



Jesus Fellowship/
Jesus Army
Celibacy Inspirational
Newsletter

January 1999 No.9

From the
Editor ...



The freedom to be a spiritual father

Being celibate has brought surprising opportunities for Nick Everard in his desire to reach the outcasts of society

BORN IN THE West Indies, of a white Jamaican mother and an English father, Nick spent his childhood moving, first from Jamaica to Trinidad, then to Nigeria, India, Uganda and finally on to Paris. His father, although penniless when he arrived in the West Indies, made a successful career in the diplomatic service.

While Nick was a young boy out in India, he began asking questions. "We were very well off with servants, a huge house and monkeys in the garden! It was a colonial lifestyle," he says. "I and my two brothers were sent to a private school in England to be educated. But on the streets of Bombay I saw intense poverty. The poor would maim themselves in order to beg successfully from Europeans. I asked myself, 'Why all this inequality? Why the racial prejudice?' I'd always wanted to be black and I also found myself hating money."

Nick, when aged 17, listened to Richard Wurmbbrand, the persecuted Romanian pastor, as he spoke to boys at his school about the call to sacrifice. The cost of becoming a Christian weighed upon him and a few months later on he gave his life to God.

"I knew at the time I would be sacrificing everything - a wife and money. I sensed that I'd be single."

It was while Nick was a student in Coventry that he was invited to the Jesus Fellowship.

"Here was a sense of unconditional acceptance which I'd always longed for, with real equality and social justice. Here was love. I felt, 'I've found the kingdom of God!'"

Nick had felt the call to celibacy for a few years and, at the age of 24, as he sat in the front of a car with an old friend, he made a full commitment to being single for Jesus.

"I had the most powerful spiritual experience of my life when the overwhelming presence of the Spirit came upon me and I knew God was affirming my obedience.

"I have sought to give myself wholeheartedly to seeing the underprivileged finding life and security in God and a sense of purpose in life. I've been



Nick has been able to give his time more fully to help others in need as a celibate

taught much about myself - and life - by the rootless: drug addicts, thieves, travellers, the homeless. I've found many of them return warmth and loyalty to me.

"I've sat through the night with heroin addicts who were going through cold turkey. I've been with alcoholics as they've gone through their detox. I've

helped skinheads, punks, hell's angels, kids with their heads in glue bags, pimps and prostitutes as well as the professionals. People have

needed much time. Marriage and a family would have placed too many restrictions upon me. As a celibate I've found the liberty and freedom to be a spiritual father.

"Having young people around me is my life source. Celibacy also keeps me young. As one gets older, the youthful energy of the young warrior abates. But a new energy arises within - the energy of wisdom, understanding and compassion - the father energy takes over."

And for Nick, at the heart of this energy lies celibacy.

"I had the most powerful spiritual experience of my life"

Complete as One

ARE SINGLES (who make up around a third of most congregations, and this figure is increasing) to be seen as in a temporary state until they find a partner? Or should they be encouraged to "seek to remain in the state they were called in"? (1 Corinthians 7: 20)

Sadly, the majority of churches view man as incomplete without a partner. Singleness is a non-ideal, short-term state which needs to be resolved by marriage.

This is a flawed position which is not found in scripture. We are complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10) and find fullness in Him, not in an earthly state. There is nothing in the Bible to say that man needs a sexual relationship in order to be truly human. Satisfaction is found only in obedience to the Lord and in fully serving Him alone.

It is time that a more scriptural balance is brought to the exclusive teachings that present marriage as the way to fulfilment. Celibates and singles have a vital ministry in the church and the example of Jesus and Paul needs to be honoured and followed in our day.

Huw Lewis

The companionship of Jesus

"For me, as a celibate, purity is far more than just a sexual thing. It is living wholly dedicated to Jesus, focusing my thoughts and attention on Him alone. The companionship of Jesus has been very real to me."

(Jo White, a celibate sister in the Jesus Fellowship)

TOTALLY MOBILE

"THE WORLD situation today confronts us as Christians with both challenges and opportunities unparalleled in history.

To meet these challenges and grasp these opportunities we need among us men and women who are as totally mobile and free from normal human ties and commitments as Paul was in his day."

(Derek Prince, *New Wine*)

Pathfinders!

Past and present heroes and heroines of celibacy

Amy Carmichael

Why was it ever forgotten, I wonder?
(1867-1951)

AMY CARMICHAEL was a woman of extraordinary vision and undaunted faith as well as a fervent believer in the power of prayer. Above all, she was a lover - of Jesus and her spiritual children.

