



W*E have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. ¹⁹Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. ²⁰Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. ²¹For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. (Isaiah 26:18-21)*

On 30 April 1975, a tragic end came to the Vietnam Conflict – a struggle that lasted from 1 November 1955 to 30 April 1975. It was a tragic conflict from the perspective of American blood and tears that were shed as well as for the immense number of dead and wounded on the side of the Vietnamese people. A nation possessing power to destroy the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army in a matter of days was forced, by their own State Department, to only engage in half-victories and ceding every advantage to a ruthless enemy bent on domination of the South.

During the duration of the war, many children were born to Vietnamese women fathered by American fathers. Many such children were left behind by the sudden and

humiliating withdrawal of American and allied forces. A small percentage was reunited to their birth fathers in America in the succeeding two decades, but thousands were left in extreme poverty and at the mercy of a population who took a dim view of children of mixed heritage. Most became street children, beggars, and gang members in order to survive. They became known as 'Bui Doi' (pronounced Buoy - Doy!), or the Dust of Life. This was an appropriate term since their lives were valued by the Vietnamese society as little more than the dust of the street.

These children, left behind by circumstances beyond their control, were essentially unwanted orphans. They knew not who their father was and, in some cases, not even their mothers who may have abandoned them out of shame in infancy. The mothers, too, must be pitied for being left in untenable social and financial circumstances in which the effort to raise a child born to American fathers would have presented an insurmountable objective. Many who were sought out by their fathers and brought to America have become stellar citizens and patriots. Coming from the hell of Vietnam as children of mixed race was very much like dying in the dust and waking up in the fertile pastures of the American landscape.

In my view, these pitiful children of the dust of Life is precisely like the great number of people of the world who go about their lives not knowing their Father in God or any such motherly love as the Church is commissioned to provide. Instead of condemning such numbers of people, the Christian must view them in sympathy since they have not been granted the grace to know God as Father – at least not yet! God acts at His own time and discretion and there are huge numbers who walk in darkness today who will joyfully bathe in the effulgent Light of Christ tomorrow.

As we have written many times over, there are but two families on earth – the children of the Light, and the children of darkness. There is no twilight in between. You are either chosen, called, and granted salvation by God through the grace of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, or you wander in the murk and shadow of dark places. God, in His discretion, has called many out of that darkness by means of His foreordained and predestined volition. All are as the Dust of Life ere the Holy Ghost enters into the deep chambers of the heart and calls their name to Life as Christ did Lazarus. The dust of the earth is the permanent abode of the ungodly.

You will remember that two men stand forth as stark reminders of the destination of both the chosen of God as well as the reprobate sinner. Please do not doubt the veracity of the very words of Christ in describing this great abyss separating the two:

T*HERE was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*
(Luke 16:19-23)

The heritage of the lost is the dust of the earth; the heritage of the righteous is Paradise. Please note that there is no delay between the departure of the two men and their present condition. The rich man died and was BURIED! The poor beggar, Lazarus, died and received an immediate angelic ESCORT to the bosom of Abraham. Death comes as the blink of an eye. The rich man immediately awakens and finds himself in Hell. But Lazarus awakens in the Paradise of God. The speed of the transfer is quicker

than the speed of light. Once one is committed to one, or the other, there is no way to travel from one to the other. *But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.* (Luke 16:25-26)

One other point to consider is that faith in the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ and His Person as revealed by the prophets in all the Word is paramount to being accounted among His family. *Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* (Luke 16:29-31) Signs and wonders are not needful, faith in the plain and simple Word is, indeed, needful.

The Children of the Dust of Life of Vietnam always dreamed of being found by their fathers and taken from their dire hurt, else they would remain compromised in life and liberty. But once found by the father, their lives are transformed in wonderful ways. The same is true of the children of the dust of Life in the world. Many hunger to be identified and claimed by their Father in Heaven. With that desire comes certain fulfillment for it is evidence of the inward counsel of the Holy Spirit. An indifferent faith of once a week church attendance without continued daily prayer and Bible study will not suffice.

As children of God, our focus is fixed on that City of God which lies at the end of that straight and narrow road leading up to its gates. Faith is the gift of purpose and power that draws us near:

THESE all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, (Hebrews 11:13-17)