



## And These Three Remain

*And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

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### CRIMES OF A CHRISTIAN

By Kent Dickinson

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003, John Ashcroft, then Attorney General said, "Today's indictment sends a clear message: if you endanger lives and property through violence and intimidation in order to get your way at the bargaining table, you will be caught and prosecuted to the full extent of the law."

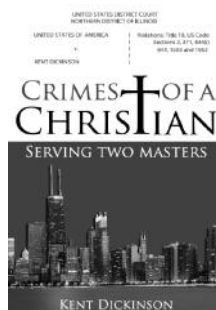
He was talking about Kent Dickinson. A family man who was part of a cause. A cause that had started out with noble intentions: protecting the jobs and families of 400 union member. However what had started out noble, soon descended into a nationwide smoke bombing spree that had attracted the ATF, FBI and U.S. Attorney's office.

Kent Dickinson was the "hammer" that was wielded effectively against the corporations that threatened his livelihood. It earned him respect from his peers and perks at the union.

When he realized how far he had fallen, he fell to his knees and cried out to God for forgiveness. "Crimes of a Christian" is a

gripping tale of his fall and redemption. Here is an excerpt:

In early October the



Crimes of a Christian  
By Kent Dickinson

negotiating committee gathered in that conference room where seven years earlier I was introduced to the secret world of 110. The current contract, the one many of us had fought for, was soon to expire. The meeting, more like a requiem, was a grim affair bereft of any spark or original ideas. Maybe it was the fact that the Feds subpoenaed our files two years earlier, maybe it was Mike's arrest and we were all afraid to say anything, or

maybe we were just tired of it all. Whatever it was, a cloud of inertia hung over us like a blanket of molasses.

The spirit of The Cause was gone. Steve seemed to reign only for the paycheck and the perks. Of course he always did, only now he didn't try to conceal it. Al seemed more interested in the AFL-CIO vice-presidency he had won two years earlier. Whatever bond or glue which once held the union together seemed to be desiccating and cracking. Loyalty. It was the loyalty. And it wasn't so much that loyalty was disappearing but rather that it was shifting, from the "we" to the "me."

During the 90-minute drive from Chicago to Bonfield I went through a metamorphosis. The meeting left me feeling depressed. We all generally agreed that Sony would most likely push for a new, albeit debilitating, contract. As I thought more about it, my initial depression devolved into anger when I recalled

how easily both Steve and Al accepted what they deemed inevitable. That anger sparked energy. And about the time the Dan Ryan turned into I-57 that energy would not admit defeat. Thoughts similar to the ones I had three years earlier sprang to mind.

If I can't smoke bomb maybe we can come up with some kind of delayed stink bomb? Or maybe we can use a paint gun somehow... smuggle one into a theater and shoot the screen...or maybe...

Alone and alarmed at what I was thinking, I shouted out loud. "What am I doing?..." Then, collecting myself, I continued inwardly, "No more...I don't want to be that way..." And again, I turned to Him. "Dear Lord, help me to become a better person...help me to become the person you want me to be."

I didn't say that frivolously, for I believed He heard me. Since I was seven, I always believed

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He heard me. And I knew, or at least felt, that what I was praying for would come at a price. Maybe I had to be ripped away from my surroundings. Maybe 110 would collapse: I'd lose my job, my house. Joyce would lose the horses. We could lose everything. I thought all those things. But then I remembered, He was there forty-some years ago when I wanted to kill myself. I have to trust Him. As the driveway to my five-acre spread came into view I said aloud, "I trust in you Dear Lord...please help me to become a better person."

October 26<sup>th</sup>. Aside from the encouraging news that Sony and the office were close to an agreement, it was a pretty ordinary day at work. The last show ended shortly before 1:00 A.M. so technically it was October 27<sup>th</sup>. I don't consider it a new day until after I go to bed, sleep and wake up again. Therefore I consider October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001, as the last day of my old life.

Since our little horse ranch was 55 miles from Crestwood, the 110-mile round trip required frequent fill-ups. I had developed the pattern of stopping after work at the same low-cost gas station a couple of times a week. It was a pattern, I now believe, which did not go unobserved.

At around 1:15 A.M. October 26/27, I was holding the gas nozzle when I noticed a black Dodge Intrepid pull up to the row of pumps next to me. I stood looking at it because I was in the market for a new car and was considering an Intrepid. No one got out. The driver remained unseen behind heavily tinted glass. I thought little more about it as I returned my attention to the pump, squeezed out the last dime to fill my tank and returned the nozzle to its holder.

