



Of Seeds and Flowers



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AMERICA-2021, LET'S DECLARE IT A YEAR, IN DESPERATE NEED OF TRUTH, FORGIVENESS, RECONCILIATION AND LOVE!!

In the village of Laken in innermost Friesland there lived a long thin baker named Fouke, a righteous man, with a long thin chin and a long thin nose. Fouke was so upright that he seemed to spray righteousness from his thin lips over everyone who came near him; so, the people of Laken preferred to stay away.

Fouke's wife, Hilda, was short and round, her arms were round, her bosom was round, her rump was round. Hilda did not keep people at bay with righteousness; her soft roundness seems to invite them instead to come close to her in order to share the warm cheer of her open heart.

Hilda respected her righteous husband, and loved him too, as much as he allowed her; but her heart ached for something more from him than his worthy righteousness. And there, in the bed of her need, lay the seed of sadness.

One morning, having worked since dawn to knead his dough for the ovens, Fouke came home and found a stranger in his bedroom lying with Hilda.

Hilda's adultery soon became the talk of the tavern and the scandal of the Laken congregation. Everyone assumed that Fouke would cast Hilda out of his house, so righteous was he. But he surprised everyone by keeping Hilda as his wife, saying

he forgave her as the Good Book said he should. In his heart of hearts, however, Fouke could not forgive Hilda for bringing shame to his name. Whenever he thought about her, his feelings toward her were angry and hard; he despised her as if she were a common whore. When it came right down to it, he hated her for betraying him after he had been so good and so faithful a husband to her. He only pretended to forgive Hilda so that he could punish her with his righteous mercy. But



Fouke's fakery did not sit well in heaven.

So, each time that Fouke would feel his secret hate toward Hilda, an angel came to him and dropped a small pebble, hardly the size of a shirt button into Fouke's heart. Each time a pebble dropped; Fouke would feel a stab of pain like the pain he felt when he saw Hilda with the stranger. And so, he hated her the more; his hate brought him pain and his pain made him hate.

The pebbles multiplied. And Fouke's heart grew very heavy with the weight of them, so heavy that the top half of his body bent forward so far that he had to strain

his neck upward in order to see straight ahead. Weary with hurt, Fouke began to wish he were dead.

The angel who dropped the pebbles into his heart came to Fouke one night and told him how he could be healed of his hurt. There was one remedy, he said, only one, for the hurt of a wounded heart. Fouke would need the miracle of the magic eyes. He would need eyes that could look back to the beginning of his hurt and see his Hilda, not as a wife who betrayed him, but as a weak woman who needed him. Only a new way of looking at things through the magic eyes could heal the hurt flowing from the wounds of yesterday.

Fouke protested. "Nothing can change the past," he said. "Hilda is guilty; a fact that not even an angel can change."

"Yes, poor hurting man, you are right," the angel said, "You cannot change the past, you can only heal the hurt that came to you from the past. And you can heal it only with the vision of the magic eyes."

"And how can I get your magic eyes?" pouted Fouke.

"Only ask, and they will be given you. Each time you see Hilda through your new eyes, one pebble will be lifted from your aching heart."

Fouke could not ask at once, for he had grown to love his hatred. But the pain of his heart finally drove him to want and to ask for the magic eyes that the angel had promised. So, he asked. And the angel gave.

Soon Hilda began to change in front of Fouke's eyes, wonderfully and mysteriously. He began to see her as a needy woman who loved him, instead of a wicked woman who betrayed him.

The angel kept his promise; he lifted the pebbles from Fouke's heart, one by one, though it took a long time to take them all away. Fouke gradually felt his heart grow lighter; he began to walk straight again, and somehow his nose and his chin seemed less thin and sharp than before. He invited Hilda to come into his heart again, and she came, and together they began again a journey into their second season of humble joy.

"Forgive & Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve" – SMEDES

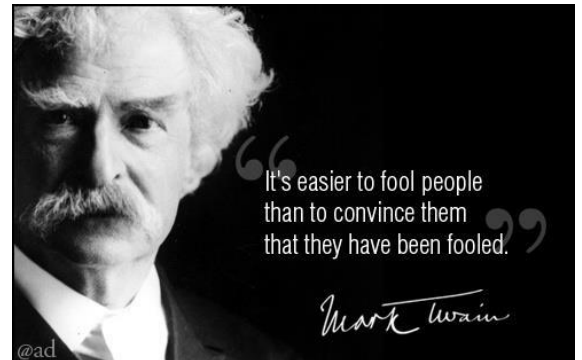


The Christian life is ALWAYS ABOUT MOTIVATION. **"Why am I doing this?" "Why am I NOT doing this?"**

