

**GRANT COUNTY CHURCH OF CHRIST  
JANUARY 16, 2011**

**Butterfly's Wings**  
(Author Unknown)

One day a small opening appeared on a cocoon, a man sat and watched for the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and it could go no further.

So the man decided to help the butterfly, he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily.

But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened!

In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly.

What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through our life without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been.

We could never fly.

## I AM "ONLY" A PREACHER

Jerry W. Carmichael

I am a preacher, nothing more, nothing less. My chosen profession is proclaiming the great news about Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. I use any effective medium available to accomplish this task. This is my life. It is all that I do!

I teach Bible classes, preach sermons, write articles for newspapers, bulletins, and other publications each week. My days are spent in prayerful study of God's word and in visiting the sick, the shut-in, and prospective members of the church. My evenings are spent studying the Bible in homes and helping church members with their problems.

My family and I have moved fifteen times.. I only remember three vacations in the past that did not involve church business in some way. I am expected to dress well and drive a late model car no matter what my financial situation is at the time.

I must be a perpetual student of the word of God so that my preaching and teaching remains fresh and new, although my message is nearly two thousand years old.

Most preachers never own a home that is completely paid for, nor are they ever able to retire completely, even if they wanted to. And most suffer at least one devastating financial set back (usually around middle age) which makes it necessary for them to start all over again materially.

Perhaps I have painted a pretty grim picture of my profession. One may ask, why would anyone want to spend his life in pursuit of such a career? The following are some of the reasons I am still "just" a preacher.

1. I am obligated as a Christian to use what talents God has given me to save as many souls as I possibly can while I am alive (Matthew 13:1-23; John 21:18).
2. My job is pleasing to God if I do it correctly (Romans 10:15; 1Corinthians9:1-18).
4. The eternal rewards for soul winners are not worthy to be compared to what little suffering we endure on earth (Romans 8:18).
5. While I may never amass great treasures on earth, I am laying up treasures in Heaven where they really matter (Luke 12:21).

Full-time preachers are becoming increasingly rare. The difficulties associated with the job, have decreased our ranks immensely. I will not be so presumptuous as to say that I will never be among the ranks of those who

preach part-time or not at all. But, for now, this is what I do. I have been blessed by God to be able to do this for most of my adult life. I thank Him daily for the fact that I am "ONLY" a preacher.

### And I Won't Back Down

This is the transcript of the ACTUAL radio conversation of a US naval ship with Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland.

**Canadians:** *Please divert your course 15 degrees to the South to avoid a collision.*

**Americans:** Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the North to avoid a collision.

**Canadians:** Negative. You will have to divert your course 15 degrees to the South to avoid a collision.

**Americans:** This is the Captain of a US Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.

**Canadians:** No. I say again, you divert YOUR course.

**Americans:** THIS IS THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS LINCOLN, THE SECOND LARGEST SHIP IN THE UNITED STATES' ATLANTIC FLEET. WE ARE ACCOMPANIED BY THREE DESTROYERS, THREE CRUISERS AND NUMEROUS SUPPORT VESSELS. I DEMAND THAT YOU CHANGE YOUR COURSE 15 DEGREES NORTH, I SAY AGAIN, THAT'S ONE FIVE DEGREES NORTH, OR COUNTER-MEASURES WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THIS SHIP.

**Canadians:** This is a lighthouse. Your call.

NOTE: Are we arguing with God about something and He keeps telling us to change our course [repent: a change of mind that leads to a change of ways]. He is trying to help us avoid a collision and we keep waiting on Him to change. 2 Peter 3:9 *"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

