



**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No. 38, September 23, 2014 / Southside Baptist

Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is **a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen.”***

WHEN TERRORISTS RECRUIT OUR CHILDREN— and Why

They’re Successful! By Lori Stanley Roeleveld {Don’t really know who this author is... but I believe that this is a worthy read!!}

I knew a young American Muslim boy. He was twelve. His mother had left his Muslim father to return to her Christian faith. Their marriage had taken unexpected turns. She attended a mid-week women’s Bible study so her son would have an opportunity to join the youth group that met at the same time. He refused to enter the room in which the youth gathered but she hoped he would become curious and wander in. After a couple of weeks, I asked him, “What do you think about joining in with the group?”

He shook his head. **“It appears to be a weak religion, soft, not really about anything that matters and the young people have no direction. They do not seem to care or know much about what they believe.”** The mother gave up going because her son berated her about her weakness in turning to this soft faith. I lost contact with them not long after that.

That boy missed his father. He responded the way his father had taught him. Who knows what God may have worked if the mother had persisted, if he’d sat in the hallway a few more weeks? I don’t know the youth in that

youth group. Perhaps they were more serious than the boy knew, but perhaps, his observations were on the mark. I thought of that boy this week when I heard reports of young Americans, Brits, and Australians [voluntarily signing on with ISIS](#). **What possesses young adults to betray their homeland to join a group whose trademark is beheading?**

The apostle Paul gave me the answer today. In the opening of his letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul refers to the Christians there as “**you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.**” (Romans 1:6 ESV) **CALLED TO BELONG**. The phrase flew like an arrow to a place of deep hunger in my soul. A place that throbbed with such agony in childhood and adolescence that I become a child again when it is stirred.

I remember being so eager to belong, to be included with others so badly I would have been (and was) tempted to many wrong paths to silence that aching need. The desire to BELONG is responsible for most of my earliest sins and I thank God often that I wasn't recruited by a cult or embraced by a false religion during the height of that need.

The enemy knows we come hardwired with this hunger. In their recruitment propaganda, ISIS terrorists exploit the desperate craving to belong. They promise camaraderie, a strong and unflinching system of belief, and a higher purpose than personal fulfillment. They target young people who haven't found their identity or their purpose in life in Christ and they pervert that empty soul-space to meet their own agenda

Paul understood this dynamic. He had once belonged to the Pharisees - a group with a clear and unflinching system of belief, a group that gave him an identity and into which he'd earned a place to belong **but his encounter with Jesus broke his bondage to that system and freed him to find these needs met in Christ alone.** In the first six verses of Romans 1, we learn that Jesus gave Paul **1)** an identity (a servant of Jesus, an apostle), **2)** a purpose (set apart for the gospel), **3)** a sense of being part of something historic (Jesus is the one the prophets proclaimed, the Son of God declared in power by His resurrection from the dead) **and 4)** a

mission: (who has graced us with the task of bringing about the obedience of faith for the sake of His name among all nations).

He concludes the passage by folding in the Roman Christians to all these same things by calling them **those who are “CALLED TO BELONG.”** **What Paul understood about himself and his calling is true of us today. We are also those who are “called to belong.”** How powerful is that in a world where many feel so disenfranchised they will betray home and country just to belong? Are we proclaiming this belonging in our churches? **Are we telling the young people in our world that coming to Jesus is about more than personal life enhancement? We’re designed to want to belong, to live in community, to work for greater things than just ourselves. Are we speaking to this hardwiring when we outreach those who don’t know Jesus?**

Are we praying for the twenty-something’s in our communities, in our country, who feel lost and who are filled with a desperate longing to belong? Are we asking Jesus to open our eyes to see them and open our mouths to invite them into the greatest adventure that exists? Are we living that adventure in front of them so they see evidence of that thing to which they are invited?

According to the scriptures, the closer we get to the end of the age, the more people who will choose darkness, evil, and the great delusion but we don’t have to make it easy for them. We can go down fighting; telling them the truth. We are the boots on the ground in this particular battle, loved ones.

Our Father God is not some distant commander-in-chief trying to direct the effort against our enemy from afar. **He was so committed to this fight, He put His own boots on the ground when He came as one of us, lived among us in the flesh, and laid down His own life to purchase our BELONGING.**

We are CALLED TO BELONG. Let that sink into that old wound you’ve carried, that bleeding place that falsely marked you as isolated, rejected, and alone. If you’ve come to Jesus, know He

called you to BELONG. You are in the fellowship. You have an identity in Him, a greater calling, a purpose in life, and you belong with us. Remember this. Then, tell someone else before they choose to take their need to belong to the enemy camp.

JESUS CHRIST: If He is not worth DYING for— we will not LIVE for Him! PERSECUTION— for Christ’s Sake! [Edited from

Richard Bewes and Nathan Busenitz]

In Matt. 10:28 JESUS said, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell.” **Stephen, the first Christian martyr as he was dying offered two prayers:** For himself— “LORD JESUS, receive my spirit.” For his enemies: “LORD, lay not this sin to their charge.” **The Apostle Paul said,** “The Holy Spirit witnesses in every city, saying that bonds and imprisonments await me. **BUT NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME,** neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy!”

