

FREE

CHATTANOOGA

The Yellow Deli

REUNION 2009

A TWELVE TRIBES FREEPAPER

The early '70s would not have been such a special time in the Chattanooga area without The Yellow Deli. Remember those luscious fruit salads, great sandwiches, fresh salads, and homemade desserts? Something about its warm, rustic atmosphere drew people like a magnet. And who can forget the heart-felt invitation at the bottom of the hand-drawn Yellow Deli menu: "We serve the fruit of the Spirit... Why not ask?" Somehow God's love had been communicated to our hearts in such a way that all we wanted to do was pass on the love, joy, and peace spoken of in the New Testament. Our Savior meant everything to us, so working together to serve the best food in the best atmosphere, with all of our hearts, seemed a normal response. The fruit of the Spirit was produced naturally from the good tree of happy believers working together.

That was the motive in the hearts of Gene and Marsha Spriggs when they opened the first Yellow Deli on Brainerd

Road in May of 1973. They wanted to have a place where people from all walks of life could come and touch a living demonstration of God's love in those who served them. They had the hope that in the darkness of our troubled society we could reach out to lost people like a beacon of light in the midst of a storm with the pure love of God we had found.

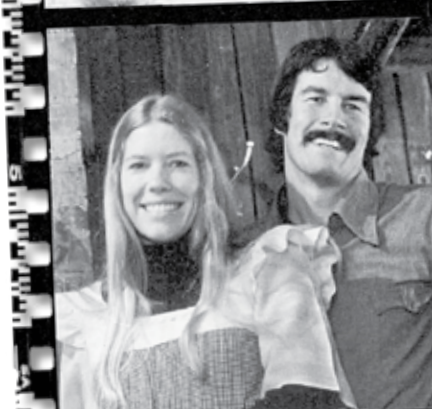
We were

on a burning desire to see that love even heal the strife and division we were seeing between the Christian churches we grew up in. But as time went on we sensed that there was something holding people back from having the same "sold-out" zeal we had found. We knew from our Savior's own words that the greatest hindrance to giving a hundred percent to God comes when we love the world or the things of this world. And without giving a hundred percent, no one can endure.

We have written the following stories as a way to reach out to many who were with us in the Vine House days but didn't endure. As one man states: "There came a point in my life when all I really wanted to do was be where I was really wanted." Nothing has changed. Our desire is to let those who left us long ago know that they are still wanted. We also want our old friends, who were drawn to the faint light in us and who still hold fond memories of their times with us, to know that they are still wanted and needed. And for those whom we are meeting for the first time, we extend our heartfelt invitation to be part of us. You are all greatly wanted and needed. ✿



young and small and not so powerful, but our love and zeal for our Savior was strong. We wanted to share this love with everyone we saw. We were convinced that the love of Jesus could change the world if people could just see it being lived out in reality on a daily



Yellow Deli Reunion

The Bible became real to me when I met two people, Gene and Marsha, who actually lived by the words they spoke. It was clear, real, tangible, genuine love from the heart. I never saw love like this before. I heard a lot about the Bible, and somehow deep down inside I believed it was true, but there was never anything drawing me to Christianity. I never saw love there.

I was 19, lost, lonely, confused. My friend Valerie had become a Christian in college with Campus Crusade. She knew we were really making the wrong choices in life, and I did too. Holy angels were leading us to a place of surrender, and circumstances were bringing us to a low place.

A friend gave us a card inviting us to a rap session about the Bible at the Light House. We were intrigued. We went right away, curious to see what our friend had told us about.

When we got there, the room was full of young people like ourselves. Gene was reading from the Bible: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and looking at all of us right in the eyes. I had never heard these words before, the words that Jesus said to His followers. It was so convicting, life-giving. I loved it. I was sitting on the edge of my seat, hanging onto every word. We were so affected by the way they talked about love.

Gene and Marsha were just newly married, they lived by faith, and just wanted to do God's will. This was their home, and they were having these meetings there three times a week.

Valerie and I could not stay away from the Light House. We loved the life, happiness, and joy that Gene and Marsha had. We wanted to be just like them. "It's because we've given up everything to follow Jesus," they said. That's what we wanted to do. We heard the words of eternal life, we saw our sin, and deeply desired to be forgiven.

Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be My disciple must hate his old life and come after Me." I hated my old life, and I wanted His

new life. So, what now? We went to Gene and said, "We want to do God's will, too. We want to surrender everything and follow Jesus just like you. Can we live with you?" Wow, what a test for Gene and Marsha, who'd only been married a few months, to take in two needy teenagers into their home!

You know what? There was no hesitation. We found a home, a place to belong. We were cared for. This was God's true heart for the lost, lonely, and confused. Gene and Marsha had received

God's love and this was the acid test. 1 John 3:14 — "We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death." And verse 16, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

So this is how it all started: two people totally surrendering all, forsaking everything, truly finding the connection to God Himself — LOVE. We found out what LOVE is; we found out that God is LOVE, and that LOVE is action.

Now I find myself 36 years later still building on that same foundation. What caused me to stay? Valerie didn't stay. The cost was too great for her. I guess she really didn't hate her old life, since she went back to it. I guess the Jesus she met in Campus Crusade made allowances for her old life. That gospel must have a different set of standards. We had been close friends. We came here together, and we parted ways. Her life decreased, and mine increased. Valerie died, a lonely soul. I am so thankful for the abundant life we have together. I'm so thankful for the true authority of the Word of God, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it."

We have grown in our understanding in so many ways since those early days. Many have not remained here, but I love the words of Peter when Yahshua* asked, "Will you leave Me, too?" Peter said, "No, Master. Where else will we find the words of eternal life?" ❀

~ Priscilla (Prisca)

A Place to Belong

by Priscilla



Prisca in the Vine House days



Prisca these days

"I have given to them the words You have given Me"

by Joy Holderman

I found myself in the basement of a small chapel. There I heard and saw something that changed the course of my life and destiny: the love of God demonstrated in two people who not only spoke His word but were living it. As I left that night, I was touched in the deepest part of my being. My eyes and heart were opened to another spiritual dimension different from anything I had ever known.

I was sixteen years old and full of self life, the all-consuming monster destroying me and all those around me. But when I heard the truth from these new friends, I was set free to love. The words of Yahshua they spoke to me, and the spirit they communicated it to me in, convicted me. They spoke about the One who did not live for Himself, but laid down everything for those around Him.

Gene spoke many times from the book of First John, about how the only way we would know that we had passed out of death and into life was because we laid down our life for our friends. I loved the words of Yahshua that Gene spoke to us. I now had a greater preoccupation than self interest. I received the word spoken by those who had authority because they themselves were obeying these words. It gave me clear direction for my life, the way to know the Creator of the universe and obey Him in all he

A Twelve Tribes Freepaper

said, a place to be made clean, to love like Yahshua, and be loved by Him. A new social order was beginning. Here I could become who I was created to be, where jealousy, strife, selfish ambition, and peer pressure could die. Love was then able to grow in my heart.

What I had seen in Gene and Marsha's heart seemed to be the same love that Yahshua had for His disciples when He lived on the earth. He cared for them spiritually, mentally, physically, and in every other aspect of their lives. In John 17:8, it says "For I have given to them the

words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known that surely I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me." Yahshua spoke the same words to His disciples that He had heard from the Father.

They received and obeyed His words, and because of this they knew He was of the Father. The words spoken to them went in and changed the core of their selfish nature. They were able to become those who could love just like their Master Yahshua.

I am now 54 years old. The love and life I received back then is still changing me to no longer live for myself, but to live for my brothers and sisters. Thirty eight years ago I determined that I would live and even die to bring about a place so others could receive the same life of love I had received. I am so thankful for the tiny seed of faith that was planted in Gene and Marsha. It continues to grow steadily into His dwelling place. ❀

In love with Yahshua and His brothers and sisters,

~ Joy Holderman
(Dardah)



Joy Holderman in the Vine House days

* See page 15 for an explanation of the name **Yahshua**

Sometimes my mind is like a tape deck. Remember tape decks?

Push "play"...

I'm driving down McCallie Avenue in our family's 1965 Impala. Don is in the passenger seat. Don and I never spent much time together in college, but we both ended up in Chattanooga at the same time. Sometimes I'm over at his house, handing him wrenches while he works on his old MG. This time, he's been at my house helping me make a plaster cast of my face so I can experiment with three-dimensional makeup for plays.

Warner Park is coming up on the right. I glance to the left and see a sign with foreign lettering. Don follows my gaze and says, "Ever been in there?"

"No. What is it?"

"The Areopagus. My sister says they have really good food."

"A Greek restaurant?"

"No, it's a Yellow Deli."

"A what?"

"Yellow Deli. It's run by Christians. They've got another one out on Brainerd Road where the Nickel Bag Head Shop used to be, near Sambo's."

Fast forward a couple of weeks...

Blue Jeans and Burlap



Robert Chambers in the Vine House days

I'm getting out of the Impala on the edge of Sambo's parking lot. David is getting out of his car also. Only a few minutes earlier he called me from somewhere on Brainerd Road. His work requires him to travel, and he happened to be in Chattanooga. I asked him to meet me at Sambo's. Together we walk across the street to the little building with yellow bricks and brown shutters.

Inside are rustic booths, lots of barn wood and cedar shingles, and a de-

coupage poster of bread and wine that says, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Something about the place feels like home. Even before I taste the food, I know I'm going to come here again.

Fast forward a couple of months...

by Robert Chambers

I'm in the Yellow Deli, having just finished a knackwurst and sauerkraut sandwich. Like most afternoons when I come in, Joe has been my waiter. He's a black man, five or ten years older than me, who writes my order left-handed and upside down, and then sits to talk with me while I eat. This never happened to me in any other restaurant, but I like it. I have learned from Joe that he dropped out of school in third grade to help his daddy, an Alabama sharecropper, working in the fields.

As I go to pay my bill, Joe introduces me to the man talking with him at the bar. The man turns out to be the cousin of someone I went to grade school with. He plans to tell his cousin about meeting me.

"What are you doing these days?" he asks.

See Blue Jeans on page 12

A WANTED MAN

by David Jones

That little Vietnamese boy haunted me when I returned to the States in 1972. We'd gone to an orphanage near DaNang to visit, and he scooted up to us, so happy to see us. He was missing both legs, probably blown off in a booby trap. It was so painful to see such a thing.

Returning from that war only confirmed what we'd known all along: we'd been had. Our lives were put on the line, and so many of us came back in body bags, because some people wanted to make a great name for themselves, and didn't mind risking our lives to do it. So we arrived back, glad to be alive, wanting to get on with life.

