



Manasquan Writer's Ministry

Writing for the glory of God

Happy Spring !

By Renee Bergin

Ah, Spring. After the winter the Jersey Shore just endured, complete with frigid temperatures and too much snow, the warmth of Spring is a long awaited visit from an old friend.

As we start to put away our boots, sweaters, mittens and gloves and eagerly start looking at the outdoor grill and wondering if there is gas in it in lieu of the comfort foods and warm crock pot dinners that kept us warm during the cold months, let us also look at God's Word and reflect on what this season also represents. Unfortunately, to describe the essence of Spring, we have to bring up Winter, because without Winter, we wouldn't have Spring. Winter is a time for solace, a time to stay indoors, a season to reflect and ponder. The animals go into hibernation, there are no leaves on the trees, no flowers in our gardens:

He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,' and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.' So that everyone he has made may know his work, he stops all people from their labor. The animals take cover; they remain in their dens. The tempest comes out from its chamber; the cold from the driving winds. The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen. Job 37:6-10

Then, ever so slowly, the temperatures start to rise. The sun stays longer. The birds are chirping and the animals are scurrying. The trees and flowers are budding, and our moods are improving. The world is becoming new again, Spring is upon us, a renewal. The Bible says:

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Psalm 51:10

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 2 Corinthians 4:16

God speaks to us, directly to us, when he shows us Spring, it's renewal, and in His Word. So not only are we seeing and feeling a renewal with the warmer weather and budding trees, He also places a renewal in our minds, in our hearts and in our spirits.

And He doesn't stop there. God gave us his only Son, who on Easter Sunday we remember the ultimate renewal, the Resurrection.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3

During the next few weeks, as we find our gardening tools, purchase our beach badges, and search for chocolate covered Peeps for our Easter baskets, let the Holy Spirit renew you in your mind, body and soul, and remember that our Lord and Savior Jesus died on the cross for us, so we have a new birth and living hope into our future.

Happy Spring!



Leap into Spring

by Andrea Rodgers

Like many of us, my friend (let's call her "Jane") recently developed a bad case of spring fever. Even though the night temperature was supposed to drop to forty degrees, she decided to get some fresh air and sleep with the window cracked open.

Jane awoke suddenly during the middle of the night when someone began tugging firmly on her hair, pulling her head closer and closer to the window! Letting out a terrified shriek, she managed to turn her head enough to discover a masked bandit's face pressed up against her glass window, his arm reaching through the small opening and grabbing her hair. He was literally trying to pull himself through the window by using her hair as an anchor! Who was this masked bandit, you ask? He was a very large raccoon! (Let's call him "Rocky").

Grabbing her pillow, Jane swatted at Rocky's arm until he let go. As suddenly as he had appeared, he disappeared into the darkness once more. After getting past the freakiness of Jane's experience, I began to realize that we could all learn some valuable life lessons from Rocky.

Lesson 1: Be aware of life's opportunities that may come your way. By paying attention, Rocky saw a chance to find his dream home. If your eyes are not open to the beauty of God's world around you, you may miss out!

Lesson 2: Take a leap of faith and use your God-given talents to pursue your dream. Rocky climbed a tall tree, leapt onto Jane's family room roof, climbed to the second story roof, and then lowered himself to Jane's bedroom window. While Rocky took a literal leap, I challenge each of you to take a figurative leap this spring. Praise God for the gifts He has given you and use them to appreciate the world around you.

Lesson 3: If things don't go as you may have hoped or planned, trust that God has a different plan for you. Although Rocky didn't achieve his dream that night of finding a new home for his family, he landed on his feet, ready to try again.

The Lord is my strength and shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him. Psalms 28:7

P.S. Yes, this is a true story and yes, Rocky resides in the Manasquan area. So, perhaps you may want to put your screens on your windows!



