

BA

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Faith, Hope, Love

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2013: Year of the Spirit's Fruit

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Forever Free

One hundred fifty years ago, on January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued an Emancipation Proclamation while America was mired in a bloody Civil War.

The essence of this executive order was to proclaim freedom for all slaves living in Confederate territory. More than three million blacks were affected as the Union armies gradually extended control across the South. The Emancipation Proclamation did not fully and finally outlaw slavery in America, however. It took the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution (December 1865) to accomplish that.

While the Civil War raged a century-and-a-half back, mostly in the East, America was also pushing toward its “manifest destiny” in the West via railroads, rivers, and overland trails, like the Oregon and Santa Fe. The nation’s Western frontier saw the spread of churches and the appearance of new religious groups, like the Mormons.

In the Midwest (Michigan, Iowa, etc.) Sabbath-observing Christians were making a push. Joseph Bates, apostle of the Sabbath. James and Ellen White, leaders of Seventh-day Adventism. And Gilbert Cranmer, whose differences with the Whites led to the Church of God (Seventh Day)’s start in 1858. Its *Bible Advocate* magazine was first published as *The Hope of Israel* on August 11, 1863.

Four points of this history lesson merit review and emphasis:

- The Emancipation Proclamation of 150 years back. It declared millions free from the tyranny of being owned and forced to labor under the whim and whip of others.

- The weekly biblical Sabbath. It emancipates millions from the tyranny of being owned by mammon and forced to labor according to an unrelenting calendar.

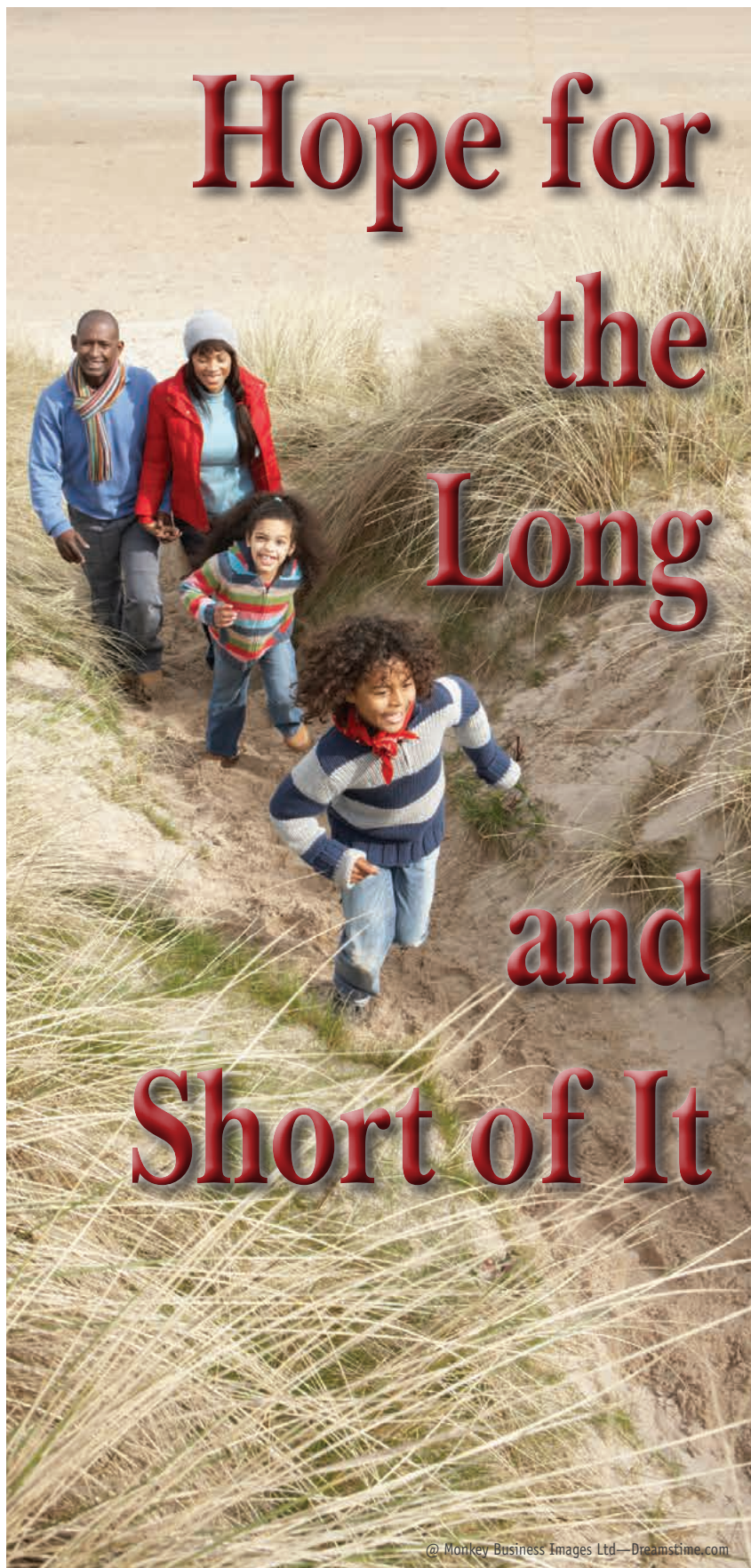
- Timeless biblical redemption. It emancipates all who believe it from the slavery of sin’s penalty and the dominance of sin’s practice. Forever free!