But I couldn't. Whatever had sustained me or given me a reason to live was now oozing out of my pores. I

knew that better men than myself died over there, and yet here I was, alive, but not well.

I had been raised going to church, but I had always hated it. Surely, if all God wanted me to do was to sit in a pew once a week, bored out of my mind, then we would just have to part ways. So I did. But now, back on the shores of my homeland, I wondered.

There came a point in my life when all I really wanted to do was be where I was really wanted.

All that time in Vietnam I never feared death. Sometimes Christians came around to tell me I should fear death, but I didn't. I feared their pew far more. What could be worse than that? Yet there it was, a greater fear. It was the fear that I could have been snuffed out over there, and it would not have made one bit of difference whether or not I had ever existed.

See Wanted Man on page 11



Josie Stevens in the Vine House days

I endured because I believe

by Josie Stevens

I believe God is good and only has kind intentions for man.

I believe God's plan to rescue men came at a great cost, one I could never pay.

I believe His word is true and if one does it he will gain

understanding and strength to endure.

I believe He will get those people who will overcome.

I believe He uses circumstances to purify people so they can be made back into His image.

I believe Yahshua is choosing a cabinet to rule in the next age with Him.

I believe it's not our circumstances but the choices we make, what we choose to believe in our circumstances that counts.

I believe I can honor Him with the choices I make during my stay on planet Earth.

I believe I will endure because I believe He will help me when I ask Him to.

Because I believe, I am thankful and willing to lose my life for the sake of gaining Him.

I'm glad to believe.

I want to make Him glad by choosing

what pleases Him. ✨

We Had A Dream

by Eileen Smith

At 15, I was not sure about life anymore. Why was I alive? What was the purpose for my life? Excelling in school, sports, and in the eyes of others was no longer enough for



Eileen Smith in the Vine House days

me. “Mary, how can you know that God is real? How can you know!” Silence was all this devout Southern Baptist could give me. She’d invited me to church that night. My heart was so stirred at the altar call, but it was all so foreign to me.

A Sincere Cry for Help

Well, I crawled out of bed and did what I’d seen people do in movies. I got on my knees at the side of my bed and prayed, “God whoever you are, whatever you are, I want you to do with my life whatever you want!” Then I slipped back up under my covers and fell soundly asleep.

The next morning I found myself on the edge of my bed tying my tennis shoes. But more than that, I was thinking really hard. I could not think of one reason why Julie, whom I was very jealous of, was such a bad person. The day before I could have given anyone a list of her faults a mile long. Today, I only had good thoughts about her. My mind had been transformed. It worked. I must be saved. So began my life as a zealous evangelical Christian.

I joined Mary’s church. Youth groups, choir tours, Campus Crusade for Christ, organizing student groups and prayer circles, public speaking, leading adult bible studies, county-wide events, training people to share their faith, etc, etc. Between school, sports, and being a Christian, I was busy. No time to think. Everything I did was a witness for the Lord. “Praise the Lord” was a common phrase.

Zippering along to choir practice in my little yellow car, I remember passing the Church of Christ, the Assemblies of God across the street from my church, and a few blocks over was the Christian Church. That’s it! “Mr. Jones, Mr. Jones! I know how we can do it! I know how we can reach Pinellas Park for Jesus Christ! We can just get together with our brothers from the Church of Christ, and the Assemblies

**“The problem around here is that only 10% of the people are on fire for the Lord! If everyone would just give Him everything...”
Silence again.**

of God, and the other church around the corner, and do it together!” Pausing with anticipation, I stared up into his face. The minister of youth and music stood there in stunned silence. I waited. It became awkward. He never answered.

I slipped back out of the door. I didn’t understand. But one thing I did understand was that Jesus was coming back soon and people needed to know that. “Why is it that

people aren’t living as if He is coming back any moment?” I demanded of Mr. Jones, the new minister of music. He was such a good man. “The problem around here is that only 10% of the people are on fire for the Lord! If everyone would just give Him everything...” Silence again.

Then I had a conversation about my new-found faith with my mother. “Mom, you know the Body of Christ is in every church. It is made up of the sincere ones in each denomination. We all make up His Body.”

“How can all of those disconnected people, with their differing doctrines, be one body? This makes no sense, Eileen.”

“Sure it does. And when Jesus comes back He is going to rapture us up into the sky to meet Him! Then we’ll be One.”

Silence again. My Pentecostal boyfriend and I were married by both his minister and mine, in the Southern Baptist Church of Pinellas Park, Florida, and off to graduate school we went! We had a dream. We told everyone about it. God was calling us to New England. We were going to become part of something that was going to change the course of history, not just be historically significant. It was going to affect the eternal destiny of humanity.

Bill was accepted at Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana. Heading north, we had arranged to spend the night at the home of some Christian friends. Their family had previously stayed in our home while on choir tour. We thought we’d accept their hospitality. As we located the home in a neatly manicured suburb of Atlanta,

the children poured out of the door to greet us. Their parents followed along behind to welcome us.

As we confirmed our intentions to stay, two of the children discreetly told me that their parents were only pretending to be glad to see us. They said, “They talk as if they are happy to see you, but you should have heard them just before you pulled in. They were

**“When Jesus comes back He is going to rapture us up into the sky to meet Him! Then we’ll be One.”
Silence again.**

complaining about you. They feel like it is insensitive of you to come here.” I’d never experienced such hypocrisy before. Bill and I excused ourselves, thanking them for their offer to have us stay. We told them that we would travel on while there were still daylight hours to be used. The parents waved good-bye with big smiles.

Relieved to be out of that situation, we planned to visit a friend who had gotten saved in a community in Chattanooga. We prayed. The lit-up expanse of Chattanooga valley lay before us, swallowed by the darkness of an unlit sky on every side. We pulled over into a gas station and called for Pat.

“Sure, come right over. We’d love to have you,” came the lively voice on the other end of the phone. But how do we find them? Asking for directions, a black man spoke up and said, “Follow me. I’ll show you the way.” We emerged from the maze of dark streets and turns. Before we could thank him, the man’s car was swallowed back up in the darkness.

Our First Visit

Drawn by the warm amber lights and rustic entryway, we approached the brick building.

“Welcome!”
“We’re glad y’all are here!”

“Can we help you?”
Our souls swelled as the flood of hospitality washed us. As our eyes slowly scanned around, we stepped forward into another world. A golden glow filled the room from the handmade wall sconces and bushel-basket table lamps. Antique barnwood wainscoting and beams, tastefully done macramé, leather-covered pool tables, red brick floors, two-story front windows graced with tropical plants, and wrought-iron spiral staircases ascending to a loft restaurant transformed this gutted factory into an oasis.

As we curiously proceeded, we were greeted by the engaging smiles of craftsmen doing leather work and making hand-dipped candles under hand-hewn shanties. Our peering into each booth was met with warm greetings and answers to all our questions concerning their projects and what and who they are. Folk music provided the final backdrop. As we parted from one of the booths in awe, I discreetly said to my husband, “Christians can’t do this. They don’t have this kind of creativity. They can’t work together like this.”

The peace, the creativity, the warmth, the continuity, the sense of oneness, was nowhere to be found out there. Our youthful zeal to fulfill Christ’s great commission had been defeated or watered down time and again by self-seeking glory, apathy masquerading as maturity, fear, division, money seeking, worldly interests, and the status quo. Everyone had their own lives to live. There is no way to live for God with all your heart, soul, and strength when you have to devote so much energy to providing food, shelter, and clothing for yourself and your family.

See *Dream* on page 14

I Responded To Love

by Eddie Wiseman

I came to a rap session at the Vine House in March of 1974. My wife and I were disillusioned children of the 60s who had really wanted to be a part of a revolution of love and peace on earth. The Movement had miserably failed and we were headed to the hills of Jackson Hole, Wyoming when we started reading the words of Jesus in the Bible. Both of us were really affected by His words. They agreed so deeply with our hearts. He talked about love and unity and abandoning everything to follow Him in this pursuit of loving and caring for humanity. We wondered if there could ever be a place where we could find that love and experience a life that was real. We had never seen it or even heard about it in church or Sunday school growing up. So our journey led us through the front door of the Vine House that eventful Tuesday night.

When we walked through the door we could sense something very different in that place. The young people were singing and we could sense a love that felt in our hearts the same way we felt when we read His words in the Bible. I remember wondering, “can this be real?” I was so affected by what I saw and heard, and the love I experienced coming from these people that I asked “can you live here?” Then I heard the most wonderful answer to my question... “YES!”

I responded to love that night — love in a people who were united in heart, mind and soul. That love wasn’t just in one or two, but in *all* of them! I remember asking them, “How did you get this life? What did you do to have love like this?” I didn’t want to hear the doctrine of Jesus dying for my sins. I heard that all my life. I wanted to see the result of it, if it was true. I knew that love for Him because of what He actually did for me should cause me to have love for my brothers and sisters. I didn’t see how the two could be separated. I sensed that kind of love for others in those people that night. The hope I had was that my wife and I could find that love and that we could be healed of all our wrong, hurtful ways by learning to love each other as He loved us.

The love I found that night at the Vine House carried great weight in my heart. So, when I asked them how they

got to be the way they were, they told me the truth: they had given up everything to follow Him because He had communicated His forgiveness to their heart.



Eddie and Mary Wiseman and their son Luke in the Vine House days

For the first time, the words of Jesus had authority. His words were calling me to something radical, a very high calling, a calling to live a life of love, to spend my life learning to live like He lived, walk as He walked—denying Himself to love others. I was compelled to obey that call, hear those words of His and do them, if I wanted my life to truly be built upon the rock of Salvation. I entrusted my life to Him — all of it: all of my ambitions, goals, plans, saying good-bye to the “good times” of the past, turning away from the selfish goals I had been trained all my life to pursue. The result was that I started having the power to live for others, which meant serving others 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I had an energy I had never had, the power of the love of God that began to motivate all my thinking, feeling, and actions. This was real. This was exciting. This love caused me to want to stay there with the rest of the Vine House people and serve them for the rest of my life.

I have seen many people come and go from here in the last 35 years. At first

it puzzled me as to why people would leave. But through the testing I have been through, I have come to see how deep salvation really is, because I have come to see how deep selfishness is engrained into my soul. I see how there is only one true Savior, whose love reaches deeper into my soul to cleanse me than whatever form of selfishness is coming out of me. I have come to see how His love never fails to reach me and to give me courage to face how I really am. I have learned that facing my sin is the first step to humbling myself and receiving unconditional forgiveness.

