

# THANKSGIVING AND SACRIFICE

## The Cost of the Cross

by Paul Carden

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*...since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe...*

*Hebrews 12:28*

I want to say something about grief and anger, thanksgiving and sacrifice.

Last Friday I saw something that made me want to weep. It was the photograph of a young woman I've never met. Her name is Bonnie.

She graduated from Moody Bible Institute, signed up with Operation Mobilization, and went with her husband to Lebanon to serve with the Christian & Missionary Alliance.

On Thursday, November 21, Bonnie was found lying face down in a pool of blood at the door of the clinic where she showed the love of Christ to Muslim women by helping them have healthy babies. Her life was taken by three bullets from an assassin's gun.

Apart from Bonnie's kind and joyful expression in the photographs, something else made me sad — and angry. If the account in the November 22 *New York Times* is correct, Bonnie and her missionary colleagues were under fire from Christian leaders in their city who wanted them to, in effect, shut up about Jesus because their witness made life complicated (cf. Acts 5:27–32). The local Catholic archbishop told the *Times* that Bonnie had been warned: "We told her she might be vulnerable to insults or even being hit and she answered that she would consider it an honor." Bonnie now enjoys the highest honor of all in the presence of our Lord. The November 25 *Times* reports the words of Bonnie's husband, Garry, at the memorial service held just three days after her death:

**He said he understood how some people might consider his wife's death a "waste." But he said he would never see it that way because they had come to Lebanon to spread the love and hope of knowing Jesus.**

**"This is a message worth laying down our lives for," he said, before dissolving into sobs that spread though the crowd.**

I ended my day beside my family, watching *Through Gates of Splendor*, the moving story of how Jim Elliot and four other missionaries paid the ultimate price for their witness in the jungles of Ecuador in 1956. Midway through the film the phone rang. It was a courageous Christian calling from Latin America who has had to move his family to safety after sustained threats by a truly dangerous cult.

The day these things no longer provoke me is the day I turn in my resignation.

All of this underscores the fact that we are not our own; we have been brought with

a price (1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23). And even though you and I may not be looking down the barrel of an assassin's gun today, or facing the spears of jungle tribesmen, we're serving the very same Savior and called to the very same cause that cost the lives of Bonnie Witherall, Jim Elliot, and countless other martyred saints. And we'd better not forget it.

**Bear these things in mind as you pray with us for this year's evangelistic outreach to spiritists on December 7–8.** The outreach will again take place — despite the pending legal action by Umbandistas against Joaquim de Andrade of CFAR Brazil. They still intend to silence him and others who want to spread the gospel, but they will not succeed. And though I can't tell you more now, pray for us as Centers in Europe respond to new threats from a major cultic group that would still their voices.

**And what is it all for?** You know the answer: The changed lives you make possible through your partnership, as seen in this moving letter just received from Budapest:

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

*Thank you very much for financially supporting CFAR Hungary. The work of the Lord here is simple and great: He seeks the lost, brings back the scattered, binds up the broken, and strengthens the sick. Christians are equipped to remain on the narrow way and to help others to enter by the narrow gate. More and more people are found by Him who once were lost in the religious jungle. Hungary is a little country of 10 million people, yet the number of new religious movements has grown from a dozen to over two hundred within the last ten years. And even today, CFAR Hungary is the only Christian apologetics ministry, and I am the only one working full time. That is a huge burden, knowing what a small potato I am. But again, thank you very, very much for helping me to be faithful to the call, to show the real face of Jesus to present and former cult members.*

*In Him who is able:*

*András Szalai  
Director, CFAR Hungary*

We are committed to expanding the impact of this unique ministry as God provides the necessary means.

We invite you to join hands and hearts with us. 

*Originally published in November 2002.*



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**CFAR** equips God's people across borders and cultures for discernment, the defense of the faith, and cult evangelism. To learn how you can help, call CFAR at (949) 496-2000 or visit our web site at [www.TheCenters.org](http://www.TheCenters.org).