



# PERFECTION OF LOVE

A B L E S S U S A N E W S L E T T E R

Vol. 8 No. 8

## A Call of Love

We can all relate to the added demands that the holiday season places on us. The Brethren of the Lord are also placed under similar demands, such as providing food, clothing and gifts for their loved ones. Therefore, BLESS in Egypt doubles the contributions to the Brethren of the Lord during the Christmas season.

We invite you to share in the blessings of giving a Christmas offering to the Brethren in Egypt, so that we all, as one body in Christ, may be able to enjoy this joyous feast.

## End of Year Announcement

Please note that BLESS USA is required to process and report all contributions by the end of the year. Therefore, all your contributions need to be received at BLESS USA by **December 31, 2005** in order for them to be included in your **2005** donation summary report. The summary will be mailed out by January 24, 2006.

*May the Lord remember your faithfulness and continue to grant you His blessings.*

## Outreach Program

That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

The church has been likened to the Body of Christ, where each individual is a member. Each member of the body helps the other thrive and prosper, as the whole body works together towards a unified goal. As members of one body, we are called to assist the other members in times of need, as the body cannot function properly if even one member is suffering. The Outreach Program serves to assist those members of the body who cannot care for themselves and have no one to care for them.

The Outreach Program seeks out the sick and elderly, who are unable to obtain the care that they need due to their age, illness, or disability. Thirty dedicated BLESS servants seek them out at their homes, in villages throughout Egypt. Once they are located, the servants perform a needs assessment survey in order to determine what type of assistance is necessary for each individual.

Some of the services that are provided include: medical care, hygiene education, housing restoration and food distribution. In addition to meeting their physical needs, these individuals are comforted by the fact that there are people who deeply care about them.

This serves as a reminder for both the servant and those being served - but now indeed there are many members, but one body...



## Sayings of the Fathers

### Love of the Poor

...There is fasting which is not bodily; a spiritual self-discipline which affects the soul. Therefore: Fast from evil-doing, discipline yourselves from covetousness, abstain from unjust profits. What advantage is it to forgo what is yours and seize unjustly what belongs to the poor? Judas fasted with the eleven, but did not curb his love for money...

"Why do you fast for strife and contention, and strike the hungry with your fists?" (Is. 58:4). These days have brought us poor men in plenty, begging and stretching out their hands. They live vagabond lives because of their need and misfortune. You who are fasting, these men I bid you to help. Be generous to your distressed brothers. Give them what you deny yourself.

You say: "I am poor as well." Give what you can. God asks for nothing above your powers. You can give a loaf, another can give a cup of wine, another clothing; thus one man's hardship will be relieved by your combined aids. Consider how the widow's mite was more than the offerings of the rich.

**St. Gregory Nazianzan**

## Reverend Fathers and beloved brethren, friends of BLESS USA

*The peace, love, and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.*

I would like to express my gratitude for the generosity and kindness of heart that you have shown towards your less fortunate brothers and sisters in Egypt ~ *the brethren of the Lord*. My beloved brethren let us continue to contemplate on:

### **The Blessings of Mercy to the Merciful**

The Divine Inspiration mentions many blessings that are bestowed upon the lives of the merciful. In the last six letters, we contemplated on the twenty-fifth blessing: The Lord preserves the merciful life. This time we will begin contemplating on the twenty-sixth blessing:

#### **The Lord will bless him on the earth**

This is one of the blessings experienced clearly by the merciful. As our teacher David the prophet sang, "Blessed is he who considers the poor...he will be blessed on the earth." (Ps. 41: 1,2).

In searching the dictionaries, we found that the phrase " to be blessed " has three meanings:

*"To be successful ,*

*"To be joyful,*

*"And to be prosperous.*

One of the dictionaries also mentions that the word "bless" is the opposite of the word "envy". For when we say that someone blesses you, we mean that he is praising what you have without wishing you loss. Then the verse, "he will be blessed on the earth," means the Lord will make him successful, joyful, and prosperous on the earth (and also preserve him from envy).

We have several examples, my beloved, of merciful people being blessed on the earth, and we shall start with:

*"To be successful ,  
"To be joyful,  
"And to be prosperous."*

#### **1)Our Teacher David the Prophet:**

Our teacher David had a very merciful heart full of compassion toward the poor and the needy. While he was caring for his sheep and while he was in Saul's house, he himself experienced how the Lord preserved his life and deliver him from death and made him successful, joyful, and prosperous. So, he chanted this very blessing in his life saying, "Blessed is he who considers the poor, ...he will be blessed

on the earth." (Ps. 41: 1,2).

#### **"The Lord will bless him on the earth ..."successful"**

The Divine Inspiration says about our teacher David, "And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him." (1 Sam.18: 14). Another verse says: "So David went on and became great, and the Lord of hosts was with him." (1 Chr.11: 9). And this was what God the Lord said to Nathan the prophet, "Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth." (2 Sam. 7: 8,9).....I made you blessed on the earth.

#### **"The Lord will bless him on the earth ..."joyful"**

David the prophet chanted concerning this point saying, "But let the righteous be glad; Let them rejoice before God; Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly." (Ps. 68: 3). He also chanted from his own experience saying, "A good man deals graciously and lends; He will guide his affairs with discretion...He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever; His horn will be exalted with honor." (Ps.112: 5,9).....The Lord will bless him on the earth.

#### **"The Lord will bless him on the earth ..."Prosperous"**

As the Lord God said, "but you shall open your hand to him (the poor)...whatever he needs...because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand." (Deut.15: 8,10). This is how our teacher David the prophet was as he chanted saying, "Now you have been pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue before you forever; for you have blessed it, O Lord, and it shall be blessed forever." (1 Chronicles 17: 27)

+ Believe me, my beloved, as much as we consider the poor is as much as the Lord will bless us on the earth, make us successful, joyful, and prosperous.

+ In our coming letters, my beloved, we will continue to give examples on how the Lord blesses the merciful on the earth.

+ May our Lord compensate you with the incorruptible instead of the corruptible, the heavenly instead of the earthly and the eternal instead of the temporal.

Bishop Youannes

*Youannes*

General Bishop and Secretary of H.H. Pope Shenouda III