



*The air is like a butterfly
With frail blue wings.
The happy earth looks at the
sky
And sings.
Joyce Kilmer*

Welcome to the June newsletter. If a June night could talk, it would probably boast it invented romance. I guess that's why there are so many June weddings.

And for the gardeners in this world, there's an old saying in folk lore. For what it's worth:

**A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay.
A swarm of bees in June is worth a silver spoon.
A swarm of bees in July is not worth a fly.**

I always did like folk lore. Anyway, in these waning days of spring remember, at the end of the day, you gardeners should smell like dirt.

GIFTS OF GOD

How often it is that I have sat in church watching the band and the Eighth Day singers or the choir performing and said softly to myself, "They have been given a gift from God". The best thing is that they aren't wasting that gift. After all, **it is the creative potential itself in human beings that is the reflection of God.**

The talent that is uniquely "You" should not go wasted. That is your "Gift of God" and it should not be ignored. We can't all be musicians, singers, poets or have physical talents that allow us to stand out above the rest. Sometimes a talent may go unnoticed by others or may not be thought of as a talent.

I believe care givers, teachers, Pastors and many such service oriented people are exercising talents that may be overlooked by others. That's because they are giving freely of their talent.

*We make a living by what we get, we make a life by
what we give.*

*Sir Winston Churchill
British politician (1874 - 1965)*

The glorious gifts of God are not to be cast aside. It wouldn't be very pretty to see Dick Butkus and Joyce Kilmer trading places. Although I'd like to see the poems Butkus

would come up with. Joyce Kilmer however would be my last choice on defense when the team needed someone to stop the run on 4th down. **Whatever you are by nature, keep to it; never desert your line of talent. Be what God intended for you and you will succeed.**

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,
and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom
is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.
James 1:17*

Friends are also a gift that shouldn't be cast aside lightly. I'm reminded of a line in the song made famous by Louis Armstrong, What a Wonderful World; "I see friends shaking hands, saying how do you do, they're really saying I love you." The love friends have for each other is rarely uttered for fear of embarrassment but should be before it's too late. After all, the capacity to love is also one of God's gifts.

Then there's the ultimate gift God promises to us to reflect on.

*For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is]
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Romans 6:23*

To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides, and the love of God is all around. All Christians know **John, 3:16.**

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Pass it on to those you meet in life who, either don't believe or need a reminder. Soon, they will realize that life itself is a gift of God.



MOVIE CORNER

I recently found a gem of a movie from Netflix well worth investing time in. **Music Within** tells the true story of Richard Pimentel, who as a young man realized at an early age he had a remarkable talent for public speaking.

Richard's (Ron Livingston) idol is College Bowl founder Dr. Padrow, but upon trying out for Dr. Padrow, the ambitious young speaker is informed that he won't have anything to talk about until he has lived a full life. Realizing that there is some merit to Dr. Padrow's (Hector Elizondo) observation, Richard subsequently enlists in the Army and prepares for duty in Vietnam.



During a mortar attack, his bunker takes a direct hit and Richard loses most of hearing and returns home, disabled. Frustrated when others inform him that he will never achieve his dreams due to the fact that he is disabled, the determined veteran makes it his mission to prove them wrong. But it isn't as much about changing others' perceptions of the disabled as it is about altering their perceptions of themselves.

With a little help from foul-mouthed, cerebral palsy-stricken genius Art Honeyman, free-spirited beauty Christine, and mercurial, hard-drinking veteran Mike Stoltz, Richard will play a pivotal role in creating the **Americans With Disabilities Act**, and finally discover his "inner music".

This is not meant to be a Christian themed movie but the way he uses his talent and the knack he has for bringing people together for a wonderful cause, tells me he had help from God. He and his unlikely circle of friends open up many minds and hearts and changed forever the way we see the disabled.

There aren't any overtly violent scenes and there is no nudity but the movie received an R rating primarily because of scenes of drug and alcohol use and strong language. However, it should be viewed by anyone old enough to know right from wrong. Aside from being a highly entertaining and true story, it is very enlightening about how the values of a society get shoved aside like so many broken bodies.

The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Matthew 11:5

It is not wealth one asks for, but just enough to preserve one's dignity, to work unhampered, to be generous, frank and independent.

*W. Somerset Maugham, 'Of Human Bondage', 1915
English dramatist & novelist (1874 - 1965)*

CRHP

Christ Renews His Parish is a spiritual renewal weekend designed to help individuals grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and with others in their faith community. Everyone uses the initials sort of sideways to spell out "Chirp" and that's what it is called.

