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# Dialogue

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Volume 4 Issue 2

*Strength for the church's journey into wholeness in Christ*

April 2002

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## **The subject: *Death and Resurrection***

Regular people having irregular lives because they know Jesus. Normal people who have become abnormal because they died with Jesus. Ordinary people who have been made extraordinary and have been called to extraordinary deeds because they are risen with Christ.

Such variations on that awesome, puzzling, sometimes maddening picture of our new lives in Christ have always ignited my imagination and fed my joy. I am very interested in "normal" people having it be "normal" to consider themselves alive with Christ. I'm not naturally extraordinary.

So for this issue of the dialogue I recruited people just like the rest of us to tell us how they deal with the wonder of death and resurrection in the normal course of their lives: facing the inner work, doing art, going to school, facing a new career, living among the poor, and hanging out with people who think that talk about Jesus, much more death and resurrection is pretty irregular.

I grew up with Christians who were rather grandiose about how they thought they should apply the Bible. Honestly, as kids, my sister and I took great pleasure in poking fun at people who sounded big when we knew how small they really were. I think they thought they needed to give Jesus a boost by looking big enough to justify his

work on their behalf. They didn't want to make him look bad — and I think they thought looking bad might cause Jesus to do terrible things to them!

So the "regular" life they lived was sort of their secret, and the "spiritual" life they lived, when someone was looking, was the one they hoped you would see.

The problem was, I always noticed both lives. I quickly grew out of assuming that there were two lives at all. I don't think we can have a "spiritual life." We were as good as dead. Now we are alive in Christ. That's life. Like John says in his nice, frank way: *God has*



*given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:11-12*

This issue is designed to take seriously all the talk people have been having about death and resurrection: the journey, the symbols, the mystery of new life in Christ. I hope it will encourage us all to live it! So read it prayerfully, since regular people like yourself have taken the risk to share their thoughts about how to die and how to live in Jesus.

*Ed. — Rod White*

## **Burying Impossible Expectations; Rising to Walk in God's Mercy**

*Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of  
heaven. Matthew 5:3*

**T**his article is not going to be perfect. Although I hope to write a meaningful, cohesive, coherent, and eloquently-worded piece, my attempt will be flawed. This is true of most tasks I undertake. And this state of being less-than-ideal is what I want to write about. My imperfection may seem obvious to you (in fact, it even seems obvious to me), yet, accepting imperfection in myself has been a slow process. The more I allow myself to be a person who is not yet complete, who is not the "ultimate" Angel, the more free and redeemed I become.

Years ago, as a new, teenage, Christian, I memorized Bible verses. One was 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, he or she is a new creation. The old has gone, the new is come!" How exciting that sounded! Life had felt pretty hard for me up to that point, and I was eager to embrace life in Christ, with the hope of everything becoming new. I was baptized in the "dunking backwards" way. As the pastor dunked me, he said, "Buried with

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(Continued from page 1)

Christ in baptism,” and as he raised me up out of the water, he said, “Risen to walk in newness of life.”

These ideas of redemption and newness got combined with the hope I had already put in my earthly future. I had my life all planned out,

and it was going to be perfect. Go to college, get a job, follow all the rules, be successful. I became a Christian and added to the list: love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And, I believed, God would help me do all these things, make my life new. Make me perfect.

I didn't con-  
sciously realize

that I wanted to be perfect. I could say, “Nobody's perfect” as well as anyone. We all know that. But somewhere inside of me, I was striving to be the perfect Angel and to have the perfect, godly life.

I entered adulthood and discovered that my ideal life was unattainable. How devastating! I felt like a failure every time some part of my life didn't measure up to my idealistic expectations. Getting any job was difficult and getting a “good” job seemed impossible. I strove endlessly for approval, but my shortcomings were always painfully obvious to me. Later, I became a teacher and sometimes I lose patience with my children; sometimes my lessons go over their heads. I believe strongly in the need for better public education, but right now I teach in a Quaker school. I have a loving husband and a wonderful marriage, but sometimes we hurt each other. Of course, many things in my life have been very success-

ful, but I hate it when I am new at something, imperfect, green, or just plain untalented. Failures, though inevitable, feel like doom.

