us over the years.

The beginnings

In the summer of 1969 the Lord began to speak to a charismatic group of predominantly university students in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA about his intention to do a new work among them. He said, "I want to make a covenant with you, but you must first smash all your idols." He then enumerated what seemed like an endless list of things which stood as idols in our lives in place of the Lord himself. Both conviction and wonder seized our hearts that night as we prayed and pondered what God has said. "What idols do I need to smash?" and " *What is a covenant?*"

In the following months the Lord led us in repentance and in deeper conversion of heart. He began to give us a

burning desire to "give our all for him," to "throw our lot in with one another," and to serve the Lord together in whatever way he chose to lead us. While our 1960's idealism and youthful enthusiasm made us open to new forms of lifestyles and communal living, we weren't really prepared for committed relationships of covenant love. We studied the scriptures to see what we could learn about "covenant" and "community" and we prayed and discussed together how we could respond to the Lord's leading. We came to a renewed understanding of and appreciation for God's covenant love for his people. His love is marked by hesed, the Hebrew word which expresses committed love, fidelity, faithfulness, mercy, and loving-kindness. We realized that since Christians shared in the New Covenant, we have a distinctive relationship with one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We had a firm conviction that God was calling us to live a shared life of committed love as brothers and sisters in Christ in a particular way in community.

Called to shared life together as brothers and sisters in Christ

At the end of the summer of 1970 we took a retreat together at a camp in the hills of southeastern Michigan. After prayer and deliberation we agreed to make a covenant together as a community and we adopted a pattern of community life and order as close to that of the New Testament as possible. A community covenant statement was written, and we took a few weeks to pray in preparation for making our commitments. Our "Covenant Statement" summarized what we believe we heard from the Lord.

"In order to respond to what God is doing among us and in order to be that people he is calling us to be, we desire to give our whole lives to him, to follow his Son, Jesus, and to live more and more in the Holy Spirit. We desire to love and serve him in lives of daily prayer and service; to praise and worship him always; to ever seek his face; to know and serve the truth of his Word in joy, peace, and love of the Holy Spirit; to believe what he speaks to us and to be obedient to the truth of his Word and the guidance of his Spirit; to offer hospitality to those whom he sends to us; to widen our hearts to those he adds to our number; and to carry out the mission that he is entrusting to us. Above all, we desire to be a people who always grow, by his great mercy, in the fervor of that first love he has given to us — he who is our all. We desire to consecrate our lives to him, not simply as individuals, but as members of a people — members of The Word of God."

In the fall of 1970 we gathered to offer our lives corporately to the Lord. Some 50 brothers and sisters each stood in turn and publicly made their commitments to the Lord and to one another: "I want to give my life fully to God and to live as a member of The Word of God." A prophetic word was spoken after we had made our covenant commitments: "This is a night of importance for my church..tonight I am restoring much that has been lost..." That night we knew that God had changed us and knit us together as a people, as brothers and sisters in the Lord. And we knew that he had called us together, not just for our sakes, but for the sake of his work of renewal and restoration throughout the body of Christ.

A sign of restoration

Today there are many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of covenant communities around the world. What is the significance of covenant community for today? First, it is a signpost of what God is bringing about through the gift of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. It is a visible public sign of the Lord's work of renewal in bringing people into a revitalized relationship with God and a sign of the unity he desires for all his people. The unity we already have as brothers and sisters in Christ stems from baptism and the gift and working of the Holy Spirit. This gift enables Christians of different traditions to recognize one another as brothers and sisters in Christ and to live together in real shared life. This unifying grace is a hallmark of God's work today.

Second, covenant community is a servant of the renewal. It is meant to be a sign to the rest of the charismatic renewal, and to the churches, and to the world. It's a message to everybody, but not everybody is called to it. People should be able to come to covenant communities and see that this is what the Holy Spirit is doing to renew his people, this is what the Lord is trying to produce. It is part of the nature of a sign that you cannot be everything. Covenant communities cannot do everything and cannot solve all problems. They are only a part, but, nonetheless an important part of God's work of renewal and restoration.

We are privileged to live in community

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book, *Life Together*, speaks of the privilege Christians have to live in visible community with other Christians. It is something we should not take for granted.

“It is not simply to be taken for granted that the Christian has the privilege of living among other Christians. Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the Cross he was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause he had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes. There is his commission, his work. ..So between the death of Christ and the Last Day it is only by a gracious anticipation of the last things that Christians are privileged to live in visible fellowship with other Christians.”

We believe that the Lord has called [The Sword of the Spirit](#), an international network of covenant communities, for this age, a time of significant change and upheaval in the world and a time of difficulty and spiritual conflict for many Christians. But it is also a time for great spiritual awakening and evangelism, and for building Christian communities throughout the world to stem the tide of evil and to strengthen God's people.

