FREEDOM'S SONG -- PART II

by Anne Byrd

Last month I concluded my article by recounting the decision our family had to face of whether or not to cling to the wonderful lifestyle that we had worked so hard to achieve, or to go on in the Lord and walk through the doors of opportunity that He so faithfully opened for our ministry. He has always given us a 'sense' of the momentousness of seemingly small decisions, and we recognized from the beginning that we were setting a course that would determine our direction for many years to come. Though it was not easy to walk away from our place and our fellowship, we knew in our hearts that this was His perfect will for our lives.

We began to travel in 1984 as LEGACY. In the beginning, our trips ranged in length from 3 to 6 weeks, and were spaced by several weeks at home in between so that we could take care of our place, and so that Barry could get a job or two into his body shop to make enough money to pay our few bills. This was when we began to realize why God had required us to get out of debt years earlier -- so that we could afford to follow the calling He had put on our lives.

Many people ask how we get scheduled. From the beginning, each time we walked through one door, the Lord opened many more to us. It wasn't easy, but we were always able to fill our itineraries adequately and put gas in the van while we were on the road, but we usually returned home with very little. We have always operated on a free-will offering basis, and have often had the opportunity to see the Lord multiply loaves and fishes. He has provided our needs, and we praise Him for that, but we have had to learn that He requires His people to walk in faith. Most of us become so insulated from a walk of faith by living in Babylon with our secure jobs, multitudinous benefits, insurance policies and cradle to grave security that Caesar provides. Those who are awake, however, see this 'system' unraveling as God prepares to judge His people for He is a jealous God!

The more we travelled, the more invitations we received. The more we were away from home, the more Barry's business declined, and the more quickly our place deteriorated from lack of care. Soon, we were at that awful crossroads of having to decide to either go full time on the road or quit.

In answer to our dilemma, donations began to trickle in in the mail. In addition to the free-will offerings we received, those donations enabled us to make a full time commitment to ministry.

At this point, I would like to thank those of you who have faithfully supported us for years. We are constantly amazed by the fund-raising tactics of many 501 C-3 ministries. It seems that virtually all of their time and energy go into trying to raise money for programs that have little or nothing to do with the Kingdom of God . The IRS 'gift' to the body of Christ of 501 C-3 status has done more to destroy the purity and integrity of ministry in this nation than any sex scandal ever could.

God has given us an anchor in Zechariah 4:6: *"Not by might (meaning wealth), nor by power (meaning force), BUT BY MY SPIRIT SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS..."* While we would gratefully accept financial help from "large" donors, most of our support has been in the category of the "Widow's Mite," and we are humbled by and grateful to those who have

sacrificially helped us to heed the call of the Lord. We will continue to trust the Lord to provide our needs through faithful Saints, and watch Him create resources for His Kingdom work without compromise of chicanery on our part. Our donor list is small, but it is full of the names of those who are great in the Kingdom of God!

When we realized that we would be spending so much time on the road, we were able to trade part of our land for the bus in which we have lived for the past 2 1/2 years. Our old bus has been the greatest source of both tribulation and blessing imaginable. Having it has enabled us to be very flexible, but dealing with numerous break-downs has added much stress to an already insecure lifestyle; but again, God has used the bus mightily to teach us to walk in faith.

We eventually rented our place out rather than to watch it continue to deteriorate from lack of occupation. These decisions were heart-wrenching, and Dannie and I have cried many times just from a longing to go home. I usually have a very hard time making it through November and December as the memories are so potent at that time, but the Lord always comforts me with Matthew 19:29: *"And every one that hath forsaken houses...or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."*

During our 4 years of full-time travel and ministry, we have had the opportunity to be involved in just about everything imaginable, from pro-life to politics, and have walked and talked with the kings of the earth. We consider our friends to be the elite band of sold-out Christians whom God will honor as overcomers when we all leave this veil of tears. We have expended far more energy than we've had, but when one is in the will of God for his life, He faithfully renews. Our finances are often very strained, but our Father God always provides. We are in awe as we reflect upon His Providential care for us. We came to the middle of 1988, however, with weariness that indicated that it was time for a major change.

We have learned in the past few months that God has never changed our calling, though it has appeared to be so. He has had us in an intensive crash course on His Kingdom. We have always wanted to be right square in the middle of what He was doing in the earth, and so we have been like itinerant fruit pickers. We have gone wherever there was evidence of a crop. We searched for His might and power in politics, and though traces of it were there, we were frustrated with what we found. We sought to most effectively inspire His people through television as we had the opportunity to participate in 3 specials aired nationwide as well as numerous other radio and television appearances. They 'came to pass,' with no lasting effect. We became involved with many parachurch ministries in an effort to help to fill the void left by the sleeping church, and though some have been wonderful efforts, we found that most eventually get derailed by sin or error without the accountability of strong covenant relationship provided by the local church.

And so, God has brought us to the point of recognizing His plan for the Church in this age. When we began our pilgrimage as LEGACY, we saw the huge void that had been left in our society by a church that was uninformed and uninvolved in real life. The true Church has indeed been in the category of "Sleeping Beauty," while the harlot becomes more and more brazen in her partnership with 'the beast.' God never has and never will bypass His Church to demonstrate His wisdom to all of creation; *"...That now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."*

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