- The *Bible Advocate*, born 150 years ago. It provided an educational tool and a rallying point for thousands of advent Christians who sought a church based on “the Bible and the Bible alone.” It continues today as a champion of the Sabbath and of the grace and truth of Jesus Christ in Scripture.

Read on and celebrate with us!

— Calvin Burrell





Hope for the Long and Short of It

Some Bible hope is reserved for that great promised day of the Lord. The rest of it is intended for our use in 2013!
by Calvin Burrell

For many readers, the thirteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians — the Love Chapter — is among the most precious portions of Scripture.

The thirteenth and final verse of this chapter sets love at the top of chief Christian virtues: "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." Faith is first, says the apostle, and love is best.

Often overlooked between these primary pillars of moral strength — faith and love — is hope. Like a second-born sibling or the middle verse of a hymn, hope struggles for the validation she deserves and comes up short of it. Not the first and not the greatest, she is usually the bridesmaid and seldom the bride.

While the Bible's highest-ranking values are those of faith (in God) and love (for God and others), among the most undervalued of biblical virtues is that of hope — hope for God's best even when we face the world's worst.

Let's look at the meaning of biblical hope, how it might look for us in 2013, how it rarely works alone, and why we find it so difficult.

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Hope's twofold meaning

In Scripture, the meaning of hope moves from happy anticipation to confident expectation. Hope is faith with a future. It is faith looking forward, with both long- and short-term prospects.

The Bible often mentions hope with respect to God's ultimate, long-term plan — to reconcile and redeem all things to Himself in Christ. For the eternal future, there is no other assurance — only in Him, by grace. The blessed hope of every Christian has three *r*'s — no, four: Jesus will *return*, we shall be *raised* to eternal life, and the immortal saints shall *reign* with Him in God's kingdom where *righteousness* prevails forever.

For this blessed and living hope we have been saved. Because it is anchored in the faithfulness of God and the righteousness of Christ, our hope is sure and steadfast. The promise is ours by faith today and will be fully realized someday — there is no doubt! This hope is faith for the long run (Romans 8:19-25; 1 Corinthians 15:19; Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:5; Titus 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; Hebrews 6:11, 12, 18, 19; 1 Peter 1:3ff).

Most believers have no problem settling here, resting in the hope of an eternal future with Christ. It's hope for the present that gives us trouble.

What about the short run? Is there any hope in Christ for tomorrow and next week?

Yes! Where there is life, there is hope. Christ is our life today, and our hope is in Him — for both the short and the long of it.

For Jesus' trusting children, the Spirit of God is the air we breathe. Where the Spirit of God

is, we have here-and-now hope, hope in every breath. Hope for the short-term amounts to a confident expectation that God is willing to do what He has promised, not just in the future kingdom but also for today and tomorrow.

Hope for here and now?