[Don Schwager is a member of [The Servants of the Word](#) and the author of the [Daily Scripture Reading and Meditation](#) website.]

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in Spirit and Truth



Sixteen new scriptural based songs marked by reverence and joy, that will inspire worship in Spirit and truth

In an effort to encourage song writers in The Sword of the Spirit to use their talents for the Lord's work, a new music CD has been produced with 16 new songs, all written by members of the Sword of the Spirit in the North American communities, and performed by talented musicians of the various university outreaches (many of whom wrote songs for the project as well). Published by [Tabor House](#). To learn more about "[in Spirit and Truth](#)" visit their website at: <http://www.inspiritandtruth.ucoweb.org/index.html>



To listen to a short mp3 audio sample of the songs, visit:

- <http://www.purevolume.com/inspiritandtruth>
- [Tabor House](#)

- (1) The River Flows
- (2) While We Still Breathe
- (3) By Your Steadfast Love
- (4) Join With Us
- (5) Open My Eyes
- (6) Sing to the Lord a New Song

- (7) Make Us Yours
- (8) Return O My Soul
- (9) Here is My Life
- (10) Holy is the One Who Saves
- (11) Glorious and Mighty
- (12) The House of God
- (13) All That is Good
- (14) Come Let Us Magnify the Lord
- (15) We Enter In
- (16) Lead Me Home

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email: editor@swordofthespirit.net