Slowly, I have had to learn to have patience with myself, to allow myself time to learn and grow. All around us, our world is

*Romans 4:18 Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead --since he was about a hundred years old--and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*

broken. We are surrounded by war, racism, pollution, selfishness. And I expected to be perfect? Though we can experience God's love and healing here on Earth, we are human and earthly and broken, like our world.

For a long time, I didn't understand what Jesus meant by “poor i

spirit” (Matthew 5:3, see top of article). Someone explained it as knowing your spiritual poverty, knowing that you are imperfect. Jesus says we are blessed when we realize this. And when we mourn that poverty, he will comfort us (verse 4). I have been receiving his comfort and learning to accept myself in my shortcomings. Though we are spiritually poor, ours is the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said it himself. I am truly amazed.

When I was 12, I baby-sat a Jewish child who attended a Christian nursery school. She taught me this song: “He's still working on me, to make me what I ought to be. Took him just a week to make the moon and the stars, the sun and the Earth and Jupiter and Mars. How loving and patient he must be! 'Cause he's still working on me.” I have never forgotten that little song, because I knew right then that I

wanted to know that God. The God who accepted me and loved me and patiently worked with me in my imperfection.

Does all this mean I am not a new creation? Is the Bible untrue? Was Paul wrong when he wrote 2 Corinthians 5:17? I am not exactly sure, but I don't think so. I had memorized that verse in isolation, long ago, but we need to read Bible verses in their proper context. Verse 19 goes on to say that Christ reconciled us to himself, not counting our trespasses against us. So he knows we are imperfect and he brings us into his kingdom anyway. It is all right to be human; we can't escape it. This doesn't mean we should sin on purpose, but that we should be gentle on ourselves in our humanity. I also believe that, somehow, God has made us new and immortal in the heavenly realms. We are not there yet, so we have not tasted what it is like to be with him in paradise. Yet that old fear of death (and of failure!) is gone, the new life in

## Dialogue

**WHY?** *This quarterly journal is a gift to everyone who wishes to be a part of the ongoing dialogue we share in Christ that forms us and deepens us as a real church. Whether you just arrived or have been with us from the beginning, we want you to be part of the conversation and an informed member of the team. We hope you will work with us to build a safe place to experience and share the love of Jesus Christ. Dialogue is a crucial part of that.*

**If you would like to respond to any of the articles printed, that would be great. We have never turned a response away, yet — but we reserve the right to do so.**

Christ has come. We patiently and imperfectly await the day when we will be with him in that home.

*Angel Grant Day*

**O**ne of the hardest things for me about the Christian life is figur-

## Our Work or God's Work?

ing out where my effort in God's plan for my life leaves off and his effort takes over. Jesus made it clear to his disciples that apart from him we can do nothing (John 15:5). However, for self-reliant people living in a competitive culture—a culture competitive enough that Solomon once commented, “All labor and all achievement spring from

*man's envy of his neighbor”* (Eccl. 4:4)—it can be hard

to distinguish between doing something with Jesus, and just doing something yourself. I don't think I am the only one who faces the problem of starting something with Jesus only to find that somewhere along the road I simply took it over, fooling myself with a few

obligatory nods to the Lord when it started to seem that it had become all about me.

Oswald Chambers made this syndrome the subject of the April 23<sup>rd</sup> entry in his devotional classic, *My Utmost for His Highest*. Chambers writes, “Beware of any work for God which enables you to evade concentration on Him. A great many Christian workers worship their work.” The result is that the Christian pursuing his or her

work without focused, even enthusiastic, concentration on God “is apt to get his work on his neck; there is no margin of body, mind, or spirit free, consequently he becomes spent or crushed.”

