



## ALL THE RAGE

BY DARYL DRIVER

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As a pastor, I'm often curious about where people find self-worth – and what happens as they're looking for it. How does the need for self-worth guide unbelievers to do and say what they do? How does it guide Christians to behave as we do?

This issue has been paramount since the beginning. Very early in Scripture we see Cain, because his sacrifice was not accepted, doubting his worthiness – and acts accordingly as he slays his brother Abel. Those who gather at Babel, anxious to have a reputation, are trying to establish their worthiness – and act accordingly with their ambitious building project. And on and on it goes, all the way down to us.

### We must recognize the flesh's insatiable desire to have its own way and plot its own rule.

Generations before us have tried to establish their worthiness by making a lot of money, wielding a lot of power, or drawing a lot of eyes. And now it seems modern culture has added another wrinkle – establishing personal worthiness by despising a lot of enemies.

Wide swaths of our population seek to find their self-worth in finding and attacking opponents, attempting to score debate points by naming and shaming ideological adversaries. Social media is the battlefield of choice in this endeavor, but it can also spill over into extended family networks, business arenas, and even congregations.

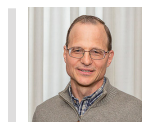
Now is a great time to remind ourselves that the Christian journey begins when an individual deals with the number one enemy: self. Or, to be more specific, deals with one's sinful nature, one's flesh. We must recognize the flesh's insatiable desire to have its own way and plot its own rule. Our spiritual journey with Jesus begins by denying the flesh so that we might submit to the Savior. Once we've chosen a

way that brings defeat to the power of sin and self, we are released not to find worth in annihilating a blood-and-bone enemy, but in knowing a Redeemer. We now have worth not in who we are, but in Whose we are.

Yet carnal influences remain. It is incredibly tempting in our day of political bickering to be “mental lawyers” – that is, to consume the latest news and immediately build a case in our minds for why our politics are right and the other side's are wrong.

This is not to say there are no absolutes. Thankfully, there are many, and the Bible spells them out. But if and when the time comes to give greater public account for our Christian convictions, we're called not to rise up with weaponry but to suffer for the faith – just as our early Anabaptist forebears did, just as our early Church brothers and sisters did. Those predecessors and others put into practice the teaching of Jesus: “You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:43-45a HCSB).

God is not looking for prosecutors. He's looking for intercessors. And we follow the example of the greatest Intercessor of all, the One who said on a rugged, Roman cross, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34a KJV).



*Daryl has served in pastoral and other ministries, and currently leads Word of Grace Church, a congregation he helped start in 2016. He and his wife Kay live in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.*

# Parting Challenges and Blessings

BY STEVE SWARTZ



For many years, my wife Phyllis and I have traveled to your churches. We've stayed in your homes, eaten meals in your fellowship halls, listened to you in meetings, and learned to love you. But now my role as conference pastor has ended. And Darren and Caryn Peachey will be traveling among you. They are younger and cooler than we are, and you will find them insightful, enthusiastic, personable, and caring.

And as they work with you to grow the kingdom, they will find:

- Leaders who have worked diligently in a time challenged by the pandemic and political polarization.
- Young people with spiritual fervor and a strong commitment to discipleship and justice.
- Churches yearning for more skill and creativity in reaching out locally and globally.
- A strong commitment to the Bible and to the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Conference agencies working perhaps more closely together than they ever have to honor God, serve the churches, and advance the gospel.
- Training and discipling programs for lay people and for credentialed ministers.

But, as always, CMC has more work to do:

- We are too white, not reflecting the diversity that will be found in heaven, and so missing the richness of how cultures can come together on earth.
- Our Statement of Practice calls us to seek out and cultivate the spiritual giftedness of men and women for the common good of the church. We have more seeking and more cultivating to do.
- The local church is to be the womb of church leaders of all types. We need to raise them up.
- Beyond local church training, we need to connect more of our young people to RI and RBC for missions/ evangelism and peace/community resources.
- The pandemic has begun to teach us how to communicate virtually. And we can learn still more about how technology can help us mature and multiply locally and globally.

As we've traveled, Phyllis and I often remarked about the quality of earnestness we have found so often in informal

conversations and in meetings. We've found this in the young people of CMC and in the older generations. We have found it in long-time CMC members and in people who have recently joined us. And this earnestness can make a way for us to keep searching the scriptures and following them, keep searching for God and finding him.

