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A Newsletter of the Amy Foundation



Because He is God

By Steve Camp

Because He is God, He must be reckoned with. Because He is God, He must not be trifled with. Because He is God, we must love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength—and love our neighbor as ourselves. Because He is God, we ought to worship Him in spirit and truth. Because He is God, we esteem Him with an undivided heart as First Love. Because He is God, we must approach Him clothed in contrition and we tremble at His Word. Because He is God, we give Him the preeminence in all things.

Is. 6:1-5 *"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a*

people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

Because He is God, he has given us His grace instead of His wrath; His love instead of His enmity; His mercy instead of His justice; joy unspeakable in glory instead of torment in hell for perpetuity. Because He is God, I have no right to myself. Because He is God, I must walk in love, and love others, as Christ loved me and gave Himself for me. Because He is God, I must be willing to forgive as God in Christ has forgiven me. Because He is God, we love the brethren. Because He is God, I cannot harbor anger, wrath, clamor, bitterness, and malice in my heart toward another. Because He is God, I must turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, and give someone my cloak if they want my coat too. Because He is God, I must be willing to suffer the loss of all things, to gain everything. Because He is God, I can rest in the surety that He is orchestrating all things for our good and His glory. Because He is God, I cannot repay evil for evil, wrong for wrong, hurt for hurt. Because He is God, we may re-

joice when our hearts are breaking and our world has been shaken. Because He is God, our trials are blessings-invited guests and not strangers.

[Continued on page 2](#) ➤

Christian music artist Steve Camp has been a dynamic voice to the Church for more than two decades, with over 50 top ten songs and 21 number one. The past three years Steve has begun a new web-based ministry, "Audience ONE Ministries." Distributed by www.ChristianWorldviewNetwork.com

Prayer Requests

We believe "The prayers of the righteous availeth much." We invite you to pray with us about various aspects of The Amy Foundation Ministry.

Amy Prayer List:

- That the Internet Syndicate will expand to new outlets so that many more people will be able to access excellent, professionally written columns dealing with today's issues from God's perspective.
- That the Holy Spirit will inspire Internet Syndicate writers.

Because He is God

◀ *Continued from Page 1*

Rev. 1:12-18 *Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades."*

Because He is God, we keep our vows to our spouse even when he or she seems unlovable, unapproachable, unteachable, or uncaring. Because He is God, we train our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Because He is God, we cannot take another to court and sue for reparations. Because He is God, we have the right to be wronged. Because He is God, we love His Word more than daily food. Because He is God, pastors should preach the Word of God instead of being clever raconteurs. Because He is God, the church must discipline sin and not wink at it. Because He is God, I cannot cherish my sin, but must daily repent of it. Because He is God, I've made a covenant with my eyes. Because He is God, I must guard my heart. Because He is God, I must not

be motivated by man's applause, but by His "well done." Because He is God, we cannot become unequally yoked with an unbeliever in any spiritual ministry or enterprise. Because He is God, all our possessions are for the Master's use—they are not ours; they belong to Him. Because He is God, we must deny ourselves, daily take up our cross and follow Him.

Col. 1:15-20 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

To do all to His glory, according to His divine purpose, under the authority of His Word, to seek His will more than earthly reward, to embrace the fellowship of His sufferings rather than the pleasures of this world even for a season, to live self-sacrificially in unreciprocated love and service to others—to do all this for no other reason than... **because He is God!** ▶

Active writing doesn't sit still

Words that just sit there will not invite someone to continue reading.

Pay attention to your writing from beginning to end. Notice the use of verbs throughout. Did you begin with active verbs and then get tired of trying?

Avoid passive verbs by eliminating helpers such as *would, could, should, have, has, had*. Figure out different ways to express verbs besides relying on those boring old crutches.

Example: *Samuel would try to excite his family to serve in soup kitchens each month.*

Instead, try: *Samuel tried to excite his family to serve in soup kitchens each month.*

Search for the passive "to-be" verbs in your writing. Spend time seeking and destroying those verbs that just take up space. Be verbs include the words *am, is, are, was, were, be, been*, and (sometimes) *being*.