I have failed many, many times, but somehow my brothers and sisters have been there to lift me up and to encourage me to not give up. Up to this point, I have been able to trust them, but sometimes it has taken me a long, long time to get to that place. And when my brothers have failed me or when I have experienced injustice, I have always been reminded of the love God has for me, and I have always had to answer the question in my own heart if loving Him and loving others is all I want to do, no matter what happens to me or how I am treated or whether I think others are loving me. And through all of this through the years, I am being healed and I am learning to love and to be compassionate and merciful to others where I was not in the beginning of this journey.



Gene Spriggs and friends at a Rap Session in the Vine House days

Many of my dear friends gave up, got hopeless about themselves or became bitter with their brothers and sisters. I watched the resulting decline of love, the increase of self-concern, and the lack of inner self worth take over in their souls.

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I understand it. I have experienced it, but I have come to know that it doesn’t have to be that way. What caused me to not give up? Trust! Pure and simple...I decided to trust God through His Body above and beyond human failure and injustice. When I gave my life to Yahshua, I truly abandoned any hope of finding a remedy to the fatal flaw of selfishness in me and in humanity anywhere else but in the Body of Messiah.

There are many Jesuses that people have received from the 41,000 denominations in Christianity, but they do not give a person the power to love and we are all commanded to love one another as He has loved us. I have seen it countless times that someone comes to us with his Jesus, and does not surrender his Jesus to embrace the True One, so he doesn’t find the power to live by His enduring love, or hold up under the rigors of becoming a disciple. So, he ends up leaving with the same Jesus they came in with. Sometimes this takes years, even decades to come to the surface.

I have learned in the Body that in order to be saved, a person has to receive the message and the messenger who brought the message. I remember years ago beginning to understand this from John 13:20 when He said to His apostles, “If they receive you, they receive me. If they do not receive you, they do not receive me.” I have been tested very deeply on this and everyone who joined with us at the Vine House was tested on this, too. To some it is very difficult to receive

the message of giving up everything if they love their selfish life. To others the task of consistently receiving the messenger is sometimes difficult because most of us are damaged by bad authority. But to come to God we have to come to His authority in a living human being who is standing in front of us speaking words of eternal life. But more than this, I saw love and unity being produced in the people there as a result of the Spirit that was passed on through these words. This

made me love him. I have seen this love grow in him over the years, but I have also discovered that our life ceases to grow and eventually ceases to exist if we stop loving one another.

See Respond on page 11

OFF LIMITS

by Mark Leonard

I was raised in the thickly religious South, just 30 minutes north of Chattanooga, Tennessee, the buckle of the “Bible belt.” As a child, the Bible held an unquestionable authority. At the end of his sermon, our Independent Baptist pastor instructed, “Every head bowed every eye closed.” Then he asked, Are there any here who do not know beyond a shadow of a doubt that if you died today you would be with Jesus for eternity? If you do not know beyond the shadow of a doubt, then raise your hand so we can pray for you.

My honest, trembling seven-year-old hand slowly rose.

“I see that hand. We’ll pray for you, son. Are there others? Today is the day of salvation.”

On the way out the door, my pastor called my father aside. My father nodded his high, broad forehead slowly, deliberately. As our family of five drove home, my father asked, “Mark, did you raise your hand tonight?”

“Yes,” I said sheepishly.

“Would you like to know how to be saved?”

“Yes, I would.”

“I’ll talk to you about it when we get home.” As we sat together on the foot of his bed, my father showed me a set of verses called “The Romans Road to Salvation.”

We began in Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...”

He asked, “Mark, do you acknowledge you are a sinner? Remember when I spanked you for lying to your momma?”

“Yes,”

“That was sin.”

Then we looked at Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift

of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

“Mark, death means more than just dying and being buried, but because you are a sinner,

you would have to go to the lake of fire, but the wonderful thing here is that it speaks of a free gift. Do you want that gift?”

“What is it, Daddy?”

“Look back at the last part of the verse: ‘...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ Jesus died on the cross for our sins so we can have eternal life.”

Then he read me Romans 10:9, “...that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

“Do you believe that He rose from the dead?”

“Yes.”

“Do you believe that is Lord?”

“Yes.”

Then finally we looked at Romans 10:13, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

“Do you want Him to save you? He says He will if you ask Him to. Ask Him to come into your heart.”

Believing my father’s words, I asked Jesus to save me. What joy I had! All my sins were forgiven (and I didn’t even hardly know what sin was yet). Now I had eternal security. I was saved.

I wrote about it for my second grade sentences due the next day, but it made little difference in the next few months. In fact, it would be five years before I would ask to be baptized. I did enjoy Mrs. White’s felt-board stories of Abraham and began to read Genesis for myself.

Then when I was about twelve, my second cousin, a 25-year old pastor died. In the emotions of the funeral, I determined to replace him in

his service of the Lord. This was strengthened as I saw all the many church members, including my father, giving their strength to make money and having no time left to share the message they believed could save. I determined I would give my life to do God’s will.

When my sixth grade class graduated, the teacher asked us all what we wanted to do when we grew up. To my fellow students’ surprise I firmly said, “I want to be a preacher.”

The tests of teenage years almost shook my faith and my moral upbringing, but by my graduation from high school, I had determined to go to Tennessee Temple University. This school in Chattanooga was the school that every one of my pastors had attended.

By this time, I was keenly aware that my home church (as well as every church I knew of) was far from zealous about the Word, except for the few “faithful.” I expected that those who chose a Bible college would be more sincere. I was surprised to find the same insincerity, immorality, and hypocrisy that ruled my local church.

I began to consider what it was that God was calling us to. I came to understand from choice reading in the college library that God gave every person in the Body of Christ a gift and expected each one to exercise it. I formulated my ideas in a paper for my freshman language class. My teacher told me that I would have received an A for it, but since it contained beliefs that opposed those of the school, she was bound to give me a B.

One day I was riding through Chattanooga with a hometown friend who had finished his Bible training. We passed a large block building topped by a billboard that read, “Jesus loves you — the Yellow Deli.” I asked my friend what the Yellow Deli was. He replied, “It’s a religious restaurant. Stay away from there. People go there to eat and end up living with them.”

It seem as if I had touched a raw nerve, so I didn’t ask more, but if they loved Jesus, what was the problem if they wanted to live together? The early church did in Acts 2. He wasn’t worried that I was living together in a dorm with a bunch of Christians, many of whom didn’t seem to love Jesus.

Later, at a student chapel meeting, the dean of students threw into his announcements and weekly admonitions an odd warning: “And of course, Tennessee Temple Students do not attend bars, night clubs, or the Yellow Deli.”

This bewildered me. Why did he link this Christian restaurant with bars and night clubs? I decided to ask a friend. He said it was because they were jealous; students were leaving school to live with these zealous Christians.

I have always been a law-abiding citizen. I always cried when we sang the Star Spangled Banner. I never consciously lied after my father asked that question. The one time I said the word “nigger” as a youth, I felt terrible and told everyone who heard me that I was sorry, even though they were all southern whites. The point? I was not going to go to a restaurant that my school had set off limits.

During summer school, my new roommate received a “Dear John” letter from his fiancé. In his suffering, he went to the warmest, most open, most real people he knew in Chattanooga — the people of the Yellow Deli.

He brought me some of their food, some of their music, and a book they were reading, *The Problem of Wineskins*. Then in the fall, he moved in with them and began to work at the Deli. I called him and he began to share what they were learning. He had much to say about how Christians were called to love one another. He also shared that as disciples everyone had a gift and was to exercise it, and everyone was expected to share what they

heard from God when they gathered.

About this time, I stopped going to the canned speeches called “Men’s Bible Class” and started going to the young married class, though I was single. I did this because the word had gotten out: the teacher of this class was zealous and challenging; you never knew what would come up. He challenged us to read Colossians for ourselves. When we got to the study on chapter 2, the words in verses 20-23 stuck out like a pink bonnet in a men’s Sunday school class.

Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

A few weeks later, I was walking through the matriculation line. Among the many things to sign was a paper containing only one “small” promise: I agree to obey the rules of Tennessee Temple, both in action and in attitude. There was a long line of people in front of me and behind me. I signed it, but as I walked on, I could not shake the connection had with those verses in Colossians. Man’s rules were saying, “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle. Stay away from those believers at the Yellow Deli.” But why? I determined I would find out why.

I asked around and was sent to the Dean of Students’ office. There was a line of about 50 rule-breakers ahead of me and others lining up behind me.

See *Off Limits* on page 10

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The other day I was having a conversation with a guest who has been coming around for a while. Very intrigued by our life, she asked me a question after she found out how long I've been in the Community. The question centered around what has kept me here all these years.

It was easy to recall the date and deciding factor that caused me to make the choice I made. The day was May 6, 1974. I remembered that day when I was persuaded in my heart that I would follow the Son of God the rest of my life. I thought, "If I get married, this is where I will do it. If I have children, this is where I will do it. If I die, this is where I want to die." I was home. Home is where the heart is, and I knew that my heart was here.

I did not understand a whole lot about anything except that I was a sinner. I was desperate and I had found a people like myself, except they had gotten out of "Adam's Casket." They had the life that I wanted. They were not withholding that life from me, but they warmly and compassionately beckoned me to get out of the water and come on board the ship. They would even throw me a lifesaver — the same one that was thrown to them. It was the lifesaver, Yahshua. He is the only one who can save us and enable us to cross over from death to life. He is God's Salvation. He could even help and deliver someone like me.

I could have never believed that in my head. I was too worthless and defiled, but I could believe those who identified with me and assured me that we would overcome together. All I needed to do was surrender to this man Yahshua. It was simple, not complicated — a decision of the heart. The more people told me of this man's love for me and all of mankind, what He gave up and suffered just for me, the more I fell in love with Him. He made the 100 on the test for me, and all I had to do was receive it. There was a natural response that rose up in my heart: that I wanted to do the same for Him — a life for a life.

I guess this is what prompted me to make the decision I mentioned earlier. All I had was a filthy life, a filthy conscience, filthy thoughts. I was a filthy person and this man desired to cleanse me, forgive me, and give me a new start in life. What an exchange! Life for death. I went for it with all my heart.

I've never regretted that decision. All I had was brokenness and strife, but because I surrendered He can make something beautiful out of my life. I told the guest I was talking with that it is all about surrender. Our Master lived every day of His life surrendered to His Father in Heaven, and as a corresponding sacrifice, we must walk like Him — humble, willing, and surrendered. This shows whether we truly love

If I Die, This is Where I Want to Die

by Gary Corder

Him, and whether He is on the throne of our heart (1 John 2:3-6).

