

# MOVING SPIRIT

devotional newsletter of  
*Village Community Church*

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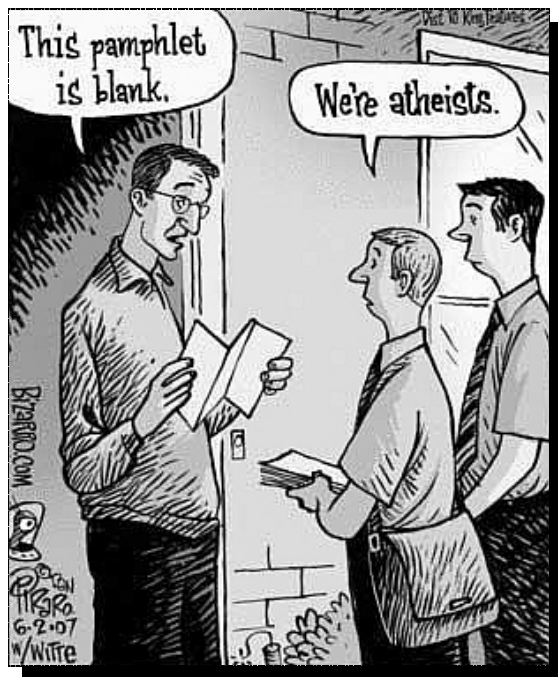
## Pastor's Parcel

There are true *agnostics*, who aren't sure God exists, but few *atheists* who live as if He doesn't. Even an intelligent one like Bertrand Russell was forced to admit, "*Unless you assume a God, the question of life's purpose is meaningless.*"

As an intellectual giant, Russell made a fatal error. Unlike the honest young men in this cartoon, he shared his ideas and thoughts, as if they were significant. Like other humans, he couldn't behave as if life had no *purpose*. He acted as if human virtues, like *love, integrity, honor* and *truth*, did have *meaning*. His actions betrayed his professed faith that no God existed to authorize the value of *virtues*.

Those who deny a God of Love, yet live as if *love* counts, are like those who say God is Love, but live egotistically. Both mock their stated beliefs. Selfish hypocrites ought to repent and practice love. But if all moral atheists got honest, and started living unlovingly, it would be a much uglier world than it is now.

Life can teach atheists that it wasn't



logical arguments but misplaced anger that raised a wall against their loving Creator. That insight can change and move human hearts toward the Kingdom of God. My hope is that everyone lets the *goodness in life* combine with the *Good News of Christ* to show them that the *Author of Goodness* really does exist, and that He really does love them.

– Pastor David Hatton

## Parish Proclamations

Many have enjoyed the messages of John Walters, who has been coming occasionally to VCC to preach over the years. We regret that health issues have prevented him from continuing this ministry. Please, remember him and his family in prayer. Thank you.

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## Personal Pulpit

### **It's Nice to Share**

After visiting his grandfather, who peppers his sentences with salty language, our preschooler came home enthusiastically using his new-found vocabulary. We tried valiantly to discourage it without condemning his grandfather, but had no luck.

Exasperated, I finally told him that those particular words were his grandfather's, not ours, so they should stay there at Grandpa's house. I was pleased with myself at finding a way to separate the profanity from the person, until our young philosopher remembered another lesson: "But, Mommy, you always tell me it's nice to share!"

— *Page Zyromski* from Painesville, OH, in *Christian Reader's* "Lite Fare"

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## Pithy Pieces

### **Tongue Tied**

"The boneless tongue, so small and weak,

can crush and kill," declares the Greek.

"The tongue destroys a greater horde," the Turk asserts, "than does the sword."

The Persian proverb wisely saith,

"A lengthy tongue, an early death."

Or sometimes takes this form instead:

"Don't let your tongue cut off your head."

"The tongue can speak a word whose speed,"

says the Chinese, "outstrips the steed."

While Arab sages this impart:

"The tongue's great storehouse is the heart."

From Hebrew wit the maxim sprung,

"Though feet should slip, ne'er let the tongue."

The sacred writer crowns the whole:

"Who keeps his tongue doth keep his soul." — from *Highways of Happiness*

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## Praise's Portion

### **A Sure Way to a Happy Day**

Happiness is something

we create in our mind.

It's not something you search for

and so seldom find—  
It's just waking up  
and beginning the day  
by counting our blessings  
and kneeling to pray—  
It's giving up thought  
that breed discontent  
And accepting what comes  
as a "gift heaven-sent"—  
It's giving up wishing  
for things we have not  
And making the best of  
whatever we've got—  
It's knowing that life  
is determined for us,  
And pursuing our tasks  
without fret, fume or fuss—  
For it's by completing  
what God gives us to do  
That we find real contentment  
and happiness, too.