Example: *Ever the perfectionist, Judy was consumed by a passion for good writing.*

Instead, try: *Ever the perfectionist, a passion for good writing consumed Judy's attention.*

Pen & Sword

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Becoming a Rock

by Shirley Roberts

I prayed as I drove home that day, prayed for a leader to step forward and direct a Divorce Recovery Workshop at our church.

Since I had recently attended this type of workshop, I understood how important it could be in the lives of devastated people who were experiencing divorce. "Wish I could do it" I thought, and just as quickly I chastised myself. Professionals ran the workshops and I was a 58-year-old housewife, working two jobs simply to survive. I was also terrified of speaking before a group of people, no matter how small. I couldn't do it.

Two days later I received a call from one of the pastors. "I have spent much time in prayer. I believe God is telling me you are the person who should lead our workshops."

In amazement, I heard myself saying, "Yes, I would love to do it." *Was I out of my mind?*

I prayed, planned and organized. Too soon, the big evening arrived and a group of people gathered in the room. I stepped before them but I was not prepared for the tears, pain, grief, and agony on their faces. I understood it, but never got used to it, even after conducting many workshops.

The joy came later, when people returned for the third or fourth evening. I would walk out of the room to pray, and I would pause to listen to the laughter and chatter. It was wonderful to experience the changes taking place in their lives.

Some walked away with nothing and made no improvements, but for many, the transformation was phenomenal. Some would seek counseling. Others made plans to return to their own churches to conduct the workshop, and one man became a leader of our own single's group.

I would weave the plan of salvation into my talk and some accepted Christ. Many began attending our church.

The call came in the autumn of 1994, and I have moved on to the seniors' group and no longer lead the divorce recovery workshop. I recall with fond memories, however, how God used an ordinary person to accomplish extraordinary things for His Glory.

Peter failed miserably when he denied Jesus, yet Jesus proclaimed "Upon this rock, I will build my church". We will all fail many times in our lives, yet we can be a tiny rock upon which God can build something mighty. ◀

Shirley Roberts faced a devastating divorce in 1990 and was later led to direct workshops to help others through similar experiences. After her divorce, she gave up writing, but now in her retirement years she has returned to write "life experiences" primarily for her six grandchildren. She lives in Cincinnati, OH.

Tell us a discipling story

Do you have an interesting discipling story to tell? Send a vignette (200-400 words) about a situation or interaction that led to your discipling another person—or group of people—in an unusual or unexpected way. How was God faithful in supporting, reinforcing or extending your obedient actions?

Send stories to:

Pen & Sword Editors, Amy Foundation, P.O. Box 16901, Lansing, MI 48901;

or email AMYFOUNDTN@aol.com.

Amy Syndicate Editor releases book

We invite you to join Amy Syndicate Editor James Jackson in praise to God for fulfilling his lifelong dream of having a book published.

James' book *In All Things... Moral Reflections and Decisions on Life Issues*, encourages readers to acknowledge God's answers to daily challenges.

The book is available online from Tate Publishing at www.tatepublishing.com.

You can also order books directly from James by sending a check or money order to **3121 Nonette Dr; Lansing, MI 48911**, or you may pay via PayPal (jjaxcoj@aol.com). Books purchased direct are \$16.99 plus \$3.00 shipping.

James invites you to include a note indicating if you want a signed copy.



Meet the Amy Foundation Board

Introducing: Terry Hart

Terry is president of T.L. Hart, Inc., a commercial-industrial painting contractor. He also serves as pastor of Commerce Church of Greater Lansing, MI.

He and his wife of 36 years, Barbara, have five children and nine grandchildren. Terry has served on the Amy Foundation Board for 20 years.

Terry has been a disciple of Jesus Christ for 33 years. He said his "local fellowship group, specifically my home group leader," was instrumental in discipling him in his relationship with the Lord. Currently his discipling ministry focuses on working with a married couple.

His good friend and mentor, the late James Russell, asked him to serve on the Amy Board. When it comes to the future focus of the Amy Foundation, Terry wants to see:

- the declining print media/internet explosion nut cracked.
- the Amy Syndicate expanded.
- new, un-thought of venues for accomplishing our goals.