SPRING

by Anne MacCormack

Many people much prefer living in places like Florida or California where it is warm most of the year, but still many of us love living in this part of the country because we are subject to the four seasons that God included when He created the universe.... *“There’s a time for everything and a season for everything under heaven.” Ecclesiastes 3:1*

Each season has something special to offer to delight our particular style; and we who live here on the New Jersey Shore, are especially privileged to experience, every single day, all the joys of summer right here in our own backyard. We proudly boast of our fabulous silky sandy beaches, refreshingly clean and majestic ocean, spectacular views of the sun rising and setting on the horizon, and a host of other amenities that bring visitors from near and far who are looking to escape the rigors of everyday responsibilities and to relax and unwind in this blissful place. Sadly, some of us think that we own this little piece of paradise and need to be reminded that everything in this world belongs to God, that he has appointed us to be His caretakers, and that all His people are welcome to enjoy His creation.

Fall brings crisp cooler air and a time to settle back into our normal routines after our time of rest and renewal of our bodies and spirits. Children resume their educational opportunities at school, and all of nature readies itself for the coming year by taking its rest in the earth below. Great pleasure is derived by observing plant life change into a dazzling mixture of red and yellow leaves swirling about as they fall to the ground.

Winters bring cold weather that revitalize and refresh; and when we wake up after a day and night of falling snow, who could not be awestruck by the breathtaking sight of tree branches and shrubbery layered with snow, shimmering like precious jewels in morning-after sunlight. We get to recall our own youth by watching our children delight in frolicking in the snow and helping them build a snowman.

Yes, each season is unique; but if I had to name a favorite, my pick would be Spring. Just a few weeks ago as I was shoveling snow for the fourth time in a short space of days, I noticed something green along the side of the driveway where the snow was shallow because of the heavy winds blowing about. Upon further examination, I discovered a small green stem of a tulip bulb pushing its way up through the snow as if to say, “it’s time for us to make our entrance, and a little snow covering us is not going to stop us.”.....God made them hearty and tough! We can depend on this happening every year.....it happened years before we were born, and it will happen again every year after we no longer trod the earth.....it’s God’s personal handiwork... another one of His miracles!

Spring is not too hot and not too cold—As Goldilocks would say, “It is just right!” Nothing to complain about....It’s the most beautiful time of the year, with everything that has experienced a kind of death during a cold winter coming back to life again. But beyond its beauty, it symbolizes hope for the future in the same way that Jesus’ resurrection and victory over death, as He predicted, assures us that everything else He said is true also, and so we are encouraged because we know that His promises are reliable.

We can be confident in knowing that death is not the end of life for a Christian; on the contrary, it is the beginning of a new life...a life that God had originally planned for us... free from sin and the trials and tribulations of a sinful world. *“Where O death, is your victory, Where O death, is your sting?” “But thanks be*

to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:55,57

When we realize all that Jesus achieved when He willingly went to the cross, experienced excruciating torture, died a horrifying death to save us, and then rose again to defeat death, we have **HOPE**. Not only will we be free from suffering the penalty of sin, but Jesus' resurrection guarantees that we will be raised too with new perfect bodies, and we will also have the delight of being reunited with loved ones and the joy of meeting our Lord and Savior face to face.

What could be more hopeful, glorious and joyful than that?



The Freedom We Take for Granted: Easter Behind The Iron Curtain

by Dudley Davis

"Everything good in Western Civilization from Individual liberty to the arts, is due to Christianity" ~ Murray N Rothbard ~

Murray N Rothbard, an American Agnostic acknowledged the debt our nation and Western Civilization owes to Christianity for the culture that (in spite of its many human flaws) produced the foundations of our American revolution and the basis of Western Civilization. One doesn't have to surrender his or her atheist faith or agnosticism to appreciate with gratitude life in a country that believes one has an inalienable God-given right to believe in nothing. What's more important, winning an argument that has no end among humans, or living as a free self-governing individual? How much freedom have the atheist or agnostic nations of the 20th century provided?