Let each of us ask: WHAT IS MY HOLD ON TRUTH? ... Is it of such importance to me that I would be prepared to be put to death for what I believe?

True martyrdom is not an issue about ‘suicide bombers’ armed with weapons, intent on killing as many people as possible – but rather about **men and women of peace whose only ‘weapon’ is the love of God in Jesus Christ.**

Four hundred fifty eight years ago, a crowd of curious spectators packed University Church in Oxford, England. **They were there to witness the public recantation of one of the most well-known English Reformers, a man named Thomas Cranmer.** Cranmer had been arrested by Roman Catholic authorities nearly three years earlier. At first, his resolve was strong. But after many months in prison, under daily pressure from his captors and the imminent threat of being burned at the stake, the Reformer’s faith faltered. His enemies eventually coerced him

to sign several documents renouncing his Protestant faith. In a moment of weakness, in order to prolong his life, Cranmer denied the truths he had defended throughout his ministry, the very principles upon which the Reformation itself was based. Roman Catholic Queen Mary I, “Bloody Mary,” viewed Cranmer’s retractions as a mighty trophy in her violent campaign against the Protestant cause. **But Cranmer’s enemies wanted more than just a written recantation. They wanted him to declare it publicly.** And so, on March 21, 1556, Thomas Cranmer was taken from prison and brought to University Church. Dressed in tattered clothing, the weary, broken, and degraded Reformer took his place at the pulpit.

A script of his public recantation had already been approved; and his enemies sat expectantly in the audience, eager to hear his clear denunciation of the evangelical faith. **But then the unexpected happened. In the middle of his speech, Thomas Cranmer deviated from his script.** To the shock and dismay of his enemies, he refused to recant the true gospel. Instead, he bravely recanted his earlier recantations. Finding the courage he had lacked over those previous months, the emboldened Reformer announced to the crowd of shocked onlookers:

I come to the great thing that troubles my conscience more than any other thing that I ever said or did in my life: and that is, the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth, which here now I renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand [which were] contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, [being] written for fear of death, and to save my life. Cranmer went on to say that if he should be burned at the stake, his right hand would be the first to be destroyed, since it had signed those recantations. And then, just to make sure no one misunderstood him, Cranmer added this:

“And as for the pope, I refuse him, as Christ’s enemy and antichrist, with all his false doctrine.”

Moments later, Cranmer was seized, marched outside, and burned at the stake. True to his word, he thrust his right hand into the flames so that it might be destroyed first. As the flames encircled his

body, Cranmer died with the words of Stephen on his lips: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. I see the heavens open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.”

Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley and Thomas Cranmer - all Protestant bishops - were burnt at the stake, in a spot marked today by an iron cross, set in a pavement outside Balliol College. Scorched doors, set between the quads of Balliol College, can still be seen, as sombre relics from that funeral pyre; **grim reminders of what - in Mary’s reign - it could cost someone to declare personal belief in the sole sufficiency of Christ’s atoning death for salvation.**

In 1555, Bishops Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley died at the same spot that Cranmer was to die six months later. Faggots were piled around them and gunpowder was placed around their necks, tied as they were to a single stake. As a lighted faggot was placed at Ridley’s feet, Hugh Latimer called out: **“Be of good comfort, brother Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust never shall be put out!”**

Again, on March 21st, 1556 it was Cranmer’s turn. Having steered the church through the many turbulences of the Reformation; having given England **the Great Bible** of 1538 and the **Book of Common Prayer** (1552), he was also responsible for the **Articles of the Church of England**, which feature thirty-nine statements of Biblical truth as they affected many of the errors and issues of that time. Possessing a superb command of scholarship and of the English language, none of his opponents could match him in debate or writing. All his theology was based on the experience and the finished work of Jesus Christ.

He was already in the Bocardo prison in Oxford, when Latimer and Ridley died; indeed from there he watched them as they were taken to the stake. It may even be that he was compelled to witness their deaths personally. Having valiantly defended his Reformation beliefs on numerous occasions - often being denied access to his writings and documents - Cranmer was to spend some two and a half years in his prison.

