

## CONQUERING OUR SPIRITUAL EVERESTS



*Pictures from Google Images*

For the next issue of *Inside Life*, I'm preparing an article which introduces people to the power of the Holy Spirit. The article reflects on the death of Sir Edmund Hillary and makes mention of some of the things Sir Ed told me when I had an opportunity to interview him for 'Youth' magazine in the 1990's. For instance, he said:

*"Without a strong inclination to overcome and achieve, you simply wouldn't try to climb Everest. It's a tedious, miserable slog. But if you persist and get to the top, there's a great feeling of satisfaction. In life I think that everyone is battling a mountain like Everest, and the key to success is much the same.*

*"Mountaineering is just a very minor thing as far as the world is concerned – there are far more important challenges in life than climbing mountains. I believe most of the mountains left to climb now are social problems. Human relationships and the overcoming of problems in the social field are far more important than physical challenges – climbing mountains, Antarctica and so on. The tougher challenges that exist are the dealings with problems of social disruption, war, etc. Whereas most of us can have little impact on whether nations drop bombs on each other, individually we should try to deal with the problems in our immediate circle and not give up hope, doing our best to create a good environment around us."*

Are you battling an Everest in your life? Or a Goliath? Sometimes people think of their problems as giants like Goliath, talking about spiritual giants like sins that keep tripping us up, or perhaps huge physical problems we face such as major health difficulties, or financial problems, or difficulties in relationships, or at work.

Generally speaking, it seems to me that physical problems are easier to overcome than spiritual or social or mental ones.

Many physical health problems, like a cold/flu, a headache or toothache can settle down and go after a few days. However there are major ones like cancer etc that are extremely hard to conquer. But

usually there's something we can do to help – something the doctor or hospital can do, and of course bringing it to God in prayer is important.

But inner or spiritual problems – things to do with broken relationships, personal weaknesses, and sins of all types – are often harder to break through, and can be a constant ongoing battle. However, God does give us a special weapon to use against sin and problems like this.

I mention in the *Inside Life* article that climbing a mountain like Everest depends on physical equipment such as ice axes, boots, ropes and crampons. But when it comes to solving inner problems – involving emotions, attitudes, relationships and sins of all types, then physical things aren't really going to help. That's where we need some virtuous moral qualities, and the gift of God's Holy Spirit, Who works on us from the inside out.

In recent years human knowledge in science, communications, technology and almost every area of existence has grown exponentially. The worldwide web has provided an explosion of global knowledge, with billions of pages of information available to anyone with a computer, all sorted into subject order by search engines within just a few seconds.

But in spite of these incredible advances in knowledge, there are just as many personal and national problems, challenges and disasters as there have ever been. Financial problems, drug and alcohol problems, rapes, murders, stress, and political upheaval continue to abound. If we compare these troubles to mountains like Everest, we are surrounded by the Himalayas many times over!

We are *still* facing many of the same problems faced by the ancient Egyptians and Romans, and the procession of other empires and civilisations that have risen and fallen throughout the annals of history! What have we learned over the centuries?

Medical advances have been enormous, but our hospitals are still full to overflowing. Commercial and economic knowledge has streaked ahead, but we still have company collapses and recessions.

Indeed, the knowledge explosion has actually spawned new and different problems. Thanks to the amazing advances in computer technology, we can now add potentially catastrophic new plagues to the list besetting humanity – things like internet fraud, hacking, viruses, phishing, paedophilia, cyber pornography, and online sexual grooming.

Why hasn't the knowledge explosion made inroads into the troubles facing us? The reason is that these problems are not simply *physical* challenges. They include aspects that stem from *inside* us, from our attitudes, desires and moral weaknesses, in other words, our "human nature." They are matters of the "heart" or "spirit", and internal issues like this can't be fixed with purely *physical* knowledge.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 <sup>3</sup>"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup>The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup>We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Our weapons are not physical but spiritual. They work in the realm of the mind, demolishing arguments and opinions and taking thoughts and attitudes captive.

That's the type of weapons we need to make use of in our fight to live a godly life: thinking the right thoughts, having holy attitudes, free from sin!

Colossians 3:5-8 shows us what to do as Christians:

<sup>5</sup>“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup>You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. <sup>8</sup>But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.”