In 1969 I was one of the first Americans to study, travel and live in what was then the "The Soviet Union" when it was an official atheist nation and religion and religious freedom were under oppression. We were in Moscow on what was our Easter Sunday 1969, on the Eastern Russian calendar it would have been Palm Sunday. However there were only a handful of Russian churches which were still active and only the old (Senior citizens) would be seen going into a church for services at that time. It would be dangerous in many ways for any young Russian to be an active and practicing Christian or Jew. Some of the young Russian students who were our official fellow students and guides, had permits to be with Americans or Europeans during the day. They would tell us privately and only when we were alone with them walking on a street that they still believed in God but they worshiped in private homes, in secret, the church had to be under ground.

That Easter Sunday, we Roman Catholics and Protestants were only able to attend mass or church services at one of the western Embassies. We went to church that Easter Sunday in the French Embassy in Moscow. Ironically the only time that the Russian Soviet government hosts could arrange for a private tour and reception for the 28 Americans I was with of Lenin's tomb in Red Square was on Easter Sunday morning at the only hour we could get to church services in the French embassy in Moscow. Of the 28 Americans, 23 were Christian and 4 were Jewish and I was an atheist. All 28 of us caucused together and declined the private special tour of Lenin's tomb unless it could be scheduled at another hour. We told them that this was the only hour we could attend Easter church services at the French Embassy; that if they could reschedule to a different time we would like to have the private hosted tour and visit of Lenin's tomb. However it was not rescheduled and even the 4 Jewish and atheist member of our group of Americans respectfully declined the invitation unless it could be rescheduled as the Christians in our group requested.

We knew as they did also that was the only time we would be able to attend Western Easter services. We also believed we needed to diplomatically decline and we never did get the private tour. We were making a

statement about the individual liberty we believed in as Americans and for our belief in religious freedom. I am to this day happy we made that decision. I would have liked to have gone inside Lenin's tomb but I and those Americans I was with believed it was important to express our belief based on the Christian principle of our founding Fathers of Freedom of the individual to worship or not to worship; and to worship in the denomination of our individual choice and conscience which we call Freedom of Religion. Our religious liberty is one of many freedoms and rights we believe inherent because we were founded as a Christian nation.

I hope more Americans today can appreciate what we did and what so many Americans have died for in the past. Even Murray N. Rothbard, an affirmed agnostic understood and respected that. I pray that many will continue to respect and appreciate our Christian principles and heritage this country was founded on.



New Life By Rob Petillo

As I left my house this morning I noticed an array of magnificent colors coming up out of the ground. Our garden has begun to push new life up from beneath the surface, and I thought to myself, "Ah! Spring has finally arrived".

Spring is my favorite season of the year. It represents the start of a new baseball season and marks the end of the hockey season, with the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Intertwined with all the excitement of watching your favorite teams is a new hope. Hope that your teams will be successful in their respective endeavors. But that is not the only hope that Spring represents.

Spring is a season of new beginnings. It is when we see the work of God's hands in all that is restored. The rains wash the bitterness of winter away and help bring a new world to life. The first bloom of flowers, the renewal of plants and trees, and the return of the wildlife that left us so many months ago all remind us of the new life that we have in Jesus Christ. God truly loves us that he would bless us with all the beauty that returns to us in spring. It is no coincidence that we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior in the Springtime, for Spring represents Hope and the greatest Hope of all is that in the Resurrection of Christ, we too will have new life. We too will be restored.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! -2 Corinthians 5:17

Going Home by Rob Petillo

As we walked through the front door I could not help but notice how quiet it seemed. Of course it had been quiet in the house for quite some time now, but this was different. It was empty. There was a certain loneliness about it. All I could hear was the ticking of the clock that was hanging on the kitchen wall. In the deafening silence it stood out like a metronome, keeping perfect time. My mom, stopping to take a look around, almost as if she were lost, turned to me and said, "It is finally over." As I looked into her tired eyes, my mind was filled with many thoughts. My dad had just passed, and although there was much sadness, there was also a feeling of relief. I was confused by this and thought that there was something wrong with me. I could not understand why I was not heartbroken.

