

A Lack of Ponder Today

December 2025

I want to thank you for your fellowship. It has been a blessing writing monthly articles to you for nearly 20 years, reflecting on what I have seen and experienced Christ doing on the frontiers of our world. At the end of this month, I will be retiring from Frontier Fellowship after 30 years of serving this wonderful mission organization. During these years, many of you have supported me and my family with your prayers and love for which we are grateful.



Going forward, I will continue to write these monthly messages, but with a new teaching ministry I have recently started called, “Encountering the Logos.” I invite you to view my new website: www.encounterlogos.org. Next month, I will tell you more about it. But, for now, I would like to offer one more message from the frontier. It concerns a person I knew and loved dearly, the former executive director of Frontier Fellowship, Harold Kurtz.

During my beginning years with Frontier Fellowship, I would often contact Harold requesting his advice or thoughts on various matters. He was not only my boss, but he was also my mentor and friend. Frequently, Harold would tell me to wait a day before we talked so that he could ponder my question. He would urge me to do the same. Harold later told me that under these circumstances, he would often go to his local Dunkin Donuts shop, order coffee, and begin what he called his pondering part of the day, sipping coffee and listening to the quiet voice of God within his heart. Harold was one of the most peaceful, yet strong people I have ever known. He was a WWII pilot, missionary in Ethiopia for 22 years, pastor, and one of the founders of Frontier Fellowship. His whole being was contemplative. Until I met Harold, I had not heard that many people use the word “ponder.” Over time, however, it eventually occurred to me that pondering is one the most important exercises of the Christian life; something we all need to do on a regular basis. Harold taught me that truth.

Recently, I heard a lecture by author Matthew Bingham, who wrote a book called, “A Heart Aflame by God.” Dr. Bingham offered one of the most succinct definitions of the word “meditate” that I have ever heard. He said that meditating was thinking deeply about what God has just said to you. Our quiet times with God consist of the following: we create an environment where we can listen carefully for God’s voice and read his Word; afterwards, we ponder or meditate on what he has said to us; and finally, we offer our responses back to God in the



form of our prayers. At the heart of this dialogue with our Creator, according to Dr. Bingham, is meditation or pondering. If we do not allow time for these vital exercises, we will never learn or know how to integrate what God has said to us into our daily lives.

Today, we live in a crazy, extremely fast-paced, over-stimulated world. People are increasingly nervous if they cannot incessantly look at their smart phones, often craving entertainment and visual stimulation throughout the day. Many people are beginning to believe that pondering is a waste of time, seemingly boring to them. Gas stations even have TV screens by pumps to help provide instant entertainment for the few minutes we are outside our cars, away from the entertainment options inside our cars. Another disappointment to me is when I am attending one of my favorite pastimes – a live Blackhawks professional hockey game at the United Center in Chicago. While in my seat enjoying the game, every five minutes between plays, or certainly between periods, two energetic entertainers pop up on the gigantic, mega screen at center ice and begin yelling at the audience, trying to engage us in mindless games or commentary of some sort. Many sports arenas today have these “extra” entertainment options so that no viewer is under stimulated. They do not want us “abandoned” to our own thoughts or meditations for a single minute. God forbid!

Pondering is also at the heart of the Christmas message. Mary pondered what God was saying to her about bearing his son in her womb; the shepherds pondered what the angels were saying to them about the holy family at the manger; the wise men pondered what the stars were telling them about their Messiah. Advent is all about waiting and anticipating what God will do next in our lives, seeking to know when salvation, redemption, or hope will arrive. However, if we are too busy mindlessly entertaining ourselves as the world would like to tempt us, we will miss the true and healing meaning of Christmas all together.

What I have loved most about my 30 years with Frontier Fellowship, is its healthy and effective missiology. Frontier Fellowship believes deeply in de-westernizing the Gospel, emptying it of any cultural biases while allowing it to run free within the context of a new culture, mother tongue, or ethnicity, allowing the core beliefs of the Gospel to be indigenized. These kinds of more thoughtful and mature approaches by Christian workers today have caused Christianity to explode in the non-western world where a majority of Christians now reside in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In the last 50 years,



Christianity has advanced greatly in our world. The internet, ease of travel, global awareness, and increased cooperation amongst Christians have made the Gospel explode with growth

worldwide. In 1974, only 40 percent of the world's population were blessed to have access to the Good News compared to 70 percent today. Mission leaders like Harold Kurtz and Ralph Winter taught a younger generation of workers to listen carefully and reverently to the voice of God while encouraging us to meditate on his Word and be of humble mind and spirit before entering or engaging a new culture, religion, or ethnic group.

Charging ahead in life without taking time to listen to God is dangerous business. God wants us to be gentle and humble towards one another, be good listeners to each other's souls so one culture, nation, or person does not overwhelm or dominate the other. God works most powerfully in the world through humble hearts. That is why he chose Mary to bear his son. She had a reverent and humble heart. Listen carefully and take time to ponder deeply these words of Mary which she exclaimed at the beginning of her journey with baby Jesus in her womb: "Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is holy; and he has done great things for me. He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him. His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham, and his children forever." (Luke 1:46b-55)



Though you and I, with God's great help, have made tremendous progress on behalf of the Gospel working together these last 30 years, there is still much work to be done. I pray that you and your church will remain active on the frontiers of our world where the Good News has not yet taken root. There are still many hungry and thirsty hearts longing for Good News, God's love, forgiveness, and new life in his son.

On behalf of Frontier Fellowship, and all the great mentors in missions who have gone before us, my family and I want to wish you and your family a joy-filled and Merry Christmas!

With much love and thanks to all!

Dan McHenry