Over the years there have been many many decisions, circumstances, and situations that I could not understand or figure out. These could have been stumbling blocks for me, and like many others, I could have left when it came down to the bottom line, the crux of the matter, the point of decision, the turning point. I remember many times going out into the woods or to some private place and being honest about what was going on in me. I wanted to talk to the One who helped me cross over from death into life. Because I would surrender to Him during those times, He gave me the grace and patience to wait upon Him and trust those I had made a covenant with. Once again, I can say that I have never regretted making Yahshua sovereign in those decisions. His saving power was just as real at those times as it was in 1974.

So what would cause a person to leave a Savior whose love is so great, to love things He hates and to hate things that He loves? The only answer I could come up with is not being humble and not walking surrendered. There is life or death in that decision. Yahshua chose life in those hard, dangerous decisions. He cried out with loud cries and tears to the One who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission. He had the same devil tempting, trying, and pounding Him as we do. His answer was being humble and willing. Our answer is the same, to walk like Him (1 John 2:6).

There have been many times that I have failed to be humble and willing, and the results are always the same: death. My enemies start ruling me until I humble myself. Sometimes I forget about James 4:4-10 and 1 Peter 5:5. Our Savior loves it when we humble ourselves because He can identify with someone who does that. He can only resist the proud, because Satan is clothed in pride. It is so peaceful and reassuring to know that if we walk humble and willing, there is abundant grace and abundant life. In the Body of Messiah no one has to miss out.

~ Gary Corder
(Ben-Nabiy)



Gary and Grace Corder
in the Vine House days

I Found Love

by Grace Corder

When I was young and coming into accountability for my actions and where they would take me, the thought of my eternal destiny tormented me. I knew I did not want to spend eternity in the lake of fire. However, I was greatly distressed by the thought of spending eternity on a cloud somewhere, strumming a harp, or even in a mansion where the streets were lined with gold. We may find these things humorous now, but these things were no laughing matter to me when I was young.

I desperately wanted to know a living God, but I despised church — sitting on hard benches beside someone I did not really even know, listening to boring, dried-out words coming from the pulpit. If I ever happened to see some tele-evangelists on TV, it sickened me. I was not

drawn or moved in any way to the songs they sang, or how they dressed, or to the message they preached. I was so condemned by my reactions to these things, I did not know if there was hope for me, because I could never imagine giving myself to that religion, and as far as I knew, that was the only avenue to being a follower of the Son of God.

**LOVE
ONE
ANOTHER**

In reality what had drawn me to believe there was a God was the stories I had read in some Bible story-books my mother had gotten me at the grocery store. I was about 8 years old before

I had ever heard any of these stories — about the children of Israel and their great deliverance, plagues that came upon the cruel and hardened Egyptians, but which the land of Goshen was free of, the Red Sea parting... It was breathtaking. I could not put the books down. I read about how they marched around the city of Jericho and the walls fell down, and the young man David, how he conquered Goliath, and how the Israelites had victory over their enemies, and the stories of Solomon and how he desired wisdom and understanding to rule over the people above all things, and the abundant wisdom that was given to him. I wanted to be a part of that people. I was literally awe-struck.



Gary and Grace Corder these days

See Love on page 13

Chosen Vessel

by Debbie Brooks

I had grown up in India as a “well-adjusted” missionary kid who was supposedly already saved when I was baptized at around twelve years old. Inwardly, though, I was going through all the things that most youth go through — an identity crisis. Growing up in a boarding school, I had littlerelation-ship with my parents and found myself alone in a big world with no answers. I went through the whole cycle about believing that God doesn’t exist to believing He did, and then back again. I couldn’t see any signs of God in Christianity, or at least not in the missionaries that I knew — or if He was in them, I did not want to be like them. I decided to hate people and actually hated myself, too. I was extremely negative and depressed and inwardly quite

rebel-ious. I had-ene d myself inside and tried to think it was “cool” to not have feelings, to not care. I had no ability to forgive because I had never been forgiven.

Life in the Community was hard because I was trying to live a life without the Holy Spirit.

I decided to go to Bryan College in Dayton, Tennessee. There we were required to go to church, but the churches didn’t make any sense to me anymore. I was tired of hearing salvation messages every week. My religious upbringing had convinced me that I was saved, but at the same time caused me to hate God and people and be bored to death with the Bible.

This was when Bob Brooks, who later became my



Debbie Brooks in the Vine House days

husband, started taking me to the Yellow Deli rap sessions. I couldn’t stand them at first. I felt spiritually dead; I had nothing to “rap” about. They would also take us out to witness on the streets, but I had no testimony to give. I could not talk to people about Jesus because I had nothing to offer. But the Vine House people, the “Light Brigade,” had life. They had love and enthusiasm for the things of God. They had something I secretly desired, but at the same time it offended me.

After marrying and moving into the Community with Bob, I continued to see my deep spiritual lack. Life in the Community was hard because I was trying to live a life without the Holy Spirit. My selfishness and rebellion was being exposed, and I fought and did my best to blame the circumstances on everyone except myself. In spite of all my reactions, I was being loved. The objective Word of God became clearer and clearer to me, “If anyone says, ‘I love God’ and hates his brother, he is a liar, for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. Everyone who loves

is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

Then one night Gene

I am honored to live with people who I want to be like, who represent a God of love.

Spriggs brought us a teaching on John 10:7-18. The door of the sheepfold is Jesus and the sheep get into the sheepfold through the

door. I knew deep within me that I was a robber who had come in over the wall. I had not entered through the door of the sheepfold with the right motive. That night I surrendered to Him. It was a complete surrender to the Greater King. I wanted to change, and from then on I began to change. The hardness of my heart has been softened.



Debbie Brooks these days

Love had won my heart, and continues to do so. I heard the voice of the Shepherd that night, and as I have continued to listen and obey along with all those in the Community, He has guided me over the years. I have not been disappointed.

People represent the God they worship. They reflect the character of their God. I am honored to live with people who I want to be like, who represent a God of love.

My name is now Havdalah, which means separation — being separated for a specific purpose, like a chosen vessel that is separated for honorable use, in the same way that the Sabbath was set aside as a special day, and in the same way God wants His people to be set aside, set apart from the nations. This is why the message will go out in the last days: “Come out of her

My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.” (Revelation 18:4)

~ Debbie Brooks
(Havdalah)

Where are you, Jesus?

by Sharon Harris

The ’60s and ’70s was such a time of transition. As a teenager, I sat perched in front of the TV watching the Beatles come alive. I graduated from high school in ’69 and then started college. My sophomore year the entire football team was killed in a plane crash.

Why?!! What was going on? At least it caused a stir on campus, flags at half-mast, people wondering where GOD was. The campus Christian ministries were active. The message was come and bind together, meet with us, Jesus loves you! The Jesus Movement was stirring in the whole nation.

I went on my search. The Baptist Student Union organized a retreat to the mountains in Colorado. We went skiing and sang around the fireplace at night, “It only takes a spark to get a fire going.” Wow, we felt so close, close to each other, close to God. And Jesus, who was He? I never understood much about Him in all my Sundays in church, but something seemed right about His life. He loved people enough to give up having a “normal” life. Could I do that? I would ask myself that question over and over as the years passed.

Well, that next year I decided to follow Jesus. I said to myself... no turning back. I HAD to do it. Something was compelling me. That conviction caused me to search for others who had the same determination. Where were they?

I found a few who seemed to be just as convinced, at home Bible studies, Charismatic fellowship groups, rallies... a few friends who stuck together, through college at least. But the time came to choose a career and I was on my own. What did Jesus think about all this getting a job, living in the world? What would He have done at this point? I prayed that He would tell me.

It seemed almost miraculous that the day after I graduated I found out about a Christian ministry for drug addicts, and they were asking for full-time commitment (at least for five years) with minimal pay. Could I do it? Could I put aside my own personal interests to live for the sake of others? I needed to try it. If Jesus did it, shouldn’t I?

I did, but after three years, the director’s wife ran off with another man

and the director had to go into psychiatric care. Where are you, Jesus? Is there a way to serve you amidst this perverse generation? After getting married, my husband and I concluded that the best way to do this was to move to the country and raise a family “on our own” the best we knew how.

But soon, the God of heaven and earth saw our plight. We had moved to a cattle farm in northern Georgia to raise our family, but we were on our own, alone. A little Yellow Deli was close by where we loved to get our weekly chef salad, and there people would sit down with us at our table to get to know us. We could hardly believe that they were actually living out the Scriptures, the life that was described when Jesus walked the earth.

See *Where* on page 9

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Where from page 8

Could it be true? Could they really be doing it, living together as the first church did in the book of Acts, and in love holding to the standards of keeping the world out and the precious, pure life of God in? We hoped it was true.

Then one day a simple act of love proved to us the difference. A couple from the community visited us in our little house on the farm, and when they found out that our refrigerator had died and we were using a small Styrofoam cooler as a fridge, they sent one of their two fridges to us the next day. They had many more people to care for than we did, but somehow compassion welled up in them when they saw our plight.

We were falling in love with the Spirit we had witnessed. We watched, visited, and eventually moved in. But this move called for commitment, not just for a year or five years, but for life. It called for everything, even our own sovereignty. I questioned, "What if God calls us somewhere else after we commit ourselves here?" And then the answer that came cut deep into my soul: "Would God call you somewhere apart from His government on the earth calling you?"

It was obvious He was raising up a PLACE on the earth where His kingdom, His government, could be tangible, where we didn't have to be "on our own" because His love and rule was being manifested through people who really cared. They proved it to me because they were willing to

put aside their own comforts, their own say about their lives, to make sure God's say was preeminent, just as His Son did. His government on the earth...a new



Sharon Harris these days

concept, but one I had to face. The reality of God's government through actual human beings is right there in the Scriptures — apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers. Receiving our Master means receiving His authority.

An apostle once said, "Let brotherly love continue." To be faithful and loyal to the True One who gave up His life for us will be the only way His life will continue and spread.

~ Sharon Harris (Khemdah)

No Longer a Fish Out of Water

by Al Jayne

In the summer of 1972, I was 14 years old. My childhood was beset with illness, and I had become physically, socially, and spiritually a very unhealthy individual. At that age I was already very depressed and disoriented. Going to church and church-sponsored youth activities were, for some reason, especially disturbing to my soul. I was being steered on a course that seemed to have a very shallow and unfulfilling outcome.