Just about twelve hours earlier I was with my dad. My brothers and sisters and I were taking turns the last few nights watching over him. We all knew it was close to the end of his long battle and wanted to be there for him. The previous night my brother John and sister Lisa stayed with him. On this night it would be my turn, along with my brother Mike. It was March 10, 2001 in the early morning, around four o'clock. The hospital room was quiet but for the sound of the respirator pumping the necessary air required to keep a tired man from the peace that he so deserved. His chest moved up and down in perfect harmony with the pumping sound that filled the room, but we knew that the breathing was no longer his. That had stopped a day earlier when we gave him our blessing to stop fighting, which by now was something we all wanted for him. Outside the room I could hear the footsteps of the few doctors and nurses on call that early in the morning, the heels of their shoes echoing down the vacant halls. The sounds would get louder as they neared, then fade into the darkness as they passed. Back and forth they went, stopping to check on the other unfortunate patients along the way.

Mike and I just sat quietly, having a conversation without saying a word to each other, as if we were somehow sharing the same thoughts and memories about our childhood and how blessed we were to have such a dedicated father. A doctor finally came into my dad's room and asked me to come out to the hall to speak with him. My heart was pounding as he told me that they would like to remove the life support. He said, "Son, it's time to let him go." Although I wanted to reply, "duh," I simply told him that I understood. It hardly seemed the appropriate time for sarcasm.

I made the necessary phone calls and before I knew it my family had arrived. My dad's mother, his brother, two sisters, wife, and all five of his children were there with him now. Every surviving member of his immediate family was present with him in his final hour except for his ten grandchildren. It was a sad moment, but somehow it was special that we could all be there with him. We all gathered around him and held hands. For the next hour we stood and prayed for him. We told him how much we love him and shared many wonderful memories as we watched him slowly leave this world. As the end neared, I could not help but watch my mom. She was looking down, tenderly caressing the hand of her husband of nearly forty years. Her face was expressionless, but the love was unmistakable, and I looked on her and my dad with a new and great admiration for the love and the life they shared. When the doctor came into the room to check his heartbeat for the last time, he confirmed what we had already known without him telling us. My dad was gone. He was finally at peace.

Looking back now, I recall a conversation I had with my dad when I was six years old. It is probably the earliest memory I have of him and it has never left me. The night my grandfather passed away, my dad came into my room to say goodnight and I asked him if he was afraid because his daddy died. He replied, "I am sad but I am not afraid because I believe in God. If I were afraid it would mean that I don't trust Him. Someday I will die and it's O.K. to be sad but I don't want you to be afraid. If we believe in Jesus we will live forever".

It is always hard losing those we love, especially around the holidays. I lost my dad a month before Easter in 2001 and I always think about him around this time. I don't think now that there was something wrong with me for not being heartbroken when he died. I just think that I have always looked at death a little differently than most because of what he instilled in me. Just as a bitter winter gives way to a beautiful spring full of hope and rebirth, so too do we pass from this world to the next with hope for Resurrection in Christ. We go home to be with our God, who blesses us with a new life.

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:23-26

I do.



Tree of Hope By Renee Bergin

A Maple tree in the summer
with her leaves forming
a perfectly round green
and flowing
picture against a pale
blue sky

An Oak tree in the autumn
with her leaves boasting
brilliant and proud colors
that fall through the crisp air
to the ground

A Pine tree in the winter
standing so tall and erect
a cone or two attached
with the snow layered on her
that enhances her beauty
in the forest

A Cherry Blossom in the spring
her petals the first sign of warmth
of new life
the pink flowers hug the earth
with a blanket
of hope



WHAT IS FAITH? By Anne MacCormack

Faith is a subject that is so wide in range that it makes it difficult to explain its meaning unless we know in what context it is being used. If we are talking about faith in a general sense, the dictionary defines faith with a slew of words such as trust, certainty, reliance, confidence, and belief without requiring any proof or evidence. We do ordinary things each day in faith... and the example commonly given is that without any forethought or proof, we have faith that a chair will hold us when we sit in it.