Terry also serves as a syndicated writer for the Amy Internet Syndicate.

About the Amy Foundation

The Amy Foundation, founded in 1976 by W. James Russell and his wife Phyllis, was named after their daughter. The Foundation is best known for its Amy Writing Awards, which is a call to present biblical truth reinforced with scripture in secular, non-religious publications. It is acclaimed as the most popular journalism contest in the nation.

All Amy Foundation programs are designed to encourage and equip professional and non-professional writers to develop and use their skills to the reclaiming of America. We hope that you will use its resources to participate in fulfilling Jesus' final instructions as stated in The Great Commission.



Submit Today!

15 writers will receive
\$34,000 in cash prizes

The Amy Foundation Writing Awards program recognizes writers who skillfully and creatively present the biblical position on issues affecting the world today in a sensitive and thought-provoking manner. Qualifying non-fiction entries must have been published in a mainstream non-religious publication.

Winning entries will be re-published in an annual collection of prize-winning entries.

For rules, sample articles and submission forms, visit www.amyfound.org or call 877-727-4262.



The Amy Foundation
Discipling Our Nation in this Generation

Time to Practice Art of Contentment

by Mike Mirakian

Imagine what people in the world's most impoverished communities would think if they heard the news. What if the Darfur refugees or the poorest of the poor in the streets of Calcutta saw the headlines. The American economy shows signs of a slowdown, so the government plans to send out money to every household in the nation.

Economists began warning of a possible recession a few weeks ago, and now our national leaders are falling all over themselves to put checks in the mail. Get money in the hands of American consumers, goes the argument, and we will do what we do best: buy stuff.

Congressional leaders from both sides of the aisle, the same ones who haven't been able to get along with each other enough to pass any significant legislation in nearly two years, have come out arm in arm to promote the economic stimulus package. With approval ratings hovering around 25 percent, Congress seems to have found their game in time to send voters some cash.

Times are tough, to be sure, for some people. The mortgage crisis has slammed the door on many one-time homeowners. Joblessness has increased. A recession would hurt just about everyone to some degree. And not many families would turn down a \$1,200 check in the mail.

But what if instead of consuming more, Americans learned to be content, learned that living within one's means can actually feel good? What if we all spent less and shared

more? What if we remembered "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21)?

See, there are only three things you can do with money. You can spend it, save it or share it.

Americans are the best in the world at spending. From an early age, we learn the value of a dollar by plunking a few down for a shiny new toy and then asking for more. As we grow up, we learn that we don't even need our own dollars to buy things; people are happy to purchase stuff for us if we promise to pay them back someday, with interest. American consumers spent nearly \$10 trillion last year, while the average household carried \$100,000 of debt.

So, we've got the spending thing down, but what about saving and sharing? Now to be fair, Americans are relatively generous people. Our charitable giving rates rival just about every other nation, but it still adds up to little more than two percent of income. And most people's saving habits are nothing to write home about either.

Americans have been blessed, and in many ways for many years we have been a blessing to others. But our prosperity shouldn't be license for greed, our blessings

shouldn't simply whet our appetite for more.

Contentment sounds like an old-fashioned word, but it paves the road to true, lasting happiness. Despite what Madison Avenue teaches, money and material things don't make us happy. They may cause us to feel good for a while, but the truth is (and we all know this from experience) the things of this life always end up disappointing us in the end. Toys break, clothes go out of style, cars rust, houses fall apart.

But if we can learn the secret of contentment, then our hearts will be free to pursue what truly matters, then we can learn what is truly valuable. The treasure our hearts most deeply desire isn't sold at the mall. Instead it must be formed in our relationships, nurtured in our character, and accepted in our souls. We find true treasure in loving family bonds, in giving of ourselves to bless others, and in honoring our God.

So, enjoy the fruits of the economic stimulus package. Buy something nice to help the economy. Put some away for a rainy day. Share a little with those in need. Your check in the mail offers an opportunity to practice the lost art of contentment, and with a little practice, you may find a more perfect form of happiness. ◀

Welcome
New
Syndicate
Writer

The Amy Foundation Syndicate welcomes Rev. Mike Mirakian as the newest columnist.