I had been hospitalized for asthma so much during my childhood that my parents decided to send me to Colorado to a special live-in clinic for asthmatic children. There was a waiting list to get in, so first I stayed with my aunt near the city of Denver. My aunt was a very kind single woman in her mid 30's. She shared a mobile home with one of her classmates from college. Despite their humble circumstances, they were very hospitable and had compassion for my situation.

The church they went to was very different from anything I was accustomed to. It was very small, there were three preachers instead of one, and they all wore blue jeans and flannel shirts. It was the first time that I actually considered that Jesus might have something to do with real life.

There was a young man there that befriended me. His name was Ben and he was 21. He had sincerity and a peace about him that drew me like a magnet. He was not a lofty intellectual or superfluous charismatic. He was secure, down to earth, yet very approachable. He attributed his lack of anxiety to being surrendered to Jesus Christ. I decided that this was what I wanted.

During my year and a half at Denver, I met many other young people that were similar to Ben. I even attended a church in someone's home. They sat in



Al Jayne in the Vine House days

a circle and sang songs with a guitar. This was truly revolutionary. After I was dismissed from the asthma clinic, I moved in with the "single brothers" of that church who all lived together in a big house. There were about 15 of us all together, and at 16 years old, I was the youngest. I didn't know it, but this was all a small part of what was being called the Jesus Movement.

In early January 1974, I returned home to Chattanooga. I was no longer disoriented. I was a zealous young Christian. All I had to do was find some people like my friends in Denver. But where?

Going back to my parent's church was like being sentenced to the Tower of London. I was starting to falter.

In February, I attended a Presbyterian youth "retreat" in Gatlinburg with other youth from Presbyterian churches across the state. The hollowness and frivolity of it all was very disconcerting to me. Was there not one person that was sincerely seeking God's will?

The last night I walked out of the Christian Rock & Roll concert and sat down on the lobby floor. I was on the verge of tears when a girl came up to me and said, "You look how I feel." I couldn't help but cry. She had a look of pain on her face that made it clear that she was experiencing the same "fish out of water" sensation that I was. She gave me a card to the Vine House and invited me to come to a "rap session" on Tuesday or Thursday night.

The next Tuesday I was there. I felt immediately that I had found what I was looking for. There was not the slightest hint of pretentiousness in the air. People were inspired and genuine.

To say that I was treated with warmth and hospitality would be a huge understatement, even though there were no refreshments. What was most awesome was the fact that these



Al Jayne these days

people did not go "home" after the discussion. This was their home. They did not wake up the next morning to go back to school, or back to their own job and individual pursuit of the "American Dream." They had a greater purpose: to be disciples seven days a week, to learn to love the way He did and extend that love to others.

The more I visited, the more persuaded I became that this was the true way, the only way to follow the Master. I was so glad that serving Him was so down to earth. It could be cutting the weeds in the ditch behind the Deli, working in the Deli, working third shift, working on the construction crew, etc. What I hated about the organized church was the complete separation between the clergy that did the "spiritual service" and all the "laity" there that filed into place and stand before them, not daring to say a word.

The Vine House was the extreme opposite of this. Everyone sang with all their hearts, and anyone had the opportunity to express their heart.

Enduring Through the Years

Over the years I have been through numerous difficult circumstances, misunderstandings, and inner turmoil that is inherent with following the high calling of becoming like Yahshua. At times it can seem to be an excruciating ordeal on one's emotions. It has not been any single relationship that has kept me here. Some of the people that I have felt closest to are no longer here.

What has kept me here is that somehow I have never doubted that Yahshua is the head over this house. He covers all of our many mistakes because the heart of this people, and what has so obviously been Gene's heart, every single day is to do His will, not seeking their own glory. In short, I believe that this Body is the essence of John 12:26.

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

The reality of that verse is right here. Here is a place you can die to the rottenness of selfish pursuit. Here is a place where we can serve Him where He is.

~ Al Jayne (Ne'eman)

Yellow Deli Reunion

Off Limits from page 6

A man with a clipboard approached. “What are you on the demerits list for?”

“I am not on the demerits list. I need to talk to the dean about a rule I don’t understand.”

“No one has ever been in this line for that. I’ll ask the dean about that,” he said, slipping into the office.

“Wait your place in line. Mr Robinson says you can see him.”

After I had waited over an hour, the dean gave one ear to my concern. He explained that the board had considered the restaurant and made the decision. When I asked him to explain the decision, he told me to read about the doctrine of the church in a certain book I could find in the library and come back if I still had questions. I took down the information and went to the library.

To my frustration, the book didn’t even support the Baptist doctrine. It made an attempt to gather the scriptures that would in some way support the general church structure that had developed over all of Protestantism. In actuality the verses referred to better supported the living, personal, concerned shepherding that my ex-roommate had described among the Yellow Deli people than the stale structure I had observed in my Protestant experience.

I took the Dean up on a second visit. “Why can’t I fellowship with these obviously zealous Christians? Why is there a rule that we have to stay away from them?”

“There is no rule that you cannot fellowship with them in their homes. We just made a rule not to go to their restaurants because people were concerned about their children leaving school.”

I tried to discuss the doctrine of the church, but he was not open to it. “The board has made its decision. Perhaps

if you wish to discuss it with them you could.”

“When do they meet?”

“Next Monday,” he said, surprised that I was not put off by fear of confronting a bunch of stately saints, he concluded, “but I don’t think it will be necessary. Our minds are made up and I can see that your mind is made up.”

As I left the office, I realized, hey, there is no rule against fellowship in the homes of these disciples!”

I called my ex-roommate. There was a teaching the next evening in the “Friend’s House” and I was invited.

I showed up in suit and tie to a gathering of informally dressed disciples. Many of them had just left from their work at the restaurant. They were warm to me and warm to each other.

As Timothy taught us, the heart of Abraham in offering Isaac opened up to us. These were not pastors or professional scholars; they were disciples — disciples who washed dishes, disciples who waited tables, disciples on the construction crew or in the house kitchen. They were not religious in a stuffy or self-righteous way. There was a freedom that reminded me of the Jesus People book I had read in my hometown library.

It did not take long to make the switch from the place of external righteousness to the place of love and discipleship. Soon after I had moved in, I had a conversation with Beth, who had been raised on the mission field in Brazil. She told me, “Alan, we are seeing the need to be baptized, even those of us who were Christians, because we see that God is calling us to more than we were called to in the churches.”

That was not really much understanding, but since I trusted what my new brothers and sisters told me, I began to ask to be baptized. It seemed there were bap-

tisms every week. Whether people were coming from the street or were quitting their pastorates to become disciples, all were confessing that they were making Jesus the Lord of their life. Whatever they were leaving behind, they were making Him first place.

We had received the gospel of the kingdom. He was not only going to rule when He returns, but now every word of the Savior is to be lived out. His kingdom is here in seed form in a people who have surrendered.

Year by year, I have learned more what Jesus required. Jesus had prayed that all who truly believed in Him would have unity. We also learned that we have apart in maintaining this unity. If we see a brother sin we are to go to him in a way that would win him back to obedience. If he will not listen, we are to bring one or two other disciples to help bring clarity. If I think my brother is wrong, really it could be that I am the one in the wrong after all. I may have been judgmental. Maybe I made a quick judgment without understanding the facts. But the point is that disciples can find unity because that is the most important thing our Master prayed for in John 17:21-23,

That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

We were taught many such things. One vital part of the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20) is our Master’s command to teach every thing He commanded. If no one ever taught you a personal responsi-

bility to obey Matthew 18:15-18 in the spirit of love (John 13:34-35), then you have not been disciplined. If you have not been disciplined, you can be if you are willing. Paul made disciples. Disciples want to become like their Lord and Teacher.

There were, however, many tests for us. There were tests for me. The Savior never promised discipleship would be without suffering. On the contrary, He taught that the way would be narrow, and with much opposition.

We who were gathered in the Chattanooga area were led by our shepherds to the cold northeast corner of Vermont. This tested many of us. Were the shepherds God’s representatives (Hebrews 10:17)? Were they His sent ones? If they were, it mattered greatly whether we received them (John 13:20). We knew the love and care they had for the flock. Why did they tell us to move? It was in the spirit of what our Savior told the apostles in Matthew 10:23 — When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another.

After we had lived a few years in Island Pond, Vermont, I stood in our gathering of 350 disciples and read Ezekiel 34 with tears. It is a long chapter. It speaks of selfish shepherds who seize the job of shepherding to fatten themselves at the sheep’s expense. We have all experienced or heard of this reality. The passage also speaks of the good shepherd. The Savior was THE good shepherd. He laid down His life for the sheep. I was thankful for my good shepherds. They were not like the “shepherds” I knew from my childhood. When I was about fifteen, the pastor left for more pay, and we were like sheep without a shepherd. I now had shepherds who impressed Jesus’ commands on my soul — not Bible verses,

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but life-changing direction and the example of love.

So this was a test for some, but my test came a little later.

I had been taught a lifestyle of “Me and Jesus got our own thing going.” But the commands of the Savior created the church. As the word became clear, we were led to see that the nature of the church is new Israel — a people for God’s own possession (1 Peter 2:9). It is a new nation. As the national character of this people became clear, we each had to give up our own personal Jesus. When someone sings, “Me and Jesus,” he is really singing, “I have my own thing going.” The gospel that Paul preached created a body (1 Corinthians 12:12), with Jesus as the head (Eph 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23). Each member is a functioning body part as vital as a finger, eye, or kidney, and each is unable to function alone.

At one point I was struggling at a job that was hard for me and that I had to do for several days alone. A thought came to me of a mission field I had once considered. I told my plan to a brother. He brought me to a shepherd. This shepherd listened intently and said, “Alan, you know what we have



Mark Leonard these days, and his wife, Emunah

been teaching. It is up to you. We are not saying you have to be here if it is not in your heart.” I knew what he meant. We were determined that the good news would go to the ends of the earth, but did Paul go out just because he thought he should? No, he was sent. The Lord of

See *Off Limits* on page 11

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Off Limits from page 10

the body spoke through the body to send Paul and Barnabas on their mission. This is the pattern of the New Testament.

I took a hard look at what I really wanted. I wanted to follow the Son of God. I knew I was in the place of discipleship. My "mission" was an itchiness to avoid the suffering of that job that I was not enjoying. I needed to find true fellowship with my Savior and with my

brothers. That day I surrendered to the Savior (Luke 13:32-33). It is a matter of the heart.

I had to give up my independence; I knew I was vital to the Body.

Now, more than 30 years, later many of us who came from that vital beginning in Chattanooga continue with revelation. Others have walked away with the same Jesus they came with. I could never go back to that

hollow life of trying to serve Jesus in a religious system that fully supports one living his own life in the world and never has a clear call to obedience.

