

## Frederick K. Hennecke

On February 2, 2011, Fred Hennecke died at the age of 89. We note this here, not only because he is my father-in-law, but also because of his contribution to this publication. For several years he proofread the paper before going to press. He is survived by his wife, Virginia; two daughters, Connie Diestelkamp and Ardis Howell; two sons, Karl and Matt; ten grandchildren, and 23 great-grandchildren.  
~Al Diestelkamp



April-May-June, 2011 • Volume 42, Number 2

# Desperately Seeking Comfort on Earth

By AL DIESTELKAMP

I suppose it's only human nature to seek comfort in this life, and I reckon there's nothing inherently wrong with doing so, as long as it is not attained by ignoring more important priorities. However, when our own comfort and contentment is based on our earthly surroundings, we risk making choices that result in ignoring the greater good.

No doubt, our culture encourages us to surround ourselves with every imaginable comfort and convenience. One who will "pull down his barns and build greater" so that later he can "take ease; eat, drink, and be merry," is considered a huge success, regardless of Jesus' warning (see Lk. 12:16-21).

One does not have to be super rich to fall prey to the inordinate desire for comfort in this life. Easy credit has allowed us to enjoy many comforts and conveniences we can't otherwise afford. In order to meet our obligation to pay for these luxuries we may find ourselves having to pass up opportunities to do good for the Lord and others.

The obsession for comfort and convenience is not limited to the "things" we can buy. It can be seen in many other choices we make in life.

### Where to Worship

If you're fortunate enough to live in an area where there are a number of sound congregations of the Lord within reasonable distance, a decision must be made regarding with which one you will work. How do you base that decision? Too many, I fear, base their decision on where they will "feel most comfortable." Making comfort the criteria causes some to avoid struggling congregations that could really use some help. You may be turned off by any number of factors: i.e., if they don't have a "full-time" preacher; if they are meeting in an out-dated building or a rented facility; if they can't af-



**WARNING:** This article may cause discomfort or irritation to some readers.

ford expensive Bible class materials (maybe they could with your help); if there aren't enough children the ages of your children; and the list goes on.

Instead of choosing where to worship based on self-gratification, why not make that choice based on where you can do the most good. To adapt a famous quote from President John F. Kennedy's inaugural address, "Ask not what a congregation can do for you; ask what you can do for a congregation."

I'm quite certain that some who read this will claim they choose more established congregations over struggling ones because they are thinking of their children's spiritual welfare. Actually, I believe children who grow up in congregations where they see their parents having to be a vital part of the work do better spiritually than children in congregations where their parents can coast along with the crowd. Then when the children grow up and become Christians they will be prepared to *serve*, rather than to constantly *be served*.

### Where to Preach

Preachers are not exempt from the temptation to seek maximum comfort. However, what preacher has not read the Spirit-inspired admonition to be willing to "endure afflictions" (2 Tim. 4:5) in his work as an evangelist? Of course, we are not to seek afflictions, but neither are we to completely avoid them.

There are some preachers who apparently think it is too much to ask of them to work with congregations without elders. No doubt, working with qualified elders is a blessing, and should be more "comfortable"

for the preacher, but if they have truly qualified elders they don't need a preacher as much as congregations without elders. To make that a litmus test in determining where to work might be a bit self-serving.

Then there are preachers who won't consider suffering the indignity of having to beg for support from other congregations, and refuse to go where the local congregation cannot provide adequate support. Older preachers, who because of their experience and influence could easily raise needed support, often leave that task to young men who have great difficulty in doing so.

The inordinate desire for comfort may also explain why preachers flock to places where the climate is pleasant, leaving other brethren out in the cold to fend for themselves.

### Retirement

Most people look forward to a time in life when they can leave the work force and enjoy retirement. A faithful Christian, who is so blessed is afforded a unique opportunity to be of service in a place where the need is great. There are many struggling churches that could benefit greatly from the addition of a mature man and his wife. However, if comfort in this life is the *primary* goal, the retiree is likely to squander that opportunity.

Paul, the apostle, after many years of faithful service amid much discomfort did not consider himself "to have apprehended," (Phil. 3:13-14). Even in his declaration that he had "fought the good fight" and "finished the race" (2 Tim. 4:7) you get the impression from later remarks that he still had work to do for the Lord.

I'm not suggesting that we purposely seek to bring discomfort into our lives. However, I *am* suggesting that in considering our options we make our own personal "comfort" a lower priority than the good we can accomplish. Our "comfort" is being prepared by our Lord (Jn. 14:1-4).

# A LIVING HOPE

By RAY FERRIS

In 1 Peter 1:3 we read of a hope that lives for the faithful child of God. In the old KJV it is called a lively hope, and in later versions it is referred to as a living hope. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...”

