



NORFOLK ECCLESIAL NEWSLETTER

<http://www.Christadelphians.net>

newsletter@Christadelphians.net

August 2003

TFTW - Suffering, I Know Why

Bro. Kyle Tucker / Late Bro. Gary Burns

16 June 2003

Dear Friends:

A little over two weeks ago, I received a letter attachment in an e-mail written by my brother in Christ, Gary Burns, entitled "Suffering, I Know Why."

What Gary wrote moved me to go see him May 31 and record on video for posterity an elaboration of his thoughts. At the end of this Thought For the Week are details of how you can obtain a copy of this video if you are interested. When I saw Gary, his mind was as sharp as ever, but it apparent that the leukemia he had been battling for several years had nearly run its course. My friend Gary died yesterday, June 14, and awaits the resurrection at the Last Day. He was 56 years old. He leaves his wife Lindsay and his two daughters Ashley and Lauren. May God comfort them in their time of need.

What follows is Gary's paper - "Suffering, I Know Why."

Beloved brothers and sisters,

Loving greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You're probably thinking, the title to this letter sounds presumptuous, so let me rephrase it: I know the why of my suffering.

I could never understand the why of the trials and suffering of others, but I can empathize with them.

You often hear people say "why did this happen to such a good brother or sister? They were pillars of their ecclesias. I just don't understand why God would take them from us in their prime?"

The attitude of Job was "I've done everything required and then some. Why should I suffer like this? I have served God and suddenly I've lost every thing. And now I've lost my health."

We've all heard or said, "He didn't

deserve that. That's not fair."

We all know that scripture tells us that we must suffer for Christ, and life just isn't fair. Our reward will be the Kingdom. No explanation needed there. We accept this on the intellectual level and move on.

Why me?

God and His Son loved me enough to make me suffer.

I now know (on the experience level) that God loves me and counts me one of his servants worthy of a fellowship of suffering. I hope and pray that this does not sound egotistical, or that I have ascended to some higher and loftier spiritual plane above others. It certainly doesn't mean "once saved always saved." It just means that one person's faith has grown.

I now understand what Paul means by "we preach Christ crucified. . . Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. I understand "the old man is crucified with him." I understand now "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." I understand now by experience the suffering and faith of those worthies mentioned in

Hebrews 11. The suffering and self-sacrifice of our Lord and the apostles is a reality for me.

The Atonement

When our Lord was crucified, the Atonement was demonstrated. He lived to do his Father's will. He was perfectly obedient and crucified the flesh daily. The cross was the crowning demonstration of the Atonement.

For the generations of those who couldn't witness that glorious 3 1/2 years of our Lord and his sacrificial death, God graciously provided us the New Testament.

Shut-Ins

Our shut-ins appreciate being remembered with calls or cards.

Please call before visiting.

Sis. Alice &
Sis. Marjorie Stephens
1019 Granby Street
Norfolk, VA 23504
622-4478

Sis. Catharine Printz
C/O Mrs. B Barham Jr.
19227 Farm Rd.
Smithfield, VA 23430
357-9376

Exhort/ Preside

3rd Murray / Tony Giordano
10th Allen Laben / Tim Lange
17th Tim / Murray Midgett
24th Jason / Mark Giordano
31st Mark / Roger Lange
Sept. 7th Michael / Tony

Bible Class

6th Murray Midgett
13th Mark Giordano
20th Jason Larsen
27th Jesse Midgett
3rd Tony Giordano

Lawn Maintenance

2nd Tim / Pharaoh
9th Tom / Jason
16th Jason / Tom (?)
25th Jesse / Murray
30th Murray / Jesse (?)
Sept. 6th Tim / Jacob

Ecclesial Events and Announcements

August CYC: Contact Nathan & Antonia about when and where for this month. (963-7502)

Happy Birthday this month to Suquoia Mosby (13th) and Audrey Belangia (16th) !

August 23rd: 10:00 am at Mark & Jean Giordano's home. Sunday School meeting for all who are currently teaching in the Junior Sunday School, and for any who might be interested in helping in any way in the '03-'04 year. This would include anyone interested in putting together a Children's Program at some point in the year. Parents are welcome to attend and ask questions or make suggestions. Coffee will be served!



On Sunday, July 6th, at 7:00 PM a group of about 30 Christadelphians (mostly from the Williamsburg & Norfolk ecclesias) left on an hour and a half tour. We cruised out Powhatan Creek and onto the River, watched the sun set over the James and watched for eagles. There was narration, plenty to look at and a lot of time for visiting. Many thanks to Allen and Tara for coordinating such a fun trip!

Pictures of the event can be seen at: <http://www.christadelphians.net/jac.htm>

(continued from front)

The Christadelphian community as a whole has strayed from the principle of the Atonement. I'm not saying that there is complete failure, or that there are not individuals who practice the principles of the Atonement. What I am saying is that as a community we have failed.

We have spent endless hours formulating statements of faith, explanations of statements of faith, explanations of explanations, position statements, highly detailed expositions and policies. We have had bitter divisions in the body, which did not glorify God, nor did they honor the principles of the Atonement.

Let me say here that a statement of faith is important, that expositions are important, that agreement on these principles is important. What I am saying is that all sides have been wrong in all of these controversies. Granted, somebody is ultimately "right," but it is God who should have been shown to be right. When did that ever happen?

This contemporary example should suffice to illustrate what I mean by living the Atonement.

A sister, some years ago, donated a kidney to her brother, whose kidneys had

failed. His transplanted kidney began to falter recently and he needed another transplant. This time his son donated his kidney to save his father. This is an example of living the Atonement. The son honored both his natural and his Heavenly Father. The son was probably not able to give any detailed exposition of the Atonement – he lived it.

I now know the why for me. He loves me enough to make me suffer so that my faith may grow toward the end that I will be in His Kingdom This has given me a "peace that passes all understanding,"

I can whole-heartedly thank him for His love and grace toward me. No matter the outcome I am at peace.

Suffering is about self-sacrifice, "crucifying the flesh." It is about giving of time, money, our talents and personal resources until it becomes a true self-sacrifice.

This isn't about me. It's all about God. So, I am at perfect peace with whatever comes.

With peace love and grace to you all,
Gary

(I received a copy of the video which will be donated to the ecclesial library in the event that people want to borrow it. Or you may obtain your own copy by going to www.wcfoundation.org. Once there, go to the "Inquire Further" page. When you are on the Inquire Further page, fill out the form and check the section marked "Other" and request the Gary Burns video in the field provided. –M.P.)

"Our life is like a written book
Each day begins a page
On which we write from day to day
Our life at every stage.
Once written it must e'er remain
For we can ne'er erase
One jot from off each page of life
Nor e'en one word replace.
So let us work with all our might
As day by day goes past
To make each page and thus each day
Much better than the last!

(poem taken from Bro. Tony's Sunday School class; author "unknown".)