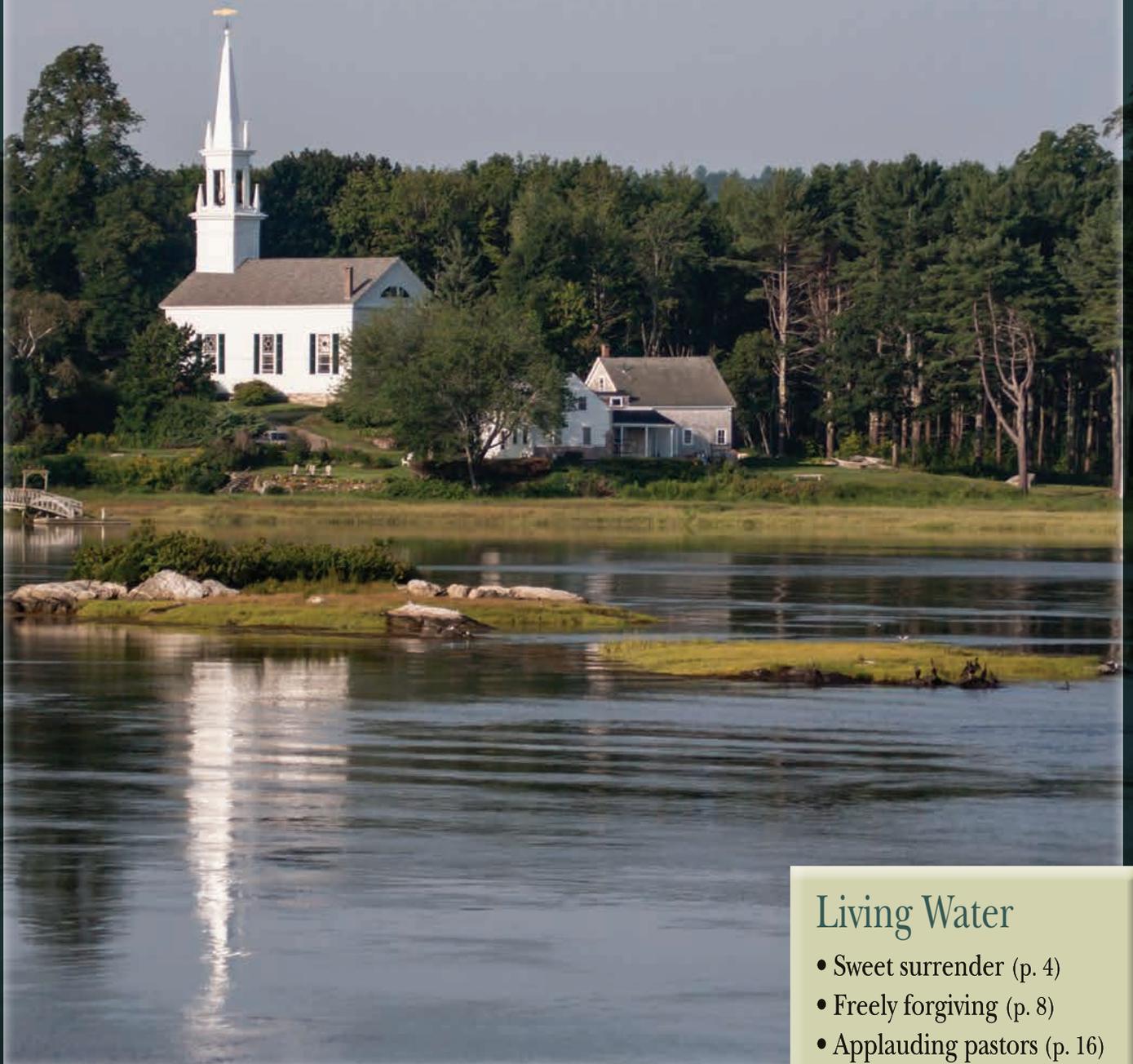


September - October 2013

BA

BIBLE ADVOCATE®



Living Water

- Sweet surrender (p. 4)
- Freely forgiving (p. 8)
- Applauding pastors (p. 16)



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Credit for front and back cover photos in our July-August issue should have been given to Al Walls of Denver, Colorado.



Scripture quotations

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Days of Our Lives

As lovers of the life God gives, let's take care to value and not squander our days. For days are the building blocks life is made of.

Romans 14, a favorite chapter, says this in verse 5: "One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike." Beyond the weekly Sabbath, to be remembered in holiness and gratitude, other days may be important to us for one reason or another. Some of the days we may esteem this season are

- The BA's one hundred fiftieth birthday on August 10, 2013.

Thanks to those who celebrated with us in Omaha and who helped us with an offering this year. Learn about our re-launch toward two hundred years on p. 26.

- The beginning of a new academic year at Spring Vale Academy, LifeSpring School of Ministry, and many other schools. Often the first day of school is one to be much remembered. On a recent Sabbath, we heard from J. T. Metcalf, one of forty-plus young evangelists at Colorado State University in Ft. Collins. Pray for J. T. and others who earnestly serve Christ's cause on campuses everywhere.

- Labor Day (September 2 in the US). More than just one last big play-day of summer, Labor Day can be a tribute to those who labor diligently according to the command "Six days you shall labor . . ." (Exodus 20:9). Those who work faithfully for others are worthy of their wages and entitled to the un-labor day that always follows six workdays. Every day of honest labor done as unto the Lord may be celebrated!

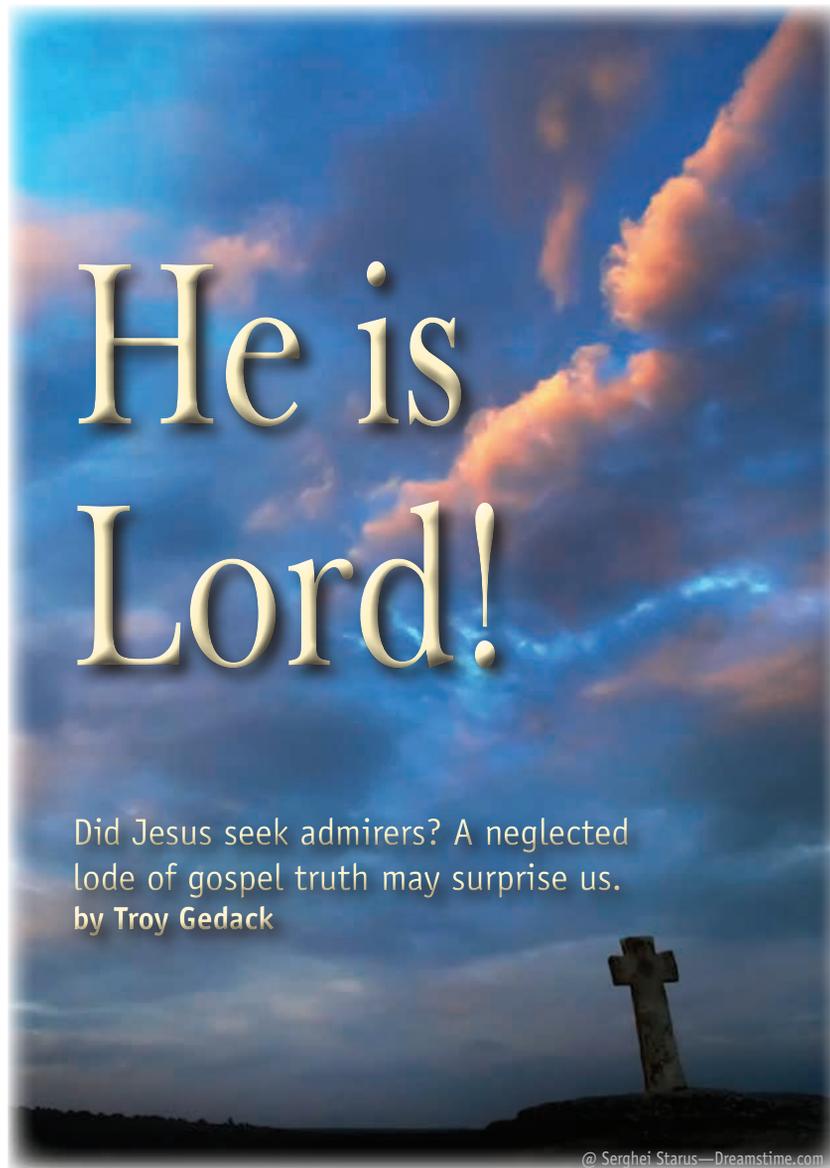
- Annual holy days and festivals that were part of God's covenant with Israel. These include three early fall events studied by Christians for their typological value. They are the Jewish new year of Rosh Hashanah (Trumpets), the solemn Yom Kippur (Atonement), and the eight-day Ingathering (Tabernacles). This year, all of these fall in mid or late September.

- Days in October to honor pastors and ministers (see pp. 16-17), for thanksgiving (October 14 in Canada), and to forgive (October 26, see p. 15).

Any of the above can be days of added value for those who act to make them so. By the Bible, I'm convinced (Romans 14:5b) that only one of them rises above the level of personal esteem to that of universal Christian memorial.

— Calvin Burrell





Did Jesus seek admirers? A neglected lode of gospel truth may surprise us.
by Troy Gedack

What does it mean to follow Jesus? To be a true Christian? Many claim Christianity as their religious affiliation, yet their attitudes and actions show little evidence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Jesus is Lord. What does that mean for His followers? Let's take a closer look at the gospel Christ taught so we can be more faithful, effective communicators of the Bible's salvation plan.

False gospel

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). This is the essential confession of faith every Christian makes, a confession marked by two things: a relationship of belief in Christ and surrender to His lordship. The idea that anyone could be a true disciple of Jesus while refusing to surrender his or her lifestyle, values, speech, and attitudes to the

lordship of Christ reveals a false gospel.

A faulty version of the gospel can present a false sense of hope to sinners. It promises them eternal life while they continue in rebellion against God. Many claim Jesus as Savior, yet refuse to commit to obey Him as Lord. What has become known as "easy believe-ism" or "cheap grace" promises eternal life without surrender to His will and leaves many professing Christians with unregenerate hearts.

Lord and master

Christ's role as Lord occupied a central space in His ministry. He often called people to yield completely and unreservedly to His lordship.