Recently, this lesson became startlingly clear to me. Coming to pursue a graduate degree in history at Penn has been part of the clear leading of the Lord in my life. All the same, I hit a period of intense frustration and burn-out. The main part of the problem was that I had become so focused on the work and concerned about my own success that I had stopped making room for devotion, as too time-consuming and unproductive.

When my burn-out got to the point that I literally could have taken days of retreats with no net

*Romans 6. We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - - because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*

loss to my productivity, I realized my mistake. What really surprised me was that as soon as I brought Jesus back in, suddenly I was enjoying my work again, enjoying my relationship with the Lord, and getting things done.

And, as an ironic bonus, since human habits die hard I managed to fall into the same pattern all over again and so I can say there is a real cause-and-effect-relationship here, not just my imagination at work.

Why it is that we can do nothing apart from Christ? I think it is due to three things: God's grace, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the reality of the Resurrection. It is God's grace, because without

his providing a wall, sooner or later, we would take up doing things on our own again, as we did before we received the Holy Spirit. It is the power of the Holy Spirit because the kinds of things we are called to do, and more importantly, the way we are called to do them, can't be done apart from the Holy Spirit. As a writer for Campus Crusade pointed out, “After years of being disciplined by Jesus, most of the disciples deserted him at the cross and one betrayed him. It was Pentecost that made the ultimate difference! Filled with the Holy Spirit, these disciples went out and changed the world!” Most importantly, this all centers around the reality of the Resurrection. The Apostle Paul wrote:

*Since Christ lives within you, even though your body will die because of sin, your spirit is alive because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as he raised Christ from the dead, he will give life to your mortal body by this same Spirit living within you (Rom. 8: 10-11).*

The resurrection of our bodies is for the future, but the resurrection life of our spirits has already begun. Let's live in it now—with Him!

*Clinton Ohlers*

Lights up on my compassion. You find me in my pajamas, a ratty

## Choosing Life

sweater and a hat with a pompom on it sitting on the steps. Next to me, huddled against me as if I can block out the wind that is bouncing past, careless of its path straight through us, is Donna. Donna is working: working the streets. To pay for the apartment that her kids and addict mother live in. We are trying to figure out what can be defined as rape.. Lights out

Lights up on me. Me breaking up a fight between two of the most beautiful children you have ever seen. The fight so clearly stemming from the frustration of growing up in a place where everything tells you no and which has nothing to do with each other. They pay no attention that I am standing in the mid-

*Acts 3:12 When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see*

dle of them — they hit me more than each other. Lights out

Lights up on Kensington Ave. as deserted as Kensington Ave. can be. soon Ed and I stumble into the picture. The sign at the Walgreen's lets you know that it is late (or early.) It begins to snow. Ed is babbling on about how much he loves me, no one else loves him. Ed has done so much dope that he can hardly stay awake, even though we are standing on the street and it is freezing. Often I am holding him up completely and screaming his name so that he will wake up so that I can get him home. Lights out.

Lights up on me in bed. Some one is knocking at the door. Calling my name. I roll over look at the camera. Close my eyes and roll back over. The knocking and calling continue as we fade to black.

Repeat that scene a billion times.

For any of you who were wondering, Brooke's the one who hears the door and rolls over in her bed. Jesus is the one who was spit on and loved back.

This is not a rant on how we should be more compassionate. I'm not writing to convince you of that -- the gospels do a bang up job of that. I'm wondering why I'm not more compassionate. Here at the simple way we have an excuse we make for the rich that goes

something like this: "It's not that the rich don't care about the poor, it is that they don't know them."

See, but I know them. What is my excuse? I've come to realize that I do not have faith in the resurrection. The death marinade that my community has been left in for years has seeped in and eaten away my faith in redemption. I can turn my back on someone who I love because I can't believe that it will get better.

