



Standing in the Source

by Andy Comiskey

While in Caracas, Venezuela recently, a man urged me to write a new book on the many new things I had learned over the last decade. I considered his assumption, then replied; "I'm not sure I know more; rather, what I know has deepened." In truth, what we at Desert Stream have learned of Christ over the last 20 years has grown more real and resonant within us. His love deepens in us, and our response to Him grows more resolute each year. We stand with Him in the battle; His way matures and changes us. Our feet are planted more deeply than ever in Christ-our Life and our Source.

Perseverance is key. The battle for truth and clarity in our sexuality and relationships has increased. But so have our opportunities to proclaim Christ through the word of our testimony, and to plant healing ministries throughout the world. To date, since Desert Stream began 20 years ago, we have visited 25 nations. This has resulted in the release of over 250 healing groups in the worldwide church.

We are grateful to God's faithfulness. Every time we preach Christ and His cross, regardless of our circumstance or feeling state, He satisfies the hungry and thirsty with His healing love. And He envisions wounded healers to arise and release to others the healing gifts God gives them.

Just recently we returned from our first ministry trip to South America, as Helen and Mark will later describe. God moved mightily in the deep and responsive hearts of the people. He is raising up an army from among solid, church-based healers who will continue the work.

We are blessed to supply them with Desert Stream Press' new edition of Pursuing Sexual Wholeness in Spanish, the translated CrossCurrent booklet, and the soon-to-be released Spanish version of the Living Waters manual. We are planning on holding our first Living Waters training in Spanish in early 2002.

Next up, Asia. In what will be the quickening of visits to nations here since our first visit to Hong Kong in '97, we plan in November to do a round of conferences in Seoul, Korea, then swing down to Bangkok, Thailand for a conference there. (Special thanks to former intern Sue Hunt for her perseverance, for her heart for the Thai people, and for her hand in getting Pursuing Sexual Wholeness published in Thai.)

Europe and beyond...Sonja Stark left California for Brussels, Belgium in June in order to assume the role of Coordinator for Living Waters in Europe. Never before has Europe been in such good hands! We miss her terribly, but are certain that our loss will be the gain of the dear ones who proclaim and heal there. Taking her place as the International Coordinator is Kin Lancaster whose story (included here) mirrors his passion for Jesus and His worldwide church.

I am in awe that we at Desert Stream, in a small way, are part of the fulfillment of Rev. 22:1 and 2, which describes: "the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and

of the Lamb...On each side of the river stood the tree of life...And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

From Christ crucified was unleashed a healing flood of blood and water (Jn 19:34); that river now flows from the resurrected Lord as living water, a crystal stream, for the healing of the nations. "Where the river flows...everything will live." (Ez.47:9)

What a privilege to be a part of that mighty river! As we humble ourselves before God and each other, we participate in God preparing a people for Himself. Desert Stream is a part of the cleansing work God is doing throughout the world. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the holy city."(Rev. 22:14)

While we release this stream, we are painfully aware of the dark current that is increasing in power and taking thousands captive. The anointing for healing and cleansing is increasing, but so is the blackness of sin and its hellish consequence. Never before have I witnessed this degree of broken sexuality and relationships. Something cold, ruthless, and perverse is arising in the hearts of humankind, a darkness impervious to truth.

This current in our culture is evident in the selfish and narcissistic behavior exhibited everywhere. Skyrocketing rates of divorce, extramarital affairs, and addiction to Internet pornography are among the tributes to our lack of conscience. Is it any wonder that homosexuals are the sacred cows of our post-Christian culture--the darlings of the media, the educational system, and the political sphere?

Even as the doomed unions of Ellen Degeneres and Melissa Etheridge crumble, the prevailing current of thought dares not whisper the truth that perhaps the empresses had no clothes after all. I recall Clinton in '98 fawning over Ellen and partner at the first gay activist fundraiser attended by a president; sadder still was Tipper Gore enthusiastically playing drums for Etheridge at the gay rally in Washington earlier this year. "Woe be to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness..." (Is.5:20)

What is our response to this prevailing current of darkness? Over the course of this year, Jonathan Hunter and I met with a team to determine how Desert Stream should respond to this moral decline. What resulted is the Proclamation statement included in this newsletter. Though we seek not to become steeped in the political process, we are determined to proclaim the transforming power of Jesus Christ in a variety of contexts.

Some have feared that we will be merely moralizing to those who don't know Jesus yet. My response: What better context for evangelism? Jesus enables people to live truthful lives. We will tell that truth through the story of our lives, wherever the Spirit leads.

So far, Jonathan and I have had editorials printed in the LA Times. Desert Stream was featured in a front-page article in the LA Times last July. Though a mixed blessing, (the photo represented me as a deranged, snake-eyed evangelist) the article proclaimed the truth that one can either choose the Glory of God or idols. And for those who opt for the former, there is help available. Not bad for a circulation of millions!

God is drawing clear lines between good and evil. We must firm up our decisions as to where we are going to stand. Those of us still drawn to the dark tide need to wake up! Playtime is over. The only way God can burn off our immature, self-serving penchant for evil is through facing the dark current as we stand in the river of Life. We must see evil for what it is, and cleave to the Source, Jesus Christ, with an undivided heart.

I believe in this season, God is granting the devil greater authority to reveal the hearts of believers. Even those who claim allegiance to Christ are being tested by Satan to see what is in their hearts. In our ministry, for example, I see the enemy moving in unprecedented ways to harass the saints through aggressive acts of seduction from the world. So be it! These trials are purposeful-to reveal what is in our hearts. Thank God for His training in righteousness; He enables us to choose whom we are going to serve and where we will stand amid the dark current of this age.

We must seek refuge in His Word and in His Body. No more lone rangers; we will get picked off! We must humble ourselves and forgive our Christian offenders. Are we each not broken members of Christ's body? Why then do we get stuck on the brokenness of others? Without commitment to a local body, we will not possess the authority we need to stand against hell's offense. (Matt.16:18). Let us get low before Christ Crucified, that He might raise us up together with the saints to stand in the Source.

We must persevere in the waters of Life until the stream of God's righteousness becomes native to us. Then we will behold the truth that we are part of the river of life which cuts straight up the middle of the dark tide. We team with Life from on high. We possess the authority to call others out of death and into that Life, His Life, which has become ours.

The dark current possesses its own authority to accuse and to condemn its population to hell. We need to recognize the eternal penalty for those relenting to the dark current. Scripture is clear: "For those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil..."(Rom.2:8) and "Nothing impure will enter into the holy city, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful..."(Rev.21:27)

Let us take seriously the high and hard call to stand in the fear of the Lord-alive to His River of Life, which is our freedom. Soberly aware of our call to stand free of the darkness, we then stand in the Source and free those who long for Life Himself. We at Desert Stream are resolute in our call to reach with clean hands for those flailing in the dark current that surrounds the River. We proclaim Jesus and make a way for them in the fresh, clear water of God.

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony to the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright morning star. The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."(Rev.22:14-17)