Perhaps we should note that the word *hope* is one that many use carelessly. People use it to express desire for anything that would be a pleasant experience. It is never used that way in scripture. The correct meaning of the word is: “1. a feeling that what is wanted will happen; desire accompanied by anticipation or expectation. 2. the object of this.” That defines the word as a noun. As a transitive verb the meaning is: “to expect, look for.” Webster suggests one check for synonyms under “expect.” When we do so we find these words: expect, hope, and await. All of these stress the idea of confidence in what is desired.

Let me illustrate the very epitome of hope with a biblical text that does not even use the word. Read Colossians 3:1-4. Did you notice the words *seek* and *set* (or *fix*) in those verses? Now think about the overall context (back to 2:10-13). Dead people are alive again, and are forgiven. Baptism is paralleled with circumcision, but one that is without hands. Old Testament circumcision indicated a Jew was part of the covenant. As a result of baptism into Christ (Gal. 3:27), into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:3), and into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) we are part of the adopted family of God. When we have been “buried with him in baptism,” we are “risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Now, in our text (Col. 3:1-4) we read, “If ye then be risen with Christ,” here is what you can expect, anticipate, await and hope for: “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”

But why would Peter speak of this hope as something that is lively, or living? I believe three primary reasons can be seen: *First*, it is living because it is actively involved in the lives and efforts of Christians. In 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 we read about how love acts in one’s life. Do you remember how the chapter ends? “And now abideth faith, hope, charity (love), these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” Why is it the greatest? because it never fails (ends), extending into eternity. We will no longer have to walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), nor will we have to hope because we will have seen what we had hoped for. “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” (Rom. 8:24-25). Thus, the reason for our hope is because it is an active (living) involvement in our pursuit of eternal life with God.

*Second*, it is a living hope because it must be alive in order to act. What is dead is not able to engage in action. Peter challenges us to act: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15). That is impossible if hope is dead! In Hebrews 6:10-12 the writer mentions the diligence of his readers that God would not forget. Then he says, “And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful (lazy, sluggish), but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” That hope is illustrated in the life of Abraham, who “after he had patiently endured, obtained the promise” (vs.15). The immutable counsel of God to us as “heirs of

his promise” is guaranteed by His oath and His promise so that “we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus...” (Heb. 6:18-20). This is obviously an active living thing in the lives of the faithful. If our hope dies we have no basis for living.

The *third* reason it must be thought of as a “living hope” may be the most significant of all. It is based on the resurrection of Jesus. The text says our God and Father “hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” It is impossible to over-emphasize the significance of that resurrection. I have preached entire sermons that were designed to stress, from statements in scripture, the significance of Jesus’ resurrection. Paul shows indisputable proof of that resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-8), and then makes repeated arguments why we must believe in it, and in our own resurrection.

The peak of his argument is found in these words: “For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:16-20). My hope lives because Christ lives!! If that hope dies our reason for living dies. Truly, that hope is the anchor of the soul, and is both sure and steadfast.

Consider your own hope. Is it alive and active—and what is the basis for it?

7000 Brook Bend Way, Louisville, KY 40229  
e-mail: rferris123@gmail.com

## A House Divided

By STEVE FONTENOT

“A house divided against itself shall not stand” (Matt. 12:25). *Fathers* are charged to train the children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). *Mothers* are to “rule the household” (1 Tim. 5:14, ASV). So, the care and discipline of children is a *shared* responsibility. Note the plural: “Children, obey your parents...” (Eph. 6:1).

For *either* parent to undermine the others’ authority is to promote a “house divided.” There will be disagreements between mom and dad, and the man in the family has been delegated authority over the woman. But the man who uses (actually misuses) his position to undermine the woman’s authority in the family is promoting a detrimental situation to all concerned—a “house divided.” Likewise, the woman who erodes her husband’s authority, whether in his presence or behind his back, is not “building her house” but “tearing it down with her own hands” (Prov. 14:1).

We cannot condone that which we believe to be contrary to the will of God (Ac. 5:29). However, we must beware lest we confuse *God’s* will with *our* will and opinions. We must make every effort to promote respect for God’s order in the family lest we become a “house divided.”

18542 Crestline Road, Humble, TX 77396 e-mail: sp63@mac.com

# THINK

ON THESE THINGS

Published quarterly in the interest of purity of doctrine and practice by the Diestelkamp family. Distributed free in quantities as ability permits.

Editor AL DIESTELKAMP  
P.O. Box 891  
Cortland, IL 60112-0891  
(815) 756-9840

E-mail aldiestel@gmail.com

Web Page www.thinkonthesethings.com

# Consistent Inconsistency

By DAVID DIESTELKAMP

A frustrated woman says to her husband, “You’re so inconsistent!” Defensively he responds, “Not all the time!” Although humorous in marriage (because it’s too often true), it isn’t funny in our spiritual lives (because it’s too often true).