Mike's bio is posted on the web site, and his columns have begun to appear at the Syndicate page of amyfound.org.

Mike is the Pastor of Bretton Woods Church in Lansing, Michigan and is a member of the Amy Foundation Advisory Board.

"Real Answers™" furnished courtesy of The Amy Foundation Internet Syndicate. To contact the author or The Amy Foundation, write or E-mail to: P. O. Box 16091, Lansing, MI 48901-6091; amyfoundtn@aol.com

The Roads of Life

Fifth Place Award of \$2,000

Excerpt

by Guy Keeler

Gilbert Shamshoian knows where he's going, even though it's on a lesser-traveled path.

The man in the wheelchair was a fixture at the intersection of Clovis Avenue and old Highway 99 for nearly 40 years. Truck drivers and commuters saw him nearly every day, sitting in the shade of an evergreen tree, until he suddenly disappeared in the late 1970s.

It's impossible to say how many people Gilbert Shamshoian greeted over the years. Many returned his friendly wave and wondered what he was doing out there and what his story might be. But most were too busy to stop. To them, the man in the wheelchair was part of the landscape.

Not until Shamshoian was gone did travelers realize Clovis and 99 never would be the same without him. Judy Woods of Clovis, who passed Shamshoian while commuting in the 1950s, was surprised to learn he is alive and living about eight miles from his former haunt.

"I assumed he had died," she says.

Shamshoian, 77, didn't go far at all. In 1976, after his parents sold their 20-acre vineyard, he went to live with them. Then, in 1988, he moved into the Bethel Lutheran Home.

He still has the same wheelchair that was custom-built for him in the 1950s. He still gets outside for several hours every day, and, if you're lucky enough to catch up with him, he'll gladly tell you his story.

The hum of distant tires

Shamshoian was a mystery to most people during his years out by the highway. They didn't expect to see a guy in a wheelchair, let alone one who was there morning, noon and evening, day after day. Even though their windshields framed him for just a few fleeting seconds, those glimpses were enough to leave a lasting impression.

The highway was a powerful magnet. Its traffic flowed like a river and Shamshoian loved to sit beside it, dreaming about going to faraway places as the vehicles sped by. Unlike most people, who take travel for granted, his freedom of motion always has been limited.

From the day of his birth, it was evident Shamshoian would have trouble getting around. His left arm and leg were paralyzed when his spinal cord was damaged during a forceps delivery.

As far as book learning goes, Shamshoian figures he has the equivalent of a sixth-grade education. The highway was his classroom and gave him a reason to get up every morning.

"Going out to the highway gave Gilbert a sense of freedom and mobility," says Curtis Rasmussen of Kingsburg, who waved at him for years without knowing his name and then developed a close friendship when Shamshoian moved to Selma and started attending the First Baptist Church.

Barbary Harding says Shamshoian's positive spirit and his steadfast faith in God have helped him rise above the troubles in his life.

"Gilbert's education was limited," she says. "He was never able to work. He was never able to marry and have a family. I've assured him that God will make up for every disappointment he's had on earth. There will be no wheelchairs in heaven."

Shamshoian misses the highway but says his heart is set on following a different road these days. He says some of his favorite verses in the Bible are found in John 14, where Jesus talks about life beyond the grave.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled," Christ tells his followers. "Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

"Gilbert gets depressed, but not very frequently," Rasmussen says. "He has something beyond himself in his relationship with Jesus Christ. He sees that his life has purpose."

It doesn't bother Shamshoian to be remembered as the "man in a wheelchair" who sat by the side of the road. He sleeps well at night knowing that, with his good arm, he waved. And others waved back.

Guy Keeler is a feature writer for The Fresno Bee. His story, "No Greater Love" received Fifth Prize in the 2001 Amy Writing Awards and won first place for long-form feature writing in the Best of the West contest.