Our prayer for you and for Darren and Caryn is the priestly blessing found in Numbers 6:

*"The LORD bless you and keep you;*

*The LORD make His face shine upon you,*

*And be gracious to you;*

*The LORD lift up His countenance upon you,*

*And give you peace" (w.24-26, NKJV).*

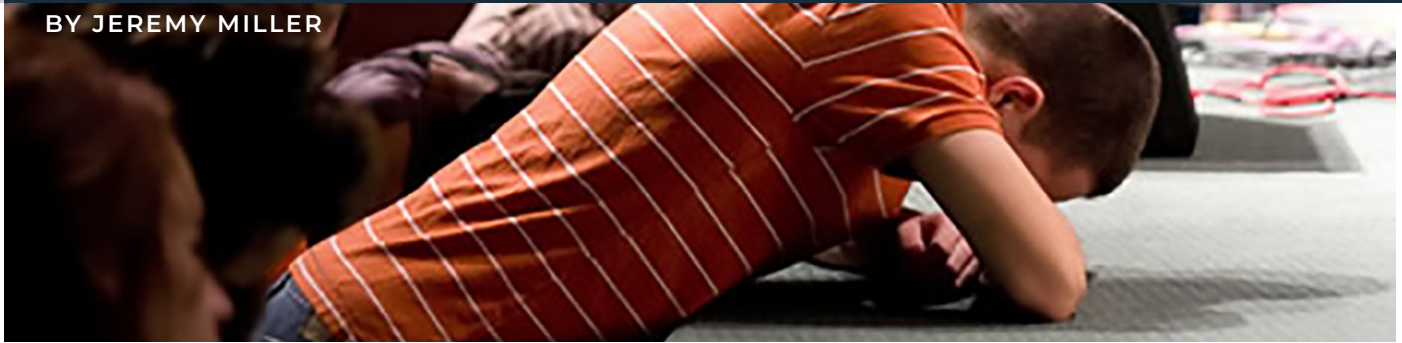


*Steve began his work with CMC in 2003 as General Secretary. In 2015 when Brian Hershberger joined CMC as Executive Director, Steve took on the role of Conference Pastor. Following his retirement at the end of April, Steve and Phyllis plan to do more than sit in rocking chairs! Steve will expand his professional counseling practice with individuals, marriages, and families. Phyllis will have more time to write. And together they expect to be more involved with their grandchildren, children, and parents and with their home church and the London community. Thanks so much, Steve (and Phyllis!), for your many years of faithful service to the CMC community and beyond!*



# Rhythms of Renewal

BY JEREMY MILLER



We lived a half mile from the church, occasionally walking to the service when the weather was nice. This proximity to the church and my mother's love of hosting meant that many traveling preachers shared meals with our family. At our church, the primary reason preachers from out of the area came around was to facilitate a week of revival services in the spring and again in the fall.

Revival services were key moments in the spiritual rhythm of our church. Several weeks before the arrival of a preacher we were often implored to begin praying for the meetings, building readiness and anticipation for what God was going to do. The kids would groan at the thought of being in church every night during the week, but we also knew revival week sometimes provided spiritual intrigue and excitement. We sat in rapt attention one year as a middle-aged man in the church tearfully confessed his reliance on alcohol. Another year, a young man spent a tense period of time wrestling with God in our church balcony, unsure about committing his life to Christ. Some adults in the church made their way upstairs to pray with him, praying with all the fervor a group of stoic Swiss/German folks are capable of.

## Do these spiritual highs dissuade and undermine a continuous and consistent walk with Jesus?

At least once during the week, services ended with the front of the church filled with people who were rededicating their lives to God. In retrospect, part of the dramatic impact these events had on my young life was observing older people I deeply respected expressing their commitment and submission to God.

Times change. The church I pastored didn't have regular "revival services." I'm not sure if that was a good thing or a bad thing. We occasionally were invited to openly repent and rededicate our lives in our weekly services. People were busy, at least prior to the pandemic, and a week of services was a big commitment. But there was something else: I and others at the church questioned the health of planned annual meetings that often culminated in spiritual highs.

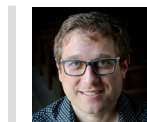
"Is it healthy for a continuous cycle of recommitment, and

are we trying to manipulate God's Spirit by planning for these times of revival? If we know people will recommit and feel ready to live for Christ, and then that fire will slowly fade away, is this spiritually healthy?" I wondered. "Do these spiritual highs dissuade and undermine a continuous and consistent walk with Jesus? Or do they create an addiction to the quick and easy spiritual fix of dramatic emotional encounters, serving as a kind of spiritual sugar rush and causing people to avoid a healthy diet of spiritual veggies: prayer, Bible reading and obedience?"

