

I Have to Go

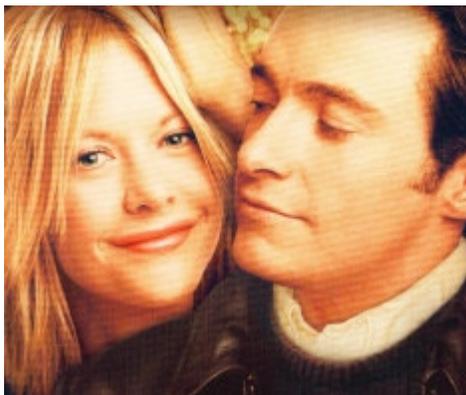
By Michael Clark

Recently, my wife, Dorothy, and I (Michael) watched a movie called *Kate and Leopold*, starring Meg Ryan and Hugh Jackman. It was toward the end that I realized that God was using it to speak His heart to me.

The plot of the movie *Kate and Leopold* takes place in modern Manhattan, New York, but spills over into a time warp some hundred and thirty years earlier. Kate McKay's former boy friend, Stuart, who lives in the flat above her, has found a hole in time that enables him to travel back and forth to the time of an English duke who was living in that same neighborhood thirteen decades earlier.

As fate would have it, Leopold follows Stuart back to the present. Leopold wakes up in Stuart's apartment in total shock, and soon discovers that he is in an alien world of modern inventions and punk rockers with spiked hair. Leopold meets Kate when she comes up to Stuart's apartment to take back her Palm Pilot. They eventually fall in love as Kate is won over by his wonderful chivalry and kindness.

Stuart is out of the scene for a few days when he falls down the empty elevator shaft on the apartment building because of a malfunctioning elevator, but finally makes his way back from the hospital. He informs Leopold that he must go back to his own era or the space-time continuum will be broken, causing havoc with their present world. So Leopold, unable to woo Kate because of her incessant doubt and impending career in the present, goes back without her. At the end, Kate's brother and Stuart are able to convince her that she must go back in time to find Leopold because she actually IS part of the space-time continuum in that by-gone era.



I was struck by Kate's parting words of as she said good-bye to the modern world and elected to take the leap of faith into that slower and gentler time so many years earlier -- into the arms of the one who really loved her. As the movie ended, I pondered the words that she spoke and I choked up, thinking that this movie depicted so closely what Jesus has actually done in coming to the earth, dying for our sins and

returning to the Father in heaven. What Kate had to do was exactly what Jesus is asking each one of us who is His bride to do.

Kate had finally arrived at all that she had been scrambling after in this dog eat dog world. She got the position of Senior Vice President of the New York office of her research and advertising company. The problem was that she found a man that stole her heart away while she was on the climb. Like so many of us who name the name of Christ, she even used him along her way to get what she thought she wanted. Finally the light came on in her heart. Here is what she said to the dinner party where her new appointment was announced:

"It's a great thing to get what you want. It's a really good thing unless what you thought you wanted wasn't what you really wanted because what you really wanted you couldn't imagine or you didn't think it was possible.

"But what if someone came along who knew exactly what you wanted without asking – they just knew like they could hear your heart beating or just listened to your thoughts. And what if they were sure of themselves and they didn't have to take a poll and they loved you, and you hesitated . . . and . . . I have to go. I'm sorry, but I have to go."

Leopold and Kate, a Type of Jesus and His Bride

Jesus had to go home to His heavenly Father and told the ones whom He loved, "Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You shall seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, I now say to you also, Where I am going, you cannot come. . . . Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you shall follow later." (John 13:33 and 36, NASB).

Like Leopold, Jesus had to go back home, but he left a hunger in those men and women that nothing in this world could fill. They would not be content until they joined the One who loved them like no other.

As Jesus was facing death later that very week He prayed,

"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. Now I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. . . . all

Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. . . . But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. . . . And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17:6-26, NKJV).

