

# **JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY**

# **JAC Online**

**Issue 153, October - November 2024**

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**In This Issue**  
**JOURNAL OF AGGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY**

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Editorial Introduction *page 3*  
Major Stephen Court

Sanctification *page 4*  
Shadrach Akhuare

Holy Matrimony *page 6*  
Steve Bussey

The American Christian Divorce *page 8*  
Steve Bussey

Empowered to Link Horizontally and Vertically *page 11*  
Captain Andre Togo

Tips for 'Wanna Be' Evangelists *page 14*  
Major Stephen Court

Transformational Prayer *page 19*  
Major Stephen Court

The Haughtiness of Hell and the Holiness of Heaven *page 20*  
Steve Bussey

## **Editorial Introduction**

By Major Stephen Court, editor

Greetings in Jesus' name. Welcome to JAC 153, the 153rd edition of Journal of Aggressive Christianity. We have another interesting slate for you this season.

First time contributor Soldier Shadrach Akhuare shares the message he preached on the day of his enrollment earlier this year, 'Sanctification'.

Regular contributor Steve Bussey celebrated his 28th anniversary this year. And Bussey has a pair of offerings: Holy Matrimony and On The American Christian Divorce.

Captain Andre Togo teaches how we are Empowered to Link Horizontally and Vertically.

And the editor contributes Tips For 'Wanna-Be' Evangelists (And You Know You 'Wanna Be'!) From Paul, and Transformational Prayer.

And we wrap up JAC153 with Bussey's The haughtiness of hell and the holiness of heaven.

Thanks for giving it a read. Feel free to explore 152 back issues in the archives, free. Share widely. Apply rigorously. Let's all stay as close to Jesus as supernaturally possible.

Courage and Godspeed.

## Sanctification

By Shadrach Akhuare

Sanctification means to be set apart for a holy use; separated unto God and for His purposes. When a man gives his life to Christ, he is owned by God and as such loses every right to exercise his appetite for unholy or anti-godly enterprise. (1 Cor 6:20). He is supposed to choose God's choices and not self-centered or fleshly choices in order to please the Lord who had separated him.

Isa.43.7 Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. (KJV)

Sanctification began in the spirit of everyone who received Jesus, without this no man will be born again. It is once and for all:

1Pet.1.2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through SANCTIFICATION of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (KJV)

As a prove of sanctification by new birth, God put his Holy Spirit in us to separate us from the spirit that controls the children of this world (1 Cor 2:12, Eph 2:2)

However, it is God's desire and will for our soul and body to be sanctified (1Thess.5.23). This is what makes us useful Christians. Romans 12:1-2 warned the believer not to be confirmed to the world, this is because that is how to remain 'separate'. Others may eat food offered to idols but Daniel and his friends won't, others may sleep with their boss wife but Joseph won't, in all, the \*IDEA OF SANCTIFICATION\* is that of separation from the lust of the world.

For this reason we are the temple of God. The more separated we are unto the Lord the more we give Him the chance to find expression through our lives. Paul addressing fornication among the Corinthians said "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 1Cor.6.19 (KJV). A temple or a shrine is wholly separated unto the god or spirit been worshipped in it. Every object in such a temple or shrine is dictated by that god or goddess. In fact, the priest and worshippers of such gods have a way of life traceable to what that god wants. All is to please the god. The body of the believer is likened to a temple and the Spirit that lives in that temple does not want fornication.

### **\*Agent of sanctification\***

1. \*The word of God:\* - John 17:17, Eph 5:26, Psalm 119:11. The word of God is our manual of separation Jesus spends most of his time teaching the people in order to introduce them to a lifestyle that will keep them separate.

2. \*The Holy Spirit:\* The person of the Holy Spirit as the first evidence of our separation governs our lives by teaching, guiding and revealing things to us. John 16:13, 14:26, Romans 8:1-16.

Sanctification is impossible without **\*OBEDIENCE.\*** We must strive to obey God's word and Spirit at only cost. 1 Peter 1:22, 1 Samuel 15:22.

**\*Benefits of sanctification\***

1. **\*Holiness\*** - John 14:30, Heb 12:14: the resultant effect of a separated life is holiness.
2. **\*Power & Authority with God\***- genuine power and authority flows from a life of holiness . Act 10:44.
3. **\*Friendship with the Lord\***- John 14:23
4. **\*Visions & revelation\*** -Daniel 10:11-12, Acts 27:23
5. **\*Secrets to material wealth\*** - Job 1:1,5; Job 29, Daniel and the 3 Hebrews, Joseph in Egypt.

Obedience to the Word and Spirit of God is what brings sanctification to the soul and body of the believer. Wherever holiness is seen, the root cause is sanctification (a life of separation) and holiness is a command for God's people.

**\*1Pet.1.16** For he himself has said, "You must be holy because I am holy." (NLT)\*

## Holy Matrimony

By Steve Bussey

Happy 28th Anniversary to the dearest and most amazing, one and only love of my life, my wife Sharon!