I watch this happen all around me. Kids throw their trash on the streets, because it is going to be

dirty anyway. Folks ignore the man who asks for some change- because we should not give "them" money. When did money and eye contact, a smile, or a short conversation all become the same thing? Churches choose air conditioning over a larger missions budget... okay maybe I don't know the why of that. I see how we let the stories and faces and lives that touch us, the people, die.

How are they reborn to us? How are they redeemed? How is their life worth fighting for? Not through pity but the cultivation of life. The defiance of the death. Not through charity that keeps us separate from each other. Not through fear-driven evangelism. Through compassion. Compassion has nothing to do with guilt, or what we really "should" do. Compassion has to do with love and passion. We can defy death with the life that has been given us, we can claim joy and freedom (and real freedom not that co-opted the-u.s.a.-can't-do- nothin'-wrong-cause-we-use-the- word-freedom freedom), we can claim each other rather than just let death get thrown on us like a wet and sticky lead blanket.

Brooke Sexton

**A**s I contemplate thoughts of life and death and art, there are a

## The Air That I Breathe

few voices running about in my head. I hear the poet, Rilke, repeating and repeating, "but it is clear that we must hold to what is difficult; everything alive holds to it..." Just below, almost like a base line, are the words of Jesus, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." Arching above is, again, Jesus asking, "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" Interspersed with my own thoughts and questions, I wonder what will emerge from this harmonious cacophony.

Life and death is a subject few people want to dwell on. As a discussion, life could be tolerable, if it weren't so intimately connected to death. All sorts of powerful emotions and painful experiences rise from that mysterious pair. It's easier just not to think about it, to avoid the whole thing all together. And then, I hear Rilke again...

Everything alive holds to... it... the difficult... life and death. Jesus offers abundant life, though he is clear that to reach out for his abundant life is to reach also for the cup from which he drinks—the cup of suffering and death. Again, the nearness is too much to endure.

Though they curve together in an enigmatic relationship, we work to sunder life and death. We push them apart making them into the parameters of birth and burial. We contort them into opposing extremes in-

side of which we fumble to define our existence. And like most outer-bounds, most borders, ends and peripheries, we fear to tread too close. To experience either is to walk a blade's edge between known and unknown, existence and annihilation, self and other.

Even so, life and death remain essential to who we are. And our world is overflowing with reminders. The seasons still cycle around us. The sun rises and sets just as the moon waxes and wanes. Even our own breath draws attention to the nearness of life...inhalation... death... ex-

*Ephesians 2:1-7 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus..*

halation. Clinging to the "easy and the easiest side of the easy," as Rilke phrases it, we huddle in the middle—hoping to remain undiscovered for at least seventy years—in an existence that looks more like death. It is into this constricted existence, this disjointed relationship that art enters as a full breath, an open space, a place for reconciliation.

This needn't be so surprising because our world is overflowing with symbols that we travel through suffering and death to find life—spring follows winter; morning follows night; a baby is birthed through pain; Jesus died and then rose to life. Even so, I am still surprised.

In a way I can't explain, art allows us to explore what has been prohibited and terrifying. Is it be-

cause the page, canvas or whatever artistic space gives us a tolerable degree of distance even as it brings us closer to what is dying and living in us?...I don't know.

But I do know that somehow with paint I can move my fingers all through my fears; in music my questions can fill the air as my body moves to sorrow's rhythm; in a poem I can discover unknown strength; through story I can find grace. In this open space, I feel expansive and alive. I feel less afraid because I have touched fear and found grace. What was once formidable is now more familiar. I have danced with pain and recovered strength. In art, opponents can make peace, extremes can melt into spectrum, and absolutes can soften into cycle.

Art helps us hold to what is difficult, to hold both Jesus' abundant life and cup of death. Like breath, it draws us near to life... and death... and life...