The Greek word often translated "Lord" in the New Testament is *kurios*. It defines someone who has power, ownership, and unquestionable right to command. The term *lord* may also be rendered "master." *Kurios* signifies "sovereign Lord," and *despotes* (also translated "Lord" in the New Testament) identifies "absolute Lord." Both terms are used in reference to Jesus as Lord in the New Testament.

Consider John 13:13, where Jesus took the title *kurios* for Himself: "You call Me Teacher and Lord [*kurios*]; and you are right, for so I am."

Both terms *lord* (*kurios*) and *master* (*despotes*) are extremely powerful and were part of the vocabulary of slavery during the time of Jesus' ministry on earth. They describe a master with absolute dominion — a slave owner. The master's subjects are bound to obey the directives of their lord. Wherever there's a

lord or master, there's always a slave (*doulos* in Greek). Consider Jesus' response to those who pay lip service to Him, yet their actions demonstrate otherwise: "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46).

Slave vs. servant

The term *doulos* is commonly used in the New Testament. It appears more than one hundred thirty times, in some form or another. Frequently it's used to describe what it means to be a true Christian. We are "Christ's slave [*doulos*]. You were bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 7:22c, 23).

Often the term is toned down by Bible translators as "servant" or "bond servant," rather than "slave." The concept of Christ as slave master and we as His slaves is mostly missing from today's gospel message. Our generation loves concepts of freedom and personal fulfillment. No doubt this reflects our society's discomfort with the practice of slavery, yet the term signifies the slave's complete dependence on his lord. It describes someone who lacks personal freedom and personal rights. It's complete submission to the control of a higher authority: slavery.

What's the difference between a servant and a slave? A servant gives willing service to another, whereas a slave belongs to the other. "Do you not know that . . . you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Our Master purchased us with the precious blood of Christ. Consider this as the very essence of what it means to be a Christian:

For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living (Romans 14:7-9).

Slaves and friends

The lordship of Christ is a prominent theme of the life and ministry of Jesus. It is the unifying concept in the story of redemption: "at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10, 11).

Christians are slaves who are totally subject to the will of another — namely Christ! Slavery is distasteful to every person. The fact that Jesus demanded absolute slavish obedience to His lordship is a difficult concept to grasp. No one, neither today nor in Roman times, naturally chooses to be another's *doulos*.

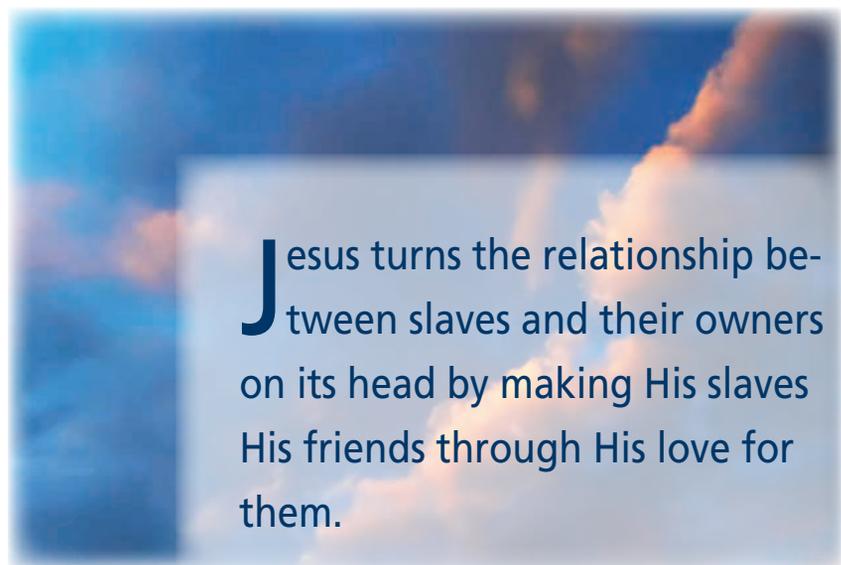
But Jesus identifies us as not mere slaves, but slaves who are friends:

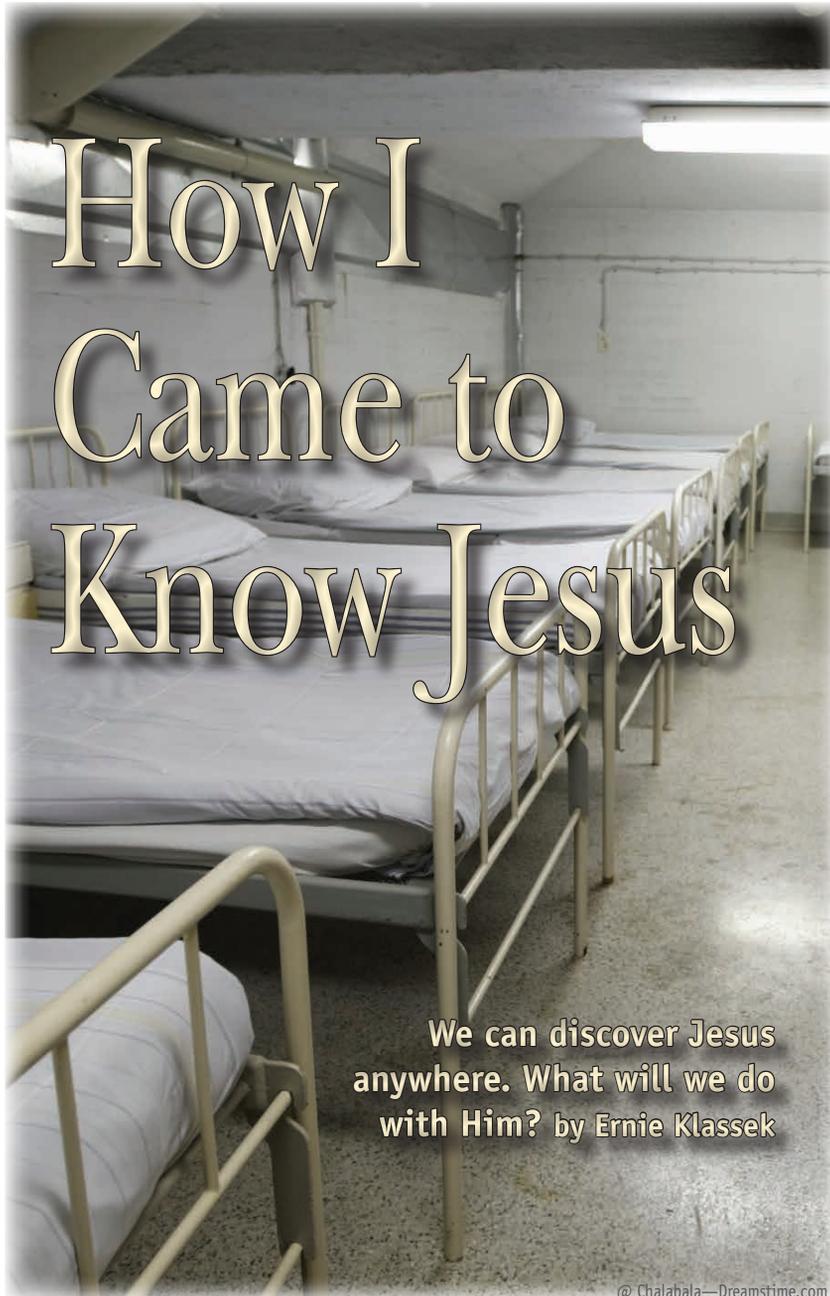
"You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:14, 15).

At the core of this teaching is obedience. Christ is the Lord who commands us, and we are expected to obey. Jesus is not suggesting that obedience makes someone His friend. We could never earn His favor through service. However, obedience is evidence that someone is His friend, the natural fruit of genuine love for Him, and the telltale mark of authentic, saving faith. Someone who does not do what Jesus says is no friend of His at all.

Jesus turns the relationship between slaves and their owners on its head by making His slaves His friends through His love for them. The friendship and love is mutual, even though He is still

continued on page 15





Five years old and living in Berlin (1936), I suffered a middle ear infection. An SS doctor poured all manner of fluids in my ear, causing much pain. He was tall with a round head, glasses, a white smock, and polished black knee-high boots.

Somehow my dear mother managed to get me away from him and into a big religious hospital, where all the nurses wore

We can discover Jesus anywhere. What will we do with Him? by Ernie Klassek

long, black robes with black and white scarves. Everybody called them *Schwestern*, or sisters. I wondered why there were so many of them. The boys on my street had only a few sisters. I had none.

Two of the sisters took my clothes off, stood me on a table, and wrapped layer after layer of coarse, gray blankets around me. I must have looked like a cocoon.

Then they took me to a big room full of men lying in white beds, and they laid me on one, tucking me in with more blankets. I could barely move my head. It was easier to just look straight ahead to a high wall opposite my bed.

There I saw a half-naked man with His arms stretched out along what looked like pieces of timber. His feet appeared to be stuck to yet another piece. His head, with long brown hair and a beard, drooped down one side as if He wanted to see something below Him. There were spots of red on His hands, feet, and body.

After several days of such treatment, I looked at the figure on the wall again. Pointing to it, I plucked up courage to ask the man in the bed next to me, "Who is that?"

I wished I hadn't. The man sat up, stared at me, and said, "What, you don't know?" Then he began to tell me lots of things about that Man up there, and he repeated His name over and over — *Jesus Christus*, pronouncing it "Yeasooos Kristoos," with the emphasis on the first syllable in each word.

That was my first encounter with the name Jesus Christ.

Learning about Jesus

When I learned to read, I borrowed catechisms and Bible story books from my classmates, and I found out a little more about Jesus Christ: where He had lived and what He had done, that people nailed Him to a cross and killed Him, that He came alive again and went to heaven. But the name Jesus Christ didn't mean much to me.

That changed when I read the Bible and discovered the

significance of Jesus' name. Before I ever read a Bible at age twenty-eight, I had learned a little Greek. When I eventually studied the New Testament, I wondered why the apostle Paul often wrote "Christ Jesus." The meaning of these two names in that sequence began to make sense: "Anointed Savior." Of course, the other way around (Jesus Christ), the names still mean the same: He had been anointed, set aside by God, to be the Savior of humanity.

The elect

Reading more Scriptures, I also learned the significance of an "Anointed Savior" to those who accept Him.

In Matthew 24, beginning with verse 4, Jesus describes an end-time scenario: humanity experiencing what He terms "the beginning of the birth-pangs" right now (v. 8, RSV). Jesus also says, "If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened" (v. 22).