Greatest Story of Forgiveness

Award of Outstanding Merit - \$1,000

Excerpt

by Gregory J. Rummo

Today marks 50 years since five American missionaries were brutally murdered in the Amazon rain forest by a tribe of savage Indians then known as the Aucas. At the time, it was difficult to discern what good could possibly come from these violent and apparently senseless deaths. Yet, what happened as a result was nothing short of miraculous.

Jim Elliot, Pete Fleming, Nate Saint, Ed McCully and Roger Youdarian were American missionaries working in Ecuador. They had learned of a savage tribe of Indians that had killed several Shell Oil company employees. Violence was a way of life for the Aucas. Six of every ten adult deaths were homicides by spearing.

Fearless, the missionaries initiated contact through an ingenious method of lowering a bucket of gifts from a small airplane. As Nate Saint flew the bright yellow single-engine Piper PA-14 overhead, banking it in a tight circle, a bucket was lowered on a long rope. It remained nearly motionless, just long enough for several curious Aucas to help themselves to what was inside.

This continued for several months.

Thinking they had gained their trust, the missionaries landed their plane on a sand bar in the Curaray River. Over the ensuing days, they made

several friendly face-to-face encounters and even gave one of the Aucas, Naenkiwi, a ride in the plane. But on January 8, 1956, all five of the missionaries were attacked and brutally murdered.

The world recoiled in horror.

The images of the mutilated bodies, recovered from the Curaray River, appeared in newspapers across the country. LIFE Magazine ran a 10-page story on the incident. It seemed to be nothing more than a tragic loss.

But God would soon roll back the dark clouds of despair, allowing the world a providential glimpse into his often mysterious ways.

Two years later, in what could be considered one of the greatest acts of forgiveness in the 20th century, Elisabeth Elliot, Jim Elliot's wife and Rachel Saint, Nate Saint's sister, went to live with the tribe, now known as the Waodani.

The women studied the tribe's language and learned their culture. Their demonstration of forgiveness to the men who murdered their loved ones so moved the Waodani, they were given the opportunity to share the greatest story of forgiveness—Christ's death on the cross.

Many members of the tribe were converted to Christianity. The murder rate among the Waodani dropped 90%.

On January 20, 2006, *End of the Spear* opened in 1200 theaters across the country. It tells the story from the Waodani's point of view, showing how this extraordinary act of forgiveness led to an end of tribal violence and deep, caring friendships for the children of the men that were murdered.

On October 28, 1949—Jim Elliot wrote in his diary, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

In a little more than six years and two months, he was called on by God to make good on those words. In so doing, he demonstrated by his death the words of Jesus recorded in John's Gospel: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

Gregory J. Rummo is a businessman whose articles and photographs have appeared in newspapers and magazines. Rummo earned second prize in the 2001 Amy Writing Awards Contest. Rummo's commentaries appear Sundays in the New Jersey Herald and on The Amy Internet Syndicate. He may be contacted through his website, GregRummo.com

You can read the full text of all 15 winning entries for 2006 at www.amyfound.org.

***Watch for more Prize-Winners
in future issues of
Pen & Sword.***



THE AMY
FOUNDATION
NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2008



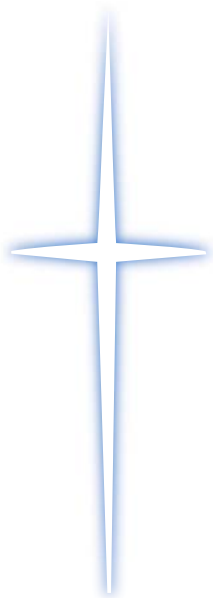
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The United States—A Discipled Nation



A Writer's Prayer

*Lord, make me an instrument of thy truth.
Where there is ignorance, let me sow knowledge;
Where there is foolishness, wisdom;
Where there is confusion, clarity;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is rancor, civility;
Grant that I may not so much seek to enlighten
As to be enlightened;
To instruct as to be instructed;
For it is only as Your Word illuminates my life
That I can bring light to others;
And it is only as Your love seasons my words
That I can bring truth to a deluded world.*

— Adapted from *The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi* by Linda Whitlock