In time, we have come to see that the Savior's name was not *Jesus*. "What?" you may ask. Yes, the name of the Savior has been changed, not by us, but a long time ago by Bible translators. His name was originally *Yahshua*, but was translated into Greek as *Iesus*

Yellow Deli Reunion

and spelled *Iesus* in Latin and finally *Jesus* in English. We have just returned to the name He had when He was on earth. *Yahshua* comes from the name of God, *Yah* or *Yahweh*, and *shua* which means *Salvation*. That tells who He is. He is recreating the same life of love on the earth that was among the first disciples.

~ Mark Leonard (Boaz)

Wanted Man from page 3

This I could not live with. Why was I alive? Was there any reason to be alive, other than just to accumulate as many pleasures as I could before I exited the planet? So my search began.

I had no idea what I was doing, or where I was going. I knew that I was deeply selfish, and I had hurt others as a result. I hated how I was, and wanted to change. But more than wanting to change, I wanted to leave the world. Why change if I remained in the same society that coerced me to go to war, and then condemned me for falling in line? I wanted out, and felt like I was losing my grip on life. But you'd never know it to see me on the outside. I acted cool and indifferent, maybe the same way you do. It's called "survival."

I wandered into the Yellow Deli late at night... many nights, actually. I'd sit in a corner on third shift, sipping coffee and just watching the workers. What's up with them, anyway? Finally, I asked a young woman, "Are you people spiritual or something?"

"Oh yes," she replied, "We love Jesus."

Oh, no. Not Him. What a disappointment. They were so warm and friendly, obviously glad to be alive,

unlike me. I spent my time wandering around town all night long, not going to sleep until the sun came up, like a bat. Restless, unhappy, longing for something, but what? Not Jesus, that's for sure.

I'd been reading the Bible some, because I felt Jesus must have been on to something. It seemed like He wanted people to catch on to a different way of seeing things, and this intrigued me. But anyone I'd ever encountered who was into Jesus was intent on making money and being really secure. I never saw anything special about that kind of love.

But these people were... well, if you've ever been around them, then you probably know what I was feeling. I was feeling wanted, maybe. There came a point in my life when all I really wanted to do was be where I was really wanted. I finally made the connection in my heart that this is really how God must feel. The way I'd been in my life, I surely never made Him feel wanted, but He overlooked that.

One night this little group had a meeting. They were always having meetings, but I actually went to this one. The darkness in my life was suffocating me, but whenever I came around them

it was if a little oxygen breezed across my nose. Especially Gene. That night I came up to him and, for the first time in my life, told another person that my life was troubled and dark, and that I knew I was wrong. He warmly took both my hands and looked into my eyes, and said, "Now I know that you are a child of God."

I don't know how he knew that. I sure didn't know it about myself. I think he understood the pain of living a pointless life, and had finally found the true source of hope. I've watched that same hope for others be displayed over and over, through many painful circumstances with so many different people, and maybe now I'm coming to understand. Many of us have sought to understand God's heart by reading the Bible, but 2,000 years after He walked the earth, the path of love has remained such a great mystery.

All over the earth men have viewed the sunset and known of the existence

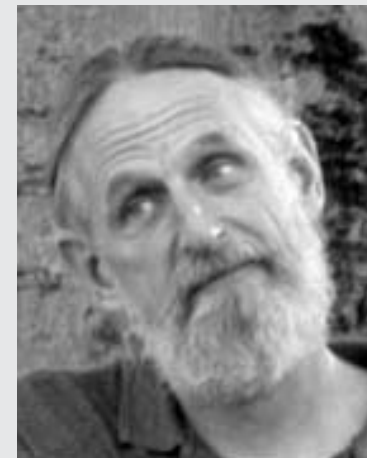
of God, no matter by what name they might call Him. They have prayed for rain, and He has given it, and they have felt thankful.

But to know why you are here on the earth, that is a very deep well that very few ever drink from. Some say we are here to love others, but I say, "Where can you find it?" And if you do find it, will you stay with love? Will love stay with you?

We wanted to write some things about why we came

to the Vine House, and why we remain to this day with the same people after so many years. Well, God is love. Someone bothered to reach out a hand to an impoverished young man and give him hope. Not just once, but often. Only the human heart can be the vehicle for such a love. How else are we to know the Master?

~ David Jones (David Yonah)



David Jones these days

Respond from page 5

Gene has never stopped loving us, just like our Master never stopped loving. He loved his disciples to the end. Loving one another is what causes our love to grow. If the evil one can blind us to the love in the hearts of our brothers and sisters because of the way they say it or because they might get the details wrong sometimes, then he has defeated us. This is what happened to so, so many that have left.

I can see that over the many, many years I have been here, Gene has consistently led me, and all of us, to *Yahshua* and not to himself. And it is also true that many of us leaders did not love the way Gene loved. We

have had many, many hurdles in our own souls to overcome.

We have hurt those entrusted to us, but we are truly learning to judge those hurts and deeply repent for them. Many of us have been disciplined severely by our Father for these things and taken out of leadership because we did not represent the true character of *Yahshua* to His people. But what is sad to me is that I may never get the opportunity to express my heartfelt

sorrow to those who I hurt and are no longer with us. I want to have that chance. I also desire that those hurt by any of us would have the opportunity to see that our love for *Yahshua* and for one another has not died because of our lacks, but instead is growing very deep through all the difficult things we have gone through.

My hope is that those who never trusted Gene or his message could come to the re-

union and see that the love of God that Gene had has been passed on to many, many people. Our Father's love has begun to restore all things, getting the church back to what it was meant to be — a light to the world, a demonstration of the kingdom to come. I sincerely hope many, many people who just couldn't quite see what was going on back then, or those who got offended and left could come and take a second look and see that the "Real One" is here and is making a people for His own possession. There's still time to be a part of it. The door is wide open! We desperately need each and every one of you!

~ Eddie Wiseman (Hakam)



Eddie Wiseman these days

Yellow Deli Reunion

Blue Jeans from page 3

“I’ve quit the theater and decided to dedicate my life to the Lord. A pastor here in town is trying to get me into seminary.”

He shakes his head in disapproval. “You can’t serve the Lord if you go to seminary,” he declares flatly.

I am offended by his bigoted dogmatism. I don’t attempt to conceal it. “So you personally know everyone who has ever been to seminary? And not one of those people has ever actually served the Lord? Is that what you’re saying?” I’m not raising my voice, but I wouldn’t call it a gentle answer, either.

Joe quietly intervenes. He leads us over to a booth and sits us down. In a kind, matter-of-fact way he tells us that the Lord doesn’t want us to respond to each other like this. He’s right, of course, and I’m in awe that this third-grade-dropout-son-of-a-sharecropper has understanding that I, a graduate of an ivy-league university, need to gain.

Fast forward several months...

Seminary hasn’t opened up yet, but the pastor has taken me with him on visitation, had me preach a lay sermon, and put me in charge of a Sunday school class. They are bright young men and women around the age of 14. Our lesson this particular morning is on John the Baptist.

“I’ve got a question for you,” I say after we finish the lesson. “John the Baptist was pretty radical — obviously devoted to the Lord. Have you ever thought of dedicating your whole life to the Lord?”

They look at me with curiosity. “You mean, being a preacher?” one of them asks.

“Not really,” I say. I realize that I’m still groping to understand what being devoted to the Lord is all about. Can I offer them any concrete options other than the pulpit and the mission field? What are we supposed to do

— go live in the wilderness and eat grasshoppers like John did? “I guess I’m just talking about making Him your first priority — obeying Him in everything you do... something like that.”

There is a pause. Finally one young man says, “No, not really. I mean, I want to do what’s right, and I don’t mind going to church, but I’m not really interested in more than that. I’ve got my life to live.” The others nod, and I realize that he has spoken for them all, as well as for all their parents — and really, for the whole church.

Fast forward two weeks...

I’m in the Impala, driving to a house near the UTC campus. I’m not sure what I’m getting into, but I know what I’m getting out of. The things that are stirring in me — to radically obey the Son of God who gave His life for me, the One who said He had all authority in heaven and on earth — those things just aren’t stirring in the folks at church. In fact, I’m not sure that they are stirring in anyone else on the planet. But, after a couple of weeks of soul searching, I’ve decided to accept an invitation extended to me several times by the folks at the Yellow Deli.

I’m not sure what they meant by, “Come visit our community.” In my mind I have a vague picture of a row of duplexes. But I know they worship together on Sunday morning. They’re doing this at a place called The Vine House. I pass by some fraternity houses and eventually pull over near an old, two-story brick structure that bears the Vine House sign.

I climb the stone steps. Inside are men and women around my age. Most of them are in blue jeans, like me. The walls are covered with burlap. I like the casual, alternative decor. A pot-bellied stove knocks the February chill off the high-ceilinged living room. I’m offered a seat on a

wooden bench. Lots of folks are sitting on the floor.

Someone sits beside me and talks to me about people in Chattanooga that I know. Various people start songs, and we all join in. A few people stand up and share their thoughts spontaneously. I can’t decide what this gathering is like... It has spiritual aspects like a Christian coffee house, but with an atmosphere of warmth and shared experiences such as I used to find at college theater cast parties. Maybe it’s some kind of campus ministry.

“Critical Mass,” as they call the gathering, is soon over. I can’t recall what people have said, but my overall impression is that they are all serious about following the Son of God. I’m more than a little stunned. Someone offers me a plate of Sloppy Joes. I eat quietly. A tall, blonde girl named Pat, who has talked with me a few times in the Areopagus, comes up and asks me what I thought of the gathering. I say something insipid and unconvincing like, “It was good.”

Her expectant smile droops a little, and she bravely replies, “Well, I hope you’ll feel free to come back any time.”

I surprise myself by saying, quietly, “I’m not leaving.”

Apparently, I surprise Pat even more. “What did you say?”

“I’m not leaving.”

She explodes with enthusiasm, drags a chair over beside me, and hops up on it. “Hey, everybody!” she yells. “Robert’s moving in!”

The room erupts in cheering. Mike, a tall, thin artist with long, thin hair, is the first to give me a warm embrace. Well, I guess I am moving in. I hadn’t really thought it through — didn’t even know there was something to move into — but I really don’t want to go anywhere else.

Fast forward to the next morning...

It’s early... a lot earlier than I usually eat breakfast. We’re all gathered around a big table. Someone shares a couple of things from the Bible. Someone else talks about an encouraging week he spent



Gene Spriggs at a Rap Session in the Vine House days

with someone named Gene building a deli in a nearby town. We pray. I’m given an orange and a bowl of oatmeal. The orange is hard to peel and the acid stings the dry skin on my fingertips. The oatmeal has not been salted. I sprinkle some salt on it and look around for the other condiments. I don’t see any.

