

## October 2008 - Vol. 23



### [The Life of a Disciple](#)

by Steve Clark

Commentary on the beatitudes

#### Feature Articles

- [Moving Forward our Ecumenical Call](#): an interview with Dave Hughes, Chairman of the Assembly of Ecumenical Communities

#### Way of Life

- [In God's Image & Likeness](#): reflection on Christian Character, by Don Schwager
- [This Is the Generation](#): God doesn't have grandchildren, by Tadhg Lynch

#### Outreach & Mission

- [Servanthood and Mission](#): young learn servant leadership in urban monasteries
- [Divided by Poverty - United by Love](#): the Spirit at work in Uganda, by Joe Fahd

#### Verse and Spirit

- [Then My Eyes Were Opened - And I Recognized Him](#), by Blanca Morales
- [Come, Run After Me](#), a poem by Ana Teresa Perrem

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.

(c) copyright 2008 [Living Bulwark](#)

publishing address: Park Royal Business Centre, 9-17 Park Royal Road, Suite 108, London NW10 7LQ, United Kingdom  
email: [living.bulwark@yahoo.com](mailto:living.bulwark@yahoo.com)

October 2008 - Vol. 23

## The Life of a Disciple

commentary on  
the beatitudes

by Steve Clark

**From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt: 4:17).** At the time in Jewish history when Jesus spoke these words, one of the things that people were most concerned about was God's coming to reign. About 20 years before Jesus began to preach, the rule of the last Jewish king in Palestine had ended, and Judea and Samaria were now under Roman government — under pagan rule. Jews believed that pagan rule in the land of Israel was an abomination. God was the one who was supposed to reign. The Jews at this time were looking for the rule or reign of God.

What we receive from Jesus in the beatitudes is a teaching about how somebody should live who believes that the kingdom of God is at hand, and who is staking his life on that kingdom.

- 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:
- 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- 5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
- 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
- 10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11 "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
- 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.  
14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.  
15 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.  
16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:2-16).

Verses 3 through 12 are the beatitudes. The term comes from the Latin *beatus*, 'blessed'. The beatitudes portray the character of a disciple of Jesus. Verses 13 to 16 describe the effect the disciple is supposed to have on the world around him, if his life conforms to the beatitudes.

There are eight beatitudes (taking verses 10 and 11 as one beatitude), and they can be grouped into two sets of four. The first set is concerned with the way the disciple relies on the Lord. The second set focuses on the disciple's relationship to other people as a result of his reliance on the Lord. There is even a one-to-one correspondence between respective beatitudes in the two sets: verse three corresponds to verse seven, verse four corresponds to verse eight, and so on.

This is easier to see if we examine the meanings of some of the words and phrases involved. For example, 'poor' in verse three corresponds to 'merciful' in verse seven. The relationship may not seem obvious; however, 'merciful' can also be translated 'generous', which fits with 'poor'.

Again, 'those who mourn' in verse four probably means 'those who repent'. This fits well with the 'pure in heart' in verse eight. It is easier to recognize the correspondence between 'the meek' (verse five) and 'the peacemakers' (verse nine), and between 'those who hunger and thirst for righteousness' (verse six) and 'those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake' (verses 10 and 11).

Putting all this together, the beatitudes match up like this:

Blessed are the poor in spirit...Blessed are the [generous].

Blessed are [the repentant]...Blessed are the pure in heart.

Blessed are the meek...Blessed are the peacemakers.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Now let us look at each beatitude in greater detail in order to grasp the meaning of each one and relate it to the overall picture.

[Continued > Next Page | 1 | 2 | 3 |](#)

(c) copyright 2008 [The Sword of the Spirit](#)

publishing address: Park Royal Business Centre, 9-17 Park Royal Road, Suite 108, London NW10 7LQ, United Kingdom

email: [living.bulwark@yahoo.com](mailto:living.bulwark@yahoo.com)

October 2008 - Vol. 23



Members of the Assembly of the Sword of the Spirit met last May in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

## Moving Forward our Ecumenical Call

### An interview with the Chairmain of the Association of Ecumenical Communities

The [Assembly of the Sword of the Spirit](#) in May of 2008 elected Dave Hughes as chairman of the Assembly of Ecumenical Communities (AEC). In the following interview Dave explains the role of the AEC in the Sword of the Spirit.

***For those Sword of the Spirit members who do not know you personally, could you tell us a little bit about yourself?***

Would be glad to. First, my wife Jane and I have been married for 27 years and have five wonderful children, ages 13 to 25. We both got involved in ecumenical Christian community during college days in Ann Arbor, Michigan and have been active ever since. We took a brief sabbatical from active participation in the early 90's when my company sent me on an assignment to France but quickly re-engaged in the Word of Life community in Ann Arbor upon our return. We are members of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, a Reformed denomination. I am trained as an engineer and have executive level responsibility for leading various international programs for General Motors.

***Could you explain what the Association of Ecumenical Communities is and how it fits into the overall structure of the Sword of the Spirit?***

First of all to be clear, the overarching and primary identity we have is as the Sword of the Spirit itself, our community of communities. This is the main organizational entity and how we mainly represent who we are to others. Most importantly I think this is how the Lord relates to us as a body. Then within the Sword of the Spirit governmental structures there is a provision for associations to support and help meet the needs of special groups. Currently there are two such associations – one is Christ the King Association, which fosters the life of Roman Catholics in the Sword of the Spirit and the second is the Association of Ecumenical Communities (AEC), which

aims to help in the development of the life of the ecumenical communities in the Sword of the Spirit.

I go to some pains to explain this because I find that often brothers and sisters can get confused on how it all fits together. Sometimes I'll hear someone say, I am a member of Christ the King Association but not the Sword of the Spirit, or I am a member of the AEC but not the Sword of the Spirit. This is not possible given who we are. We are members first and foremost of the Sword of the Spirit and then secondarily members of the special associations.