For the sake of the elect? Who are they?

I found a clue in Peter's first letter, where he begins in verse 1, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout . . ." regions in the Middle East, where many of them were about 1,950 years ago.

Today those who are linked with the name Jesus Christ are known as Christians. They are God's elect, strangers in the world, and they are scattered among the six billion inhabitants of the earth.

How are Christians strangers,

different from the rest of humanity, that Jesus would consider them elect? The answer came to me in the remainder of the first chapter in Peter's letter, verses 13-16:

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Christians are to be holy, just like God. Now that is being different — and significant!

Peter goes on to say in the following verses that we should live as strangers here on earth, in "reverent fear." Jesus purchased us with His blood. Our faith and hope are solidly placed in God because He raised Jesus from the dead and glorified Him.

Suffering

The name Jesus Christ took on an even greater meaning when I read 1 Peter 4. I learned that being God's elect doesn't mean we're exempt from suffering. In fact, believers should expect to suffer, because Christ suffered

(v. 13). We should consider ourselves blessed when we are insulted for Christ's sake, "for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you" (v. 14).

If ever there was a time to bear that name and to be, or become, one of those elect, it is now. The world needs to know about our "Anointed Savior" and the difference He has made in our lives. Will we put our election to good use that will impact someone for eternity?

Gratefulness

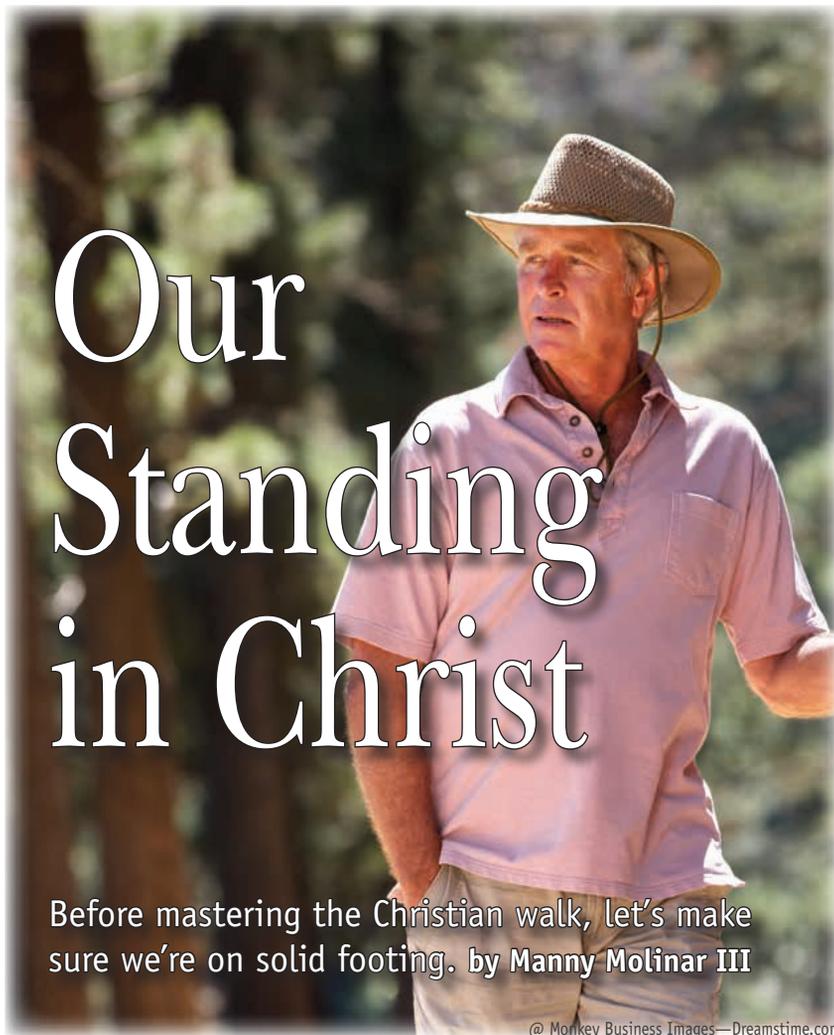
I've come a long way in my understanding of Jesus since I first encountered Him in that religious hospital. He's no longer a stranger hanging on pieces of wood but the Savior who chose me for His holy purpose and lives in my heart. **BA**

Ernie Klassek

lives in Booragoon, W.A., Australia. Scripture quotations were taken from the *New International Version*, except where noted.



The world needs to know about our "Anointed Savior" and the difference He has made in our lives.



Our Standing in Christ

Before mastering the Christian walk, let's make sure we're on solid footing. by Manny Molinar III

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Before babies start to walk, they have to find their legs to stand. They hold on to Mom, Dad, or some object. Or they lean on something to stabilize themselves. Then come a few steps. Soon they do it all on their own.

Likewise, Christians need the stability of standing before they walk. That is, we need to understand our position in Christ before we can live as Christians should. We often find people trying to be or become Christians without knowing who they already are in Christ. They don't know what it means to be justified — to stand right with God by faith in Christ.

Spiritual blessings

In the first and second chapters of Ephesians, Paul reminds believers in Christ of their position — their standing in Christ — and the benefits that come with it. He begins by praising God for giving us every spiritual blessing just because we are in Christ by faith. And what are these spiritual blessings? In Christ, He chose a plan of salvation for us before the earth was formed. He appointed His Son to come from the far heavenly places to carry out that plan. We can either accept or reject to be chosen.

We have been purchased by Christ's blood and obtained an

inheritance (vv. 7, 11), the gift of eternal life. In Christ we trusted after we heard the truth of the gospel (v. 13a). That's how we come to know it. Once we accept what we know in our heads, it becomes belief. When we accept this truth with our hearts, it transfers to trust. We trust God for our salvation through Jesus Christ.

Also, in Christ we are "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory" (vv. 13b, 14). God's own Spirit indwells believers, securing and preserving their eternal salvation. *Sealed* refers to an official mark of identification placed on a letter, contract, or other document, marking it as officially under the authority of the person whose stamp was on the seal.* The Holy Spirit is given by God as His pledge of the believer's future inheritance in glory (2 Corinthians 1:22).

Resources

Next, Paul offers a prayer for all believers, first that God will grant them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him (Ephesians 1:16), second, that the eyes of their hearts will be opened to three things (vv. 18, 19):

1. To know the hope of His calling. Those who have been called by God in Christ understand the hope that lies within them, that there is an unseen certainty ahead.

2. To know the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. We have everything we need — in Christ (Philippians 4:19; 2 Peter 1:3).

3. To know the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe. Once we accept the truth of the gospel by faith in Christ, we have sufficient power to live a changed life.

New life

“And you . . . were dead in trespasses and sins” (2:1). This is a sobering reminder of the total sinfulness and lostness from which believers have been redeemed. The word *in* indicates the realm or sphere in which unregenerate sinners exist. They are not dead because of sinful acts that have been committed but because of their sinful nature. “The course of this world” (v. 2) refers to the world order — i.e., humanity’s values and standards apart from God and Christ.* These are like fortresses that imprison people and from which they need to be set free.

Against this backdrop of darkness and despair, Ephesians 2:4-10 presents the beauty and truth of the gospel in three wonderful words. It is because of God’s *love, mercy, and grace* that He made us alive in Christ Jesus even though we were dead in our trespasses. Salvation brings spiritual life to the dead. God has raised us up together with Christ Jesus and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Him. He has put us *in right position* with Him, by raising us up and seating us together in Him (vv. 6, 7).

This is our standing in Christ — right with God, as Jesus His perfect Son is right with His Father. In other words, God, to show Himself strong by the exceeding riches of His grace, has given us everything we need to first stand right in Christ by faith so that we

might learn to walk faithfully with Him as well.

Through faith in God’s grace we are saved, says Paul (vv. 8, 9). These two things are necessary for salvation: the grace that God freely gives and faith to receive it. We can’t save ourselves, and we can’t earn it. It is freely given. Good works cannot produce salvation, this text says, but they are God-empowered fruits that give evidences of salvation’s validity (v. 10).

One in Christ

In Ephesians 2:11-14 Paul writes that Gentile believers were once separated from the Jews socially and religiously. Separated from God and having no Savior, they were without hope. But that wall of separation has been broken down in Christ (v. 15). Jesus does not exclude anyone who comes to Him or regard one as spiritually distinct from another. “New” man in this verse refers to something completely different from what was before — different in nature and quality. Spiritually, a new person in Christ is no longer Jew or Gentile, only Christian.

All true believers share one standing in Christ. We have all been reconciled to God (v. 16). We all have access in one Spirit

to the Father (v. 18). We are all fellow citizens with the saints and members of God’s household (v. 19). We were all built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ being the cornerstone (vv. 20, 21). In Him we are being built together into a dwelling place for God, by the Spirit (v. 22).

Solid footing

In these first chapters of Ephesians, Paul says that believers have been chosen by God, redeemed by Jesus’ blood, and sealed by the Holy Spirit. We have been given every spiritual blessing and resource to do good works. We are spiritually alive and unified in God’s household, built on the foundation of Christ.

This is our position in Christ, our standing in Him. Now we are ready to walk! **BA**

Manny Molinar III and his wife Leticia both serve on staff at Spring Vale Academy, Manny in the kitchen and in the classroom.



* The author is indebted to the thoughts in *The MacArthur Study Bible*.

God has given us everything we need to first stand right in Christ by faith so that we might learn to walk faithfully with Him as well.



Questions & Answers



Give me proof that your church really is the church of God.

Your request for “proof” suggests doubt about any religious organization that takes the name “church of God” for itself, as if it has a monopoly on the market. We understand this concern.

On the other hand, we should be slow to fault a Christian church for selecting a name that reflects biblical usage. While Scripture never assigns an exclusive, proper name to the corporate body of Christ’s followers, its common designation for that body is the generic “church of God,” found nearly a dozen times in the New Testament. Other names like “churches of Christ,” “church of the Firstborn,” and “church of the living God” occur there, once each.

The Church of God (Seventh Day) does not claim to be identical with the one and only “church of God” of Scripture. In the Bible the name “church of God” is given to all who belong to God’s great family of faith by virtue of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ His Son. While only God knows who all of them are (2 Tim. 2:19), strong evidence shows that they extend far beyond any one denomination or church organization.