There is a word in biblical Greek called “synezeuxen” - it literally means “to be conjoined” - or joined at the hip; rooted in the word “zeugos” or “yoked together.”

This defines Sharon and I. You cannot understand either one of us without understanding that we were designed to be joined together - in life, in love, in work, in play, in ministry, on mountaintops, in valleys, in parenthood, in laughter, in tears, in sickness, in health, in poverty, in riches, in head, in heart, in hand, in time, in space, for eternity - IN ALL THINGS WE ARE ONE, and it still feel like that isn't even enough!!! Seriously! I can spend all day with her (and I do) and never feel I need to be apart! In fact I keep thinking, “I wish we could spend more time together!”

I cannot explain this mystery (despite my attempts, and I am at this point a professional explainer - as this and many other posts demonstrate!), I can only testify to the reality that we were “made” to be together. Yes, while we “chose” to be together (30 years ago with a promise ring, 29 years ago with an engagement ring, and 28 years ago today with a wedding ring), I can and do covenant and declare in no uncertain terms that we were “made” to be together.

Sharon and I just began to audit a course on “The Bible and Human Sexuality” with Dr. Robert Gagnon, the world's foremost accurate living biblical scholar on the topic - and he has meticulously defended that Jesus' teaching on the entire topic is anchored in Jesus' cosmic, foundational teaching on the exclusive, monogamous relationship anchored in Genesis and firmly established in Mark 10:6-9:

“ 6 But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’ 7 ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, 8 and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

“Synezeuxen.” There it is - “coinjoined” by who? By GOD. This is His creative working - that before Sharon and I were even conceived, we were designed by the eternal craftsman to “fit together as one.”

This does not mean we lack capacity or individuality - but that we are ultimately at our absolute best when together - but not together independent of our Creator and Redeemer - but when that “matrimony” - a word derived from Old French “matremoine,” from Latin “mātrimōnium”<sup>[1]</sup> (“marriage, wedlock”), from māter (“mother”) + -mōnium (“obligation”) is not merely “conjugal” - it is HOLY MATRIMONY!

We were made to be locked together! By the way, that isn't prison - that is freedom! In other words our “oneness” as a couple created to fit perfectly together - is only experienced in its' glorious fullness within the sanctified reality of the “twoness” of

our relationship or togetherness between Creator and what HE has created and joined together!

To be married and be holy means the surrender of “self” - being wholly disposed not to one another - but aimed fully towards the love and glory of God!

Therefore our completeness is not defined foremost by OUR being together but by our being together IN HIM. For our dear friends who are single and not married - this fulfillment is satisfied IN HIM ALONE. So this completeness is found in God’s destiny, His desire for us to experience the fullness of salvation, of complete redemption and restoration in His Holy and fulfilling love.

Let me share why:

From that “active” and “continuous” and absolutely “complete” (100%) aiming of HOLY LOVE to our Creator, Preserver, Governor, and Redeemer - loving HIM with ALL our hearts, minds, souls, and strengths, our love for one another is the OVERFLOW of the self-giving love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit poured into a life filled to the brink with love for one another!!!

That love for one another then pours out from our love to our children, our families, our friends, our colleagues, our neighbors, our enemies, the world!

Therefore, from this “yoking together” comes the fruit of the Holy Spirit - this marriage I have enjoyed the fruit of for 28 years which feels like 28 minutes has been a feast of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control! A feast I have enjoyed so much from Sharon - but one in which I find I so often fall short of, but for the grace of God and the grace of my dear Sharon!

The self-giving love and grace of God has poured into my life through the love and grace of my dear wife - and has, through the years, demonstrated and testified to the truth that I am refined and conformed and healed and made whole more and more into the restored image of God’s holiness through my marriage! The same can be true for those who are single. The same can be true for us all!

It’s impossible to explain this mystery except to say I know it and testify to it because I have experienced this joy unspeakable!

Therefore, may every second of every minute of every hour of every day of every week of every month of every year - what GOD has joined together (synezeuxen) - may nothing “chōrizetō” (separate, vacate, tear apart).

I LOVE YOU SHARON - WHOLLY and HOLY NOW AND FOREVERMORE!!!

## The American Christian Divorce

By Steve Bussey

*(Steve Bussey wrote this comment in response to a September 17, 2024 facebook post by Philip Grant Farthing On The American Christian Divorce...)*

Much of this divide is tethered to the modernist-fundamentalist split - which is actually more a story of German and Dutch thinking with a smattering of English and Scottish thought.

We see it played out in the US because the country is like a megaphone that sadly sometimes exports the worst aspects of its culture. The same can be said of religion.

If you study how the modernist fundamentalist debate of the late 19th and early 20th century gave way to both neo-orthodox and neo-evangelical perspectives, these debates were an extension of that Dutch-German debate - and it was driven largely by reformed thinking.

Wesleyans on the other hand emphasized acts of piety and mercy (for those who were faithful to Wesley) - and we see that idea scaled with the holiness movement's idea of revivalism and reform, distinct attributes of the first and second evangelical awakenings.

