

A little more information about some of the matters raised in

Glimpses of God – Hope for Today’s world

The Course Booklet

Session One

Page 5

<http://www.accomplishtrust.org.uk>

Accomplish is a registered charity in England and Wales, charity number 1127235.

Accomplish Children’s Trust (Accomplish) is a UK-based charitable trust raising funds to support children and young adults with disabilities in Africa.

Accomplish aims to bring relief to children who have physical or learning disabilities, and their families. They provide support to local (African) organisations through grants and their initiative-support network.

Accomplish projects include:

Child Sponsorship

Medical interventions

Family support networks

Provision of vocational training

Income-generating support projects such as goat and pig projects

Development of a school for children with visual and hearing impairments

Our current focus is on rural areas in Uganda, but the longer term vision of **Accomplish Children’s Trust** is to reach children and families across Africa.

Page 5

<http://www.streetpastors.co.uk>

The Street Pastors Initiative is run by the Ascension Trust, charity number 1127204

Street Pastors is an inter-denominational Church response to urban problems, engaging with people on the streets to care, listen and dialogue.

It was pioneered in London in January 2003 by Rev Les Isaac, Director of the Ascension Trust,

and has seen some remarkable results, including drops in crime in areas where teams have been working. There are now some 9000 trained volunteers in around 250 teams around the United Kingdom.

Each city project is set up by Ascension Trust and run by a local coordinator with support from Ascension Trust and local churches and community groups, in partnership with Police, Council and other statutory agencies.

Session 2

Page 9

Some Other Rainbow - Their Own Story by John McCarthy and Jill Morrell

Paperback: 672 pages

Publisher: Corgi; New edition edition (1 April 1994)

ISBN-13: 978-0552139533

Book Description:

A remarkable account of courage, endurance, hope, and love.

From the Back Cover:

On 17 April 1986 John McCarthy was kidnapped in Beirut. For the next five years he was cut off from everything and everybody he knew and loved, from family, friends and, perhaps above all, from Jill Morrell, the girl he was going to marry.

For five years, John McCarthy had to endure the deprivation - both physical and psychological - of captivity; the filth and squalor of the cells in which he was kept; the agony of isolation and repeated self-examination; and the pain of ignorance, of not knowing if those he loved even realized he was alive.

For Jill Morrell, the five years of John's captivity were a different kind of hell: the initial shock and disbelief; the gradual acceptance that John had been taken and that her life had changed irrevocably, that all their plans had been shattered.

But Jill refused to give up hope. For five years she and a group of friends worked ceaselessly on behalf of John and all the British hostages in the Middle East, until the extraordinary day in August 1991 when John McCarthy stepped down from an aeroplane at RAF Lyneham. A day when they could begin again.

This is their story, a remarkable account of courage, endurance, hope, and love.

About the Author

Biography for Jill Morrell

Jill Morrell was born and brought up in Yorkshire. She, too, graduated from the University of Hull and subsequently worked at UPITN. She lives in London.

Biography for John McCarthy

As a journalist in television news John McCarthy was sent on his first foreign assignment to Beirut in 1986 aged twenty-nine. His career was abruptly cut short by militiamen who kidnapped and held him captive for five and half years.

Since his release he has written four books - Some Other Rainbow (with Jill Morrell), about his hostage years, Island Race (with Sandi Toksvig), an account of their circumnavigation of Britain, and Between Extremes (with Brian Keenan), a journey through Chile and his latest, A Ghost Upon Your Path.

John McCarthy continues to work in both radio and television.

Page 9

Brother Lawrence was born Nicolas Herman in Hériménil, near Lunéville in the region of Lorraine, located in modern day eastern France. Having felt he had received a revelation of the providence and power of God at the age of 18, within six years he joined the Discalced Carmelite Priory in Paris. In this intervening period he fought in the Thirty Years' War and later served as a valet.

Nicolas entered the priory in Paris as a lay brother, not having the education necessary to become a cleric, and took the religious name, "Lawrence of the Resurrection". He spent almost all of the rest of his life within the walls of the priory, working in the kitchen for most of his life and as a repairer of sandals in his later years.

Despite his lowly position in life and the priory, his character attracted many to him. He had a reputation for experiencing profound peace and visitors came to seek spiritual guidance from him. The wisdom he passed on to them, in conversations and in letters, would later become the basis for the book, The Practice of the Presence of God. Father Joseph de Beaufort, later vicar general to the Archbishop of Paris, compiled this work after Brother Lawrence died. It became popular among Catholics and Protestants alike, with John Wesley and A. W. Tozer recommending it to others.

As a young man, Herman's poverty forced him into joining the army, which guaranteed him meals and a small stipend. During this period, Herman claimed an experience that set him on a unique spiritual journey. He considered it a supernatural clarity into a common sight, more so than as a supernatural vision.

Conversion

During the winter, Herman looked at a barren tree, stripped of leaves and fruit, and realized it awaited the sure hope of a springtime revival and summer abundance. Gazing at the tree, Herman grasped deeply the extravagance of God's grace and the unflinching sovereignty of divine providence. Like the tree, he felt seemingly dead, but held hope that God had life waiting for him, and the turn of seasons would bring fullness. At that moment, he said, that leafless tree "first flashed in upon my soul the fact of God," and a love for God that never ceased. Shortly after, an injury forced his retirement from the army, and after a stint as a footman, he sought a place where he could suffer for his failures. He thus entered the Discalced Carmelite monastery in Paris as Brother Lawrence.