"Mister Dickinson?..."

I turned to face the voice. A young man about six feet tall, of medium-build and wearing a plain suit, approached me. I assumed he was the driver of the Intrepid as its door was now wide open. Instantly, I sensed something ominous and warily confirmed my identity with a question, "Yes?"

The man flipped open his wallet which he had already been holding, to show me his ID.

"FBI...would you step inside the car please?"

It was as if a dam broke, allowing all the blood to rush to my feet. My heart pounded as though it was trying to break free of its ribbed cage. The agent walked the few feet to his car, opened the rear door and invited me in. "Please...have a seat."

I could not make autonomic movements. My mind had to command my right thigh to lift and step forward, and then the left. Every step required a mental, as well as physical effort. It seemed to take forever but after a few seconds I was sitting in the back seat of the black-upholstered interior of the FBI's Dodge. Two men, both in their early 30's, sat in the two front seats twisting their torsos to face me.

"I'm Special Agent Robert Robbins..." the driver announced. "And this is Special Agent Mike Connelly." he said as he indicated the boyish-looking man next to him. Neither one smiled or offered a hand or even snarled or looked threatening. They were non-emotional, business-like. "We'd like you to listen to this..." and with that he shoved a cassette into the car's stereo system and pressed a button.

A sudden chill came over me. We waited in silence for the tape to begin. There was an audible hiss – then I heard it. Me. Then Joyce's voice. Then Little Joe's. It was the spaghetti luncheon. I could hear the rattle of dishes in the background as Joe pretended to be morally torn by "what we did." I heard my wife's recorded voice say: "Honey tell Joe what you told me..." I heard myself explain the deal I made with God. I heard Joe bemoan, "...I feel awful...you know... with all those smoke-bombs we set off we must've hurt some people." And I heard myself trying to console him; "no one was hurt...that was never our intention. We just wanted to cost the companies money and that's what we did."

That's it, I thought, the smoking gun. I then heard Joyce's inspirational words, "And they deserved it!"

The chill momentarily left me, replaced with an inner warmth.

The tape continued for maybe five minutes more. It was snipped and edited so that I heard only the damning, incriminating statements. No doubt the agents thought that the amount of evidence would crush me to the point of cracking but what it did was give me time to think, regroup, and regain my balance. I listened intently to the recording trying to find a loophole or some plausible explanation for the things I said. When it ended, Agent Robbins turned off the cassette deck and both of them swiveled around to face me. They waited for my reaction.

"That's nothing!" I stated defiantly.

Unmoved by my reasoning they went into detail as to why it was something. The tape was incriminating and admissible in court – it was all the evidence they needed. In addition to arson and conspiracy, I might be slapped with a RICO charge which carried a possible 30-year sentence. They took turns trying to overload my fear instinct. It was not the stereotypical good cop/bad cop routine but more a tag-team performance of psychological bludgeoning. Every time I tried to protest or insert what I thought was a flaw in their logic they would shut me up – politely. I remember thinking at the time that it was probably in the FBI training manual to pounce on a suspect fast and furious and not let him get a word in edgewise – control the situation. That's what they're doing, I told myself.

When they finished making their case they offered me the Fed's version of the old mafia choice of the money or the bullet. Only theirs was freedom or prison. Agent Robbins held a piece of paper for me to see as he offered, "You can sign this which states that you agree to testify before a federal grand jury or...." Now Connelly held up a second document and spoke; "...We give you this which states that on Friday, November First, you will surrender yourself to the United States Attorney where you will be charged and processed for the crimes mentioned...The choice is yours Mister Dickinson."

It's amazing how fast the mind can work. Images flickered across my mind like time-lapse photography; Joyce, my son Michael, the farm, the horses, the neighbors – what will they say? If I'm arrested, indicted and go to prison – for thirty years! – I would lose everything. If I testify, the union and all I fought for would collapse. The four hundred families I told myself I cared about would suffer. Brenkus would go to prison. After eighty years, Local 110 would be no more and I'd be the reason why. It was the Lady and the Tiger, Monty Hall's Let's Make a Deal and Sophie's

Choice all rolled into one. Only the lady was a tramp and there was no grand prize behind door number two. It was lose/lose either way – the union or my family. The two Special Agents remained in place, staring at me, each holding a paper between his thumb and forefinger. Reluctantly, I took one of the documents. From my back seat I could see that the FBI men were noticeable disappointed.

"You're making a big mistake Mister Dickinson."