These are the spiritual Everests we need to climb. How do we do it? Defeating these is like scaling Everest – you get over one ridge and all you see is more hills up ahead. But defeating these spiritual sins is even harder than climbing Everest. It is so tough that no one has ever done it – apart from Jesus Christ – no one has ever lived a life free of sin. If you can do it, you’ll be a spiritual Sir Edmund Hillary – the first person in the world to climb the spiritual Mt Everest of overcoming all sin!

We have to rid ourselves of all these sins, put them to death! How can we do it? Thankfully, there is an answer – in Romans 8:13 “For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”

That’s how we can put to death our sins – by the Spirit!

Verse 14 “For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.”

The Spirit leads and guides us – like a mountain guide leads a climber up a mountain like Everest – Hillary couldn’t have made it there without Tensing.

Verse 15-16 <sup>15</sup>“The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by Him we cry, “*Abba*, Father.” <sup>16</sup>The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”  
The Spirit is of sonship – He shows that we are God’s children.

Verse 17 “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory.”

Do you realise that part of that sharing in Christ’s glory will be the fact that we will conquer the Everest of sin as He did, and will become perfect and sinless. We will never sin again! We will have reached the spiritual summit of Everest and bask in glory there with Jesus Christ forever.

Rev.21:4 “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Of course, as it says in Romans 8:1, we are already in this state – but it is temporary at the moment – we keep ruining it by lapsing into sin and having to repent again.

Romans 8-18 “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

It’s like climbing a mountain – you forget about all the rigours, sacrifices and difficulty of it when you get to the top!

Sir Edmund Hillary basked in the glory of his achievement for over 50 years. It involved suffering when he climbed the mountain, it was an arduous, strenuous trek – but that was far overshadowed by the glory of the feat, like the pains of childbirth are far outweighed by the wonder of birth.

Verse 19 “For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.”

The whole creation is waiting for us to reach the summit of spiritual Everest, at the resurrection.

Verses 20-21 <sup>20</sup> “For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the One who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.”  
It will come to pass – the summit will be reached.

Verse 26 “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”  
The Spirit helps us in our weakness. He is our Comforter, our Mountain Guide (John 16:13). This is one of the sections that describes the Holy Spirit not as just a power, but acting in a personal way to encourage and help us.

Sometimes we don't know the right words to pray as we go through the stresses and pressures of life. We cry out to God, but can't find the words to express ourselves. At times like that, the Holy Spirit, who is God in us, intercedes for us.

God is so great and awesome that it is hard for us in our puny minds to comprehend Him. His ways are so high above ours, we can't really get a handle on Him. He is so great and magnificent and glorious! So it's hard for us to fully grasp the wonder of the Holy Spirit – just what He or It is really like.

But one thing is for certain – it is an awesome blessing that God has given us His Holy Spirit! As verse 13 says, the Holy Spirit is the key to overcoming the spiritual Mt Everest of sin!

“For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”

Notice Romans 8:6 “The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.”

Our mind can be controlled by the Spirit – filled with the Spirit, and that will give us life, peace and every good thing we desire.

Romans 8:9 “You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.”

Having God's Spirit is an incredible blessing. It controls our sinful nature and makes us belong to Christ.

And look at the blessing verse 11 shows us!

“And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who lives in you.”

The Holy Spirit is our guarantee of Eternal Life! And maybe this verse refers to extra life, real life, we experience right now, in our mortal bodies; because we have the Holy Spirit living in us.

Let's conclude in Verses 37-39 of this fantastic chapter.

Verse 37 “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”  
We are not just conquerors of spiritual Everest, but “more than” conquerors!

Verses 38-39 <sup>38</sup>“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup>neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

There are no problems, physical, mental, social, psychological or spiritual that can beat us! We can conquer all our Everests, defeat all our Goliaths. By dying for us, Jesus showed His love for us is so great He will always be with us.

No “powers” can separate us from Jesus – referring to any unseen forces of evil in the Universe, Satan, or sin or any type – all can be banished.

Nor any height – the highest mountain on Earth, Everest, or the highest mountain anywhere in the Universe – every physical or spiritual Everest can be conquered! Because of God’s great love, shown in Jesus, and dwelling in us through God’s wonderful Holy Spirit!

Let’s conquer our spiritual Everests, with the help of the Spirit!