"Where I am going. . .you can not follow me now." When Peter heard this he was so upset that he was ready to run right out, get a sword and fight to the death to stay by Jesus' side. Peter and the others could not follow him now. The problem was not in their lack of zeal, but in their lack of maturity. They were not ready, but there was a promise given to them and to each of us who follow on to know the Lord. That promise is, ". . . but you shall follow later."

Many of us have been taught to put off in our thinking this follow later until it is nothing more in our minds and hearts than so much pie in the sky by and by. We have been told that we must "occupy until He comes again." This becomes translated in our modern Christian thinking, "Get a job, go to church, have a family and find your American dream." To this we politely say, "Rubbish!" There is a heavenly abiding in the now that Jesus has made a way for and it goes way beyond the seducing downward pull of this world system and all its enticements. Paul said, "We now dwell in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," not "If we are good enough citizens in this world and go to church we will dwell in heaven later." It is still the desire of Jesus that where He is, there we may be also. Remember, He prayed this while He was still in His fleshly body.

So much of today's Christian teaching has made it impossible for our minds to grasp that there is a NOW dwelling in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So many of us, like Kate McKay of Manhattan, have never dreamed that there was any other world than the little island where we have spent our whole lives in the limitations of our belief structures. Jesus did not come to put those whom He loves in a box called the Christian religion and turn them over to the regimens of this world system. He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly – that we might have peace, not as the world gives, both now and in the next life to come. As these two dimensions become welded together in our hearts as one, we become one in Christ, enter eternal life and start really living in the Father as Jesus did here on earth.

Have you felt the touch of His hand? Have you heard that noble voice that is calling unto you about a higher way? It is a voice that calls, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!" (Song of Solomon 2:10-13, NKJV).

"He Must Increase, but I [Must] Decrease"

Dear saints, don't take this wrong. Where we and many others are being called, some cannot go right now. They have ministries to build, careers to pursue, and are too distracted by the practicalities of this world to follow the call of the One who beckons to them to come aside and spend time with Him. Be assured the Lord is calling each of you there, but you have to let go of the one life in order to grasp the other.

Recently I, Michael, exchanged letters and phone calls with a brother that was caught up in the new revelations that he received from the Lord and the numerous books that he had written. He was convinced that he had the keys to heaven's door that everyone else needed. Like children, so many of us grasp a small part of spirituality we have seen and are so eager to tell others that what we have is the whole picture and unless they see it just as we do, they are really missing out. We fight this mindset all the time. It is self-exalting and divisive at best, and worst of all, it stops you from learning anything new unless it lines up perfectly with your previously acquired revelations.

Here is part of the exchange I had with this brother:

"____, the Lord has been taking me to that place where understanding all mysteries and having all knowledge mean nothing to me. Like Paul said, 'I am determined to know nothing, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' The time comes when we count all else as dung, our revelations, our books, our articles, our acceptability and following. Jesus is enough. I think that this is about as good an explanation of death to self that there is. Seek it with all your heart, my brother."

Brother ____ replied,

"Well, if I am understanding you right, then you should take down your web site and quit teaching as well. Is this what you are saying? It just doesn't seem clear to me."

Actually, this is a good observation on his part. We would and will do just that. If anything we have been teaching does not point men and women to a more intimate relationship with our Savior, it needs to be cut and discarded. All we want to see in the body of Christ is each member securely attached to the Head, not to us, our "great" revelations or anything else.

So many people in ministry today want to project a Christ that they can manipulate from behind the curtain like the Wizard of Oz. Jesus is not the Great Oz and His true ministers do not pull the strings and twist the levers on an idol they have cleverly built in His place, the idol called "my Ministry."

John the Baptist showed us the way to minister Christ to others. His disciples came to him complaining and feeling threatened that Jesus' disciples were baptizing more followers than he. His answer was succinct, "He who has the bride is the Bridegroom. But the friend of the Bridegroom rejoices when he hears His voice." He also said, "He must increase, but I [must] decrease." God is showing us what it means to be a true friend of the Bridegroom. Our calling is only to deliver the bride of Christ to Him as a chaste virgin, not a chased woman ravaged by false suitors who take her to themselves for their own gain and pleasure.