LIVING BULWARK sources of strength and renewal for Christian life and mission

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Glacier, Sea, and Mountain

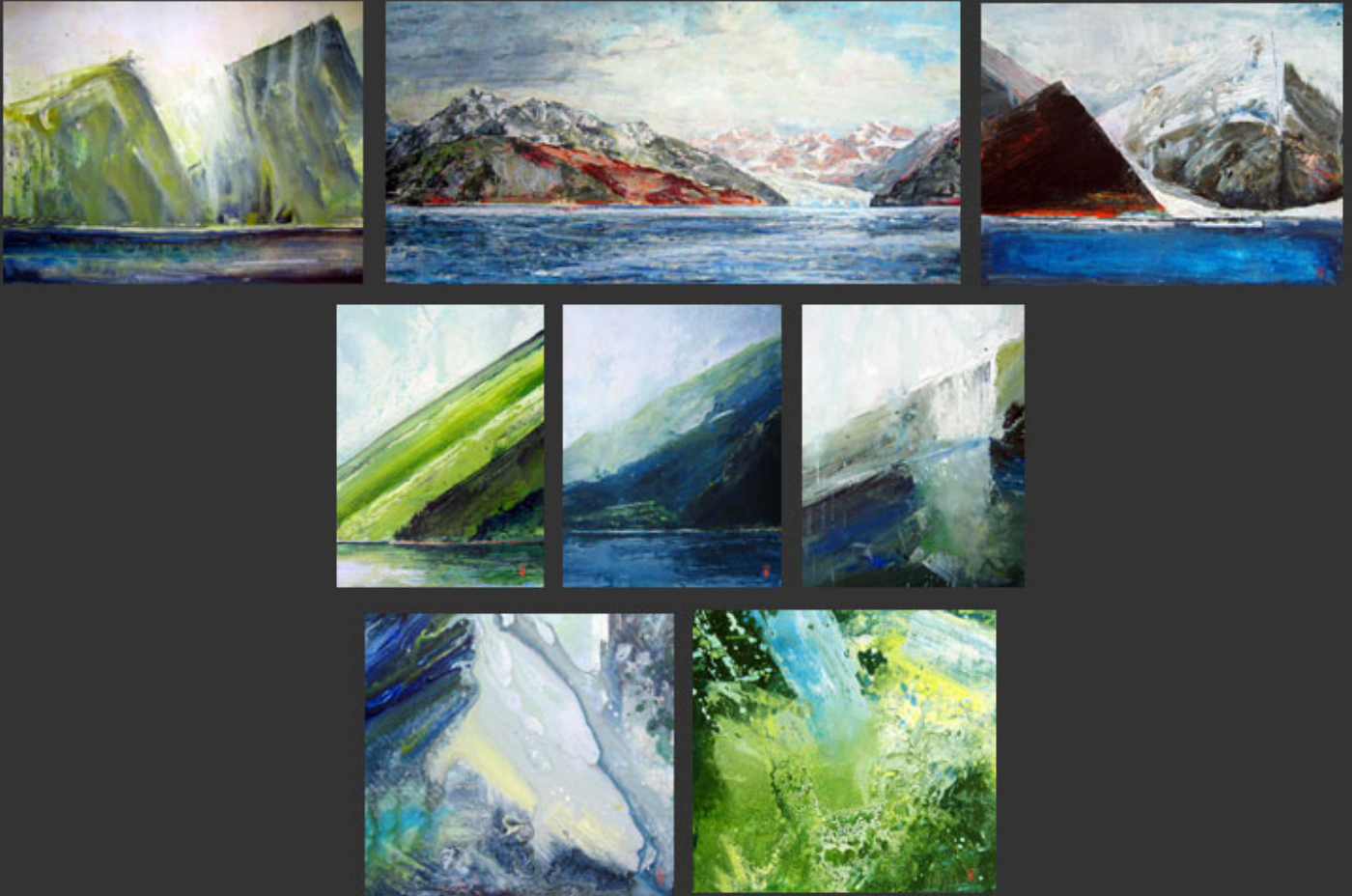
recent art work by Jamie Treadwell



John Muir Glacier - acrylic painting

Introduction:

In July 2006 Jamie Treadwell toured the inner coastal regions of southeast Alaska on an expedition passenger ship, the Sea Lion. Beginning in Sitka and ending in Juneau, for 7 days the ship explored the inlets and sounds bordered by glacier-scoured peaks. At sea level temperate rain forests rise steeply up from the deep waters into massive ice fields above. The glaciers flow like massive rivers, moving up to 7 feet each day. During the trip Jamie took photographs, notes and sketches that have been used over the past year in London to capture the impressions of the magnificent landscape.



Artist Statement:

The Alaskan landscape is awe inspiring. Over the past year I have returned again and again to explore in my painting the fantastic majesty and dynamic nature of Alaska. As I began painting the series, I worked representationally, painting the landscape as I saw it. As the paintings developed, I left the representational behind, and sought a more direct expression of the 'inner dynamics' of the landscape. The play of light through mist on sharp edged mountains blurred through sheets of rain, dark mysterious ocean depths reflecting powerful volcanic mountains, the colour and textures of mountain sea and sky became my subject matter. The action of the painting itself became important, for example the use of powerful brushstrokes contrasting with subtle washes reflect the nature of the volcanic mountain and ocean weather. The final two painting of the series "Glacier, Sea, Mountain" and "Ice and Sea" are visual poems. Behind the painting "Ice and Sea" is the experience of watching a 200 foot wall of ice collapse into the sea. This painting focuses on a detail - the transparent blue glacial ice against the sea green of the ocean at the moment of impact. This detail captures a moment in the endless process of transformation as the glaciers crash into the sea.

This series is a celebration of God's creation. The power of nature, majesty, greatness, are all virtues from the Lord our God, reflected in his creation.



John Muir Glacier - sketch



John Muir Glacier Front - sketch

As Browning states it, the point of painting something is not to reproduce it exactly (which is impossible anyway), but rather to represent it in such a way that it enables others to see the reality of that which is represented for the first time. The pedantic mind may wonder why we should paint the apple when we already have the real apple here. Isn't the real apple more realistic? Why make another one, that is less realistic? But the point of a great painting is not that we have had a shortage of apples, but rather that we have not yet understood apples the way we ought. The painting of the apple is not to compete with the real apple in order to replace it, which would be silly, but rather to name it in such a way that I begin to see real apples differently.

The nature of the artist's contribution in helping man 'see'.

Art as Covenant Naming, by Douglas Wilson



John Hopkins Inlet - acrylic painting



Glacier, Sea, Mountain - acrylic painting

To An Alaskan Glacier
by Charkes Keeler

Out of the cloud-world sweeps thy awful form,
Vast frozen river, fostered by the storm
Upon the drear peak's snow-encumbered crest,
Thy sides deep grinding in the mountain's breast
As down its slopes thou plowest to the sea
To leap into thy mother's arms, and be
There cradled into nothingness...



Forest Ridge - acrylic painting



Rain on the Ridge - acrylic painting

Alaska

by Charles A. Keeler

Fiords of the far west shore, where peaks sublime
Are cloudward thrust 'neath folds of glistening snow
With hoar and frigid streams that tideward flow,
Sculpturing their cliffs and crags which mount and climb
Full in the sight of Heaven -- grim heirs of Time,
Stern children of Eternity, that grow
Austere and terrible 'mid storms that blow
Their lusty trumpets in the tempest's prime.

What joy is this to float upon thy tide,
So blue, so beautiful -- to gently glide
'Mid islets forested, past shores that stand,
Dark Portals opening to enchantment's land,
Where all is but a dream, soon, soon to be
Lost in the purple mist of memory.

[See also: [Faith, Vision, and Art](#) by Jamie Treadwell]

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