In the summer of 1979 I conducted a two-week bike trip, Smoky Mountains to Upland, to help fill out the summer. Mid-way through the trip I really needed spiritual input. Killing time, I was rummaging through a pack of “on sale” books in a cut-rate drug store. Miraculously I found a small green book, A Religion for Our Time, written by a Frenchman, Louis Evely. This little book, page for page, has offered more help over the years than any other I have read. Discovering the book in a drug store would be like finding Pepto Bismal on a library shelf! "Thank you, God!"

At this Christmas time, allow me to share thoughts from the heart of Louis Evely and his wonderful book:

"We are the inhabitants of Bethlehem who have no room for him, and in my day I do not have one hour to pray, I have no room, I have no time. I know now why he is poor, in his manger. It is I who have not given him anything, who have kept all my good clothes for myself. And I know why he is lying on the straw.

"Bethlehem is a revelation, an expression of the profound and eternal reality of his being: he is rich only with the love of the Father. He, too, like our poor, lives on charity!

"If God wants to become incarnate in you, what time, what room, what welcome have you offered him up until now?

"The whole Christian adventure is to attempt to give birth to God in the world.

"And it is to be born again in a zone of ourself where we are all too dead, and it hurts to be born.

"The air which for the first time tears lungs makes newborn babies cry. The life which comes back into a numb limb, the warmth which penetrates a frozen limb, makes us yell with pain! But it is the pain of being born.

"It is not always easy to love your neighbor, but the real difficulty is in loving the reality of the Incarnation. In the history of the church, all of the heresies aim at the Incarnation, they aim at getting rid of this unbearable thing: that God became man.

"There is only one proof that Christ is alive: his love is alive in the world, and it makes people do things which nothing human could do.

"So he made us like him, capable of doing more for the others than we would do for ourselves. If it were only a matter of ourselves we would still put up with our mediocrity. But how can we expect to transmit it to someone else? Your faith awakens when you bring it to others.

"No one escapes totally from God. No one is clear-sighted enough, vigilant enough, to recognize him and refuse him under all the faces under which he presents himself to us.

"In what will you recognize God if not in the fact that he is like no one else, in the fact that he reaches us at a depth where no one else has ever touched us?

"The world will not believe in God until it has visible proof that God is alive in the world and it can have only one: that his love is living in the world. That you do things
which are beyond yourselves, that his love is living in you, that you are poor men in whom he does great things.

"There is no possible conversion unless one experiences poverty.

"There is no greater strength than to dare to be poor, no greater strength than to bear ones misery, ones obscurity, smallness, infirmity and to believe enough in God to be well-balanced, happy, serene, glad, free of oneself. Not over burdened by one's miseries.

"Before any purchase, ask yourself if others will benefit from it, if they will be more at ease in your home. You will never do enough of that.

"Poverty seldom leads to love. But genuine love always leads to poverty.

"Happy the poor man, for he is filial, free, fraternal. He has entered the kingdom of God. He has begun to enjoy a life and happiness which belong to him forever.

"The best definition of poverty which I have heard is this: 'The poor man is someone in whose home everyone feels at ease.'

"You should become so transparent to the presence of God in you that you bear witness that he is living and that you come to others naked, vulnerable, disarmed, with this presence which appeals to theirs.

"The most beautiful manifestation of the glory of God is man living God's life --I hope that I hurt you, that everyone looks back over his life to reproach himself for living of it so little.

"Man is sacred, but he has to be penetrated by the sacred. So let yourself be penetrated, be silent a little. Die a little. Pray, be quiet before him. Sit down. Let yourself become sacred.

"How is it to be like you? Do others want to become like you? Go get rid of your sad face! Go get another face!

"Have you savored anything good enough to wish it to be eternal? Do you love anyone enough to want to live with him or her forever?

"Do you love the world, things, enough to want to make them participate in your own eternity?

"If Christianity has spread first in our western civilization, with such luxury of material development, is it not in order that we supply the whole earth, along with an authentic evangelization, that minimum of food and joy with which the millions of men presently underfed and exploited will be able to give homage and thanks to God."

Thank you for sharing with us over the years! May the truth of Mr. Evely's words help us to encourage others in Christ!

Warmly yours,

Bob and Staff

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