



RESURRECTION CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

300 Eagles Nest Farm Road, Hawk Point, Missouri 63349 • Ph: 636-597-3755 • FAX: 636-597-3743

Paul and Gretel Haglin

EVANGELIZING THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER

August 2008

Letters of Faith

**“Comfort ye, oh comfort ye My people!” says your God.
“Speak tenderly to the heart of Jerusalem!”**

(Isaiah 40:1-2 NAS95)

Dear Beloved,

Again we are hearing the word *persevere* resounding to the Body of Christ. The response we received to last month's *Letter of Faith* affirmed that many of you concur. David Wilkerson's Pulpit Series (available at www.worldchallenge.org) and other ministry letters emphasize the call on the Body of Christ to follow Paul's exhortation to the Philippians to: **“...press on toward the goal (to persevere) for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”** (Phil. 3:14 NASB)

But we are also often reminded that our pressing on to the high calling—our persevering through the obstacles thereto—often requires us to be comforted by other steadfast brothers and sisters in the Body.

Hear the cry in God's heart through the prophet Isaiah! God's Word says that it is your hearts that need tender comfort. But most of us are like David when he cried out in Psalm 69:20: **“Reproach has broken my heart, and I am so sick, and I looked for sympathy, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none.”**

Are you a comforter in the Church today?

Father God is calling out to His Church, to you, His people, to be discerning and sensitive and available to those who need a touch from Him through you. God wants us all to be comforters!

Our phone rang—a familiar voice sobbed, *“Our Tommy is dead. He drowned in the pool and the doctors just told me he's dead! Help!”* And God said to us, *“Comfort My People!”*

We opened a letter—an anguished cry poured forth from it: *“I've been fired after 25 years of service. No notice, no pension, just ‘we can't use you anymore!’ Help!”* And God said to us, *“Comfort My People!”*

A woman was weeping quietly in the pew in front of us. Her husband shared that their 20 year-old daughter had died two years ago, but his wife was still grieving! And God said to us, as to His Church, *“Where are My comforters?”*

These experiences are dramatic illustrations of the need for comfort in the Body of Christ, but there are also subtle signs that people use to signal their distress, and we should be alert through the Spirit to hear their cry, too. A deep sigh, drooping shoulders, dragging feet, a hand kneading the forehead, a haunted look, restlessness, Eeyore-ism: they are all body language cries for comfort.

Our hearts cried out, *“Show us how to comfort your people, Father God!”* His answer came through His word: **“...encourage one another, and build up one another...we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.”** (1 Thess. 5:11&14) And, **“...let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful and noble activities; not forsaking or**

neglecting to assemble together as believers, as is the habit of some people, but admonishing—warning, urging and encouraging—one another..." (Heb.10:24-25 Amp)

In crises, it becomes obvious to us that God has designed us to need one another just as the members of our physical bodies need one another to function as the head instructs. It is not a sign of weakness or a lack of faith to need one another. It is a sign of a healthy Church—the Body of Christ—growing in awareness of our true corporateness!

How comforting it is just to hear someone misses you and has been thinking of you! Paul states that clearly when he wrote: **"...God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more."** (2 Cor. 7:6-7 NASB)

God showed us in His Word that we learn to comfort by being comforted. **"Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of sympathy... comfort...(mercies) and the God [Who is the Source] of every consolation and comfort and encouragement; who consoles and comforts and encourages us in every trouble (calamity and affliction), so that we may also be able to console (comfort and encourage) those who are in any kind of trouble or distress, with the consolation (comfort and encouragement) with which we ourselves are consoled and comforted and encouraged by God."** (2 Cor. 1:3-4 AMP)

Old Testament Jews referred to God as their "Chesed" God; that is the Father of Mercies, or the God of mercy, lovingkindness, and covenant-keeping faithfulness. He is the God and source of all comfort. We must comfort with His comfort through the Comforter—tenderly (that is God's way to comfort) and to the heart (that is God's place to comfort).

Note the preceding scripture says that once we have been comforted in our affliction by Holy Spirit, we can comfort those in *any sort* of affliction, because we will have the faith to bring Holy Spirit's comfort to others, no matter what their affliction is.

The translators of the King James Bible just used the word "comfort" to translate Greek words that mean console, encourage, and exhort, but each of these Greek words has a definite meaning. Taken together, they fully define the word "comfort," which the Amplified clearly shows us means *to console, to encourage, and to exhort*.

The first aspect of comfort is consoling. David shared with his Father in heaven: **"When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Thy consolations delight my soul."** (Ps. 94:19 NASB) One dictionary says "to console" is: to give strengthening aid (like chicken soup); to cheer in time of grief, defeat, or trouble; and to alleviate grief or sense of loss.

