



Christian Report

To Win...To Disciple...To Equip...To Win

Volume 9 Issue 8

August 2009

We are members of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability and Christian Service Charities in order to maintain the highest standards of excellence and accountability.



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Resting or Striving — by Bob Flynn, President/CEO

Had we duly felt the burden of our sins, that they are a load which our own strength is wholly unable to support, and that the weight of them must finally sink us into perdition, our hearts would have danced at the sound of the gracious invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). But in those who have scarcely felt their sins as any encumbrance, it would be mere affectation to pretend to very exalted conceptions of the value and acceptableness of the proffered deliverance. This pretence accordingly, is seldom now kept up; and the most superficial observer, comparing the sentiments and views of the bulk of the Christian world, with the articles still retained in their creed, and with the strong language of Scripture, must be struck with the amazing disproportion. (William Wilberforce)



I have been wrestling with a verse in the Epistle to the Hebrews for some time now. It is one of those questions that itches at the back of your mind and refuses to be soothed until it is answered. In this case the question was provoked by reading a familiar phrase in a different translation.

So we must ^{G4337}listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may ^{G3901}drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1 NLT

My question was, "How does one listen very carefully to what

one has already heard?" The translators necessarily struggle to find the words to transmit this from the original. The modern literalist attempts this conveyance with, "pay closer attention." The more time-honored versions render it, "give more earnest heed." Literally (when you add the word

"perissoteros"), it is, "to give heed more abundantly." If we look more closely at the word, "prosecho," we see the idea of holding the mind or ear toward ("listen very carefully"). In the nautical sense it is, "to take up a heading towards" the truth we have heard.

This is an inference from the author's discourse in the previous chapter where this truth is defined as that which was spoken by the Son, Who is infinitely superior to all of creation. His Gospel then should be given our undivided attention. It is the hearer's duty to listen carefully so that the heading will steer clear of the rocks and shoals of pernicious nature and instead, chart a course toward the shores of good and profitable. If our attention be split, then our observation of the Guide Star is made unsuitable for navigation, and "our striving thus becomes losing."

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing (A Mighty Fortress is Our God, Martin Luther)
G4337 προσέχω prosécho; pros: toward + echo: to have and hold, implying continued possession. To have in addition, to hold the mind or the ear toward someone, to pay atten-

tion. As a nautical term, it means to hold a ship in a direction, to sail towards.

This has to be contrasted with the word, "pararreō" that means to drift away, perhaps even imperceptibly. Why is this important? Since the beginning, when our Parents were deceived in the garden of Eden, the enemy of our soul has been using the same means to lead us toward destruction. You would think that after these thousands of years we would wake up to the fact that we are repeatedly led astray by this spiritual sleight of hand. But church history gives us the real outcome. We continue to be hoodwinked by the slow drifting away from the pure truth of the Gospel, until half-truths and counterfeit truths become our steady diet. With our course no longer Christward, we set sail for perdition's flame.

G3901 παραρρέω pararréō; contracted paarraruo, fut. parareúsomai, from pará (G3844), by, past, beyond, and rhéo (G4483), to flow. To float by or drift past as a ship, or to flow past as a river. Figuratively to slip away, suggesting a gradual and almost unnoticed movement past a certain point. Of a person, to move stealthily as a thief. It is used figuratively of persons meaning to glide away, to swerve or deviate from something, such as the truth, law, precepts; equivalent to parapípto (G3895), to fall aside. It occurs only in Hebrews 2:1 where it is used in an absolute sense "lest we drift away from that which we have heard" (a.t.), transgress.

The slow, imperceptible slouching toward Gomorrah has been occurring in our nation

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Would Your Church Like to Strengthen Its Ministry to Military Families?

Attend the 2009 North American Regional AMCF "Helping Military Families" Conference.

Equipping Churches & Mobilizing Nations to Pray for & Minister to Military Families

You are invited to participate in this unique conference which features inspirational international speakers who will equip you to minister to and to pray effectively for military personnel and their families. Participants will also hear Steve Green in concert, attend military ministry workshops, and enjoy the beauty of God's creation in Estes Park, Colorado!