Jesus said, "But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:5-7, NKJV).

In a sense, even the flesh and blood Jesus had to decrease. Many people who have been wounded by false ministries have come to us. Like the lame man lying beside the pool of Bethesda, they cry out, "I have no man!" We send some of them away sad when we point them back to Jesus and away from the need to have a man. A vast percentage of Christendom is dependent on powerful and charismatic men and women who need to be needed. This is the same sin that Israel fell into at the time of Samuel the prophet. They cried to him, "Give us a king so we can be like the other nations." The need to follow a man and sit at his feet makes us like the heathen nations of this fallen world order.

Jesus promised by His going away that He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and that HE would lead us into all truth. Believe it or not, the Holy Spirit is the One True Teacher! He can and will lead you always to Jesus, THE TRUTH, and not to another. Obey Him! All human teachers can do is verify as a second witness what you have been hearing from the Holy Spirit.

Jesus came to take captivity captive and to give gifts unto men. He came to take YOUR captivity captive and set you free from an unholy dependence on other men! This is why we get a red flag when brothers or sisters comes along and say that THEY have the keys to understanding or that THEY have the ONLY source to the true gospel or that THEIR revelation is the only one that is complete. This is just another trap! These people are setting themselves to make you captive to themselves! Believe me, it will not be long until these "gifted ones" will be seeking YOUR gifts and offerings so their "great ministry" can go forth and save the world.

The Holy Spirit has been given to each of you. His gifts are for all to draw from, not just a few privileged officers in the church. You are all priests and God has placed no higher priest caste over you. Jesus is our only high priest and the one true apostle. Let God be true and all men be liars. Consider the ONE Apostle and High Priest of our faith:

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than

the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. (Hebrews 3:1-4, NKJV).

Don't sell Jesus or His high calling short. Don't settle for the false god of ministry or any other god that is not Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Abide in Him and let ministry be a by-product of that abiding in His love. Do not let it become your love. Don't do as so many people of this world do, both inside and out of the church. They sell out for a bit of pottage made with its savory seasoned lamb. We have a great birthright that lies before us. The way has been prepared by the very Son of God. Take the leap of love into the Father's arms that He took. Overcome this world and its lusts by the blood of the Lamb, the word of your living testimony, and love not your lives nor seek them even unto death, that your joy might be full.

Are We About Our Father's Business, Or Just Plain Busyness?

Over the past few months I (George) have received several e-mails from sincere believers who have come out of the busyness of Institutional Christianity, asking, "Am I just supposed to sit around twiddling my thumbs and doing nothing? What do I do now? Isn't there some ministry I can get involved in?" One refreshingly honest sister wrote "I see what I've been doing wrong -- building my life on me instead of Him, seeking a ministry instead of Him. . .but I don't know what to do with myself now."

The religious climate of today, with its devotion to programs, reminds me of the merry-go-round in the City Park in the little town where I grew up. We kids loved to get on it and spin it as fast as we could, the faster the better. Around this merry-go-round was a 360-degree path, worn into the ground by the constant pounding and scuffing of little feet. I loved the reckless, out of control feeling, as the world around me became a surreal blur. A merry-go-round may give you the illusion that you are going somewhere, but you always get off right where you got on. Though your feet are back on the ground, you are still spinning in your mind, and sometimes a little sick at your stomach. It takes a little while to recover your balance. Sadly, many people who escape the institutional merry-go-round hardly have time to recover their spiritual equilibrium before they get on the house church-merry-go-round or some other merry-go-round.

The restlessness many people feel in the interim is due to the fact that American Christianity has mistaken work for fruitfulness. In John 15:5 Jesus spoke of the only way that we "branches" can do anything. "I am the vine. You are the branches. He who

remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." Just as Jesus could do nothing of himself (John 5:19), neither can we unless we abide in Him. Branches are fruit bearers, not workers. There is a big difference between work and fruit. Work denotes labor and sweat; fruit speaks of inception, organic life, nurturing and growth. Spiritually speaking, fruit is the byproduct of the Spirit of Christ working in and through our lives, producing His fruit unto righteousness. The branch cannot produce fruit of itself it must draw life from the vine. As the life of the Vine passes through it, the fruit of the vine effortlessly appears on the branch. The secret to fruitfulness is not busyness but abiding.

