

MISSION: IMPERATIVE!

...presenting the nature of creation

“...We have only one aim in life now - to remain loyal to the Führer unto death.”

Committed to what??

Does the name *Catherine Geach* mean anything to you? I had never heard of her until November, and now that I have, I feel ashamed. How about this name - Magda Goebbels? That's one you might know. I didn't know much about her at all, but I know something about her now, and I feel ashamed. Why? I sometimes am troubled by reminders of who or what I'm really committed to in this world.

Magda Goebbels was the wife of Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister during WW II. She and Joseph were totally committed to a man, Hitler, and the causes for which he stood. In fact, their commitment was amazing - even shocking - when placed in light of how uncommitted we as Christians often are to the cause of Jesus Christ.

In a letter to her son, Harald Quandt, written from the famous bunker just days before she and Joseph committed suicide, she wrote: “...We have only one aim in life now - to remain loyal to the Führer unto death; *that we should be able to end our life together with him is a gift of fate for which we would never have dared hope...*” Wow! Could we say that dying for Christ is a gift for which we could hardly dare hope?

Catherine Geach is now a young woman of 27. She is a talented violinist, a graduate of the prestigious Royal Academy of Music in London. She had everything going for her from the world's perspective - her beauty, her talents, her personality, her drive, and her education. She probably could have “made it big” on the classical music scene if she had wanted to - but she decided to do something very different with her music!

As a teenager in London, she had heard about the “killing fields” and all the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. This touched her deeply. So, as an 18-year-old, she traveled *alone* to Phnom Penh, the capital, to see for herself how she could help. “I want to go to Cambodia and play my violin for peace”, she told an official in Ho Chi Minh City as she was applying for a visa.

Two months later, after an eye-opening stay, she headed back to London, determined to return. She learned Khmer, the national language, and how to play traditional Cambodian musical instruments.

After graduating from the Royal Academy in 1991, she did return. She was 19, and still alone! She had been searching for a way to help heal the suffering she saw, and she found her answer by starting a school devoted to the ancient music that the Khmer Rouge had tried to destroy. All her students are disabled or orphaned children. She decided to establish the school somewhere that foreign aid rarely reached. So she chose Kampot, a tiny city where the fighting between government forces and elements of the Khmer Rouge still occasionally raged. Knowing that she was a highly visible foreigner who was especially vulnerable didn't deter her. She kept on going. She reasoned that if children could live with all the dangers, so could she.(!) An amazing woman who displays commitment, compassion and love!

Now, did you notice anything missing from this brief story? First, as far as I know, Catherine is not a born-again believer in Christ. As such, she is not led by, *nor empowered by*, the Holy Spirit. She did not attend Bible school or a missions conference where the Lord “led” her to go to the mission field. She does not bring a message of eternal hope.

So why does Catherine's story sting me like it does? Because Catherine's heart has been completely captured. She displays courage and commitment in the face of danger and hardship, compassion and love for the completely unlovely, and determination in facing the impossible - *all without the aid of the Holy Spirit!* And all for what? - to teach war-torn kids about their musical heritage! From her world view, Catherine is *acting* upon her convictions.

You and I, on the other hand, have the Holy Spirit and the message of the gospel - the power of God unto salvation. Do we act on *our* convictions? ...on *our* compassion? How committed are you? How committed am I? Lord, help me!□

Final Entries, 1945 - The Diaries of Joseph Goebbels, Putnam, 1978