It may also be helpful to point out that the Sword of the Spirit itself is an ecumenical community. It is not just those members who live in AEC communities who are called to be ecumenical, we are all called to be ecumenical although the way we express this may be different. The AEC is simply an association to help foster and support the life of our ecumenical communities; it is not the sole repository or expression of our ecumenical call.

### ***What do you see as the main challenges you'll face in your new service as chairman of the Association of Ecumenical Communities?***

Let me digress for a moment on this question. One thing I feel strongly about is that we talk too much about the challenges of ecumenism – the challenges, the difficulties, the issues. Without making light of these various points – and they are real enough – let me suggest a very different framework for thinking and talking about ecumenism.

I believe instead of speaking so much of the challenges, we need to speak more of the beauty of the call, the privilege of the life, the joy of living out the unity that God has for us. This is more than just semantics: I think it is key to how we look at our ecumenical life.

As an engineer I am trained to look at problems and challenges, dissect them and find solutions. So I am very comfortable with the language of challenge, difficulties and issues. As an engineer I am also a born pessimist, so it is easy for me to look at our ecumenical life and pick out any number of 'impossible situations' – theological, organizational, practical, you name it.

Yet I am convinced that we need to do that which God has called us to and set before us and not attempt that which only He can achieve. Very simply, we are called to live an ecumenical life together and to do that well, with great charity, understanding and real love. This is something of great beauty in the Lord's eyes. We are not called to sort out all the theological differences and organizational issues, that is God's work and work that He is very capable of achieving and will achieve in His own time.

So our main challenge is a challenge of vision: do we see the beauty of the call and will we give ourselves to it? This is where I mainly want to serve and help lead us – to see and embrace the beauty of the call.

I've seen how focusing on the challenges can lead to what I call 'ecumenical despair' – we'll never figure this out, we'll never crack the nut, it's too hard, etc. Focusing on the beauty of the call gives us hope to stand and do what God has called us to do.

### ***How would you provide an apologetic or try to convince someone from your denomination that they should become engaged in an ecumenical community like the Sword of the Spirit?***

I would make a very straightforward appeal to Scripture. In our denomination, as in most protestant denominations, we place a high emphasis on the authority of scripture. I believe the scriptures speak clearly of the value, the primacy that God places on unity in the Body of Christ. In John 17, Jesus speaks with simple eloquence of the vision God has for his Body, "may they all be one". If we are serious as Christians and believe we need to obey his Word, this call to unity must be actively pursued.

Ideal unity involves both a theological unity but also a unity at the level of daily life and service. Sometimes denominations, including my own, can place too high a value on theological unity (admittedly important!) and too low a value on expressed unity – daily unity lived out in the trenches. Our mission is clearly to be a vibrant

expression of the latter!

Two years ago I did an in-depth study on the life of the Apostle Paul. It was a very rewarding study and I felt like I came to understand the man more deeply. It led me to think of what he would say if he was brought back today to experience the life of the modern church. What would be the first words out of his mouth? What would be the first thing he would get to work on? I believe he would take us all to task for the lack of expressed unity at the local level: why is the body broken before the eyes of the world? Who is working on this? I'm sure he would have plenty to say on various theological and moral issues as well but I think this would be his first point.

So I would seek to persuade people from my denomination that in living this life, in working for this unity we are aligned with scripture and indeed aligned with the very heart of God and his ultimate plan. In heaven there will only be one bride.

***So what is your plan to help lead this area forward?***

The most important thing in any service is to first find out what the Lord is doing and then go plow in that same field. So my immediate plan is to take a season to seek the Lord on how he would have me serve. Since I do not formally take responsibility as Chairman of the AEC till May, 2009 I have some time to do this. I also want to underline that there is a group of leaders, the executive council of the AEC, that serves alongside me. So it is also a priority to gather their thoughts and understandings of how to best serve so we can move forward in consensus.

Having said all of that, the main avenues of service that I see at this time is a combination of strengthening what we have and pursuing new initiatives. The new initiatives could include increasing the external profile of our ecumenical call in the Sword of the Spirit, building new partnerships with other groups, even planting new ecumenical communities. Exactly how that mix works out is what we need to have the Lord's wisdom on.

Paul Dinolfo (my predecessor as Chairman of the AEC) and the brothers serving with him have done an important work to get the structural and organization elements in place for the AEC. This will free me up to focus more on building upon those foundations.

***In closing what can we as members of the Sword of the Spirit do to strengthen and move forward our ecumenical call?***

It's a great question! Our ecumenical life and mission is a call for each of us, not just for me, not just for the members of the AEC executive committee or members of AEC communities. Every individual member of the Sword of the Spirit needs to make a personal commitment to support our ecumenical call. This will vary from member to member as to how they express this, but the commitment is critical. It can be easy to think of our ecumenical call as someone else's responsibility.

One thing I would ask everyone to do is take a season of prayer to seek the Lord for this area, to become convinced of the 'beauty of the call' and to make an ongoing commitment to pray for our ecumenical unity. Beautiful things are often fragile; our ecumenical life is no exception and the attacks upon it can come on many levels. So we need to bathe our unity in prayer. This would be my main request, to please join me in prayer for this beautiful privilege we have been given to live out.



Dave Hughes is a coordinator of [Word of Life Community](#) in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA and Chairman of the Sword of the Spirit Assembly of Ecumenical Communities.

---

(c) copyright 2008 [The Sword of the Spirit](#)

publishing address: Park Royal Business Centre, 9-17 Park Royal Road, Suite 108, London NW10 7LQ, United Kingdom

email: [living.bulwark@yahoo.com](mailto:living.bulwark@yahoo.com)

October 2008 - Vol. 23



Looking towards St. Paul's Cathedral in London, designed by Sir Christopher Wren

## In the Image and Likeness of God

a scriptural reflection on Christian character

by Don Schwager

### *Without vision people perish*

Sometime after the great fire of London which had destroyed most of the city in 1666, an observer who was watching three construction workers asked each of them a question: What are you doing?

