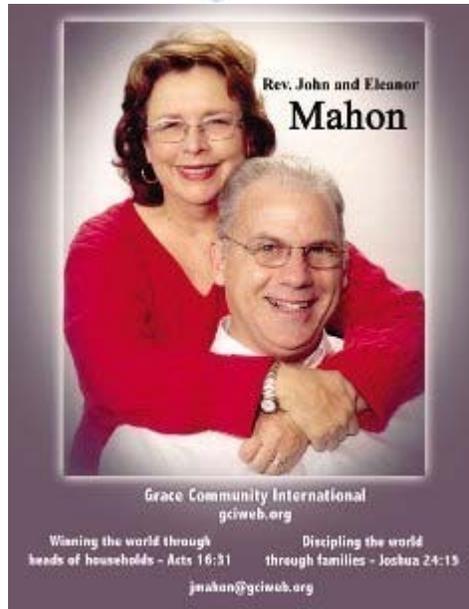


Prayer Dispatch 10.14.15 / *“That’s not my marriage, I am not that missionary.”*



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In this Prayer Dispatch...

- I. Report on Eleanor’s Health
- II. *“That’s Not My Marriage, I Am Not That Missionary”*.
- III. **Prayer Requests: As you minister with us throughout the world through your intercessions please allow the accompanying passages from the Word of God to guide your prayers**
2 Corinthians 1:11 “you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.”
 - A. Please use this passage from Ephesians Chapter Five to guide your prayers for our marriage
Ephesians 5:22-33

Eleanor As Helpmate

22 - 24 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

John As Spiritual Protector and Leader

25 - 27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

John As Provider

28 - 30 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body.

John and Eleanor - The Testimony Of Our Marriage

31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

John and Eleanor – Love and Respect

33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

B. That God would bless the ministry materially, that we might in turn bless those to whom we minister.

2 Corinthians 9:11 you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God.”

Dear Prayer Warriors,

*“I swear before God, before man
and in the presence here of His Church,
I give myself to you as your husband,
all my worldly goods I bestow upon you,
I pledge to be the spiritual leader of the home,
to love you as Christ loved the Church,
in sickness and in health,
in poverty and in wealth,
in good times and in bad,
until death do us part,
so help me God.”*

Dear Prayer Warriors,

First let me give a report on El’s surgery. The orthopedic surgeon is very encouraged at her progress. The in-home physical therapist and visitation nurse are equally impressed at her resilience and determination to return to the mission field. This week she has started out-patient physical therapy at a clinic—lots of hard work but she’s beginning to get her strength and stamina back. There have been many opportunities to witness, distribute Bibles and evangelistic materials because of her sweet, longsuffering spirit. I praise God for such a godly wife. By God’s grace, your prayers and the healing ministry of God, we will return to the mission field in 2016.

I have appreciated, as well, your faithfulness – not only in prayer but in financial support during this time. No amount of financial planning could prepare us for the radical changes in health care costs and insurance coverage. Your faithfulness has gone a long way to blunt the shock of the new healthcare system.

In terms of postponing our fall mission trip, I have never looked back and am confident we made the right decision. I am painfully aware that some missionary husbands press on, leaving their wives behind when illness, tragedy or adverse circumstances occur. When asked about this I my reply is, *“That’s not my marriage, I am not that missionary.”* I understand and completely agree with those who take short-term mission trips without their wives. I categorically oppose those who, as a lifestyle, continue on the mission field without their wives because of tragedy, illness, poverty or bad times.

Early in my Christian life, I was impressed by the response of the family man Jacob, to his brother Esau. God the Holy Spirit records this incident in Genesis 33:13-14 “But he said to him, ‘My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And if they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die. Please let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir.’”

From earliest times, there has been a different standard in Holy Scripture for married men over those who are single. For family men and those without families. As I repeat over and over in my Marriage Covenant Seminar, there are certain spiritual responsibilities which cannot be delegated. At the top of these responsibilities is a married man’s spiritual and personal obligations to his wife and, where applicable, to his children.

To quote again from the Marriage Covenant Seminar: “You are free to roam the world, work late every night, live without regard for safety or income, spend every night in some form of ministry activity, function without regards to worldly creature comforts, just don’t get married. However, if you do marry, you must come home and fulfill your responsibilities to your wife and your children.”

I realize, though, that in this I am fighting an uphill battle. The lie from Satan, that a minister may “put his family on the altar for a higher calling” is well received throughout the church. I have come across this time and again...

“in sickness and in health,”

Cancer – I know a missionary whose wife used to be “on the team.” However, when she developed cancer, he left her behind, continuing his missionary travels.

Arthritis – I met a missionary who spent the vast majority of each year traveling and speaking at conferences. When I asked about his wife, I was told that she had developed arthritis and could not travel. When I challenged him on his priorities he shared that he was trusting God for her spiritual protection and was setting a hedge around her in prayer by faith, while he was away. I asked him, that if he was such a man of faith and prayer, why not ask God, as a sign as to whether he should continue on the mission field, to heal her. He had no reply for this. I challenged him that it takes less faith to heal arthritis than it takes to keep the world, the flesh and the devil at bay when you abandon your wife.

“in poverty and in wealth,”

Poverty – I met a pastor from the Republic of Congo who was living a very comfortable life in the U.S. When he showed me a picture of his impoverished wife and children back in Africa, I challenged him as to how he could live a life of ease apart from them. He shared that there was simply not enough money to bring them over. I rebuked him, challenging him as to why he had enough faith to live a life of ease but not enough faith to care for his family. God has not called us to travel the world, fly luxurious intercontinental flights, spend time in spacious airports, stay in the homes of the wealthy, enjoy conference centers and churches -- while our wives and children live in poverty. This, too, is sin.

