

# HIGH Calling

April 2025

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 *Jesus, Ginger and Injera* (Bill Kierce, Jerry Coleman and Fekadu Amanu)
- 2 *Celebrating the life of John "Buddy" Shell: How He Loved Jesus*
- 3 *Not I, but Christ* (A. W. Tozer)
- 4 *Our Ultimate Weapon* (Dennis Kinlaw)

The *High Calling* is a publication of The Francis Asbury Society to serve as a link between FAS and its constituents, building loyalty and awareness so that the teaching and experience of Christian holiness may continue to be lived and proclaimed throughout the world.

The Francis Asbury Society  
PO Box 7 | Wilmore, KY 40390  
859-858-4222  
fas@francisasburysociety.com  
www.francisasburysociety.com

Executive Editor: Bill Kierce  
Contributing Editors: Jennie Lovell  
and Vic Reasoner

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS ISSUE of the *High Calling* marks the first in our new format of monthly online publications. While this may not be ideal for those who have become accustomed to receiving the full magazine throughout previous years, it will allow the Francis Asbury Society to deliver more content over a one-year period and do so much more cost efficiently. Each issue is designed in a way that allows for readers to enhance the size of articles through use of computer technology or to print each *High Calling* as a hard-copy magazine. Thank you for your continued partnership with FAS.

## Jesus, Ginger and Injera

by Bill Kierce, Jerry Coleman and Fekadu Amanu

**IN JANUARY 2025**, three of our team members at the Francis Asbury Society (FAS)—President Bill Kierce, Jerry Coleman and Fekadu Amanu—were privileged to participate in an historic ministry occasion in Ethiopia. Long considered a cradle of early Christianity in Africa, Ethiopia is referenced 37 times in the Old Testament, often as the ancient land of Cush, and once in the New Testament, when Philip encounters the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. Its

capitol city, Addis Ababa, serves as the headquarters of the African Union and, therefore, functions as an economic and political hub for all of Africa. For two days, the ballroom of a downtown hotel became a makeshift sanctuary—a holy place for worship, teaching and prayer—in what one participant called, “The most significant gathering of evangelical leaders in Ethiopia since the Communists left the country in the 1990s.”



*Bill Kierce, Fekadu Amanu, and Jerry Coleman in Ethiopia*

A proud nation that had never in its history known colonization by European powers, Ethiopia fell under Communist control in 1974, the result of Marxist military opportunism during a time of economic collapse and famine. For nearly twenty years until its overthrow in 1991, the Socialist Derg government ruled with an iron fist, brutally torturing Christian leaders, especially the youth, in the attempt to negate Christianity's influence. Many of those imprisoned and persecuted youth now lead the largest denominations and emerging evangelical movements in Ethiopia, another reminder that the blood of persecuted saints makes fertile soil for the Church's growth. To share our hearts and our meals together, which regularly consisted of *injera*, a native spongy flatbread used for scooping up elements of the meal by hand, and *special tea*, a hot concoction of sweet tea infused with ginger, and to hear stories of God's faithfulness told by these revered leaders was truly humbling.

The intent of this mission in Ethiopia was and continues to be the fulfillment of an initiative the Francis Asbury Society calls *Empower the Nations* (EtN). Participants gathered at this conference in Addis Ababa represented a multi-generational cohort of leaders from the largest evangelical denominations and para-church groups in

the country, whose members number over 30 million Ethiopian evangelical believers. The event focused on three topics: biblical holiness, discipleship and leadership development. One participant stated:

The Empower the Nations Conference was more than just an event. It was a divine appointment, a call for national evangelical leaders to return to biblical holiness, authentic leadership



and intentional discipleship . . . The connection between personal holiness and national transformation was particularly striking. If leaders embody holiness, their influence can reshape entire communities.

During the week following our conference in Addis Ababa, the FAS team had the privilege of meeting individually with leaders to discuss potential

ministry partnerships. The primary goal of Empower the Nations is to establish long-term relationships with indigenous leaders, and the Lord has provided the Francis Asbury Society enormous opportunities for ongoing ministry in Ethiopia. In fact, doors are already opening throughout Africa for future EtN partnerships in countries such as Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Our immediate objectives in Ethiopia include working with colleges and seminaries there to design and deliver course curriculum that will assist in training local pastors and church leaders. We are also exploring ways to support Hintset Publications, an Ethiopian media and printing ministry, to promote capacity-building among local authors, editors and publishers.

The Psalmist prophesies that when God scatters his enemies in times of revival, "Ethiopia will stretch out her hands to the Lord" (Psalm 68:31).

