



The Public Square

by J C Bowman

George Orwell wrote about 1984, but for me 1984 could probably be best described as a year I was whiskey bent and hell bound. I was 20 years old and thought myself bullet proof. I was a member of the United States Marine Corps and I was very angry. On October 23, 1983, 241 American servicemen, mostly my Marine Corps brothers were killed in the terrorist bombing in Beirut, Lebanon. It was my first view of the ugliness caused by hatred from one religion toward another. I saw terrorism and the cowards who perpetrated it up close and personal. It is impossible to capture in words my abhorrence of terrorism.

I felt I should have been there with my Marine brothers in Lebanon. More importantly I felt anger raging in me directed at God. It was made worse when my beloved Grandmother Leona Green passed away early in November of 1983. I boiled with rage, which seethed below the surface and occasionally surfaced. I had always been a moderate user of alcohol, but I turned my drinking to a new level. I was going to teach God a lesson. He could not love me enough through my pain, and I could walk the earth without fear of man. It is a dangerous combination: Little fear of God, no fear of

man, all fueled by alcohol. I studied religions throughout much of 1984, and even contemplated atheism. I searched, and God patiently waited. My sole purpose to prove Jesus Christ was not who he said

The Man I Want to Be

he was. In the end, I discovered not only that Jesus Christ had an answer to the problems I faced, He was the only one who could fill the pain that was in my heart. I had always known Jesus Christ was often compared to other prophets and teachers. But I was to just discover he was more than that not only for me but also for the world. In all of my years of "knowing" who Jesus was, I had never allowed myself to have a relationship with Him. It was the fortunate intercession by my old Cleveland High School classmate Bethany O'Bannon who led me into that relationship.

Jesus absolutely had to be the most unique human being to ever live. Everything from His birth, His life and His death was miraculous and made Him different than any other person to have lived. In fact, Jesus Christ's life was probably even more remarkable than His birth. Threatened by His prominence and influence, the po-

litical and religious establishment conspired to kill Him. His death had been predicted over a thousand years before His birth. After His death, He rose again. And, He wanted a relationship with me. My once shaking fist had disappeared to become uplifted hands on my bended knees as I embraced incomparable love.

The prophet Isaiah wrote of Jesus, "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement for our

peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed." Jesus would pay the penalty for our sins so that we could be forgiven and have eternal life. Just as had been predicted, Jesus was given the most brutal death sentence of that day for maintaining that He was the Son of God. While hanging on a wooden cross with spikes through His hands and feet, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Jesus had power to come down from the cross, but He chose to sacrifice His life for others. Just as promised, Jesus also was resurrected on the third day after His burial.

There are many religions and prophets, but only Jesus Christ offers absolute forgiveness from your sins and eternal life with God. He has already died for your sins. All you must do is put your faith in Him. In 1984, I came into the year permeated by the consumption of alcohol, I ended the year infused by the power of Jesus Christ. I

also found the woman I would spend the rest of my life with, Bethany O'Bannon. I gave her an engagement ring that Christmas. We married in July 1985. We are both are serving Jesus Christ today. The greatest thing is we are doing it while working together. The fact that I get to work with my entire family is one of the greatest gifts God has allowed. It is a blessing to see my mother Linda Lawhorn and my brother Ernie Bowman and spend time with them as adults. My step-father Ken Lawhorn is a blessing to my life, as are my in-laws Bob and Nancy O'Bannon. We all know life passes too quickly and it is the small blessings that we most cherish.

I am sure most of you know that I am writing my last article for *the People News*. I want to take this opportunity to thank my readers these last 10 years or so. I appreciate Pete Edwards for the opportunity. I am not abandoning the actual Public Square, and my

daughter Jennifer Martin can more than handle the literary world here at *the People News*. There is simply too much work to be done in the world to secure liberty and protect faith. It has been a pleasure to meet so many of my readers and I hope you will continue to follow me and support me in the next phase of my life. You can keep up with my activities on my website at

www.eppcmanagement.com

I pray God's blessings on your lives. I want to wish you a Merry Christmas 2008 and prosperous 2009. I know as you read this America has new elected leaders and a new president. I predict 2010 will be just as fun politically, and locally it may be even more exciting. Remember, elected leaders need your prayers, your ideas, and your watchful eye on their actions. Government is not, and never will be, the solution to your problems. I ask that you continue to support my efforts to change the world, especially since I am no longer whiskey bent and hell bound. I must also

confess that I am not bullet-proof. I will quote the duo Montgomery-Gentry as my final words in *the People News*:

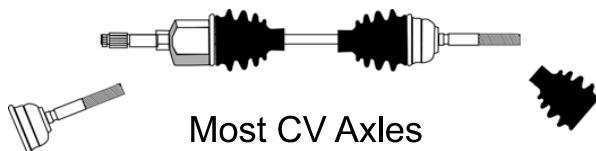
So now I'm slowing it down and I'm looking around. And I'm lovin' this town and I'm doing alright. Ain't worried 'bout nothing except the man I wanna be. I'm thinking it's time to be livin' the rhyme when I'm singing a song about nothing but right. And it'd sure be nice if you would roll with me.

[Note from Pete Edwards;- J.C. Bowman has been a regular contributor to this paper for over 10 years and during that time I have been honored to call him my friend. I thank him for the insight and wisdom he has shared with us and the love he holds for our community. He continues to reside in Cleveland and remains a public policy analyst, and faith and community based entrepreneur. He enjoys being called a community organizer these days! And he's thinking about becoming a pirate! You can also reach him by mail at P.O. Box 4938, Cleveland, TN 37320.]

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