The first worker said: "I'm laying bricks."

The second worker said: "I'm building a wall."

The third worker said: "I'm helping Sir Christopher Wren build a great cathedral for the glory of God."

What motivated these workers? Money, ambition, vision? The scriptures warn us that "without vision the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18), Without moral vision, eventually individuals, families, and communities fall apart. What destroyed the great Roman Empire? History has shown that it was not just outside forces, but corruption (moral corruption) from within.

Charles Read said: "Sow an act and you reap a habit. Sow a habit and you reap a character. Sow a character and you reap a destiny." Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16).

### *Moral vision for our lives*

Character is very important for our moral behavior. It gives orientation and direction to our lives. Our moral life is rooted in our character. How we live morally is not determined simply by rules or how we may respond to one particular situation. Rather our lives are shaped by our moral vision and by how we have been formed in character.

Character has to do with willing, choosing, and desiring what is morally good.

Character in its purest form is most clearly exemplified in the example of one whose life is dominated by an all-consuming purpose or direction. Francis of Assisi gave up inherited wealth for a life of voluntary poverty in his single-hearted pursuit of the love of God. Mother Theresa's life of heroic service to unwanted and poverty-stricken children and to the neglected, dying invalids of Calcutta was fueled by her all-consuming love for Jesus.

We grow in character to the degree that we attain singleness of purpose and direction. If we find that we cannot accept a higher job promotion or status in our career and at the same time act honestly in all our transactions, or if we realize that we cannot gain as much money as we can and at the same time treat all others fairly, then we must choose one or the other. We become as we have chosen. The kind of person we are, our character, determines to a large extent the kind of future we will face and live. Character is thus not an end in itself, but a means for achieving the purpose God created us for, namely to live Godly lives that bring honor and glory to his name.

### ***Beholding the face of God***

What destiny does God intend for us as individuals, families, and as a people united with him? In the Psalms we get a glimpse of it.

As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with beholding your form (Psalm 17:15).

You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, LORD, do I seek. Hide not your face from me." (Psalm 27:8-9)

When Moses ascended Mount Sinai, he said to God, "Show me your face." In Jesus we see the face of God. That is why Paul the Apostle says that Jesus "is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15).

### ***Created in his own image***

How does a child recognize a parent – by gazing upon the face. God wants us to recognize that he is our creator and father. We were created in his image and likeness (Genesis 1:27). When we gaze upon the face of Jesus we not only see the face of God, but we see what God wants us to look like. Children instinctively reflect their parents in speech, attitude, and behavior.

Great spiritual teachers have described the ultimate destiny and goal of human life as the beatific vision – seeing God face to face and enjoying his presence, which is the source of supreme happiness and blessedness. St. Cyprian, a church father writing in the second century, said: "How great will your glory and happiness be, to be allowed to see God, to be honored with sharing the joy of salvation and eternal light with Christ your Lord and God... to delight in the joy of immortality in the kingdom of heaven with the righteous and God's friends."

### ***The life of the beatitudes***

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus begins his teaching on the kingdom of God and the kingdom way of life with the beatitudes.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you*

*falsely on my account.*

*Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.*

*(Matthew 5:3-12)*

The beatitudes reveal to us the character of Jesus and the character he wishes his disciples to have. It makes sense that he would start his teaching ministry with the beatitudes, rather than with the commandments, because the beatitudes point us to the source of true human happiness and fulfilment. The beatitudes respond to the natural desire for happiness that God has placed in every heart. They teach us the final end to which God calls us, namely the coming of God's kingdom (Matthew 4:17), the vision of God (Matthew 5:8; 1 John 2;1), entering into the joy of the Lord (Matthew 25:21-23) and into his rest (Hebrews 4:7-11).

Jesus' beatitudes also confront us with decisive choices concerning the life we pursue here on earth, including the use we make of the goods he puts at our disposal. God alone satisfies. In the beatitudes Jesus asks each of us, Do you seek the highest good, the total good which is above all else?

The beatitudes are a sign of contradiction to the world's understanding of happiness and joy. Only the humble of heart who seek God can find the true source of abundant life and happiness. Jesus promises his disciples that the joys of heaven will more than compensate for the troubles and hardships they can expect in this world. Thomas Aquinas said: "No one can live without joy. That is why a person deprived of spiritual joy goes after carnal pleasures." Do you know the happiness of hungering and thirsting for God alone?

### ***Supreme happiness and blessedness***

If we desire the supreme happiness and blessedness which Jesus offers, then we will aspire to live a life of virtue and character which reflects God's glory and likeness. God wants his light to shine in and through us in the way we live, act, and speak so that others will see in us the face and reflection of Christ – the one and only source of supreme happiness and blessedness. The Lord Jesus gives us his Holy Spirit to transform us into his own character and likeness. The Spirit gives us the grace and help we need to turn away from sin and all that would disfigure us morally and spiritually. The Spirit teaches us how to live the life of the beatitudes.

And 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).

The choice is ours – we can yield to the transforming grace and power of the Holy Spirit who is at work in our lives, both to heal and transform what has been marred by sin, or we can allow our own unruly passions and sinful desires to blind our vision and rob us of the joy and happiness which God intends for us.

