

HOLINESS IN MISSIONS

“She committed suicide,” I was told as I looked through a 1977 yearbook of one of our conservative educational ministries. “He is divorced.” “They no longer are Christians!” “They left their parent’s values years ago.” “I don’t think they go to church anywhere anymore.” “They dropped everything and sporadically attend a charismatic church.” Statements like these about many other individuals pictured there caused a lump to swell in my soul. What happened in these lives over the past thirty-five years? The portraits of these smiling “conservatives” would never suggest the cataclysmic changes that would characterize the next three decades of their lives.

These changes are not confined to Anabaptist circles. I recently read through the 1924 Student Cat-

alog of the Bemidji State University located near my home in Blackduck, Minnesota. A university that is decidedly secular today with its co-ed dorms and agnostic curriculum, encouraged their students in the “General Information” section of their catalog in that era to, “attend regularly some church of their choosing. The College, recognizing the value of religious culture, encourages its students to form and maintain intimate relations with the churches.”

The identification and practice of holiness has been nearly obliterated by the waves of lasciviousness, legalism, individualism, and denominationalism. Students who do not have a living faith will inevitably develop a false view of what motivates a Christian. They wrongly assume that practices of holiness are to somehow earn them favor with the Lord and/or the church. They fail to ever comprehend that true believers are drawn to holy living because of their deep love. In the absence of that love, holy living becomes burdensome and restrictive to the normal pursuits of life. The changes come rapidly when they “wake up,”

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WITH CHILDREN AT RISK IN CAMBODIA

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I WITNESS NEWS



IGO STUDENTS WITH TIBETAN FRIENDS IN CHINA

and their heritage is gladly abandoned with little or no thought about how the “new freedoms” will effect the culture and heritage of their offspring.

Gerald McDermot penned it well in *Seeing God*, when he said, “True Christians find that the love of God in Christ is so attractive, so beautiful, that they cannot help wanting to serve him.” He goes on to say, “If I had to summarize in one statement what distinguishes true from false spirituality, it would be this: the unregenerate never see the beauty of holiness. They may see and have some understanding of God’s holiness, but they never see it as beautiful.” He concludes, “only an appreciation of the beauty of God’s holiness is powerful enough to change the heart.”

The “fire escape” salvation that is offered by much of Evangelicalism today seldom lifts the seeker above a self-preserving tonic for the “old man.” Holy living is, at best, set aside as unnecessary, and at worst, seen as legalism. Legalism can never produce or maintain holiness. Legalism only produces a quaint people out of touch with God’s call to “go into all the world.” The fear of hell is insufficient for sustaining a life of holiness. Only a love for the Father can develop and nourish a holy life in the believer.

The beauty of holiness is captivating! It is comforting! It speaks of transcendence! It is powerful and gripping! Though we triumphantly sing, “Oh worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!” many of us have yet to feel its comforting intoxication. A woman from a Chiang Mai brothel came to the IGo chapel repeatedly just to watch loving fathers take care of their children during the service. She was fascinated by the beauty of holiness. A motorist who noticed a group of young people singing at a highway rest area, later wrote to say, “keep sharing that inner love.” He was captivated by the beauty of holiness. A pastor related his dislike for Americans until he hosted a group of radiant students on their ministry trip. Since then, he has not missed attending the annual Asian Bible School. He was gripped



NEW STAFF MEMBER BEING “CHEERED”

Val Yoder, the IGo Administrator, was married to Barbara Lapp on January 14, 2012. Barbara plans to join him in the ministry when the second semester commences this summer. Val is currently “cheering” his wife in Minnesota as they reconnect with their home church at Kitchi Pines. In May they will move to New York where he will be able to become better acquainted with Barbara’s family and church. They would appreciate your prayers as they prepare to return to Thailand in August.

by the beauty of holiness.

