

Mission and Sacrifice

By Craig Paardekooper

I (we) were born into a war zone. It was not a physical war like we see in images on TV. It was a much more pervasive ideological war being fought over the minds of all people.

We are all refugees in this ongoing war.

On one hand, we were told that life was meaningless, a product of random accident, and that we were no more than the chemical reactions of matter.

On the other hand, there was the possibility that we were created by God, for a noble purpose, and that all our strivings, and the striving of those we care about, were ultimately significant, and might receive their just reward.

The extreme importance of the outcome of this war led me to divert all my energy, time and effort to it - sacrificing all else.

It didn't feel like a sacrifice, but rather a necessity because the consequences either way were so extreme.

It's taken a lifetime. But now it is certain that we were created and that God has played an ongoing part in human history. Our past is probably more remarkable than we can ever know, and our future will be also.

With the end of Covid, and the completion of much discovery about God, I felt that my mission was complete, and now was time to resume normal life - finally - after all these years.

But, alas, without a mission I felt destitute. Normal aspirations had been shelved long ago. And their neglect for so many years left painful voids, which other people might fill with family, career and comfortable security.

Mission had shielded me from this pain. In the ferocity of conflict, when everything was at stake, all other concerns had been eclipsed.

But when the ferocity is over, then we can feel the cost.

I realize now that mission cannot be given up and it cannot end - because it sustains us in the absence of all other comforts.

Those who make the fateful decision to sacrifice all cannot un-sacrifice all later. And the cost is only justified by the mission. So, mission cannot end. Instead, it can transform, extend or steadily grow into something lasting, something more beautiful. It must send down roots, spread its branches, and reach its full form. It must seed change.

And it must always persist, even if at a gentler pace, whilst everyday life is maintained.