



*A publication of The Plymouth Rock Foundation, Marlborough, NH 03455*

## MAKING YOUR MARK FOR JESUS CHRIST

*"Not every one who says unto Me, Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My father which is in heaven." (Matt 7:21)*

**E**ach individual leaves a mark upon the world. The mark a person leaves *externally* — on friends, associates and acquaintances, and on the community, springs from the mark, the imprint, one carries *internally* -- *in the heart and on the mind*. For, as our Master's word assures us:

*As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.*  
(Prov. 23:7)

And, as reported in Matthew 12:35, Jesus reminds us:

*"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things."*

Christians — those who truly seek to live in and for Christ — are required to make their mark for Him. That is His mandate; that is our task. And that we can do only when His mark is in us -- in our heart, on our mind, and thus upon the life we lead, the work we do, and the way we do it.

Paul wrote to the Christians at Philippi, those who are His are to

*"Let this mind be in you which*

*was also in Christ Jesus."* (Php 2:5; John 13:15; Col 1:9,10).

Just what does that mean? If we do seek to have in us that mind which was in Christ Jesus, how would -- how should -- that affect our lives, our witness, our work?

At the very least, does that not mean that we should as much as humanly possible view the world and the things and ways of the world as Jesus would view them. That through His eyes, as it were, we measure the issues, the problems, the opportunities and determine what would be right in His sight. What would He do? And, that we weigh the events of the day on His scale and measure events by His teachings and principles.

*"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment that you may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ".* (Php 1:10).

If we seek to do that we will indeed leave a Christian mark upon the world.

### Those Who Went Before

Those early-early Christians, the First Century followers of Jesus, they carried His mark. They carried it internally and they made their mark for Him externally so that all the world of that day could see.

***If American Christians were to really put God first in all things, if they would truly make their mark for Christ, can you image the tremendous change that would take place in our nation!***

(2 Chron. 7:14)

*"And He said unto them, "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." "... the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea and gathered every kind..."* (Mt 4:19; 13:47,48). So it was that those earliest followers of Christ took as



their symbol the mark of the fish. Two curved lines, one concave, one convex, with the lines extended at one end, to form an ellipse with a tail.

In the Greek, the word for "fish" is *IXΘYE* (*Ik-thee-us*).

For the followers of Jesus Christ, *IXΘYE* had a very special meaning: each of the five letters was the first letter in five key words which bespoke a faith precious to that early church:

**I - Jesus; X - Christ; Θ - God; Y - Son; E - Savior.**  
"Jesus Christ. God's Son, Savior"

The mark of the fish was a graphic symbol. It was an external sign signifying an internal commitment, an internal state of heart and mind and an external way of life. It was a means of identification and communication.

But, the real mark, the true mark, of those early Christians -- their Christian love, their Christian character, their Christ-centered conduct and their joy -- that was an external manifestation of their internal heart-set (and mind-set). It was a total consecration even in the face of hardship, tragedy, suffering and physical death.

*"For to them to live was Christ"*  
(Php 1:21)!

That zeal, that heart-fire which burned within, that passion to show in words and works the glory of The Risen Christ -- that was the mark of the early followers of The King (Matt 5:16).

Because they were followers obedient to Christ, they lived victoriously. Through Him Who

empowered them, they conquered life. And, through Him, they conquered death. In and for Christ, they won the victory.

Even when the scoreboard in the Coliseum was "Lions 10; Christians 0," they won! They were more than conquerors for Christ.

They were in but not of that world. They were different; distinctive, dedicated. Zealous of good works. Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts. Living responsibly, righteously (not self-righteously), for His sake and in His name.

They studied God's word... the Old Covenant, the commandments, the laws, the Biblical principles and precepts, and the New Covenant, the good news and Epistles from the Apostles.

#### **What A Mark!**

They taught those words. Lived those words of love and discipline. They sought to do whatsoever Christ had commanded.

*And, what a mark they made!*

They toppled empires, conquered darkness, turned things upside down.