There are separate Chirps for men and women. I'm guessing that the reason is that the retreat is an overnight affair and should not be thought of as an "overnight affair". Actually, it's a good thing that it is an overnight thing because they keep you busy and the trip home and back, the following morning, would just detract from your sleep time.

I've seen it listed in the church bulletin before and I looked it up on the internet before I went. Other than what I said in the opening line, you won't find much more information online. Usually, a church that sponsored a retreat will have mostly testimonials from attendees and they all say how it changed their lives.

The reason for secrecy is to ensure maximum impact on each attendee. I will say a few things, though nothing that will detract from the impact.

I often heard people that went through it before me saying they loved it and keep going back. They don't go back as new attendees but they go back to assist first timers through the process. They were so helpful that they took away all of my concerns.

Being disabled, I didn't think I should attend because I thought it would be too challenging. It would have if I was on my own but nobody is alone at Chirp. They went out of their way to make sure I was doing okay and if I needed to sit, someone made sure there was a chair there. Sure, I was tired at the end of the day but if I went through it alone I wouldn't have finished. They did what Jesus would have done to bring everyone together as a faith community. That was impressive.

I've heard past attendees refer to each other as, "my Chirp brothers" and though I just met most of them the fellowship was as close to being brothers as possible. The past Chirp brothers gave up a weekend to work all aspects of the event. They not only acted like ushers and group leaders, I saw some of them working in the kitchen and being a Lutheran Church, there was a lot of food.

The next Chirp is the ladies Chirp in the fall. I won't say anymore about it except I encourage all of the ladies to sign up as soon as the list is available. Disabilities will be accommodated. Food is plentiful and there are enough breaks in the day to accommodate all needs.

The most amazing part for me was the fellowship. The event made our church seem like a small country church where everyone knows each other already. Be it the fellowship or the growth in your faith, I guarantee you will be changed for the better.

FEAR DRIVEN INDUSTRIES

As I was watching TV the other day, there was a commercial for a sun blocking cream. At first I didn't pay much attention until I saw the whole commercial repeated during the next commercial segment.

The ad shows little kids playing outside on a sunny day but everywhere they go there's an adult with an umbrella protecting them from the sun's rays. I assume that the manufacturers are claiming their product works as well as being under an umbrella. I suppose that's good advertizing because we don't want our children getting skin cancer or dried skin.

Turning to the Science Channel a show about the human body was playing. They were talking about how the skin is nature's best solar panel and how the sun gives us so many essential vitamins and builds up the immune system. They went on to say that moderation and common sense is the best defense against sun stroke, cancer or sun burn.

Flipping channels led me to pass by the Family Channel and their ads were showing kids gulping down vitamin pills. Another ad showed another pill company selling pills that enhance memory. Wow, I should stock up on that but I already forgot the name of the product.

Later, I went grocery shopping. I shop at a nearby Jewel/Osco because of convenience, not store loyalty. I always start at the Osco half first. Those commercials were fresh on my mind so I thought I'd look at the products firsthand.

I was overwhelmed when I saw a display of sun lotions that took up most of an aisle. When I was a kid, there was Coppertone and one or two others. They still have Coppertone but more types within that brand than I would have imagined. In fact, each brand offered many varieties of the same thing.

The labels showed that they all had the same synthetic vitamins and plant by-products and the only differences was the texture; creamy or oily. They all rallied around the same fear factor, SPF numbers as referred to by the ads on the displays.

It made me realize how an entire industry evolved out of fear. Skin Cancer is a legitimate fear but common sense and moderation could help if there was any left. However, common sense doesn't sell products.

Osco has several aisles with health food products and dietary supplements. One product shocked me, and it takes a lot to shock this old man. There's a dietary supplement used in hospitals called, Ensure. It is like a vitamin milk shake they use when a patient is weak for whatever reason. I first saw it when I had cancer and they wanted to help my stomach get used to eating again. It has a huge amount of calories and should be used by hospitals and not as a quick meal.

However, right on the ad on the shelf is a young mom giving it to a young child like it was some sort of treat. The implication is that kids and moms are too busy for a meal and this is an easy fix. I guess we want the easy way out in our busy world.

The point is that whole industries have been built by implanting fear in the consumers' minds. Vitamins are cheap and easy to make so to keep prices up they create a fear and that helps sell any excess products as well.

When I was young, I remember being taught that a well balanced diet will supply you with all of your daily vitamins but in the 70's they put out vitamin pills in the shape of cartoon figures. Soon, kids were gulping them down eagerly without being told.