Turning to the girl beside me, I ask, “Do we have any milk or brown sugar?”

She looks at me with what seems to be mild disdain.

A Twelve Tribes Freepaper

“Whadda ya think this is,” she asks, “the Hilton?”

Fast forward a week...

I’ve volunteered to work third shift, so here I am, washing dishes in the Areopagus. I’m not very fast on dishes, so they often pile up, but I do them the best I can. After all, I’m doing them for the Lord.

A voice comes from over my shoulder. “Hey, Robert, I want you to meet someone. Robert, this is Gene.” I’ve heard of Gene a couple of times, now. I gather he’s a sort of pastor or leader, but I don’t know much about him. I say, “Hi,” and the person making introductions says, “Gene, Robert is an actor!”

Oh, no. Having spent a lot of time in the theater, my own opinion of actors is pretty low, and I really don’t want to be identified as one. Gene, however, seems impressed. “Wow!” he says. “An actor!”

Inwardly, I am disappointed by his delight. Whoever this Gene person is, he apparently has zero discernment.

Fast forward a few days...

I’m sitting on the floor in the Vine House for a teaching. Gene is going to teach, but after his enthusiasm about me as an actor, I am a little skeptical. The doubt doesn’t last long, though.

What he says is simple and clear. There are spiritual gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4. The whole purpose for us having those gifts is to equip all our brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ to do the works they were saved for. And all those works that have been prepared for them to do have one purpose — to build up the Body in love. It is a process that has to go on continually until we all become just like Christ. His work for us on the cross was to bring us back to the Father so that His Spirit could begin to work in us, to make us like Him.

See *Blue Jeans* on page 13

Our life together as the Church is the catalyst for the Spirit to do His work.

The world is focused on individual growth and achievement. Each person strives after his own perfection, seeking knowledge and other forms of personal development. But Christ transfers us out of this self-centered realm and into His Kingdom where we are all focused on our corporate growth in grace. We are responsible for each other. Nonetheless, it is still up to each of us to choose whether we receive a minimum or maximum amount of grace to do what we have been saved for.

Despite Gene's apparent lack of discernment about actors, he's obviously got insight into the Scriptures. Although I came to this meeting ready to judge what Gene had to say, I realize that after hearing it there is only one thing I can do with it: put it into practice.

Fast forward one month...

Here I am at another teaching, and writing rapidly. I've never before heard such clear, simple truth.

Genuine love longs to enrich its object, not possess it. Real love is more a matter of loyalty than affection. One who loves is controlled by his will, not his emotions. Love is purposeful commitment, setting the welfare of the beloved above your own. The Son of God made obedience to His commands the test of love.

Sacrificial love for others will come forth from us if we are in the springtime of our love for Christ. Love is greater than knowledge, faith, and hope. Love is the mark of a true church.

The church is God's kingdom on earth. A kingdom involves authority. Government is established by authority

so that there will be order. Order is necessary so that care can be expressed. Care must be expressed in order for love to be seen. We cannot participate in the coming Kingdom at Christ's return if we do not participate in building up His Kingdom now.

The Ephesian church had an authority structure. They possessed discernment and were a model of impeccable orthodoxy, but they lacked love. Orthodoxy is cold and grim without the warmth of love. Drudgery in our labor indicates the loss of love. Without love a church has no light. The Ephesian church was told that their lampstand would be removed if they did



Robert and Kathy Chambers these days

not repent and do the deeds of love they did at first. No church has a permanent place. All are continuously on trial.

Fast forward three decades...

Without a doubt, we've been on trial, just as that old teaching proclaimed. It sure seems like continuously. A lot of times, maybe most times, we haven't measured up. But forgiveness has always, always been extended, to both the small and the great — to the ten-talent disciple as well as to the one-talent disciple. Mercy continually triumphs over judgment.

I shut the tattered composition book and place it on my desk. The edges are yellow with age and gray with dust. It has been on dozens of bookshelves and traveled thousands of miles inside dozens of cardboard boxes. It carries no feelings of nostalgia for me. It is not a record of "the good old days." The words inside it are timeless. They are words of eternal life. They are still being taught and carried out, day by day.

I think about many who sat on the Vine House floor when these words were first uttered. I wonder, why were they there? Was it because our Master's words were proclaimed in a fresh and living way? Was it because they liked being loved? Or was it just because it was cool to have Bible studies in blue jeans with burlap on the walls?

At times I have not been loved. At times I have not been understood. At times I have failed to love and understand others. But love covers over a multitude of failures to love. And regardless of our failures or our circumstances, I still belong to the One who went to death on my behalf. And He still lives here, forgiving us our failures as we forgive those who fail us. So where else should I be, except where He is? And, you know what? Through it all we are learning to consistently love and understand each other.

Rewind one decade...

I happen to be with Gene when the memory of our first meeting pops into my head. I describe briefly my recollection of the event: third shift, the dish sink, the introduction, his enthusiasm. "Why," I ask, "were you so excited about me being an actor?"

He replies instantly and frankly, "I was just glad one of them had been snatched from the flames."

Oh...

Right.

Me too.

~ Robert Chambers (Qatan)

We were not church goers, so much, but I believed in that God. I believed He sent His Son. But, as I grew older and realized what was the acceptable and approved lifestyle for sincere Christian believers, I knew I was in trouble. I so longed that Christians were like the people of old in those stories — together. And no one, not one person, ever gave me any hope or vision about the eternal destiny and purpose of men and women who were Christians, believers in the Son of God. What would these people do forever and ever?

Then the most amazing thing happened to me. Pam O'Rear (now DeVoss) and I walked into the Yellow Deli. Nothing could ever separate me from Pam, because together she and I found what we did not even know to search for. She brought me to the Yellow Deli. She said, "I know someone who knows God." And she did. When we walked into that place, and later into the Vine House, I knew that I could be happy and satisfied with the spirit that I found there, for eternity.

I found LOVE — not some fleeting heartbeat of a feeling, but love in action. A man and his wife, filled with the love of God, opened their door and said, "Come live with us. We will take care of you. We'll take care of one another. We will show the world that the Father sent the Son. They will know that we are disciples because of our love for one another." I found a place where I could work and never grow tired, where I could love and never grow weary, for eternity.

I owe this couple my life. They opened up their home to me. They opened their doors. They were the "sent ones" to tell me the gospel. I loved their authority. I knew it was from God. No one had to tell me that. No one stood at the door telling me who was "in charge." The spirit within me wooed me to open up my heart to that love and authority that would teach me to *give up everything* for Yahshua, my Savior. This was *good news* to me.

I have been through many, many difficult and trying times in my life. However, the spirit that I first received when I walked through the doors of the Yellow Deli and the Vine House, the spirit and the heart that said, "Come live with me," has carried me through. Not only has it carried me through, but it has been the driving force in me, the living stream that has caused me to love others (just as I was loved), even through difficult times. It has put in me the heart to not let down young disciples, to stand beside them and to teach them that Yahshua is worthy of *everything*, regardless of what we must suffer.

What the enemy intended to use to destroy me at times, has instead strengthened me and even caused me to draw close to those who may have been the ones to hurt me. And their sometimes hurtful ways have caused me to acknowledge and turn from the hurtful ways in my own life that have also hurt others. I learned that "love finds a way" here in the Community — from the same heart of those who opened their doors to me so many years ago. And I believed it. I have received the reward of the prophet because I believed and listened to what was in the heart of those who first showed me the love of God.

Thirty-some years later, that same heart burns within me. It is a love that cannot be quenched. I am eternally grateful. I am so grateful to be together with those who have decided to follow Yahshua. "No turning back, no turning back."

~ Grace Corder

Yellow Deli Reunion

Dream from page 4

A person only has so much free time and money that he can give to God. But somehow this seemed different.

Time passed. At school, Bill began carving out his future, and his teachers had some things for him to understand along way, too. Busy working to support us, I was dimly aware of a change taking place in my husband. His zeal for God seemed to be waning. He did not know how to relate the things that were affecting him in his classes, particularly, “History of the English Reformation,” and “History of Pentecostalism.” You might say that he was shell shocked to discover that Christianity was never pure. It was always divided, worldly, corrupt, and compromised. He learned that as soon as church and state were married by Constantine in the early fourth century, Christians began to use their state power to put each other to death over doctrine — their differences of opinion about the truth. As the pages of history turned, he discovered that Christianity strengthened the violence of the American Civil War. Across time it is evident that although the Jesus of the Bible has a supernatural character, the Jesus of Christianity produces nothing more powerful than other human religions and institutions, operating according to natural principles.

Considering what we were a part of more objectively or circumspectly, we began to see that the amazing reformations that people pointed to as testimony of their salvation experience could have been obtained through various other means. It is within the power of every human being to obey the law of conscience. It does not take supernatural power to work hard to provide for your family, stay loyal to your wife or husband, and raise children. People all over the world of almost any cultural background have held these values central

to their lives for millennia. The evangelical gospel that we were acquainted with merely called those who had strayed back to these principles and gave people a social context to stick to them.

The next step in life was to find a place to do Bill’s ministry project. We remembered those Yellow Deli people. They said, “Yes, you can come and do your project here.” So we went back to Chattanooga. Our previous visits had communicated that those people cared about us. They loved in a way that we had never experienced in all of our previous encounters with Christian groups. We moved in with all our belongings, expecting to practice our future ministry.

I awoke to someone singing outside of my room. The song continued outside one room after the other. We both jumped to our feet to see what the first day in this new place would hold for us. Rousing and dressing our son Jeremy, I headed downstairs toward the dining room. The table was full of more singing. Something in me said, “This is where God lives. I don’t ever want to leave this place.”

Sundays were great! Our worship service was called Critical Mass. Our vision was that we would all be so devoted and full of the Spirit that like atoms we would build up so much synergy that we would explode. We sang with all of our hearts. “If God be for us, who could be against us!” The word of God preached by men like Eddie, Gary, and Gene made me tremble. “The Way is narrow and it is going to get narrower. The Way is hard and contracted by pressure.” Wow! I’d never heard anything like it.

And He was saying to them all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses

his life for my sake, he is the one who will save it.

These words stirred me up. I was focused on every one, straining to comprehend what God was saying. The spirit of prophecy was awesome. I knew it was Him.

We were accepted into fellowship. At our weekly Sunday communion meal, we shared a handmade loaf that we broke together. My husband worked at one of our deli restaurants. I taught some of our preschool age children and cooked supper every day. We were on the daily community schedule and did our part.

