

Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for he is beautiful, and a song of praise is fitting.

Ps. 147:1 ESV

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

Greetings on this lovely Lord's Day here in Illinois where from my sunroom I'm watching fall turn into winter. As I write, leaves are swirling and dancing in the air like butterflies as they descend to a frosty earth. How quickly this year has gone by, filled with lots of good things and, hopefully, much accomplished. Sadly for me, however, I had to take a "fast" from writing newsletters in 2007 in order to finish a book, and very soon now the manuscript will be turned over to my publisher. Some of you have feared your names were dropped from the mailing list, but, no. Apart from computer glitches, they are there and hopefully in the year of our Lord, 2008, there will be the time and strength to write to you of the many things that weigh on my mind and heart to share with you.

How I wish all of you who so desired could have been with us in the Wheaton PCM this past June! The testimonies of healings and even full conversions are still coming in. There were 800 of us in attendance, and it seems that almost all have a wonderful story to tell of how God met them in their hunger or in their brokenness, in such very special ways. And to all of you who wrote, know that I have read your glowing accounts, and only wish it were possible to adequately respond to all your letters and cards.

One of the things that God always does in our PCMs is restore to the needy and the penitent the knowledge of the Holy, and with that, all that is transcendent and that completes us. It is a remarkable thing to watch, as I do, from the front of a large auditorium, and see broken and needy ones begin, if ever so slowly at first, to *hope*—then as the power to repent and obey is set in, begin to receive from the God of their salvation.

During this past conference, the Lord moved more strongly than ever, it seems to me, to open the eyes of all present there to His *beauty*: that of Father, Son and Holy Spirit—three Persons yet one. This knowledge can only come with true worship, with *adoration*. Many folk come to PCMs because they cannot find such worship in their home churches, try as they may. Beauty, transcendence in the midst of the dread darkness in our culture is what Christians hunger for, and yearn to reclaim.

Created in the image of God, we arrive in this world with an inborn hunger for the transcendent, even for heaven. Something in us is born *knowing*. In such a time as this, when the Western world finds itself in the horrors of a spiritual and moral freefall, many come out of this culture to our conferences trapped in the ugliest of sinful compulsions, having forgotten this inborn holy craving. And it is in the presence of the Holy One, the very coming into sacred space filled with true worship, that these dread bonds begin to break and fall away from them. The true self that yearns for the good, the beautiful, the true, and the noble then begins its heroic journey up and out the false self, with its layers and layers of sordid behavior, and breaks through into God's light with His pathway in sight. Again, it is no small thing to have the privilege, year after year, of seeing this miracle of redemption occur.

Jubilation, singing to God a new song in worship, plays a large part in these miracles. And never has the music been more blessed than in this last PCM. Most of the letters flooding in exult in joy over the music that led the way into what was for many their first taste of the transcendent, the holy, all the glory that a worshiping people bring down upon themselves. A year or more before, I had asked Doug Carrington to put together a list of some of the greatest hymns and anthems of all time, and he in effect compiled a PCM hymnal. He put an enormous amount of research and work into this as he searched out some of the greatest with John Fawcett leading at the piano, and John Cannon playing the organ, gave to our people the classic music that adores and exalts the Lord. It was stunning. Paula Faub, one of the musicians, described it this way:

I have never experienced worship in such a way, although my heart has craved true worship as if I have been starving and thirsty. I have seen glimpses, but this was new for me. The holiness of God descended upon us. We ascended into heavenly worship of our Holy God. I will never be the same. I was changed in the presence of a Holy God.

The worship was like the heavens came down to meet us, and we ascended to the heavens. ...We were worshiping alongside the saints from generations past; they joined us in chorus in praise of our Almighty God. There was a great fullness of sound and of Spirit. His Holiness and His anointing were strong upon us. Sometimes at the end of a worship set all 800 of us were motionless, just perfectly still, in awe, receiving in response—no sound, no attempt to move. Long periods of silence. I feel like we have seen the Lord pass by. He is here, and we cannot take in His glory in the physical. It is too much.

