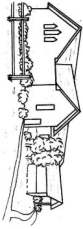


**NORTHWOODS
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**



**4723 GRIFFITH AVENUE
CHEYENNE, WY 82009**

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. JOHN 4:24

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.
Mar 16:15

THE NORTHWOODS NEWS

WITNESS FOR THE DEFENSE

By

Rich Cesal

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Mat 28:19-20.

These words of Jesus instruct us to witness to the things concerning Jesus. In short, the Gospel. The good news that we have a Redeemer who lives. Who can forgive our sins and grant to us eternal life with the Creator God of the universe.

When I first became a Christian, I had a zeal to tell others of that which I had found. With our store, we had a place where a forum about Christ would break out on occasion. People came in and many times the conversation would move to witnessing to them. That in a sense was a case of a captive audience. It was easy to witness to people who had a hunger to know. I don't know if any of those talked to ever became Christians. But the time was right as God's providence would provide.

When I had to return to work to provide an income for my family, I was thrown in with a group of co-workers at the University of Wyoming who were far from being Christians. The computer operators provided many opportunities to witness to them since my job took me into the computer room much of the time. I had singled out a particular operator to witness to and pray for. He was a Vietnam vet and his language was straight from the rice paddies. Nothing like taking on a top of the line challenge. I prayed hard for him with no apparent success. Then one day the word came, he had been killed that morning in a motorcycle accident on the way to work on the streets of Laramie. Brett had showed no signs of beginning to soften. Unless he had a death bed conversion, I'm afraid he was lost.

I had other occasions to take on someone I thought I might lead to Christ. As far as I know, I had no success in any of these attempts. In Eph 4:11, Paul says, "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." Paul does not say but strongly implies that *all* are not prophets, *all* are not evangelists, *all* are not pastors, and *all* are not teachers. I certainly had been shown to not have the gift of evangelism.

There are people of whom God obviously has given that gift. I think I have read all the books written by Corrie ten Boom. Her most famous book, *The Hiding Place*, tells of her experiences with the Nazis during World War II.

The ten Boom family was a very strong Christian witness in Haarlem in the Netherlands. Corrie and her sister Betsie, both of whom never married lived in their childhood home with their father, Casper. Their mother had died much earlier. Casper was a watch maker and their living quarters were over his shop. In *The Hiding Place* there is some mention of the ten Boom brother Willem being a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church. Although church affiliation is not stressed, there is no doubt that this was a devout protestant Christian family.

Late in the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, Corrie and her sister decided to take in refugees from the Nazis most of whom were Jews fleeing being sent to the death camps. Casper agreed and said, "In this household, God's people are always welcome." They built a very small hidden room behind a linen closet in an upstairs bedroom which could house up to six people in very cramped conditions. The ten Booms were discovered, arrested and sent to Ravensbrück in northern Germany, a notorious women's concentration camp during WW II. Betsie took ill there and died. Several others of the ten Boom family also died in prison including Casper.

While in prison, Corrie and Betsie held Bible studies with the inmates. Even in that horrible place they told of God's love and His providence. They even thanked God for the lice because that kept the prison guards out of their barracks so that they could hold those Bible studies without being disturbed. There is a notable quote of Betsie's which tells volumes of her sincerity. During a moment of severe depression and hatred for the Nazis on Corrie's part, Betsie said, "There is no pit so deep that God's love isn't deeper still."

Corrie describes a typical evening in which they would use their secreted Bible to hold worship services:

"At first Betsie and I called these meetings with great timidity. But as night after night went by and no guard ever came near us, we grew bolder. So many now wanted to join us that we held a second service after evening roll call. . . . (These) were services like no others, these times in Barracks 28. A single meeting night might

include a recital of the Magnificat in Latin by a group of Roman Catholics, a whispered hymn by some Lutherans, and a sotto-voce chant by Eastern Orthodox women. With each moment the crowd around us would swell, packing the nearby platforms, hanging over the edges, until the high structures groaned and swayed.

"At last either Betsie or I would open the Bible. Because only the Hollanders could understand the Dutch text we would translate aloud in German. And then we would hear the life-giving words passed back along the aisles in French, Polish, Russian, Czech, and back into Dutch. They were little previews of heaven, these evenings beneath the light bulb." (Ten Boom 1971, p. 201)

Betsie, never strong in health, grew steadily weaker and died on December 16, 1944. Some of her last words to Corrie were, "... (we) must tell them what we have learned here. We must tell them that there is no pit so deep that He is not deeper still. They will listen to us, Corrie, because we have been here." (Ten Boom, 1971, p. 217)

Corrie was released on a clerical error and survived until she died on her birthday in 1983. She was 91.

