

The Link

"Safe Space"

Websters Dictionary—“Safe Space is a place free of bias, conflict, criticism or potentially threatening actions”

Do believers have a “Safe Space” free of conflict, criticism and life threatening occurrences?” While residing on earth, is the Christian’s life a “bed of roses?” The airways are filled with tantalizing sermons about the “positive” benefits of following Christ. From many pulpits, pastors proclaim that if you desire “the blessings” of God (security, safety, a good job, a beautiful home, health and wealth) then simply NAME IT—CLAIM IT, AND BELIEVE YOU HAVE IT. There are a plethora of books and electronic sermons/teachings that exploit biblical ignorance of Christians.

I have heard it said that the safest place to be is in God’s will. Is this true?? Evangelist Ray Comfort once said:

“We did not come to Christ for a smooth flight, rather we came to Christ for a smooth landing.”

Preachers today talk about how God wants us free from debt, disease and discomfort. REALLY? No!! Christ entered history over 2000 years ago so we could be set free from the bondage of sin and self (pride). Does God at times prosper or heal a believer? Absolutely! Yet, the Lord at times has to take a mallet and chisel to chip away the impurities in our lives.

The nature of the first sin revolved around SELF: **“You can be as God.”** To put Satan’s words in today’s vernacular: You can be somebody—well known—popular—famous—successful—a person that others admire. The Apostle Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, educated in the School of Gamaliel and a descendant of Abraham, was a very religious and intelligent Pharisee who needed major adjustment/realignment in his life. Hence, an affliction/thorn was introduced in order to subdue his pride. The Apostle’s thorn was **“a messenger of Satan”** allowed by God to buffet him. Most believe the thorn was some kind of health issue (**2nd Corinthians 12:7ff**). Scholars say that the physical ailment may have been leprosy and/or an eye issue (**Galatians 4:13-15**). Paul’s response was boasting about his weaknesses: **“Power is perfected in weakness...for when I am weak, then I am strong.”** There are moments in life when God must bring us down to bring us up!

Without question, life is about preparing believers for a God appointed purpose as well as preparation for Heaven. Most believers must be brought low to be made useful—to be made an instrument for His glory. One contemporary example is the life of **Chuck Colson**. He served as Special Counsel to President Richard Nixon. Colson was afforded all the perks that life could bestow on a person. Yet, it took being incarcerated to pry open his spiritual eyes. Chuck’s schoolmaster was prison which not only brought him low (humbled him), but it also gave him a taste of prison life so he could identify with prisoners and establish a ministry that would reach thousands of inmates. In other words, Chuck’s

“thorn” was prison where he fleshed out **Galatians 2:20**—**“... no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”**

God desires to crucify our self-centered nature to make us useful—usable. Crucifixion (dying to self) is a painful and a life long process, but very necessary. Without question, suffering comes to every believer who desires to follow Christ. Let’s examine a few verses:

Philippians 1:29—**“For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to SUFFER for His sake.”**

2 Timothy 3:12—**“And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus WILL be persecuted.”**

Though God sovereignly watches over every believer, there is NO SAFE SPACE in this life. Following the footsteps of Christ, we will be criticized, bruised and sometimes our lives will be threatened. Paul’s entire ministry was met with persecution. **Second Corinthians 11:24-28** exposes some of the hardships Paul faced as a result of being in God’s perfect will.

- Far more imprisonments
- Once stoned, beaten times without number & often endanger of death
- Five times receiving 39 lashes, 3 times beaten with rods
- Three times shipwrecked spending a day/night in the deep
- In danger from rivers, robbers, my countrymen, Gentiles, dangers in the wilderness, dangers among false brethren
- Many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure
- Plus the daily pressures and concerns for all churches

Without question, suffering is a part of the Christian’s experience. God sanctions suffering to mold and shape believers into usable vessels of glory. Jesus taught His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount that when faced with persecution/suffering, REJOICE!

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:10-12).

In conclusion, NEVER FORGET that though difficult days will arise, we are secure/safe in Christ Jesus. In other words, our salvation is guaranteed and is our “SAFE SPACE!” Jesus emphatically declares in **John 10:28,29** that “nothing shall snatch us from God’s hands.” Simply stated, “born again” men and women are SAFE and cannot be “unborn!”

Rick

Your Gracious Help is Greatly Appreciated!

GENERAL FUND: MLI is very grateful for all those who have gone the second and third mile to help MLI tackle some serious ministry challenges. THANK YOU! Though we are not out of the woods yet, please continue to pray and support the efforts of our mission. Your continued support to the General Fund is very important and greatly needed.