The beauty of holiness “leaks” out of the lives of God’s people. It flows from their foundational love for God which colors all they do. Their kindness to their enemies is beautiful! Their radiant, joyful countenance is beautiful! Their life-long loving marriages are beautiful! Their self-sacrifice to “in honor prefer” another is beautiful! Their modest attractive appearance is beautiful! Their care for the poor and needy is beautiful! Their respect for the elderly is beautiful! Their reverence in worship is beautiful! Their beaming, obedient children are beautiful! Their moral standards of purity are beautiful! Their joyful, God-honoring music is beautiful! The heritage of godliness they have welcomed is beautiful! Their hearts that hold no grudges are beautiful!

This is the power of the Gospel! It is certainly true that Jesus forgives sin and removes us from the eternal consequence of that sin, but He doesn’t leave His people ugly! He makes them beautiful! He makes them holy, not only positionally, but actually! This is the message that evangelists and missionaries must carry to our dark world. Where Jesus has been, there is beauty! Let us sing with heart-felt desire:

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wonderful passion and purity;
O my Savior divine, all my nature refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me.*

~ Val Yoder

TESTIMONIES FROM IGO ALUMNI

A Pastor wrote:

I wanted to take a few minutes to send both of you a note on how ___ & ___ have been doing since they came home from IGo. As an encouragement to you and the work there in Thailand, well, let’s just say I really feel both their lives have been drastically changed in a very positive way. After spending some time with them, listening to their experiences and the spiritual insights they’ve gained, I’m more enthused about the program than ever! Both of them are like artisan wells - they’re full and running over, and wanting to share with others - especially our congregation and youth group - what God has been teaching them the last few months. It’s quite exciting to see. My prayer is that we can send more of our young people to IGo; I really feel our typical Anabaptist congregations can be changed in a positive direction if we inject some passion for ministry & service into our churches, starting with our young people. The vision they gain, if kept nurtured, can last a lifetime.



ABOVE: IGO MINISTRY TRIP IN CHINA
RIGHT: IGO STUDENTS SET UP THEIR TENT IN TIBET, CHINA



Scholarship Fund

The IGo Board has established a Scholarship Fund to assist students with the costs of attending IGo. This fund is designed to primarily assist two groups of students. First, students spend approximately \$6000.00 to fly to Thailand and attend a four-month semester. If they would like to remain for the second semester, there is the additional expense of about \$4000.00 to complete their training. Since most young people don’t have that much money available to them, the scholarship fund is available to help them with the costs of the second semester. Secondly, a prospective student who has been involved in VS for a year or more within the previous eighteen months also qualifies for financial assistance. These students can only be helped if there is money in the scholarship fund to assist them. If you would like to contribute to the scholarship fund, please send your donation to IGo, PO Box 116, Ephrata, PA 17522 earmarked for the IGo Scholarship Fund.

A Student:

One thing I have been thinking a lot about is this whole vision of starting a young men’s Bible Study/Mentoring programs for any of the youth guys from our two churches. I have learned so much from the mentoring program I was a part of at IGo and it’s my desire that more young people could start sharing and studying the Bible together in this way!

CONTACT

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TESTIMONIES FROM IGO ALUMNI CONT.

A Student

There's just no other way (than journaling) to process and recuperate and adjust from 4 months of what I experienced on the other side of the world. I feel like I have learned more about myself and God in the last 2 months than any other short time period of my life. And I can't get done being grateful for it. It's even starting to take away my fear of the future with its inevitable disappointments and pain. Turns out, God uses those things to make life beautiful. It's nice to finally feel that peace and reassurance after so long wrestling and yearning inside.

RISE UP OH MEN OF GOD

Currently we have a one to five deficit of men to ladies planning to attend the first semester of this year. We need men for the harvest! Men provide the protection and leadership for whatever is to happen in the Kingdom of God. That includes the student body and ministry trips each semester at IGo. If you, or someone you know of would be willing to prepare for the work of the harvest by coming to IGo this April . . . we would love to hear from you now!



JUMPING ROPE WITH CHILDREN AT RISK
IN CAMBODIA



SPREADING JESUS LOVE TO THE
CHILDREN IN CHINA