Christian faith is all of these definitions, but the best one can be seen in Hebrews 11:1, "*Now faith is being sure*"

of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” which is saying that faith is belief without seeing or requiring any proof or evidence.

To me, faith is taking God at His word that He is who He says He is, that He has done what He says He has done, and that He will do what he promises. Before we take a person’s word for truth, we must know that person very well; and in order to know God very well, we must know His Word which is contained in the Bible. Many good people contend that they believe in the Bible, but they can’t accept some parts of it because it doesn’t make sense to them or because they believe that some parts of it are too old--no longer relevant because some of it was written thousands of years ago, and it is not logical in their sophisticated thinking. But that is an attitude that defines a faith that is weak because..... *”Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever.”* - Hebrews 13:8

I will not deny that my faith is weak at times—I want to believe everything that God has said; but because of our human condition, I find myself sometimes questioning the reasoning of some of His Word, but I am encouraged and can fully accept God’s explanation of that when he tells us in *Isaiah 55:9*, *“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts”* and I feel confident that the things that we do not understand now will continue to be mysteries but will be very clear when we encounter the Lord face to face.

The mustard seed is one of the tiniest of seeds, and yet God tells us that *“If we have faith as small as mustard seed, we could say to this mountain, ‘move from here to there and it would move. Nothing will be impossible for you.’”* -*Matthew 17:20*. Can I believe that? Did He mean that literally or symbolically?—I don’t know, but what I do know is that I believe the Bible is God’s own Word, written by prophets appointed by Him and that every word is true and without error. Some of it is crystal clear, and some of it is not easily understood and needs further explanation that we will have some day when we meet our Lord face to face but I have unwavering belief that we are saved by faith alone in the fact that Jesus Christ died cruelly on the cross because of His great love for us and to save us from the condemnation of sin so that we can live with Him forever ... *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”* - *John 3:16*

If we spend time reflecting on and believing that promise, it will be a great beginning to attaining and enhancing the kind of faith that we seek!



Walk by Faith

By Dave Wilenta

2 Corinthians 5:7-8 - “for we walk by faith, not by sight”

What power in this verse! Our eyes are one of the most remarkable physical structures that God has endowed us with! They allow us to witness first-hand the beauty of His creation! Sight is no doubt a blessing for the children of God that should not be taken for granted. But the ‘walk’ the Apostle Paul is referring to in 2 Corinthians is our spiritual walk.....Here, Paul contrasts faith (SPIRITUAL) and eyesight (PHYSICAL). Remember *Hebrews 11:1* *“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see”*.

So what does it mean to ‘walk by faith’? A good indicator of our faith walk is to take an inventory of the things that populate our ‘minds-eye’ everyday..... Stop and think for a moment.....What’s controlling your walk.....The spiritual or the physical? Many of us like and appreciate nice things, but we must ask ourselves “are we living our lives in pursuit of them?” Cars, houses, possessions, even worldly sentiments and recognitions like glory, honor and power can affect and ultimately control our everyday walk. We all experience trials and tribulations in this world, and in the midst of them there are many other physical/emotional influences that can control our walk such as resentment, anger, fear, rage, jealousy, etc..... As disciples of Jesus, the key for us is to be guided by our faith every day, in everything. To do our best to ‘see’ with God’s eyes while “setting our minds on things above”.....To be guided by the strong conviction of the reality of eternity with our Savior, to walk according to the Spirit, and to exercise the joy that is found only in Christ every day. To refuse to walk as men and women condemned, but instead to walk with confidence and joy because we know where we are spending eternity; and ultimately there is nothing more important!