Sadly, in the US, the Methodist church's drift and compromise in the area of slavery and the formation of North and South Methodists compromised the integrity of Wesleyan witness. The South drifting into a fundamentalism fused with a pseudo-nationalism that resisted issues of mercy justice, with the North embracing a radical abolitionism and much of the allure of the industrialism and intellectualism that would fuel the gilded age.

Following the Civil War, the Holiness Movement was formed as a "return" to classic Wesleyan ideals and sought to integrate revivalism and reform. The North was quite brutal to the South and did exploit and abuse in many ways - as much in the church as in society. There is a story of Railton going to Texas and trying to heal the wounds and reconcile Wesleyans in 1880 at one of the first Holiness Camp Meetings in Texas!

Timothy Smith's research demonstrates this continuity - but this movement has also struggled.

The emergence of both Pentecostalism and Boston Personalism further tore away at the Wesleyan witness - and by the 1920s the more orthodox progressive social reform collapsed into a secularized socialism and ecumenism that under-emphasized confessionalism for a utopian, post-millennial vision of personal and "social" holiness (not how social holiness was originally understood by Wesley - but now as a pseudo-socialism).

By the 1950s, Pentecostalism gave rise to the charismatic movement. Fundamentalism gave rise to neo-evangelicalism. Modernism gave way to liberalism and neo-orthodoxy. During this time, the Wesleyan confession lost its way. Aspects



were scattered in these various camps. Add the “Red Scare” of the Cold War and the “boom” not only of the American population, but the idea of the teenager, pop culture, etc. - and you have the next major iteration of these ideas.

Enter television’s growing popularity from the 50s to the 70s and these ideas evolve (or devolve) even further. The reforms of the 60s in the areas of race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. revolutionize and further isolate these camps.

By the late 1970s, the social crisis and a strange boom and bust in evangelicalism gives rise to the “moral majority” and Christian right. At the same time you have a crisis around the authority of Scripture, a larger network of believers United through Lausanne, the rise of “process” theology, a new wave of radical theologies such as the death of God movement, etc.

The 1980s sees the introduction of cable television, 24-hour news media, televangelist scandals, HIV, AIDS, global famine, the collapse of communism. The church growth movement gives way to the mega church as “Jesus People” movements of the seventies evolve like the hippies becoming yuppies into “seeker sensitive” monolithic structures. Youth and children’s ministry shifts from catechesis to fun and games.

The 1990s see the emergence of the internet, Gen-X, postmodernity and skepticism to a commercialized church. We witness the end of apartheid and an accelerated “globalization” with the exportation of everything from MTV to Word of Faith prosperity gospel messages being pumped into places like Africa. Multi-national corporations start merging and acquiring things everywhere - including Christian companies from music to Bibles to VeggieTales and commodify these into “big business” - exporting these alongside McDonalds and Nike shoes.

In this era, church “brands” became swallowed up in all of this! Movements like “Promise Keepers” and the Christian Community Development Association were tackling issues around men being positive role models and racial reconciliation and urban ministry being critical areas to focus on. The “Toronto Blessing” and other charismatic revivals in Florida, London and other locations fueled a new wave known as the “new apostolic reformation” championed by people like Peter Wagner, John Wimber, and many others.

Anti-American sentiment grew globally as Russia collapsed and America sold itself as “the victor” - and its’ culture became the mass-exported normative of a globalized world.

9/11 struck fear in the world and the early 2000s saw the rise of social media, where people could find echo chambers of sub-cultures that would fuel their niche perspectives. During this time, we witnessed the most extreme splits fissuring. Groups like the emerging and emergent movements began to “deconstruct” expressions and eventually essentials. The phrase “progressive Christianity” become popular. Cultural studies from German critical theory to French post-structuralists (and post-everything!) have given rise to a collective disdain for “religion” but a celebration of “spirituality.” Spiritual formation and social Justice became alt cultures.

These ideas resonated with millennials and became highly interconnected globally through social outlets. Those “cybercommunities” gave rise to post-geographic movements knitting together by virtual solidarity to the ideas (and ideologies) of their unique point of view. Fueled by the language of justice and the turn inward to what has become known as both “moralistic therapeutic deism” and “expressive individualism,” and then fueled by a form of philanthropy and “justice seeking” from the comfort of your own mobile phone and we had a recipe for revolution of any and every sort!

Shifts in the field of sexuality and a major shift in the media and the business industry demonstrating support for more progressive views further split the church left and right.

By about 2015, we have witnessed a cataclysmic collapse of Christianity - deconstructing and facing one of its greatest crises for several centuries. Many locations - from Europe and the UK to the US to Commonwealth nations like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand - have been abandoning the faith in large droves BUT this has been paralleled by an unbelievable EXPLOSION of Christianity in Africa, South America, Asia and other places.

Due to the cosmopolitan nature of our world and the increased mobility of people worldwide, much of the “majority world” that embraces Christianity is speaking prophetically to a once Christian “minority” world - challenging the compromises on both the left and right.

