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Gordon Dalbey Newsletter #2

Whatever happened to Y2K?

It's hard to believe that this time last year we were all cowering before the threat of computer meltdown. For some, Y2K's no-show is evidence that we can create and control even better than we imagined. While I do appreciate computers—if only because I can send you this message instantly for free!—in fact the year 2000 stands in my life as a monument to the Father's grace and power amid my inability to control my life and ministry. Every one of my speaking engagements was His sovereign work—such as in Portland, ME, where my “contact” first began praying 6 years ago that I would come there. A foundational article I submitted three years ago to *New Man* magazine appeared at last in the Oct issue (attached here). For four months, during my entire summer/fall speaking schedule, I was sick with bronchitis, sinusitis, and plugged ears. Not fun when you're flying up to three connection flights each way to an event in pressurized cabins, coughing into microphones and crashing between speaking sessions on couch cushions behind the podium area. Since I can't call in sick (!), I could only offer it all up to the Lord and beg Him to use my weakness to surface any brokenness and enemy strongholds in me that my natural strength and good health might otherwise have covered up. Amid antibiotics, many graciously offered alternative remedies, much time on my face before the Lord and the prayers of many friends, the Father not only used me to bring His truth and grace to many, but cleaned me out of much emotional, spiritual, and eventually physical sickness. Sadly, Mary's mother died in Arizona at 96 after a long illness when I was in Hong Kong, and we had to spend Thanksgiving apart.

I'm glad that the computers held strong after all. But for me personally, the year's Good News was this: Though I was weakened, my Father gave me strength to minister at all my scheduled events; though emptied, my Father filled me with His Spirit; though events rarely drew more than 100 men, the Father healed deeply; though saddened, Mary has taken her grief to the Father and is growing through it; though often apart geographically, the Father has drawn our family closer; though we saved no money, my Father provided so all bills were paid; though at times I was brought low by circumstances, today I'm lifted up by my Father with thanksgiving and praise. 2 Corinth. 4:7-11--a celebration of God's hand amid adversity--has come alive to me.

When I was much younger, and more impressed thereby with my own strength and worldly merits, any trial would stir me to demand, “Why me, Lord?” Today, my words are the same, but my spirit has changed. I no longer wonder why someone so able and deserving should suffer such pain, but rather, why someone so unable and undeserving should enjoy such blessing. At 56, I give up on a mind to understand it. I just pray for a heart to receive it. And speaking of surprise blessings: When I first met Mary, I asked her where she would most like to go for a vacation. “The Greek Isles,” she replied. I confess I had hoped for something more affordable (say, Disneyland?). And then recently, shortly after our 10th anniversary, I was asked to be the speaker next June on a “Tour of the Bible Lands” cruise, “fully paid with one other accompanying,” to—yes, the Greek Isles! Come with us if you can--click below for details.

Perhaps fittingly, for my last event of this year I was privileged to minister in Hong Kong at the invitation of Jackie Pullinger, who has been used powerfully to restore drug addicts there to sobriety and their destiny in the Lord. Without advertising, word spread far beyond her ministry, and over 600 men from all walks of life came to Hong Kong's first Christian men's conference—my largest event in 8 years! I discovered—sadly—that the father-wound is at least as deep and destructive in Chinese men

(and women) as everywhere else in the world I've visited. But the Father is equally determined to restore His sons (and daughters) there as elsewhere!

As a shining example, the overseer of the drug rehab center--strong and healthy with his beautiful wife and two bright young children--is himself a "graduate" of the program some 10 years ago. Through a translator, he told me his addict parents had cast him out on the street at 5, and he grew up lost in drugs, in and out of prison and hospital emergency rooms. He had heard about Jesus, but scoffed at the stories. And then one day, at the end of his rope, he went to a drug den in the "Walled City" and began looking for Jackie's ministry center nearby. "I went not to *believe* in Jesus," he said, "but to *see* Jesus." (*Did you catch that, my fellow believers?*) He heard the music and worship, and soon after entering felt an arm around his shoulder. He was surprised to see a woman there. He thought, "This can't be Jesus—he's a man, wearing a long robe!" But as he looked into her eyes, he was literally transformed. "I saw acceptance in her eyes—something I'd never seen before. She didn't tell me I had to get off drugs. She just looked at me, and something good in me that had died came back to life again." The term, "resurrection eyes" came to mind; I offered it to the translator, and when he managed it in Chinese, we all smiled.

From England, Australia, and Hong Kong to California, Chicago, Dallas, and New England, I've continued to minister mostly to men and women who have long believed in Jesus—have read His Word, served His Church, anticipated His coming, and often moved in the gifts of His Spirit. But most have not dared to see Him as our true and living Father, beckoning us in our deepest wounds and needs. When the Father of Lies has insisted that our wounds are shameful, it feels safer to be a believer of doctrine. We don't trust the true Father to bear that shame, so like Adam and Eve, we cover ourselves and hide from Him. That is, those who haven't dared to *see* their deepest, unmet need for fathering can't *see* Jesus—who rebukes His disciples then as now, "For a long time I have been with you all, yet you do not know me, (Philip)? Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Do you know Jesus? Before you answer by telling me what you believe, answer this: *Have you let Jesus show you your true Father?*

In Hong Kong, as always, I preached that the world's pain and suffering break us unto death so we can at last recognize Jesus as the true Life-Giver and be born again as sons of the Father. A hard shell requires hard breaking before its seed can germinate (old American proverb!). Sincerely troubled, one Chinese brother pleaded, "But isn't there an easier way to do that, without going down so far and suffering so much?"

"Brother," I sighed—freely translated—"if you find it, no fair secrets!" Jesus promised His followers "tribulation" in this world, but in the same breath reminded that He had overcome the world that breeds it (John 16:33). I don't like tribulation, don't seek it, don't wish it on anyone else. But without it, I confess I'm too often content simply to *believe* in Jesus—and thereby not *see* what He died to bring me, namely, the outstretched arms of the Father we all long for, the destiny He set for me at the foundation of the earth, and His power at hand to fulfill it.

And so, my friends, in Y2K + 1, may you and your family trust afresh the Father and your destiny in His calling--looking not to *believe* in, but rather, to *see* Jesus--and may the living, risen Christ honor your faith by revealing afresh His purposes and power among you.

Shalom, Gordon