Modestly do we propose, gladly do we trust, that CoG7 is part of the true, biblical “church of God” — by God’s grace. We may be the least part of that big family, but we claim our full share in it through faith in God’s promises to “whosoever” will believe Him and obey the gospel call.

We encourage you too to trust and obey the Lord Jesus for your eternal inheritance in the kingdom of heaven. All who do are included in the true “church of God.”

— Elder Calvin Burrell

How do I know if my church is a cult? I go to Church of God (Seventh Day). Not Adventist — just a regular Christian church.

Your “just a regular Christian church” phrase says something about cults. Cults are often “irregular” in the sense that the historic Christian faith (1 Cor. 15:1-4) is not of primary importance to them. Rather, they focus on something other than “Christ and Him crucified” (2:2) — often a message they’ve found or written outside the Bible.

In common usage, *cult* means a deviant subgroup of the one faith, isolated from the Christian mainstream by beliefs and/or practices that give it marginal standing with regard to biblical teaching and make it a toxic faith, risky for members.

Both the Church of God (Seventh Day) and the Seventh-day Adventist Church dissent from the mainstream Christian observance of Sunday as a holy day. This “irregularity” alone is hardly enough to brand anyone as a cult. Rather, the Sabbath principle embedded in the Bible’s creation story and moral law continues to attract the interest and loyalty of serious followers of Jesus, many of whom sincerely ask which day is the holy Sabbath of Scripture.

If a church promotes confidence in Christ’s grace — not in the church — then it’s not likely a cult (Acts 16:31). If a church says God’s people are in many churches, then it’s not likely a cult (John 10:16; 2 Tim. 2:19). If a church has many respected leaders — not one feared leader — then it might not be a cult (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3). If a church takes all its teachings from the Bible and allows members to respectfully disagree, then it’s not likely a cult.

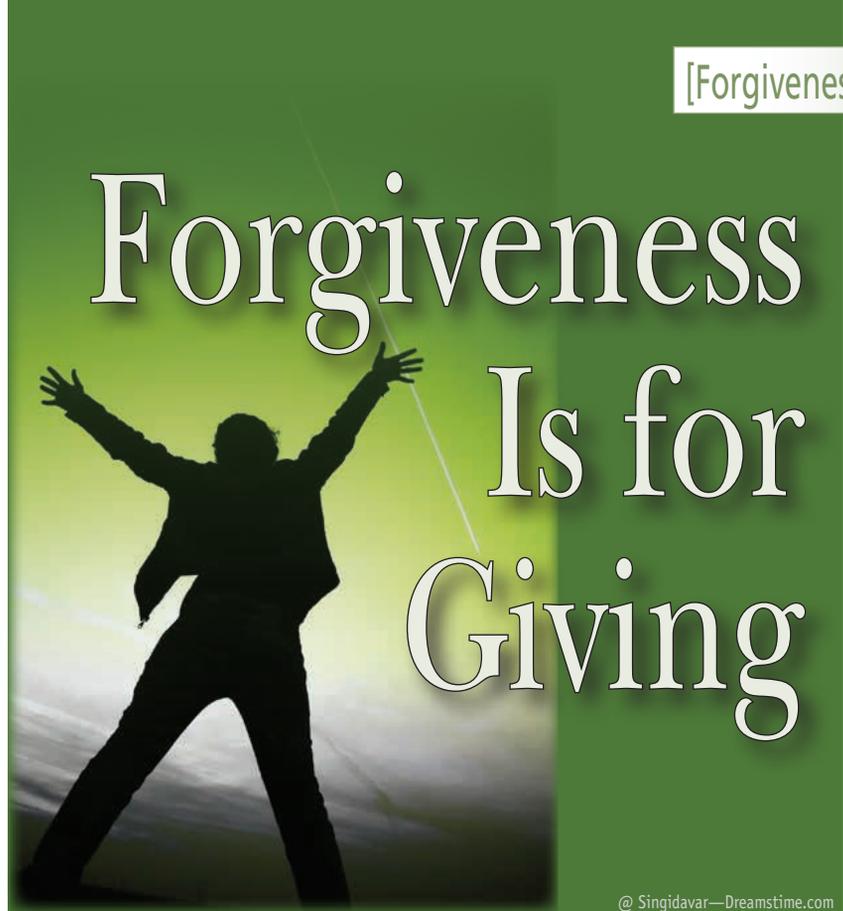
— Elder Calvin Burrell

by Pastor Jared

Everyone experiences pain and suffering in life. Typically — and tragically — we receive our most traumatic wounds within the context of our closest relationships. Herein lies the great irony: We hurt and are hurt by those whom we love most deeply. There are tremendous implications for our mental, spiritual and relational health in the way we address and process these injuries.

Forgiveness may be the most important *and* the most difficult thing in the world. When we are hurt, our natural, reflexive inclination is to react in one of two ways (or maybe both). Either we take steps to protect ourselves from being vulnerable to further injury; or else we try to lash back and inflict revenge. But both of these instinctive reactions result in additional dysfunction and disharmony. Perhaps that's why Jesus confronted us in the Sermon on the Mount with the absolute necessity of forgiving (Matthew 6:14-15), and Paul gave us a clear model on precisely how to give the priceless gift of forgiveness (Ephesians 4:31-5:2).

The truth is that whenever we do not forgive, we forfeit personal power. Think about it this way: When we do not forgive, we unknowingly and unintentionally allow whoever offended us (whether it be some "jerk" who cut us off on the highway, or someone who truly — even deliberately — harmed us in some personally significant way) to distract and deter us from our normal focus in life. We automatically allow ourselves to become consumed with feelings and fantasies of retaliation and revenge. What



we don't realize is this: Never does an offender control us more than when we do not forgive him or her!

So what are we to do? Simply put, forgiveness means "giving up our right to hurt back." This *lex talionis*, or "law of retribution," is a universal human tendency — that's why God has to tell us specifically not to take revenge (Leviticus 19:18, Romans 12:17-21). No one has to teach us to feel that we deserve "tit for tat." Unfortunately, when we act on this innate human impulse, we gain nothing and usually end up hurting ourselves. If I drive madly for nine miles, weaving through traffic in an attempt to cut off the guy who cut me off, I never get my 25 to 30 feet of pavement back — I simply endanger the lives of my passengers and fellow travelers. In the same way, poking out someone's eye or tooth can't restore anybody's vision or smile — it just keeps

ophthalmologists and dentists in business. Revenge is not only functionally pointless, it's counterproductive. It has been said that exacting revenge is like drinking poison in hopes that our enemy will die.

Yet when we are wounded, the pain and suffering are real. To deny this, pretend it isn't there, or attempt to "spiritualize" it away is not only immature, it's unrealistic. Psychologically, we must grieve the loss in order to heal the hurt. And this work of grieving is almost always a long process. We work our way through it in several stages, just as when we emotionally process a physical death. Without that godly work, we stay stuck in an immature and reactive state of mind, hell-bent on revenge. We never move on to the mature and proactive stance of extending forgiveness.

Forgiveness represents the

continued on page 24



My Journey

The Forgiveness

by Ken Young

In 1962 my wife and I began our printing business by trading our deep freeze for an antique press. We bought a full-sized shop one piece of equipment at a time. The business grew, and I quit my day job. Long hours and hard work over many years rewarded us with a healthy business and a good income.

Eventually we found a small farm in southeast Kansas. I tried to stay loyal to the business but was spending more and more time at the farm. So we decided to sell. One day a man and his wife came to look at the shop and said they wanted it. They asked us to owner-finance it. We arranged a large down payment and payment plan. They were nice people, and I wanted to be in the country, so I agreed to the sale plan.

Lost livelihood

My wife and I signed the contract, deposited the check, and headed for the farm. But something went terribly wrong. The check bounced, and the payments never came. The couple

moved the print shop equipment and didn't return my calls.

My thoughts raced. *I've lost my livelihood!* Devastated, I contacted an attorney and arranged to go to court. On the trial date the couple never showed up. I got a judgment against them, but you can't spend a judgment. I found out they had done this before and had now moved over a thousand miles away. The attorney told us that, if we pursued them, they could always stay a jump or two ahead of us.

Lost relationship

I finally realized that the printing business we had worked at so hard for most of our lives had been taken away, and there was not one thing I could do about it.

The easy-going Christian I thought I was began to give way to bitterness. I couldn't sleep. I would lie in bed trying to think of ways to get even with that couple.

I had always thought time has a way of healing all hurt, and it did to some degree. But my Christian walk suffered tremendously. I still prayed and read my Bible every day but couldn't remember what I had read. My

prayer life seemed useless. I completely stopped witnessing. My relationship with the Lord was gone.

New conviction

I lived in this depressed state for a long time before the light of God's Word finally broke through. At the farm alone one night reading the Bible, I sensed the Holy Spirit speaking clearly to my heart. As a child, I had memorized the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 but never noticed verses 14 and 15:

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

As I read this, my heart had never been more convicted. I realized the Lord did not approve of my unforgiveness, and at this point I too was unforgiven. I prayed and asked forgiveness.

I told God that I would try to forgive the couple, but deep down I could still feel bitterness. I still felt justified in hating them for the evil they had done to me. I prayed one more time and

Fight

asked God to help me forgive, but He never forces His will on us.

Restored joy

This was the most helpless, depressed state I ever remember in my life. I finally laid the Bible on the table and prepared for bed. I thought about not praying, but praying is something I always do.

I told God I was sorry that I couldn't be in eternity with Him. "God, if I can't be forgiven, please forgive these people who have done this to me so they can be saved."

Somewhere during this prayer, the Holy Spirit helped me realize my heart had been cleansed. He restored to me the joy of my salvation.

Full forgiveness

I was sure it was all over and I would not have to deal with this horrible situation again. I was wrong.

Several months later, my son came by the house one afternoon after work. He worked in another print shop, and one of his co-workers had told him that this couple was back in town and

making a lot of money. I could get my lawyer to collect all I had coming!

My first thought was *Sweet revenge at last*. Then the Holy Spirit reminded me of the long, dark trial I had gone through just to learn how to forgive. I told my son, "All has been forgiven." I hope by now he understands where I was coming from.