Jessica Lindsay

**W**rite an article on money." That seemed easy enough. That was about six drafts ago. So, now I sit here

*(Continued from page 7)*

he would never have learnt the meaning of faith. Before he can believe, the utterly impossible and ethically irresponsible situation on the waves of the sea must be displayed. The road to faith passes through obedience to the call of Jesus. Unless a definite step is demanded, the call vanishes into thin air, and if men imagine that they can follow Jesus without taking this step, they are deluding themselves like fanatics.

## Money: Drowning or Watering?

wondering why it's so hard to put these thoughts together into some coherent whole.

We all deal with money every day. That familiarity doesn't change the fact that the subject of money is a hard one. Jesus said that it's so hard that if you have too much of it, you are going to have a tough time seeing the need for him.

In the past few months, money has taken a larger prominence in my life. Juanita and I just bought a house with some significant need for repair. I began a new job with the chief responsibility of finding money to ensure that the program can function. We are laying the plans for

adding to our family and I hear that kids cost money. With all of this, I thought I would be familiar enough to easily write an article.

At the core, money leaves me conflicted. I see the great things that can be accomplished when there is enough. But I also see the conflict and misery of hav-

ing too much or too little. It's that whole death and resurrection that we are focusing on. Money is what waters the gardens of our lives but it can also be the flood or the drought that kills everything. With some things, we have an easy choice to simply get it out of our lives if it is killing us. Money isn't one of those.

Listed below are a few goals that I have to maintain that balance between the life-giving and destructive aspects of handling money.

### *Live a life of simplicity and stewardship.*

I think most of us fall into the trap of spending more as we make more. There is always something that we can buy which we think we need or want. Living simply aims to keep costs down by thinking and planning for what it is that we actually need. One person put it this way. "There are two ways to get enough: one way is to continue to accumulate more and more; the other way is to desire less."

### *Share what I have.*

Another goal of living simply is to have money available to share with individuals or our church as a whole. Think about what would

happen if every member of our church family were sharing what they had.

### *Put relationships first.*

It is easy to use money as power. It creates a transaction mentality where the understanding becomes "I'll

do for you if you do for me." We cease to value people and value instead what they can do for us or how they can make us feel better.

### *Seek things that will last, not what will make me feel good for the moment.*

Jesus had some fairly drastic words when he talked about those things that get between

God and us. "If your right eye offends you, gouge it out. If your right hand offends you, cut it off." C.S. Lewis writes of it in the introduction to *The Great Divorce*. "You cannot take all luggage with you on all journeys. On one journey even your right hand and your right eye may be among the things you have to leave behind." Gaining the world and losing your soul is not a very good deal.

Randy Nyce

**O**n Saturday, we celebrated baptism together. Baptism is a community practice that symbolizes death, burial, and resurrection. Through baptism, we remember Jesus' journey and we recognize our own death to sin,

## Life Through Death

our own burial of the old life, and our own resurrection to walk in the newness of life. Our personal salvation is a result of Jesus, the Christ, giving up His life.

**As salvation begins in Jesus, salvation continues in us through an ongoing death, burial, and resurrection process.** As God teaches us, we participate in putting to death habits, thoughts, and ways of living that keep us from fully experiencing God's love and life.

The good news of salvation in Jesus that we believe is not simply a matter of a prayer of conversion. It is an ongoing, daily process of whole life transformation. Individuals who don't participate in this continuing process of transformation grow stagnant, spinning their wheels and going nowhere. Those who heed Jesus' call to carry the cross daily – remembering Jesus death, bur-

ial, and resurrection – have the courage to enter into a powerful metamorphosis. As we walk with Jesus, this cycle of death, burial, and resurrection breathes ever-deepening life into the journey.

**In the same way, our fullness of life as a body of believers must stem from a continual renewal process.** We gain new life collectively through this death, burial, and resurrection. The living body of Christ is adaptive and responsive, putting to death practices, attitudes, and theologies that keep us from fully experiencing of life in Christ.