But then, as Bill worked long hours at night with Roger at the Brainerd Deli, Roger began talking with Bill about true baptism. Just as John the Baptist had challenged the Pharisees in his day to question their own religious foundation, so the people in the community were questioning us as to whether we had really surrendered everything to Jesus.

This was difficult for me. I had been sincere that evening when I cried out at the side of that bed. But no one was challenging my sincerity; they were challenging the Jesus I had received. It was true that the Jesus that I had found in all those churches and all those Christian organizations did not have the power to call people to obey the scriptures. Large portions of that big black book, The Holy Bible, that had been exalted as the Word of God in all those places actually had very little to do with how people lived their daily lives. It says to not be anxious for your food, shelter or clothing, and “To be My disciple one must give up all his own possessions.” Unless you are a lunatic or a celibate monk, how can you do that? I’d read all of these verses many times before. I had devoured my Bible until it fell apart more than once in the few years I’d been “born again, but somehow their simple truth had gone

unnoticed. The Jesus or Jesuses that I had met previously saw the scriptures from a different perspective than the one I was meeting now. They did not have the authority to get people to give all they had to God.

I began to see that God could tell these people to do anything and they would follow Him. That thrilled me. On that basis I was immersed and washed of Christianity. I found myself free of that guilt that drove me to every altar call in the Baptist church to rededicate my life. Also, the doubt as to if God is real or not had persisted in the face of all my Christian zeal and devotion. That too washed away, never to return.

It has been a long time since that start in Chattanooga. Jeremy is now 31. We have raised five sons and two daughters. The oldest three are married and raising their children in the Way. All of our children are following in our footsteps.

It has not been easy. We have experienced a little of what Peter must have meant when he wrote, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though something strange were happening to you.” Somehow suffering tends to naturally translate to the human soul that something must be wrong. It is hard to not blame others or circumstances for our personal afflictions.

This has been most evident to us as we tried to raise our children. It has been the greatest test to our faith. Raising children to follow their Creator and not one of the hosts of errant ways out there is beyond Bill and me, especially nowadays. As a people we heard that God needed families to more fully represent Him, and as a people we responded. We have seen the reality of the expression, “It takes a village to raise a child.” Our village is the community.

A Twelve Tribes Freepaper

We are very thankful for the friends who have helped us and our children along the Way. Had it not been for them, our children would be lost and we would have given up. When we were failing, our friends either redirected us or stood in as a bridge to God for our children.

In my needy times I have found the Jesus that we follow in the faulty human beings that I live with. This is very humbling work. Just when you think that you are making progress, someone brings to your attention something that you don’t even realize, or your child does something embarrassing or inappropriate or hurtful or something even worse. How can our children be protected from the negative influences and even the predatory nature of some evils unless God protects and shields them?

The number of communities that have fallen apart over the issue of raising children can hardly be numbered. Bed-times, toys, music, clothing, food, to spank or not spank, standards, manners, beliefs — is there any end to the opportunities to come into conflict with other parents and their children? Injustices arise and work to split apart even the most like-minded, well-intentioned, loving people. We need the help of others to raise them but how can you overcome the obstacles?

The Jesus of the New Testament called people to deny themselves. He also called people to make a blood covenant with Him and with each other. That means that no matter what happens you are going to stick it out. But yes, self gets in the way. In the beginning we had an expression that said, “It wouldn’t be so hard if it weren’t for self regard.” That hasn’t changed. The only way we can cut off self is to do what He did and cry out, entrusting ourselves to our faithful Creator.

See *Dream* on page 15

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Dream from page 14

If we have given our lives to Him, He is faithful to keep us and deliver us from all harm (not suffering, but evil).

Love for Him and each other compels us to hold our peace when we are upset. Respect for each other causes us to doubt ourselves and not judge one another. Our love for the truth helps us gain insight from the “least.” This Way keeps us together and lights up our path.

We are a bunch of needy people. I never could have imagined that life could be so good or so hard. But what did I expect it to cost to fulfill our dream? How else could a kingdom of love fill the earth if it wasn't like this? My 16-year-old son said, “Imma, it is so satisfying to work really hard and then be able to see what you did. You can look at that fireplace that you just built. It's satisfying.” How much greater satisfaction to see the image of God etched in human hearts because we worked really hard to love others the way He would love them if He were here.

It says, “For joy over us He endured the cross.” I believe that. I also believe that those who have the same heart and spirit that He had will also take up their own cross and do the deeds that He did. We sing a song that says,

Love is our home, a place to receive healing.

Brokenness of heart opens the way, and forgiveness washes all.

Love is our home, it's filled with brothers and sisters

Sharing what we have on our hearts causes us to grow in love.

No more separation or fear of rejection.

For we have entered into a simple love affair of the heart.

Love is our home...

Come and sing along with us. I cannot promise that this will be an easy life, but what greater thing could anyone do with the days God has given him than to allow love to work through him to heal the needy, cure the weary soul, to bind the broken-hearted, and to gather those who have been cast aside? Yes! We are a people with vision and purpose for our lives. We believe that love will triumph over darkness. We want to be a part of winning that battle. We invite anyone who will to join us.

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourself also with the same purpose.”
(1 Peter 4:1)

~ Eileen Smith (Adah)

Our Master Yahshua* the Messiah

Our Master hung there on the cross with His body bleeding and beaten beyond recognition. He choked and gasped for air as the searing pain shot to the core of His being. Shock waves shuddered down His frame. The crowd watching Him jeered and mocked, defiantly calling out, “Come down from there if you are the Son of God!”

Many had died at the hands of the Romans claiming to be the Messiah but this case was different. It was more than just the execution of another cult leader. These men were crucifying what He stood for as well. “Come down from there,” they mockingly said again, “and we will believe in you,” not realizing and not caring that they wouldn't have.¹

They couldn't know the deep love that motivated this perfect man to make the most costly personal sacrifice that would ever be made throughout all eternity. All they were thinking about was themselves, and how He had offended their sense of righteousness, as they hurled contempt and hatred at Him.

His peace and composure during the shameful ordeal astonished those few onlookers who were saddened by the greatness of His suffering. They noticed that the tenderness they'd always seen in His eyes was still there.

Even His disciples had fled the scene, as the pressure became more and more real in their own lives. The mocking crowd taunted Him; “You saved others, now save yourself!” They didn't know He was at that moment receiving the penalty they deserved for their sins and their insolent, presumptuous attitudes.

Only a few who were standing there that day appreciated the awesome self-control this humble man was exercising. Even though they didn't fully understand what was going on, they could sense that He knew what He was doing. That knowledge lifted Him above the shame of His

nakedness and the pain of His broken body. Then it happened. His last breath was released with a great cry of submission. Like the lambs of old, the sacrifice of His life had been thoroughly inspected and found blameless. His face set like flint and His final conscious thought to please His Father, He was what a lamb could never be, a willing sacrifice for sin.²

At that moment, the unimaginable weight of the sin of the whole world crushed the spirit in His body down, down into the center of the earth. As His soul was ripped from the broken shell of His body, the pain He had been experiencing did not let up. The crushing sense of distance and alienation from His Father in heaven grew greater and greater. In the agony of death, which He Himself referred to as “a place of torment,”³ He received the just penalty for the accumulated selfishness and wickedness of the entire human race.⁴ And He did more than that too. Through facing death and overcoming the fear of its loss and suffering, He took away its power forever.

As He came up out of the depths of the earth, He knew there would be those who would care enough about what He'd done for them to obey whatever He would tell them to do. These would be the ones He would entrust the keys to — the keys He'd taken from the evil prince who rules the fallen world, the keys to death and Hades.⁵

He knew how to unlock the prison of self-centeredness and death within man. His message on earth had been clear, very clear, but His words only had their full effect in those who fully trusted Him. Those who had known Him told others what He had said so they could also be unlocked from their prison. The love that dwelled in the hearts of this small group forbid them from doing anything less than

sharing everything they had. They didn't even want to consider that anything belonging to them was their own. Seeing one another's needs, they shared their meals, their homes, and their very lives.⁶

It was in all these ways that they were dying to themselves. Just like He had died on the cross, they were dying to all the things that had motivated them before to make their own lives better, but had only left them separated and lonely. Nothing gave them greater joy than to experience the exact same life that He had on a daily basis. This was the bloom of their first love. Lost, hopeless humans beings were attracted to this amazing life of togetherness and wholeness. In the communities of Yahshua the Messiah they were set free from the dark, personal prison of self-centered existence they'd been trapped in. These early disciples proved they had the keys and that they could unlock the doors for others as well.⁷ They proved that God was in their midst by the love and unity they had.

Yet as the Church grew, strife, immorality, and greed took over until they were hopelessly divided by the very things He had died to do away with.⁸ Those same evil spirits that tested their Master had come to test His people; and they hadn't completely trusted, not the way He had trusted His Father. They didn't realize they were losing their first love. They didn't even know they had lost the keys.

But the story doesn't end there... There is Good news! Today, right now those same keys are once again on the earth, because there is a people who are obeying His word again. Those who have received the keys truly believe He is able to reach all the way down to where man is lost, lonely, and suffering. ❁

⁶ Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37; 6:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 2:14

⁷ Matthew 16:19

⁸ 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-3; 6:4-11; 11:18-21; 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1; 11:2-4; 11:13-15; Galatians 1:6-8; 5:15-21; Ephesians 6:24; 1 Timothy 6:3-10; 2 Timothy 2:26-3:7

¹ Matthew 27:40-42

² Luke 23:46

³ Luke 16:28

⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:21

⁵ Revelations 1:17-18

***YAHSHUA** — The name *Jesus* was a corruption of a Greek name *Iesous*, which was in turn a corruption of His original Hebrew name, *Yahshua*. In fact, even the letter “J” and its pronunciation didn't creep into the English language until the 16th century. Since we are speaking of the name above all names, you would have thought that the church leaders would have taken pains to preserve the proper name

of the Savior of the world. But they didn't, and along with the corruption of the name came a corruption of the church and its structure and nature. But for us, with the restoration of His true name came also a greater confidence to call upon the One from whom we could receive forgiveness, mercy, and salvation in our lives. It was fundamental to know who we should call upon for this purpose

and who not to call upon. In the culture of old Israel, names were not mere tags to label a person. One's name in the Hebrew language described his identity and purpose in life. And how true this was pertaining to our Savior, for His name meant “Yahweh's Salvation” — mighty and powerful to save. Wow! What a contrast to the English name, *Jesus*, which has no real meaning of its own.

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