



## Chaplain's Notes April - May 2002

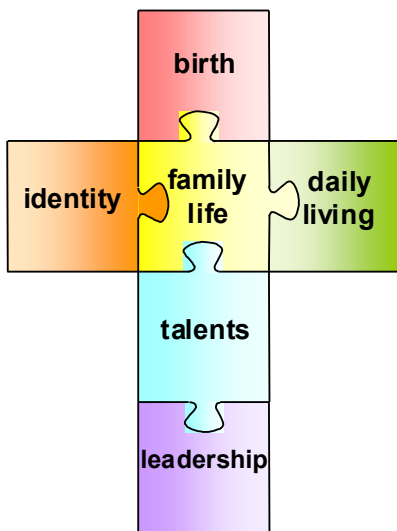
(special double-sided edition)

Dear friend,

How are you? I hope all is going well for you. For me, life has been a little bit like a roller-coaster: it's had its ups & downs! I often ask God why it is that the track I'm travelling has so many sharp bends & gut-wrenching falls! The answer always seems to be, though, that it's because I jump the tracks or take the wrong turns, and God has to do something desperate to get me back on the right track!!

All of what has happened to me in my life has made me reflect deeply on what the track of life is really supposed to look like. Have you ever thought about that, too?

In this newsletter I'd like to share with you a "big picture" solution which has really helped me. I hope that it helps you as well, and I am interested in your feedback.



I have realized that all of life seems to fit into six areas.

First of all (& obviously) we have to be born into this world.

Then from childhood onwards our identities are fashioned. We begin to learn consciously and subconsciously who we are as male or female, who we are as a "Kutschker" (in my case), or a "Smith", or whatever our surname is. We learn how to be a part of a family, whether the example is a good one or bad one. This, of course, also plays a huge role in the fashioning of our identities. And in our daily living, we also start to learn how to relate to the wider world out there, all the different people, different values, ideas, and so on. We begin to realize that the world is much bigger than just our own family.

In our teenage years, and especially through the education process, we also start to realize what our talents are, what we are good at, and therefore what type of job we might actually end up doing.

Then, through using the talents we have, we come into leadership. We become skilled, others learn from us, and we also teach others many things. Even being a parent is being a leader, because you are responsible for bringing up children, leading them into how they should be living their lives in the world.

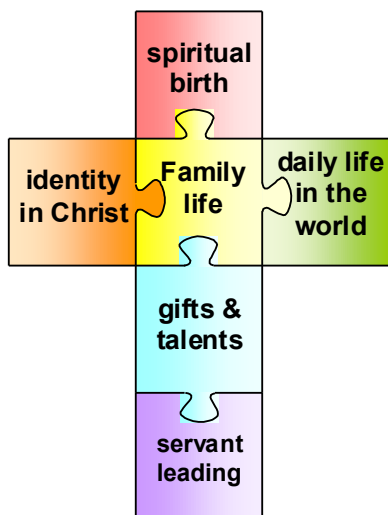
Does this sound accurate to you? It does to me. Furthermore, whilst the above provides an overview of life, it also helps us to categorize all the problems we see in our world today:

1. Although we are physically alive, for many people there still seems to be something missing inside of them - they can't seem to find happiness, peace, or joy; it's as if there is a hole in their hearts; people can be at a party and still be lonely.
2. Many people have a low self-esteem, a low view of themselves. So, we often do anything to try and feel good about ourselves. For some, they try cigarettes; others try alcohol, or gambling. Some become sports fanatics, looking to football or soccer. Others try to find their identity in their car or work, etc.
3. Family life is becoming less and less stable. There are so many divorces, broken homes, and children born out of wedlock. Home is often a hell for many. Family bonds have been eroded. Elderly citizens are left alone in their own flats, or shunted away to retirement villages and isolated from their families.
4. The world in which we live is being polluted & trashed. People are being abused instead of respected, there are wars, crimes, rapes, pornography, fights, religious arguments, anarchy, refugees, dog-eat-dog in the business world, etc. People rip each other off, and couldn't care less about anyone else.
5. People's abilities to express their talents are stifled, or they have never been given an opportunity to flourish. And when talents are expressed, it is often for selfish ends.
6. We see dictatorship and oppressive leadership. We see power politics, and people still treated like slaves or pawns in a game of chess. We see leaders who don't really know what they are doing.

This being said, is there any hope? Is there a solution?

In all of my thinking, study, reading, research, & talking with people, I am convinced that although we are born physically, the solution lies in also being born spiritually. We need enlightenment.

As Jesus said: **"You must be born again"** in order to experience life as God always intended it.



When you open up your life to Jesus Christ and become spiritually born, and then allow the spiritual to affect every realm of your existence, life becomes fulfilling, meaningful, and alive!

When the Spirit of God comes to live within you, no longer is there an inner emptiness, but rather a wholeness, peace, and joy beyond understanding.

Your identity is no longer defined by the trashy experiences you have been through in life, but rather by who you are in Christ: you realize that you truly are significant from God's perspective, highly valued, of great worth, and very special in His eyes! You no longer have to prove yourself to anyone!

Whereas your "human family" may be beyond "repair", you are now embraced to be a part of God's family: He becomes your Father, Jesus is not ashamed to call you His brother / sister, and every other believer is now your spiritual "sibling". You are never alone, because God is now with you in a very real way, and He always cares for you!

In your daily life you understand that the spiritual reality is the fundamental reality, much greater than the physical universe. You begin to see the earth as a place to be respected, not raped & trashed. You begin to treat other people with dignity & kindness, showing mercy and exercising forgiveness. Your work becomes something you do for the glory of God and blessing of other people, not a purely selfish and greedy enterprise. You begin to honour those in authority over you, from parents to governments. And beyond religion, you are able to see evidence of the grace of God at work in other people's lives, even if they are not yet following Jesus.

When the Spirit of God comes into you, not only does He equip you with spiritual gifts & talents to bless other people, but often unlocked potential within you is released, just like Spring causes flowers in bud to bloom.

And leadership becomes seen as a responsibility to serve others to bring out their best.

Does this sound good to you? It does to me. And I am experiencing it. You can, too! But to experience it, as I said before, you need to become born again. Would you like to become born again? Allow me to ask you a few simple questions to help you:

1. Do you believe that God exists? (yes / no)
2. Do you acknowledge the fact that you are a sinner, and realize that you cannot get rid of the guilt of this sin by yourself? (yes / no)
3. Do you believe that God loves you?
  - the evidence that God loves you is that He sent Jesus to die on the cross for your sins, and that Jesus rose again from the dead. (yes / no)
4. Do you desire to turn away from your sins, turn back to God, ask Him for forgiveness, and bow to Jesus & make Him the "lord" or boss of your life? (yes / no)

If you have answered "yes" to all these questions, you are ready to be born again! It is appropriate that you now pray a prayer like this →

A prayer for salvation to become born again:

Dear God,  
thankyou that you love me  
thankyou that you sent Jesus to die for my sins  
I am so sorry for my sins (*name them here*)  
please forgive me  
I don't want to sin any more  
I believe that Jesus died for me  
I believe that Jesus rose from the dead again  
I want him to be the Lord of my life  
and I want to follow him  
Thankyou Lord God  
in Jesus name I pray,  
Amen.

If you have now prayed the above prayer from your heart, please let me know - I would be overjoyed, and would love to help you further grow in your new-found spiritual life! (Being born again is only the beginning!) If you would like to know more, or would like further help in having your own spiritual birth, please contact me.

God bless you exceeding abundantly,

