SOLOMON'S PORCH

SPRING 2003 THE NEWSLETTER FOR **FRIENDS** OF ENLACE

HOPE REVEALING

BY DAVID MCGEE

One year ago I sat in a New Testament Theology class and nearly chuckled aloud at yet another instance when a professor threw in the idea of "integration of faith and learning." During my years of undergraduate study at a Christian liberal arts university, I heard this concept often. However, theological debates and intensive study can cause God to seem distant, a figure to be pondered. I found the tasks of practical integration and application to be even more difficult when dealing with complex and multifaceted biblical texts such as Revelation.

The book of Revelation is part of a genre of literature that is called apocalyptic. The word "apocalyptic" comes from the Greek word meaning "remove the veil." Imbedded in this word is the idea that spiritual reality is only faintly obscured from our every day vision. Grasping this spiritual reality is not as formidable as seeing beyond a "brick wall", but rather more like seeing through "a thin, filmy gauze."[1] God's reality, therefore, in a biblical, apocalyptic vision, is not mystically distant but rather obscured from our perception by the veil of our human experience. As 1st Corinthians 13 describes, God enables us to see glimpses through this veil, this cloudy glass, by revealing his love for us here and now. By lifting the veil and revealing compassion, he shows us indications of what true reality is and will be. He shows us a glimpse of what else may be in store for his people.

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1 Howard-Brook, Wes. Apocalypse Soon? In Sojourner's Magazine. (vol. 28, No. 1, January-February 1999) pp. 36-38.

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HOPE grown COFFEE

BY MICHELLE NEGRON BUENO

coffee prepared for wholesale

With coffee shops cropping up on every corner, it may be hard to imagine that the status of coffee growing and the plight of coffee growers worldwide are in a state of crises. In coffee-producing markets all over the world, coffee prices are bottoming out. For the small-scale producer who doesn't have access to newer technologies or stable markets and depends on coffee to feed his or her family, this crises has caused extreme hardship.

One of the most promising solutions to this situation for poor farmers is to connect with a cooperative that has joined the movement of "fairly traded" coffee. This movement consists of a chain of partners that believes in ensuring that a quality product gets from producer to processor to consumer in a manner that is equitable for everyone.

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HOPE REVEALING

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WHILE attempting to sift through the difficult language of apocalyptic literature, we are all too often caught up in varying debates concerning modern application and prediction of events. But what we see in the book of Revelation is John, an apostle of Christ, offering a perspective to his readers that was not previously available to them. A revelation that even though they were suffering, God had a greater plan. A revelation of perseverance through a faith in Christ. A revelation of hope.

This year I find myself in El Salvador working for ENLACE. Integration of faith into my learning process has become a necessity while adjusting to the surroundings. After marriage my wife and I decided to come here to El Salvador to visit friends. Seven months later we're still here and have made at least a 2 year commitment to help with the talents God has given us.

Our time here so far has shown me that people in the impoverished rural sector of this country are not very much different than the original recipients of Revelation. Similarly to them, John's original audience was being oppressed by a stronger, overarching force. The imagery handed to them was great and dramatic and spoke of drastic spiritual intervention that would swoop down and crush the oppressor. Even though in their lifetime, they never saw "a literal enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his head," (Rev 12:3) but they must have understood the revelation of hope that John alludes to. A hope that God's reality was near and accessible. The hope that they, as the poor and oppressed, required intervention and would one day receive it.

As ENLACE works with the poor here in El Salvador, we have the opportunity to see the veil being lifted and the oppressor crushed every day. Clean water for thousands of Salvadorans crushes the oppressive nature of parasites and sickness that kills hundreds of children each month. Health clinics crush the oppression of small children dying in vain. Micro-enterprise and agricultural development crushes the oppression of ruling class economics. As Christians, we sometimes focus on a "race with the rapture." We often evangelize based on this impending deadline for spreading the news. But maybe that shouldn't be our only focus. The work of development has a need to settle into a focused, enduring drive for compassion. "This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints" (Rev 13:10) I believe it is necessary that we allow revelatory texts to integrate God's hope within us so that we can be a part of His work around us.

community members in bonanza

FARMING INTERNSHIP

Many families in El Salvador struggle to provide enough income to support their families. The ENLACE intergrative farm has successfully tested the technical and commercial viability of passion fruit, *loroco* (a local, edible flower) and pig farming.