Now, kids won't drink water from a tap. They'll look at it and whine, "There's nothing in it". Bottled water has to be flavored and have vitamins and ginkgo beloba and other junk in it, even though the body will only retain a small amount and the rest is waste.

The fear created is the prospect of a weak and tired body. The fear is erased by a picture of a perky young lady working out and gulping down the product without a pause in the workout. How cool is that? If I take the pills, drink the water and spend a fortune on dietary supplements I will become a perky young lady.

Also, you can't buy any hand soap unless it's ant-bacterial. That's fine if you work in the food industry but they are finding that kids are not building up immunities to bacteria and stronger strains of old diseases are creeping back. That's okay because the drug industry has a surplus of the next pill and advertisers are working to establish the necessary fear.

Try a little test at home. The next time the kids are watching TV, mute the commercials. You will be shocked at their behavior when you do. The mute will even make toddlers cry. If you mute the show they were watching, however, they won't notice. Subliminal messages are illegal and hard to prove but they don't need them because fear is the strongest subliminal known to man. Imagine what it does to a weak mind.

Fear has built multi-billion dollar industries and advertisers do a marvelous job implanting fear into the psyche of society. TV and any other such technology can be a wonderful aid in educating our children but mute the commercials and talk with your kids during the break. Afterwards, read a Good Book with them.

My faith is unshakable but the only fear I have is the hold fear driven industries have on society. Your children's bodies are being filled with useless and excessive chemicals instead of the good word of the Bible.

***For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.
2 Timothy 1:7***

I love this next story. Over the last few years there have been so many lawsuits by the ACLU against anyone who dares act like a Christian. If they had their way, there would be no more Christianity anywhere and the way we keep handing our faith to them, they might get their way.

Before you start to defend the ACLU as some noble souls standing up for the 1st amendment, consider the fact their founders and many current members belonged to the Communist party. Their main function is to illuminate Christianity from American society.

BRAVE NEW SCHOOLS

You've got to fight for your right to pray

Group prepares for battle against stifled religious expression at graduations

By Chelsea Schilling
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Liberty Counsel, a nonprofit litigation, education and policy organization, is on a mission to ensure student prayer and religious views are protected at spring commencement ceremonies with its annual "Friend or Foe" Graduation Prayer Campaign.

Liberty Counsel's "I will pray" wristband

Mathew D. Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel and dean of Liberty University School of Law, said the organization is providing students and school administrators with a free legal memo on graduation prayer in advance of commencement exercises to prevent suppression of prayer and religious speeches.

"We sent the information out now, to get the legal memo in the hands of principals to resolve these matters before problems arise, so I anticipate in the next week or so we might start hearing of matters from different schools." Liberty Counsel is also encouraging students to wear red wristbands with the inscription "I will pray" to graduation exercises.

In the landmark case *Adler v. Duval County School Board*, Liberty Counsel triumphed against the ACLU, confirming the right of schools to allow student speakers to conduct prayer or present secular or religious messages during commencement ceremonies. The case passed through federal appeals courts five times and was brought before the U.S. Supreme Court twice.

One suit Liberty Counsel filed on behalf of a student was the case of Russell Springs, Ky., graduating senior and class chaplain Megan Chapman. She was gagged with a court order obtained by the ACLU that strictly prohibited her from praying during the Russell Springs High School's 2006 commencement ceremony.

When the graduation began, there were an estimated 3,000 people seated in the gymnasium. Following the principal's introduction, the senior class stood and recited the Lord's Prayer as a showing of support. They received a standing ovation from the crowd. Chapman had originally planned to read a secular poem, but she chose to speak about her relationship with God instead.

The late Rev. Jerry Falwell provided Megan and her sister with full scholarships to Liberty University, and CNN featured their story on "God's Christian Warriors."

"That was one of the most rewarding events we've ever experienced where one student had the chance to either remain silent or stand for Christ," Staver said. **"She chose to stand for Christ, and He blessed far and beyond what she had asked or imagined."**

In a 2007 case in Denver, Colo., a principal forced valedictorian Erica Corder to write an apology to her school community, threatening to withhold her diploma, because she said the name of Jesus Christ in her 30-second speech.

"We tried to resolve it through education, but it didn't work, and so we ultimately filed suit," Staver said. "That suit is still going. This month we will finally have a summary judgment on that case."

Staver expects that more cases will arise this spring, but he said his ultimate goal is to prevent suppression of religious invocations.

