

'... to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord' (1 Corinthians 7:35)

# Undivided



FROM THE  
EDITOR ...

JESUS FELLOWSHIP/  
MODERN JESUS ARMY

**CELIBACY  
INSPIRATIONAL  
NEWSLETTER**

**OCT 2002 NO.17**

## The riches of the heart

I CAME across this quote recently (from *Vocations in Marriage, Celibacy and Singleness* by W. Coombs and F. Remeck):

"Celibacy calls an individual to develop the riches of the heart. It is affirmation of life and love. It invites the person to become more human, sensitive and affectionate. Instead of cutting one off from the world, celibacy is a means of communing with Christ and with all creation in Him at the very heart of the world."

How true! Real celibacy is not a denial, but a full expression of humanity. The celibate will always seek to follow the example of the supreme celibate, Jesus.

A large part of being human is interacting with each other, communicating and building meaningful relationships. The man, Jesus invested most of His time in doing exactly that, freed from natural family ties. He released His humanity in forging inclusive relationships with a wide range of people; in weeping with those who weep and laughing with those who laugh; in serving, trusting, forgiving, challenging and loving 'to the end'. Not surprisingly, He called His disciples 'friends' and was Himself labelled 'the friend of sinners'. His hearty bonding with a close group of men and women created a team who would conquer the world.

Far from being cloistered and out of touch with the real world of painful relationships, celibates are meant to be closely involved with the messy business of life and pour their lives into others for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw'.

**Huw Lewis**

**PAST AND PRESENT HEROES  
AND HEROINES OF CELIBACY**

**MILDRED CABLE (1878-1952)  
CELIBATE PIONEER**

**Enthusiasm gone mad!**

"I THINK the Lord wants you in China!" an older missionary once said to the young Mildred Cable. At first Mildred, only 15 at the time, was repelled by the idea. Yet these bold words stayed with her and later set her upon her life's journey.

Mildred, born in 1878 in Guildford, England, determined to join the China Inland Mission and trained in pharmacy, anatomy, midwifery and surgery, She also went to Bible school with her fiancé. One day she had a letter from him saying that, if she continued in her resolve to go to China, he would end the engagement. Going to China had become a dangerous business indeed, in the wake of the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 when hundreds of foreign missionaries were killed and ten thousands of Chinese Christians. Mildred, though heart-broken, was not deterred. Later she wrote: "On a beautiful May morning, when the lilac was in bloom, there was put into my hands a letter in which was written that which made a goblin of the sun ...unless I was to deny my vocation, I must pursue my pathway alone... in one hour the highest things of life burned themselves to ashes."

Mildred's parents, too, were dismayed at her intention to go to China and did their best to dissuade her from such a dangerous course - but her father later had to admit that he had dedicated her to foreign missionary work on the day she was born!

At the age of 22, Mildred finally left for China. She met up with a companion, Francesca French and later her sister Eva and they became known as the Trio and this became a unique partnership that lasted fifty-five years.

For twenty years they laboured in the Shansi province of central China, rescuing girl prostitutes, teaching illiterate girls and bringing people to Jesus! Mildred and her two companions then felt God tell them to head for the Gobi desert in the

Northwest of China. Often regarded as the most inhospitable desert in the world, people warned them of the great dangers that lay ahead for them but they still determined to go. "Enthusiasm gone mad!" was how one commentator put it. Others said, "You can't build the church with nomads!"

For fifteen years they toiled in dismal conditions, often living in caves and filthy inns, visiting the lonely, the rejected and the poorest of the poor, feeding orphans, healing the sick, educating girls and rescuing countless women and girls from prostitution or opium lords. They criss-crossed the desert waste again and again in an old donkey cart, learnt the local dialects, told thousands about Jesus, baptised people and, like Paul, revisited their converts. Captured by bandits, held to ransom and labouring in extremes of desert hot and cold, sometimes hungry, often exhausted, they laboured on, gaining the respect and lasting devotion of the local people.

Jane Hepburn, a contemporary Missionary writes. "At the mercy of psychopathic bandits and generals at whose whims they could have been annihilated, prey to cholera and typhus, tormented often by questions and doubt, and with paralysing fear lurking in the crevices of every ravine and mountain pass, the strain often proved intolerable and the task hopeless. But their calling to open a window in the darkness, through which Jesus would shine as the Light, spurred them on, and the feeling that the 'night when one could work' would soon be upon them, gave them the urgency they needed to complete the task."

In 1936 foreigners were expelled from China and Mildred and her two companions went to live in Devon where they lived, tirelessly working for China as they spread the needs of China's millions around the world.

Mildred died in 1952 aged 74. Reflecting on the hardships of her unusual lifestyle and calling, Mildred commented: "For Christ's sake it is worth it a thousand times over!"