After leaving Ravensbrück, Corrie began a life of more than thirty years sharing her faith with people throughout the world. Her book, *Tramp for the Lord*, tells of her evangelical travels and near-destitute days in postwar New York to heart-stopping adventures in Africa. Corrie's inspirational life story proves that God does great things.

On more than one occasion, when she would ride in a taxi in New York, before she arrived at her destination, she would have the taxi driver asking how he can become a Christian. Once, after feeling that God was sending her to New York City to meet someone, upon arriving at a hotel with no money, she inquired at the desk if there were any messages for her. There were none. She told the clerk she would sit in the lobby and wait on the Lord. Finally, the clerk called her to the desk and there was a telegram with money for her.

Corrie did not generally speak to large groups although at times she did through her association with Billy Graham. She was mostly one on one with people she had some contact with. It is obvious that God had given Corrie ten Boom the gift of evangelism.

Joni Erickson Tada is another who is a super witness for God. You would think she would be somewhat bitter towards God for bringing essentially an end to any kind of normal life after her diving accident at age 18. But she has joyfully told the world about how thankful she is that she knows Christ. She has said, "I would rather be in this chair with God than to be able to walk without God."

I had found, as I observed Charmayne witnessing to customers in our store, that she was most effective when giving her testimony on how she became a Christian rather than telling them of Jesus. It seemed as though the people would hang on her every word. When you tell people how your life has changed because your heart was changed and you repented of your sins and how you know that Jesus is your Redeemer, people listen.

There are churches where testimonies are given before the congregation. Before becoming a genuine Christian, when we were answering God's call to shop for a new church in Florida, we came upon The Palm Bible Chapel. This church had an AWANA ministry where our one daughter was attending. During an AWANA function for parents, part of the program was the giving of testimonies. I wanted nothing to do with giving testimony. Probably because I didn't have one. I believe when people hear a testimony, they think "I could do that".

We belonged to several churches in Laramie. One was extremely liberal (Laramie United Presbyterian Church) with a pastor who had no business being in the pulpit. For Example, this pastor absolutely forbade the singing of *Amazing Grace* in the church. We were active in the programs of the church. We were in charge of the youth group and I had opportunities to witness to them. I also spoke before some adult gatherings and taught adult Sunday School. Again, I don't know if God had used me to bring any of His people to Christ or not.

In one church, a Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, the men needed fundamental teaching. We had a very successful weekly Men's Breakfast in which there were many opportunities to witness on various issues. But when denominational doctrine is flawed, there is much confusion and error.

In Wisconsin Rapids at a Baptist Church, I was an AWANA leader for the high school kids. I gave them a good dose of reformed theology and tried to point out the errors in the strong dispensational teachings of the AWANA manuals. Also, in Wisconsin, I was not allowed to teach in the church since I was not a member because of the baptism issue. After years of telling people both young and old about Christ I can say that I know of no one who came to Christ because of my witnessing.

There is a book written by Sheldon Vanauken called *A Severe Mercy*. A good subtitle for this book would be *An Anatomy of A Conversion*. The book tells the story of how a young married couple at Oxford became interested in Christianity through evening discussions with other students. He and his wife knew nothing about Christianity or the Gospel. Sheldon decided to write to C. S. Lewis with some questions. The book contains the actual correspondence between Vanauken and Lewis as the Vanaukens progress in their investigation of what it means to be a Christian. Sheldon and his wife ask very deep

questions about knowledge, proof of Christianity, and life after death. Lewis does not evangelize Vanauken but simply answers the questions as they are asked. In one such exchange towards the middle of their progression, Lewis ends his letter with, "But I think you are already in the meshes of the net! The Holy Spirit is after you. I doubt if you'll get away!" A sad note: Sheldon's wife, Jean Davis known as Davy from her surname comes down with cancer after accepting the Lord and dies hence the name of the book.

"Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified," Rom 8:30. This speaks to God's preordained choice and the fact that one cannot resist that call. This is a demonstration of God's sovereignty.

The Bible teaches that God is absolutely sovereign but it also teaches human responsibility. And so, we have what is called an antinomy. Two positions which logically seem as opposites and both cannot be true. Thus it would seem one must be incorrect. But in the case of God, the impossible is possible and we must accept this Biblical teaching much as we accept the trinity, the virgin birth, and Christ's bodily resurrection.

But this causes some dilemma as we speak about evangelism. God is sovereign in His choice of those whom He will call His people. But we are responsible for our actions. Since we do not know whom God has chosen, and the Bible instructs us to witness to others, we must do as Lewis did and tell them the Gospel and allow God to carry out His preordained plan.