"The point of our campaign is to educate and, if necessary, to litigate to make sure that religious viewpoints and prayer are not censored from graduation."

"Every time we give up a part of our faith to fit in to the ways of the world, we lose it forever. We lose a precious part of God's promise and sacrifices to the world and the world will never give it back. And some day when the world tells us we can no longer have our religion except where they say and God is driven from our schools and our government and our homes, then God's people can look back and know that our religion was not taken from us, it was given up, handed over bit by bit until there was nothing left."

Robert Sheffey, 19th century evangelist.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

matthew 16:26

For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

Psalms 149:4

I, for one, will not hand over my faith. I love it when I see kids willing to go against powerful adversaries to keep their faith intact.

Every so often I find a story continues from month to month. Usually, those stories are disasters like wildfires or earthquakes. When I first saw the next story, I had just finished sending the May newsletter and I really didn't expect it to be going on still. I was delighted to see that it's not only still going on but looks like it will be around for a while.

Lakeland Revival Going Strong - and Global CBNNews.com

CBNNews.com - Something awesome and powerful has been happening in Lakeland, Fla. every night for the past month: Revival! Thousands of people have been lining up twice a day, longing for a physical or a spiritual touch from God.



Now, it's spreading to other countries as services are streamed live on the Internet and broadcast globally by GOD-TV.

Scores of sick people have reported being healed after attending the services, where Canadian evangelist Todd Bentley has preached. "It's historic in the sense that it's a media revival. We're in 214 nations a night. A potential audience of 400 million. We get hundreds of stories a day of people that are around the world getting healed watching the broadcast. It's contagious through media," Bentley said.

It has even motivated some people to catch a flight from across the world to experience the revival for themselves.

John Darnell was in Australia watching the services online. He was so moved by the event, he immediately booked a flight to Florida. **"Absolutely I believe! Miracles happen. God is real. Jesus is alive and the world doesn't know,"** Darnell told Tampa's CBS affiliate.

The crowds have grown so large that services had to be moved to the Lakeland Civic Center, from Ignited Church where it began. On some nights, nearly 6,000 people have tried to get inside. They then moved the event to Auburndale Life Church when they could no longer hold the services in the Civic Center.

Now, other pastors and leaders are offering words of encouragement, admonishing Bentley to continue having the revival as long the Lord is moving, according to Charisma Magazine.

"Todd, you need to keep going in these meetings as long as the Lord is moving. I feel that this is a prophetic sign that another wave of revival is coming to North America," John Arnott, who pastored the historic revival at Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship in 1994, wrote a letter to Bentley.

The services have been going seven days a week since the revival broke out April 2. The revival has been extended indefinitely.

The following is excerpts from other stories about the revivals and healings.

Rare Syndrome Healed

"It attacked the joints, the muscles, the bones, the skin. And it was unbearable," she said.

Caroline sent CBN News a medical report a neurologist wrote last year about Caroline's right hand, labeling its condition "Permanent Impairment" and writing there was "nearly no range of motion of the fingers with claw-like deformity, and pain from the fingers to the elbow."

But the first night Caroline came to the meetings, she received a total healing. Flexing her hand by her face, she said, "I have never been able to do this since it started."

Moving Without Pain

Kathryn came for a healing to the morning meetings still going on at Ignited Church. When Pastor Strader asked for those in pain to stand, he saw Kathryn stand first.

"I just prayed a simple prayer: 'Jesus, heal the lady,'" Strader said. Kathryn then remembers Strader blowing towards her. "And he blew and said, 'you're healed.'"

Strader then watched Kathryn nearly collapse over the chair in front of her. "And she had totally bent over the chair, just like a jackknife. Totally bent over, for 20 minutes." Kathryn recalled, "He said 'can you touch the ground?' And I said, 'I don't think so. But let me try.' And I bent over and I touched the floor and I was shocked."

Strader became extremely excited. "And we said 'go to the doctors and see if the rods have disappeared because it's impossible for you to bend over.' She has the x-rays. The rods are still there. How can she bend over with rods? That is unbelievable."

Not only is Kathryn healed, but she tossed away the addictive drugs and hasn't had one withdrawal symptom.

Ruptured Discs, Cerebral Palsy -- Healed

One miracle had a comedic touch: a man with two ruptured discs hobbled up to the stage. He had to use a cane to walk. But then his back was healed and he started jumping all over the stage. so much so, that the ushers couldn't even catch him.