"Comfort" is an active and dynamic word: much more than "A pat-pat, there-there, time will heal" surface treatment—it is deep—it is to the heart!

We consoled the woman weeping with uncontrolled grief in front of us in church. We shared with her the pain of our mutual loss (the death of our 11 year-old son in his sleep) and how God had comforted us by His *consoling presence* and given us His precious words of hope. After ministering consolation (two years is too long to be incapacitated by sorrow), we quietly rebuked the spirit of grief that had latched onto her, and then prayed for the healing of her broken heart. She was set free!

The main noun translated "comfort" is *Paraklesis*—the same root word as the name of Holy Spirit—the Paraclete. It is used to describe the counsel for the defense; the one called to another's side; an advocate or intercessor. It is a constant reminder that He is *the* Comforter and through us it is *the* Comforter Who comforts!

There is a second category of words that have been translated just as "comfort" but really mean types of encouragement. One such word implies the comfort given or spoken, which inspires with courage, lifts the spirit, and quickens the heart to faith.

When the mother of Tommy, the 15 month-old baby boy that had drowned in the swimming pool, called in despair, we were led to inspire her with courage by declaring by the Holy Spirit that Tommy wasn't dead, but alive (that was a gift of faith at work in us). Paul heard the mother's prayer in the spirit and interpreted it for her—"I see him healthy and running in your front field." We quickened her heart to faith by reminding her that God was faithful and He had promised her a son when the doctors said there was no way and now He would return their son when the doctors again said there was no way!

Gretel lifted her spirit by barging into the emergency room and praying in the Spirit for Tommy—who responded to the power of God by coming back to life with a lusty cry and a protesting kick. The resurrection power of God released was so great that dead-on-arrival-men on both sides of his cubicle were resuscitated: one had died from a drug overdose, and one from a massive heart attack.

A different Greek word for "encouragement" is used to convey the meanings to hearten, to spur-on, to urge, to foster hope and growth, and to incite people in a given new direction.

This kind of encouraging comfort was the main thrust of the apostles' ministry in the Book of Acts! Paul and Barnabas went about "**...establishing and strengthening the souls and the hearts of the disciples, urging and warning and encouraging them to stand firm in the faith, and telling them that it is through many hardships and tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.**" (Acts 14:22 Amp.)

Note that last sentence. The Lord has never sent us the word that we are destined to live a life of ease, or a guarantee of physical comfort free from exertion or doubt, all of which are definitions of the word *comfortable*! Our God is the God of comfort, not ease.

Encouraging-comfort is needed to help keep ourselves and each other from falling into the deceitfulness of sin. "**...warn [admonish, urge and encourage] one another every day...that none of you may be hardened [into settled rebellion] by the deceitfulness of sin...**" (Heb. 3:13 Amp.)

Now let's look at the word "exhort." The letter we mentioned earlier was from a distraught businessman who had just been fired because of a corporate merger that had left him without a job or a pension. Interestingly, in his position as corporate treasurer, he had been instrumental in arranging the merger. When we met with him, we were conscious that we were not being led to say: "There's a lot of that going around!" (like he was suffering from a head cold). Nor did we give him a good old generic comfort scripture like Rom. 8:28: "**...God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God...**" Surely this is a truth, but it is of no comfort. Nor did we bellow at Satan and demand that he give our friend's job back!

Holy Spirit urged us into this third kind of comfort, "exhortation", which means to *stimulate* our friend to release judgments; to *entreat* him to cut his roots of bitterness; to *strongly urge* him to enter into real forgiveness; and to get up and get going again!

We were exhorting him to ask Holy Spirit to help him examine his God-given natural talents instead of just his past employment experiences, and daring him (a very male way of exhorting) to take up the challenge and risk of looking for a job where his real interests and giftings from God actually lay.

I (Paul) reminded him of the several completely different careers God had led me through to train me for Him: from Aeronautical Engineer at Bell Aircraft; to structures engineer at the Research and Development Command in the U. S. Air Force; to a McDonnell Aircraft Customer Service Representative; through owner, designer, and developer of the largest private airport in the country and real estate developer of the surrounding Industrial Airpark. Then I was called into God's service as pastor, radio Bible teacher, and a traveling teaching ministry with my wife!

I shared how faithfully God had led me through each phase from apprehension to confidence in His leading, using each experience to develop more of the character of

Jesus in me, and endow me with wisdom and expertise for His next step.

He left our lunch with his shoulders squared and a grin on his face. He could barely wait to see God's plan unfold in his life. He soon moved into an entirely different job that was stimulating and rewarding—exhorting—comfort got him back on his feet. This kind of comfort is like what the bagpipers gave to the flagging and battle-worn Scotsmen—they were lifted back into the fray.

