

# Wellspring

February – May 2012 Isaiah 58.6

*All things are possible with God*

[A publication of Broken Yoke Ministries, Inc.]



## Not Everyone Will Agree

By Bob Van Domelen

<sup>24</sup> *Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.* (John 12.24)

For the past few weeks, I have been thinking quite a bit about Mother Teresa of Calcutta and sharing some of those thoughts with individuals with whom I correspond. I know, how would she fit into the context of this newsletter? But I think she does.

Letters she wrote to her spiritual advisors exposed the darkness and complete sense of separation she felt from God through most of her years in ministry. Not only could she not feel God's presence, at times she wrote that she was not even certain that God existed.

Mother Teresa came to believe, however, that she was feeling the darkness Jesus felt as He approached the cross, the complete absence of the Father. Despite this pain of separation, she determined to continue serving with the hope that all her efforts were done solely to bring God glory and honor.

Reading "Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light" was, at times, difficult because I couldn't imagine laboring as she did for so many years without some sense of feeling God's presence. Part of me was asking "If someone like Mother Teresa felt abandoned by God despite all she had done, what hope have I who does so little?"

***unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains but a grain of wheat***

When I first realized that God was calling me to serve in this ministry, I imagined all sorts of things. The plans I had were many and worth consideration, but they were *my* plans. Some of those plans became reality yet others died for lack of interest or support. The ministry, however, continued to move forward year after year.

Personally, my dreams have not been unlike those of many who read this newsletter, indeed many who have read it for years. To anyone recognizing unwanted same-gender attractions and desiring freedom, the prayer is simple: "God, change my thinking." Maybe we have even on occasion prayed "Make me normal." At this stage of my life, though, I tend to believe that "normal" would make me just like everyone else and I am no so sure I want to be like everyone else.

On the other hand, I have not fallen to the ground and died, either. I am still a grain of wheat. I pray for inner healing and a greater surrender to God while at the same time unwilling to really surrender. Surrender is not merely saying "Thy will be done, Lord." Surrender is adding "help my will be one with yours." And if I manage that last part,

then I won't necessarily know how God's will is to be done in my life. I won't necessarily see my life change in exactly the manner I want it to change because God's notion for my life is far better than any I could imagine.

Over the years I have met individuals claiming complete freedom from same-gender attractions. The skeptic in me may not say it but my mind sometimes offers a skeptical "Yeah, right." There are, however, a few whose shared statement of freedom didn't seem contradictory to me in any way. There was a difference in them and it was not some sign they wore saying "Now I am heterosexual."

Ironically, I think that the freedom I sensed in them was that the focus of their lives no longer dealt with the question of gay or straight. Though it might be confusing to say this, I am not suggesting that they became comfortable with a gay identity any more than they embraced a straight one as much as I am suggesting that their identity was God-centered, God-focused.

***but if [the grain of wheat] dies, it produces much fruit***

In all that she did, Mother Teresa lived in obedience to God's will and to those who were her superiors. She did not walk around with her eyes focused on the ground; she greeted whatever she was called to do with a smile regardless of the duty or how she felt about it. Others were drawn to her consistency and her faith without knowing what she suffered in the solitude of her thoughts. And in the end, she died leaving over 4500 members of the order she founded, the Missionaries of Charity.

It would be tempting to shove the book aside as being nothing more than the story of a truly remarkable woman. It would be tempting to suggest that God listened more to her than to you or me in our prayers because she was such a holy woman. And it would certainly be tempting to set aside any thought of being free from unwanted same-gender attractions if attraction still exists.

There is, I think, a critical element that has yet to be discussed—the matter of choice. In times of her spiritual darkness, Mother Teresa could have deserted her faith. She could, as she shared in her letters, have returned to the simplicity of religious life within the order of nuns where she professed her vows and avoided the path of complete reliance on God for every need. She chose instead to follow the calling impressed on her heart.

Her life, while an example of incredible love and service to those in need, is alien to most of us who have never had to sacrifice so much. We have been brought up in a world where happiness is defined by possessions, status, or personal happiness.

I would really like to share "All we have to do is . . ." but those words are pretty shallow when in context of surrendered living despite the fact that there is truth in them. I would like to say that change is a simple choice but nothing in this life is really simple. And as I have shared before, we don't really deliberately choose anything that we don't believe is in our best interests or that doesn't meet a need we have.

What I can share is that the path is laid out for us. Jesus walked it to a conclusion beyond our imagination so that we would find salvation. Whether we choose to walk that path or not is an individual choice and one that only God will judge.

Not everyone will agree with my choices and might have what they believe are good arguments against my decisions. But in the end my relationship with God (and yours, too) doesn't depend on others agreeing with it. If, however, I allow debate over same-gender attractions to dominate my life, I am missing the point. God made me to know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world and be happy with Him in the next. Amen.



### Ministry Ordains

The board of directors for Broken Yoke Ministries and Reclamation Resource Center approved the ordination of Jill Rennick, director of The Grace Place, and Mike Levenhagen, director of Reclamation Resource Center on Friday, December 16, at Meadowbrook Church. John Groff (center), board member, served as worship leader for the event.

### Newsletter Change

In 2009, the Board of Directors agreed to publishing *Wellspring* three times a year as both interest and financial support had been dropping. At the November Board of Directors meeting, the decision was made to offer this newsletter an internet option.

([www.brokenyoke.org/Wellspring.html](http://www.brokenyoke.org/Wellspring.html))

Approximately one third of the readers of *Wellspring* are inmates without internet access. In our last edition, this notice was given with a request that those wanting to continue receiving *Wellspring* should contact the ministry. Anyone so desiring to receive a print copy of the newsletter need only write the ministry with that request.

**Broken Yoke Ministries**  
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**De Pere, WI 54115-5824**



## The Grace Place

Exciting news! The Grace Place support group meetings now include focus on the following support systems: men, women, family and friends, and spouses.

Anyone interested in attending should contact Jill at 414-218-3940 or email her at [Jill@thegraceplace.us](mailto:Jill@thegraceplace.us).

## Wisconsin Support Group Ministry Locations

### The Grace Place

**Meetings:** Wauwatosa

**Support Group** (weekly)

Tuesday, 7:00PM

### Reclamation Resources

P.O. Box 1062

Oshkosh, WI 54902

Call 920-303-1041 for meeting information

<http://www.reclamationrc.org>

***Remember, this ministry depends on your donations to produce this newsletter and other ministry-related expenses. All donations are tax deductible.***

**Reminder: The next *Wellspring* will be published in June 2012 – online at [www.BrokenYoke.org](http://www.BrokenYoke.org)**



### *Our Prayer Corner*

*Because we care about one another,  
we pray . . .*

- For all those who struggle with same-sex attractions, that they embrace the identity God had in mind for them from the beginning.
- For those who are afraid to surrender, that they seek the Lord daily in all things.
- For those feel abandoned by God, that they will feel God's presence in their daily living.
- For *The Grace Place*, that the new name will encourage members of the support system to know that it is a good place to be.
- For parents dealing with a child who struggles with or has endorsed the gay life, that they not give up or fail to love.
- For the facilitators of our support group meetings, that they feel God's blessings for their efforts.
- For Jill as she continues to seek financial support in her role as a full-time co-director of this ministry.
- For the ongoing general financial support of this ministry, that those who are able will be willing to support us with both finance and prayer.