

Alleluia

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Living Out Our Years as an Alternate Society

By Carolyn Clark



Are you living as an alternate society? If anyone had asked me that question forty-one years ago, I would not have understood what he was talking about. I clearly remember several of us coming together each day asking God to lead us in our desire to be in His will living out our lives. Now looking back, I am totally amazed and so grateful to Jesus that He has led me over the years to become that alternate society that was prophesied. I do not remember any of us saying, "Hey, God wants us to be an alternate society." We just knew we said "yes" to God, and He said, "Follow Me."

First things first! The Holy Spirit spoke clearly to all of us that we needed to live closer together in order to build the kingdom. The question was, where do we find the place to live close to one another? After looking into a few properties, God led us to the run down Fleming apartment complex. This was the beginning of living the life we called "community" that none of us were accustomed to living.

So what did God want? These

were the things He told us:

- Closer relationships, isolation slipping away
- Sharing (furniture, food, money, cars, etc.)
- Children developing new relationships, life-long friends, some even marrying one another
- Pulling together financially — sharing fund — living out Acts 2:44, 45
- Working together on repairs to Faith Village and later the school
- Activities and recreation: things like volleyball, shooting pool at Gooney's, children in Immaculate Conception School where they related to others. God gave us this prophetic word to be an alternate society during our tenth anniversary celebration.

Before I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as a wife and mother of two young children, my life was invested in many different social and local community activities. I tried to do my best in all of them —everything from program chairwoman to organizer of an area-wide program

against drugs. As a co-chairwoman of a program for under privileged children, our group won awards from the State of Georgia two years in a row. There were many other things that took up my time in those days, and Sunday was the only time I gave to the Lord. The time came for me to turn my life over to Jesus and to let Him have all of that time and energy I had invested into worldly pursuits. He wanted me to be part of His building that alternate society that would change this world.

I recall the joy and excitement I felt as God spoke to us in those early days of community. He was calling us forward. He used hard work, less sleep, little money, lots of praying for our daily bread, serving one another, and ministering to many who came to us day and night. Then, how could I ever forget cleaning out refrigerators (maggots and all)? I also recall the day I ran away from the house when we were supposed to move into Faith Village.

God blessed our efforts in so many ways during those early days

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Being an Alternate Society as We Live Out Growing Old

By Bob Nestor

Several years ago, I remember a discussion we had at the Governmental Council about retirement. We all talked about what we thought retirement should look like and what our retirement years should be like. Dennis McBride then entered the conversation after we all had voiced our opinions and began to give us his vision on what our retirement should be from the Holy Spirit's point of view. I believe he said that retirement was not and should not be a word in

a Christian's vocabulary. Did Moses's retire? Did Elijah retire? Well maybe, sort of, he had a special exit strategy! What about Paul or Peter or John? No, our latter years should be a time when we just begin to serve the Lord. As Dennis used to say, he wanted to die with his boots on.

We have such a mentality in our culture that says after we work forty or fifty years, we deserve to kick back and enjoy ourselves. In the more than two thousand years of church histo-

ry, there has never been this idea of doing nothing but having leisure time and wondering what vacation we should take next. God wants us to serve in His kingdom. We have a call on our lives to be a people who wear ourselves out for the Lord. 2Tim 4:6, 7 says, *"As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."* We do not have the option to just do nothing as Christians. God wants us to be engaged in some sort of kingdom activity until He calls us home. Does this mean that we can't take a vacation? Of course not! God wants us to recharge our batteries every so often so we can then go back and get into the race.

I remember when we went to Junaluska for our 40th birthday celebration. We invited Larry Christenson and his wife to join us and for Larry to bring us a word from the Lord. Larry at that time was in his mid-eighties, yet he was still serving the Body of Christ with his great wisdom and insight into the Christian life. Can you remember how animated he was when he gave us his talk at the conference? This was not a man who was retired in place! By no means, he was

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of building this alternate society. He blessed us one day when we really needed food with a pick-up truck pulling into our driveway loaded with sweet potatoes. Another miracle that happened was the man showing up at our door needing a place to stay, who then fixed many of our broken furnaces, which we were unable to repair because we could not afford it. God was teaching us each day how to be "in the world and not of it."

