

REFLECTIONS

October 23, 2005

A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

Matthew 5:14-15

Mom's China Doll

My grandmother's house was full of toys. There were boats and planes and cars and marbles and games. It was like the whole house was a toy and I was free to play with all of it. We played on the bed making tents with the covers; we played hide and seek and cowboys and Indians, and who knows what other games. But there was one toy that we could not play with. It was Mom's China doll.

Mom's China doll was beautiful to look at, artfully designed and beautifully dressed, but no one could play with it because it was too fragile. The doll's hand painted head was made of delicate China, so the slightest bump would break it, its beauty lost. It was the most beautiful toy in the house, but it was kept in a box and stored safely in the closet—a place where no one could see it. Even as a boy I wondered if beauty lost was not better than beauty never seen.

After my grandmother passed away, Mom kept her China doll. She too kept it in a box and stored safely in the closet. Then as we closed down Mom's home, one of the keepsakes that passed to us was Mom's China doll. It brings back warm memories of those times at my grandmother's house. It stirs my imagination of my mother as a little girl; and it serves as a reminder of Mom and her love for me. But we still keep it in a box and stored safely in the closet. No one can see it. Even our family may not know that we have it; and when they discover it one day, they may not recognize what it is.

Most of us protect our spiritual lives that way too. We cherish it for all of the meaning that it brings to our lives and for the comfort it provides to us. It is the most beautiful blessing we have, but we show it to no one. People don't know that we have it and if they discover it one day, they may not recognize what it is.

Someday we are going to place Mom's China doll on display. Oh, we will still put it in a safe place, and we will protect it so it will not be broken, but the exhibit will allow others to share in its beauty. But before that, I hope we exhibit our faith in Jesus Christ. I hope others will know that we have it and recognize what it is. I hope we can share the love it represents and encourage others to share in its enduring beauty. And unlike Mom's China doll, our faith is not fragile. It is durable and strong.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +