



SONrise

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EMMAUS

NEWSLETTER

... Strengthening the Local Church

On March 27, 1977 a KLM jumbo jet sliced through the top of a Pan American jumbo jet on the island of Tenerife, Canary Islands. There were no survivors on the KLM flight, but many managed to exit the Pan American flight. One of the survivors visited Kingsport in the early 1980's.

After his plane was cut in half, he rushed to the aisle to exit the plane. He noticed that scriptures were pouring from his mouth. He didn't have time to think about it, they just flowed. Then he noticed other people frozen in fear in their seats, blasphemies pouring from their lips. They could not move and perished in the fire.

As he told us of God's deliverance, I noticed a fear creeping into my mind – What would come out of my mouth if I were in such a crisis? Would God's word come forth, or would I be cursing God? I could not answer either question with any satisfaction. I latched onto King David's cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God!", for I knew Jesus' words, "Out the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." It was a matter of my heart, not my head.

When I went on the Walk to Emmaus in 1991, I just knew that God was going to grant my request for a clean heart when it was announced that we were going to Dying Moments and that we could give to God that which troubled us the most. I just knew that He would zap my heart clean with one quick lightning stroke – but He didn't. Instead, He assured me that He was at work on my heart.

A dozen years later, I realized that my "crisis" had come - major surgery. If you have ever been there, you know that you can say some pretty stupid things under general anesthesia – your mind is no longer in control. The last thing I wanted to do was to dishonor God – conscious or not. The nurse anesthetist was a friend of mine, so I knew I could find out later what I said. When I was coming to in the recovery room, I couldn't even open my eyes yet, but I could hear myself praying out loud – very loud. I stopped praying and thought, "What will the people in the recovery room think?" Then I had the second thought, "I don't care what they think!", and began to pray again. Even through the pain of recovery, I was rejoicing - God had done a work in my heart! My friend confirmed that no unwholesome word had come out of my mouth, even though I was talking all the time. What a relief!!!

I can take NO credit for what came from my mouth or for what God did in my heart. I am still a work-in-progress, for God isn't through with me yet. I want to encourage each of you to let God search your heart as we begin this new year and to let Him clean out anything that would offend Him – have a personal "Dying Moment". You can trust Him with the results – "As for God, His way is perfect."

De Colores,
Barry Smith