**"For Christ's sake  
it is worth it a  
thousand times over!"**

# No turning back

**Rae Lee became a Christian in 1991 and made a celibate vow in 2000. He lives at the Jesus Fellowship house, 'Lighthouse', in Liverpool. Rae (27) is a true 'Scouser,' having been born and brought up in Liverpool.**

**A**LTHOUGH his parents are Buddhists, from Shanghai in China, Rae, as a young boy, found himself believing in God and became a Christian when he was sixteen. In 1993 he went to study at Liverpool University. As a young Christian he longed to serve God but, after a few years, the church he belonged to broke up and, disillusioned, Rae began to return to his old life of gambling and clubbing. Then, through the invitation of an old school friend, Rae visited the Jesus Fellowship and was amazed by the family feeling and brotherly love he experienced.

However, when Rae first heard people in the Jesus Fellowship talking about celibacy he wasn't impressed! "How can you stop people falling in love?" he thought. Eventually Rae joined the Jesus Fellowship but his thoughts about celibacy didn't alter much! "I used to laugh at celibacy," he said. "I thought it was for old men and women who couldn't have a relationship."

Rae continues the story: "One gathering of church trainee leaders I was jumping up and down as I worshipped God at the front. 'I want you to be a celibate' I felt God say. I instantaneously put my arms

down and stopped jumping. 'No way' I said. 'I'm meant to have a wife and kids.' The conversation continued as again Rae felt God ask him: "What are your heart's desires"" Rae replied "I made a vow that I'd be totally given to You and Your Church. God said 'Yes' and this picture came to me. I looked down into a valley and I saw lots of people living together. This obviously represented the people of God. Amongst these people I saw some who were single, unhindered. picking people up and helping them along. They were there for God and God

**Without having to worry about a spouse and children, celibates always seemed to be available for anyone to talk to.**

alone. Then I understood what celibacy was all about 'No wife, no kids. it's going to be tough.' I thought."

"Later I was to realise I'd gain everything here in celibacy that I'd have had in a relationship - with brothers - apart from the physical relationship. The need to be wanted and loved, the desire to be part of a family, having someone to nurture and teach, would all be fulfilled spiritually in the Church of God. You are not meant to miss out, in fact you're gaining a lot more! I'm an evangelist and I had started to become a spiritual father too."

Rae's friends thought it good not to make a celibate vow until he was twenty-five so he would

have time really to make sure this was what God was calling him to. Eventually, in December 2000, Rae made his vow of life long celibacy in front of the church. "I felt a tremendous sense of relief when I had made a permanent vow," said Rae. "I wanted to be the best example I could possibly be as a celibate! I'd had a lot of good examples in people who are celibate leaders and I saw how the gifting made them so much more fruitful. Without having to worry about a spouse and children, they always seemed to be available for anyone to talk to. They also seemed to have an intimate knowledge of God."

Speaking of the absence of a partner and family ties, Rae added, "Celibates are freed for God's call! They can achieve so much more! I've been fathering and mentoring people a lot older than myself, with many different needs," He said. "I've been able to connect with them and bring the word of God into their lives."

Rae believes that moving in his gift of celibacy enhances his prophetic and inspirational gifts. "I have a greater well of inspiration and energy to draw from! The celibate gifting enhances everything I am and everything I do! Yes, I get tested on my celibacy. I get all sorts of offers!" he joked. "I need the grace of God I! I couldn't do it on my own!

"Jesus never used the word celibacy. He talked about eunuchs and a eunuch can't go back! I've chosen to be a 'eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven' and I can never return to the possibility of having a wife and children."



**"Did you never think you'd missed your way, maybe, being a monk?"**

'Missed my way? No, not me. Did I choose it or did God choose me? I would make the same choice again tomorrow. Although... sometimes my skin is hungry for tenderness or touch. Yes, that I miss: but no one is guaranteed that loving tenderness, and, look, I have found it in the cloister, where others starve for it among their own kin, at their own hearthside. "

*The Hawk and the Dove* by Penelope Willcock

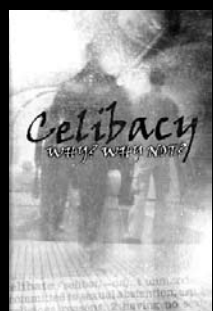


## **FEEDBACK**

**We are always pleased to hear from any who read 'Undivided' and will always try to answer any questions directed to the Editor. Address correspondence to: The Editor, Undivided, Jesus Fellowship Central Offices, Nether Heyford, Northants NN7 3LB or email: huw.lewis@jesus.org.uk**

### **Celibacy and the Jesus Fellowship**

Celibacy is a gift and calling spoken of by Jesus (Matt 19:12) and recommended by Paul (1 Cor 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, those widowed, as well as single people of all ages and sexual orientations.



# Have a look

The video, 'Why? Why Not?' Six men and women speak about what it means for them to have chosen to be celibate for God and the path that led them to make that decision.

**AVAILABLE NOW! From Jesus People Shop, Nether Heyford, Northampton NN7 3LB, UK**  
Tel: 0845 166 8172 [www.jesus.org.uk](http://www.jesus.org.uk)



# Seven Silver Rings



An updated and enlarged Seven Silver Rings has been published. This includes new chapters on the history and biblical background to Celibacy as well as answering some of those frequently asked questions about living single for Jesus. Comprehensive and challenging, it sets out to show how a radical lifestyle of undivided love for Jesus and His church

is possible in the 21st century. This voluntary choice is far removed from the institutional forms of celibacy.



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