



SONrise *July-August 2001*
EMMAUS
NEWSLETTER
... Strengthening the Local Church

Spread Your Wings and Fly

It's summertime and our focus shifts from Walks to Flights and Journeys. Flights and Journeys imply a more extensive experience than just a "walk", but we know that our Journey through this life consists of our Walking with the risen Lord every day. But flying? Do we really fly?

As I said in my last letter, I think God speaks mainly to me in these letters as I share them with you, so I often go back and read them again, trying to incorporate them into my life. The "Summertime" message is working - my summer has not flown by, and it is so full of beautiful experiences and special moments, that May seems almost a year ago. And I recently had an opportunity to put "The Model Works" letter into practice. One of the points that Jack Edwards (the new Senior Minister at First Broad Street) made in his first sermon was that everything we do in the church should be undergirded with prayer. He specifically called for prayer in the Prayer Chapel during the entire Church Leadership Council meeting each month. It was such an "Emmaus" thing for him to say, that it really hit home and I knew that God was calling me to that Prayer Chapel. It's been a long time since I have prayed on my knees for 2 ½ hours straight, but I tried to follow what Emmaus had taught me - I took off my watch, I asked God to do in me what I could not, and I let go to let God do the rest. I was still deep in prayer when Gail came by to tell me that the meeting was over. It was a most holy moment for me.

Five days later, I spent another 2 ½ hours in prayer - this time on my bike instead of on my knees, doing more listening than talking. God was speaking to me through the incredible wildflowers and the beautiful scenery, but what really struck me was the abundance of birds and butterflies. Butterflies were everywhere (as were the flowers), and I was surrounded by a symphony of birdsong for the entire ride. In addition to the multitude of little brown songbirds, there were brilliantly colored cardinals, bluebirds and goldfinches; there were soaring hawks, an eagle, and a great blue heron. I even saw a few wild turkeys. Some of what God was telling me through all of this is that birds don't sing because they have a message - they sing because they have a song. Christians should not tell people about Jesus to convert them (only God can do that) - they should tell about Jesus because they have really Good News and will burst if they don't tell somebody. The butterflies don't fly from flower to flower to pollinate them - they are drawn to them by beauty and sweetness. Christians should not help others out of obligation or guilt - they should love with God's Love and be drawn to those that God Loves. The eagles don't soar high above the earth simply to find food - they soar because life itself is to feel the wind beneath their wings. Christians should not live to

a higher standard because they are better than others – they live on a higher plane because God's Spirit lives within them, lifting them high above the life of this world. But what if they all chose to be like the turkeys and never fly. If they didn't fly, the songbirds would soon lose their reason to sing as the world taught them only to "gobble." If they didn't fly, the butterflies would only be worms in fancy clothes, and the plants would bear no fruit. If they didn't fly, the eagles would soon starve, for they were not created to live on the "chicken feed" the world around them has to offer.

In that first sermon, Jack Edwards also challenged our church to step out in faith without worrying about whether the net will be there. That's pretty scary because we could fall flat on our face (at least from our perspective), but if we don't step out in faith, we will never be able to fly. First of all pray – not just our own feeble prayers, but asking God to pray within us. Then, empowered by God's Spirit, step out, spread your wings, and fly!

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