

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.*

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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"Love love" - Immersed in Love

And, you, may the Lord cause to abound and excel in your love one toward another, and toward all,—even as, we, do toward you: To the end he may confirm your hearts, faultless in holiness, before our God and Father, in the Presence of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 Rotherham)

In the last issue, I wrote I was groaning and rejoicing at the same time. Well, what follows is a report of the rejoicing.

Our rejoicing is based on an experience my wife and I had from November 7-12, 2016 at the height of the US presidential election that I have written about in the last several issues. By way of introduction, the election, as far as we know today, settled who will become the 45th president. However, our nation continues to be divided down the middle and, most likely, will remain that way, at least for now. As published in the last issue, even the public church is divided between the God, guns, and country crowd and the racial justice crowd. So, we have a nation divided with some elated at the outcome and some traumatized by it. One thing that is clear to me, based on a dream I had in 2009, is that the leadership of the last seven years has been judged and most likely war was averted. As reported, I saw a huge rocket, a symbol of war, on a launch pad but did not see it moving. At this point, I interpret this to mean that the current leadership was leading us into war, but God's hand of judgment has stayed it.

On October 9, 2016, the Lord spoke to my heart that ***"a vote today is a vote for the world system, for Babylon which is falling."*** The Lord knew what was ahead for us, for we didn't get to vote and the sky did not dissolve and the Lord disown us. Actually, just the opposite occurred as the Lord revealed His love to us in a marvelous way.

On the eve of the presidential election, November 7, 2016, the day started out as usual but ended on an entirely different note. At 3 pm, I had to take my wife to a doctor for severe pain, by 5 pm we were sitting in the Emergency Room of a local hospital, and shortly after that she was admitted to the hospital. However, there were no beds available so she (we) had to wait in the ER until 7 am the next day at which time a room came open. During her time in the ER, several tests were done on her, one of which was quite unpleasant, but the grace of God was upon her to endure it with grace. Six days later, she was released from the hospital, much better than when she was admitted.

Now, to some, this experience might seem like a nightmare. How could one rejoice over this? After all, 14 hours in the ER is quite a long time, and six days in a hospital can't be all that pleasant. However, let me assure you that it was nothing of the sort. Over the last 13 years, we have had a lot of exposure to the medical community, including hospitals and their level of care, some of which was good and some of which was not so good. At least one person we know has used this same ER and hospital but did not have the experience we had.

You might think that I am rejoicing that my wife is home and doing well. To be sure, this is cause for rejoicing, and I am very thankful how this event turned out, although it may not be entirely over as follow-up is required. However, we are both rejoicing over the love both of us experienced from the entire hospital staff from beginning to end, from the ER staff to the ones doing the many tests to the doctors, nurses, and technicians that cared for her during her stay. It is difficult to put in words, but we were immersed in the love of God the entire time. In such a setting surrounded by many healthcare professionals, it would not be unusual to encounter one or two people that were having an off day, but, as God is our witness, we encountered no one having an off day, as in, being rude or uncaring. Everyone was kind and caring.

But it goes even beyond this. The ICU was on the same floor as my wife's room and there was a waiting room where families gathered while they waited for their loved ones to get better. For the entire time, the same black family was waiting outside the ICU each day, often all day long. As we took daily walks so my wife could gain her strength, we would stop and talk to this family. One morning I took a stroll and only one of the men was in the waiting area. When he saw me, he said: "Hi, brother." Can you imagine that; a black man calling me brother as the nation and the church are so divided along so many lines, including race, during a raucous election? I realize some might say that this is not unusual when people are in difficult times; people tend to draw together in a helpful way that crosses all divides. True. But, there was much more to this experience.

It is important to understand that during this time, we, nor anyone else, mentioned the name of Jesus. We never tried to share Christ with anyone and no one tried to share with us. Only once did we mention "the Lord" to a physician's assistant and she acknowledged agreement with us. That was it. In other words, we did not parade around telling people we were Christians. We simply responded to the kindness we received by being kind and thankful in return. We were manifesting the life of Christ without advertising it, and everyone was manifesting the love of God, whether they were Christians or not, whether they knew Jesus or not. As the old song goes: "Love was in the air." God's love transcends time, space, and man's temporal labels. One does not have to be labeled a Christian to manifest God's love. This is vital to what we saw throughout this time.

Bear with me; before pulling this together, I need to share a dream I had on October 19, 2016. I was asleep and in a dream state I asked the Lord: **What is the prophetic word for the church?** I found myself repeating this over and over again until sometime between 3-4 am, I saw a page that looked like it was out of a bible. In the middle of a paragraph, I saw the words: **Love love!**

It must have been the Spirit of the Lord, for I knew right away that this was a verb and a noun. *Love* (verb) *love* (noun). It is like saying "love receiving love" or "love to love" or "love giving love." Another way to state it is "love the whole concept of love." To this could be added "the manifestation of love" or "the experience of love." But even these seem to fall short. I believe the Lord did not elaborate or string other words into this, as I have, to stress a much higher and all-inclusive expression. After all, **God is love**, and this is the greatest and most profound essence of God. The whole embodiment of God's ultimate purpose to be **All in all** is summed up and encapsulated in love. And, we must add that this love is the love of God in His Son, our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One. *Love love* is the height, width, and depth of God. *Love love* is the expression of the entire creation of God. *Love love* is the hallmark of the New Creation in Christ. *Love love* is the answer to the old humanity that is passing away.

I apologize for my words falling so far short of the greatness of these words *love love*. May the Spirit of the Lord make them *rhema* to you.

Now, back to the six days in the hospital. The best way we can describe this glorious experience is that we were immersed in the love of God in Christ the entire time. It was a manifestation of the expression *love love*. It didn't have to be put into words; it was something that had to be experienced. The world outside was embroiled in and being split apart with politics, but we and all around us were like in a bubble. No one was speaking of the election; everyone was simply going to work and doing their job and doing it well, and we were the recipients. And, we give all the glory to God the Father and His Son.

But there is one more thing. The Spirit of the Lord has impressed upon my heart that this experience was a foreshadow of the Anointing that is coming. In fact, this experience was the Anointing and we experienced the Presence of the Lord. Many Christians in certain circles view an anointing as having the ability to do great things that make them stand out from others. In the end, much of what is called *anointing* looks and feels more like a circus routine driven by the soul and not the spirit. This is not anointing.

Dear brethren, the Anointing that is coming is the manifestation of the love of God. Its hallmark will be *love love!* Love transcends all divisions, love heals, and love never fails. Love is the greatest of all, for it is God is All in all. Glory is the ultimate manifestation of God's pure, unhindered essence of love. In His love, the Lord used my wife's hospital stay to write this on our hearts. Again, we give Him all the glory. May He write this on your heart, as well.