All that to say... I wonder whether it might be worth us returning to Wesley’s vision of embracing both acts of piety and mercy? Humpty Dumpty has fallen and broken and, while we cannot put him back together again on our own - a return to the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things can make whole that which seems beyond repair.

We are so desperately in need of true revival and true reform. One without the other will not result in a great awakening of our present generation.

## Empowered to Link Horizontally and Vertically

By Captain Andre Togo

Scripture Reading: Colossians 1:16-17 (NIV): *“For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”*

The concept of being “empowered to link” speaks profoundly to the dual aspects of our relationships as believers: the horizontal links we form with each other in community, and the vertical link we maintain with God. Understanding this divine connection is essential to living out our salvation journey, marked by grace, love, and purposeful interaction.

### 1. Horizontal Links: Community in Christ

In the body of Christ, our horizontal connections, relationships we build with fellow believers are foundational to our spiritual growth and the fulfillment of God’s purpose in our lives. These connections go beyond mere social interactions; they represent a vital, dynamic partnership in the mission of Christ.

Our horizontal links function as a support system within the Christian community. Paul emphasizes the necessity of these relationships throughout his letters. In Galatians 6:2, he instructs believers to *“carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.”* This call to actively share in one another’s struggles underscores the essence of community: we are not meant to walk the journey of faith alone. The act of bearing burdens, be they emotional, spiritual, or physical, reflects the compassion and love that Christ demonstrated during His earthly ministry. Additionally, Romans 12:15 exhorts us to *“rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”* This verse illustrates the dual aspect of connection, celebrating victories and providing comfort in times of trial. These acts of sharing joy and sorrow create a tapestry of human experience where we deeply feel the highs and lows of life together. Such connections cultivate empathy, allowing us to experience Christ’s love through our interactions.

### Mutual Support and Accountability

As members of one body, we are called to support and hold one another accountable in our spiritual journeys. This accountability is not about judgment or condemnation; rather, it reflects a shared commitment to pursue holiness and godliness. In Hebrews 10:24-25, we are encouraged to *“consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.”* Here, we see that accountability thrives in community, where believers inspire each other to stay the course in their faith. This form of mutual edification is essential for spiritual development. We all have moments of doubt, weariness, and temptation, and having fellow believers to uplift us and remind us of God’s truths can be crucial. When we surround ourselves with a community of faith, we equip ourselves with reminders that we are not alone, and that God’s grace is sufficient for our weaknesses.

In our fast-paced and often challenging world, encouragement is a powerful tool of connection. Proverbs 27:17 says, *“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”* Engagement in each other’s lives through words of affirmation, acts of kindness, or simply being present can literally sharpen and refine our character. When we encourage one another, we ignite hope and strengthen resolve, allowing fellow believers to continue pressing on in their faith.

Moreover, shared mission is an incredible motivator within community. When we come together, unified in a common purpose whether it’s mission work, community service, or church activities our collective energy amplifies our impact. The early church exemplified this unity, as described in Acts 2:42-47, where the believers devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer, resulting in powerful testimonies of divine provision and growth.

### **Recognizing inherent value and God-given roles**

Empowered to link horizontally is about recognizing the inherent value that each person brings to our community. Every believer possesses unique gifts, talents, and insights that benefit the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). By creating an environment where each individual feels valued and essential, we create space for people to operate within their purpose. Understanding that we all play a role in the Church’s mission whether as teachers, encouragers, servants, or administrators invites us to embrace our positions while uplifting others in theirs. This collaborative spirit is essential for unity in diversity, allowing us to appreciate differences that enrich our community. Every interaction we have with fellow believers is an opportunity to manifest God’s love, grace, and unity. Ephesians 4:3 calls us to make *“every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”* In practical terms, this means we approach one another with grace, open communication, and resolve conflicts with a heart for reconciliation.

As we engage in relationships filled with love and truth, we mirror Christ’s beauty and presence in our community. The way we treat one another can serve as a living testimony of His love to a world that desperately needs hope and healing. When others see our genuine care and commitment to one another, they are drawn to the source of that love: Jesus Christ.

## **2. Vertical Links: Connection with God**

Our vertical connection with God serves as the bedrock of our empowered lives. In the Gospel of John, Jesus illustrates this relationship in John 15:5, stating, *“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me, you can do nothing.”* This profound metaphor underscores the necessity of maintaining an intimate relationship with Christ, which is cultivated through prayer, worship, and the study of His Word.

Salvation initiates a direct communion with God, transcending our earthly limitations and linking us to the divine source of life. This communion is not merely a religious obligation but a transformative experience that empowers us to live out our faith authentically. As we engage with God through prayer and worship, we deepen our understanding of His grace and love, which in turn influences how we perceive ourselves and others. This vertical relationship is foundational; it shapes our identity

and motivates us to reflect Christ's love in all our interactions. The grace that brings salvation is also the grace that empowers us to live godly lives. As highlighted in Titus 2:11-14, this grace instructs us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, enabling us to lead self-controlled, upright lives while awaiting Christ's return. The transformative power of God's grace is evident in personal testimonies where individuals testify to a marked change in their thoughts, behaviours, and aspirations since embracing faith. This ongoing transformation is a testament to how deeply our vertical relationship with God can influence every aspect of our lives.