- **MLI TEACHERS:** Paul Akise of Uganda and Julius Lusinda of Tanzania each need **\$100 per month** salary. Even if half of the amount is given, this will help our general budget.
- **WIDOW SUPPORT:** Your gift to the **Widow's General Fund** helps those who do not have a donor. It also gives flexibility to help critical needs that some widows may incur.
- **OTHER IMPORTANT NEEDS:** The **Medical Fund** is constantly being used especially during the current pandemic. For several months we have assisted in several dental issue, major surgeries and general medical needs. **Any amount is appreciated.** Monthly salaries for several **staff members** needed **\$50** (Shelia our receptionist and Joseph our daytime security guard) and two pastors at **\$70** (Pastor Emma and Pastor Wasawa). Thank you!
- **OTHER MLI SPECIAL NEEDS AND PROJECTS: PTL!** One usable used **laptop** received and one more still needed. **SHELIA**, MLI receptionist, is learning accounting—The fees per term is **\$125**. **MILLING PROJECT FOR WIDOWS:** We are ready to finish the first phase by completing the walls and install the roof. We have gotten a new estimate of about **\$1500**. **PASTOR ANTHONY OF KENYA:** Pastor Anthony has helped other pastors in Eldoret to feed their families. **Any gift is greatly appreciated.**
- **STREET KID'S FUND:** MLI is helping many street kids through education/vocational training, sheltering, feeding and clothing. **Your gift is important.**
- **DR. SAM:** Doc has a serious hernia and in great pain. **(PTL! Need is met at \$650!)**
- **DEAF CHILDREN'S SCHOOL:** Mission Link has now secured over 3 acres to build a school, dorms, showers/bathrooms, classrooms and kitchen. This is a **VERY NEEDFUL PROJECT**. **We do not have an estimate of funds needed**, yet the first priority will be classrooms, two dorms, bathrooms and a water well. If you ever thought of helping some of the most needy children in all of East Africa, this project is a worthy investment. There have been several donors that have sustained this school, but we need others to come on board.

Please Do Not Forget that Uganda and Kenya Continue to Face Some Very Difficult Days Ahead

Many have lost jobs and the prices of commodities have risen. East Africa is facing difficult days as tourism has been slowed or stopped due to the pandemic. We are VERY grateful to donors who have not allowed this global crisis to slow their giving. YET, many of MLI's ministries in East Africa have requested assistance. There has been an increase demand for medical assistance, food aid and general needs due to lost income.

Kenya: Through the tireless efforts of Pastor Euticals Wambua, another installment by donors of approximately **\$58,000** has been contributed and wired on June 23rd by MLI for feeding people in the Korogocho Slum and in other oppressed areas of the country. Over **\$60,000** was given back in the Spring to help during the locust invasion and pandemic. Pastor Euticals is very encouraged by your generous response and prayers.

Pastor Anthony Ndambuki of Kenya: Donors have assisted Pastor Anthony as he has been sharing food and resources to help a number of pastors with families. **Your continue gifts are much appreciated.**

Uganda: In the Spring, MLI distributed commodities to Widows, Albinos, Bodas, a school administration, and MLI staff. The distribution will be REPEATED in the month of July. Also, MLI has recently helped with a number of dental and medical issues (some very serious). There have also been some contributions toward several of MLI's projects.

Pearisburg, Virginia Property: The pandemic has postpone/slowed MLI's transition. As of this newsletter, we are considering moving forward with remodeling the building. However, with the pandemic still very much active as well as the inability to be able to know what the future holds for both mission trips and shifting to our new location, we simply wait upon the Lord (Isa. 40:28ff). While waiting, we want to make some improvements to the facility. Your continued support for materials for remodeling is important as well as volunteer assistance. Please let us know if you can volunteer to spend a day or two to help.



PLEASE READ!

DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, ALL TRIPS TO UGANDA ARE POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. MOST LIKELY, THE COUNTRY OF UGANDA WILL NOT BE OPEN TO OUTSIDERS UNTIL A VACCINE IS MADE AVAILABLE.

PLEASE SIGN UP FOR OUR "NEWS BRIEF" EMAIL. GO TO THE BOTTOM OF MLI'S HOME PAGE TO SIGN UP: www.missionlink.org.

AGAIN, WE WILL BE REDUCING THE NUMBER OF MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS MAILED EACH MONTH. IF YOU ARE READING THIS ANNOUNCEMENT, YOUR NAME IS MOST LIKELY SECURE AND YOU WILL CONTINUE RECEIVING "THE LINK."

NOTICE: Again, July is a continuation of MLI's cell phone collection. Please ask your family, friends, Bible study group and church (Pastor) to donate their old cell phone to Mission Link. Also needed are laptops, tablets, electronic keyboard, and cameras. Thank you for helping!



Thirty dollars a month brings great happiness to our African Widows!

Will you prayerfully consider adopting a widow? (James 1:27) **Irene Mutesi** is 69 years old (1951) having 3 children. Irene states: **"My husband died of an unknown disease in 1993. I thank God for my life."** Irene is grateful for the provision and care given through Mission Link Int'l that has improved part of her life (soap, stove, medical, some financial support, etc.). Her challenge is school fees for the children. Irene fellowships with the Church of Uganda."