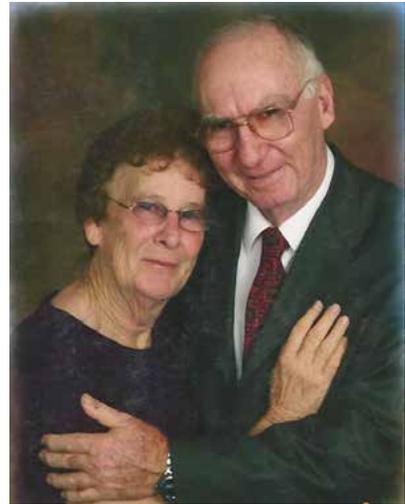
Lessons learned

I learned a lot from this bad business deal. Jesus asked our heavenly Father to forgive those who crucified Him. Our sins had a part in that crucifixion. Should we not forgive our fellow man for a wrong word or deed? First John 4:20, 21 says:

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

Who is my brother? For me, I think it's that man and his wife who did us wrong.

Achan, who stole while Jericho fell, knew about the wedge



of gold hidden in his tent. Wasn't I like him? I had a wedge of unforgiveness hidden deep in my heart that I didn't even know about. Achan didn't think his sin would affect anyone but him, but it affected the whole nation of Israel.

Looking back, I can see that God took care of our needs during that troubling time, that He eventually restored to us the prosperity we lost in that deal, and that He patiently led me to release my bitterness to Him. I've enjoyed fellowship with a number of churches, preached my first sermon at age sixty-eight, and love the church I'm in now.

Forgiveness is God's will, but it's a battle. I'm so grateful He helped me win it.

Ken and Jan Young live in Wichita, KS, where Ken teaches Bible classes.

Benefits Package

by John Schott

Are you sure your personal sins are truly forgiven? Do you ever think *I grapple with so many lustful and hateful thoughts, God couldn't forgive me for all of them?* What about the times you have behaved rudely or uttered some thoughtless, hurtful words that still make you feel ashamed? What about when you didn't get around to doing what you know you should have done and missed your calling to care for your family or friends?

Do some of those sins of omission still haunt and cause you to shake your head? Sins are a serious problem for every person, as God knows. He did something about our sins when He sent Christ to pay the penalty for all of them, yours and mine.

Your unrecorded sins are no worse than David's recorded sins. He was inspired to write, "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Psalm 103:1, 2).

Benefits! That's a word we like

to hear because the Lord's benefits are for us. Leading the list of David's benefits from the Lord is "Who forgives all your iniquities" (v. 3).

Is it coincidental that forgiveness of sins leads this list of benefits, or do you think David purposely chose it to lead this list? Probably the latter. The record of 2 Samuel makes clear that David knew too much about sin, by experience. However, David also knew to take his sins to God, including his sins with Bathsheba and against Uriah. You can read a portion of his prayer in Psalm 51:1-4.

The biblical record of David's sins, his confession and asking God to forgive those sins, leave us with a question. Is there a biblical record of David's forgiveness? Yes. In 1 Kings 11:34 God says, "I will not take the whole kingdom out of [Solomon's] hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes."

Without David's being forgiven, how would it be possible for the Lord to say that David kept His commandments and statutes? *Kept* is past tense, and this statement is made after David's death. Obviously, God had forgiven David's sins and cast them out of His sight.

Forgiveness of sins is a benefit of ours just as it was for David: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). Instituting the Lord's Supper, our Lord Jesus explained why He went to the cross: to shed His blood "for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). We are among the "many" for whom Christ died!

Therefore, we need not carry a load of guilt for past sins. Do not doubt they have been forgiven. You have confessed them to a merciful God who doesn't remember forgiven sins against us. Neither should we!

As for current sins, the ones that beset you and you're aware of, do what David did by confessing them to God and asking Him to forgive them — knowing He will (1 John 1:9). Then rest in the truth of God's Word, allowing your confession to conclude the matter once and for all.

We live under the grace of Christ who, as our high priest, understands our weaknesses, and invites us to come boldly to His throne, where we'll find His mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:15, 16). **BA**

John Schott is a schoolteacher and pastor, and serves the Petersburg, MI CoG7.



He Is Lord!

continued from page 5

Lord and we are still His slaves. He remains our Lord and Master, and we belong completely to Him (Romans 6:18).

Glorious surrender

Everybody serves somebody. No one can serve two masters, but none are fully self-governed either. We're all enslaved in one way or another. To whom or what we are enslaved makes all the difference. Are we slaves to sin or slaves to righteousness? The glorious freedom in being slaves to Christ means an end to human autonomy. Let us surrender to the lordship of Christ, gladly and completely.

Why? Because Christ has redeemed us, purchased us for His own. We've been chosen (Ephesians 1:4, 5); bought (1 Corinthians 6:20); owned (Romans 14:7-9); subjected to the Master's will (6:16-19); declared dependent on Him (2 Corinthians 9:8-11); and called to account, to chastening and to reward (Hebrews 12:5-11).

Jesus was not seeking admirers; He was calling followers — not casual followers but slaves. True faith in Him begins with an unconditional surrender of the sinner's heart. What a glorious surrender! To be Christ's slave is the complete joy of every believer. **BA**

Troy Gedack pastors the church in Colorado Springs, CO. Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*.



“Be Healthy” Plan for Positive People

by Robert A. “Bob” Moyers

The following strategies for healthy, happy living will help reduce negative stress, balance the mental-emotional-physical-spiritual energies within the body, and create awareness of the power of love, the joy of forgiveness, and the peace of a humble heart.

When you wake up, try to declare a joy-filled, happy day. Speak the truth with love. Ask good questions. Listen with understanding, not just for agreement. Think in silence. Do not interrupt. Don't allow fear, anger, hurt, or sadness to take your joy. Resolve conflict by saying, “Thank you” and by learning positive lessons from it. Ask what you can do to make relationships better. Be glad and rejoice in this happy day!

Ask for forgiveness and forgive others. Say these wellness words: “Please forgive them. Help me forgive them. Please forgive me. Help me forgive myself. Please remove my bitterness. Please restore my joy.”

Know that distress is caused by having to be right, by finding fault, by trying to control things we cannot control, and by being selfish.

Stop bad habits, break addictions and distress by saying this: “I want to stop. I can't stop. Take away my wrong desire.” You have the power to control your attitude, to be honest, communicate, love, encourage, forgive, and admit your faults.

Say these twenty-one wonderful wellness words often: “I'm wrong. I'm sorry. Forgive me. You did a good job. What is your opinion? I love you. Thank you. Please.”

Make a decision to do the will of God each day. National Forgiveness Day is October 26, 2013. Visit unconditionallovelive.com.

The Bible tells us to honor and imitate those who serve us in the Word. For example:

- Speaking of his co-worker Epaphroditus, Paul wrote to the Philippian church: "Give him a grand welcome, a joyful embrace! People like him deserve the best you can give" (Philippians 2:29, *The Message*).
- And to the Thessalonian church, Paul wrote: "And now, friends, we ask you to honor those leaders who work so hard for you, who have been given the responsibility of urging and guiding you along in your obedience. Overwhelm them with appreciation and love!" (1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13, *The Message*).

October is a special time among Christians for pastoral appreciation. Ministers and their wives, named on this page, have served for many years, seldom in the spotlight. They have not sought to honor themselves, but we delight to honor them.

These ministers rarely served in high positions, preached to large crowds, or pastored mega churches. In many cases they served bi-vocationally, making tents (like Paul) to support themselves and their families while serving the gospel and the Church with little or no remuneration. They are modest men, a majority of whose photos were not readily available for publication.

They are men who've expended their lives for Christ. All will have reached the age of 80 years by December 2013. Thus they are elders in every sense. They are men respected and supported by faithful wives, women who've been stalwarts at home and toiled alongside them at church. (Deceased spouses are indicated in parentheses.)

In this space we make no attempt to review places they've served or good they've done. Their rewards will come in that Great Day. To illustrate the Christian values they've given themselves to, upside down from worldly values, we list them here in reverse alphabetical order. These men have been content with many lower seats. God resists the proud and gives His grace to the humble.

— Editor

Esteeming

*The BA honors ministers
and their wives not often
honored.*

*George and Gina Colbert of Denver,
Colorado*

*Samuel and Ruth Sanchez of Sacramento,
California*

*Jesse (and Verma Lee) Rodgers of Rudy,
Arkansas*

*Melvin (and Bernice) Reuscher of Lodi,
California*

*Stanford and Phyllis Lewis of Brooklyn,
New York*

Roy and Shirley Keim of Dodge, Texas

*Joel (and Socorro) Hernandez of Chicago,
Illinois*

Elders



*Nick and Dorothy Nimchuk
of Medicine Hat, Alberta*

*Paul and Virginia Heavilin of Muskegon,
Michigan*

Jose and Estella Garza of Houston, Texas

*Aaron (and Gladys) Faith of Wapato,
Washington*

*Ben and Florence Coulson of Pocahontas,
Arkansas*

*Raul and Alfonsa Cervantes of Roseville,
California*

*Hugh and Lucille Butrick of
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

What the Pastor Does

A pastor's responsibility is to help his flock become a breakout church — one that breaks out of its shell to achieve greatness. To do this, he needs leadership skills, a strong passion for Jesus Christ, and a desire to connect with people.

A good leader works every day on his/her leadership skills, trying to be more effective. These skills include surrounding yourself with the right people and influencing them to achieve common goals.

Christ and His apostles were good leaders, able to influence people around them and steer the road ahead. Paul knew where he was going and set up leaders in every city so the work of Jesus would continue.

The second thing a pastor needs is a passion to do the work of Jesus Christ. Though Peter was not as well educated as Paul, his passion became powerful through the Spirit of God. On the Day of Pentecost, he preached with boldness. Even the skeptics in the crowd saw his boldness and marveled: "And they realized that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). If pastors have Spirit-anointed passion for their Lord, amazing things can happen. People will receive salvation, and the power of God will be seen in many lives.

The third thing a pastor needs for his church to "break out" is a desire to help Christians continue on the path of righteousness, as well as reach people on the outside. Breaking out will happen when the pastor reaches people for Jesus Christ and the rest of the church reaches out as well.

Because Jesus Christ is the hope of the world, pastors have an important job. Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37). Pastors can do a lot to help their churches achieve greatness. As they apply themselves to become better leaders, generate greater passion, and reach more people, the Church will break out into growth and greatness. May God bless our pastors! **BA**

— John Henson Jr.
Grand Prairie, TX



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Unity in the Spirit

The tale of two cities furnishes a common thread of our Omaha experience. **by Peter Youngs**

One could easily assert that the oldest continuing quest of humanity is for unity. How we dwell together has been a central social issue since the earliest efforts of human government. Now nearly everyone has the opportunity to cast his/her perspectives into a “net” that reaches every corner of the globe. Our well-intentioned efforts to harmonize on any number of worldviews usually produce dissonant dissertations.