Jesus taught an all or nothing, “He who is not with Me is against Me,” gospel (Matt. 12:30). Although spiritual consistency is rooted in repentance and God’s forgiveness in Christ, we must have hearts which consistently yearn for the way of God.

## Inconsistency & Faith

“Even the demons believe—and tremble!” (Jas. 2:19). So what’s the problem with demon faith? There is a disparity between what they know, and even accept as true, and what they do. Even calling Jesus, “Lord” is inadequate if it doesn’t produce what is consistent with that confession—doing what He says (Lk. 6:46).

Faith that isn’t based on God’s word is easily changed by feelings, situations, and false teaching. This inconsistency is called being “...tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery

of men...” (Eph. 4:14). Faith which inconsistently trusts God’s will as a guide for life is compared to “...a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (Jas. 1:6-8). To be consistent, true faith must be anchored on what it knows to be true in God’s word (Rom. 10:17).

## Inconsistency & Hope

The main reason behind inconsistency is the false sense of security it provides. Before others, it is a hypocrisy that says, “I’m better than I really am.” To self, occasional righteousness provides the opportunity to accentuate the positive to the downplaying of known negatives. Sometimes doing right is better than always doing wrong—right? There is a third choice!

We must consistently remember that ours is the “hope of eternal life” (Tit. 1:2). The hopes, promises, and dreams that this life offers pale in comparison to the “blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13). Inconsistent focus on our true hope will devastate sober minded decision making abil-

ity. Inconsistent choices are inevitable when they are based on the ever changing hope this world tries to offer.

## Inconsistency & Law

I once heard a US Supreme Court justice explain why the Court reluctantly overturns rulings. He said, “Inconsistency breeds contempt for the law.” If we change the law whenever it pleases us it loses its meaning and authority.

God is our lawgiving King; we are His law keeping citizens. Inconsistent obedience says to God and others that some of what God says is important, but some of it isn’t. It actually puts us in the position of God, determining what is good, and when. Our lives are to be a “living sacrifice,” not simply in the things we give God, but in submitting our will fully to God in all things (Rom. 12:1). When God and others look at us what do they see? Are we lawmakers or law keepers? Are we the standard or is God?...

Someone said that in religion there are believers, unbelievers, and make-believers. Consistent consistency will demonstrate which we are.

940 N. Elmwood Drive, Aurora, Illinois 60506  
e-mail: [davdiestel@yahoo.com](mailto:davdiestel@yahoo.com)

# The Search for The Righteous

By ROBERT E. SPEER

Diogenes (408?-323 BC) was a Greek philosopher and cynic who traveled about Greece carrying a lantern in the daytime in search of an honest man. Cynicism was so deeply embedded within him that he was hypocritical—that is, while he claimed to be looking for an honest man he would not admit to ever having found one.

Jeremiah (late seventh century, early sixth century BC) was neither a philosopher nor a cynic; he was a prophet of God. As such he was instructed: “Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; see now and know; and seek in her open places if you can find a man, if there is anyone who executes judgment, who seeks the truth, and I will pardon her, though they say, ‘As the Lord lives,’ surely they swear falsely” (Jer. 5:1-2).

In Jeremiah, chapter 2, God reminds Israel of when she was “holiness to the Lord” (vs. 3). Nevertheless she turned against God (vs. 5), even though He has led and preserved them in the wilderness and into the



bountiful promised land (vss. 6-8). Said Jehovah, “[My people] have forsaken Me (vs. 13). Yet, He pleads for their return (3:12, 14; 4:1, 14). But for all His pleading and attending promises Israel His people did not return.

There were many men in Jerusalem, but Jehovah told Jeremiah to find a man—just

one man—who functions justly and seeks truth, and His people would be pardoned (5:1). But they were defiant, having a rebellious heart; they had revolted and departed (vs. 23). One is reminded of Abraham’s plea for Sodom at the time Lot was in that city (Gen. 18). Abraham’s plea was for sparing the city if 50 righteous could be found there (vs. 24); or 45 within the city (vs. 28); or 40, or 30, or 20 should be found there (vss. 28-31). Finally, Abraham said, “Suppose ten should be found there?” (vs. 32). With 50 and each descending number named by Abraham, God promised to spare the city. As it turned out, only one man—Lot—was spared, along with his two daughters. God destroyed Sodom and other cities of the plain (Gen. 19:22-25).

What of the city you live in? Would there be 50 righteous people therein? What of 45? 40? 30? 20? or 10? If only one righteous person who was honest, dealing justly and seeking truth could be found within your city and its environ, would that be you?

