

POWER Source

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."

John 14:16-17

BACK IN 1969, back when the hemline was battled wildly between the mid-thigh and ankle, back when bell bottoms were the rage and fabric colors caused migraines, back when NASA prepared for the moon and Richard Nixon prepared for the White House—back when the world was at once more simple and perilously confused, Gary and I readied an old, beat up, discarded bread truck for a summer journey south.

The point man for the missions group had earlier visited our church, stroking the congregation for funds and stoking enthusiasm in those

willing to make the journey. His words ignited our youthful ardor for the unsaved, and my friend and I committed ourselves to spending the summer of '69 in a mountain village of eastern Mexico.

The old bread truck was in terrible shape—we probably paid as much as two hundred dollars for it—and much work was required to get it ready for the trip. Being teenagers, however, our concern lay more with creature comforts than structural integrity. The truck was to be not only our transportation, but our quarters for the summer, so our priorities were interior looks and ease of living.

We first built a false floor and laid carpet, then covered the walls of the cavernous interior with wood paneling. From someone's basement or attic we acquired an old overstuffed chair, which made the space look more like Aunt Edith's parlor than a transport for racks of bread. The interior was finished with a short wardrobe of sorts, attached to the wall just behind the driver's seat.

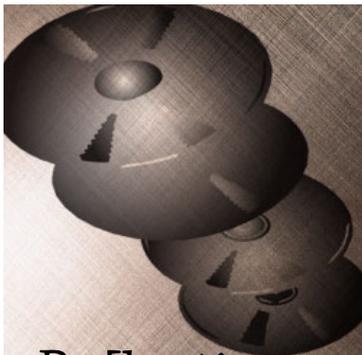
Because teenagers require music,

we next considered what we should install for a sound system. To be honest, the years

have erased the logic behind our decision; it could have been that all our funds had been used up in the walls and floor of the interior, or that we simply possessed more records than tapes. Whatever the reason, for our source of music we mounted a record turntable atop the wardrobe.

Now, the attentive reader will immediately recognize a problem with this scheme. For those too young to be conversant in this antiquated technology, let me explain: Records are played on a revolving disk, with the actual sounds being picked up off their surface by a needle affixed to the end of a free-swinging tone arm. By design, the tone arm pivots side to side, up and down, letting it track easily through the concentric grooves on the record. The slightest bump sends it skipping and screeching across the surface of the platter.

Since the ride of the bread truck was not what one would call pneumatically sound, this was not a ter-



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by the Pond

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ribly bright decision. Well, we were teenagers, but we weren't congenitally stupid, either. We knew the rules. We realized that we would not be using our fabulous stereo sound system while traveling down the roads to Mexico—no matter how smooth the pavement. We knew that the records would remain stacked and silent until we were stopped—until we could unroll our very, *very* long extension cord and plug it into a steady source of electricity at our destination: the missions church located at the tiny mountain village of Galeana, Mexico.

Ready and Available

When an individual becomes associated with God through Christ, that individual is, from that point on, permanently and steadily linked to Him by the Holy Spirit. The presence of God in that life is constant: it does not waver, there is no ebb and flow. The Spirit Himself is likewise constant: He does not vacation or nap, nor does He present Himself complete to one individual, but abridged to another. He is there, steady and complete, in every believer.

Given that, why do so many of us live out our Christian lives like that truck-bound record player—only energized when we've stopped and plugged ourselves into the local church?

Every Sunday morning church parking lots the world over fill with cars. From those transports emerge Christians of every stripe and color, every economic station and substrata, every personality and size. Come Sunday morning they arrive dressed in their best and troop inside for their instruction and worship. For a little while they are energized, thoroughly

and completely connected to God through study of His word and worship of His holiness. Like the stereo plugged into the church's electricity, their rejoicing sounds forth in loud praise while they are connected on Sunday. But, just as with the portable record player, once they disconnect and move off, they fall silent.

Technology today has advanced far beyond the idea of mounting a stereo turntable, or even a cassette player, in a bread truck. CD and MP3 players long ago replaced the antiquated record player, and travelers in any vehicle today can enjoy full, symphonic sound anywhere—even jolting down a rocky path suitable only for 4-wheel drive. And, of course, batteries today are smaller and more powerful than anything dreamed of in 1969, so the miniature players can be carried anywhere.

Yet the faith of many is still as moribund as an old record changer in a dilapidated bread truck. Without the physical hook up to the institution—without actually being on the church premises dressed in Sunday finery, their faith is as silent and lifeless as a turntable strapped down and locked in place for the bumpy ride.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all

rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 1:18-21

Every Christian today comes equipped with the most sophisticated, powerful battery pack ever devised, but many still conduct their lives as if they're powerless outside the four walls of the church building. Every one of us has been converted into a freestanding temple, but many are still operating under the idea that communion with God is either impossible or unnecessary off the church grounds.

Many Christians today have not learned how to find God in the small moments of daily living. They've not discovered His presence—though it is certainly there—in the events and moments taking place around them every day. And because of this their praise falls silent, and they miss out on the power and sweet communion available to them wherever they are, whatever their activity.

Through Christ Jesus, God has stepped out of the secrecy and cloying incense of the Most Holy Place. Through Christ, the Holy Spirit has been released to dwell in each one of us. In Christ Himself we have a steady, dependable Brother who journeys with us—not just on Sundays, but through every day of the week.

"...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:20b

