

## The Eyes of Faith

By Dan Puumala

Vision is a very important aspect of one's sensory being. Vision is also a very important aspect of one's spiritual being. Since spiritual reality is not physical, we cannot see the spiritually "real." So we use analogies to talk about spiritual reality. We speak of seeing with "the eyes of faith." In her 1989 book, *The Healing Presence* Leanne Payne writes of the way the heart "sees" what is real. In her just-published autobiography, *Heaven's Calling: A Memoir of One Soul's Steep Ascent* she writes of this same concept. We at Outpost practice the spiritual discipline of "seeing with the eyes of faith," or the "True Imagination."

Prior to this ability to see the unseen real, most people have what Payne calls an "experience orientation," that is, practicing one's faith by trying to make a certain spiritual experience happen consistently. Payne herself wanted to "feel" (with the senses) close to God. She'd had a remarkable experience and she thought, quite naturally, that because it was so extraordinary and she felt so close to God, it was spiritual reality. She wanted to live in that experience. What she didn't know was that God's presence was not dependent upon her feeling his presence. When the feelings dissipated, she despaired over thinking she had lost contact with God. But, as we all eventually learn, the "mountaintop experience" will stay with us only a little while.

In our work here at Outpost, we encounter many people who want to feel God's presence, thinking that if they don't feel it, it isn't there. They want to hear God's voice saying, "this is the way, walk in it," but they can't audibly hear that voice. They want to experience the feeling of other sex attraction (OSA), but they don't. It can be quite distressing for one who belongs to God, but does not feel it. It makes them doubt the reality of the eternal. But the physical mind cannot grasp the reality of the Unseen Real. One must begin to use one's True Imagination to see beyond the physical world into the spiritual world. Oddly, we "moderns" train the imagination out of children these days through our "seeing is believing" mentality (scientism).

To want to experience feelings of attraction for the opposite sex is natural. The expectation is that once they "feel" OSA, they will have had a genuine healing (spiritual) experience. They'll know God is real. They'll have their "sign." And conversely, if they DON'T experience OSA, then healing must not be real, God is a crutch

and the Bible is filled with falsehoods. We don't shame people because they want OSA; it is a good thing to desire. However, this is short-sighted and usually the way one goes about experiencing OSA falls short of the goal (involves sin whether it's legal or not). You see, in the connection between spirituality and sexuality there is an element of the Unseen Real that cannot be apprehended by mere sensuality. Our senses reveal only part of what's real. But our modern sensibilities teach us "this is all there is," and often we're duped into settling for something quite less than our heart's deepest desires.

Jesus had words for the "miracle mongers" of his day: "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs, but because you ate the loaves and had your fill" (John 6:26f). Jesus put his finger right on the temporal, sensory issue that the Israelites were settling for: bread and fish. But having received that did nothing for them in the longer term: later that day they would grow hungry once again. Sensual fulfillment is only temporary.

In writing of her struggles through her own adolescence, Payne writes, "One of the remarkable things about serving God is that lost opportunities, along with the deepest desires of the heart, have a way of re-presenting themselves . . . . But healing would have to come first." (page 66).

So how does one move from seeking only physical gratification into seeking eternal satisfaction? This is the faith journey. Payne writes of her whole life being that of a "steep ascent", indicating that the path heavenward (toward ultimate fulfillment) is not easy, but an upward climb. When the people who chased Jesus after the Feeding of the Five Thousand asked, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent" (John 6:28f).

This work is not readily apparent and that fact may explain why the gate is so small and the road that leads to life is so narrow that only a few find it. Outpost helps people find that small gate along that narrow road. This work of "believing" in the One whom God has sent is



*Sensual fulfillment is only temporary*



not easy. But it sounds so simple that people disregard it along the broad way to instant gratification. This is immaturity because they don't see that trusting in God yields results. Indeed, the old hymn writer understood this:

*But we never can prove  
the delights of his love  
until all on the altar we lay;  
for the favor he shows,  
and the joy he bestows,  
are for them who will trust and obey.*  
(John H. Sammis, 1887)

## **Trusting in God yields results**

Once we step through that tiny gate onto that narrow road, we can begin to progress. The sight is poor, but the vista grand. We are like the man who found a Pearl of Great Price and bought the whole field. There is a certain gusto with which we pursue the exploration of our "field." Our desire is intensified with each new discovery. Our impetus for change grows and modulates from external, temporary pacification to internal, eternal realization. Lifestyles change and people submit to radical obedience to the commands of Christ.

This constantly presents challenges to us. But, as Payne writes, "I knew that the only way of transcending, of overcoming in this life, had to do with the steep ascent of obedience to divine truth" (p. 66). One soon discovers that this transcendence comes with temporal gifts as well: vision. Jesus commanded the blind man, "'Go,' he told him, 'wash in the Pool of Siloam' (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing." (John 9:7), and "'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' 'Who is he, sir?' the man asked. 'Tell me so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said, 'You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.' The man said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshiped him." John 9:35-38. The point is that the man had to obey Christ as part of his healing; which resulted in eye-sight *and* eternal, real, worshiping relationship with Jesus.

