

The High Calling

A Monthly Journal of the Francis Asbury Society

From the President's Desk

“God is a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference nowhere.”

This famous saying, attributed to several different authors, on one level serves

to remind us of God's immanence—He is everywhere; He is always present.

There is, however, a deeper interpretation of this saying from classical literature. In *Vita Nuova*, Dante tells of a very disturbing dream. God comes to him weeping and says, “My son, it is time to end our fabrications ... I am like the center of a circle to which all the points of the circumference bear the same relation; you, however, are not.” *

In other words, God says, “Dante, you are not in the center of love with me; you are on the circumference. You have gone astray from the right, from my will, and from the center of my love.”

As disturbing as a dream like this must be, it may be a moment of grace, a wake-up call. It was for Dante. Notice that God comes weeping to Dante: He loves us enough to come to us, to seek us fervently and find us wherever we are on the circumference.

This year, let us make time for him to come. Hopefully and prayerfully your New Year will be fruitful and will find you in the center of His will.

God bless you,

Paul Blair

*Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, trans. D. Cervigni and E. Vasta, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 6–65.

Living Holiness
your fulfilled calling

Titus Discipleship Summit
April 19–21, 2012

www.tituswomensministry.org

Ministry Center

—October 20th marked our one-year anniversary in the Ministry Center, a year full of new and exciting opportunities for FAS.

—Dr. John Oswalt just wrapped up his study of Genesis 25–50. Around 50 people from Wilmore and the surrounding community gathered on Monday nights through the fall semester to dig into God's Word. Titus Women met Tuesday nights for a study on Hebrews entitled *Drawing Near*. Around 12 women have been regularly meeting for these Tuesday night studies. The *Dennis F. Kinlaw Symposium for Theological Dialogue* has convened three times with great success. Video coverage of the two most recent symposiums can be accessed via our website (www.francisasburysociety.com).

—Throughout the week, various Asbury Theological Seminary and Asbury University students have also met at FAS for prayer and discipleship. One seminary class entitled, “Life of Prayer,” chose to make the peaceful setting of the Ministry Center their permanent meeting place for the semester.

—The *Fall Renewal Conference* is the latest major event to take place in the Ministry Center. We also held another *Christmas Open House* due to the success of this event last year and were pleased again with the connections we were able to make within our community.

Publishing

—Warner Press has released two new titles under the Francis Asbury Press imprint. The two titles are companion volumes designed as resources for Sunday Schools, Bible studies, discipleship groups, or similar settings.

The first is a redesigned edition of Harold Burgess' *The Framework of our Faith*, with the added subtitle *A Disciple's Guide to the Apostles' Creed*. The second title is an all-new book called *The Prayer of Holiness-Hungry People: A Disciple's Guide to the Lord's Prayer* by Barry Callen. These two books meet a pervasive need for solid, holiness-centered educational material, and we are pleased to announce their release. These and many more holiness-centered resources are available on our website.

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News and Notes

“There appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him”(see Luke 1:8–17).

All At Once

by Paul Vincent

1 Zechariah, we are told, was *on duty*. Unless our lives are to become a loose series of random actions and chance events, we must cultivate a moral seriousness and normalize that sense of urgency into dutiful routine. The dangers of the life of moral striving, even the life of *imitatio christi*, are apparent enough. What we do in our own strength alone may steady our resolve and lead to some self-reform, but it cannot cleanse the heart. F. G. Peabody (*Jesus Christ and Christian Character*) once said that “a theory of morals is like a house by the wayside, where one may rest securely for a night, but which is not the journey’s end.” An ardent, moral life may lead to a false assurance. We know what we should do, we do it, then rest in our own success.

While appeal to conscience may lead directly to a spiritual life, it seldom does. But a saving knowledge of the Father through the Son in the Spirit will surely result in an awakened heart and the obligations entailed by love. In the nineteenth century, F. H. Bradley (and others) spoke helpfully of “my station and its duties” as a way to break free from the gravitational pull of dull, dumb, brute instinct. The person starts where the beast ends. Indeed, in every workday we become acquainted with a deep sense of obligation to God and the moral order he has established. But however necessary, however well and good, however meet, right, and our bounden duty, the moral life is not the ultimate category of existence. The shepherds were dutifully watching their flocks outside the village of Bethlehem, but the movement of the grazing sheep was only one reason (and not the most significant) for their being on that hillside.