Teresa Pemberton had had 22 leg surgeries. Suffering from spinal stenosis and cerebral palsy, she could hardly walk much less jump before coming all the way from Tualatin, Oregon, to get a healing in Lakeland. And she did.

Teresa recalled, "The Lord said 'jump' and I jumped and I could jump."

"We get hundreds of stories a day of people that are around the world getting healed watching the broadcast. It's contagious through media," Todd Bentley told CBN News.

Not Somebody, THE Body

All the leadership says the same thing: this anointing to heal is for everyone in the Body of Christ who wants it.

"And our focus here in Florida every night is I lay hands on every single person who comes -- whether it's 5,000, 10,000 -- And I'm praying every night, 'God, give it away, give it away, give it away.' And that's the focus here: impartation," Bentley said.

Some are saying this is the most contagious anointing the world has ever seen. Because, as one visiting pastor said, the touch for healing isn't just on somebody, but on the Body.

CHANGE

Some time ago, I went by my old neighborhood. There used to be a prairie at the end of the block that was left undeveloped throughout the years I lived there. To anyone who grew up there it was just called the prairie. No address was necessary.

We spent most of our summers digging tunnels, climbing trees and playing baseball in an area in the far back part that we dug out and maintained because it was our little slice of Heaven.

The prairie, as I expected, was long gone. Only the neighbors my age remembered any of it. It's been replaced by homes that are way too big for the lots. I felt bad for the kids that lived there because they will never know the feeling of freedom and adventure a simple prairie holds for those willing to open their eyes.

Gone too, are the WPA streets whose only maintenance requirements were an occasional spray of tar and gravel. The tar used to be a source of amusement to us kids when some unsuspecting kid would walk across the street barefoot. His buddies could have told him it was fresh tar but what fun would that have been?

Freshly paved streets with proper curbs made it look like a foreign land. Most of the same houses were still there but they weren't the same with all the additions and changes. Many of the same families still lived there but the homes were owned by the children as most of the parents had passed away.

Life's a voyage that's homeward bound.

Herman Melville

US novelist & sailor (1819 - 1891)

Just as neighborhoods change, so do people. We go through various experiences over the years that change us. Whether the results are for the better depends largely on our attitude.

When you consider that the life expectancy for most Americans is 75, that leaves a lot of time for many changes. I came from a generation that didn't expect to live past 30 and here I am, still pluggin' along just waiting for the next change to slap my in the face and yell. "Wake up!"

It took me a long time and a lot of rough changes to realize that every change brings new opportunities to serve God and grow. After all, we don't really grow until we learn to serve God.

I didn't quite "get it" until I read about the apostle Paul. Both he and his living conditions changed after his experience with Christ on the Damascus Road. He was sent to arrest Christians but rather than arresting them, he became a courageous and bold defender of the faith.

He was beaten, stoned, shipwrecked and imprisoned. Paul certainly had good reason to complain, but he thanked God.

Why? Paul recognized that his greatest treasure was Jesus Christ and the righteousness Christ offers.

Some of the changes life throws at us won't be easy to contend with. The loss of a loved one or a doctor telling you that you have a cancer and should tie up loose ends at home because you may not make it are the types of change that could make a weak person give up on Christ.

That's an understandable "knee jerk" reaction but in time having the Lord to lean on is infinitely better than leaning on a bottle that will soon be empty. God's promises are never empty.

Some change, such as losing a job will seem like the end of the world the instant it happens. Most people know you by what you do for a living and without the job, you have no identity. A life serving Christ gives us an identity no employer can take away and it's infinitely more fulfilling.

The change we see in our children as they mature and one day walk out of the door forever to live as an adult all their own may seem like a dark day at first. The empty nest syndrome hits some parents so hard they feel the void could never be filled. That is until they are called upon to babysit for grandchildren. Then the kids have to face life changes.

Change is inevitable for all of us. So, when it comes we can look for the new opportunities God is offering in it and, like Paul, we can rejoice, give thanks and embrace the change.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all [men], especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:10

Be alert to give service through the Lord. What counts a great deal in life is what we do for others.

Life is a long lesson in humility.

James M. Barrie

Scottish dramatist & novelist (1860 - 1937)

I like what Bob Dylan said:

*You may be a construction worker working on a home,
You may be living in a mansion or you might live in a dome,
You might own guns and you might even own tanks,
You might be somebody's landlord, you might even own banks*

*You're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
You're gonna have to serve somebody.
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.*

I love the changes in my life since I resolved to serve the Lord.

THE LIGHTER SIDE

Learn to read life's signs.