---

For a more indepth study by the author on Christian character see:

[Virtues and Vices: Countering the deadly vices with Godly virtues.](#)

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

(c) copyright 2008 [The Sword of the Spirit](#)

publishing address: Park Royal Business Centre, 9-17 Park Royal Road, Suite 108, London NW10 7LQ, United Kingdom

email: [living.bulwark@yahoo.com](mailto:living.bulwark@yahoo.com)



October 2008 - Vol. 23



## This is the generation...

by Tadhg Lynch

### *Taping the vision*

Anyone who has been involved in community circles will probably be familiar with the experience. There's a little humming at the start of the recording as the sound on the microphone screeches, then the speaker taps the mic and says "Is this thing on? Can you hear me down the back?" to which there are a couple of mutterings of assent or denial. Some smart-aleck cracks a joke you can't hear and the sound of audience laughter ripples across the weeks, months and years to your ears listening in the future as you lie sick in bed or mopping the floor, digging your garden or driving your car along the highway. The "tape ministry" has been an important part of community life for generations – the recording of good teaching, of insight, and of advice passed along to those who missed out – through the tape-deck, the walkman, the CD player, the mini-disc and the iPod. The very act of making a recording is prophetic – it suggests to us who attend that someone else will want to hear what we are part of today, will have interest in the things we learn, after we hear them. You speak down the years to those who come after. They have missed the meeting just because they didn't make it that week or perhaps because they didn't exist when you heard that teaching years ago. Perhaps they missed the meeting that week because they had something urgent to attend to, or perhaps they weren't yet in existence to miss the meeting...

### *Generating the "trans"*

To whom do we wish to pass on the vision of the Sword of the Spirit with most urgency? Is it to those who are not yet a part of our number but are part of the world, or is it to those who are part of our community world but not yet a part of our number? I am speaking, of course, of the phenomenon of the "community kid." I know it experientially because I grew up in community. One of the most interesting things about the Sword of the Spirit is the emphasis which we place (with some success) upon the call of the Lord to be transgenerational in our life together as a people. This "trans" lingo is so different from the language of the world that my word processor keeps telling me that I have spelt it wrong – it literally doesn't have the vocabulary to deal with the idea. From parents who were baptized in the Spirit in the fervor of a first conversion have issued a race of children who have been raised in the Spirit, nurtured, taught and loved within "the bulwark" – our international network of communities. The "community kids" are surely some of the people we have copied all those tapes for. How else would we seek to teach our children about the Lord, than through the format in which we ourselves came to know him?

### *Embracing the stereotype*

Of course, if I had the correct answer to that question I would not be writing this article, I would be writing a manual and making a lot of money. Before your patience runs out and you switch back to reading Steve Clark (a prolific writer and founder of the Sword of the Spirit), let me indulge myself and sketch a few stereotypes. The community kid par excellence exhibits a number of common traits. S/He commonly comes from a big family (from now on I am going to use the male personal pronoun as it is the one with which I have some experience), has been part of a “youth group” in some format for most of his life, has probably sneaked away for a date or two with a member of the opposite sex with an undefined sense of guilt accompanying him, and harbors a nascent longing for the magical age of 18 when he can “leave all this stuff and decide what to do with my life.” In reply to the logical reasons his parents give him for attending the community meeting or the youth group, he will often reply with the timeless classic, as I once remember telling my parents, “I didn’t ask to be born into all this.” We worry about our children, we worry about their spiritual development, about their relationship to the Lord and to the Christian church which we, rightly, earnestly, desire they be a part of. How do we help this group of people take a place within our life? There are three ways I believe we can make it easier for children raised within community to discern for our call.

### *Re-wording your kids...*

The language we use should change. I always feel an irritable and irrational sensation when I hear myself referred to as “Generation 2” or even as “a community kid.” My neck stiffens and I don’t really want to listen to what the speaker has to say next. These are all descriptive terms, but it is important to remember them for what they are – sociological nicknames which we put upon a group of people to help us define a concept. I would submit that these are not helpful when we are speaking to those to whom they refer – kids who have grown up in community. They imply exactly what the rebellious teenager shouts at his parents, “I didn’t ask to be born into this.” Every time we call someone a community kid, we remind them that they haven’t chosen for this way of life. Similarly, when we refer to our households as “the girls” or “the kids,” we encourage them to act that way – it implicitly tells them that this is all we expect of them. If you’re a community kid – when do you become a “community adult,” and how? When you make a full commitment? When your parents die? Never? I believe we should speak of our young people as we would wish them to become – “The men’s house,” “younger members,” “underway” or whatever we desire to call them on to. We do it for each other – “brother” and “sister” are aspirational, rather than grammatically correct forms of address, no matter how real we may make them in practice. In fact, nearly all of our names and monikers seek to inspire rather than coldly describe. Our community names – Work of Christ, Charis, Joy of the Lord, our songs – This is the Generation, People of God Shine Forth Like Lights, and our outreaches – Life in the Spirit, Pharos (lighthouse), Koinonia (community) to pick only a few examples. Language shapes and forms a people whether we wish it to or not – if you define the words in which people think, you give shape to what they think. Show me a community whose name is a bald sociological description of the members and I’ll show you one which will fail as they grow older. We Happened to Live on the Same Street doesn’t have quite the right ring to it.

### *Re-ordering your kids...*

Put your family first. If your family is part of the community, that is the relationship your child has to the group – because his family is part of the community, rather than that he is “part” of the youth group, the bible study or (horrors) a community kid. He attends those things because his parents decide that it is a good thing for him to do. To use another example, we never tell our children that the school “makes them go there” or “wants them to do their homework” – neither should we do so for community. When the family is the reason a child is part of the community, it avoids the temptation to answer your children’s many questions with “we do that because the community says so,” or, “everyone in the community does that.” As your children will soon find out, and let you know, everyone in the community does not do that. Difficulties, tantrums and rebellion take place in the context of being against the family and the parent, rather than against the community. I think this is of real importance – we have a duty to protect the bulwark in the eyes of our children as well as in the eyes of the world. We would surely never tell a friend from the secular world that the community group makes us tithe our income to it, or that we do so only because everyone else does so. Why should we treat our children differently? If we are strong parents and counsellors for our children, we will be able to tell them that we wish them to partake of this thing or that, because

we believe that it is best for them, and because we care about them rather than because an entity to which they may have only a tenuous relationship, decrees it so.