"Perhaps." I answered honestly as I read where to surrender myself on November 1.

After being granted permission to leave I said like an 18<sup>th</sup> century courtier, "Thank you for being such gentlemen. I want you to know I appreciate the courtesy and respect you've shown me....Have a good evening." They wished me the same.

With the Order to Report in hand I walked shakily back to my car. One often hears or reads about "knees buckling" without really understanding what it means. Fear makes your legs weak and stupid. With each forward step the rear leg which momentarily supported all my weight wanted to fold up. I had to consciously lock my knee with each stride in order to prevent my knees from collapsing, buckling, under me.

I figured that the agents were watching my movements for tell-tale signs of fear and weakness so I tried to solidify the tower of jello which my body had become. I drove away with no hesitation and did not look back.

Strangely, my first thought as I pulled out of the gas station and onto Cicero Avenue was not of Joyce or a 30-year prison term, but of Little Joe. I remembered his showing me his new car and mentioning the Ford Tempo we used. He must've been wired. I remembered the time he called to encourage me to get back into the fight. His phone was surely tapped. I should have seen it coming. Poor kid, they probably threatened him also with RICO and 30 years, he must have been absolutely scared to death.

And I prayed for him. I felt no anger, no wish, desire or even thought of revenge. I felt compassion. And because of that, and my initial response to pray for Joe, I don't believe it was the FBI who changed my life forever that night.

The long drive home was awful. I kept changing radio stations and cassettes. Nothing could stop my mind racing over the gas station events. I'm going to be arrested. What'll happen after that? Should I tell Joyce? How can I keep this a secret? It's all over... everything. I might go to prison. No. Me? Prison? That's impossible! What would happen to my family?... the union?...everything.

At home it didn't stop. The tortuous questions. The answers I didn't want to know. I went to bed, tried to

sleep. No good. "...Mister Dickinson?...FBI..." It happened just like in the movies I've been showing my entire life. My life is a movie. What's real? I can't sleep.

Finally, something compelled me to go downstairs to the family room – Joyce was sound asleep upstairs. It was dark, I kept the light off. I didn't want even shadows to see what I did next. I got down on my knees and folded my hands like I'd been taught to do in my eight years of parochial school. And I began to talk to God. I told him about the trouble I was in even though I knew He already knew. I reminded God of the deal I thought we had: if I go to prison fine, just please don't hurt Joyce. Then I stopped making deals. I gave up, surrendered. I told God, "I put my life into your hands. I will do what you ask...whatever it might be. Please help me."

*"Forgive your father."*

What?! Where'd that come from?

*"Love your father."*

What does my father have to do with anything? He's been dead for twenty-one years.

I had not been thinking of my father. I was too wrapped up in my own worries to think of him or anyone else other than Joyce. Those words came from beyond me. And when I expressed confusion about them in my prayer they came to me again. As if that would be the solution to everything, they came to me again. Obeying the voice that imprinted its words in my mind, I began to think of my father. This time, unlike the other times I thought of him, I looked back in fairness, softly, without rancor. He was a tormented soul. Fearing the exposure of his own dark secrets, he overcompensated. He tried to be the man he felt he wasn't. Poor guy. He must've felt great shame. I wish I knew. I wish he had told me. I could've told him it's okay... you're still my dad.

*"It's not too late."*

That unspoken voice again.

*"Forgive your father."*

But I don't want to. For decades I was comfortable in discounting him. He was mean and cruel when he drank, a stumbling drunk. He embarrassed and tormented me. He was a dictator when sober and a piss-in-his-pants slobberer who demanded respect when drinking. He represented everything I didn't want to be.

And yet...and yet there were those times when he supported me. Like those times he came to my stupid softball games. All loser kids who weren't good enough to join a hard ball little league back then joined the softball league. But I never knew I was a loser. My dad was there to cheer me on. I never gave him much to cheer about. Throughout my life, I never gave him much to cheer about. I was an average stu-

dent at best. Throughout his lifetime I never held a job outside a movie theater. I never gave him a real reason to be proud of me. And now I could be going to prison.

"Dear Lord, please help me. What should I do?"

*"Forgive your father."*

I'm the sober one and I may go to prison. He was the drunk and he built a small empire. Who am I to judge? But I'm not sure I'm ready to forgive my father.

*"Do it for me."*

How can I refuse God? He asks so little. "All right... I forgive my father...and I'm sorry I wasn't a better son." Tears filled my eyes. My throat tightened. And I didn't know why. It wasn't sorrow over the lost years with my father, or even pity for my own impending doom. It was the feeling of lightness.