The vertical relationship with God inevitably affects our horizontal relationships and our interactions with others. As we experience God's steadfast love and faithfulness, we are compelled to extend that same grace to those around us. This principle echoes throughout Scripture; for instance, Paul encourages believers in Philippians 2 to embody humility and consider others more significant than themselves. The vertical connection not only nourishes our spiritual lives but also cultivates a community characterized by love, compassion, and reconciliation. Our salvation is not just a momentary experience but an ongoing journey of transformation and empowerment. When we embrace the truth of our salvation, it ignites a passion within us to link both horizontally and vertically. The transcendent nature of our relationship with Christ provides us a new perspective on our lives and interactions. In recognizing that we are saved by grace and adopted into the family of God, we become vessels of that grace to others. This realization compels us to extend love, forgiveness, and kindness across our horizontal connections while depending on the strength and guidance of our vertical link with God.

The challenge for many believers is to engage effectively in both dimensions. Sometimes, our horizontal interactions can experience strain, which can tempt us to withdraw from our vertical relationship with God. Conversely, an isolated vertical focus can lead to neglecting the community God has placed us in. It is essential to nurture both links harmoniously.

Acts 2:42-47 provides a beautiful picture of the early church engaging in both: they broke bread together, prayed, and were in awe of God's power all while enjoying the favour of the people. This dual empowerment led to growth in numbers and deepened faith.

### **Prayer**

Gracious Father, thank You for empowering us to link horizontally with our brothers and sisters in Christ and vertically with You. Help us to nurture both relationships with reverence and love. May our connections reflect Your character, drawing others to You and strengthening the body of believers. Help us to embrace our salvation as a transformative journey that influences every aspect of our lives. Amen.

### **Action Step**

Consider what steps you can take this week to strengthen both your horizontal and vertical links. Perhaps plan a time of fellowship with fellow believers or dedicate time to deepen your personal relationship with God through prayer or Scripture study. Reflect on the significance of both connections and how they shape your life of faith and community.

## Tips for 'Wanna Be' Evangelists

By Major Stephen Court

Most people (who do things like this) would put the apostle Paul high up on a list of all-time evangelists (not that there is anything wrong like that). He gives us a glimpse into his motivation and approach to evangelizing in 1 Corinthians 9. As our text, we are offering an alternative rendering (complete with notes of Greek definitions) to highlight Paul's perspective on evangelizing here in hopes of revelation and expectation of edification.

1 Corinthians 9:16-27.

Verse 16

16 Yet when I evangelise I cannot boast, for I am compelled to do it. I'd be miserable if I didn't proclaim God's good news.

*Notes: euangelisomai = announce good news (evangelise... proclaim God's good news); kauchema – Strong's – boast, glory, matter or ground of glorying (boast); epikeitai = lie on, rest upon; + ananke = necessity = (compelled); oai = alas! Woe! (I'd be miserable- as Phillips)*

sec- So, a few things: Christians are compelled to evangelise. I heard my comrade opine that since Christians evangelise, if you aren't evangelizing...

(this is where some readers respond, 'ouch', and get down on their knees in repentance);

You can't boast about evangelizing, any more than attending the holiness meeting Sunday morning, or reading the Bible every morning before you head to work, or praying through your intercession list before breakfast, or meeting weekly with that younger Christian you are discipling. It's all a part of what William Booth called 'Salvation Life' (we're bringing that term back; stay tuned for a book title some time in the next decade or two, probably [just need to pray it up, recruit a co-author, write it...]).

I guess a related observation is that you can't boast about those other things, either (your worship, prayer, Bible reading, Bible memorization, fasting, etc.).

What compels us? Not the rules, not the obligations nor expectations. The love of Christ compels us. At least, that's the point.

And if we're not evangelizing it is because we're not compelled to evangelise. And if we're not compelled to evangelise, it is because the love of Christ is not compelling us. And, is it fair to continue (?), that if the love of Christ is not compelling us, then there is some disconnect between the love of Christ and us. And, that gets us back to my comrade's opinion (above), and if you aren't evangelizing, you aren't a Christian...

(too harsh? Read on)

Paul admits he'd be miserable if he didn't evangelise.

Can you empathise?

What makes you miserable? (if anything) Is it when you don't get your way, when the weather turns against you, when you are inconvenienced by traffic delays, when your team loses the big game?

Paul's miserable when he doesn't evangelise. (actually, we shouldn't slime him. He doesn't say that. He guesses **CONDITIONALLY** that he **WOULD** be miserable if he didn't evangelise. I infer from this that he **DID** evangelise consistently, faithfully, boldly, compellingly and so wasn't miserable, at least from not evangelizing [he did get shipwrecked, beaten arrested, flogged, and heaps of other inconveniences that might have brought on symptoms of misery)

Verse17

17 If I choose to practise this vocation, I get wages; but it isn't a matter of choice, it's a stewardship entrusted to me. 18 So what's in it for me? I get excited about propagating God's good news for free, not demanding privileges.