Born of Irish parents, Amy was converted as a teenager after her family moved to Belfast. Fired by socialist ideals and a passionate love for people, she founded 'Welcome Hall', a mission amongst Belfast's mill girls.

Kindled with that same love, Amy sailed for Japan in 1893 to be a missionary. Although her dream ended just over a year later, when she came home exhausted and unable to cope with the extreme climate, it was here that she received the strong call to celibacy. Years later, she described how she found a solitary cave to pray.

"I had feelings of fear about the future. That was why I was there, to be alone with God. The devil kept on whispering: 'It's all right, now, but what about afterwards? You are going to be very lonely.' And he painted pictures of loneliness - I can see them still. I turned to God in a kind of desperation and said, 'Lord what can I do? How can I go on to the end?' And He said, 'None of them that trust in Me shall be desolate.' That word has been with me ever since."

The following year she sailed to southern India and soon gathered around her a group of women whom she formed into a woman's band, named the 'Starry Cluster'. Under her leadership

the women travelled around the villages, visiting homes and speaking to women and children who were willing to listen to the gospel. When two teenage girls who wanted to become believers escaped from their homes and came to her, the threat of violence forced them all to move to rural Dohnavur. Amy was to live there for the rest of her life.

In 1901, she rescued her first temple child. Such children were destined for a life of prostitution in Hindu temples. Over the years she rescued and had brought to her many other children in similar danger. A home was made for them - amidst a community of believers, later called the Dohnavur Fellowship. Like Amy, many at Dohnavur chose to remain single, 'to attend upon the Lord without distraction', as one of them said.

In 1916, Amy formed 'The Sisters of the Common Life' for single women like herself. In a book of guidelines for them, she wrote: "There is nothing dreary or doubtful about this life. It is meant to be continually joyful." Amy, called 'Amma' ('mother' in Tamil), was not only a spiritual mother to many of her fellow workers, but to her adopted children as well. Her aim was to train the children 'to serve, to be evangelists and lovers of souls.'

In 1931, she had an accident which left her an invalid for the rest of her life. For the next twenty years, confined to her room, she continued in her role as 'Amma' to the family as well as writing many books. In one of her books, called *Ploughed Under* she writes of the need of celibates to be spiritual parents.

"Perhaps because there are so many perishing for lack of love in a world which can be hard and cold to birds which have no nest of their own, He wants some mother-hearts to be free to make nests for them."

"Why was it ever forgotten, I wonder?" she said of celibacy. She kept hold of the word she received many years before - "It has been fulfilled to Me. It will be fulfilled to you."



Show me Thy face

Many years ago now, I came across a devotional poem by an unknown author in 'The Christian Book of Mystical Verse' (*highly recommended reading!*)

It wasn't particularly a celibate song, but it captures to me the essence of the supreme love for Jesus that more than compensates for any earthly love we have sacrificed.

I put the words to music, and sing it as an inspiration to return to the source of my celibate vow.

The first verse is printed below.

(Pete Donegan, a celibate brother in the Jesus Fellowship)

Show me Thy face - one transient gleam

Of loveliness divine,

And I shall never think or dream

Of other love save Thine:

All lesser light will darken quite,

All lower glories wane,

The beautiful of earth will scarce

Seem beautiful again.

Kingdom Consecration

"THAT 'YES' (to God's calling to celibacy) invites me to consecrate my womanhood and its capacities and potential to God, in a special way, for His kingdom. In doing so, I embrace a spiritual motherhood which can only be fulfilled by a life of service to others.

Men called to celibacy likewise consecrate themselves to a spiritual fatherhood and life of service."

(Briege Mckenna, *Miracles Do Happen*)

A precious sacrifice

"CELIBACY KEEPS me close to the heart and side of Jesus. He understands the longings and aches you sometimes can't put into words. He covers my vulnerability and frailty - a woman's sacrifice for His sake is very precious in His eyes."

(Maggie Stokell, a celibate sister 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. They include single parents, the divorced, widows and widowers as well as single people of all ages and sexual orientation.

Just published!



Seven Silver Rings

The accounts of seven celibates from the Jesus Fellowship who tell their own stories with passion, humour and courage

80 pages. Price £2.99 (£3.50 by post).

Info: Jesus Fellowship Central Offices,
Nether Heyford, Northampton
NN7 3LB, UK Tel: (01327) 349991

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CHRISTIAN NETWORK
PUBLICATION