This one-of-a-kind event is sponsored by the Christian Military Fellowship (CMF), the Association for Christian Conferences, Teaching & Service (ACCTS), Officers' Christian Fellowship (OCF) and others.

Join the Wall of Prayer; go to the map at: <http://www.accts.org>

A Conference to Equip Leaders & Mobilize Churches to Pray for & Minister to Military Families

Where: YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, CO – 900 acres of Rocky Mountain grandeur with outstanding conference facilities (www.ymcarockies.org)

When: 17-21 August 2009. Check-in on Monday afternoon. Closing Ceremony Friday morning. Daily conference sessions - 9:00-11:30, 1:30-3:30, 7:30-9:00

What: Inspirational Speakers, a Steve Green Concert, and Workshops on Prayer & Military Ministry. This conference will equip you to help military families through the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment phases of military life.

Who: Conference speakers include:

Dr. Myles Munroe, Bahamas – internationally renowned author, lecturer, teacher, life coach, government consultant, and leadership mentor who has written over 80 books

Dr. Richard Blackaby, USA - Pastor and President of Blackaby Ministries International, and the author of numerous books on Christian living

Pastor Rob Parker, Canada – Founder/Director of Canada's National House of Prayer

Gen Lee, Pil Sup, Korea – President, Association of Military Christian Fellowships (AMCF)

LtCol (JDF, Ret.) Nestor Ogilvie, Grenada – Vice-President, Association

of Military Christian Fellowships (AMCF)
LCDR (USN, Ret.) Cal Dunlap,
Executive Director, Association for
Christian Conferences, Teaching & Service

MG (USA, Ret.) Bob Dees - Executive Director of Campus Crusade for Christ Military Ministries

Ch (MG, USA) Doug Carver – Army Chief of Chaplains (Tentative)

BG (CF) Dave Kettle – Chaplain General, Canadian Forces

Rev. Prince Bodie, Bahamas - Chaplain RBDF, President of the Association of Caribbean Military Christian Fellowships

LTG (USAF, Ret.) Bruce Fister – Executive Director of Officers' Christian Fellowship

BG (CF, Ret.) Larry Lashkevich – President of Military Christian Fellowship of Canada

ADCS (USN, Ret.) Bob Flynn - President/CEO, Christian Military Fellowship

How: Register at (<http://accts.org/naramcfc/>) or call the ACCTS home office at 1-800-487-8108.

How Much: There is a \$50 per adult non-refundable registration fee. The cost (lodging and meals) is between \$310 and \$420 per adult depending upon which lodging you select. Children 6 - 12 will cost \$72 each. Children 5 and under are free.

Important Information to Know:

- Fly to Denver. Drive, or take the shuttle bus to Estes Park (Estes Park Shuttle, phone: 970-586-5151)
- Rooms have queen or double beds, private bath, & Wi-Fi. Many are handicapped accessible. Take the picture tour link from our web

- Daytime temperatures average about 80 F, nighttime lows about 50 F
- Daily rate includes 3 buffet style "all you can eat" meals. Breakfast 7:00-9:00; Lunch 11:30-1:30; Dinner 5:00-7:00
- Dress: appropriate summer casual
- ATM, Snack Bar, and General Store/Gift Shop on premises

Four Workshop Tracts: FAMILY

Assisting military families during pre-deployment, deployment, and post deployment:

- Spiritual care for families
- Post-traumatic stress disorder and combat trauma care
- Military Spouses
- Financial Issues

LEADERSHIP

Bringing Christian leadership to all aspects of life:

- Building national military Christian fellowships and military leaders
- Leadership development principles
- Positional and personal leadership
- Leadership resources
- Spiritual leadership in families

CHURCH

How churches can assist:

- Chaplain/pastor support for families
- Church military support programs
- Church ministry near bases
- Church ministry to National Guard families
- Korean-church ministry to military families