*"Love you father."*

In my 51 years I had never said either aloud or to myself "I love you dad." I couldn't. I can't. He never told me he loved me. He was too proud. He probably would have felt like a queer if he had. How sad. How sad to be afraid of saying, "I love you" when it can bring so much joy.

*"Say it now."*

Say it now? Just like that? Fine. I love my father. There, I said it...I love you, dad.

And the dam broke, the tears flowed in streams. My throat became like a knotted sock – dry and taut. Yet, I felt a great freedom, like some oppressive weight had been lifted from me. A feeling that I had never before experienced came over me. On the night that my government threatened to imprison me for 30 years, on the night I faced the prospect of losing every possession I owned – on that night I felt the greatest joy I had ever known.

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"Crimes of a Christian" is a 302 page hard cover book being released by One Body Press this fall.

We are taking advance orders on our website, [www.onebodypress.org](http://www.onebodypress.org). You can also pre-order a copy through Amazon or BarnesandNoble.com Order your advance copy today!

Don't want to wait? Visit Amazon's Kindle store. The Kindle version of "Crimes of a Christian" is already on sale at Amazon.com

For updates on versions and our release schedule, check out the book's Facebook page:

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## PASSING OVER A TRANSGRESSION

By Debra Hasty

Hate is one of those words that can easily set off a series of emotions within you when you speak hatred towards those who come against you. Hatred is usually followed by anger that can set a pattern for the rest of your life if you are not careful. Hatred and anger causes others to place judgment on you without knowing the circumstances that caused you to be this way in the first place and this can set a social precedent that will only add to the fire that is raging inside of you.

You can feel justified in anger towards another person when they wrong you by society's standards and this world has become a social majority rule kind of place that has leaned more on retaliation than forgiveness. This is why we have wars between countries that are no different than the war you have raging in you against those who wrong you and you want to bring your own retaliation against them.

People are quick to use the phrase an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth within their justification of retaliation for after all this is what Jesus said in the Bible, but they have either never read the Bible or else they have just omitted the rest of the verses as Jesus gave instruction on how to deal with our enemies in Matthew 5:38-48.

Love and forgiveness is hard to accomplish especially if you do not know the love of Christ in your own life as it is God's greatest commandment and his will that we love everyone, even our enemies, Matthew 22:36-40.

As a child of God through the Spiritual rebirth when you are in the flesh you allow yourself to be separated from the Holy Spirit as flesh and Spirit can not mix and flesh is a hostile enemy against God, Romans 8:5-8. This also allows Satan a window to enter into your thoughts that could cause

you to do things you could regret later.

People ask me how I can be so quick to forgive and I simply tell them it is because Jesus is quick to forgive me my trespasses. I know if I hang onto unforgiveness this will shut down the blessings of God in my life and those things I pray for will only fall on deaf ears as when I do not forgive my Father in heaven will not forgive me when I stumble and fall at times Mark 11:25,26.

There were times in my early teenage life before I accepted Jesus that I carried so much hurt and anger inside of me, but suppressed it around my parents for my own sake. Forgiveness was not even an issue as I could not forgive what caused the anger and hate to well up inside of me. I became defiant around my classmates and even my teachers and this caused me to fail in what I truly would have liked to accomplish within my schooling as I carried an I do not care about anything attitude until the day I graduated.

Proverbs 19:11 The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

It took me many years, even after I became a Christian, to truly let go of my anger and surrender it totally to Jesus so he could start the healing process inside of me so I could forgive and love that which tore me apart as a child. This is not to say I never get angry anymore, but now I can be quick to forgive those who come against me and truly love them even though they may be an enemy to me for but a moment.

Who better to be angry and have unforgiveness for others

than God himself having to see his creation of humankind that he created for his own good pleasure become contaminated by those who have chosen to walk not after the statutes of God and reject his covenant he made with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, but walk after the condition of their own heart deceiving, abusing and using anyone they can along their path of unforeseen destruction.

God at anytime could take out all of mankind like he did with the flood in Genesis chapter 6, but even though his wrath is against those who have rejected him his love is even more for those who have yet to reconcile back to his grace as he has only to forgive those who will come back to him. We might look on the outside of a person thinking they are unworthy of God's grace, but God's love is unconditional that says it does not matter who you are or what you have done I will always love you as God is longsuffering not wanting anyone to perish, 2Peter 3:9, but knows not everyone will come to him.

