

A Message From the Editor:

Over the Wall into Eden

After being gone for two years, a pea fowl hen my wife and I raised from a hatching was waiting atop the well house when I arrived home now nearly a week ago. Why she left, I don't know. Where she had been, I don't know. Why she came home, I don't know. But seeing her again after two years produced a sense of joy that far exceeded Jonah's satisfaction with the vine that shaded him while he awaited Nineveh's destruction.

In 1996, I took home an older pea hen from a bird rescue mission in Salt Lake City. The pea hen had been in a cage barely large enough for her to turn around for the three years the rescue mission had her. She had a tumor behind her left eye; I suspect she was then blind in that eye.

With considerable difficulty, I mated her with a cock in 1997. She hatched a clutch of six eggs. All females. I kept one of the young hens.

In 1998, I left where I was living in Southeastern Idaho and moved onto the Clearwater River. Shortly after moving, the cock went for a walkabout. I never saw him again, except in a home video sent to one of the hunting shows. He was with a flock of wild turkeys, so I know he at least survived the 1998-99 winter on his own.

I acquired another cock, a young bird that was not sexually mature. The old hen, though, would have nothing to do with him the spring of 1999, or the spring of 2000.

All three birds roamed freely. They never went far from home. Then I relocated to southern Illinois late summer 2000. And still the birds freely roamed close to home until spring turkey season 2001—the cock left with a flock of wild turkeys that were pushed off the natural range by hunters.

Both hens called for the cock as they had called for the cock that disappeared on the Clearwater. No bird ever answered the calls. But after a month, both hens took off. The older hen returned after a few days. The younger hen didn't.

The older hen laid a clutch of eggs. I hoped they were fertile, since the cock had bred her several times prior to him leaving. I knew that the month between being bred and her laying was problematic, but all I could do was hope for the best...On a rainy night, a coyote took her off her nest, which wasn't but seventy feet from the house, a week or so after the eggs should have hatched. The window was open. The dogs were in the house with me, and I heard her let out one plaintful holler as she was being attacked—she shouldn't have been on the nest; I should have already taken the eggs away from her.

I cannot convey the joy I felt when the young hen returned. And that joy is nothing compared to the joy Christ and the Father feel when a disciple returns to Eden after going on a long walkabout in the world.

I will share no history with most of the disciples who read what I and others of *The Philadelphia Church* write, but Christ and the Father do share far more history with each disciple than I do with the pea hen. So if I feel great joy at the pea hen's return, well, you determine for yourself what will occur in the spiritual realm when you return to the covenant by which all of your sins are borne by Christ. There is plenty of danger to you just outside the walls of Eden, so climb inside the laws of God as fast as you can. I'll help as much as you will allow me.

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