*Notes: prasso = to do, practise; Strong's – accomplish, perform (practise); ekon = of one's own free will, voluntary (choose); misthon = wages, hire (wages); akon = unwilling (isn't a matter of choice- Phillips); oikonomian = stewardship, administration (stewardship); pepisteumai = believe, trust; Vine's – be persuaded of, place confidence in (entrusted to)*

*misthos = wages, hire (in it for me); euangelizomenos = announce good news (propagating God's good news); theso = place, play, set (propagating); adapanon = without expense (for free); katachresasthai = make full use of, overuse; Vine's - abuse (demanding); exousia = power to act, authority, privilege (privileges)*

sec- Evangelising is a stewardship entrusted to us. That explanation raises the stakes considerably for many, we expect. And Paul gets exciting about evangelizing for free. (Now, there are some readers – officers - whose vocation is to 'live to win souls' and 'make their salvation the first purpose of my life'; and you, technically, aren't doing it for free. And since that vocation seems to be 24/7, you will have difficulty empathizing with Paul in getting excited about evangelizing for free [to clarify, you [we] can get excited about evangelizing, just not evangelizing for free]. This is an advantage soldiers have over soldiers who are officers – they can get excited to evangelise for free!)

Verse19

19 Although I am no one's slave, I make myself everyone's slave so that I can see more people saved, and into a fuller salvation.

*Notes: eleutheros = free (no one's slave); edoulosa = to enslave, bring under subjection; Vine's – bring under bondage (make myself... slave); kerdeso = to gain; Vine's - win (see... saved); pleion = more in quantity, number, or quality; Vine's – excel, more excellent (more people... fuller salvation)*

sec- Of course, this is the opposite approach to the world, in which people typically insist on their rights and push their way to accomplish their purposes and look out first (and often exclusively) to their own interests. Paul subjugates all of that – all of

him (reminiscent of his testimony in Galatians 2:20 of being crucified with Christ!) – so that he can see to other people’s deepest needs, salvation and full salvation (if you’re newer to the salvos, ‘full salvation’ is one of the nicknames that we give to the experience of holiness)

(speaking of holiness nicknames, one of them is ‘perfect love’ as used by John. In 1 John 4, he teaches that perfect love drives out fear. We can substitute out the nickname and say that holiness drives out fear. And if fear is driven out, then we’re fearless. Look what we just did! ‘Made up a new holiness nickname – fearless!’

Caveat: it can be operationalized incorrectly so just be sure that fear is being driven out by Jesus and it doesn’t become a factor of braggadocio or stupid stubbornness)

This is a possible resolution for any who are late to the new year’s party: “More people saved, and into a fuller salvation.”.

Verse20

20 To the religious, I behave like a religious person in order to win religious folk.

For those who subject themselves to strict rules and religious law I subject myself to strict rules and religious law (though I am not bound by them) so as to win those who subject themselves to strict rules and religious laws.

*Notes: kerdeso = to gain; Vine’s - win (win)*

sec- we riff on ‘win’ in the intro to GO FOR SOULS: A guide for the Salvationists soul-winner, so we won’t go into it too much here, except to note that Paul is indicating that he wins souls (yes, only Jesus saves, we get it; we’re just quoting Paul).

So, how does this look for us today? There are a few kinds of religious folk who need to get saved in my sphere these days: Muslims, Jews, and ‘Christians’ (I used quotation marks because real Christians don’t need to be saved, but these folk are caught up in the religiosity of certain Christian rules and traditions and lack a relationship with Jesus). Paul doesn’t blow up their worldview.

That’s what some of us (including me) might be inclined to do – let’s show them liberty in Jesus! (I’m not saying that is always wrong; just noting that it wasn’t Paul’s approach). Instead, Paul showed respect for their devotion by matching it. Maybe in doing that, it was easier for them to see the difference in Paul’s life that Holy Spirit made from their status quo?)

Verse21

21 Among those outside the framework of religious law I put myself in the position of someone outside the framework of religious law, (although I remain submissive to Christ’s law) in order to win those outside the framework of religious law.

*Notes: anomois = lawless (outside the framework of religious law); ennomos = legal, subject to (submissive to); kerdano = gain; Vine’s – win (win)*



sec- How do you pull off v21 at the same time as v20 without being spiritual schizophrenic at best and hypocritical at worst? We're guessing that these might have been seasons of life for Paul. When in v20 context, he acted v20. When in v21, he v21'd.

#### Verse 22

22 With the fragile I share their fragility to win the fragile.

I have, in short,  
become all things  
to all people so that  
by all means I may  
save each one.

*Notes: asthenesin = without strength, weak (fragile - synonym); kerdeso = to gain; Vine's - to win (win); pasin = all, every (all); panta = all, every (all); pantos = altogether, by all means (by all means); sozo = save (save); tinas = certain one, someone, anyone (each one)*

sec- The first bit with 'the fragile' suggests Paul's compassionate empathy. Good example. And good correction for those who read Paul in general and Paul in this evangelist passage as merely a hardcore, Bible-thumping, offensive rabble-rouser.