*The world has never been the same!*

Like the blade of grass that keeps on keeping on and finally breaks through the concrete walk, they persevered, they proclaimed, they prevailed.

Pliny, the Roman scholar, wrote of their mark. He wrote that in a day when fleshly appetites and greed and situational ethics permeated society, these Christians refrain from theft, robbery, adultery, perjury, or denial of trust." (Could that be accurately written of all Chris-

tians in this day?)

Galen, a Roman physician, wrote, "Some (Christians), in ruling and controlling themselves and in their keen passion for virtue, have gone so far that real philosophers could not excel them."

#### **"...You Do It Unto Me"**

In fact, walking in the still-fresh footsteps of The Master, those First Century Christians were obediently mindful of His words which had been so recently spoken -- words which have been recorded in Matthew (25:31-46):

They cared for the widows and the sick; they aided the orphans and the homeless and imprisoned; they ransomed slaves and debtors; they rescued the new newborn babies from beneath the aqueducts where they had been abandoned ... all this and more they did in and for the love of Jesus Christ. And even when they refused to bow to Caesar, even when the sword and flame wrote finish and they left their burning, bleeding bodies behind as they rose to join with Him, they did so with love and blessings of forgiveness on their lips.

Theirs was a breadth and depth of compassion and concern and unselfish giving unprecedented in that ancient world -- and, yes, in our world today.

All this and more they did, those early-early Christians. Not in the name of Caesar, not as agents of the State, not in a show-march to Rome, but quietly, constantly, prayerfully in the name and service of the living, reigning King, Christ Jesus. For Him and through His grace they made their mark -- the



mark of victory in Christ.

That love of Christ, that spirit of obedience to The Living God, flowing from Him through them ... all that and more left a mark upon the world which would not be denied and could not be erased.

(And, if there is need for a job description for today's followers of Christ, surely it is there, in that passage in Matthew. Such a witness in His name and for His sake would be a light unto this dark and troubled world. As did they, we also could turn the world upside down!)

#### **The "New Force"**

The church historian, Augustus Neander, wrote about that "new force" personified in the followers of Jesus -- a force begotten not of sword or armed might, not of ruthlessness or political power or selfish greed -- but a force of the power inherent in those who seek to serve The Christ by serving others in His name, and in His love.

Neander described its flow, its power, its wonder:

"And as this divine power showed its efficacy on the inner life of the man, so it manifested itself with an attractive force, in the outward appearance and actions of that life...."

"That, more than anything else," wrote Neander, "wrought to the conversion of the heathen."

#### **And A New Agenda**

They were a new force with a new agenda-- a new mission, because they had a new Master and they were His and because they sought to live in and for Him. Thus, they had the power to make their mark for Him.

### **What A Sad Mark!**

Pollster George Gallup describes the Christian community -- the Believers in this nation today -- as being 3,000 miles wide and three inches deep. Why does he come to that conclusion? Could the following be one factor?

Some 10,000 clergymen of various denominations were surveyed with these questions, and these results:

**Q. "Do you believe in Christ's physical resurrection as a fact?"**

51% of the Methodists, 49% of the United Presbyterians, 44% of the Episcopalians, 33% of the American Baptists, and 13% of the American Lutherans said, "NO"

**Q. Do you believe that The Scriptures are the inspired and inerrant word of God?**

95% of the Episcopalians, 87% of the United Methodists, 82% of the American Baptists, and 77% of the American Lutherans said, "NO"

And, then there is this: The rate of divorce among pastors is higher than for the general public as a whole. What a tragic mark for those who profess to be His shepherds!

*"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who art in heaven!"*

Now, that is really making your mark for Christ! And, whom do you glorify? Not self, not politicians, not Caesar, not institutions. Jesus Christ!

We remember them and the saints that came after them -- and we look to the early Christians in this land -- and then we look at ourselves and our nation, at the present and emerging generations -- *and we weep*. Oh, God! What has happened to America!

