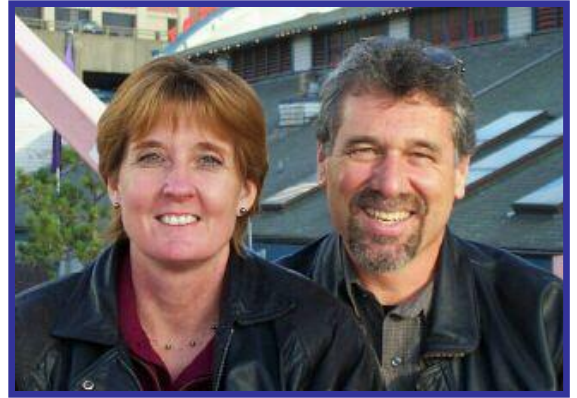


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"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened." (Matthew 27:50,51)

For years, when I read this passage, I would think of the veil being torn from top to bottom to allow us to enter into the Holy of Holies by the death of Christ - and it is a legitimate application since we now have free access to the very presence of God by the blood sacrifice of His Son. But God delights, I believe, in exploding our stale doctrines, grown tasteless and powerless after so much time stored away in a box labeled: "Stuff I Already Know". Yesterday, my box of stale doctrine was opened with a swift jerk to the fresh air of the Spirit's abounding and limitless creative mind.

"The veil of the temple wasn't torn to let us in," Cheryl exclaimed as we were sitting on our bed reading, "it was torn to let God out!" It was a moment of revelation. I could see the heart of God, the longing of God to be with us and envelop us in His life and love. When Mary broke the alabaster box and poured it on the head of Jesus, the costly fragrance was released and filled the room. There is a power and life which can only be released by death. By the death of His Son, God was released to manifest Himself, to dwell in us by His Spirit and not consume us because of the fire of His holiness. That judgment was poured out upon His Son. With His sacrifice, God is now released from behind the veil to inhabit us, bringing life to the dead, light into darkness and power into weakness. It isn't that *we* become life, light or power. *He is* life, light and power and *He* has been released to live in us. It has taken place because the veil was torn.

Paul wrote: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken, struck down, but not destroyed - always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:7-11). God's purpose is always to bring us to life. However, that life He will give us is His eternal kind of life; it is *His* life. His crushing, His breaking, His crucifying of us (and it does involve who *we are* - we are *not* good and He cares *nothing* about our *self-image*) is to bring us into the life *of* Jesus. God has been released by the death of His Son to inhabit us and to manifest to us His life, light and power in our body. That is why we are "delivered to death". God's love for us goes beyond all our stale doctrines and powerless speeches. "The kingdom of God is not in word but in power" (1 Corinthians 4:20; also 2:2-5). This power of God, the life and love of God, has come into the world. He has been released into our midst and He is *real*.



One of the reasons for this letter coming to you so soon after my last letter has to do with the storm "Agatha". You have probably seen in the news the reports of terrible damage and loss of life because of the prolonged rains our whole region has experienced. For over a week, the rain fell unabated, saturating the ground, causing mud slides, washing away roads and destroying crops. There were many people who lost their lives, especially in Guatemala, and thousands have been left homeless. In our area, there has been less of an impact, although dozens of families from a refugee camp close by needed to be moved to safety. What the

rains did reveal to us is how inadequate our facilities are to meet together as a church.

Last Sunday, we actually had to cancel the services. I arrived at the property before 7:00 am to find that a part of the dirt retaining wall (a 10-foot wide section) had broken loose and slide down and that the ground was so saturated with water we could not put down folding chairs. Our tarp is OK to keep the sun off, but it provides little protection against the driving rain. Here in tropical El Salvador, usually one wakes up to clear skies, even in the rainy season, allowing us to hold outdoor services. But, after a week of rain and with rain continuing to fall heavily last Sunday, it was necessary to call off the services.



We are now building draining ditches to handle the runoff. About one-third is done. We hope to finish it up within a month. We need to get a roof up as soon as possible. It certainly brings the reality of our situation before the congregation and (I hope) we all have been motivated to humble ourselves before God and pray.

I wanted to write and let you all know we are fine. The members of the church and the general population here in Santa Ana have not suffered devastating destruction or loss of life. Thank you for your concern for us. I do ask you to pray that we will follow God's leading to supply

an adequate place for our congregation to meet. Rains are forecast again for this weekend. We are hearing predictions that this is to be a very wet year with many storms. The needs we have go way beyond our ability to supply. We look to God.

Thank you for your prayers for us. We are

Yours for Souls,

Harold & Cheryl

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