God continually calls believers to turn away from entangling sin. Knowing that life in Christ is a transformative process, our ministry together should be open to transformation, to always being untangled. We have to listen to God's voice calling us to crucify unhealthy patterns of our life together,

too. Congregations that refuse to admit room for growth deny the life-giving process of Christ, the possibility of metamorphosis in the body. Our community of believers must welcome deaths and resurrections as opportunities for growth.

Last night, I was reminded of the unique ways that God speaks to His people. The prophets of Scripture, God's chosen mouthpiece, never had a majority support. These leaders were met with ridicule, persecution, and even death. Powerful ministries recorded in Scripture did not originate in committee, but rather in community. Believers responded to the work of the Living God in their midst.

In the same way, our incarnational ministry must reflect the whole gospel – preaching good news to

the poor, setting the captives free, and proclaiming the year of our Lord. Jesus began his public ministry declaring that the call of the prophet Isaiah to do just that was fulfilled in him. This is the starting place for our ministry as the body of Christ.

Along the way, we must seek to identify with Christ through death, burial, and resurrection. Collectively, we have to put to death sin, bury our old lives, and rise to walk in the newness of life. Our livelihood together reflects the transformation that Christ is

*1 Corinthians 15:21-7 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.*

working in is individually.

So let us remember the death of Jesus, the ultimate sacrifice given so that we can live. Let us recall the burial of Christ, the finality of forgiveness. And let us celebrate the glorious resurrection of Christ, evidence of new life possible with God. This process of metamorphosis continues to offer vitality and hope to individuals and bodies of believers.

*Alison Handy*

If we would follow Jesus we must take certain definite steps. The first step, which follows the call, cuts the disciple off from his previous existence. The call to follow at once produces a new situation. To stay in the old situation makes discipleship impossible. Levi must leave the receipt of custom and Peter his nets in order to follow Jesus. One would have thought that nothing so drastic was nec-

## **Dietrich Bonhoeffer on New Life From the *Cost of Discipleship***

essary at such an early stage. Could not Jesus have initiated the publican into some new religious experience, and leave them as they were before? He could have done so, had he not been the incarnate Son of God. But since he is the Christ, he must make it clear from the start that his word is not an abstract doctrine, but the re-creation of the whole life of man. The only right and proper way is quite literally to go with Jesus. The call to follow implies that there is only one way of believing on Jesus Christ, and that is by leaving all and going with the incarnate Son of God.

he first step places the disciple in the situation where faith is possible. If he refuses to follow and stays behind, he does not learn how to believe. He who is called must go out of his situation in which he cannot believe, into the situation in which, first and foremost, faith is possible. But this step is not the first stage of a career. Its sole justification is that it brings the disciple into fellowship with Jesus which victorious. So long as Levi sits at the receipt of custom and Peter at his nets, they could both pursue their trade honestly and dutifully, and they might both enjoy religious experiences, old and new. But if they want to believe in God, the only way is to follow his incarnate Son.

Until that day, everything had been different. They could remain in obscurity, pursuing their work as the quiet in the land, observing the law and waiting for the coming of the Messiah. But now he has come, and his call goes forth. Faith can no longer mean sitting still and waiting—they must rise and follow him. The call frees them from all earthly ties, and binds them to Jesus Christ alone. They must burn their boats and plunge into absolute insecurity in order to learn the demand and the gift of Christ. Had Levi stayed at his post, Jesus might have been his present help in trouble, but not the Lord of his whole life. In other words Levi would never have learnt to believe. The new situation must be created, in which it is possible to believe on Jesus as God incarnate; that is the impossible situation in which everything is staked solely on the word of Jesus. Peter had to leave the ship and risk his life on the sea, in order to learn both his own weakness and the almighty power of his Lord. If Peter had not taken the risk,

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Goal Check *Jan-Mar 2002*

**T**his is a regular feature of this publication. We want everyone to have some facts so we can have authentic dialogue! We adopted these goals in October of 2001 and January of 2002. Every quarter we evaluate our progress toward meeting them.