That is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said: **“...we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”** (1 Thess. 2:11-12 NASB)

Beloved, learn to exhort as you walk alongside—be a paraclete—but be careful never to allow anyone to become dependent on you for strength and guidance instead of on Jesus! Like crutches, we may help bear the load for a season, but should be discarded as soon as possible.

We have experienced seven principles of comforting.

1. Call out to Jesus for help, then point the person you are comforting to Jesus as the answer and solution, and *bring* them to Jesus—*escort* them to Him like the disciples finally did to Blind Bartimaeus (Jesus said **“Bring him to Me”**) Isaiah 53:4a says: **“Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried...”** Griefs and sorrows and sickness and pains were carried for us by Jesus on the cross, so bring them to Him—He is the Burden Bearer!

2. Minister a Holy Spirit-quickened scripture because as Prov. 12:25 says: **“Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad.”** And **“Remember the word to Thy servant, in which Thou hast made me hope. This is my comfort (consolation) in my affliction, that Thy word has revived me...I have remembered Thine ordinances from of old, O Lord, and comfort myself.”** (Ps. 119:49-50, 52) And **“...that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”** (Romans. 15:4)

Especially minister those scriptures that Holy Spirit has used to minister comfort to you, and those that have been given to you by Holy Spirit to speak forth to that person.

Some are so precious because they reveal such a warm and caring and humorous Father God. We got a Spirit-breathed word for a dear friend who was suffering in the hospital with great pain from a kidney stone. We proclaimed boldly to him: **“It came to pass...”** (1 Thess. 3:4) And minutes later it clanked into his sieve.

3. Release a word of prophecy as directed by Holy Spirit. Remember **“... one who prophesies speaks to men for edification (to build-up) and exhortation (to stir-up) and consolation (to cheer-up).”** (1 Cor. 14:3)

Be alert to Holy Spirit giving you a prophetic word in a situation that calls for comfort. In fact, expect it!

4. Share a faith-building testimony. Build each other up (Eph. 4:16) so that we can overcome with the word of our testimony (Rev. 12:11). Give testimony of the “tests” you have passed! For Heaven's sake don't share how hard it was for you to find a job—or what pain you suffered with your operation—or how you flunked a test! In other words, don't be like Job's comforters! Comfort, don't commiserate!

5. Comfort with a sanctified, loving touch. A holy embrace releases pent-up tears and hidden fears, and builds faith—like Jesus laying His hand on the leper! The Lord showed us that as we put our arm around the shoulders of a saint in need of comfort, it would lift the depression and help bear his burden—it is a prophetic act of caring-comfort.

We are to exhibit the 1 Cor. 13:7 kind of loving comfort that **“bears all things...”** and fulfill Gal. 6:2: **“Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.”**

6. Do not preach, teach, or sermonize! Avoid the temptation to tell the person right then and there how or what they should have done to avoid the problem or accident, or by pointing out how they goofed! They don't need that added stress. Remember the Good Samaritan did not spend time pointing out to the victim of a highway robbery and beating how he could have avoided this pain by having chosen to travel in the safety of a caravan or at a better time of day. He helped him. He poured on the Oil and the Wine!

Be sensitive, not corrective. The object of comfort is restoration, not retraining; healing, not lecturing! Sometimes just sitting and holding the hand of a grieving wife, a stricken father, or a depressed friend can bring an awareness of the Lord's peace and lovingkindness into their lives again. **“For the despairing man there should be kindness from his friend; lest he forsake the (reverential) fear of the Almighty.”** (Job 6:14) Let the healing balm of Christ's love and strength quietly flow from you into the starved and weakened places deep inside their hearts.

7. And finally, don't comfort sin! Don't be an enabler! Let Holy Spirit complete His work—conviction should bring Godly sorrow. Let it do its good work!

Our prayer for you is: **“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.”**

(2 Thess. 2:16-17 NASB)

Hugs,



MINISTRY REPORT:

We are putting the finishing touches on adding two lavatories and a storage room onto Eagle Chapel. Joel Sampson engineered and designed the whole project and prepared the construction plans for us. Thank you, Joel!

Amongst the many saints coming to Eagles Nest for worship, ministry, and fellowship, we have just enjoyed a ten-day visit from a beautiful psalmist and long time friend from England. God gave her two new awesome worship songs while she was in Eagle Chapel. Keep your eyes and ears open for a new worship CD from Linda Jones. Her songs are transforming!

Check out our website (www.rcmin.org). We are going to start presenting chapters from our new book-in-process, “Let's Retain Revival—THIS TIME.” Take a pre-published peek. We think you'll really like it!