Since we are no longer isolated, we can build that alternate society. Today, we have many ways of doing this — being Jesus to those we meet at the store, at sporting events and bringing Jesus to one another as we pray for the trials and tribulations of life. Jesus is always setting up encounters so we can exhibit His love and truth to those around us. I recently had an opportunity to share Jesus and His truth with a man at Kroger's.

As we grow in holiness, the Holy Spirit makes us more and more aware of worldly fashions and customs in

our culture of dating and courtship, which are far from Christian norms. Several years ago, I was with a few people and we watched a very funny movie. Recently, I watched the same film and I was uncomfortable with language and numerous scenes. My spirit is being changed and transformed by Jesus. Thanks be to God!

He has asked us to be faithful to live out the teachings of our formations program. In Alleluia, we have agreed to avoid gossip, slander, divisiveness and party spirit (factions) and to live out Matt 18:15. Living out being an alternate society is helping us to reflect Jesus to the world. The parable of the mustard seed (Matt 13:13) showed me that God is calling us all to be that mustard seed. He is calling us to be faithful and to be that light on a mountaintop. Alleluia, like the mustard seed, has started from the smallest beginnings where He planted that small seed in our hearts. It is now growing into that tree for all to use.

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Carolyn Clark is one of the original Alleluia Handmaids who provide overall insight to the Alleluia Community Elders from a womanly perspective and has been serving in pastoral care for about 30 years. She also serves on the Pastoral Team. Carolyn and her late husband, Dale, were two of the founding members of the Alleluia Community in 1973. She has two adult children and seven grandchildren and attends St. Joseph Catholic Church in Augusta, Georgia.

Our Picture Torn in Two

By Colette Sullivan
Grade 9

The following is the winning essay by a 9th or 10th grader in the Augusta Chapter of the Georgia Right to Life's Essay and Oratory Contest that was held in May of this year.

Everywhere you look in the world, there is life. In the hot, waterless, arid deserts of our world, there are cacti that survive and nocturnal animals that seem to come out of nowhere at all. In the high mountain passes where it seems only rocks thrive, small weeds and trees grow. In the suburbs, grass and flowers push their way through the cracks in the cement and asphalt to form a

spectacular scene. These things are just beautiful. Nothing more can be said. But there is something that is even more beautiful than all of these things. The most beautiful thing in the whole world is a baby. The small baby in the arms of his mother has made all the difference in some people's lives. Nothing can ever replace the simple beauty from seeing a small newborn in the arms of his beaming



mother who made the decision to carry her child for the full nine months. In the world today, though, something has been created to tear this image of pure happiness apart: abortion. Abortion is a terrible thing the human race has created because it destroys early lives in the womb, it harms the mother along with her unborn child, and it goes against every moral right we hold dear.

"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you."— Jeremiah 1:5. From the very moment of conception, a human life begins. No matter what, no matter what some may think, a baby is beginning its lifelong journey from that point onward. Any human life is an amazing thing. We start from being three centimeters long to growing up to be six to seven foot giants. But some people in the world believe it is in their hands as to whether or not this baby God has created should live or die. They have promoted themselves to become judge, jury, and executioner. That human life, a defenseless child in his mother's womb, has become the victim of the horrible choices many women have made to themselves. Even the mother, though she may deny it, is harming herself along with killing her baby.

Everyone in the world has a conscience that God created in their heads. Whenever we do something wrong, a little voice in our head starts to talk on and on and never seems to quiet until we fix the problem we created. Our consciences seem, though, to act up the most when we do something terrible and that we

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on fire, full of the Holy Spirit and still serving the church. Do you remember his closing comments? "Drop kick me Jesus through the goal posts of life, end over end, neither to the left or the right... make me a piece of Your master plan."

What is God calling you to do as you get older? What is your mindset about retirement? If you are still raising your children, you may not have given this even a thought as it seems so far off. There was a country song a few years ago that was popular, *Don't Blink*. The song said:

"Just like that you're six years old and you take a nap and you wake up and you're twenty-five and your high school sweetheart becomes your wife. Don't blink!"

It goes on to say that you marry your high school sweetheart, and before you know it, your kids are now moms and dads themselves and you're celebrating your 50th anniversary.