The loneliness of his ordeal, coupled with what today we would call a form of brain-washing on the part of his persecutors, induced him to sign a document, recanting his cherished beliefs and upholding the teachings and supremacy of the Roman Pope. It looked as though Mary's triumph would be complete – with the apparent collapse in spirit of this pivotal Protestant figure. Surely the English Reformation could now only fall with Cranmer's confession and subsequent execution as a heretic. **Yet Cranmer's was but a momentary faltering of nerve.** Taken out to die on the morning of March 21st, 1556, Thomas Cranmer – (led from the Bocardo to St Mary's Church and escorted with psalm-chanting Spanish friars on each side) – was ready with his final ringing testimony to the truths for which he had always striven. It was a very public moment. As for his forced recantation — **we state again:** Finding the courage he had lacked over those previous months, the emboldened Reformer announced to the crowd of shocked onlookers:

I come to the great thing that troubles my conscience more than any other thing that I ever said or did in my life: and that is, the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth, which here now I renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand [which were] contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, [being] written for fear of death, and to save my life. Cranmer went on to say that if he should be burned at the stake, his right hand would be the first to be destroyed, since it had signed those recantations. And then, just to make sure no one misunderstood him, Cranmer added this: ***“And as for the pope, I refuse him, as Christ's enemy and antichrist, with all his false doctrine.”***

QUICKLY, bound with steel around his waist, the fire roared up and Cranmer held his right hand directly in the flame, as he cried out, **“This hand hath offended!”** ‘This,’ writes Archbishop Marcus Loane, ‘was recantation of a kind which none could undo; a Sign of Faith which no one could misread. **His patience in torment, his courage in dying,** won admiration even from hostile members of the crowd which looked on. He stood firmly in the same place, ringed with flame, lapped with fire; and stirred no more than the stake to which he was bound, only lifting up his

eyes and crying so long as his voice would allow, **“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”** (*Masters of the English Reformation*, Church Book Room Press, 1954, p.240).

Revelation 2:10, 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold the devil is about to throw some of you into prison that you may be tested, and for 10 days you will have tribulation. **Be thou faithful unto death** and I will give you the crown of life.'

Matthew Henry writes: Christ arms against coming troubles. Fear none of these things; **not only forbid slavish fear, but subdue it**, furnishing the soul with strength and courage. It should be to try them, not to destroy them. **Observe the sureness of the reward;** I will give thee: they shall have the reward from Christ's own hand. Also, how suitable it is; a crown of life: the life worn out in his service, or laid down in his cause, shall be rewarded with a much better life, which shall be eternal. **The second death is unspeakably worse than the first death**, both in the agonies of it, and as it is eternal death: **it is indeed awful to die, and to be always dying.** If a man is kept from the second death and wrath to come, he may patiently endure whatever he meets with in this world.” (From Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary)

Another outstanding example of being faithful unto death was in the life of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John. According to reliable history, he was burned at the stake in 155 A. D. He had been asked to say, “Caesar is Lord,” but he refused. When Polycarp was brought to the stadium, the Proconsul urged him, “Swear, and I will set you at liberty; reproach Christ.” **Polycarp answered,** “Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury; **how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?”**

When the Proconsul again pressed him, the old man answered: “Since thou art vainly urgent that I should swear by the fortune of Caesar, and pretendest not to know who and what I am, hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian.” **Then the Proconsul said,** “I have wild beasts at hand, to these will I cast thee, except thou repent.” Again, “I will cause thee to be consumed by fire, seeing thou despisest the wild beast, if thou wilt not repent.”

Polycarp replied, “Thou threatenest me with fire which burneth for an hour, after a little while is extinguished; but art ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly.” Shortly, thereafter, he was burned at the stake.

Martyr’s Oath! ” *In the twenty first century there are lands where Christians face death on a regular basis. From such lands have come what is called, the Martyr’s Oath. It is reported that it is not uncommon to hear of Christians even incorporating it in their wedding vows, as they begin their lives together as evangelists and church planters in lands where conversion to Jesus as Lord is a capital offense.*

“TODAY, I stand as a dead man. I declare that in Jesus Christ, I am saved by His blood, and thus I am dead to sin, and no longer dead in my sin. TODAY, I stand and declare that I surrender my will and my life, to His will and His life. I shall go where He sends me, without asking questions. I shall go to whomever He sends me, without seeking fame. I shall preach to everyone, even if they hate me. I am an Ambassador of the Cross, and must deliver the Message. I shall pour my life out to reach my family, my friends, my neighbors, and my city. I embrace the shame of the Cross and I fear nothing but God. I welcome suffering, shame, persecution, beatings, imprisonment and death, but I will not be silenced. If I am killed, I pray that my blood should be a harvest for souls. This is my city. I dare not do less.”

NOW... WHAT ABOUT OUR CITY?

Grace to one and all! James Bell www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

**** WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM; IN THE CHURCH AUDITORIUM! ****

NOTE: Jody Allen is ministering to young Children, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth

Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service. YOUTH GROUP: Wednesdays 6-8pm... led by Byron Smith

➔ NEXT LADIES BIBLE STUDY— September 25 @ 11:00AM,

Led by Cindy Bell

*** SATURDAY MORNINGS @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! ***

SUNDAY Schedule for September 28:

- 1. 9:30am-** Sunday School Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship
- 2. 10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
- 3. NOON FELLOWSHIP MEAL**
- 4. 1:00pm- Early Afternoon Service**

SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL!

Children are like young plants in a garden— while young and tender must be protected. Southside Christian School works in harmony with the local Church and empowers parents!

<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>