596 Marseille Blvd., Winchester, KY 40391  
e-mail: [robertspeer596@bellsouth.net](mailto:robertspeer596@bellsouth.net)

# SHAKING THINGS UP

By **ANDY DIESTELKAMP**

This past March 11th our church building was filled to capacity on a Friday night to hear a sermon from Shawn Daniels entitled "The Unshakable Kingdom in a Shaken World." It was not an impromptu lesson in reaction to the catastrophic earthquake that hit Japan less than 24 hours earlier and which effectively rippled its way even to the shores of our country. The message had been planned and advertised for that night weeks in advance.

I do not make that observation to suggest that God sent this calamity to serve as a timely sermon illustration for our gospel meeting. While some who purport to have the divine gift of prophecy might retroactively claim that they had predicted this event, such would be merely the revisionist machinations of self-important false prophets seeking relevance for their misguided ministries. No, the seismic event was not timely, but the message preached to us on March 11th was.

Paul wrote, "the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). As we watch video clips of tsunamis swallowing in a moment all the things we work for

years to obtain (businesses, houses, cars, etc.), surely we appreciate the relevance of Jesus' admonition, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matt. 6:19,20).

Security is not ultimately found in anything physical. In nature there are things against which we are unable to protect ourselves. When even *terra firma* shakes and cracks so as to move the oceans, we are graciously reminded that our bodies are but dust and our life-spans are vaporous. This realization drives some to party, "for tomorrow we die," while others are driven to their knees to worship their Creator and their only hope of salvation. While the godless wring their anxious hands over the future of this globe, the God-fearing fold their hands in prayer, committing their souls to the only One who offers something truly unshakable.

As you read this article in the relative calm and comfort of your home, consider how fragile and unstable *everything* is in this world. A mere belch of negativity from nature or nations can send stock markets worldwide into tailspins. The excesses fostered by a prosperity that only gives God a nominal place on its coinage but attempts to remove His national influence could easily be our fall. Economic carelessness fueled by selfish materialism mixed with moral degradation is a recipe for disaster.

As the late Paul Harvey frequently observed, "Self-government without self-discipline will not work." History is littered with the ruins of fallen people who forgot that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). We

would all be wise to be more diligent in our pursuit of righteousness rather than our pursuit of things that perish with using.

Lest for some arrogant reason we think that it won't happen to us (U.S.), God has preserved in His word the condemnation of "His chosen people," the nation of Israel. In seeking to be like the nations around them, they suffered the fate of those nations. In rejecting the Messiah, their house was left desolate (Matt. 23:38). For nearly two millennia the ruins of their physical temple have testified to the truth that nations which reject God will be judged. If God did not spare Israel, He will not spare us unless we repent. No, the recent earthquake does not mean that the Japanese are worse sinners than we are, but it does remind us that, unless we repent, we will all likewise perish (cf. Luke 13:1-5).

From The Flood (Genesis 6-9) to the destruction of Jerusalem (Rev. 11:2), we have been amply warned that "the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 Jn. 2:17). "Both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?" (2 Pet. 3:10,11).

"See that you do not refuse Him who speaks...from heaven" (Heb. 12:25). Jesus Christ is mankind's salvation and only hope. He offers citizenship in a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:27-29) because it is not of this world (Jn. 18:36). His is a church against which not even the gates of death can prevail (Matt. 16:18). The kingdoms of earth pass away one by one, but the kingdom of heaven remains!

323 E. Indiana Ave., Pontiac, Illinois 61764  
e-mail: adiestel@frontier.com

## Voluntary Partners

### Cost of past issue:

Printing & Supplies	\$ 85.00
Postage (U.S. & Canada)	408.05
Return Postage (25)	11.00
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>\$ 504.05</b>
Funds available for past issue	1,228.32
Surplus	\$ 724.27

### Donations (as of 4/12):

Jerry & Sue Brewer, AL	\$ 50.00
Dennis W. Oliver, TN	50.00
Anonymous, IN	20.00
Paul & Wilma Earnhart, KY	50.00
Illinois friend	60.00
<b>TOTAL DONATIONS</b>	<b>\$ 230.00</b>
Surplus from past issue	724.27
Funds for this issue	\$ 954.27

We thank God for our brothers and sisters who voluntarily participate with us by covering the costs of publication. This issue is expected to cost about \$540, which would leave a balance of approximately \$414 toward the cost of the next issue.

## MOVING?

Don't miss an issue! Please notify us of your new address.

# THINK

ON THESE THINGS

P.O. Box 891 • Cortland, IL 60112-0891

Return Service Requested

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Cortland, IL  
Permit No. 11