Life goes by in the blink of an eye especially when compared to the eternity we will spend with the Lord. He has put us here to build His kingdom. We need to be serious about our service to Him and winning others for Christ. These are the important things in life. We can't lose sight of the forest from the trees. Jesus is the goal and there is no letting up. Our community continues to grow older, but we need to give God all we can even though we may not have the same strength and stamina we had twenty or thirty years ago. Ask yourselves today the questions: Am I like Paul? Have I fought the good fight? Have I finished the race? Have I kept the faith?

Bob Nestor is a retired Laboratory Administrator and an Elder of the Alleluia Community responsible for pastoral and service teams, community events and is in headship of the weekly prayer meetings. He and his wife, Pam, have been Full Covenant members of Alleluia Community since 1976. They have five children, nine grandchildren and live in Augusta, Georgia, where they are members of St. Joseph Catholic Church.

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Choice should Not Come at the Cost of Another's Life

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know is wrong but do it anyway. All of the women who have had an abortion have suffered consequences. Sometimes if they have a surgical abortion, infections start, cervical damage occurs, and it hinders other attempts to become pregnant again. A pill called RU-486 has also been formulated to allow women to create an abortion without having to go into a clinic¹. This abortion-inducing pill basically causes the baby to starve to death because it cuts off the progesterone (a hormone that controls the female menstrual cycle) signal so that no more food will travel down to the baby. Although it has been called "safe" and "effective" by some, it really causes more damage than good.

"The right to life is the first among human rights"—Pope Francis. Everyone in the world has rights. That was the whole point of the United States breaking away from Great Britain so that we could be free. We have no more slavery in the U.S., and everyone who lives here receives a trial. During World War Two, though, the Nazis went through and massacred millions of humans in order to create the perfect human race without them. We look back at that now and we say how it was so terrible that some humans did that to one another and that we would never be like that ever.

How can we say how terrible the Holocaust was and then turn around and do the same thing? How can we live with ourselves knowing that we are hypocrites calling one thing terrible and doing it anyway? Some say that all women should have the choice to decide what they want to do with their bodies. A woman should have a choice, but not at the cost of another's

life. It should go against every moral we hold dear. Killing another is illegal in the U.S., but abortion has become legal. Abortion is the killing of the unborn so it should be illegal, but it is not. We have become no better than all of the other terrible people who devised ways of killing people.

The Romans crucified and tortured their prisoners. They also used them for sport in the arenas while the animals killed all of the prisoners. The Nazis used concentration camps to squeeze the most work out of their prisoners while killing them off. They used gas chambers to kill everyone at once. They discarded every human right these people had and just gave them death as their reward for hard work. These babies still in the womb, the fetus or whatever you choose to call it, have been stripped of their rights as human beings. We too started off like they are now, a small defenseless child left with no protection but the mother. How can we call ourselves fair and just when we turn a blind eye to the situation at hand?

Abortion is a terrible thing. No matter how some put it, no matter what some say in order to reconcile themselves, it is a terrible thing. People may not believe that all human life starts when a sperm and an egg become one. Six weeks into the term or seven, that baby is the same human it was the moment he was conceived. Everyone started off this way. So how can they say, "Oh, well all women have a choice and we were born because our mothers chose life, but we'll let you have an abortion anyway because it is your choice and the thing growing inside of you is not really a child. It is just a group of cells."

and not stop and think about it? Have we so lowered the bar on human life? Have we made life become that cheap?

Not only does abortion kill an innocent child, it also harms the mother in more ways than one. Just the thought of abortion should be enough to make us all break down and cry. Every time I see a picture of the remains of a child from an abortion, I cannot help but cry. Just seeing all of those lives that will not live to see the blue sky and the soft green grass is enough to make me stop and wonder. Who knows? Maybe one of those babies could have been one of our future presidents or could have invented an invention that could have made the Earth a cleaner place. Maybe one of those babies could have grown up to become an important person in history. All we can do is pray for their souls and the end of this silent holocaust.

(Footnotes)

¹ "RU-486."

National Right to Life,

<<http://www.nrlc.org/abortion/ru486/>>

Colette Sullivan, the daughter of Full Covenant members Larry and Clare Sullivan, will be in the 10th grade at Alleluia Community School this fall.

Correction

Ania Hatfield's essay published in the July 28 issue of the Dove was erroneously listed as the 2014 winning essay. In actuality, it was the 2013 winning essay. We regret the error.