### *Forgetting about your kids...*

Evangelise. I truly believe the best thing we can do to encourage our children to hear the call of the Lord is to be seen by them to be active in spreading that call to others. Children who grow up within the community have lived among the committed members and often know the most intimate details of the working life of the group, but have yet to make a decision for or against it. If the dominant tenor of the group is to be outward in focus and seek to reach others, this is the prime impulse which will be passed on. If most of the talk and action is about the community kids and how to “get them to join,” we teach them introspection and stasis. The constant tension of our call to be a “community of disciples on mission” of course will make this a difficult balancing act, but the rewards will be great if we manage to teach our children that the most important mission of the community is to spread the gospel of Christ – its not them.

### *The generation*

The word transgenerational is a clumsy one at best, but it implies something which is worthwhile. “Trans” is a prefix – it comes before something established, gives it nuance, and helps to transform it – to make it something new. It also implies a reaching across, a message through the generations which is surely what we wish to impart. The word, however, also has an impermanent aspect to it – it speaks of movement and cycle which is at least as important to us as the permanence of our message – we wish to be ready to listen and respond to the call of our Lord as we go forward, even as we discern it looking back. We should apply the same care when we speak to, and call on, our children. The message comes from a place of solidity, but the call – a relationship with the Creator of the Universe – is anything but. God, as one of my youth leaders once told me, doesn’t have grandchildren. When people tell me about their conversion experience through, say, a fellow named Tony in London on the 16th of September 1982, I’m sometimes envious, but not wholly. God had a conversion experience for me too. He sent me to my parents – it was kind of a divine appointment. “Community kid” doesn’t quite manage it.

Tadhg Lynch was present in his mother’s arms at the original commitments of the [Community of Nazareth](#) in Dublin and, as such, considers himself first generation. He currently resides with the [Servants of the Word](#) in Lansing, Michigan, USA where he works for [University Christian Outreach](#).

(c) copyright 2008 [Living Bulwark](#)

publishing address: Park Royal Business Centre, 9-17 Park Royal Road, Suite 108, London NW10 7LQ, United Kingdom  
email: [living.bulwark@yahoo.com](mailto:living.bulwark@yahoo.com)

October 2008 - Vol. 23



## Servanthood and Mission

### Learning while living in a community of “urban monasteries”

an interview conducted by YouthWork Magazine

The following article, based on interviews with Kairos in Europe and the Middle East, was originally published in the September 2008 Issue of [YouthWork Magazine](#), a monthly publication based in Great Britain which provides resources for equipping and informing Christian youth workers. Used with permission.

#### *Young people learn servant leadership in “urban monasteries”*

Leadership lessons are best learnt while living together, according to youth and students Movement, [Kairos](#). For three weeks in July [2008], 32 young adults from around the world were together in Dublin for an intensive training program in servanthood and mission, while practicing living in a community of “urban monasteries”.

“Kairos Summer Mission Households” is an initiative of the [Sword of the Spirit](#) – an international ecumenical movement. They provided seventy hours of classroom and workshop style living and a week of street mission, all in the context of these young people living in households. The participants, of different nationalities and denominations, were divided into single sex houses, shared bedrooms with two others and took part in an intense schedule which began with breakfast at 7am followed by morning prayer. Prayer times started with the ancient tradition of chanting two psalms, listening to scripture, and then moving into open prayer and then finishing with quiet time. The students took about an hour for their own study time before starting the program at 9:30 am. During the rest of the days, training included sessions examining contemporary culture, how to address the challenge of relativism, how to build strong teams and developing the skills needed in leadership. The third week of the mission was devoted to various missions on the streets of Dublin.

The university-aged students who attended were young pioneers wanting to gain experience in building community, and grow in the skills and gifts of evangelism, leadership and outreach. “Leadership training cannot simply consist of developing competence,” Youthwork was told by Jamie Treadwell, the founding Director of Kairos and now the Kairos coach. “Forming character is a crucial part, and some would say is the area of greatest need for this generation. We must go beyond classroom theory into the life experience of service. The households are like a little urban monastery geared for mission.”

The program puts such an emphasis on the importance of students learning how to live alongside each other, because Paul Jordan, Kairos Director considers the aim of the program to be helping young people to grow as servants. “The theory is great but living with each other is where the rubber hits the road, where you learn how to serve one another. This is the fundamental attitude of a leader and missionary.”

Joni, one of the household leaders from Belgium gave an insight into her experience: “In leadership we tend to focus on the task, but this is not the whole picture. People have a background. One of the girls said to me, ‘I’m not used to structured life. At home I get up when I want to get up. I have a meal when ‘m hungry.’ I’ve realised in leadership we have to understand where they are coming from. It’s not a matter of disobedience or being lazy. It’s just that people are different. My heart has expanded in this leadership role. I’m concerned for the girls in my household - is everybody OK, how are they engaging with the program, are the relationships going well, is their sleep and food all right?”

Joni also described the areas that were less easy. “There’s a burden here too. I get tired. I need to get a good night’s rest and a good time of prayer. I need God’s grace to help me if I am to lead others well.”

The 32 participants were from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland Belgium, Poland, Germany, Lebanon, USA and from a variety of Christian streams, including Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Roman and Maronite Catholic and Greek Orthodox. All of the students held positions of responsibility or have a vision for leadership and mission work at their universities.

Kairos is the international youth and student movement of the Sword of the Spirit, an international communities movement. “The Summer Missions Household” is hosted by [Nazareth](#), a local community of the Sword of the Spirit. They supported the program by opening up their homes, providing lunch, giving administrative and prayer support.

Contact [info@kairos-eme.org](mailto:info@kairos-eme.org) or visit [www.swordofthespirit.net](http://www.swordofthespirit.net)

(c) copyright 2008 [The Sword of the Spirit](#)

publishing address: Park Royal Business Centre, 9-17 Park Royal Road, Suite 108, London NW10 7LQ, United Kingdom  
email: [living.bulwark@yahoo.com](mailto:living.bulwark@yahoo.com)

October 2008 - Vol. 23



Africa Spring Rain Tree - watercolor by [Jamie Treadwell](#)

## Divided by Poverty – United by Love

an encounter of the Holy Spirit at work in Uganda

By Joe Fahd

Joe Fahd grew up in a Christian family from the Maronite tradition in Lebanon. He is a member of the People of God, an ecumenical Christian community in Beirut, Lebanon. Since September 2007 he has been in formation with the [Servants of the Word](#) in London, UK.