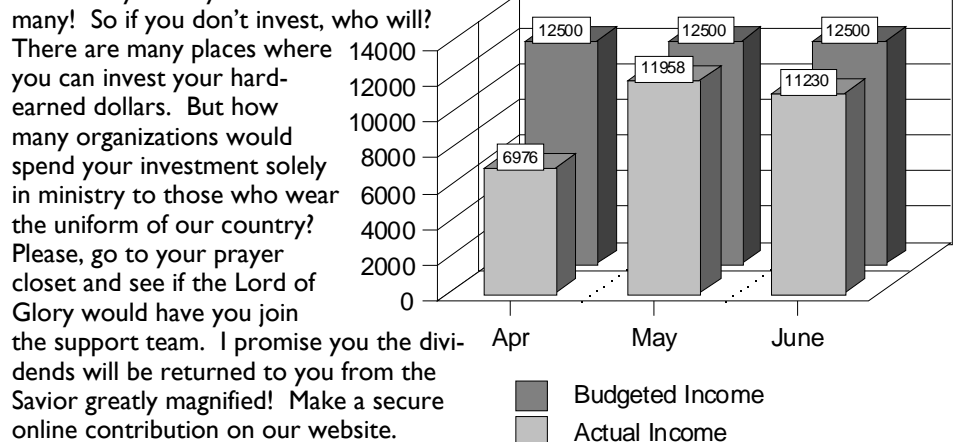
PRAYER

How to bring the power of prayer to meet military family needs:

- Available prayer resources
- Adopting a soldier/family for prayer
- Corporate prayer opportunities
- Local, state, and national prayer for the military
- Mobilizing nations to pray for the military

War Bonds — Won't You Join the Team?

Wars are very expensive! The war for souls is no exception. You however, may ask, why should I help support the war effort of CMF in the military society? Stop and think about how many folks there are in our country who have any concern for eternal things in the military society. There are not many! So if you don't invest, who will? There are many places where you can invest your hard-earned dollars. But how many organizations would spend your investment solely in ministry to those who wear the uniform of our country? Please, go to your prayer closet and see if the Lord of Glory would have you join the support team. I promise you the dividends will be returned to you from the Savior greatly magnified! Make a secure online contribution on our website.



Stretched Thin—by CH (CPT) Anonymous, USA

As I start my fifteenth year of ministry, I realize I have been stretched thin. I started as a missionary in Youth With A Mission, ministering in the USA, Europe, Asia and Africa for two years. I burned out, trying to "save the world" myself. I then went to seminary, getting a foundation for ministry. Serving churches during those three years helped me survive the academic stress.

After this I was a Youth Director for a year at a denominational church. It was busy, fulfilling work, but I realized youth ministry was not my strength. A Medical Center accepted me as a Chaplain Resident for Clinical Pastoral Education for a year. This again was fulfilling work, but it was hard on me emotionally as I experienced a death a week in the Emergency Department.

At this point in life I joined the Army as a chaplain. After the Officer Basic Course and a year of training, my battalion went to Kuwait for a year. Working every day of the year (except for two weeks off in the middle) wore on me, but it was satisfying ministry, as we saw church growth during the military buildup for Operation Iraqi Freedom. I returned to the United States for a year, enjoying getting weekends off again.

The Army moved me to Germany, and I was able to see the churches in several countries during my free time. I spent four months in Baghdad, Iraq. We

were mortared weekly, but thank the Lord no one in my battalion was injured. When we returned to Germany, it was good to be safe in Europe again.

The Army moved me back to the United States so I could be near family, for which I am very grateful to the Lord. I recently was stretched thin again as we had many things to do as we packed our containers for Afghanistan. The Lord tested my faith by not releasing a sound system for us until the morning our containers had to be shut for transportation. I was reminded I need to, "Walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5: 7).

The Army let me know that I have been passed over twice for promotion to Major, due to only a 60% promotion rate. This is what has stretched me thin the most. I have worked hard the last eight years in the Army, and I presume I will have a challenging year working in Afghanistan. During my two-week leave I did more praying, reading of The Word, worship, etc. which helped me to cope with the news. I have at least one more time to be looked at for promotion. Regardless of what happens, I am thankful for the Lord providing for me the last fifteen years in ministry, and for the great opportunities I have had being a part of His plan, as Christ brings others closer to Himself. The Lord may be stretching me, but He will not allow it to be more than I can handle. See 1 Corinthians 10:13.