What a humbling time we experienced during January 2025 in a hotel ballroom 9,000 miles from home on our faces before the Lord, joining with battle-scarred spiritual warriors crying out for God to revive their land. There will be more times of prayer and ministry in Ethiopia. For now, our prayer remains, "May this gathering ignite a movement of revival and discipleship that transforms Ethiopia and beyond." ✨

## Celebrating the life of John "Buddy" Shell: How He Loved Jesus

December 17, 1929–March 12, 2025



*John Shell*

Hemlock Inn in Bryson City, NC, along with Buddy Shell, as its owner, to establish the

John Shell, known to many as "Buddy," was a dear friend of the Francis Asbury Society from the time of its inception. In fact, Dr. Dennis Kinlaw, Dr. Harold Burgess, and a few others convened at The

Society in 1983, with John as one of the founding board members. For 40 years, the Society convened at that sacred place for the "Hemlock Inn Retreats." The sounds of the dinner bell, guests' conversation around the tables, and Bible teaching and worship on the back porch, along with the smell of home-cooked meals on the Lazy Susan, are all precious to anyone who has experienced them. John will be deeply missed by untold thousands whom his life touched in unique ways, no less those of ours at the Francis Asbury Society.

**BORN TO MARY** Lewis and Paul Shell in Marietta, GA, John was the third of five children. A 1946 graduate of Marietta High, he was voted "friendliest" of his senior class. He met Ella Jo (Stevens) at Tennessee Wesleyan Junior College and they married in 1950. After John's time in the army, he studied education at Peabody College and sold insurance for a time. However, in 1969, John and Ella Jo fulfilled a lifelong dream and bought The Hemlock Inn, where they

practiced their gift of hospitality and served guests for over 20 years. Since their retirement, the Inn has stayed in the family, being capably managed by their son-in-law and daughter, Mort and Lainey White.

When Ella Jo passed away in 1998, John continued to be active at the church and with the Inn. After several years John reconnected with Roberta

Lineberger, a fellow Innkeeper, and they married in December 2002. They were active at Long's Chapel, teaching Sunday school, helping with the soup kitchen ministry, and starting Celebrate Recovery. When Roberta passed away in 2016, John moved back to the Inn, where he lived peacefully for the remainder of his life. He loved the Inn where he could tell his stories, remi-

nise with the guests, and enjoy the wonderful home-cooked meals. He loved Jesus as a close friend and would read from his well-worn Bible daily, often along enjoying with a Coca-Cola and pimento cheese sandwich. Buddy, or "Papa," as his grandchildren knew him, is survived by his two daughters, Dianne and Lainey, 10 grandchildren, and 20 great-grandchildren. ✠

## Not I, but Christ

by A. W. Tozer (1897–1963)



Perhaps the reason A. W. Tozer is still read and appreciated today, over 50 years after his death, is because he says things that almost no one else is saying. While most contemporary preachers rarely mention the cross, it was a primary theme in the ministry of Tozer. This article is taken from a book that seeks to distill the best teaching on the topic of the cross and its meaning for the Christian life (*The Crucified Life*, Ventura: Regal, 2011). This article is a slightly edited abridgment of chapter 13, "The Beauty of Contradictions" (157–66).

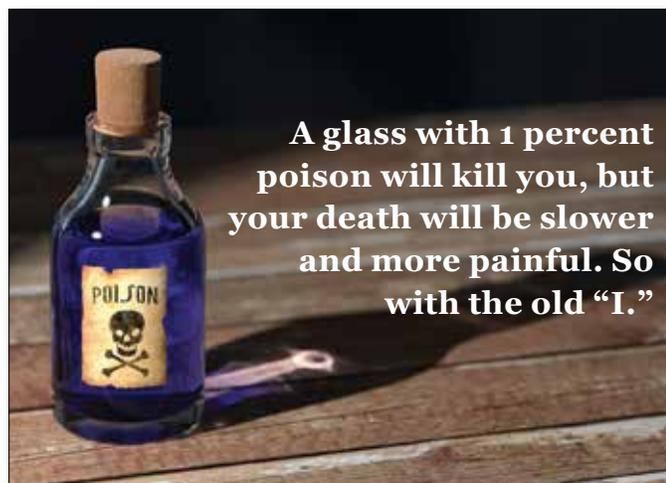
**TWO CONTRADICTORY SCHOOLS** of thought can be found among Christians today. I am not referring to Calvinism and Arminianism, nor am I thinking of liberalism and fundamentalism. I'm referring to the reason we think Jesus came into the world and the purpose for which he died.

One school of thought holds that Jesus came to help us. He came and died on a cross to take us out of the conflicts and the twisted situations we get into during our lives. The thinking is that we are basically good people who occasionally do bad things. Jesus came to make us better people, to help us with self-improvement. Trusting Christ means that we can be more popular and successful. Feelings of low self-esteem can be quickly eradicated. Jesus helps us to be the best we can possibly be. Jesus came to solve our problems, bolster our ego, and make us happy and cheerful.

The other school of thought is that Jesus came to put an end to the self; not educate it, polish it, or improve it, but to kill it. The "I" must be eliminated

in its entirety for Christ to hold his rightful position in our lives. No matter how much it is cleaned up, it still contains an irredeemable core of corruption. The old self must go, regardless of the cost. The key verse to help us know how to deal with the old man is Galatians 2:20. Actually, the verse is Paul's personal testimony.