### Network Goals

- **Deepen our skills for growing our cell network and encouraging the process of coming to faith in Jesus Christ.**

*We have had significant Cell Leader Training Times and also trained Prospective Cell Leaders.*

- **Assign Circle Venture to help us share our resources.**

*Our CV Director, Pam Rowen-Herzog, has re-envisioned the day-to-day work of Circle Venture.*

- **Create more mission teams to lead us in particular aspects of ministry.**

*The Orkney House Team formed. The Frederick Douglass Support Team took the first steps and accomplished another project. The Computers Partners Team is still re-forming. A team called The Shalom House Team had a formation meeting. An prospective Arts Show Team held a showing. The Venue Team met and took first steps to forming.*

- **Develop our capabilities for helping new and old believers to mature in Christ.**

*Our classes in Center City on the Art of Christian Meditation and Friendship in Proverbs have been helpful. We have done substantial work on an overall strategy.*

- **Perfect the means we use to grow love and connect our mission as a network of cells and congregations.**

*No significant development.*

- **Increase the activity of our Damascus Road Team in overseeing our structures and training further people.**

*The Team participated in new Humanity Month..*

- **Better organize our people to extend the kingdom by reimagining the communication of our vision for a network of cells and congregations lead by a team of Cell Leader Coordinators and Pastors.**

*Our Cell Leaders have deepened in their understanding and in regularly communicating the life of the network in their cells. We updated our Resource Persons list.*

- **Hold quarterly training times based on an updated version of our "Public Meeting Plan."**

*Devin Greenwood and Rod White have combined to plan two worship team leaders meetings this year. We have long-term plans and a developing website for sharing among the network teams.*

### Congregational Goals

#### Center City

- **Organize a series of events that get us out of our "box."**

*No significant development.*

- **See a visible increase in our diversity through the work of our Damascus Road Team and our united attempts to help everyone bridge barriers.**

*No significant development.*

- **Be ready to move or expand our location by February, when our present lease ends.**

*Paul Kohl and The Next Building Team and the Venue Team have both done a lot of research, but with few results. The Atlantic Conference Bishop has promised help in raising funds for a possible purchase.*

- **Initiate experiments in corporate prayer, and experience the work of gifted intercessors organized for regular prayer.**

*Lent finished well. There has been little further development.*

- **Raise \$120,000 for our Common Fund from October 2001 to September 2002.**

*From October-March we received \$47,969. That's \$12,000 under budget.*

- **Show compassion in Center City in new, practical ways under the leadership of Circle Venture and Circle Counseling.**

*No significant progress.*

- **Improve the tools we use to work together and improve the means we use to tell people about how they can share their time, money and gifts.**

*We created a class on Being and Doing Good Effectively. We helped artists find a viewing. We reformed the Radius as a quarterly "newspaper."*

### Northwest

- **Cultivate relationships with the surrounding community – including the people, schools, businesses, churches and community organizations.**

*The Super Bowl Party helped. The Step Team and other area groups have used the building.*

- **Continue to build a sense of community among the current membership.**

*Ongoing, incremental progress.*

- **Expand the number of covenant members.**

*The New Dimensions members were officially combined with the Circle of Hope members.*

- **Continue to improve the quality of the building. This would include having at least one kitchen operational.**

*Much improvement has been made.*

- **Build an effective ministry to youth and young adult.**

*A Youth Mission Team is in the works. We are getting ready to host the CCDA Youth Convention this summer. Significant contacts have been made through Hope Café.*

- **Increase the level of security during the public meeting.**

*No significant action.*

- **Continue to develop an effective worship time that is rich and dynamic and that allows us to experience God in a deep and meaningful manner.**

*Consistent improvement.*