And then the 'money' quote. We alluded to Paul's testimony in Galatians 2:20 above, and it is probably worth looking at the whole verse here: I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ live in me. The life I live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself to me.

This might explain the challenges we addressed in #5 and #6. It is CHRIST doing it all. If we are crucified then we are totally available for Jesus to do whatever He wants in and through us.

#### Verse 23

23 I do it all for the sake of God's good news and for the rush we share in evangelizing.

*Notes: euaneglion – good news (God's good news); sunkoinonos = partaking jointly of, co-participant (rush we share)*

sec- The 'rush' is normally Holy Spirit, as promised in a few places in Acts when we confront the enemy in battle conditions. And Holy Spirit 'rush' should be high on the list (below 'the sake of God's good news', Christ 'compulsion', love for lost people...) of motivating factors.

#### Verse 24

24 Now, you see that in a race everyone runs but only one wins. Race to win.

25 All contenders exert power over their faculties focussed on taking the crown – one that lasts until next season - but we do it for a victory never outdone, never out of date.

*Notes: eido = see (see); trechontes = to run (run); stadio = stadium, certain measure of distance; Strong's – space or distance of about 600 feet (race); lambanei = take, receive; Vine's – accept; +brabeion = prize, award = (win); katalabete = lay hold of, seize, take eagerly; Vine's – to appropriate (race to win)*

*agonizomenos = contend for a prize, struggle; Vine's - fight (contenders); enkrateuetai = exercise self-control, self-restraint; Vine's – to have power over oneself (exert power over their faculties); labosin = take, receive (take); phtharton = perishable, corruptible (lasts until next season); stephanon = that which surrounds, chaplet, crown (crown); aphtharton = undecaying, imperishable (never outdone, never out of date)*

sec- Ah, the competitive juices of some readers starts to run in these verses. Our brief highlight here? 'We do it for a victory never outdone, never out of date.' Hallelujahweh!

Verse 26

26 My runs aren't wandering afternoon strolls.

My boxing isn't about giving the air a thrashing.

27 With head shots and body blows, I torture and discipline myself so that having recruited all these others into God's good news race, I won't be rejected.

*Notes: trecho (run); outos = in this way, thus; +adelos = uncertainly = (aren't wandering afternoon strolls); pukteuo = to box (boxing); deron = to skin, thrash (thrashing)*

*upopiazō = strike under the eye (head shots); soma = body (body blows... body); doulagogo = enslave (torture and discipline); keruxas = be a herald, proclaim (recruited); adokimos = not standing the test, rejected (rejected)*

sec- Ah, Paul rips it all down from the clouds to the daily, the practical. This is the behind-the-scenes preparation for the fight. How does it look?

Well, if you are all fasted up (living a fasted lifestyle, engaged in regular fasting), then you are ready to confront the enemy and don't have to beg off to go and get ready.

If you are consistent with your rations, spending time with Jesus every day, then you are typically armed and ready for conflicts that fill your day.

If you are experiencing the 'fuller salvation' ('fearless', holiness) Paul is aiming for up above, then you lack the chinks in your armour that will expose you when attacked.

If you are engaged in the other spiritual disciplines and means of grace, you will be ready.

Last takeaway? Paul has 'recruited all these others into God's good news race'... That will be a wonderful report for each of us to be able to give. God grant it.

## **Transformational Prayer**

By Major Stephen Court

We have been crucified with Christ; and we no longer live, but Christ lives in us; and the life people see us living we live by faith in Your Son, who loved us and gave Himself for us (Galatians 2:20). Now we who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the natural inclination to sin with all of its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24). We don't want to boast in anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, on which the world has been crucified to us, and we to the world (Galatians 6:14).

For God, You said, "Light shall shine out of darkness." You are the One who shines in our hearts, illuminating in us the knowledge of Your glory in the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6). We lack no gift (1 Corinthians 1:7). Blessed be You, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for You have blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Love is the gait with which we walk, the same love-gait Jesus popularized and actualized on His trek to the Cross that created such an offering and sacrifice to You, such a fragrant aroma (Ephesians 5:2).

Christ in us, the hope of glory! We spread the amazing news of the riches of the glory of this mystery among everyone who will listen (Colossians 1:27). We fight the good fight of faith. We grasp hold of the eternal life to which You have called us (1 Timothy 6:12). You have saved us and called us with a holy calling, not because of the great things we have done, but according to Your own purpose and grace granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity (2 Timothy 1:9). For God, You so loved the world, that You gave Your only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16).

## The Haughtiness of Hell and the Holiness of Heaven

By Steve Bussey

Hubris is defined as "overconfident pride combined with arrogance." It is a vice that blinds an individual from basic common sense. Sadly, we are living in a world today that promotes this idea as a virtue and we can see this subtly making its way into the church.

In the kingdom of God, hubris is a deadly and unholy characteristic that has dramatic temporal and eternal consequences.

