

The Link

Saint or Sinner?

Do not imitate me—I am no saint!

Which is it—Is a Christian a saint or a sinner or both? The fact is, the Bible declares a Christian a **saint** (Phil. 1:1; Rom. 1:7; Col. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:5), but at times a believer can be overtaken by **sin**. So in that sense, we are sinners (1 John 1:8) saved by grace. However, as a true believer, we do not typically label/identify ourselves a sinner but as a saint. In reality, every believer/saint still struggles with temptation (which is not sin) and at times surrenders to the temptation (which is sin). Please understand that the saint's role in this life is to walk as men and women of Christ—"Setting our mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Col. 3:1-3). I have expressed in past newsletters the importance for missionaries to share Christ both in Word (lips) and by example (life) whether in the USA, Africa or anywhere in the world. Our lives validate our words. You can be sure that **THE WORLD IS WATCHING**. Let me illustrate....

After completing seminary and eventually moving to Charlottesville, my father, a contractor, built Candy and I a house in Albemarle County. Having more than three bedrooms necessitated having a larger septic field. I "camouflaged" the 4th potential bedroom in the basement as my personal office, thereby reducing the size/cost of the septic field. After the final building inspection was completed, our plumber approached me about covering up the true use of the fourth bedroom. He stated, "I thought you were a Christian." That remark thrust a dagger into my heart and stirred my conscience. At that point, an internal war was waged. One "voice" tried to justify the whole debacle by saying: "Perhaps when Matthew leaves the nest the bedroom will indeed become an office. In that respect you are being honest." Yet, I knew what I had to do in order to recapture my internal peace. I apologized to the plumber and then wrote a letter to the inspector confessing the coverup. Not only do we sometimes "justify" our sin, but it can literally taint our witness and stifle the Holy Spirit. Though a book can be written on this subject, allow me to further illustrate by directing our attention to the home.

The manner in which we live before our children will move them toward or away from the Christian life. A teen was caught smoking by his parents. One evening Dad was passing by his son's bedroom as he caught a whiff of a very familiar odor. Opening the door he witnessed his son, Tommy, in the very act of smoking. Dad lit into his son giving him a host of reasons why tobacco can harm his health and the fact he was disobedient by doing something in secret. Tommy's response was, "you smoke Dad, why can't I?" Dad immediately fired back: "When you become an adult, you can do what you want, but as long as you are living under my roof, you will follow my rules!" [Here are more examples to highlight my point.] As a pastor of a Baptist church in Connecticut, I once had a deacon state that his son would have been a believer, if the church had hired a youth pastor. How sad! Many believers are oblivious of their responsibility as being an exemplary parent...that is, living out the Christian life before their children and the world. **Children are watching...and neighbors and work associates are watching!** While flying to East Africa, I can vividly remember a lengthy conversation with a business man as we stood in the back of the plane. Though he indicated he was a believer, his philosophy as a parent was to encourage his children to try different religions to see what feels right to them. Wow! He had a twisted/unbiblical role as a parent. In the Old Testament, there is a sobering passage that should arrest all of us, if we understand our vital role as God's ambassador to the our family and to the world.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. [Being "salt/light" to our family FIRST begins with a sincere and intimate love for God.] And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. [In other words, the Lord must reign in my heart to where He controls the way I think and live.] You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. [Children must be intentionally and consistently taught by parents morning, noon and night. Every opportunity must be seized.] You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. [Our children must SEE the reality of God's Word in our life. Our love and devotion for God must clearly be witnessed by little eyes.] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." [Your home should be a sanctuary and place where the presence of God is recognized and felt by both family and friends] (Deuteronomy 6:5-9).

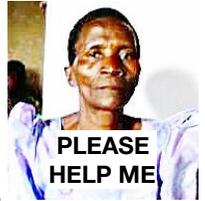
Even grandparents have a role to play in the Christian development of grandchildren, and they must be a godly example. Recently, my seven yearly granddaughter called me on the phone to ask a question about God. "Pappy, how do you know when God is speaking to you?" We had a lengthy discussion about the various ways God communicates to His children and the need to daily have our spiritual ears pitched upward/inward so we can hear His voice. Remember, prayer is both talking with God as well as listening to Him.

I am reminded of what Paul stated on occasions...that his followers should **imitate** him as he is an imitator of Christ (1 Cor. 11:1; 4:16). That is heavy! The fact is, there are eyes watching you and me. People are watching and some "will" imitate you. As a believer, we should be sensitive to what flows through our minds, the words we espouse from our lips and the way we present ourselves to both our family and friends. With that said, whether we like it or not, eyes are upon us—people are watching especially our children. Our lips and our life should point family and friends to Christ. People are not looking for perfection (no one is sinless), but for believers who understand the dangers of sin. If we sin, honestly own the sin, repent and place your eyes back on the things above. Parents have the "major" role of pointing their children to the Savior. The church is there to help with this, but the home should be the place where the Christian life is exemplified. Yes, the Bible calls true believers saints...for they have been sanctified and set apart by the blood of Christ. Yet, continually be aware of Satan's diabolical schemes, and even to our fleshly desire to embrace sin. **Let us determine to live and act like saints...we have been set a part as God's ambassador.** Always be conscious of the fact that the adversary is like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Satan desires for God's people to drift toward the world—to lose their saltiness/witness—to diminish their light. Do not allow the devil to have the victory. Live and walk as a saint and be the example for others to follow.