### ***Making disciples of all nations***

This past July I was invited to travel with four unlikely companions – Martin Steinbereithner, an Austrian-born Servant of the Word, Sword of the Spirit European and Middle East region missionary coordinator and management guru who lives in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Delphine Lebbe, a single woman in Jerusalem community in Belgium, John Keating, an American song-writer, missionary coordinator for the Sword of the Spirit, and presiding elder of the Servants of the Word, and Mags Tierney, an experienced fundraiser and outreach leader for Youth Initiatives in Northern Ireland. And myself the youngest and least experienced member on the team.



Sword of the Spirit Mission Team members (Joe knelling on the far right) with Emmaus Community Staff

So what brought us all together? Mission. In the Sword of the Spirit we call ourselves a *community of disciples on mission*. Mission for most of us involves serving the Lord right where he puts us in our daily living situations, studies and jobs, neighborhood, church, and community. But on this occasion we were actually going to travel somewhere to engage in mission. The common goal for our team was to help run a two-week student training program hosted by the Emmaus community, an evangelistic Catholic group in Luwero, central Uganda. This program aims at forming Christian leaders among university students from across Uganda and some other places in Africa. Our first week there we ran three courses for returnees who attended last year's similar program: a course on Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, the Two Kingdoms Course (a course about spiritual warfare and choosing for Christ) and a course on habits necessary for effective leadership. In the second week, some of the students who attended the first week helped us run the program in which we provided a course on the letter to the Romans, a course on Christian character and a course on evangelism. We were also sharing meals, conversations, recreation times, and entertainment evenings with the participants.

Friends who had been to previous mission trips to Africa told me to expect to receive more than I could possibly give. I certainly found this to be true - just as the Gospel states, "give and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap" (Luke 6:38). If you are a regular reader of Living Bulwark, you have probably already read about previous mission trips to Uganda.



What I want to share with you is a snapshot of what I saw God doing in the lives of individuals from the three

groups who were attending this program: Emmaus Community, Cornerstone Leadership Academy, and the Uganda Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

### *Training the young for evangelism*

Emmaus Community in Uganda runs an outreach ministry that centers around evangelism and equipping others to be evangelists. Community members live in common financially at a center which trains evangelists, fosters Christian life and provides a base for active Christian ministry and evangelism. We had the privilege of getting into contact with some of their students who were receiving formation to become evangelists. This opened our minds to how God is using the efforts of these people to change the lives of many others who face serious challenges in their personal lives. This set of challenges was very new to me or was an extreme form of what I had seen elsewhere. Many people's lives are also seriously affected in this region because of the spread of witchcraft. Even during our short stay, some four people were prayed with and were delivered from the oppression of evil spirits. Emmaus also serves as a center for many Christian conferences providing the location, practical support, and also sometimes the content for retreats that cater to youth, clergy, lay people... Graduates from their evangelist formation program then go on to serve around the country or in other places including Kenya, Tanzania, Congo, and Zimbabwe. The Emmaus Community are also able to provide for some of the physical needs of their surrounding region including water which villagers can pump from an artesian well on the Emmaus grounds.

### *Rejected from the womb – reborn in Christ*

**\*Janet**, a university student aged 20, miraculously survived various attempts at abortion and abandonment when she was a baby. Her very young mother had ended up as an outcast because of her pregnancy. She grew up with a step-father after her mother got married and was haunted by rumors and attempts by her step-father to reject her. She felt unable to love men in general. Through the help of spiritual counselors, Janet learned to accept God as her heavenly Father. Although she never got to know her earthly father, over a period of time she was able to find healing and reconciliation with her step father and step siblings. During one of the conferences run at Emmaus she experienced new confidence and hope. She also found a sponsor which enabled her to enroll in the university. In the program we ran last year, she was blessed through getting to know Christian students who loved her and eagerly came back to attend this year's first week program and help us run the program in the second week.



### *From hunger and need to love and acceptance*

**Chris**, another student, was orphaned when his parents were poisoned by his step-mother. He was expected to die along with his siblings at an early stage, and he grew up constantly facing threats by people who promised him a similar fate. God intervened in his life by protecting him and leading him to a place where he could grow as a Christian disciple. He is now seeking to establish himself with a goal, purpose and mission statement.

### *A divided family finds unity in Christ*

Some students from Cornerstone Leadership Academy in Uganda formed the second group of attendees. They enriched the ecumenical breadth of the program we were running with brothers and sisters from Protestant churches. Cornerstone trains young people from very poor backgrounds coming from different tribal groups and denominations. It provides high school education and works on forming men and women into friends of Christ who in turn transform their society.

**Mathew** is a good example of some of the people whose lives were transformed through God's work in Cornerstone. Mathew grew up in the eastern part of Uganda in an extremely poor polygamous family of thirty-five. He experienced continual hatred and threat due to conjugal competition between the three women his father married. "Food was not compulsory," as Mathew puts it. He only was able to afford a mattress to sleep on at the age of fifteen. He had to leave school around that time because he couldn't afford the tuition. With the help of his sister's marriage dowry, he was able to pay for one more year of school. Mathew progressively came to know the Lord through the work of Christian evangelists around that time. He became an active member in his local church despite the opposition of his parents.