Several years ago, I posed this line of questioning to a pastor friend. He pointed out that God seems to encourage spiritually intense seasons because he built rhythms of revival into the annual calendar of the Israelites. Each year, there was a system of feasts, festivals, and days of remembrance. His people were forced to pause, to offer sacrifices, remember his goodness, renew their commitment to him, and then celebrate their life as God's people.

Additionally, there are stories of special seasons of revival. 1 Kings 22 tells the story of Josiah, the young king who recognized the sinfulness of God's people and how far they had drifted from God. He called the people of God to a special season of repentance. They looked to the scriptures and began to pray. They became ruthless about removing the areas of sin in their lives, and they pursued obedience to God's Word. They had a revival and renewal of their hearts.

I find myself wondering if we inadvertently removed a key component of spiritual formation from our church bodies when we removed seasons of intense focus on God. Seeking a direct encounter with him as a people can draw God's people together and help reset the tendency toward a dull spirituality. These seasons of heightened spiritual focus will likely look different from the context in which I grew up. That's fine. However it looks, it seems helpful to consider again the benefits of a rhythm of spiritual renewal in which God's people together set aside time to seek his face.



*Jeremy lives in Rosedale, Ohio, with his wife Sarah and their four children. He is president of Rosedale Bible College and is committed to its mission to prepare Kingdom workers.*



# Repairing Brokenness

BY KARLY



## ***A New Children's Home in Thailand***

When we on the 58:12 United team look back on the journey of opening the first 58:12 United Children's Home in Pattaya, Thailand, the word that comes to our minds is patience. The timeframe was not what we anticipated, but God moved with us each step of the way. Now, we are excited to finally report that the home is operational and seeking to provide a safe place for children who have been abused, abandoned, or trafficked.

The process of opening the home began four and a half years ago, when Grace Church (Berlin, Ohio) and Rosedale International (RI) sent the first members of our team to Thailand. We spent our first year in language school while seeking God's guidance for long-term ministry. Months of prayer led us to the city of Pattaya, where we spent the next few months serving different ministries.

**If we can help one family at a time and share the hope and truth that God has given us, then we have made an impact for his Kingdom.**

At that time, we began to pray about how to proceed with ministry. After prayer and fasting, we decided to establish a branch of Grace Church's 58:12 Global in Pattaya. Our name is a reference to Isaiah 58:12: "Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings" (NIV).

In Pattaya, we saw a need for repair and restoration. The city is known for the sex industry. Many families are torn apart due to trafficking, and many children are sold, abandoned, beaten, and left behind. Our team feels called to repair this brokenness by empowering, strengthening, and bringing unity through the 58:12 United Children's Home. If we can help one family at a time and share the hope and truth that God has given us, then we have made an impact for his Kingdom.

After two years of attending meetings and working to set up the 58:12 United Children's Home, we received our foundation

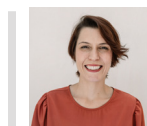
licenses in the summer of 2020—a moment our team spent many days praying for. This last step to becoming a nonprofit foundation opened doors for more ministry opportunities, and allowed the home to finally accept children.

Through connections with other ministries and a local church, we were able to find and hire Thai staff to serve as house moms. Only God could have made this happen as quickly as it did! Our house moms have been a huge asset already; they have planted an amazing garden, and power-washed and painted the outside walls of the home. We also hired a part-time social worker to help bring high-risk children into the home.

The doors of the 58:12 United Children's Home officially opened on January 4, 2021. We did not immediately receive children; however, we continued to see God move through our team by drawing us closer together. We began having team church weekly, which has proven to be a time of connecting and sharing together.

On the evening of February 5, we received our first child, "N". We strive to give each child the best mental, emotional, and physical care we are able, and have kept busy taking "N" to doctor's appointments and caring for her inside the home. She is doing very well and is adjusting to life as we work with our social worker to discern what is best for her future.

Busy is an understatement to describe our team, but we have been preparing for this day and cannot thank the Lord enough for his strength, guidance, and faithfulness. Please pray for us as we trust in the visions God has given us for the 58:12 United ministry. Pray that we as a team can stand boldly in our faith as we seek to bring the Kingdom to Thailand. Pray that we would grow closer, and that language would not become a barrier between us and those with whom we work and share the gospel. Lastly, pray that each child who walks through our doors would feel safe, loved, and cared for, and would fully grasp the message of the gospel and accept Jesus Christ into their lives.



*Karly is Co-Director of 58:12 United in Pattaya, Thailand. She oversees the 58:12 United Children's Home and social media, and teaches English. Karly is married to Jacob and has three sons.*