Farmers are now being invited to three-month internships at the farm, to learn both theoretical and practical aspects of non-traditional cultivation and small-scale pig farming. Following this training they can qualify for credit and technical assistance as they introduce production to their own farms and communities.

$100 would provide a farmer with one month of training ☐

$50 would provide a farmer with two weeks of training ☐

$3 would provide a farmer with a day of agricultural training ☐

send your tax deductible donation to ENLACE [mailing info on page 4] note line: passion fruit internship

HOPE grown COFFEE

coffee prodution is in a state of crisis

For example, many companies sell a 12 oz. bag of gourmet coffee for $8 in the United States. Of this amount the small scale producer makes well under fifty cents per pound while assuming a great part of the risk. Even with the cost of processing, exporting, importing, and marketing factored in, companies reap astounding profits while the poor farmer is not provided a living wage. Fair traders see this situation as unacceptable and have worked hard to create a normative price system for coffee farmers that reflects farmers' true needs and the needs of their struggling local economies.

ENLACE is proudly part of this fair commerce movement. As we link you to the rural poor in El Salvador with programs that improve the quality of their lives, we are now excited to report that we are bringing coffee from Nicaraguan farmers and a family processing cooperative to you as well. This endeavor will not only pay the small scale coffee farmer and a processing cooperative in Nicaragua with a just price for their work and product, but the proceeds from the coffee will be reinvested into ENLACE's programs that assist Salvadoran farms and small-scale agricultural producers.

ENLACE's **Hope Grown Coffee** is high-quality, arabica bean gourmet coffee and represents compassion and justice "to the last drop." Each 12 oz bag of coffee is certified organic—which simply means that no toxic chemicals are used to produce and process it. In fact, it is cultivated with all natural fertilizers, hand picked and sun-dried in parchment for several weeks—accentuating the aroma and flavor.

REGULAR JOE

ENLACE'S HOPE GROWN COFFEE

If **you** are interested in providing a cup of hope to your church, your home or your place of business, please contact the ENLACE USA office and we'll send you a sample packet of this wonderful brew. Hope Grown Coffee merges the taste you like (mild, medium and dark roasts are all available) with respect and love for your poor neighbors and the earth.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

SOLOMON'S PORCH

Community life hinges upon communication between people. Porches, porticos, town halls, churches, community forums and even water coolers are a few of the many places where community life is facilitated through discussion, information dissemination and debate. Solomon's Porch was one of these centers of community life in the Bible. It was not only a meeting place for discussion but also a place wherein miracles happened. As you might recall, Peter healed the crippled beggar there and many more came to believe in Christ through the testimony of his followers.

We believe that this publication, Solomon's Porch, can serve as our virtual porch wherein the community that surrounds ENLACE both in Latin America and the United States can discuss thoughts and concerns about being Christians in a world of need. We also believe that a publication like this can witness and record the miracles that happen when people who serve Christ, follow his example.

COFFEE ORDER FORM

☐ please send me a **FREE** sample of HOPE GROWN COFFEE!

SPECIAL RATE!

ITEM DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNIT PRICE $7 per bag
5 bag minimum	SUB TOTAL	
	SHIPPING $1.00 per bag	
	TOTAL	

please designate
mild, **medium, dark,** whole bean or ground

please send me _____ pounds of HOPE GROWN COFFEE! (see order form)

address _____

_____

email _____

SEND CHECKS MADE PAYABLE
TO ENLACE USA TO:
5405 Alton Parkway
Suite 5A number 458
Irvine, California
92604

*all donations are tax deductible

CREDIT CARD DONATIONS:

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