



Jesus Fellowship/  
Jesus Army  
Celibacy Inspirational  
Newsletter

October 1997 No.6

# 'Celibacy means I can be wholly available'



Jayne - flooded with joy when she decided for celibacy, finding a new love for Jesus

I ALWAYS had a faith in God but I rebelled in my teens and got into the heavy metal scene - parties, bikers, hippies. I loved to be the 'life and soul of the party' but inside I had a deep loneliness which I just longed to fill.

In my mid teens I came to a cross-roads in my life. In the scene I was in it was getting harder and harder to say 'no.' I knew I had to make a choice for God. I remember the time I broke down and cried because I knew I had been running away from Him. I asked forgiveness and knew a deep peace within. The old loneliness and emptiness left me.

I always had a heart for needy people. I saw so much injustice around and I always wanted to DO SOMETHING to change the world! I joined Youth

## Jayne's heroine, Teresa

'MOTHER TERESA was always a woman who fascinated me by her dedication to God and love for the outcasts of society.

I believe part of her secret was her deep love for God which she found in her celibacy. She encouraged her sisters to love Christ with their whole being and to love and serve people as they would love and serve Christ, to see Christ in the poor.'

When Jayne first heard of celibacy she wanted to run a million miles! Saying 'Yes' to God has brought a new availability to love as Jesus loves.

CND and got involved with protests and petitioning. After becoming a Christian I studied dramatic arts at university. I wanted to use drama as a way of communicating God's justice. We began a drop-in centre at the church I went to at that time. My vision for outreach was outside what the church felt it could take on and I felt frustrated.'

When I came to the Jesus Fellowship I had a boyfriend so I wanted to run a million miles after hearing about celibacy! I felt frightened of the sacrifice and commitment.

It was a few years later, when I felt totally desperate to find God in a new way, that I gave Him the whole decision concerning marriage. I sensed God very clearly say: 'Could you be celibate for the sake of building the church?' The next day I heard Him ask the same question again. This time I said 'Yes Lord, I will!' Amazing love and joy flooded me and I was totally lost in loving Jesus. I was fully His and He was mine.

*'I always wanted to do something to change the world'*

Celibacy has brought me stability. It feels like the missing piece in the foundation of my life. It makes me more available to people that come around to our house. It means I can commit myself wholly to the pioneering work of building the church in our region. Celibacy means I can be wholly available.

Since becoming celibate I have found a greater dependency upon God and I believe that new depth of a relationship with God has led me to have a greater compassion for others. Celibacy makes me available to be a 'spiritual mum'. My desire is to see beyond the outward in people to love them as Jesus loves them!

From the Editor ...



## MOVERS AND SHAPERS

AT THE SHARP end of God's work in any nation will be those who shake up the present and shape the future. They are the activists and world-changers who carry clear vision for advancing the kingdom of Jesus, whatever the cost.

Among these movers and shapers will be celibates - those who have chosen to live single and undivided for Jesus and His cause. They will show the radicalism of a Jesus-first lifestyle, ready to sacrifice what the world holds dear for the sake of building the church, and trust that all their needs will be met as they do so.

*Huw Lewis, a Jesus Fellowship celibate brother*

## Appreciation from a married man

AS A MARRIED man with a family I appreciate and respect the ministry and calling of the celibates. They bring a zeal and undivided commitment without which the church would be very much poorer.



I think it is brilliant that a young man or woman at the height of their drive and energy can find God and His church so attractive that they can abandon the idea of marriage.'

*Ed, a married brother in the Jesus Fellowship*

## Celibacy and the Jesus Fellowship

CELIBACY is a gift and calling spoken of by Jesus (Matthew 19:12) and recommended by Paul (1 Corinthians 7:25-35). Around 300 men and women in the Jesus Fellowship nationwide have made the choice of staying single.

It includes single parents, the divorced, widows and widowers as well as single people.

# Pathfinders!

Past and present heroes and heroines of celibacy

## Aidan (595?-651AD)

'BROTHER, IT SEEMS to me that you were too severe on your ignorant hearers.' These are the first recorded words of St. Aidan, described by one historian as 'the Apostle of England.' Aidan at the time was a monk in St Columba's famous Celtic monastery on Iona off the west coast of Scotland.

The 'brother' to whom Aidan spoke was another monk called Cormac who had returned downcast from a failed mission to Northumbria. He had been invited to evangelise it by Oswald, the Anglo-Saxon king, who had been converted through the Iona monks. 'I can't do it,' he said dejectedly, 'Those Northumbrians! They're stupid. They're pig-headed. In fact, they're plain barbarians! It just can't be done.'

