



# CROSS CURRENTS INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

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## Our Dear Prayer Supporter,

May this month's letter encourage your heart to know that you are "A Chosen Vessel" as the following article was written with you in mind.

Dorothy and I rejoice in His mighty purposes being outworked through CCIM as He knits our hearts with yours in the fellowship of the Gospel.

Thank you for all that your prayers and gifts mean at this time. You will rejoice to read this letter from Justin, who lives in Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire) West Africa, where we broadcast: "Rendezvous with the Lord."

Hi! I'm Justin. I found "Your Quest for God," among my sister's things over the week-end and I read it! She

lives in the boarding school and comes home at the week-end. When I asked her to lend it to me to read, she told me how it belonged to her friend. I read through the book and I saw your mobile phone number. How can I have a copy? My sister shared the testimony of her friend and it was unbelievable! She became a Christian thanks to your book. My sister shared that her friend's life has truly changed and I want my life to change also. I don't want to do bad things anymore. I am a robber and I want to become God's good child. [ED: Please pray for Justin!]

In His love,



## A Chosen Vessel

by Richard A. Bennett

After sharing the startling news of how Saul of Tarsus was now transformed to become Paul the Apostle, God gave Annanias the assurance that he, who had been "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," (Acts 9:1) was "a chosen vessel unto Me to bear My name before the Gentiles, the kings, and the children of Israel for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (v.15).

Later in Galatians, Paul testified that as far back as the timing and the biology of his birth this was providentially designed by God: "But when [i.e. the Chronology of his birth] it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, [i.e. the Biology of his birth] and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, [i.e. the Doxology of his birth] that I might preach Him among the heathen" Acts 9:15,16. But, you might ask: "How does that affect me? Paul was surely a very special person."

**\*The Chronology of our birth:** As with Paul the year, the month, and the day, when you and I were born was not accidental, nor incidental, it was intrinsic and inescapable! God Himself elected that, at this turbulent hour of human history, you and I should be introduced into the human race.

**\*The Biology of our birth:** Even in our mother's womb, God selected our specific genes, our unique DNA and our ethnic background. As a young believer, I heard Dr. Graham Scrogie say: "When God made you He broke the mold!" So why do we try to be what God never made us to be? God created us to be a unique vessel of blessing to a lost world.

**\*The Doxology of our birth:** The only functional capacity of a vessel is to have something either poured or placed into it. That is why Dorothy and I sometimes pray 'Lord Jesus, may the overflow hide the vessel!' Surely that is the intent of the Apostle Paul when he continued: "They glorified God in me" Galatians 1:24.

**When people look at your life and mine and see no further than the vessel, they miss the true significance of a vessel that has received new life in Christ.**

*“We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us”* 2 Corinthians 4:7. The phrase, **“earthen vessels”** carries great significance. In Leviticus chapter 14 we read of the cleansing of a leper’s house. The priest was ordered to empty the house and remove all infected articles and stones. Then, a sacrifice was to be offered in an earthen vessel . But what of the earthen vessel? The earthen vessel had to be broken because it readily absorbed the prevailing plague of leprosy contamination. So, unlike a brass pot, which could be washed, the earthen vessel had to be broken.

God tells us that Christians are earthen vessels. No matter how circumspect we endeavor to be, even though it be only by remote control, the contaminating influence of a Christ-rejecting culture, with its value systems, sensuous fashions, entertainment enticements and intellectual arrogance, daily permeates our earthen vessels.

**O Wind of God, come bend us, break us,  
Till humbly we confess our need;  
Then in Thy tenderness remake us,  
Revive, restore; for this we plead.**

*Bessie Porter Head (1850-1936).*

**So what does God do?** Many of us wilt in self-pity and panic when the skillful hand of our heavenly Potter breaks the vessel. God’s value system is not that of budgets, buildings or bigness. But, as God touches the very core of our hopes and the bottom falls out of all of our plans, we are lowered to the foot of the Cross. And if we are too tall for that, then we are too tall to be mightily used of God. Many of us are familiar with the little chorus: **“Spirit of the living God, fall fresh on me.”** In the sequence of that prayer it should then be **“Break me,”** followed by: **“Melt me,” “Mold me,”** and **“Fill me.”** A cup that is full of vinegar cannot be filled with orange juice and a life that is filled with “self” cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit. Breaking precedes blessing!

**So what can we do?** As the old hymnist wrote: **“He who would fight for Truth must first be true within.”** Conscious sin requires conscious and specific confession before the throne of grace: *“For if we confess our sins, He is faithful [to His promise] and just [to His provision] to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* 1 John 1:9. However, few of us realize that God is not only interested in exercising His bountiful mercy and grace as He forgives our sins, He is also greatly concerned with the development of our character.

And this can be a painful process. As the character develops so does our spiritual capacity, and, it is this capacity formed on earth that will be crystalized in heaven when we see our Savior face to face. Yes, whether it be a trial of financial stress or physical suffering; whether it be the trial of a wayward son or the pressure of the overwhelming daily routine; whether it be that of a physical weakness or the breaking of an attitude of self-sufficiency, all are purposed by a loving Savior to break the vessel: *“That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of ourselves.”* Only in this way is our character expanded and our God glorified.

Isaac Watts, a gifted scholar and poet, was a man full of love. However, outwardly he had a hooked nose, high cheek bones and beady eyes. Isaac fell in love with a lassie from Scotland he hoped to marry. Sadly, she turned down his offer by saying: “Mr. Watts, I wish I could admire the casket as much as I do the jewel inside!” Isaac Watts remained a life-long bachelor and turned his broken heart into a life of praise to the Lord. He wrote over 1,000 wonderful hymns of worship including: **“When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride.”**

