



Perseverance Press

Crossroad Emmaus Community

May 2022

Special points of interest:

- CRE Gathering for June will be held at the Danevang Lutheran Church, on the 17th. See you at 6:30 pm.
- The next board meeting will be held June 21 at JEC, 8925 Hwy 111 South. The meeting begins at 7:00 pm.



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Our Heart Goes Out to the Greater Uvalde Emmaus Community

As those living in Uvalde are experiencing grief, and disbelief at what occurred at the Robb Elementary School let us all turn to prayer for their community.

Father, we know your presence is always felt in times of tragedy and suffering. We ask for Your mercy and healing for the community of Uvalde, and for all others outside of this community that are affected by this senseless act. We ask that You hold in Your comforting arms those children that are injured and survived, as well as those that were not injured. We ask that You be with the body of Christ that is treating and serving those that survived this tragedy, guiding their every action. We hope that all touched by this turn to You in their grief. Let those that enter this community come not with platitudes or platforms, but instead be quietly instrumental in truly being the hands and feet of Jesus. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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The Long Suffering

Last month I shared a little about the suffering that Jesus experienced on our behalf and how I felt about that through some of my youth. After the April Perseverance Press went out, I thought a little more about that suffering, or more importantly the “rest of the suffering” that occurred.

I think sometimes we forget about the suffering that God experienced. Easter was a free gift for us...the greatest gift mankind will ever receive. But it was not free for God. After all, this sacrifice was of His only begotten Son.... And it had to be this sacrifice. Moses stepped up to the plate in Exodus 32:32 telling God that if it helped, to blot him out. No deal. Throughout the Old Testament, we see indicators of what was to come, even though most of mankind did not understand this, even into the New Testament, when it came directly from the mouth of the Sacrifice.

It took this sacrifice to atone for our sins in response to the wrath of Almighty God. This was not a vindictive act on God's part but was provoked by evil itself. God loved us enough to face the crucifixion of His Son for us.

There are four things given us by the cross of crucifixion: Atonement, Redemption, Justification, and Reconciliation. Atonement as we could never atone for our own sins, much less those of all mankind. Redemption, redeeming us from all we have done, or ever would do. Justification as Christ covered us with His own righteousness, so that God sees us that way, instead of as we are. Reconciliation as Jesus reconciled us to God the Father, allowing us to meet the demands of heaven.

This should make us think about our faith. One of the greatest, maybe the only, function of faith is to remember the grace provided us in this. It sort of reminds me of the question: So, do you know *of* God, or do you know God? It's the relationship thing, or more importantly, the depth of that relationship. Do you have faith in God, or do you have faith in what the grace of God gave and continues to give us? A good thought as we struggle to *fully* open ourselves to God's grace, peace and love.

De Colores,

Vernon



Pilgrim Sponsorship

Editor's Note- This is the final installment in a three-part series on Sponsorship. Please refer to the previous two months of the Perseverance Press for parts one and two.

Continue to pray for your new 'Babe Chick.' Encourage the Pilgrim/Babe Chick in his or her Fourth day involvement. Give your friend an opportunity to talk through the experience.

Help them find a group. Or, be prepared to start a group with him or her for until they find others to be in the group. Take them to Gatherings as your guest for a couple of months.

Help the pilgrim reenter their Church and consider ways to act out new commitment and enthusiasm.

Inform the Pilgrim of how he or she can serve the Emmaus community and future walks. Offer yourself as a mentor until your new brother or sister is comfortable in the community.

Help the Pilgrim sponsor others. Sponsorship is an act of agape love for God, for the Pilgrims, for the Emmaus Community, and for the church.



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What's Next?

In 2019 a Pew study reported that over a ten-year period, self-professing Christians had dropped 12 percent from 77 to 65 percent of the US population. Simultaneously those that reported themselves as “religiously unaffiliated” rose from 17 to 26 percent. This means that a quarter of all Americans are either agnostic, atheist, or have no opinion of, or interest in religion.

It is obvious that Christian influence has fallen considerably in the past half-century. In the post-truth, post-Christianity world that we live in, the church in general is no longer seen as the source of fact that it once was. This is because the Bible is not seen as an absolute authority by many Americans.

Christian prayer is not a welcome activity in public schools and many public spaces. In some areas there is outright hostility towards Christians, and Christian activities. Interestingly, students in some public schools can sign up for a class to learn about a pagan reli-

gion but cannot utter the “C”-word, or the “J”-word, as it is considered offensive to some.

But does any of this actually mean there is a decline in Christianity?

Maybe we are only seeing a reduction in religiousness, or religiosity. (I like that word better...it sounds a little bit more outlandish!) A decline here does not actually mean there is a decline in faith. Maybe we are just losing the people that are only Christians on Sunday. Yeah, I am talking about the NO FLOWER people that show up on the wrong weekend and can't figure out why there are no lilies or poinsettias. Now that it is less fashionable to be a Christian, they have taken their foot out of the fishers of men boat and planted it firmly on the solid ground of “I think I hear a rooster crowing.”

God's people have been giving us examples of this for years. Multiple times God grew weary of their culture because while they went through the motions of appearing religious, He knew their hearts.

He did not see true worshippers. Christianity has experienced the same thing. From the Reformation in the early 1500's, through a century of “enlightenment”, back into a “great awakening” of Christianity, then through an industrial revolution, into a second “great awakening” then the sexual revolution, then the Jesus movement for years until now. Now everyone wants to define their own truth.

What will we see next? We have already seen the Christian worldview shift, losing influence in our culture. We see our beliefs as offensive to some. We see so many people that are biblically illiterate. But I am thinking that maybe this is ok. Maybe God would rather have a smaller group of dedicated true believers more than He would a group of people that are just going through the motions.

Do we give up? Of course not. We keep spreading the Gospel to all that will listen. If it is meant to be, the Holy Spirit will make it happen.