All eyes turned on Aidan. 'Well,' they said, 'if you think you've got the answer, you'd better go and try it!' So they made Aidan a bishop, found twelve volunteers to go with him, and sent him off to Northumbria. This happened in the year 635AD.

Choosing the famous island 'Lindisfarne' for their monastery and mission base, Aidan and his celibate Celtic monks began a very successful mission that reached the very heart of the people of Northumbria.

Aidan refused to allow his position of leadership to raise him above the level of the poor. He used money given by the rich to buy boys from slavery whom he would care for in the monastery at Lindisfarne. Generally he insisted on walking everywhere so that he could take every available opportunity to meet 'the people.'

This following story illustrates his love for the poor. Oswald's successor, King Oswin, was a good friend to Aidan and, worried by the fact that Aidan would not ride a horse, he chose one of his best horses and gave it to him. A little while later he met a beggar, who asked for money so



**King Oswin gave his friend Aidan one of his best horses, but was not very pleased when he found out Aidan had given it to a beggar!**

Aidan gave him the horse. The king on hearing this was angry. 'There are plenty of poor-quality horses in the royal stables which would do for beggars. But that was a very good horse, which I had chosen for you!' Aidan was amazed. 'My lord king' he protested 'surely you can't mean to tell me that that foal of a mare is more important to you than a beggar, the child of God?'

This story gives an important clue to Aidan and his monks' success. They had learned to love, to see 'a child of God' in the poorest of the poor. Bede, the famous historian, writes of Aidan and his community that they 'lived as they taught.' They were completely genuine. Aidan cared nothing at all for worldly possessions; he gave away whatever money was given to him. He did not care at all about worldly position; he was outspoken in criticising the powerful when necessary. He was a man 'of peace and love, purity and humility'. He knew how to be friends with the mighty, without compromising his own standards, but he particularly cared for the sick and the poor.

Cormac had not been right! The Northumbrians could be converted and Aidan and his monks did it, though he did not live to see the immense expansion of missionary work from Lindisfarne which would happen in the next generation.

Aidan, like many Celtic Christians, was a man of the people. As Bede writes 'He was rightly loved by all.'

*He insisted on walking everywhere so that he could meet 'the people'*

## Unconditional loving

'THIS PRESENT generation suffers terribly from the effects of sexual boundaries of all kinds being discarded. I have



found that young people especially appreciate the kind of 'eunuch' love that celibates bring to them.

You can almost see their relief that here is someone loving them for themselves - and they're not going to be sent the bill afterwards. For so many of them 'love' has always had a hidden price-tag.'

*Selina, a Jesus Fellowship celibate sister*

## They HAD to be single

'ST. FRANCIS could not have done what he did had he not been single. Nor could Jesus. In our day we miss the profound wisdom of Paul's counsel - marriage of necessity divides one's loyalties.'

*Richard Foster, author and international speaker*

## Supreme goal

'IF WE SEE singleness as a challenge, then pursuing the purpose of God, not searching for a partner, will become the goal of our lives.'

*Trevor Partridge, writer and broadcaster*

## Wholehearted love

'CELIBACY is not an end, but a means. The end is to love God and men with all one's heart and being'

*Gregory of Nyssa*

## Look what I've found!

'THE BEST THING about celibacy for me is the sense of discovery it carries with it. It is about being able to make a difference in peoples' lives. It is discovering spiritual reality and passing it on to others!'



*Wilf, a Jesus Fellowship celibate brother*

## Something special

'SINGLE PEOPLE have something to give the church which married people just can't give.'

*Rob White, Director, British Youth for Christ*

# Wisdom from above

AFTER TWO weeks lying down with a bad back I had more opportunity than usual to view the skies!

I felt God say: "The sky is as celibacy, whilst the land is as marriage! The land and the sky are very interdependent. From where do the water droplets ascend but from the earth? And where does the rain fall from but the skies? So My church is incomplete without both celibacy and marriage."

Celibacy can be compared to the sky -

knowing a relief from many earthly anxieties as clouds scurrying across the sky at the bidding of the wind. Celibacy is responsive to the Spirit's breath. It is never still! It is always moving, it reflects the heart of God. Yet it receives life from those gifted in marriage. As those who are married need those around them with the gift of celibacy so celibacy, in turn, depends on marriage to be fruitful. We need each other!

*Deborah, a Jesus Fellowship celibate sister*

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