— *Helen Steiner Rice*

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## *Prayer's Priority*

### **A Prayer**

Hello, dear Lord, I called tonight  
To talk a little while.  
I need a Friend Who'll listen to  
My anxiousness and trial.

You see, I can't quite make it  
Through a day just on my own...  
I need Your love to guide me,  
So I'll never feel alone.

I want to ask You please to keep  
My family safe and sound.  
Come fill their lives with confidence  
For whatever fate they're bound.

Give me faith, dear God, to face  
Each hour throughout the day;  
And not to worry over things  
I can't change anyway.

I thank you God, for being home  
And listening to my call,  
For giving me such good advice  
When I stumble and I fall.

Your number is the only one  
That answers every time.  
I never get a busy signal,  
Never have to pay a dime.

So thank you, God, for listening  
To my troubles and my sorrow.  
Good night, dear Lord, I love you too,  
And I'll call again tomorrow.

— *Unknown*

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## Perpetual Precepts

### **The Lord Is My Shepherd**

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her class memorize the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. She gave the youngsters a month to learn it. Little Rick was excited about the task, but after much practice, he just couldn't get past the first line.

On the day the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 before the congregation, Ricky was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd. That's all I need to know."

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## Poetry's Place

### **DESIGNERS**

We're designed to be designers  
By the Maker of the skies.  
But to copy nudes and nature,  
Artists often plagiarize.

Praise the Artist of creation,  
When you render earthly art.  
Our designs are mere reflections  
Of the great Designer's heart.

— *David L. Hatton, 12- 27-2011*

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## Pearls of Prudence

When thou prayest, rather let thy heart  
be without words, than thy words  
without a heart. — *John Bunyan*

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Unbelief is the shield of every sin.  
— *William Jenkyn*

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If I speak what is false, I must answer  
for it; if truth, it will answer for me.

— *Thomas Fuller*

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There are no sins God's people are more  
subject to than unbelief and impatience.  
They are ready either to faint through  
unbelief, or to fret through impatience.

— *Thomas Watson*

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## Pleasurable Pastime

### **Say a Prayer**

Little Johnny and his family were  
having Sunday dinner at Grandmother's  
house. Everyone was seated around the  
table as the food was being served.  
When Little Johnny received his plate,  
he started eating right away.

"Johnny! Please wait until we say our  
prayer," said his mother.

"I don't need to," the boy replied.

“Of course, you do,” she insisted.  
“We always pray before meals at our house.”

“That's at our house," he explained.  
“But this is Grandma's house, and she knows how to cook.”

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## *Priceless Prose*

### **Getting into Heaven**

A man died and stood at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter met him, saying, “Here's how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven. You tell me all the good things you've done, and I'll give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you're in.”

“Okay,” the man said, “I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart.”

“Wonderful!” said St. Peter, “That's worth two points!”

“Two points?!” he exclaimed. “Well, I went to church all my life and supported its ministry with my tithe and service.”

“Terrific!" said St. Peter. “That's certainly worth a point.”

“One point!?!” he cried. “Well, how

about that soup kitchen I started in my city, and all that work I did in the shelter for homeless veterans?”

“Both fantastic!” he replied. “Good for another two points.”

“Only good for two points!?!” the man cried out, discouraged. “At this rate the only way I'll get into heaven is by the grace of God.”

“Bingo!” shouted St. Peter. “That's 100 points! Come on in!”

— *anonymous*

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## *Precious Principles*

Most people know the “Serenity Prayer” used by Alcoholics Anonymous. It was actually taken from a longer prayer by the great theologian *Reinhold Niebuhr*. Here is the whole thing:

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;

Courage to change the things I can;

And the wisdom to know the

difference.

Living one day at a time;

Enjoying one moment at a time;

Accepting hardships as the pathway to

peace;

Taking, as He did, this sinful world as

it is, not as I would have it;

Trusting that He will make all things  
right if I surrender to His Will;  
That I may be reasonably happy in this  
life and supremely happy with Him  
Forever in the next. Amen.”

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## *Past Pathways*

### **The Birth of the Song “PRECIOUS LORD”**

Back in 1932, I was 32 years old and a fairly new husband. My wife, Nettie and I were living in a little apartment on Chicago's south side. One hot August afternoon I had to go to St. Louis, where I was to be the featured soloist at a large revival meeting. I didn't want to go.

