



SHIELD OF FAITH

"Take Up the Shield of Faith" – Paul

Friday September 13, 2019

But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. — Psalms 59:16

A Song of Love and Light

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My wife, Paulie, is a singer and songwriter. She's written many inspirational Christian songs. You can listen to them on YouTube. Just search for Paulie Heath.

I am writing this column from the chapel at Sky Hy in Maine. Coach Dave Daubenmire and I pulled in here at 10 last night. It is still dark. Three feet in front of me is a window. Thirty feet in front of the dark window, and three stories down, the land slopes sharply to a lake a quarter mile distant. On the horizon the red lights that adorn the cranes of Bath Iron Works shipyard, Maine's largest employer, are visible.

When our three sons were young Paulie would come here occasionally for a night or two on spiritual retreat. She probably sat in this very room and received from the Holy Spirit inspiration for a song. She would choose to sing of His strength, His love. She perceived Him as her fortress, her refuge.

Times of trouble visit all of us. They haunt our path. Prayer opens the eyes of our spirit to the light in the darkness.

Over the horizon, beyond the Bath Iron Works crane is Pemaquid lighthouse. Since Christian civilization established itself on Maine's rocky shores the light has pierced the Atlantic seascape warning ships of imminent danger. God's light pierces the darkness of this world. He guides us past the rocky promontories of sin and evil upon which the roaring ocean of time dramatically explodes in wave after wave of foaming white.

We must choose to open our spiritual eyes to see the light. We can look the other way. We can drive the ship of our life on to the rocks and be destroyed. Prayer opens our eyes. It makes God's lighthouse visible and our will gives us the power to steer clear of danger.

Years ago Paulie would sit in this room opening her mind through prayer to creative thoughts like these. God made us in His image. He gave us the superpower of language and music. He gave us these superpowers so we would not be alone, so that we could love and be loved. Too many of us fail to rise above carnal love. Beyond His lighthouse the land rises toward the heavens.

C.S. Lewis wrote of those heavens in his little book "The Great Divorce." He describes the land beyond the distant mountains as the solid place from which solid people came down to offer wispy, loveless pilgrims assistance on their journey out of the storm tossed world.

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Lewis, an Oxford literature professor, mastered English and brilliantly wove words together to illustrate God's powerful love. We've an echo in the carnal love of friends and lovers. God comes to us in the character of an untamable lion in Lewis's Narnia tales. The mid twentieth century work in English by two close friends, Tolkien and Lewis, pierce the terrifying God-hating darkness of our day.

First in books, and also as movies, their work imaginatively lights the way through danger to the safety of a Christian consciousness. Western civilization creaks, groans and wails like a long lost storm tossed ship nearing home. And home for the West can only be Christian.

Religion is the language of the heart. The heartbeat of the West is weak, but it hasn't stopped. Christianity will never stop beating. It will win.

Just look at the Russian people. Piercing the darkness of the God-hating chaos of communism is an emerging Christian culture that celebrates family life, eschews abortion and proscribes homosexuality. Here in America the light of Christ's gospel still guides pilgrims away from the dangerous shoals of sin. One week from now the loving labor of hundreds of Maine Christians will be measured in signatures. They circulated petitions over the summer on a number of moral issues.

The use of direct democracy was forced on the people of Maine by God-hating "liberal" political and religious forces. They captured the high ground in Maine's state capital, Augusta, in the last election. They used their power early in the year to force their evil agenda into law. The good people of Maine are working to overturn those bad laws.

I pray they succeed, of course. In a few short days we'll know if their noble effort will advance to a statewide vote. I have my doubts, as you know if you've read my previous columns.

But through it all I clearly see God's light piercing the darkness of this world.

The sun hasn't started illuminating the horizon in the east. I am as sure of God's love and care as I am confident I will witness the sun rise through this chapel window in the not too distant future.

Amen.