When we walk by faith, we are no doubt a light for others, and can potentially draw unbelievers into the same saving relationship with God, that we have. When we walk by faith we exercise the spiritual gifts we’ve been given through the Holy Spirit and our faith becomes living and active.....we learn to embrace the difficult moments because we know that at the end of difficulty lies restoration and blessing....When we walk by faith we realize our strengths and potential to further God’s kingdom, but pay special attention to our weaknesses and learn to depend on God just like the Apostle Paul in *2 Corinthians 12:10*... *“That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong”*.

If we are walking by faith, we remember that God is walking with us at every cross-road, dead-end and round-about, and we rejoice because we are growing closer to Him through these experiences. When we walk by faith, we refuse to surrender to fear and take chances to exercise our God-given gifts and talents and *“work out our salvation”* – *Philippians 2:12*
When we walk by faith, we seek council from God on every decision in our life, whether big or small, because as His children, our actions always matter....

The Bible teaches us that *“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* - *Romans 10:17*. To walk by faith we first hear, then understand and accept, and finally commit ourselves to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.....

Charles Spurgeon said, "Faith and obedience are bound up in the same bundle. He that obeys God, trusts God; and he that trusts God, obeys God."



The Substance of Faith

By Renee Bergin

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

I was struggling with the topic of Faith, and writing about it has been difficult. In the verse above, the “evidence of things not seen” falls into belief. The substance of things hoped for, the beginning of the verse, is something that’s on your heart, in your soul, something that you want to do. I have been hoping that my son

Brian and I could become closer to the Lord as a family.

You see, I pray every day. I pray every day for my son Brian. I pray that he hands in his homework, that he passes his math test, that he has friends, and that he learns the responsibility of cleaning of his room. I thank God every day for my biggest blessing, my son. I also pray every day about my life, my job, my car, etc. Sometimes the Spirit gets a hold of me and reminds me of how selfish I am so I start praying for others, the sick, the needy, the people in the car that is broken down on the side of the road, or the ambulance that passes me with its lights blaring. I journal and attend church services on Sunday. I journal-pray. I study books of the Bible. Recently, it hit me. How much of my spirituality is rubbing off on Brian? My guess: not a lot. I pray and journal in the early mornings before he gets up. I keep my prayer life to myself, nor do I encourage or prompt Brian to pray for others. It's my own personal spiritual journey. But wait. I am a parent. I am supposed to be teaching Brian about God, and dropping him off at youth group or dragging him to church on Sunday is not enough. I need to take an active role in his spirituality, and we, as a family, need to come closer to the Lord.

So, I began to hope, and pray. Brian and I started to talk more about prayer. Recently, we decided that for lent, instead of giving something up, we are going to add more prayer into our daily lives. I have faith that our new found prayer time will bring us both closer to God and therefore bring God into our decision making processes, and overall life decisions, as a family, and not just me.



Trust in The Lord

By Rob Petillo

For the past month I have been contemplating the definition of faith. Faith is a word that many of us use generically to describe what we believe to be the truth: that God created us, we turned from Him, and He sent His only Son to redeem us. While these and other beliefs that we have are professed by us to be indisputable facts, do we really, truly believe them? Do we live our lives as an example of our professed faith?

Of all the Christian concepts, such as love, forgiveness, charity, faith, etc., faith is possibly the hardest for me to grasp. When we love, we can feel it inside. When we forgive someone who has hurt us, we know that we forgive them because we do not hold a grudge: we continue to love them. When we give of our time, talents and treasures, we know that our charity is pleasing to God, and helps our fellow man. We can see the good in it. Faith is different. It is not tangible. It is not something that we can see, hear, touch, smell, or taste, yet it undoubtedly does exist.

