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Taking Calvary's Love To Our Enemies—by Vic Primeaux

It isn't often that we come across significant events and the people that impact and shape them which faithfully reflect the forgiveness of one's enemies so awesomely displayed by Jesus Christ as He hung on the cross. As we have just celebrated Jesus' victory over sin, death and the grave during the Easter/Resurrection Sunday holiday, we should ask ourselves "how can I possibly apply this to my own life?"

The life of our Lord was filled with demonstrations of a love that is way beyond human understanding ... a love which we call agape love. Unfortunately, it seems to be a love which is far above our being able to attain to or fulfill in our lives. We read in the "Sermon on the Mount" these seemingly impossible-to-fulfill words spoken by Jesus Christ: "But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:44-45)

Are these just lofty ideals which are totally out of reach by anyone in military service ... something just for theologians to debate? Well, once again I find the insight offered by respected Christian ministry leader and author Chuck Colson (a former Marine and White House Chief Counsel), to be exceptionally informative and helpful for those of us in service to America. He writes in his recent column entitled "Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima—and Calvary":

Sixty-six years ago, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor—an action that dramatically altered the course of history. Jacob DeShazer was on KP duty in California when he first heard the news. Furious at what the Japanese had done, he resolved to retaliate personally. And in April 1942, he got his chance—as a B-25 bombardier when Doolittle's Raiders attacked Tokyo.

During that fateful run, DeShazer's plane ran out of fuel, and the crew bailed out over enemy territory. DeShazer was captured, and spent the next forty months as a POW—including thirty-four months in solitary confinement. Three of his buddies were executed, and another died of slow starvation.

With plenty of time to think, Jake wondered: What makes people hate each other? And he also wondered: Doesn't the Bible say something about loving our enemies?

He asked his jailers for a Bible and eventually



Ribbon Cutting for the CDR RAY EVANS Shore Operations Building at ISC Seattle — Flanking retired CDR Ray Evans as he cuts the ribbon are then-13th District Commander, RADM Richard Houck and U.S. Senator Patty Murray on 14 Aug 2006. Standing behind Ray Evans are (left to right) CAPT John Furman, CO, FD&CC Pacific; CAPT Stephen Metruck, Commander, Sector Seattle; and, CAPT Jeff Belmondo, CO, ISC Seattle. The Shore Ops Bldg is home to Sector Seattle, VTS Puget Sound, ESSU Seattle, and the multi-agency, state-of-the-art Joint Harbor Operations Center. Look for next month's article "From Navy Cross to the Cross of Christ" about WWII Signalman Ray Evans who fought Imperial Japan's military forces on Guadalcanal alongside Medal of Honor recipient Douglas Munro. (photo by Vic Primeaux)

got one. He read it with fascination, re-reading some parts six or more times. Then, ten days into his study, he asked Christ to forgive his sins. He remembers, "suddenly . . . when I looked at the enemy officers and guards . . . I realized that . . . if Christ is not in a heart, it is natural to be cruel. . . . [M]y bitter hatred . . . changed to loving pity." Remembering Christ's words from the cross—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"—he asked God to forgive those who tortured him, as well.

Fourteen months later, in August 1945, paratroopers liberated DeShazer from his prison cell. After the war, a chaplain on General MacArthur's staff wanted something to help heal the animosity between the United States and Japan. He approached Don Falkenberg of Bible Literature International, who had read DeShazer's testimony shortly after his release. And soon the story was being circulated as a booklet called, "I Was a Prisoner of Japan."

But here's where the story gets interesting. Japanese Navy pilot Mitsuo Fuchida was Chief Commander of the historic December 7 raid on Pearl Harbor. He had advised against attacking the American base, but when given orders to proceed, Fuchida led the assault.

Eventually Fuchida logged more than ten thou-

sand combat hours. But his closest brush with death was on the ground in Japan. He was in Hiroshima the day before the atom bomb was dropped. His life was spared because orders had come to go to Tokyo.

When the war ended, Captain Fuchida returned to his family farm near Osaka. Later, stepping off a train in Tokyo, he was given a copy of Jacob DeShazer's booklet. Intrigued, he began reading the Bible. And despite his Shinto heritage, he accepted Christ as his Savior.

How marvelous are God's ways? An American airman is taken prisoner, is converted, and his testimony leads his captors' ace pilot to Christ. Over a thirty-year span, Captain Fuchida and Sergeant DeShazer traveled together throughout Japan. Together and separately, they saw tens of thousands of Japanese converted.

Learning to love our enemies is so important, something every Christian must strive for. But when we're fighting

deadly enemies, as our nation is today at war, doing so is a miracle—a miracle of restoration and healing that can come only through faith in Christ.

Are you willing to open your heart and let the healing love and grace of Jesus Christ, which he made so freely available to us from His cross on Calvary, to pour out of you to your shipmates ... to your friends ... to your family ... and even to your enemies? If Jake DeShazer, who spent 40 months as a Japanese POW—enduring torture, starvation, extreme temperatures, and solitary confinement—could allow the Holy Spirit to use him so powerfully as a living witness of the redeeming love of Jesus, what is holding you back? You can trust God completely to turn your darkest times into situations where His light will shine through you and touch others in truly awesome ways!

(note: An outstanding 81-minute DVD, including extensive footage of DeShazer's fellow Doolittle Raiders, is available from Discovery House Publishers at <http://www.dhp.org/default.aspx>)

Masthead photo shows the Coast Guard Aviation Memorial — honoring all aircrews who "did not return" — located at Coast Guard Air Station/Support Center Elizabeth City, NC (photo by Vic Primeaux)

The major portion of this article is by Chuck Colson, from BreakPoint, Dec 7, 2007, reprinted with permission of Prison Fellowship, www.breakpoint.org.