Another thing that came forward in a brief, albeit special way was teaching on the Person and the work of the Holy Spirit. The modern church's appalling neglect and lack of knowledge of the Third Person of the Godhead has long been a grief and an amazement to me. I asked the church gathered

there to give Him His rightful place and to shed any false theological notions they may have had concerning Him. I wanted to stress that He is not an "It," and that we should not behave as though He were almost the member of the Holy Trinity we are not to talk about or adore! None say this better than Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, and so I quoted from his book *Of Water and the Spirit*.¹

Theology defines the Holy Spirit as the Third Person of the Trinity; in the creed we confess Him as proceeding from the Father; from the Gospel we learn that He is sent by Christ to be the Comforter, to "guide us into all truth" (John 16:13) and to unite us with Christ and the Father. We begin each liturgical service with a prayer to the Holy Spirit, invoking Him as "the Heavenly King, the the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who is everywhere and fills all things, the Treasury of Blessings and the Giver of life."...Truly the Holy Spirit is at the very heart of Divine Revelation and of Christian life. Yet in speaking of Him, it is extremely difficult to find proper words—so difficult indeed that for many Christians the church's teaching about Him as *person* has lost all concrete, existential significance, and they see Him as divine power, not as *He* or *Thou*, but rather as a divine *It*. Even theology, while maintaining of course the classical doctrine of the Three Divine Persons when speaking of God, prefers—when dealing with the church and Christian life—to speak of *grace* and not of *personal* knowledge and experience of the Holy Spirit.

This word of truth went over the people like a divine benediction, wave after wave, and gave the Holy Spirit all the more freedom to move and the Lord Christ freedom to heal His people.

Esther Daflucas, who has for many years served on the PCM team and teaches a workshop on the healing of lesbian neuroses, wrote:

Every PCM is a taste of heaven to me as we gather together from various denominations and many countries to worship the Lord, but this past PCM held an even deeper and more profound focus on both the holiness of God and the unique work of the Holy Spirit. In deeply reverent worship which focused on the holiness and wonder of who God is, we were helped to look straight up to the throne, and to consistently take in the love, glory and beauty that is always shining down to us.

¹ Alexander Schmemmann, *Of Water and the Spirit* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), p. 104.

And according to your letters, many of you are passing this glory on, the faith in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that changes individual lives, and thereby impacts and changes nations as well. May we be His lamps, shining with the glory of heaven, glowing with His light, toward the end of being the light in the quickly falling darkness of the world in which we live.

We wish for you the most blessed Advent and Christmas season and in Him a glorious entrance into the new year of 2008.

Next year's PCM is scheduled for June 15-20. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Under the mercy,

Leanne Payne

LETTERS TELL THE STORY

We received so many wonderful letters from those who attended this PCM, telling of God's gracious work of healing, delivering, strengthening, and illumining minds and souls. We wish we could share them all, but that, of course, is not possible. May these few bless and encourage you.

SENSE OF BEING HEALING

I am a totally new person! ... I was so utterly empty and dead inside. I had absolutely no sense of being. ... I have felt extreme rejection from both parents. ... All I remember was being left home alone. No meals, no dialogue, no relationships with either parent or siblings, no clean clothes or baths, no touching, no reading. I lived my life inside my head. I was a lost child. ...

In sixth grade I went and bought my own [Christmas] gifts and wrapped them up and put them under the tree. ... One was a white bathrobe with little orange striped flowers on it.

Anyway since two years ago, God has set all my relationships in order! ... Most of the codependency is gone from my marriage. ... I love myself. I love my life. I love my God! I am at the beginning of a totally new life. ... Every morning I go to Jesus, and He fills my cup with Living Water. (I get all my needs for life, affirmation, approval, love, acceptance, sense of being from one Source!) This is what PCM has done for me! I no longer have to worry about me. I can now focus on bringing love and life to others who are empty, lost, lonely, dead, suicidal, broken, invisible. Thanks be to God for His amazing Word, His unfailing love, the mystery that He is!

FROM DOUBT AND PRIDE TO WORKING WITH GOD

This was my first PCM.... I was apprehensive and not a little skeptical. ...[There has been little] to differentiate my life before accepting Christ from my life after. Certainly nothing I could not easily explain away by other means. I was despairing of ever connecting with God and beginning to wonder why I wanted to in the first place. I was jealous of others' experiences and...relationship with God.