“in good times and in bad,”

Rape – I remember talking with a missionary whose wife was left at home for months at a time while he travelled throughout the country in which he was ministering. When I asked why, he shared that earlier she was with him on the field but was brutally raped. Now she stayed at home. How this man could spiritualize leaving this poor, brutalized wife at home and unprotected while he got to play spiritual explorer is beyond me.

Spiritual rebellion – In one of the countries where I minister, there is a man well into his 50’s, who stays months at a time on the field. Concerned at his familiarity with the younger women in the church, I tried to broach the subject of Christian dating and the age differences between himself and the young women with whom he seemed to spend his time. I was shocked to learn that he was married. He shared with me that his wife had joined a liberal church and would no longer go to the mission field with him, so he pressed on to the higher call. There is neither Scriptural excuse for this sin, nor for the sin of the mission organization which sanctioned such carnal priorities.

A separate ministry – A well-known executive with a large para-church Christian organization once told me that he really envied the fact that my wife traveled and ministered with me. When I asked him about his wife (whom I knew had served with him on the mission field) he shared with me that she had felt a need for self-actualization and had taken a ministry responsibility in the U.S. and was no longer ministering with him. His response to this was to simply leave his wife at home and continue his ministry overseas, just like he did as a single man before he met her.

“until death do us part,”

Dementia – I know a missionary whose wife suffers from dementia, yet, without regard for her health or his responsibility, he continues to minister, entrusting his wife to the care of others.

I know other missionaries whose wives have aged more quickly than they have. Rather than stand by her “till death do us part” they freely leave her behind to pursue their missionary career.

Let there be no mistake!! These same men, when they have their stroke, will expect the wife they left behind to care for them --to put their lives on hold and dutifully stand by this negligent and selfish bedridden man for the duration of his life. They will expect them to do this with a cheerful heart as their ministry. They will expect them to exert an entirely different set of values and spiritual priorities than they modeled and taught. This is simply wrong.

“so help me God.”

God the Holy Spirit is very clear in this regard in terms of my spiritual responsibilities... God has called me to be Eleanor’s spiritual leader and protector. There are a number of spiritual principles at work here...

First: My responsibilities before God to Eleanor were made when I took the Marriage Covenant Vows where I swore to God...

Sacrifice Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,"

Spiritual Leader & Spiritual Protector Ephesians 5:26 "so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,"

Material Provider and Protector 1 Timothy 5:8 "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

Second:

To Be My Helpmate Genesis 2:18 "... I will make him a helper suitable for him."

As I repeat over and over in my Marriage Covenant Seminar, "Your wife cannot be your helpmate if you do not let her help you."

As My Helpmate - To Be By My Side Genesis 2:18, 23, 24

18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone..."

23 The man said, " This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Eleanor cannot be my helpmate if I leave her behind, if I do not have her by my side. This is an indicator of God's will for my life – "where is Eleanor?"

We are in this together and by God's grace, your prayers and your sacrificial gifts, we will be back on the mission field in January - together. In the meantime, invitations to Russia, South Africa, Cameroon, Kenya and more have come in. Stand with us in this, through your prayers, that we might, represent you in the harvest fields of the world.

But let this be made known to all. When I swore before God, the Church and Eleanor, these words, I did not view them as poetic but as a holy vow to God.

*"I swear before God, before man
and in the presence here of His Church,
I give myself to you as your husband,
all my worldly goods I bestow upon you,
I pledge to be the spiritual leader of the home,
to love you as Christ loved the Church,
in sickness and in health,
in poverty and in wealth, in good times and in bad,
until death do us part,
so help me God."*

In Psalm 15:4 God the Holy Spirit says that a righteous man is one who "*swears to his own hurt and does not change;*"

Contrastingly, God the Holy Spirit says in Ecclesiastes 5:4 ***“When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow!”***

Missionaries, pastors, businessman, husbands and fathers who vow one thing to God and then, when illness, poverty or bad times arise, abandoned those vows are, in God’s eyes, fools and God takes no delight in them.

By God’s grace and your prayers I will be counted as righteous on that day, having fulfilled the vows which I swore to God, to the Church and to my darling wife Eleanor.

I close this email, as always, with a deep and abiding thankfulness for your sacrificial and effectual prayers, which empower and drive this ministry ever forward in the cause of Christ.

By His mercy,
II Corinthians 4:1
Rev. John S. Mahon
Grace Community Int. -

Please allow me to close this dispatch with a hymn from my prayer notebook that has been especially meaningful to me...

(Psalms 104:33-34 “I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Let my meditation be pleasing to Him; As for me, I shall be glad in the LORD.”)

Link to music/tune for this hymn: <http://nethymnal.org/htm/m/j/mjesusil.htm>

My Jesus, I love Thee

My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign.
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

*I love Thee because Thou has first loved me,
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree.
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.*

I'll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath;
And say when the death dew lies cold on my brow,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.

*In mansions of glory and endless delight,
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;
I'll sing with the glittering crown on my brow;
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now.*

William R. Featherston 1864; (Featherston was only 16 years old at the time) *Born:* July 23, 1846, Montreal, Quebec, Canada ; *Died:* May 20, 1873, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Little is known of Featherston, except that he belonged to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Montreal (later renamed St. James Methodist Church, then St. James United Church).