A story tells that two friends were walking through the desert. During some point of the journey, they had an argument, and one friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand: TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SLAPPED ME IN THE FACE. They kept on walking until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire and started drowning, but the friend saved him. After he recovered from the near drowning, he wrote on a stone: TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SAVED MY LIFE. The friend who had slapped and saved his best friend asked him, *"After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand and now, you write on a stone, why?"* The other friend replied: *"When someone hurts us, we should write it down in sand where winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it."*

Prayer before the U.S. Senate, 1946. *"The choice before us is plain: Christ or chaos, conviction or compromise, discipline or disintegration. I am rather tired of hearing about our rights and privileges as Americans. The time is come - it is now - when we ought to hear about the duties and responsibilities of our citizenship. America's future depends upon her accepting and demonstrating God's government, NOW!!* Peter Marshall, CHAPLAIN, US SENATE 1946-48 **"There is a watchman – a watchman that stands before the door of anarchy and it is TRUTH."**

Franklin Graham, wisdom: *"I am not sure exactly where our great nation is on this slippery slope of decadence, but I know we are perched on the precipice of even greater depravity unless God's grace and mercy lead us to personal repentance and national renewal"* **Franklin Graham, June 2018.**



And a prayer from Franklin's father, Rev. Billy Graham: *'Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. **We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values.** We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot policemen and abortionists and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self- esteem. We have abused power, ruined reputations, built debt and called it politics. We have been misled by the media and called it journalism. We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have pretended to care for children and called it liberation and career building. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment. Search us, Oh God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Amen!'*

The Church and our Society are filled with three kinds of people:

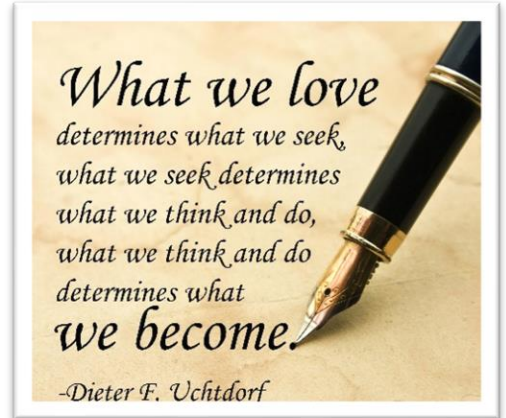
1. **UNCRITICAL LOVERS** - Who so love their culture, church, institutions blindly. They can't see defects or shortcomings.
2. **UNLOVING CRITICS** - who only know how to criticize, complain and never offer positive solutions to all that they soil.
3. **CRITICAL LOVERS** - People of wisdom, insight; people who see and feel the consequences of present decisions and their effect on the future. HOW WE NEED CRITICAL, WISE LOVERS!! *"Where there is no wisdom the people perish."* Proverbs



Men always lose half of what is gained by violence. What is gained by discussion and reason is gained forever.



JANUARY IS THE ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE: 2400 ABORTIONS A DAY IN THE U.S. ALONE! -ABOUT 930,000 A YEAR! 60 MILLION SINCE ROE V. WADE. AND NOW, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, THE HEINOUS PRACTICE OF HARVESTING TISSUES AND **ORGANS FROM LIVE BABIES**. OUR FUTURE DOCTORS, AND YOUR TAX DOLLARS. - GRANTS FLOWING THROUGH OUR NATION'S NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH. *CAN YOU IMAGINE ONE OF YOUR CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN BEING USED FOR BODY PARTS?* IN SOME STATES, ADVOCATES OF ABORTION ARE PROMOTING THE ABILITY TO KILL YOUR BABY UP TO THREE DAYS AFTER THE CHILD IS BORN, AS LONG AS YOU KEEP THE CHILD COMFORTABLE FOR THOSE THREE DAYS. *"THE HOTTEST PLACES IN HELL ARE RESERVED FOR THOSE WHO, IN A TIME OF MORAL CRISIS, REMAINED NEUTRAL."* - DANTE



On November 17th the Catholic Bishops of the Us USCCB issued a warning to Mr. Biden that his stance on abortion causes confusion among the Catholic faithful. Duh! Do you think? -and Nancy Pelosi and Andrew Cuomo as well. Are they still Christians? YES, if they haven't denied Jesus as Lord and Savior etc.. Are they still Catholic Christians? NO. Should they be denied the Eucharist, the SIGN AND CAUSE of UNITY in the Body? YES.