I went through a time in my walk with the Lord that I questioned many things of his love and forgiveness. I just could not get my head wrapped around how he could love and forgive us even though we did not deserve it. One day we were taking communion, but before I took of the bread and wine (grape juice) I asked Jesus to reveal himself to me in a way I have never seen him before. Like they say, be careful for what you ask for.

This is graphic if you have a mind like me that actually plays out like watching a movie when something is presented before you. I wanted to truly know what Jesus went through and he took

me in the Spirit and when I took of the bread and broke it in two as I always do I could literally see and hear his skin, muscles and ligaments being ripped apart as he was being whipped and when I took of the wine I saw him hanging on the cross and all I could see was an unrecognizable figure, blood flowing from the top of his head to the ground below until it touched my feet. I could have thrown up, but instead all I could do was cry.

In all my sin, my anger and my hate for others before I knew Jesus as my personal Savior he knew me, loved me and made the greatest sacrifice for his love for me over 2000 years ago knowing that someday I would come to his mercy and grace. Still today I can not fathom such a love for another person and it shames me when I get angry at others as this flesh will get angry at times, but praise God we can take that anger and lay it at the feet of Jesus for healing and forgiveness.

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.

This is where we need to be in our walk with Jesus that we would also be willing to lay our lives down for another if it meant another person would come to the Lord by the witness of our sacrifice as Jesus sacrificed himself for us. Father forgive them for they know not what they do. This was said by Jesus while hanging on the cross and this should also be said by us especially when others come against us no matter if it's a family member, a friend or nations against nations we have to have forgiveness in our hearts for those who have no knowledge of the love of Christ in their own lives. We need to be a witness to others and allow that light of Christ shine through us instead of hiding it under a bushel.

When others see you treating them with love and com-

passion instead of retaliation this will send a message to them that you will not be shaken or moved by what they do to you and in some it might even draw them to Christ by your love and forgiveness. We have enough hate and anger in this world and this is why we have wars between nations, wars between individuals as everyone has their own causes of why they do the things they do. I believe God is shaking the earth right now with all the earthquakes to send us all a wakeup call that the coming of his son Jesus will be soon, even though no man knows the day or time of his return, but that we had better make ourselves ready as this world will only wax worse and God would that no one would perish, but have eternal life with him, John 3:16.

Haggai 2:5 according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

Haggai 2:6 for thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

Haggai 2:7 and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

Let love and forgiveness flow from you like the blood of Jesus flowed for all of us as he made the greatest sacrifice for his love and forgiving grace for all of us, even though we do not deserve it, so you will be found in all holy conversation and godliness.

2Peter 3:9 the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.



## DEPARTING DIRECTOR

One of the members of our board of directors is going to be mobilized for a deployment to Afghanistan. He will be departing after Thanksgiving and after a few months of training at FT Hood, will be sent overseas to Kabul to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

We would like to ask you to keep him, his family, and the ministry in your prayers as they prepare for the deployment and continued prayer while he is deployed overseas. Your prayers and support are greatly appreciated!

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**A N A T H E I S T , A H I N D U A N D A C H R I S T I A N W A L K I N T O A  
B A R . . .**

This summer has been a very busy one. There were two separate periods of AT training with my unit, one of which included an extra long drill weekend. There is only so much you can learn two days out of the month, but when you are together for two weeks solid, there is much that can be discovered about people you will be trusting your life with.

During the first AT, I became good friends with two of my peers in particular. One is Hindu and the other is an atheist. The atheist was actually my roommate for part of the time I was there, and many interesting discussions were had between us.

The thing that interested me most, however, was not the discussions we had, but the *actions* of my friends. Not only were they very open about their beliefs and very patient in explaining things to me, but they are two of the nicest people I know. They were very quick to provide ample help in many different areas. They were so helpful that I inadvertently offended/hurt one of them when I declined an offer to borrow a vehicle for the time I was

there.

The Bible tells us that we are love each other, support each other and help each other. There are many Christians who live up to what the Bible says. However, I would venture to say that most do not, at least not in the way they should. I know fall short more than I care to admit, and yet here are two people, who do not believe in Jesus, who lived up to His words better than most of His followers.

Please understand that I am not trying to say that one group of beliefs is better than another, but rather show how the actions of these two, good friends have caused me to look deep within myself. How often do I show love to my neighbor? How many times have I helped people when I've been in the position to do so? Some may be offended, others may see the irony, that I am striving to live more like Jesus based on the actions of somebody who does not believe in Him. Regardless, I have learned that one can be surprised at just how far a little bit of help can go.