God's sovereignty and human responsibility are two sides of the same coin. If you try to see both sides at the same time you will fail but that does not destroy the fact that both sides exist.

Ligonier Ministries' *Tabletalk* magazine says, ". . . we must never emphasize divine sovereignty at the expense of human responsibility (fatalism) or human responsibility at the expense of divine sovereignty (Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism)."

The job of the church is to present both sides of that coin. And if one side is stressed at the expense of the other there will be doctrinal problems. The so-called evangelical church has done just that. Their whole emphasis is on evangelism and they do not recognize the absolute sovereignty of God. They also ignore the command that Jesus made to His followers that they should feed His sheep. (John 21:15-17).

And so we, in reformed churches, recognize God's absolute sovereignty and our responsibility. We must follow the declarations of Paul in Rom 10:12-13, "For *'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'* How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" We must tell them.

As R. C. Sproul has declared, ". . . the doctrine of salvation can be summed up effectively in three words: *regeneration precedes faith . . .*" Even that very faith required for believing is unmerited and given only by the grace of God (Eph 2:8-9). We cannot deserve regeneration, which is why we must finally attribute our salvation to God alone and His sovereign election. Let us be grateful that the Lord has not left us to ourselves but has transformed us to believe in Him. And of course that will not happen unless someone tells us.

We perhaps never know the results of bringing the truth to others. But the Bible says, "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (Isa 55:11). **Ω**

Session Report

March is here already. The year is moving fast. As a session we want to encourage you to be active in the life of Northwoods to the glory of God. We are blessed to be called by God to be a part of His body - the church. He has given each one of us a role to play and gifts to use for the building up of the body. Opportunities abound for you to use those gifts this year.

There are plenty of opportunities to grow - Sunday school, FEAST, men's breakfast, Bible study 20/30, and Sunday morning and evening worship. Do not miss out on the blessing of knowing God more and helping to sharpen each other.

There are plenty of opportunities to serve. The LCCC Bible study needs people to help with snacks and discussion, LifeChoice needs people to support them during their banquet, VBS needs teachers and volunteers, and many other things you can do on your own for those God brings your way. Do not miss out on the blessing of being God's hands and feet.

On a final note, we are moving the monthly session meetings to the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm starting this month. We are still available to meet with you at that time if that works, but we can also meet with you after worship on Sundays if that is better. Please just let us know.

May God richly bless you this month. **Ω**

Announcements

Daylight Saving Time Notes

Sometimes DST is used for a longer period than just the summer, as it was in the United States during World War II. From February 3, 1942 to September 30, 1945 most of the United States had DST all year; it was called "War Time."



Daylight Savings Time begins—March 9

The daylight saving date in many countries may change from time to time due to special events or conditions. The United States, Canada and some other countries extended DST in 2007. The new start date is the second Sunday in March (previously the first Sunday in April) through to the first Sunday in November (previously the last Sunday in October).

FEAST— Feast meets on Mar 12 & 26. We eat starting at 6:00 PM and Bible Study starts at 6:45 PM.

Men's Breakfast— March 15 the men will meet at the church for a full breakfast cooked by Dale Vosler and Rich Cesal and continued study in James, 8:00 AM.

Ladies Brunch— The ladies are invited to the Jessica Lewis' home for brunch on March 20th at 10:00 AM. .

Nursery Schedule for March

2nd - HUNTER ANDERSON
 9th - JENNY ROPER
 16th - LAURA TWITCHELL
 23rd - BECKY SHWEN
 30th - LYDIA BRUNGARDT



Please trade with someone if you are unable to do nursery duty on the assigned day.

Robert Shockey	3rd
Zach Jenkins	6th
Al Auzqui	9th
Asa Davison	12th
Becky Shwen	14th
Daniel Vickery	21st
Kieran Tunnicliff	25th



Katherine (Kate) Hankey: Author of *The Old, Old Story*

Compiled by Stephen Ross



Gospel tracts to hand out in her classes. She was also very supportive of foreign missions.

Katherine and her father belonged to an influential group called "Clapham Sect." Most members of this group were prominent and wealthy evangelical Anglicans. A well known member of this group was William Wilberforce.

In her thirties, Kate became seriously ill and it was during the lengthy period of recovery that she wrote *The Old, Old Story*, a long poem about Jesus. The poem consisted of two main parts. The first part is titled, *The Story Wanted* and was written in January, 1866. The second part is titled *The Story Told*, and was written in November, 1866. The complete poem was first published in 1867. The author was not identified, nor was she noted as the author in the 1875 edition of this poem.