I close with some verses that have encouraged me and helped me learn during these trying times. I pray they will comfort you as well.

"God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8: 28

"...Our adequacy is from God." 2 Corinthians 3: 5

"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" 2 Corinthians 4: 8, 9

"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1: 6

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Philippians 4: 13

"For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." 2 Timothy 1: 7

"...We may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4: 16

Because I have had to work out an hour and a half, five days a week preparing for Afghanistan, I have lost five pounds. So I have literally been stretched thin! ☩

Resting or Striving — by Bob Flynn, President/CEO

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since the quenching of the Great Awakening — with America's greatness now inversely proportional to the size of the National Debt!

Romans 1:21 "For although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give him thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts and their senseless hearts were darkened." (NET)

The reason we must "listen very carefully to what we have heard" is that we must refresh our hearing of it each and every day as we enter into Christ's Sabbath Rest! He has created a new day and called it, "Today" whereby we may enter into this blessed repose and blessed abode (katapausis). But if we fail to do so we will find no rest; our course will not be straight, and we will drift slowly away from His perfect will in our lives.

God's promise of entering His place of rest still stands, so we ought to tremble with fear that

some of you might fail to get there. For this Good News—that God has prepared a place of rest—has been announced to us just as it was to them. But it did them no good because they didn't believe what God told them." (Hebrew 4:1-2 NLT96)

I sought for the key to the greatness and genius of America in her harbors and her ample rivers ... ; in her rich mines and vast world commerce ... ; in her public school system and institutions of learning. I sought for it in her democratic Congress and in her matchless Constitution.

Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great. (Alexis de Tocqueville)

New Members

SFC Zamain & Tammie Brown, USA
Mr. Jason & Paula Davis
PO1 Ryan Done, USN
CPO Mike & Asami Eads, USN
Mr. Carl & Teal Elliott
SSG Kraig & Linda Morris, USAR (Ret)
SGT Johnathan & Tesca Pardue, USA
SSgt Brandi Smith, USAFR
ATC Kevin & Gale Tillett, USNR(TAR) (Ret)

Promotions

SFC Ted Merriss, USA
COL Paul Post, USAR
LTC Jason Strickland, USA

We're On The Web
<http://www.CMFHQ.org>

What is Your Primary Identity — Sinner or Saint? — by Pastor Larry Hoskins, Th. M., CMF Board of Directors

Are you being mastered, or are you mastering? At the beginning of human history, two brothers presented their offerings to the Lord. Cain was a farmer, and he offered fruit from the ground. Abel was a keeper of the flocks, and he offered from the firstlings of his flock. The Scripture tells us that God had regard only for Abel's offering, and the author of Hebrews tells us why: "By faith, Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain," (Hebrews 11:4 – emphasis mine). No law had been given that required a sacrifice. For some reason, however, Cain's offering fell short. The implication of the text is that Cain's act of worship was merely an act that was never connected to faith in the living God. He was just going through ritual observance without any connection from his heart and mind to that of God. Such a fact warrants our consideration. How connected are our hearts and minds to the heart and mind of God?

The story continues by noting that when God did not value Cain's offering, Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. I can just imagine his hanging head, furrowed brows, and drooping shoulders. Sin was spreading its ugly tentacles, and God gives Cain the opportunity to turn in the direction of faith. God asks him why he was angry and why his countenance had fallen. God was giving Cain the opportunity to do some reflective introspection. An opportunity for insight and re-direction was at hand.

How do we know this? God continued by saying, "If you do well (i.e., to turn from anger and to the Lord in faith), will not your countenance be lifted up (due to a totally different perspective and relationship with God)? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door, and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

The picture of sin crouching is like that of a cat dropping its belly as it stealthily draws near to pounce upon its prey. Sin wanted to dominate Cain's thinking and actions. The next thing we see is Cain murdering his brother — a kind of sin that had never been done before. Sin has mastered *him*, when God had told Cain that *he* must master sin. What a tragedy!