Monday of PCM fit my expectations. ... I watched others, including my wife, having direct experiences with the Lord, but I was apparently unworthy. I settled into anger at God ... and went to bed planning how I would get home, leaving my wife our car. After a sleepless night, I resolved to give it one more day. I went to the lectures seething with anger at God for His rejection of me. The morning sessions brought awareness of that anger. In the afternoon Ita Fischer put it all together for me. "Anger at God comes from pride," she said. Of course it does, I realized.

The scales fell off. ... I immediately confessed my pride to the Lord, repented, and asked for His healing. No drama—but my anger drained away.

Through the rest of the meetings I did not begrudge anyone their healings though I had no more. ... Either I did not need those healings, or the time was not right for me. I was able to worship, learn, and rejoice in the experiences of others.

My anger at God is gone. It will not be back. My pride is not gone, but it has been named, confessed, and repented. It will be going soon. I have claimed the promise of wholeness and accepted my role and the work I must do to rebuild the temple of the Lord and work out my salvation. I begin to understand what it is to be a child of the Most High. PCM has been the catalyst. Praise the Father! Praise the Son! Praise the Holy Spirit!

LEARNING TO PRACTICE GOD'S PRESENCE

I want to rejoice with you for the Lord's special visitation during this conference and for my restoration. The resymbolization of my heart has come about in a most beautiful way. I had renounced my Catholic heritage unwisely and have been alienated from that symbolic wealth for many years. In praying with the prayer ministers for a symbolic view of my true center, I "saw" the Sacred Heart of Jesus move from before my eyes into my chest. It grew, beating strong and true, larger and larger, stronger and stronger, until I began to wonder if I would burst with the Presence. At the exhortation of the ministers, I began to breathe in deeply and was filled with joy and confidence that Another truly lives in me. I now have a true center wherein lives the very heart of my Savior, my Lord and my God, my very life.

Thank you so very, very much for listening to God and loving Him and me so much that you are teaching me to listen too.

HEALING OF SENSE OF BEING AND WELL-BEING

Praise the Lord! I feel that I go home a new creation. ...The prayers for a sense of being and wellbeing were what helped me most. Christ lives in me. I know this. I have been a Christian a long time, but my ability to live from my center [in God] was absent. Somehow my soul got it this time.

Maybe it is too overwhelming a thought—that the Creator of the universe, the Holy Creator God, would be willing to live in me, an imperfect being. My head knows this, but my heart could not fully accept it. The Lord has filled me with Himself where my own substance was lacking. I am already experiencing the difference. Thank you all of you....

If God's will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven, prayer begins with adoration.
P. T. Forsyth

Te Deum Laudamus¹

*You are God; we praise you;
You are the Lord; we acclaim you;
You are the eternal Father:
All creation worships you.
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise;*

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.***

*The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you;*

***Father, of majesty unbounded,
your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.***

*You Christ, are the king of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.
When you became man to set us free
you did not shun the Virgin's womb.
You overcame the sting of death
And opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
You are seated at God's right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come and be our judge.*

***Come then, Lord, and help your people, bought with
the price of your own blood, and bring us with your
saints to glory everlasting.***

¹ Phyllis Tickle, *The Night Offices* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Tickle Incorporated. Used with permission.

O God, Almighty Father

*O God Almighty Father,
Creator of all things,
The Heavens stand in wonder,
While earth Thy glory sings.
O most Holy Trinity,
Undivided Unity;
Holy God, Mighty God,
God Immortal, be adored.*

*O Jesus, Word Incarnate,
Redeemer most adored,
All Glory, praise and honor,
Be Thine, our Sovereign Lord.
O most Holy Trinity,
Undivided Unity;
Holy God, Mighty God,
God Immortal, be adored.*

*O God, the Holy Spirit,
Who lives within our souls,
Send forth Thy light and lead us
To our eternal goal.
O most Holy Trinity,
Undivided Unity;
Holy God, Mighty God,
God Immortal, be adored.*