

Perspective is Everything: A Missionary's Reflection

by John Fain, Director of International Ministries PIONEERS (Fall, 1998)

The last couple of months have been intense, exhilarating, draining, yet satisfying. That's pretty much the norm for our lives, isn't it? Our prayer letter, which has already gone to press, will outline in greater detail some of those "happenings." One surprising event of late has been a sense of discouragement that has seemed almost designed by the enemy to bring us down. Nothing too earth-shattering to report...just the normal strains and disappointments of ministry in a fallen world. When I found this short article I wrote a year ago for our missionaries, it helped me to put things back in perspective. I dedicate it to one of my friends, Frank Merry, in Lexington, SC. Frank is a man who loves God passionately, and has labored with great energy to make HIM known among the nations. Frank is also suffering with a very serious form of cancer. Please join me in prayer for a fellow prayer warrior and his family who need HIS strong arms around them at this difficult time. Frank...behold the Lamb!

"Behold the Lamb"

Perspective is everything. Consider for a moment the amazing implications of these truths in light of your present circumstances...

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb...And cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb'....and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God. Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen!" --- The Revelation of St. John, Chapter 7.

No other religious creed or philosophical system heralds such a dramatic hope for the future. The best the world can offer is an anemic, hollow desire for "self-fulfillment" and material gain, or the crushing legalism embodied in ritualistic purity. Only the deliberate intervention of our Creator into human history would dare to account for such a grand and glorious reality. Only His God-sized outstretched arms could possibly embrace each of the distant cousins of our diverse and stiff-necked human family. His enduring love and His unfathomable grace alone could result in the vivid global display outlined in these verses. What a startling contrast to the fallen world in which we live, work and struggle!

Isn't that just like our God to explode the boundaries of our thinking, and challenge us to never, ever accept the status quo in our lives? Some of you reading this are desperately weary, having expended the last drops of your physical, emotional and spiritual resources in His service. Others are numb with grief--you have recently lost a loved one, or stood helpless as key, deeply valued relationships crumble around you. The pain is so intense that the vehicle of language is inadequate to describe your inner groanings and sleepless nights. Still others are questioning "the call." Why would He put me in THIS place on THIS team?! Is my life and spiritual gifting being wasted in the parched soil of this resistant land? You feel as Adoniram Judson who cried out during the darkest hour of the soul following the death of his wife and daughter..."God is to me the great Unknown, I believe in Him, but I find Him not!"

Yes, perspective is everything! Our labors are clearly not in vain. No matter what pressures we face or discouragements we are called on to endure, we get to see the end from the beginning! Someday each and every people on the face of the earth will have representatives at the ultimate

cosmic caucus! On that day it will all have been worth it! Imagine for a moment an international throng where all petty jealousies, prejudices, infighting and personal agendas have faded into oblivion in the blazing brilliance of His glory and warmth. Think of beholding with your own eyes the full extent of His beauty, melting away a lifetime of frustration and pain, and establishing perfect, eternal relationships with Himself and one another. This is not some man-made delusion or pipe dream of maniacal religious fanatics. It is, in fact, the God-ordained revelation of what is to come whether we really believe it or not.

Through the prayers of friends and ministry colleagues Adoniram Judson slowly aligned his perspective with God's vision of what is to come. The results were dramatic, catapulting him into a new era of personal growth and ministry effectiveness. What about you? Have you caught the vision of His ultimate victory and eternal reign? **Behold the Lamb.**