Those of us fortunate enough to attend the Church’s recent convention in Omaha were encouraged to consider this issue of unity from a *Sola Scriptura* perspective. Unity is at the core of Christ’s covenant, and the Church is in a unique position to understand and reflect this message from our Prince of Peace and from His Word.

Opposites

In and of itself, unity is not always good. Genesis 11, for example, tells of people coming together to “build ourselves a city,

and a tower . . .” (v. 4). The word *city* here makes us think of unity. No broad endeavor of humanity could succeed without the cooperation it implies. But this early communal effort at Babel resulted in miscommunication and disunity that still plague the world. It also provides for a significant contextual contrast, for in the next chapter we see the first call and covenant to Abraham: “I will make you a great nation . . . in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (12:2, 3).

How opposite are Babylon and the city of peace, whose builder and maker is God! Our church’s Hispanics have taught us their “Pas avos” greeting, a sincere wish and blessing of peace. After their Passover Seder, Jews pronounce the wistful “Next year in Jerusalem” prayer, a deep longing for peaceful messianic restoration. In one way or another, most people yearn for this blessing of Abraham in contrast to the continued confusion of Babylon.

Jerusalem, the so-called City

of Peace, has its etymological root in *shalom*, a multi-ethnic word that pictures perfect peace. Romans 8 tells of Paul’s hope and God’s assurance that this age of un-peace shall someday end in “glorious liberty” (v. 21), an expression of perfect unity under God’s government. “The whole creation groans and labors . . . together” (v. 22) for the Abrahamic adoption into a body where we are no longer tossed to and fro by the confusions of Babylon.

From our reinforced cultural perspective, each of us must consider how we fit into the unity formula of peace in a conflicted world. What obedient act today will allow us to realize the final unity the Church has long taught and sought? Are we simply recipients of Abraham’s covenant, chosen but powerless? Or do members have specific instructions with an ongoing, integral assignment in the body? (Slaves in Egypt could not stop the final plague, but they did have a choice to use the revealed

plan and apply the blood. They could provide a unified, obedient household.)

Mutual dependency

These were among my thoughts as I listened in Omaha. Elder Antonio Vega told us that our “actions cause our thoughts and our thoughts cause our actions.” This is scary, since most of us think about a lot of things between Sabbaths. It reminded me of an experience from my former occupation.

In helicopter emergency services we trained to maximize efficiency and safety. Many hours in tense medical and rescue situations have a way of binding a team like little else.

One day we were flying about 1,800 feet over the Ozarks. While the nurse worked with a critical patient, I communicated with the trauma center. The pilot’s head was down, and no one was looking outside. I looked up to see a military plane on a converging course, so close I could see the pilots. They were not looking either!

We were trained to use the clock for visual cues (“7 o’clock level incoming”), but all I could manage was “Ahhggggrrrr . . . ahhhhhh!” Immediately our pilot shoved the stick, throwing us into a dive. By the time we pulled out, our faces were sagging and the trees were close, but “down” was the quickest and only direction that could have saved us then. With our patient screaming, how did our pilot hear my unintelligible effort intelligibly?

The answer is that he and I had learned to depend on each other’s unique training and experience. We were subject to

our roles and authorities. This incident can illustrate the principles our convention speakers were trying to convey.

Building a body

Relationships begin with respecting roles. Our conference presenters spoke specific instruction and commitment — the basis of unity. Kevin Lewin encouraged us to stand despite the risk. Troy Gedack admonished us to be “body builders,” exercising daily with a goal in mind. Calvin Burrell said we *could* walk together in unity if we simply agreed to do it (Amos 3:3).

My EMS crewmates agreed to “walk” under authority. In time we built a “body” team through walking into a strength and agility we could rely on. Our actions had affected our thoughts and our thoughts our actions.

As Sabbathkeepers we acknowledge that the fourth commandment addresses the entire week: “Six days you shall labor. . . .” In my secular moment of crisis we were able to “rest” assured in interdependence because of our six-day obligation. Can we truly trust team members we see only on Sabbath? Should it bother me that my most effective relationships have been with those I spent the most time with, though they believed not?

Israel Steinmetz spoke of our need to be governed into a cohesive whole, though it be more in our nature to “govern than be governed.” Ken Lawson urged us plainly to live and love in longsuffering and forbearance according to the many commands of Scripture. God’s authority on such matters is the foundation of unity. They require commitment and discipline, not just feelings.

Choices

What city do we live in? We must choose between Genesis 11 or 12, between Babylon or holy Jerusalem, between confusion or unity, between building walls around our position or building bridges to those who differ.

Let’s go forward in obedience, walking together around the walls in our way. No noisy debates. As the presence, authority, and blessing of God lead and we speak our Lord’s name with one voice, the walls between us will fall. **BA**

Pastor Peter and Kelene Youngs live in Hutchinson, KS, and serve the congregation in Wichita.



We must choose between Genesis 11 or 12, between Babylon or holy Jerusalem, between confusion or unity, between building walls around our position or building bridges to those who differ.

Depression in the Church

by Dr. Hyacinthia M. Leonce-James



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When I heard that Rick Warren's son Matthew committed suicide last spring, I was shocked. Pastor Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, *The Purpose Driven Church*, and other books, must really be hurting. I couldn't believe he of all people would have a son who would kill himself.

I hurt for Pastor Warren and agonized over why Matthew did this, as though I were a member of the family. What did this young man lack to take his life? His father is a pastor who helps millions. I'm sure he prays over his household, prays that his children know Jesus, and that they too pray. His father was there for him. What could the reason be?

The answer is the D word. Depression is a terrible thing for anyone. It has a negative connotation, especially in the church where we hear a number of comments: "Just pray about it, and everything will be OK." "If you get depressed, you don't believe

in Jesus." "Christians should never be depressed." "Have you fasted and prayed about your feelings?"

When you're depressed, some well-meaning Christians can be your worst enemies. They don't understand that some depressive states are mild, others more severe. Episodes where you feel irritable and sad, or may even cry, are more minor forms. Other states can last for years. Certain depressive states can be treated only by medication, due to depletion of serotonin in the brain.

In depression, you may not want to do anything — like pray or even eat. You may feel hopeless that a situation won't change despite years of praying.

What about a situation that hits to the core of your soul, knocks you off your spiritual feet? Some people are strong enough to rise above any situation. Others, wired differently, may not be able to handle strong blows in life. Some stay down a

little while, then get up again. Remember we are all different and are in various places in our spiritual walk. Each Christian should be sensitive to the needs of the one less blessed.

After his great victory in praying for rain after many years of drought, Elijah ran and hid because Jezebel wanted to kill him. The Scripture says:

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" (1 Kings 19:4).

How could a man, after performing such great works, end up near suicide? Surely he could call out to God and be helped, couldn't he?

We all have times when our burdens seem too hard to bear. It's not that we don't have faith or haven't prayed. It's that things are just not going right, and we may need an extra *oomph* — someone to pray for us, to hold us when we cry, or to listen.

We can be a little more sensitive to those around us who may be suffering emotionally, like Matthew Warren. They need prayers of compassion more than comments. **BA**

Dr. Hyacinthia Mary Leonce-James has her doctoral degree in clinical psychology and has over ten years' experience in the field of forensic psychology. Married eleven years, Dr. Mary is the mother of two and attends CoG7 in Galena Park, TX.





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The Infant Model

A life lesson in the power of spoken peace.

by **T. A. Huggins**

I watched the baby in her carrier as she was placed on the seat in front of me. She was beautiful, dressed in a white T-shirt edged with pink roses. Her eyes were opened wide — large blue almonds set wide on her small, fuzz-covered head. She quickly gained the attention of all those seated near. She seemed to slowly look this way, then that, eyes not fully focusing on nearby objects. Her small arms and legs moved in a manner that seemed to startle her. I could hear her breathe with some difficulty — probably a result of living in an

environment different from her nine-month cocoon.

A few minutes passed, and her arm movements became more frantic. Her legs began flailing, and her forehead reddened. It was as though her infant ears heard and understood the scripture being read: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33).

As she became more agitated and cried out, the baby seemed to demonstrate the tribulation we all face in this world. Her mother lifted her from her carrier, patted her, and quieted her. In the next few moments the baby was sound asleep, flaccid and still.

Just then our pastor concluded with the rest of John 16:33: “but

be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” The child once again was modeling the scripture as she slept peacefully in her mother’s arms.

I then realized I had received the gift of watching the Scripture come to life as the child demonstrated our toil, battle, and struggle with the world and our promised peace. As the service ended, I thanked God — first for our Savior, who overcame the world, and then for the new life in the seat in front of me. **BA**

T. A. Huggins writes from Danville, IN. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.



Going Green



Ideas and opportunities for saving the planet.
by Marion Duckworth

@ Anasasia Tsoupa—Dreamstime.com

I scoffed at TV news film of environmentalists perched high in giant sequoias, refusing to come down. “Hippies!” I mumbled to myself. “Save the whales, save the forests, save the earth! How about saving souls?” A conservative Christian, I knew what was truly important.

After the news ended, I began feeling uneasy. *If we don’t save the planet, there’ll be no souls to save.* . . .

Since that experience years ago, I’ve had to admit that a John 3:16’er like me does have an obligation to go green. “Save the earth” is neither liberal nor conservative. It’s biblical. After the Flood, God gave Noah dominion over all: “I now give you everything,” He said (Genesis 9:1-3, NIV). With that gift came responsibility.

Not that I had been totally remiss. When it was convenient, I *did* recycle, separating cans

from glass and leaving them curbside every Monday. Once I even asked for a compost pile for my birthday. Startled but cooperative, my husband dug up a plot in the backyard. Pleased with myself, I saved peelings and coffee grounds in a bucket under the sink and worked them into the soil. I loved the loam it produced and celebrated every lovely worm.

But I moved soon after and couldn’t have a compost pile in my new home. Besides, I was too busy writing about the Christian life to think of ways I could go green. While I was grocery shopping recently with my friend Carol at an environmentally friendly store, a light bulb went on for me. The business provided sturdy, recyclable brown paper bags, but Carol had cloth ones stashed in her trunk. I thought of her as going the second environmental mile.