Our obedience to Christ yields results as well: eternal, real, worshiping relationship with Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of the deepest desires of our hearts. Do we say everyone gets OSA? Marriage? No. These are not our goals. For if our sights are set on physical, sensory externals, we may never achieve our ultimate desire: heaven. Better that we focus on achieving that! Jesus said, "If your eye [or whatever your sensory desire is, including OSA or marriage] causes you to sin, pluck it out [or, let it go]. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye [or only same-sex attractions] than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell," (Mark 9:47).

For some, obedience will produce the vision to move into relationship with the opposite sex. They may not "see" the OSA ahead of time, and this may become an issue in dating relationships. When a young man seeking to overcome homosexuality or same-sex attractions "sees" a relationship with a woman, she may feel the need to find out if he's "attracted to her." Well, there may be vision for that on the man's part, but he won't be able to explain it in sensory language. It isn't time yet for that to be fulfilled. There is a need for boundaries. I think of Joseph and Mary before the birth of Christ. Joseph held back. Out of deference for Christ, the man is not allowed to express his "felt" attractions—he's obeying God and seeking to remain pure. In times like this, it is important for the woman to begin to see the obedience of the man as leading to eternal rewards. It is by faith that they proceed into relationship out of obedience to Christ.

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). *ON*

*Dan Puumala is Outpost's  
Executive Director.*



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# NEWS FROM THE FRONT

## Ministry & Other Events

- 11/21** Dan and David were interviewed on AM 1330 Relevant Radio, Golden Valley, MN
- 12/27-1/1** Nate, David, and five others attended **The onething Conference** in Kansas City, MO
- 1/16** Dan and team will speak at Association Free Lutheran Bible School, Plymouth, MN
- 1/28** Nate, Candace, David, and Daniel will speak to the youth group at the Evangelical Covenant Church, International Falls, MN
- 2/4-7** Nate will speak at the **Truth Exchange Conference**, Escondido, CA
- 2/7-8** Dan will speak at First Evangelical Free Church, Minneapolis, MN
- 2/28** Outpost Board meets, Robbinsdale, MN

## MO3 Group to Start

There will be a new group for **MenOver30** starting on January 12. This group is for men who are seeking to overcome same-sex attractions and walk in purity before God and others. We will be studying the book *Growth Into Manhood* by Alan Medinger, one of the heroes of the Exodus Movement, dating back to the 1970s. Our focus will be to strengthen the inner man in areas of spirituality, masculinity and relationships. Cost for the class is \$150, includes the book and a weekend retreat. Call the office to schedule an intake appointment with Dan. Class meets Mondays through April 13 with the retreat April 17-19. Scholarships available.

## A Call to Prayer

- Pray for our fall **Living Waters** program which started October 30.
- Pray for the young people who attended *the onething Conference* in Kansas City in December. Pray God calls many into dedicated lifestyles of prayer and fasting, for the sake of the Kingdom.
- Pray for the start of the new "MO3" group for "Men Over 30." Pray for the leadership team to gel and the men to enter into all that God has planned for them.
- If you have a personal prayer need for yourself or for a family member, please let us know via phone, email or letter. We will intercede on your behalf during our Wednesday staff prayer time between 11 AM and 12:30 PM. You are always welcome to join us!

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Where there is no vision, God's people perish.  
Proverbs 29:18

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\$100 for materials and retreat.

## A Word About Finance

Happy New Year! The last available financial data is from the month of November:

### Income Vs. Expenses 11/30/08

Budgeted Income	Actual Income	Budgeted Expenses	Actual Expenses
\$64,353	\$52,164	\$65,052	\$64,523

While this data is "old" already, and Christmas will have come and gone by the time you receive this report, I can say that the trend in December has not changed much this fall. This has been disappointing to us.

The Board has ordered me to make a contingency plan, adapting our previously approved budget to the changes in our economy. Our income stream has run about 20% shallower than expected, and we'll need to cut our budget to reflect that. All our staff are required to raise a significant portion of their salaries and expenses, so it is very difficult to cut back salaries.

God answers prayers even before we ask them, so if you would, please pray that the final weeks of the year will make up the difference (about \$16,000). It will be too late to get a tax benefit for 2008, but please consider a sizable donation that will help us make up the difference. It is important to me that you know that any gift and every gift is sincerely appreciated and valued. Our budget, while relatively large compared to most ministries in our network, is very tight. We don't have extra items in our budget. We solicit volunteers to give and lay carpet and paint. We have people stuffing envelopes. We bought one piece of furniture in 1997 and nothing since. Our computers are donated. But we go places in the spirit realm and see lives set free. We're committed to keeping on doing what we are doing, even if we have to have pay cuts.

Bless you as you consider your gift,

Dan Puumala  
Executive Director



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# Inside: The Eyes of Faith

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