Three good questions to help us (especially politicians and the media) to decide the morality of the actions we/they are about to perform:

1. Would I like to be found doing this when Jesus Christ comes again?
2. Can I invite Jesus to come along and be involved in this action?
3. Will this hurt someone else? Will this be a stumbling block for another person? Would I like this to be done to me?

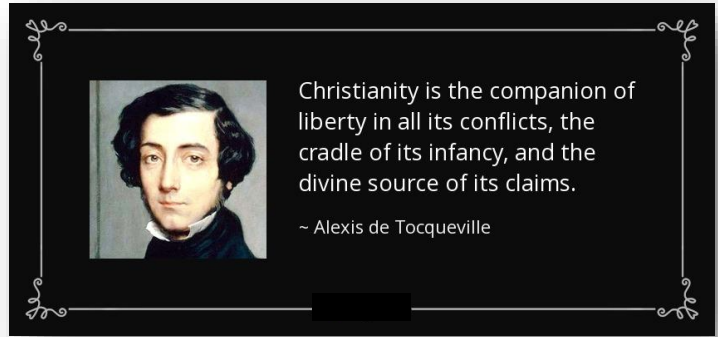
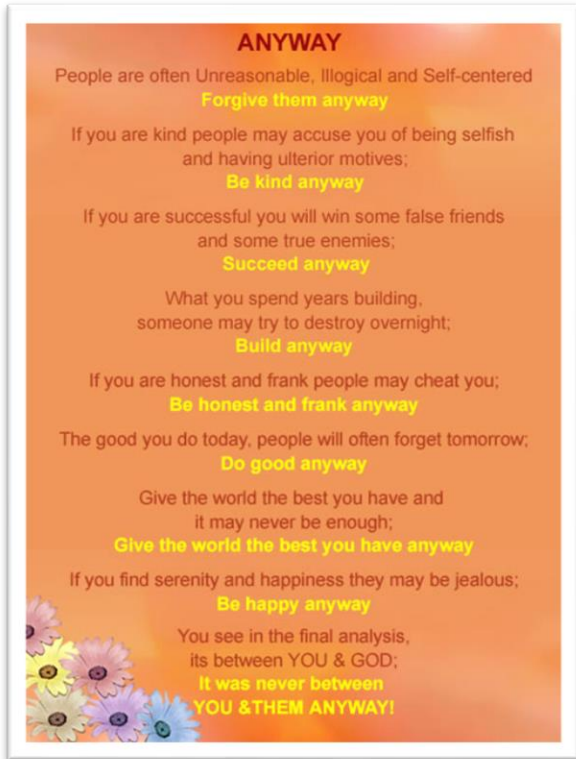
CHRISTIAN UNITY: In January, we have special thoughts and prayers for all of the divided Christian groups united forever in the name of Jesus. -and long for the day when ALL will be united in one profession of faith. Jesus at the Last Supper prayed: *"Consecrate them by means of truth. Your word is truth. ... that they may be one, as we are one, I living in them, you living in me that their unity may be complete. So SHALL THE WORLD KNOW THAT YOU SENT ME..."* John 17: 22-23. **UNITY** is such a powerful sign to the world!! **Disunity** shatters the message of Jesus.

There is an unseen, unrecognized and often denied REAL WORLD all around us. -the world of angels, demons and saints. At PRESENT, in this very real world, there is a battle raging. -a **true spiritual warfare!** How else explain the incredible evil, the incredible NON-TRUTH and mind-boggling lack of logic that DAILY is accepted in our culture and goes unchallenged. *"Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the*

dragon and his angels fought back. But the dragon was not strong enough and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down- that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads THE WHOLE WORLD ASTRAY. **He was hurled to earth, and his angels with him.**" **Revelations 12: 7-9.**

SPEAKING SOFTLY:

A poem Mother Teresa hung in the Calcutta Orphanage.



Prayer to Our Lady of Lourdes: *Dear Lady of Lourdes, I ask for healing that I may live my life to its fullest Christian potential. I ask for health and strength of body that I may be well prepared for whatever lies before me. I ask for mental clarity and alertness that I may grow in knowledge and wisdom, while remaining open to positive change. Uplift my spirit and make it secure in God's goodness and mercy. Amen.*

"If I could encourage you toward one spiritual discipline, it would be silence and solitude. I don't see any other way out of the addictive society apart from a significant and chosen degree of silence and solitude." - Richard Rohr

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF BECOMING AND WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS TO AVOID IT?



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