Green guidelines

When I got home, I decided to list ten ways to go green now:

1. Carry cloth bags to the store like Carol did. How to remember? Stash them with my grocery list.

2. Use one-side good paper for scrap. This one’s easy because, as a writer, I have lots of it. I simply cut sheets in quarters, put them on the counter, and grab one when I need to jot something down.

3. Become a thrift shop junkie like my friend Gail, who almost never buys anything new. Shopping with her was going on a treasure hunt. That would be a delightful challenge.

4. Borrow books at a public library, buy them used, or download them on my e-reader.

5. Stop buying water in plastic bottles. I have an environmentally friendly one that’s refillable in my kitchen. All I have to do is use it.

6. Save bones and vegetable scraps and put them with meat and broth for lunch, instead of tossing them in the garbage and opening a can of soup.

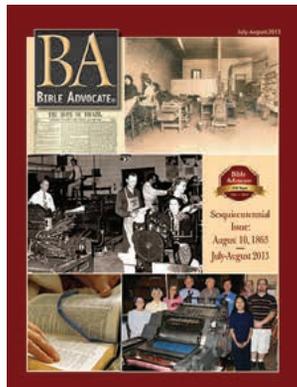
7. Use mass transit again. In New York City where I once lived, I traveled by subway. There are no subways here in the Pacific Northwest, but there’s a decent bus system. I can get a schedule and learn to make connections.

8. Go paperless when I can. Pay bills and do banking online. Take my name off junk mailing lists.

9. Save water by taking showers (with a water saver) several times a week, rather than soaking in the tub. Considering the needs

continued on page 24

Mail Bag



Kudos for July-August

After reading the latest issue highlighting 150 years of publication, I have a new appreciation for BA! It was awesome to see the pictures of past CoG7 servant-leaders (so happy to see Lawrence Christenson, who encouraged me in mission work) and know that today, we are here in their place. I loved Max Morrow's and Roy Marrs' recollections of youth, especially the mention of a wagon, molasses, Sunday funnies, and church services in a school. Thank you all very much for your hard work and dedication in continuing this great legacy for His glory.

J. M.
Facebook

I just finished one of the best BA issues ever. Your "First Word" and Whaid's "Last Word" will be remembered as an "end" and a "beginning" in both of your lives. Bob Coulter's historical piece was outstanding and his "eight original core beliefs" statement, enlightening. The "open creed" initiative about "good and bad" changes (God only knows) in beliefs over the years provided useful data. The "Great Gifts, Precious Promises" piece was awesome — a wonderful experience

shared mightily and enthusiastically. The "Older Than 150" research piece was wonderful. "Alive and Well" was thorough and well documented. Jerry Griffin's "Check Your Sources" was the best "advice" column I've read in 30 years of BA.

To sum it up: Wow. Wow. Wow. May the readers of BA continue to be like Jesus to everyone they meet.

B. M.
Liberty Center, OH

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the peace of God continue to abound in you and the staff working in these offices, as well as the writers of this beautiful magazine that has benefited many readers from different countries.

For many years the *Advocate* has helped greatly in my Christian formation and has been a valuable resource of inspiration for messages to the congregations in my area. Thanks for generosity and brotherly love in Christ I have received. May God reward in large and rich blessings to each of you. I raise my prayers for you.

H. H. R.
Puebla, Mexico

I am particularly fond of this issue of BA. I love every snippet of history about the little flock (Luke 12:32). Congratulations for the well researched article "Older Than 150."

E. K.
Western Australia

I just wanted to say thank you to Mr. Jerry Griffin for his article in this past issue of the BA. I don't have his e-mail, so I was hoping you would pass on my appreciation.

T. W.
E-mail

Many thanks and congratulations for the 150th anniversary issue of the BA. What an inspiring issue — and inspiring anniversary! I am sure that I join thousands of others in praying for God to continually bless the work of BA and for all of you who produce it.

R. W.
Tucson, AZ

This is an encouraging historical insight. Several CoG7 groups in Kenya are allied to different denominational headquarters world over, resulting from splits the Church suffered in its infancy. BA is widely accepted by many who desire unity of purpose, faith, hope, and love.

K. A. S.
Kenya

From the covers and pp. 22, 23, the photos show how you prepare what comes to us. When I see the pictures of 30 editors 1863-2013, I congratulate and appreciate your quality of the work of God that the truth may be known to the world. I conclude that the Europeans have done a very hard work from afar.

I love the history mostly. Some BAs of 2008, 2012, and 2013 have helped me to know more. In "The Story of the Church of God (Seventh Day)" by Robert Coulter, I found more information. I hope that [with] Elder Coulter's new book on Church history, which is to be released this fall, you may remember me with it.

May the name of our Father in heaven be glorified, who enables our brother Whaid Rose to speak as a man of God concerning "Endings" (p. 39). A very good and healthy speech of wisdom.

M. W. O.
Kisumu, Kenya

Grace complaint

It is clear you don't understand what the biblical word *grace* means ["Let's Talk About Bible Truth," p. 12]. If you had, your readers would have been spared the florid, intellectual hogwash used to introduce the subject. It is hoped that in future articles on these vital subjects, you will refrain from lighthearted, philosophical drivel and present those subjects soberly as they are given in Scripture, foregoing vain, ego-pleasing, intellectual rhetoric, questionable metaphors, and flowery phrases that do not glorify God but are designed to impress men.

R. L.
West Valley City, UT

More gospel, less politics

We need to adhere to biblical gospel instead of trying to align ourselves to churches that have little or no interest in promoting the gospel.

L. P.
Harrison, TN

Editor's Circle benefit

It's encouraging to help send the BA to multiple locations throughout the US and internationally. Learning how someone in another country, in prison, or just by chance reads an article that exposed him to Bible truth is always uplifting. Timely articles and positive angles prove that God's Word remains relevant in a fast-changing world, even though I may not be interested in every subject. I especially enjoy the "Mail Bag" letters. Listening to the various opinions and questions of others in an open forum is a useful learning tool. All of this is what being a member of Editors' Circle has meant to me.

L. F.
Arvada, CO

Going Green

continued from page 22

of our planet, that wouldn't be a huge sacrifice.

10. Buy biodegradable cleaning products instead of simply choosing the cheapest. Going green does have a price tag, after all.

Some ways to go green simply didn't work for me. I tried crocheting placemats out of strips of plastic bags, then wondered what in the world I'd do with a stack of them when I finished. Neither could I bring myself to spin yarn out of dog hair and use it to knit a sweater, as one woman demonstrated at an art fair. I'd compromise by buying my yarn at Goodwill.

Starting a habit

Pretty soon, ideas began clamoring for attention in my brain. How about that stack of shoeboxes in my closet? Use them for dioramas with my grandkids? Maybe I could grow cherry tomatoes in a window box or in flowerpots on the patio.

I realized that I had come up with ten ways to go green, with more waiting in the wings. I'd start with the first five and practice them for a month — the time it takes to form a habit. Then I'd add more.

On Judgment Day will God ask me what I did to save the planet? I don't know, but I'm not waiting to find out. **BA**

Marion Duckworth
writes from Vancouver, WA.



Forgiveness Is for Giving

continued from page 11

very heart of the Gospel. The truth is that no one ever deserves to be forgiven. Not only is forgiveness unfair, it is also unjust. No one can earn or deserve it — much like all the other priceless treasures of Christianity, such as love, mercy and grace. That's why it has to be a gift, freely given. No matter how deep the pain and disappointment you experience in life, remember this: Never are we more genuinely like God than when we freely give the gift of forgiveness to someone who doesn't deserve it. It is the most expensive, essential and extravagant gift in the universe.

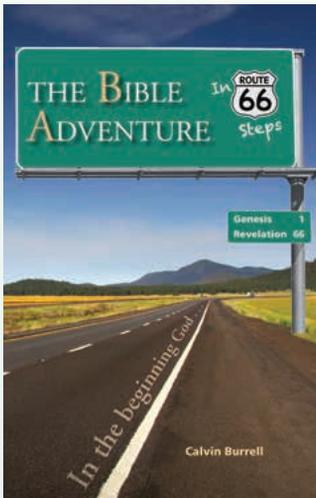
Trained in both theology and psychology, **Dr. Jared Pingleton** is dually credentialed as a minister and as a clinical psychologist. In professional clinical practice since 1977, he specializes in ministering to hurting persons from a Biblically and psychologically integrated perspective. Jared has a diverse background as a popular speaker, professor, published author, pastor, and psychologist and currently serves as the Clinical Director of the Counseling Department at Focus On The Family. He and his wife Linda have 4 sons and love living in Colorado Springs. **BA**

From the Thriving Pastor website at thrivingpastor.org. © 2013, Focus on the Family. Used by permission.

Indian Summer

*I've reached the autumn of my life,
where the changing color of my hair reminds me of the
passage of time. But I want an Indian summer.
Each frost of hardship tightens my joints and bends my
back. But I want an Indian summer.
It is harvest time, and I am reaping the foolish decisions
of my brash youth. But I want an Indian summer.
My eyes are dimming, but they still look for adventure.
My ears are ringing, but they still listen for the laughter
of innocence. I want an Indian summer.
Just as leaves offer their most beautiful hues when they
are near to falling from the tree, so I want to present
my best before I crumble to dust.
O Lord, give me one more splendid season that I may
spend my hard-earned wisdom!
To run with the swift, while knowing where I am going.
To dance with vigor before the music fades.
I am ready to conquer new ground, to slay the largest
giants, to rescue captives long held.
See! Though low in the sky, the sun still shines.
Lead me and I will follow. While it is still day,
let me relish the warmth from the Son and the warmth of
an Indian summer.*

Cobey Bartlett



The Bible Adventure, a 128-page collection of the editor's short surveys of the Bible's 66 books, is available from the Bible Advocate Press, in English only. The regular price is \$9, with quantity discounts.

Submit orders to Bible Advocate Press at P. O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233; bap.orders@cog7.org or the online bookstore at cog7.org/store. You can also call the G. C. office at 303-452-7973.



Publications

Keith Michalak, Director

How do people receive the truth of God in order to believe? In two ways, at least.

First, by hearing it with their ears. Preaching is a primary way God's Word is communicated, according to Romans 10: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (v. 17) and "how shall they hear without a preacher?" (v. 14b). The truth of God must always be broadcast orally: It must be spoken and preached!