2 Then again, Zechariah was chosen by *lot*. Recently a very fine historian and sociologist has written of cultures which see in *chance* “a source of knowledge and a portal of possibility.” This scholar sees Protestant America as providing support for the whole success of casinos and lotteries: “The notion of grace as a kind of spiritual luck, a free gift from God, lies at the heart of gambling’s larger cultural significance.” This is astonishingly far from the Biblical concept of the lot. Remembering the Urim and the Thummin, we have to think that a sovereign God was behind the puzzling tradition of the lot. The whole notion that the priest must adapt and comply with this mysterious instruction became for the Aaronic priesthood an institutional practice and an enduring habit of the human will. On one level, the lot was a revelation of the will of God; on another level, it was (or seemed) simply a procedure for ordering of the daily schedule. In either case, the outcome was an opportunity for obedience and service; we understand Zechariah’s submission as an act of faith. God can make all things new. He can transfigure and renew our whole nature when we honor His will. And He can

make every new day and every unexpected, seemingly fortuitous happening an opening in the hard wall of fate—another occasion for divine blessing. E. M. Pusey put it well: “God makes every common thing serve, if

thou wilt, to enlarge that capacity of bliss in His love. Not a prayer, not an act of faithfulness in your [our] calling, not a self-denying act, or kind word or deed, done out of love for himself; not an act of study done purely for his love; not a weariness or painfulness endured patiently; not a duty performed; not a temptation resisted; but it enlarges the whole soul for the endless capacity of the love of God, and of God” (*University Sermons*). If we must “hope in the Lord” and “die in the Lord,” surely we must live in Him and for Him who makes all things work together for His glory and our good.

3 But “*there appeared to him an angel of the Lord.*” We can prepare ourselves for *duty*; we may even go into training. We can prepare ourselves for chance by coming to “expect the unexpected.” But the supernatural angel is something else entirely. Zechariah is terrified. We’re not ready for lower-case letters to become capitals. We expect someone to step in from another room; we do not expect a visitor from the capacious “room” of heaven. When we know that we are hearing the voice of God, His words displace all the babble in the wires of an information-oriented society, all marketing ploys of retail stores with their frenzied advertizing hype, all the gassy clamor in the lecture-rooms of the secular academy, all the hedonistic uproar of a sensate culture. Even if the immediate voice is familiar, the message cannot be explained in terms of its earthly origin. In his *University Sermons*, Canon Henry Parry Liddon puts it clearly: “If God has spoken to us through human souls and in human language, it is when he has assured us independently that while the instrument was human, the truth which it conveyed was divine.” When we hear His voice, perhaps in the most unlikely of places, we sense the self-evidence of the Maker of all things in His unmistakable Presence.

An angel awaited Zechariah at the right side of the altar of incense with a promise of “joy and gladness” (Luke 1:14). Gabriel came as the forerunner of the forerunner. Zechariah hesitated, but already the Good News was sweeping back in retroactive power and rushing forward to a manger in Bethlehem. Zechariah did not fail to obey; while the assembly of people prayed, he offered incense in the sanctuary of the Lord. But Zechariah failed *to believe and to receive*.

Think of this. When spring comes, we are ready to welcome the first flowers and the gentle rains and the warm afternoons, but we never quite expect the winter to lift and leave so decisively. We don’t expect bright life to arrive so dramatically, inaugurate her seasonal sway so early in every bulb and bud, every limb and leaf, every bramble and breeze, every sprig and sprout. We watch in wonder at the rain-spatter on the sidewalk and sunlit patches on the sill. But, of course, we don’t have to prepare for spring; if we open our hearts when it comes, April will flow right in.



Kinlaw's Corner

Excerpts of classic sermons by
FAS Founder, Dennis Kinlaw

I had a dear friend whose father had recently died. When I called him, I realized very quickly that he was really shattered to lose his father. As we talked, he said “I have been a Christian for a long time, but I want to confess something to you.

All my life I have lived in terror of God.” He continued, “About three months ago I had an unbelievable experience of joy. I had never had an experience like that before,” and he said, “I wish I could live the last decade of my life in the joy of the Lord.” He had spent his entire life in mortal terror of God, but now the terror was gone.

The apostle John writes, in I John 4:18, “Perfect love casts out fear.” For years, I didn’t know what to do with that. But do you know what I think that passage means? Perfect love takes out of your heart the fear of God. And do you know what I think is the supreme mark of the fallenness of man? We are terrified, and terrified of Him in whom we ought to find our greatest joy and our deepest confidence.

I urge you to read the Psalms with that in mind. You will find that God was the psalmist’s security. God was his joy, his delight. Now, I think God wants to bring us to the place where we know something of how to delight in the Lord.

Delight is a word used many times in the Old Testament in reference to God. After all, if He is our bridegroom and we are His bride, is not *delight* an appropriate word for our relationship to God? We take joy in Him as a bride in her bridegroom!