#### **Those Early Signs**

The mark of the early Christian was magnetic, attractive, inviting, power-filled and powerful. Not smug in self-righteousness. Not snug in great cathedrals. Not beguiled by fuzzy "feel-good" sermons. Not "name it, claim it" shell games. Not being unequally yoked with pressure groups of this moment or the next. Not serving as an appendage to this political party or that -- not moved to bargain *quids* for questionable *quos*...

It was hearts on fire for Christ waging a soul-winning war against kings and potentates and gaining victories over sin and degradation. It was lives changed not through easy words tripping neatly off the tongue or slick TV programs -- no, it was the power of The Holy Ghost making a life-shaking impact on society.

It was the external fruits of an internal rebirth -- a regeneration, a true revival and an honest reformation for the glory of The Living God. Amen!



### What About Now?

What about us? We who in this day and age and world profess to be His? We who would claim rights to the title, "Christian"?

Are we worthy descendants of those early ones -- are we cut from the same cloth as those who first knew Him and loved Him and knew full well what it meant to trust and obey?

Do we have that same unyielding, undeniable, unquenchable driving desire to serve Him -- and others for Him -- as did those early-early Christians?

Are we willing to face our lions as they faced theirs? To stand erect and strong before the Caesars of this day as they did theirs, and refuse to be unequally yoked, shunning the sins of compromise?

Are we strong enough and wise to resist the call of the wiles? To stand separate unto The Lord, meek and obedient to His word? Or did we really think we can transform today's lions into pussycats through conferences, compromise and capitulation? That we can gain a "place at their table" by a tiny "give" here for a little "get" there?

### What mark do we make for Christ?

What does it mean to be a Christian in this computerized, plasticized, internetted world? Does The Lord make different demands now than He did to the saints in the past?

Our Lord and Master tells us there is more to being His than simply singing a new song. He makes it crystal clear!

"If you love Me," He said, "If you love Me, keep My command-

### The Mark of Satan

*Peter Hammond is Founder and director of Frontline Fellowship and director of United Christian Action in Southern Africa. He has used the Foundation's "Biblical Solutions to Contemporary Problems" in his mission to establish Bible study groups across Southern Africa. This report from Peter on the recent (on-going) carnage in Northern Sudan and the slaughter of Christians paints a picture of the horror and the carnage that has swept that land.*

"It is important to understand that Christianity did not die out in Northern Sudan because of external persecution by Muslims. The churches were empty and abandoned long before Islam filled the vacuum... ..

"The Christian churches were too closely allied to the political power structure and fell with the kings. By compromising with Islam and allowing a quota of their own people to be enslaved in order to buy assurances of peace, a Nubian kingdom condemned itself to be judged by God.

"**The lessons to us today are clear:** It is essential that we give priority to literacy training, Bible teaching and leadership training. ... and we need to be very careful not to be co-opted by secular politicians, only to be used to advance their humanist agendas. Nor may we ever compromise our Faith in order to buy some temporary illusion of peace.. *And may we not fail those who are being persecuted for their Faith and who are looking to us for help.*" Want to help Peter? Give us a call.

ments." (John 14:15)

This, too, He said:

"If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My father will love him, and We will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him." (John 14:23).

Then said Jesus unto His disciples, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny Himself and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, shall find it" (Matt 16:24,25)

A Christian, then -- that person who seeks to make his or her mark for Christ -- is one who is totally committed to Christ ("that in all things He may have pre-eminence"), has no other gods before Him, and is "a peculiar person zealous unto good works" "living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" so as to make his mark, or her mark, for Jesus.

Not for self, not some ego-motored drive in pursuit of fame, fortune or fun -- but one who loses his life in Christ and seeks in life to be totally His "for to me to live is Christ!"

The secret of making your mark for Christ? Consider this:

"Thou shalt love The Lord with all your heart and with all your soul -- and love your neighbor as thyself."

"Herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples."

That is the mark of a Christian. The dimension, the depth, the power of the mark of a Christian. Because it is not we but He Who lives within us.

**Praise God!**