Samuel Logan Brengle warned us in "Holiness and humility":

"The sinful heart apologizes for itself, excuses inbred sin, favors it, argues for it. A man who still has the carnal mind says, 'I think one ought to have a little pride. I would not give a snap of my finger for a man who had not some temper. A man who will not stand up for his rights is weak.' And so he excuses, and argues in favor of, the sin in his own heart.

Not so the man who is holy. He remembers his former pride, and loathes himself for it, and longs and prays to sink deeper and deeper into the infinite ocean of his Saviour's humility, until every trace and stain of pride are forever washed away."

So let's take a quick dive into some proverbial wisdom from the Old Testament and a word of warning from Paul in the early church.

Proverbs 16:18 reminds us, "pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." The word "pride" in Hebrew is "ga'own" meaning "arrogance, pomp, a swelling of majesty." "Sheber" means "brokenness or destruction." It is used by the prophets to link the pride that led to the destruction of Jerusalem.

In other words, those who are filled with hubris will be so blinded by their own self-delusion that they will lead those under their care into utter destruction. You can see why Scripture warns against this deadly vice!

Proverbs 16:18 goes on to use the term "gobah" or "haughtiness." The word literally means "height" - thinking you are a head above the rest! Remember Saul - and the external qualities that Samuel the judge looked at (and judged incorrectly, mind you!). Saul was literally "a head taller than everyone else" (1 Samuel 9:2) - and yet his physical height was nothing compared to his psychological height - a haughtiness that was covering up deep, carnal insecurities that would lead to short (pun intended!)-term success and long-term destruction. Why? Because his ego was big but his heart was small. He trusted in his height over trusting the Lord in his heart!

Jeremiah (48:29-30) used this term to refer to Moab, who God declared was full of themselves:

"We have heard of Moab's pride-  
how great is her arrogance!-  
of her insolence, her pride, her conceit  
and the haughtiness of her heart.  
I know her insolence but it is futile,"  
declares the Lord,

“and her boasts accomplish nothing.

Proverbs 16:18 combines this idea of "height" (gobah) with "spirit" - the word "rū·aḥ" - which is the word used to describe the breath or spirit God breathed into the dust to create human beings - His "moral image" (Genesis 2:7). So when we are filled with a "haughty spirit" there is no room for the Holy Spirit in our hearts. This means that the Spirit cannot bear witness with our spirit that we are children of God when hubris is rooted in our hearts (Romans 8:16). So a spirit filled with hubris suffocates spiritual life in a person, hubris asphyxiates holiness of heart and life. It degenerates that which God wants to regenerate.

Proverbs 8:13 reminds us that, "to fear the LORD is to hate evil; [God] hate[s] pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech"

Paul also addresses this deadly sin when he speaks to the church at Corinth and suggests that they have drifted into significant error (and thus deep division threatening to destroy the gospel witness in their community) which applies the intellectual manipulation of the wisdom of the world and the political manipulation of power for one's own carnal objectives.

I pray that God might deliver the church today from this age-old tactic of the enemy. May God sanctify us and lead us towards the foolish, weak, and insignificance of the cross that we may boast not in ourselves but in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Reflect on the words of wise counsel 1 Corinthians 1:18-30 which identifies the bankruptcy of hubris existing in the hearts of believers:

18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,

23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.

27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;

28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,

29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Brengle offers this wise counsel on the marks of a truly humble person:

1. A truly humble soul does not take offense easily, but is 'pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.' (James 3:17)

2. He is not jealous of his position and dignity, or quick to resent what seems to touch them. Before the disciples were sanctified, they found a man who was casting out devils in the name of Jesus, and they took offense because he did not follow them; and forbade him. Self is very sensitive. 'But Jesus said, Forbid him not.' (Mark 9:39)

3. A truly humble person does not seek great things for himself, but agrees with Solomon when he says, 'Better it is to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.' (Prov. 16:19.)

He rejoices in lowly service, and is more anxious to be faithful to duty and loyal to principle than to be renowned among men. The disciples were often disputing among themselves which should be the greatest, but Jesus washed their feet as an object lesson, and commanded them to become servants of one another, if they would be great.

4. Humble people are modest in dress. They think more of 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit' than of the clothes they wear. They will endeavor always to be clean and neat, but never fine and showy.

5. They are also plain and simple in speech. They seek to speak the truth with clearness and accuracy and in the power of the Holy Spirit, but never with 'great swelling words' and bombast, or with forced tears and pathos that will arouse admiration for themselves.

They never try to show off. To them, it is painful to have people say, 'You are clever,' 'That was a fine speech.' But they are full of humble, thankful joy when they learn that through their word some sinful soul was saved, some erring one corrected, or some tempted one delivered.

They speak not to please men, but their Heavenly Master; not to be applauded, but to feed hungry hearts; not to be admired of men, but to be approved of God.

And, on the other hand, their humility keeps them from criticizing and judging those who have not these marks of humility. They pray for such people, and leave all judgment to God, who in His own time will try every man's work by fire (1 Cor. 3:13)."

Let's turn away from the haughtiness of hell and aim for the holiness of heaven!