Rick

News Brief

GENERAL FUND: Your gift to the general fund is a vital source and blessing. We are grateful for the trust you extend to our office to place your gift where it is most needed. Second to discipling pastors, MLI assist poor widows on a regular basis in two villages: Mafubira and Itukulu. Our African widows live in unimaginable deep destitute poverty—the kind of poverty that does not even compare with that in America. They live on maize, beans and matoke. Image living in a home that has a dirt floor, dung walls and a thatched roof. Snakes, rats, roaches and mosquitos have free access to their home. The stench is sometimes unbearable. The widow pictured right & bottom-left has been in "The Link" for four (4) months (which is **A NEW RECORD**) hoping to receive a donor. Please...\$30 per month will be a great great blessing for Aidha.



PRAISE GOD FOR DONOR GIFTS!: Our Itukulu widows project is ready to proceed to construct a simple building on MLI's recently purchased plots. It will house a small facility for the milling and grain storage. **Your contribution has enabled us to begin installing the foundation!** PTL!! In October **Esther's House** will continue toward completion with donated gifts. (**Please continue to fund**). MLI has purchased **two blood pressure cuffs** for a widow and her son. A **bicycle pump** has been given to a widow who needs to pump up her **wheelchair** tires which was donated last year (pictured below). A donor has injected **new funds** to continue helping Pastor Timothy's **school dorms**. There are over 500 students in Basana School. Funds were given to one of an MLI instructor to buy expensive, but productive tomato **seeds**. Thank you!

Widows: **"General" Support for Widows:** You may not wish to adopt a widow, but prayerfully consider **"General Widow Support for Itukulu."** MLI will divide funds among those who do not have a sponsor. All who attend MLI widow meetings on a regular basis will receive a small financial gift until they receive a sponsor for monthly support. We are prepared to make small financial gift to 60 widows in the month of October (and hopefully in the future) giving to those with no sponsor.

OTHER MLI PROJECTS: Sam Choli, a medical worker and friend of MLI, needs your help to fence in his compound so he can raise chickens for an income and to keep thieves from stealing. Sam needs **\$1650** to make this a reality. **Needed: MLI carpenter—Vincent needs a small 10" table saw; Office portable phone system—4-phone set \$80; 2-laptops.**

OTHER IMPORTANT NEEDS: The Medical Fund is VERY LOW and is constantly being drained. **Any amount is appreciated.** Also, please keep the **Street Kids Fund** coming. MLI Church Plant—Kigera—really needs a permanent structure. Help this growing village church and Pastor Emma build a more permanent structure. This is a great project for a church or Bible study group to adopt—**any amount appreciated.** **Monthly salaries for several staff members \$50** & two staff teachers **\$90** & and two pastors at **\$70** (Pastor Emma and Pastor Wasawa).

UGANDA HEADQUARTERS: During the month of October, MLI really needs an injection of funds to help with the ministry in country. Ground rent, NGO recertification, insurances, maintenance, etc. all have strained our accounts. **Any gift appreciated!**

UGANDA TRIP: Pastor Todd Childers will be traveling with Rick to Uganda September 24th through October 8th (pictured below). He will be doing several conferences, visiting and helping a church plant with their temporary building. Please keep Todd and his family in your prayers. Rick will return to the USA on the 29th of October. He will be working with widows, preaching and speaking at a MLI graduation. Pictured far left is Eric. He has worked with street kids for years, including kids connected to MLI—Azam, Joshua, Zack, etc. He and two street kids were instantly killed on a motorcycle (boda). Second picture to the left is Philip and a widow who was given an air pump. The bike was given by MLI last year. Pictured in the middle is Glassell Williamson, MLI's administrator and bookkeeper. Please pray for Glassell and her husband Ray. Ray recently had an operation on his left foot. Surgeons removed the toes. He is now in therapy.



NOTICE: for OCT.
 is a continuation of MLI's cell phone collection. Please ask your friends, Bible study class, church, and family to donate their old cell phone. Thank you for helping!

UGANDA: Pr. Todd Childers will be spending 11 days with Rick in Uganda leaving USA on September 24. Rick will return on October the 29th. A MLI pastor's school graduation is scheduled & Pr. Todd will host leadership conferences.
February 1-14, 2020: MLI has just purchased tickets for our team to Uganda. Each trip is different and filled with exciting opportunities to express Christ's love for the African people. It is not too late to sign up as long as we can obtain airline tickets. If you notify MLI within the next week, we may be able to get you on the same flight schedule as the team. Email Rick for additional information—thelinkoffice@gmail.com
June 13-26 Trip to Uganda: Catawba Valley Baptist Church is leading the way with a sizable team signed up to travel to Uganda in 2020. We have a few tickets still available, so connect with our office soon. Much is planned for this trip.



Thirty dollars (\$30) a month brings great happiness to an African Widow! Will you prayerfully consider adopting this dear widow? THIS IS THE 4th MONTH LISTING
Aidha Mutesi was born in 1962 and is 57 years old having six (6) children. Her husband died of an heart attack 9 years ago. Aidha use to be a drunkard, but **God saved her through Mission Link widow's fellowship.** She praises God for the support from MLI of some basic needs. Aidha is taking care of orphaned children which has not been easy. Her house is in need of renovation and children needing school fees which are two critical needs.