His method

He was assigned to the monastery kitchen where, amidst the tedious chores of cooking and cleaning at the constant bidding of his superiors, he developed his rule of spirituality and work. In his Maxims, Lawrence writes, *"Men invent means and methods of coming at God's love, they learn rules and set up devices to remind them of that love, and it seems like a world of trouble to bring oneself into the consciousness of God's presence. Yet it might be so simple. Is it not quicker and easier just to do our common business wholly for the love of him?"*

For Brother Lawrence, "common business," no matter how mundane or routine, could be a medium of God's love. The sacredness or worldly status of a task mattered less than motivation behind it. *"Nor is it needful that we should have great things to do. . . We can do little things for God; I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of him, and that done, if there is nothing else to call me, I prostrate myself in worship before him, who has given me grace to work; afterwards I rise happier than a king. It is enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God."*

Brother Lawrence felt having a proper heart about tasks made every detail of his life possess surpassing value. *"I began to live as if there were no one save God and me in the world."* Brother Lawrence felt that he cooked meals, ran errands, scrubbed pots, and endured the scorn of the world alongside God. One of his most famous sayings refers to his kitchen:

"The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament."

or in the original French

"Je possède Dieu, affirme-t-il, aussi tranquillement dans le tracas de ma cuisine, où quelquefois plusieurs personnes me demandent en même temps des choses différentes, que si j'étais à genoux devant le Saint Sacrement."

He admitted the path to this union was difficult. He spent years disciplining his heart and mind to yield to God's presence. *"As often as I could, I placed myself as a worshiper before him, fixing my mind upon his holy presence, recalling it when I found it wandering from him. This proved to be an exercise frequently painful, yet I persisted through all difficulties."*

He found a peace in reconciling himself to the thought that this struggle and longing was his destiny. He said his soul *"had come to its own home and place of rest."* His death in 1691 occurred in relative obscurity, but his teachings lived on in the compilation of his words.

Page 9

The quote from Solzhenitsyn is taken from *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956* (1973) - an account of the Soviet prison system, based on extensive research and Solzhenitsyn's own experiences as a prisoner in the Gulag. It is composed of 7 sections, and often divided into 3 volumes.

Session Two - Track [24] of the course CD

Press release about the first national survey on biblical literacy undertaken at St John's College, Durham:

Session 3

Page 16

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

by Francis Thompson (1859-1907)

*I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me'.
I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities;
(For, though I knew His love Who followed,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to:
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateway of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clanged bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to Dawn: Be sudden—to Eve: Be soon;
With thy young skiey blossom heap me over
From this tremendous Lover—
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,*

Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
 Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
 But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
 The long savannahs of the blue;
 Or, whether, Thunder-driven,
 They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven,
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:—
 Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
 Still with unhurrying chase,
 And unperturbed pace,
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
 Came on the following Feet,
 And a Voice above their beat—
'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.'

I sought no more after that which I strayed
 In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes
 Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
 With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share
With me' (said I) 'your delicate fellowship;
 Let me greet you lip to lip,
 Let me twine with you caresses,
 Wantoning
 With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
 Banqueting
 With her in her wind-walled palace,
 Underneath her azured dais,
 Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
 From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.'
 So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one—
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.
 I knew all the swift importings
 On the wilful face of skies;
 I knew how the clouds arise
 Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;
 All that's born or dies
 Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful divine;
 With them joyed and was bereaven.

I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine:
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I; in sound I speak—
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;
Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness:
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;
And past those noisèd Feet
A voice comes yet more fleet—
'Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.'

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou has hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenceless utterly.
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amidst the dust o' the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.
Ah! is Thy love indeed

A weed, albeit an amarinthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
 Ah! must—
 Designer infinite!—
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
 From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
 Such is; what is to be?
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity;
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again.
 But not ere him who summoneth
 I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
 Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields
 Be dunged with rotten death?

 Now of that long pursuit
 Comes on at hand the bruit;
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:
'And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!

 'Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught' (He said),
'And human love needs human meriting:
 How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
 Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
 Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
 Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
 All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
 Rise, clasp My hand, and come!'

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'

Session 4

Page 18

My song is love unknown,
My Savior's love to me;
Love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.
O who am I, that for my sake
My Lord should take, frail flesh and die?

He came from His blest throne
Salvation to bestow;
But men made strange, and none
The longed for Christ would know:
But O! my Friend, my Friend indeed,
Who at my need His life did spend.

Sometimes they strew His way,
And His sweet praises sing;
Resounding all the day
Hosannas to their King:
Then "Crucify!" is all their breath,
And for His death they thirst and cry.

Why, what hath my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
He gave the blind their sight,
Sweet injuries! Yet they at these
Themselves displease, and 'gainst Him rise.

They rise and needs will have
My dear Lord made away;
A murderer they saved,
The Prince of life they slay,
Yet cheerful He to suffering goes,
That He His foes from thence might free.

*In life, no house, no home
My Lord on earth might have;
In death no friendly tomb
But what a stranger gave.
What may I say? Heav'n was His home;
But mine the tomb wherein He lay.*

*Here might I stay and sing,
No story so divine;
Never was love, dear King!
Never was grief like Thine.
This is my Friend, in Whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend.*

Session Five

On Track [49] of the CD/transcript, Shirley Williams talks about her mother, who was Vera Mary Brittain (29 December 1893 – 29 March 1970) - a British writer, feminist and pacifist, best remembered as the author of the best-selling 1933 memoir *Testament of Youth*, recounting her experiences during World War I and the beginning of her journey towards pacifism.