Why did Cain find himself under the dominion of sin? The fact is that he really did not want to "do well," as God had described it. Cain's actions led us to the inevitable conclusion that he liked sin and that he was more interested in pleasing himself than he was in pleasing God. He was a sinner who liked to sin, so he presented himself to sin as his master. I sometimes wonder what it was like for

Cain to have to spend the rest of his life with the knowledge that he had killed his brother. Did he really enjoy the "benefits" of being mastered by sin?

When we trusted Christ to save us from our sin, God gave us a new identity. I call it a "primary" identity. Throughout the Scriptures, believers are called saints. The moment we placed our faith in Christ, our former primary identity of sinner was changed.

Now do not misunderstand me. In the generic sense of the term in which a "sinner" is "one who sins," yes, we are all sinners. The Apostle John tells us that to think otherwise is to deceive oneself. I am not talking, though, about the "generic" sense of the word. I am talking about the specific, life-directing sense of the word sinner — our being "in Adam," under God's wrath, spiritually dead, without hope, without God, even being his enemies. If being a "sinner" is our identity, then is it any wonder that we would find ourselves constantly giving in to sin and allowing it to master us?

A new and better identity has been provided for us. Rather than being "in Adam," we are now "in Christ." We have been given His righteousness, and thus we can truly be called "saints." A saint is one who has God-imputed holiness. The righteousness we have is not of our own making. The Scriptures clearly say that if we keep the whole law but break it only in just one point, that we are guilty of all. They also teach that all of our righteous deeds are as filthy rags. Whether we have done one sin or a million, we fall equally short of God's standard of holy perfection. The only way a "sinner" becomes a "saint" is for God to give the righteousness of Christ to the sinner, and that is done only when a sinner turns to Christ in faith — trusting Christ's death and resurrection to save him or her from his or her sin.

So how does a "saint" master sin? Romans 6 tells us that we master sin by "considering ourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Galatians 5 tells us that we do that, not by trying harder, but by walking or living by the power of the Holy Spirit. We do not master sin by mere human effort, by simply trying harder. As Christians, we must make a clear distinction between our former manner of life (being "in Adam") and our new manner of life (being "in Christ.") When sin tries to master us by tempting us to sin (even those we have battled with for a long time) we must claim, in the power of the Spirit:

"I'm not 'in Adam' any more. I'm

dead to that life. My primary identity is not that I am a 'sinner' any longer. My primary identity is that I am a 'saint' who is now 'in Christ.' So by the Spirit's power, I choose to live in my new identity, and I cannot do that and sin. By God's strength, I will live in righteousness."

When we remember these principles and when we live them out in our thoughts, words, and actions, sin does not master *us* anymore; by God's grace and power, we master *it*.

Which seems to be truer of you these days? Does sin master you, or do you master it? Yes, we all fall from time to time, failing to live in our new identity and in the power of the Spirit. We fall prey to those three enemies of the believer — the devil, to the world system, and to our own fleshly desires. In that sense, we are all sinners. But is that our primary identity? As was the case with Cain, sin is crouching at our door, too. It wants to master us, but we must master it.

Romans 12:2 says, "And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Has your mind been renewed? If so, which is your primary identity? Sinner? Or Saint? Our actions may speak louder than our words.

Nominations are Open

Nominations are now open for the CMF Board of Directors. Directors are appointed at the October meeting and serve a three-year term that begins in January. The Board currently meets four times a year at the CMF office in Englewood, CO.

If you are interested in serving the ministry in this capacity, please let us know here at the home office by any means — phone, mail, or email.

The following is an excerpt from the CMF Bylaws that outlines the qualifications:

The Board of Directors shall be comprised of a majority of individuals possessing a professional graduate degree and/or significant corporate board/executive level experience. As many as practicable shall be active-duty enlisted when elected who are also currently serving as CMF Local Representatives with active local ministries.