From this poem come two well-known hymns: "Tell Me the Old, Old Story" and "I Love To Tell the Story."

"Tell Me The Old, Old Story" was taken from eight stanzas of four lines each in the first part of the poem. William H. Doane (1832-1915) composed the music for this hymn and first published it as no. 240 in his *Songs of Devotion*, 1870. Doane indicates the author as anonymous. A collection of Kate Hankey's hymns that she published in 1870, including "Tell me The Old, Old Story," titled *Heart to Heart: Hymns by the Author of "The Old, Old Story,"* also does not identify Hankey specifically.

"I Love to Tell the Story" was adapted from the words of the second part of Hankey's poem with the music composed by William G. Fischer (1835-1912), and first published in *Joyful Songs*, 1869.

In addition to "The Old, Old Story" (1866) her publications include *Heart to Heart* (1870) and *The Old, Old Story and Other Verses* (1879).

Kate Hankey died May 9, 1911, in London, England.

LESSONS FROM NATURE

Tom Ascol

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love.
I love to tell the story, because I know 'tis true;
It satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.

*Refrain: I love to tell the story, 'twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love.*

I love to tell the story; more wonderful it seems
Than all the golden fancies of all our golden dreams.
I love to tell the story, it did so much for me;
And that is just the reason I tell it now to thee.

Refrain

I love to tell the story; 'tis pleasant to repeat
What seems, each time I tell it, more wonderfully sweet.
I love to tell the story, for some have never heard
The message of salvation from God's own holy Word.

Refrain

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.

Refrain

The Bible frequently uses animals as illustrations to help us understand key points about life. In Proverbs, ants are held up as examples of being industrious (6:6), and a lion is used to describe a king's wrath (19:12; 20:2). David warns us not to be like a horse or a mule in the way we relate to God, and Isaiah assures us that those who wait on the Lord will soar with "wings like eagles" (40:31).

Jesus occasionally uses animals to make a point in His teaching. If our heavenly Father takes care of the birds of the air (Matt. 6:26) and does not let one of them fall to the ground apart from His will (10:29), then we can be sure that He will take care of His own children.

Before the Lord sent the twelve apostles out to preach the Gospel, He warned them of the opposition and persecution they would face as they ventured out into the world as His ambassadors. To make His point, Jesus again drew analogies from the animal kingdom.

In fact, in one sentence, He mentions four different animals. "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (10:16). Our Lord teaches His followers some profound lessons by His choice of animal analogies.

First, we are like sheep. In John 10, Jesus describes Himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His people, whom He calls His sheep. Sheep are gentle and submissive animals. They are defenseless, which is why they need the protection and provision of a shepherd.

The lesson is readily apparent to anyone who understands the Gospel of God's grace. As sinners, we are helpless before God. Our only hope is a savior, and God has provided Him for us in the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. Without strength and without recourse, Christians are dependent on Christ as the great Shepherd of the sheep (Heb. 13:20).

The next lesson is not so obvious. Not only are Christians like sheep, the world is also like a wolf pack. Wolves are predators. They are ravenous and dangerous. They run in packs and work together to gang up on their prey. When a wolf and sheep meet up in the wilderness, put your money on the wolf every time!

According to the "law of the jungle," wolves will always have an advantage over sheep. They are stronger, faster, and more fierce.

So it is with Christians in the world. In one sense, believers will always be at a disadvantage because we don't play by the same rules. The virtues that our King calls us to cultivate are meekness, gentleness, self-

control, kindness, and other sheep-like qualities that no self-respecting wolf would ever desire.

Given the disparity that exists between sheep and wolves, why would people who are compared to the former ever associate with those compared to the latter? Jesus told His disciples that He intentionally sent them to be involved in the lives of unconverted people. He sends His sheep on a mission to wolves. Specifically, we are sent to call wolves to become sheep.

Though on the surface this seems like an utterly foolish mission, in reality, it is God's way to accomplish His saving work in the world and to display His wisdom and power in the process. When sheep conquer wolves it is obvious that something supernatural has happened.

Our Lord wants His followers to see themselves as inherently helpless as He sends them into the world of unbelievers to preach the Gospel of His kingdom. Such self-awareness will cause us to trust not in our own resources but in Christ.

Furthermore, this imagery will motivate us to heed our Lord's encouragement to be both wise and innocent as we engage people with the Gospel. He calls us to be like serpents and doves.