The astounding thing is that if this is true, then it must be true that He gets joy out of us when we trust Him. But I can’t imagine Him getting real joy if we are terrified of Him. You see, we have got to get to the place where we not only want His will and choose it, but where we say, with the many who have received His perfect love, “I delight to do Thy will, O God.”

Back in July, I wrote of the Francis Asbury Society’s status in regard to our response to increasing globalization. Since then, our vision has begun to come to fruition in some very tangible ways, and I would like to share with you a very exciting one of these ways.

In October, Dr. J.B. Crouse and I met Dr. John Hong in Seoul, South Korea. I had the opportunity to deliver the Charles and Lettie Cowman Distinguished Lecture Series at Seoul Theological University. Dr. Hong interpreted my lectures, which were entitled *Reflections on the Inner Life of God: The Resurrection of the Body as the Kerygmatic Rule for Faith and Practice*. We also preached in several Korean churches and participated in the World Federation of Holiness Churches convention. Additionally, Dr. Crouse delivered a chapel address at Seoul Theological University, and I was privileged to lecture at Hyupsung University, a 5,000-student school in the Methodist tradition.

During our stay, Dr. Hong arranged a meeting with key strategic theologians and pastors from the Evangelical Holiness churches in the greater Seoul region to prayerfully discuss the possibility of opening a chapter of the Francis Asbury Society in South Korea. The leaders engaged in a time of reflection, prayer, and sharing and determined to elect a steering committee to initiate a chapter of the Society in South Korea, the first of what we pray will be several international chapters of FAS.

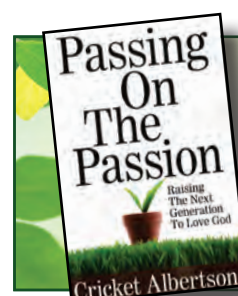
Strategic discussions will continue to take place with the steering committee and with the FAS board of directors as to how

South Korea Report by Ron Smith

best to proceed to the future in order to fully establish a vibrant fellowship among our Korean sisters and brothers. The Francis Asbury Society expresses its thanks to Drs. Crouse and Hong for facilitating these meetings.

In November, back home in Wilmore, several Korean graduate students from Asbury Theological Seminary met with Drs. Hong, Crouse, and myself to have a Thanksgiving dinner at the Smith home, celebrating the new horizons for FAS in South Korea and all God has done and will do through the fellowship with our Korean family of Christians.

The three of us will return to Seoul in January to participate in wider meetings that have been scheduled with 100 key Korean pastors for more vision casting, prayer, and worship. Please join us in prayer for these exciting days as our Korean friends explore and expand their relationship to the Francis Asbury Society in order that we may continue to join as a people, in the words of Bishop Asbury, “wholly devoted to God.”



Just released!
Passing on the Passion
by Cricket Albertson
\$10.00 each

News and Notes continued ...

Titus Women

—On September 29 through October 1 in Grove City, Ohio, Titus Women had the privilege to be a part of Come to the Fire, a national women’s conference. Approximately 2,400 women registered from 35 states and 50 denominations. Beth Coppedge co-led training for 100 altar workers and was the keynote speaker. Cricket Albertson gave her testimony. Titus Women also had a resource table that was well visited.

—Titus Women have also recently published two new books: *A Lydia Leader’s Guide*, written with Lydia Prayer coordinator, Patsy Lewis, and *A Boy’s Guide to Prayer*, written by Cricket Albertson. Cricket has also written *Passing on the Passion*, published by Come to the Fire.

—God continues to open doors for Titus Women to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Stephanie Hogan spoke at a women’s breakfast in Sharptown, New Jersey and then traveled with Vicki New to Port Huron, Michigan, where they both spoke to 150 women at a Lydia Prayer conference. Beth Coppedge and Cricket Albertson, along with Al Coppedge, spoke at a retreat in Sidell, Illinois.

Evangelism

—Ron Smith, Executive Director of FAS, has had many opportunities to travel and share the message of full salvation

in churches, camp meetings, and retreats, including a trip to Korea (see “South Korea Report,” page 3). Please earnestly pray for Ron and his family as he gives his time and energy to evangelism and development in the winter and spring months. He has two international trips planned in January; he travels to South Africa January 2–12 and to Seoul, Korea, January 22–29.

Staff

—Katie Diddle is now serving as FAS Treasurer. Debby Marchál has joined the administrative office staff. Dr. Paul Vincent (Professor of English, Asbury University) has taken on the role of Director of Publishing.

The High Calling—January 2012

The High Calling is a monthly journal published by the Francis Asbury Society to serve as a link between FAS and its constituents, building loyalty and awareness so that the teaching and experience of Christian holiness may continue to be lived and proclaimed throughout the world.

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