Matthew's academic skills were quickly recognized by his teachers and they sponsored him for private lessons to catch up on the material he missed when he had to leave school earlier. In the midst of all of this, Mathew was still struggling financially. When he heard that Cornerstone was interviewing prospective students to attend its high school program, he signed up and was accepted. He saw this as a providential work of God, since he wasn't the most academically apt among the students being interviewed. He still needed to find funds to pay for the travel expenses to Kampala, the capital of Uganda where the school was located and directions around Kampala where to find the school. The Lord provided for the travel expenses and Mathew met someone on the bus who knew the way to the school. This was a great help since Mathew had never traveled outside his village area. Clothes, shoes, bedding and other goods were donated as well. Through becoming a member of Cornerstone Leadership Academy, Mathew got to experience the generous support, encouragement, and love of Christians who reached out to him. His involvement at the academy enabled him to grow in Christian discipleship.

Mathew next did a Bachelor's degree in business. Hearing God's call to full time Christian ministry, now eight years on, he helps facilitate a number of Christian outreaches. Through God's work in Mathew's life, his various family members now are Christians as well. During our first week, he was giving part of the course on habits necessary for effective leadership. It emphasizes leadership out of a strong character: being proactive and not setting the blame on others for something that is happening to you, leading with a clear goal in mind, leading while efficiently managing time and resources, making sure you first understand others before being understood, cooperating creatively and interpersonally, as well as making sure you constantly monitor and re-emphasize all of the aforementioned habits.

Another student I met, named **Rebecca**, came from a poor family who could not afford to send her to school. She had thought of asking her mother to sell the family's only cow so that she could pay the fees to start high school. She saw that as the only way to get out of poverty. Her involvement in the Cornerstone family not only gave her hope and training but economic support as well, to begin studies for a Bachelor in Business degree.

*Reaching out to others with the good news of Jesus Christ*

The Uganda Catholic Charismatic Renewal office is actively involved in promoting Life in the Spirit Seminars, prayer groups, and evangelistic programs throughout parishes and schools in Uganda. They stand out as a strong witness of God’s love as they boldly speak the gospel message to friend and foe alike. Some of them even share their faith with soldiers, which is something noteworthy in a country which has a history of autocratic regimes. Several individuals involved in the charismatic renewal attended the recent leadership training program hosted by Emmaus Community.

I met **Martha**, a single mother who grew up in a tight-knit family. When she gave her life to the Lord, she decided to live alone so she could bring up her daughter in a Christian environment despite this being totally counter-cultural. She now works full time in Christian ministry.



Mags (left) and Delphine (right) with Martha and girls

I also met **Paul**, a student who is preparing to become a plumber. He attends a Muslim college but is not afraid to witness to his Christian faith, despite the challenges he faces there. And if I had time and room to write more, I could tell you about Sandra, John, Jane, Dominic - and the list goes on – and what each of them is now doing to reach out to others with the good news of Christ.

***Being grateful for a God who works wonders and miracles***

Through my personal encounters with these brothers and sisters in Christ who live in this land ravished by poverty, disease, and death, I have personally come to understand the importance of being grateful for each day of my own life.



I believe that God is doing great things in Uganda, both to renew his people there and to open new doors for evangelism, education, and leadership training. Our mission team were blessed by our short stay. We will never forget the lively exuberant style of African worship – with drums, singing, clapping and dancing, (I never thought of praising God for being ‘fat’ which is a sign of health and prosperity in Africa) and the warm hospitality we received everywhere we went.

If you ever think that your problems are too BIG and insurmountable, think again because God is doing new wonders and new miracles as we were privileged to witness in Uganda.

---

\*names of individuals in Uganda have been changed to preserve privacy

(c) copyright 2008 [The Sword of the Spirit](#)

publishing address: Park Royal Business Centre, 9-17 Park Royal Road, Suite 108, London NW10 7LQ, United Kingdom

email: [living.bulwark@yahoo.com](mailto:living.bulwark@yahoo.com)

October 2008 - Vol. 23

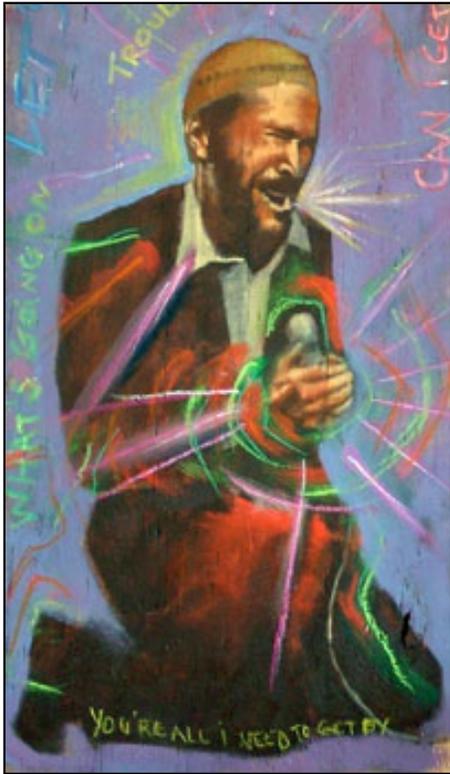


illustration by Garrett Shireman

## Then My Eyes Were Opened and I Recognized Him

by Blanca Morales

It was a gray winter day just before Christmas, and a biting cold had suddenly set in. I was living in Lansing for a few months, serving and learning more about university ministry. Like many a missionary, I was without the luxury of my own car and was left to make the most of public transportation. It was not my favorite option, but it was one that humbled me in more ways than one.

The weather that day was absolutely unfriendly, as was my attitude. As I was sitting at the bus stop, a young man came by and joined the growing crowd waiting for the bus. “It’s cold today,” he said.

I nodded. *Obviously its cold, it's been snowing all day.* He made another comment about the weather. I nodded again without even looking at him. My Floridian blood was frozen to the core and I was in no mood.