In Egyptian hieroglyphics serpents symbolize wisdom. This is fitting since snakes tend to operate with an admirable sort of shrewdness in avoiding danger. By itself, being compared to a snake is no compliment, but Jesus tempers the baser elements of serpentine prudence by invoking a fourth animal. Christian shrewdness must always be governed by a dove-like innocence. We are never free to sin in our efforts to be wise. This kind of guileless prudence is what we see displayed by Paul as he divided the Pharisees against the Sadducees when he stood before the Sanhedrin in Acts 23. We also see it manifested in his evangelistic strategy carried out at the Areopagus in Acts 17.

Our Lord calls His followers to take the Gospel into the world with thoughtful simplicity. We are to go with a keen awareness of our vulnerability, depending on our Shepherd to guide and defend us. As sheep among wolves, with the prudence of a serpent and the integrity and innocence of a dove, we are sent to proclaim the kingdom of our God. Ω

The Spirit's Internal Witness

By
R.C. Sproul

Nearly forty years ago, I was a part of a group known as the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. Concerned about the impact of liberal higher criticism, we gathered to define what it means that the Bible does not teach any error and to articulate a defensible position on the trustworthiness of God's Word that Christians could use to combat misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the church's historic position on the Bible. The council developed the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, which deals with many issues related to the inspiration and truthfulness of Scripture. Article XVII of this statement asserts, in part, that "the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word."

By this article we wanted to make it clear that the Bible is the Holy Spirit's book. He is involved not only in the inspiration of Scripture, but is also a witness to Scripture's truthfulness. This is what we call the "internal testimony" of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit provides a testimony that takes place inside of us—He bears witness to our spirits that the Bible is the Word of God. Just as the Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16), He assures us of the sacred truth of His Word.

Despite its importance, the internal testimony of the Spirit is subject to misunderstanding. One of these misunderstandings relates to how we defend the truthfulness of the Bible. Do we need to provide an apologetic—a defense—for sacred Scripture that relies on evidence from archaeology and history, on demonstrating the Bible's internal consistency, and on logical argumentation? Some misconstrue the doctrine of the internal testimony to mean that the presentation of evidence to the veracity of the Bible is unnecessary and even counterproductive. All we need to do is rest on the fact that the Holy Spirit tells us that the Bible is God's Word both in direct biblical statements and in His internal work of confirming Scripture's truthfulness.

Those who hold this position usually want to stress that the authority of God's Word depends on God Himself and believe that subjecting His Word to empirical testing is to make the Bible's truthfulness dependent on our own authority to evaluate its truth claims. At one level, this concern is laudable. Scripture's authority



depends on its being the revelation of God, above whom there is no higher authority. But when we are talking about proof for the veracity of Scripture, we are not talking about the authority of God's Word but about how we know which of the books that claim to be the Word of God are actually from Him. Here, subjective experience cannot be our only court of appeal. We need some sort of objective testimony to determine whether the Bible, Qur'an, or Bhagavad Gita is the Word of God because they all claim to be the Word of God.

This is where what John Calvin called the *indicia* come into play. The *indicia*—indicators—are testable, analyzable, falsifiable, or verifiable aspects of proof. They include such things as archaeological evidence, Scripture's conformity to what we know about history from other sources, its internal consistency, its majesty and beauty, and so forth. These things give us objective confidence that the Bible is indeed the Word of God. Both Calvin and the Westminster Confession of Faith tell us that these indicators are enough in themselves to convince people that Scripture alone is the Word of God.

However, these authorities both recognize the difference between proof and persuasion, and it is really the work of persuasion that we are discussing when we look at the internal testimony of the Spirit. Human beings are adept at rejecting objective evidence when it does not confirm their prejudice, no matter how clear or compelling the evidence may be. Some people will not be persuaded by all the proof in the world because they are not truly open to the evidence.

My experience as an apologist and minister has shown me that the real reason most people reject Christianity is not for lack of evidence. The proof from external sources regarding the truth of the biblical account is too overwhelming. No, the real issue is a moral one. The person not reconciled to God in Christ and living in disobedience does not want Scripture's claim that God has a full and final claim on his life to be true. He wants to get rid of the book as fast as he can.

This is where the internal witness of the Spirit comes in. Only those whom God the Holy Spirit has regenerated will submit to Scripture as His inerrant and infallible Word. The Holy Spirit does not give us a new argument for the truth of the Bible, but He confirms in our hearts the truth of Scripture as it is displayed in both the internal marks of Scripture (harmony and majesty of its contents) and the external marks of Scripture (historical accuracy). Objective proofs for the Bible are many and compelling, but they cannot force people to believe against their wills. Sinners are only persuaded to receive the Bible as God's Word as the Holy Spirit changes their hearts and assures them that they can trust and rely on what Scripture says. Ω

***Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever.
Hallelujah, Amen.***