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20 KJV)



This verse has a number of statements that, on the surface, appear to be contradictory. Paul starts by saying, "I am crucified." But how can one who has been killed tell us about it? Dead people don't talk. No one has ever said, "Doctor, call the undertaker because I'm dead." Then he says, "Nevertheless I live." If he has been crucified, how then can he live? He complicates things by saying "yet not I." And then he makes a confusing situation even more

complex by speaking about the life he "now lives in the flesh." How are we to make sense of all this?

The old "I" must be absolutely crucified. That is what Paul is talking about in Galatians 2:20. Nobody can die partially. Either a person is dead or he is alive. This is much like drinking a glass of water with poison in it. That glass does not have to be filled 100 percent with poison to kill you. Even if only 1 percent of the liquid is poison, it will do the trick. In fact, such a situation is even more dangerous because the poison is less obvious. A glass with 100 percent poison will kill you right away. A glass

with 1 percent poison will kill you, but your death will be slower and more painful. So with the old "I." If there is even a small portion (1 percent) that remains, you remain in mortal danger. That little bit can destroy the life of God in you just as surely as if the entire self were poison. The old self must go in its entirety so that the new can come in its entirety. Only when the old self is crucified and fully dead can the pres-

ence of Christ permeate every fiber of our being. "Not I, but Christ."

We misunderstand the gospel when we conclude that the purpose of Christ's coming and dying on a cross was to pay our debt so that we could go to heaven when we died. Paul's testimony in Galatians 2:20 reminds us that God's purpose in sending his Son was to destroy the "I" so that Christ could live fully in us! ✠

# Our Ultimate Weapon

by Dennis Kinlaw (1922–2017)



In his important book *The Mind of Christ* (Wilmore: Francis Asbury Press, 1998), Dr. Kinlaw describes how the Holy Spirit can completely transform a person's thinking so that he or she actually thinks

like Christ thinks so that the cross (self-giving love) becomes normative and the defining reality of a person's life. In this article, Kinlaw gives us a living illustration of what this looks like in practical terms (108–09).

**I RECENTLY GOT** acquainted with Josef Tson, the pastor of a large Baptist church in western Romania. Until a few years ago, the Romanian Communist Party was one of the most brutal in the world. As a Christian pastor, Josef spoke out on some issues and angered the government. So they decided to destroy him. They came in and stripped his library of all his books. Two books were quite worn and had no jackets on them, so the soldiers left them behind. One was Martin Niemoller's account of his suffering under Adolf Hitler. The other was *Abundant Living*, a devotional book by E. Stanley Jones.

This Romanian pastor put Martin Niemoller's book on his nightstand to give him strength through the night. He put E. Stanley Jones' book on the shelf in his study.

The government then sent the police to interrogate Josef five days a week and up to seven hours a day. The intent was to destroy him. Oftentimes they would question him with a loaded pistol on the table in front of the interrogator. One day, coming home after a very grueling period of questioning, Josef went into his study, locked the door, and fell to the floor, sobbing. "God," he said, "I can't take any more."

He thought he heard a voice saying, "Josef, get up. Read the book on the shelf."

Josef said there was no problem knowing which book to read; there was only one left! So he pulled down E. Stanley Jones' book and opened it. The devotional for that day was on "How to Live above Your Circumstances." It was about Jesus facing the cross. Jones said that Jesus did not resist the cross; he embraced it.

Josef said, "God, you surely don't mean I'm supposed to embrace my interrogators!"

"Yes," the Lord said, "that's exactly what I mean."

"Well, God, if you want me to do that, you must do something in my heart that you have never done before."

Josef said that's exactly what the Lord did. When he walked back into the interrogation room, he was ready



to embrace his trial. He said the change in the atmosphere was almost comical. Before, the pastor had been in trauma; but now the chief interrogator was in trauma because he had lost control of his subject! The chief interrogator was beside himself. He finally spun in anger on the pastor and said, "You are stupid. I guess we'll just have to go ahead and kill you."

Josef found himself saying, "I understand, sir. That's your ultimate weapon. When everything else has failed, you can always kill. But you know, I have an ultimate weapon, too. And when you use your ultimate weapon, I get to use mine."

"And what's your 'ultimate weapon?'" the Communist angrily demanded.

"Your ultimate weapon is to kill," Josef said. "Mine is to die."

When I die, I will be much better off. But your troubles will just be beginning.

You see, every tape of every sermon that I have ever preached will be sprinkled with my blood. So you'll have much more trouble with me dead than you have with me alive!"

The Communist shouted, "Take him out!"

A few weeks later, Josef heard through the grapevine that the Communists were saying he was crazy because he wanted to be a martyr. "But

we're no fools," the Communists said. So they stopped interrogating him. Josef said he could not even argue them into killing him then.

"When I was pulling every string to try to save my life, I was at my wit's end," Josef told me. "But when I turned the strings loose and let Christ control my life completely, I was free." ✠

**THE FRANCIS ASBURY** Society depends on the financial support of generous donors like you to carry out its operations in the fulfillment of its vision and mission. Without your support and the financial help and prayers of our friends at FAS, we would not be able to embrace the opportunities that God is placing before us. Would you consider a generous gift to the FAS General Fund?

Donate now at  
[www.francisasburysociety.com/support](http://www.francisasburysociety.com/support)  
or use this QR code.