Activity is not one bit holier than inactivity. Both can be done independent of Christ. All work done apart from Christ is nothing. The certain path to frustration begins by viewing productivity in Christ as a matter of works rather than fruitfulness and forgetting that fruit and works are two entirely different things. In Galatians chapter five, Paul contrasts "the WORKS of the flesh" and "the FRUIT of the Spirit." In Romans chapter seven we discover that we who believe have died unto the law (the old husband) so we can be married to Christ and bring forth fruit (offspring) unto God (see Romans 7:1-9). Such fruit is borne through intimate union and communion with Christ. It would be easier to build a baby than it would be to bring forth fruit unto Christ by working.

When he was asked, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus replied, "This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28-29). In this time when He is stripping so many of us of the religious trappings that have filled Christ's place in our lives, do we, like so many activity junkies, seek another fix, filling our calendar with every religious activity coming down the pike? Or do we draw away to a place of intimacy with Christ where His fruit can be nurtured in our lives? Seeking Him in secret brings open fruitfulness. Only those things that are birthed by Christ are legitimate.

Jesus said that in the final judgment, men would stand before Him offering their works as proof of their faithfulness to Him. "Many will tell me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, in your name cast out demons, and in your name DO MANY MIGHTY WORKS?' Then I will tell them, 'I NEVER KNEW YOU!' [Knew --Greek - ginosko - Jewish idiom for sexual intercourse between a man and a woman.] Depart from me, you who work iniquity'" (Mathew 7:22-23). Good fruit (verse 19) is only

produced by those who know Christ intimately. All other fruit, prophecy, casting out demons and other mighty works--even though they are done in the name of Jesus--that are not born out of an intimate abiding and knowing are iniquity. They are Ishmaels, they are works of the flesh, they are nothing.

Because of the deafening roar of the religious machinery throughout the land today, and the constant call of religious men to join them in their busyness, very few can hear the call from God's Vineyard, a call to come, abide, and bear fruit.

We leave you with these words from Michael Card's stirring song "Present Reality," which is more a prayer than a song. May it be our prayer as well!

Echo of history
A light so many strain to see
The One we talk so much about
But rarely ever live it out

Could You tell me why
Was it for this You came and died
A once a week observance
When we coldly mouth Your words

Chorus
Lord I long to see
Your presence in reality
But I don't know how
Let me know You in the now

We should confess
We lose You in our busyness
We've made You in our image
So our faith's idolatry

Lord, deliver me
Break my heart so I can see

All the ways You dwell in us
That You're alive in me

Summary - Come Away My Love

We feel the call to spend more time alone with the Lord, ministering unto Him. It was as certain teachers and prophets ministered unto the Lord in Antioch that the Holy Spirit spoke (see Acts 13:1-3). When God is satisfied with us as living sacrifices offered up unto Him, He will be sure that men will be satisfied.

So, dear saint, let us sum this up by saying, WE MUST GO -- all of us that others look to instead of to Jesus, the true Light. This is the way of the cross. This is what is meant by Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This is what is meant by following on to follow the Lord. Do not give your hearts to any other but the One who purchased you with His blood.

In our freedom in Christ Jesus, we may make ourselves servants to all, but there is only one Lord. We may love one another earnestly as brothers and sisters in Christ but our hearts belongs to Him! We may appreciate and honor one another but our devotion belongs to Him! All praise and glory belongs to Him! Though we may minister to others our foremost responsibility is to minister unto Him. Though the bonds of the Spirit join us to each other we are betrothed to Him alone. He that has the bride is the Bridegroom! Does He really have us, dear ones? Does he have our hearts - our minds - our all? Does He possess us, and consume us?