Another main method God's Word can be known by people is by seeing it with their eyes — reading it on the printed page. Here's where the BA fits in.

The Bible says less about communicating God's Word in written form (printed pages) than in oral form (spoken words). That's because comparatively few people could read or write in Moses' time or in Jesus'. Since the introduction of mechanized printing (fifteenth century AD), however, the Word written has been published more widely than any other message, and untold thousands have come to a saving knowledge of truth by reading it!

In this generation, smaller percentages of people in Western nations are hearing God's Word spoken. And larger percentages of people in all nations are literate and exposed to the printed Word, either on paper or via digital media.

BA magazine sees the wonder of a great revolution in written communications — from the printing press (paper and ink) to the electronic age (digital media). Not yet will we abandon the former, but we must embrace the latter. This is the great challenge of late 2013 as we re-launch from our 150th year toward our 200th. From all of us at BAP, thanks for your continued support!

PMT Event to Mexico

December 19-29 a "Pioneer" team from the US and Canada will journey to the lovely town of Villahermosa, Tabasco, for "Missionary Training" in a classroom and in the streets. The sum of \$465 will cover all costs in Mexico (SWORD scholarships are available), not including airfare. Contact pastormonico@juno.com or sword@cog7.org for more information, and postmark your application by November 1. If you sense God's call to serve on a mission field, this PMT could be just for you!

Next Year in Alabama

The 2014 meeting of the North American Ministerial Council is scheduled for the Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega, Alabama, September 15-20, 2014 (www.shocco.org).

LifeSpring Grads

Congratulations to these men who recently completed the Diploma of Pastoral Ministry:

Hector Alvarenga, Houston, Texas; Ruben Arzet, Chicago, Illinois; Bryan Cleeton, Denver, Colorado; Marvin España Jamaica, New York; John Gonzalez, Fontana, California; Allo Sanchez, Hidalgo, Texas; Aubrey Williams, Mississauga, Ontario; Steven Zuraff, Newalla, Oklahoma.

See the back cover for more on LifeSpring School of Ministry. Check out course offerings at www.LifeSpringSchool.org.



Church group in the African nation of Burundi, where Alexander Masumbuko is pastor.

Harold and Thelma Wilhelm, married 65 years ago at a Stanberry, MO campmeeting, were recently honored at the BAP offices, where Thelma worked for 30 years. They have moved to Kentucky after 48 years in Denver.



Opol Convention Center, owned and operated by the National CoG7 Conference in The Philippines, is near the city of Cagayan de Oro, in the southern Island of Mindanao.



GENERAL CONFERENCE

Hilton CenturyLink Center
Omaha, Nebraska
July 1-6, 2013

Convention theme: "Unity in the Spirit" was amplified in plenary sessions led by President Whaid Rose on "One Lord," "One Blood," "One Vision," and "One Book" and in sermons and Bible studies from Antonio Vega, Calvin Burrell, Kenneth Lawson, Erik Dunn, Israel Steinmetz, Whaid Rose, Troy Gedack, Monico Muffley, and Kevin Lewin. (DVD's of messages delivered during evening services are available.)*

Convention events: BA's 150th birthday celebration, LifeSpring graduation, SWORD Black & White Gala, Bible Bowl with contestants from Midwest Bible College and LifeSpring School of Ministry, youth outing to Boys Town, SVA Sound concert, and more.

Convention attendance: around 1,000; registered for business: about 480; children's program: 100+; youth: 155; and young adults: 143.

Churchmanship Award: presented by G. C. President Whaid Rose to Art Cummings (and posthumously to his wife, Martha) of Jenison, Michigan.

Convention co-directors: Elroy Jr. (Nugget) and Sue Gold of Conroe, Texas

Team leaders: Gordon Kuryluk, Ken Keim, Jody McCoy, Rosie Davila, David Babbitt, Dawn Wayman, Vona Ogren, Becky Riggs, Erin Noble, Kurt and Kristi Lang, Christy Lang, Marcia Sanders, Marjolene Rose, Elizabeth Keim, Ken Knoll, Rick Frye, Rocky Cardwell, Ray Bobcombe, Matt Sanders, Dennis O'Banion.

* Individual messages are \$5, plus handling. The package of six messages may be obtained at the discounted price of \$20.

CONVENTION



Foreign delegates: Joel, Josephine and Darrien Saban, of St. Martin; Robert Crawford, Bridget Galloway and Eunice Ashmeade, of United Kingdom; Chijoke Alozie, of Nigeria; Henry and Ruth Harley, of Jamaica; Ramon and Rebeca Ruiz, of Mexico.

Convention business: A resolution calling for potential revisions to G. C. bylaws was adopted and a revision committee appointed: Samuel Holland, chairman, Robert Coulter, Chip Hinds, Raul Romo, Whaid Rose, Loren Stacy, Israel Steinmetz, and Heber Vega. The revisions they prepare will be considered by membership at the 2015 convention.

A second resolution called for a study of the feasibility of opening G. C. board elections to all qualified Church members, including those not in attendance at conventions. A committee of Steve Krome, Mike Vlad, and Larry Zaragoza will conduct this study.

General Conference board and officers, newly elected: Loren Stacy, chairman; Samuel Holland, vice-chairman; Jose Hernandez, secretary; Brad Ciavarella, treasurer; Mark Caswell, Erik Dunn, Ruben Marquez, Jody McCoy, Dennis O'Banion, Raul Romo, Manuel Salazar, Larry Zaragoza.

Nominating Committee for 2015 convention: Paul Carlin, Brian Larson, Abel Salazar, and Jon Harvey, chairman.

Omaha options for convention: spiffy downtown with a sparkling July 4 fireworks display; fine convention center (shared on Saturday night with Justin Bieber); good weather and a great zoo.





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International Congress

IMC World Sabbath, June 29, 2013 Reports



From Tijuana, Mexico: The special IMC service here was a very blessed celebration.
— Carlos Ceron, Zone 2 Representative

From Hyderabad, India: After two months of preparation, promotion, and prayers, the special IMC Sabbath here and in all churches across India was a grand success. A brief history of IMC was presented. Officers and zone representatives were introduced (via photos). Prayers were offered for IMC; for churches and leaders in 41 member countries (including Zone 4 – India, Myanmar, and Pakistan); and for all servants of God who tirelessly preach the gospel of the kingdom. We look forward to the return of Jesus, when all things shall be made new. Great unity in faith and fellowship was felt with our brethren around the world. Praise the Lord!
— Pastor V. Jacob S. Rao, Zone 4 Representative

From Maryland, US: Hope you had a blessed day in your community. Here's a clip from our children's participation: <http://youtu.be/Nmq0GUddmGw>.
— Heber Vega, IMC Secretary



From Lisbon, Portugal: The peace of God to all our brothers in Christ, during IMC's World Day. God bless you all.
— Paulo Jorge Coelho, Zone 7 Coordinator

From Myanmar: On that whole day, the National Conference here offered special prayers for IMC members and officers all over the world. Thanks for including Myanmar as one of the members. We appreciate it very much.
— Tluang Kung, General Secretary

From Western Australia: This short message was presented here on the 29th June, celebrating the unity and diversity we share in IMC: www.message7.org/2013/imc.htm or http://youtu.be/QrY_7tuViHs
Love from all of us here.
— John Klassek

Don't forget . . .

**African Convention,
December 18-22, 2013**

**Omoku District, Rivers State, Nigeria
(use Port Harcourt airport)**

Contact robertashcrawford@hotmail.com



In Transition

The end of the recent convention began “the transition biennium.” At some point during the next two years new individuals will take their seat in the editor’s and president’s chairs.

Each of these represents a major change for the General Conference. The *Bible Advocate* is our flagship magazine, our face to the world — nearly as old as the denomination itself. And it isn’t often that a new president is appointed — only three times in the last fifty years!

These changes are happening simultaneously, making this transition biennium doubly unique. It’s a time for reflection and celebration, for the Church to come together in thought, prayer, and unified effort.

The BA’s one hundred fifty-year history is a testimony to God’s faithfulness and a tribute to the dedication of thirty-two editors, associate editors, writers, and numerous staff — many now deceased. We celebrate this magazine’s role in CoG7’s doctrinal development and its spreading our distinctive teachings around the world. For Bible truths conveyed, for gospel seeds sown, for lives changed, we thank God. And thanks to those whose faithful financial support sustains this ministry. “The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it” (Psalm 68:11, KJV).

The current editor began his tenure in 1997, after serving as Conference president for a decade. His love for the Bible and skill as writer and teacher made this a right fit. An editor’s work involves goal-setting, meeting deadlines, and dealing with matters arising from materials published. It requires wisdom, patience, and skill. Calvin Burrell has done these things well. His new book, *The Bible Adventure*, provides a helpful overview of the Bible and is a good way to tie a ribbon around his tenure as editor.

After nearly fifty years of full-time service to the Church, Elder Burrell looks forward to devoting his attention to another long-time passion: world missions. He’s sent good news around the world in writing; now he takes it in person. This fall Calvin will travel to The Philippines, Myanmar, India, and other far-off regions. God guide his travels and bless his ministry.

As the search for a new editor ensues, the board of directors is putting together a “succession process” to enhance the carefulness and integrity of selecting the next and future presidents. While those you’ve elected to handle such matters go about their work, the rest of the Church can do much.

We must rally to the cause. Convinced the Second Advent was imminent, our pioneers probably didn’t think the world would last another century and a half. Their mistakes should inform our efforts. We must secure a long and robust future for the magazine and Church it represents. The BA is our legacy. Let’s reinvent and endow it, bolster it with a fresh crop of dedicated writers and workers. And this is our church. Let’s remove the barriers that hinder her dream.

We must pray. Without prayer, our best plans are hopeless. Prayer isn’t supplemental to the Church’s work; it’s her most important work.

We must guard our unity. Satan seeks to divide and destroy, but through Christ, may love win over arguments, and may pardon disarm revenge, preserving the unity of the Spirit, during transition and beyond.

— Whaid Guscott Rose
General Conference
President





Photo: Michael Mancha

Hats off to our recent graduates
from LifeSpring School of
Ministry!

Want to walk across the stage at
the 2015 graduation? Certificate
programs can be completed in less
than two years. Find out more at
www.LifeSpringSchool.org.



Photo: Amber Schlenker