A few minutes later an older man came up to the bus stop. “Ooh-ee, it’s cold!” He continued to comment about the weather and was asking how long we’d all been sitting there. I just sat there quietly, hiding behind the protection of my hood, my eyes fixed on the sidewalk in front of me. The man continued talking. His voice sounded familiar to me, I remember thinking maybe he sounded like an actor I’d seen in a movie? Despite the icy weather and hostile wind blowing left and right, there was a warmth and merriment to his voice. He still seemed to find joy in the day somehow.

– “Doing some shopping?”

Silence. I then realized he was directing the question to me. For the first time in minutes I looked up and at the man’s face.

– “You alright there, honey?”

Feeling my face numb and stiff I managed to smile when I nodded my response.

He was not very warmly clad for the weather we were having that day. In fact, there was a hole in his shabby windbreaker. He was also missing a tooth or two, but he wasn't hesitant in sharing a smile. I had never made it a habit to speak to strangers at bus stops. Who knows what kind of people they might be, I had always told myself. In this case, I decided to make an exception. There was something different about this person. Very friendly and inviting.

We were wondering how many eastbound buses we would count before our westbound bus should decide to come (five in total), when ours finally made its way to us. Despite the man's ragged appearance, he showed gentlemanly qualities, letting every woman get on the bus in front of him, unlike the other men who tried to rush past everyone else. I was having trouble finding my bus pass, when the man asked, "Don't you have money?" I explained that my bus pass seemed to be hiding from me. Although I eventually found the bus pass in one of my pockets, I had a feeling he would have paid for me if I let him.

The bus was packed but that was no surprise, being as delayed as it was. Luckily I found half a seat (half because these winter jackets take up so much space). Next to me was a guy dressed as if he had just come out of a hip hop music video. I didn't pay much attention to him, until he pointed to my shopping bag.

- "You making a wreath?"
- "Yeah, I'm making some Christmas decorations," I answer.
- "Cool. You make 'em all the time?"
- "Nope. I've never done it before."

He nodded, finding it interesting. I kind of wanted to end the conversation there, but then I decided, *hey maybe this is an evangelization opportunity*. I was kind of hesitant; I really wasn't in a friendly mood that day. Before the next word could be spoken, I realized I had missed my stop. *Whatever. I could just get off at the next stop and walk a little.*

I pulled on the cord and waited for it to *ding*, but nothing came of it. Again I pull the cord. Nothing. "Stop Requested" didn't turn up on the screen. *Great, I thought. Who knows how far I'll have to walk now. Is this what I get for not wanting to talk to people?*

Some few blocks later the bus finally stopped. As I got off I noticed that the hip hop guy and the older man also got off at the same stop. *Interesting. These are the same two men I've been trying to ignore all along. What a weird coincidence*, I thought. The older man chuckled as if saying, "It's you again." Then he nodded his goodbye and crossed the street. When I saw the other guy still going in my direction, I noticed that he was crippled. He hobbled down the sidewalk, dragging his bad leg. Guilt set in to me for being so indifferent. *I'm so uncharitable*, I chided myself. *And that poor old man was only trying to be nice.*

I still couldn't figure out why the older man seemed so familiar. I didn't recognize him as we went along, but then, a sudden thought hit me. What if this man was Jesus? I turned around to where the man had crossed the street but he was gone. He had evidently turned a corner.

I repented for my blindness and reflected upon what had happened. This old man hadn't said anything profound, but just the fact that he was in a good mood despite the bleak weather had sent out a powerful message. And how did I receive this bit of sunshine? How did I receive him? The temptation to be indifferent had almost gotten the better of me. My eyes were then opened. How many times has the Lord wanted *me* to uplift a despondent stranger with a smile or a friendly word? Indeed, the Lord could be anywhere "in the least of these," as he had said, and might choose to speak to us through them.



Blanca Morales grew up in Miami, Florida, USA along with her parents and siblings as a member of La Nueva Jerusalem community. For the past few years she has been actively involved in youth ministry and St. Paul's Outreach program. She is currently finishing a bachelors in Religious Studies.

(c) copyright 2008 [The Sword of the Spirit](#)

publishing address: Park Royal Business Centre, 9-17 Park Royal Road, Suite 108, London NW10 7LQ, United Kingdom

email: [living.bulwark@yahoo.com](mailto:living.bulwark@yahoo.com)

October 2008 - Vol. 23



*Toward Calvary*, a painting by Michael O'Brien

## Come, Run After Me

poem by Ana Teresa Perrem

Come, run after me,  
If you want to find me.  
Come, follow me to the cross  
Run after me.

Come, run after me,  
And I will take you to the desert  
And I will speak into your heart  
In the unseen and secret place.

Come, run after me,  
Leave your burden,  
Take up your cross  
And walk up the narrow road.

Come, run after me,  
Because I am the Way  
Because I am the Truth  
And in me you will find Life.

I guide you in the way of wisdom  
and lead you along straight paths.  
When you walk, your steps will not be hampered;  
when you run, you will not stumble.\*

My way is that of poverty,  
My walk, of obedience.  
Come, learn from me  
Follow me, I will give you the bread of life.

Come, run, follow the Lamb!  
In the poverty of Bethlehem,  
In the exile of Egypt,  
Follow me to the Temple, to the Jordan,  
In the solitude of the desert,  
Through the towns of Israel,  
With the sick and the poor,  
In the sea, in the storm;  
Follow me to Jerusalem,  
Riding on a donkey;  
In the pain of Gethsemane,  
Arrested, beaten, sentenced,  
Run with me to Calvary,  
Follow me up to the cross.  
And I will give you the promise of life; look!  
The road goes to the new Jerusalem,  
The dwellings that I have prepared  
In the Father's house.

\*Proverbs 4: 11-12



Ana Teresa Perrem and her husband Dominic are members of [Antioch Community](#) in London, UK.

(c) copyright 2008 [The Sword of the Spirit](#)

publishing address: Park Royal Business Centre, 9-17 Park Royal Road, Suite 108, London NW10 7LQ, United Kingdom  
email: [living.bulwark@yahoo.com](mailto:living.bulwark@yahoo.com)