

Column

What makes you get up in the morning? The answer given to this question would differ from person to person. For one, it might be “my children . . . I live for them.” For another, it might be “my job . . . I really like what I do.” And, for still a another, it might be to change the world for the better.

Everyone needs a passion. A person who does not have one is likely to accomplish little in life and not be a very happy and fulfilled individual. But, what about the Christian? How might he or she answer this question?

First off, answers given to it would, no doubt, be as diverse as the those given by non-Christians. Family, job and making a difference in the world are certainly appropriate answers. However, for the Christian there must be more. The Christian, after all, has been set apart in baptism for service to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

In the rite found in the Book of Common Prayer, immediately following the sacramental act itself, the Minister signs the newly baptised with the cross “in token that hereafter he or she shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil.”

These words make it sound like one is being inducted into an army, and that is in fact the case. The army is the army of God.

But there are notable differences between God’s army and the army of men. The Christian soldier, for example, is not issued a rifle and ammunition, but the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the belt of truth, etc. (Ephesians 6:11).

This imagery of the Christian as a soldier has given rise to the descriptive phrase: “the Church Militant here in Earth”. This title reminds us that there is a real battle raging for the souls of men and that Christians are not to be passive bystanders. Rather, they are called to actively oppose all that demean and destroy God’s image-bearing creatures. At the same time, they are to stand for all that ennoble humans and contribute to their salvation.

They do this in different ways. William Wilberforce spent his life fighting against the African slave trade. Billy Graham gave his all announcing the Gospel to those on every continent. Still others have given up lucrative jobs to serve as medical missionaries, build orphanages and oppose dictators. Today,

there are those who are actively campaigning against the crippling debt levelled against certain third-world countries.

The bottom line: Many on the field of battle; each performing different tasks, but all are in God's army and have a role to play.

If you are a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . or would like to be . . . there is a place for you. There is no reason why anyone should get up in the morning without a purpose or begin the day without a glorious obsession. The recruitment office is as close as your parish church. Sign up today!

Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go, / my daily labour to pursue; / thee, only thee, resolved to know / in all I think or speak or do. / The task thy wisdom hath assigned, / O let me cheerfully fulfill; / in all my works thy presence find, and prove thy good and perfect will. (Charles Wesley, 1707-1788)

The Rev. Victor H. Morgan is rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Blue Ridge.