But what is faith? Merriam-Webster defines faith as: **(1) : firm belief in something for which there is no proof (2) : complete trust.** Let us take these one at a time: We Christians believe in the existence of God even though many people, especially scientists would have us believe otherwise. They say that there is **no scientific proof** that God exists, yet their own laws dictate that something beyond our understanding is responsible for life itself. Biologists will tell you that it is impossible for any cell to form without the existence of a parent cell, yet when asked how the first cell came to be, they will tell you that it must have been an electrical storm billions of years ago that somehow caused a molecular mutation of matter that created the first cell, completely ignoring their number one rule when it conveniently explains their case.

The laws of physics state that everything that exists in this universe is in motion and that nothing can be in motion without being put into motion by something that was moving before it. Yet they cannot explain what

caused this motion to begin with. Christian philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas used these laws to illustrate his theory of “First Movement”, which states that if you trace every movement back in time to the very first atom that was set in motion, it would have had to be set in motion by something beyond our universe and our understanding: something not bound by the laws of physics, since it has already been established that every molecule needs to be set in motion by something other than itself. He called that “first movement” God. Most scientists do not hold to this theory even though their own laws prove it to be true. As Christians we believe that the proof is all around us: in every form of life, every beautiful sunrise or sunset, the plants and animals and all the other beauty that exists in this universe and beyond. Science and all of its laws were given to us by God Himself, and I believe that science proves the existence of God. But does that mean that I have faith?

Definition number two is “**complete trust**”. This is where faith gets a little tricky. Complete trust in God means that every decision we make is made with the belief that it is what Jesus wants us to do. **5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. -Proverbs 3:5-6** This means that we succumb to the Holy Spirit and allow God to use us for His purpose, even if we do not understand why and even if it may bring us harm. Early Christians were persecuted, and even murdered along with their families because of their faith in Christ and their refusal to deny those beliefs. How many of us would be willing to die for our belief in Jesus, or watch our loved ones die? In our country today there are many who are trying to strike the word God from every public building and town square. Social activists have taken control of our judicial system, many times forcing decisions that contradict everything that we as Christians believe in, and our policy makers have passed laws that force religious organizations to comply with the values of the secular portion of our society under penalty of law, even though the motto of our founders, as indicated by our currency, and murals on the walls of the Halls of Congress and countless other government buildings is “In God We Trust”. Make no mistake; Christianity is under attack in this country, and around the world, and Christians who dare to voice their beliefs are more often than not ridiculed in public. So we remain silent out of fear of ridicule or worse. We do not completely trust in Jesus.

I pray everyday for the strength to trust in God: to let go of the wheel and let Him take control of my life. Sometimes I do not see the big picture - the “eternal” picture - because my understanding of the world in which I live is based on the Human condition; a “broken” condition that clouds my judgement of what is the truth and what is a lie of this world, and I fall prey to the “lies” that pull me away from Jesus. Although I know that God’s wisdom is immeasurable, and beyond my knowledge, I struggle daily to make Him the center of my decision making process; even though I know that if I do, He will guide me through the darkness in this world and I will emerge on the other side of all the trials and tribulations that this life has to offer with confidence that I am saved through Jesus Christ. As I wrote earlier, faith is hard for me to grasp. So what is faith?

To me faith is trust in the Lord. Although I have not yet acknowledged the fact that I cannot handle everything on my own and that my own judgement is flawed by the simple fact that I am Human, and have not yet completely trusted Him to take the wheel and get me home safely, I am trying ...

... and with His help, hopefully I’ll get there soon.





The Manasquan Writer's Ministry is a group of writers who are dedicated to writing for the Glory of God. Each member of our team may have their own unique style, and writing preference, whether it be short stories, poetry, devotionals, or essays, but we have one thing in common; our love for God.

Our mission is simply to bring the love and peace of Jesus Christ to our congregation, community, and the world through the written word. With our own words, combined with Scripture, we hope to inspire, comfort, and minister to those who may be poor in spirit, and lead them to a greater relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We hope you have enjoyed our newsletter. If you would like to join our group or submit your writing for future issues, please e-mail Dave Wilenta @ dwilenta@fpc.com or Rob Petillo @ rpetillo27@aol.com