Nettie was in the last month of pregnancy with our first child. But a lot of people were expecting me in St. Louis. I kissed Nettie good-bye, clattered downstairs to our Model A and, in a fresh Lake Michigan breeze, chugged out of Chicago on Route 66.

However, outside the city, I discovered that in my anxiety at leaving, I had forgotten my music case. I wheeled around and headed back. I found Nettie sleeping peacefully. I hesitated by her bed; something was strongly telling me to stay. But eager to get on my way, and not wanting to disturb Nettie, I shrugged

off the feeling and quietly slipped out of the room with my music.

The next night, in the steaming St. Louis heat, the crowd called on me to sing again and again. When I finally sat down, a messenger boy ran up with a Western Union telegram. I ripped open the envelope. Pasted on the yellow sheet were the words: YOUR WIFE JUST DIED.

People were happily singing and clapping around me, but I could hardly keep from crying out. I rushed to a phone and called home. All I could hear on the other end was “Nettie is dead. Nettie is dead.”

When I got back, I learned that Nettie had given birth to a boy. I swung between grief and joy. Yet that same night, the baby died. I buried Nettie and our little boy together, in the same casket. Then I fell apart.

For days I closeted myself. I felt that God had done me an injustice. I didn't want to serve Him anymore or write Gospel songs. I just wanted to go back to that jazz world I once knew so well. But then, as I hunched alone in that dark apartment those first sad days, I thought back to the afternoon I went to St. Louis. Something kept telling me to stay with Nettie. Was that something God? Oh, if

I had paid more attention to Him that day, I would have stayed and been with Nettie when she died.

From that moment on I vowed to listen more closely to Him. But still I was lost in grief. Everyone was kind to me, especially a friend, Professor Fry, who seemed to know what I needed. On the following Saturday evening he took me up to Malone's Poro College, a neighborhood music school. It was quiet; the late evening sun crept through the curtained windows. I sat down at the piano, and my hands began to browse over the keys. Something happened to me then. I felt at peace. I felt as though I could reach out and touch God. I found myself playing a melody, once into my head they just seemed to fall into place: *Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand, I am tired, I am weak, I am worn. Through the storm, through the night lead me on to the light, take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.*

The Lord gave me these words and melody, He also healed my spirit. I learned that when we are in our deepest grief, when we feel farthest from God, this is when He is closest, and when we are most open to His restoring power.

And so I go on living for God willingly and joyfully, until that day comes when He will take me and gently lead me home. — *Tommy Dorsey*

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## *Present Perplexities*

Some time ago, a young caller to Dr. Laura's radio show was, decrying her domestic situation, when Dr. Laura asked her if she believed in God. The girl gave reasons why she didn't, and Dr. Laura said, "Let me just ask you one thing. Do you believe your life is meaningless?" There was silence. Dr. Laura continued, "Does your life have meaning, or are you just some chemical phenomena? If all you are is some random chemical process, no matter what stage of advancement you may have reached, your whole life doesn't really have any significance. If that's the case, there's not really any point in your calling me with your problems, because it doesn't really matter what happens to you anyway."

This jolted her with logic she'd never considered. By the end of the show, the girl claimed to have had an "epiphany," realizing her error in discounting the reality of God. The radio segment ended with Dr. Laura saying, "Now go out and do the right thing." ☺

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## ***Serving Residents at Eskaton***

Village Community Church offers an opportunity for interdenominational Christian worship under the sponsorship of Faith Legacy Church. We maintain an evangelical spirit focused on the Bible as God's Word. Congregational unity is expressed by our confession of the ancient Apostle Creed or Nicene Creed at our monthly Holy Communion. We hope residents without a church home, or who find travel to their own churches too difficult, will visit our fellowship.

Rev. David Hatton, also an RN, leads

VCC with the help of Rev. Terry A. Brown and Pastor Dawn Valerio, both also bivocational ministers. All three are available for pastoral visits and spiritual counsel by request:

Pastor David's cell phone: 605-9615

David & Rosemary home: 920-5854

Pastor Terry's cell phone: 425-4731

Pastor Dawn's cell phone: 764-2328

Or leave a message for any of them at Faith Legacy Church office, 487-5123.

### **Regular Meetings:**

Worship (Music Room) . . . 10:00 a.m.

Worship (Assisted Living) 11:15 a.m.

Communion . . . 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday each month

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# *Village Community Church*

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c/o Faith Legacy Church  
3532 Whitney Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95821

*Summer – 2012*