Unfortunately, this doesn't appear to be the attitude of many Christians in the Western world today. For them, hope for the present is in short supply. This lack of hope is ironic: Despite enjoying the world's most vibrant economies and most liberated societies, despair has descended upon many in Europe and America.

In the US, for example, it is not unusual to hear discordant notes of hopelessness, most notably among those who've lost all confidence in their democratically elected leadership. Losing the vote, for them, is translated into expecting the worst for all (Isaiah 49:14; Ephesians 2:12b).

Just hoping for a better nation won't get us far, but hon-

est prayer for prime ministers, presidents, and those in authority can produce true-blue hope for better days. If I pray with zero confidence that God hears and improves things and people, have I truly prayed?

Believing we'll never see or do better in this life than we've already known can trigger despair and depression. The psalmist described this in a thrice-repeated refrain: "Why are you cast down, O my soul?" And he knew the answer to such sadness: "Hope in God . . ." (42:5, 11; 43:5).

Abraham is another stellar example of triumph through hope. He believed God's promise of a son — that he would receive an extraordinary and hilarious late-life blessing, even when it was contrary to all outward evidence. Paul writes it this way: "[Abraham] who, contrary to hope, in hope believed . . ." (Romans 4:18a).

In *The Message*, Eugene H. Peterson translates this as "When everything was hopeless, Abraham believed anyway, deciding to live not on the basis of what he saw he *couldn't* do but on

Completing Our Faith

Hope is among the species of faith that correspond to past, present, and future. When our faith looks to past bounty and we recall from Whom all those blessings flowed, that evokes *gratitude*. When our faith looks around to present natural beauty and human need, that evokes *love*.

When our faith looks ahead with full confidence in God's Word of promise, that evokes *hope*. We may be grateful to God for yesterday and loving our neighbor today, but if we're not buoyed by hope for tomorrow, we're not fully alive.

— Calvin Burrell

what God said he *would* do.” That’s hope!

Not just promise for tomorrow, God’s Word offers the assurance and prospect of help for today, so . . .

It’s OK to hope

If personal wellness is our concern, it’s OK to hope for improved health and wholeness this year – and the next. God shares our concerns, and Christ sympathizes with our infirmities (Exodus 15:26; Proverbs 4:22; Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 Timothy 4:8a; 3 John 2).

But just hoping is not enough. Wellness is as closely related to proper care of mind, body, and spirit – to healthy habits of exercise, nutrition, and rest – as it is to prayers of faith. Cooperating with nature in these ways is part

of what it means to walk humbly with God. Hope should be a powerful tonic to nurture our full cooperation with all physical and spiritual factors that tend toward wellness in the present.

Will cancer be cured before Christ comes? Polio, smallpox, and Communism have been largely eliminated in our lifetime. Why not cancer? It helps to hope. The surest nail in any coffin is one that says, “We can’t, Sir.”

If failed joy and peace at home is of concern in 2013, it’s OK to hope for a happier, more stable family. The improvements called for here are at the core of God’s revealed will for His people. Thus, we can hope confidently!

But hoping alone will not realize the hoped-for changes.

Home improvements are a realistic short-term goal only if one or two or all of us who live there support the goal with amended attitudes and actions. Let’s get the help we need, chart a path to progress, and step to it. By God’s grace, we can win on the home front!

It’s OK to hope for a more loving and fruitful church and a better world even *before the Lord’s return*, but just hoping is not enough. Let a true and living hope in God’s Word and promise prompt us to pray and act in behalf of the church we love and the world He loves. Our hopes – our happy anticipation and confident expectation for progress in both realms – please God. We know this because it reflects His own heart and will and Word.

Hoping anew

Why do we find it so hard to hope and so easy to despair? Is it that we’ve been often jaded and left empty by the unreality and dissatisfaction of so much the present age offers to those who pursue its pleasures? Have we substituted the promises of the world for those of the Word?

Let’s raise our levels of hope in Christ until they rank right up there with faith and love. Start now with the truth of two verses in Romans:

- We have hope “through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures” (15:4). By reading, studying, and obeying the Word, we’ll realize short-term benefits today.

- “We are saved in this hope” (8:24a). Trusting Him, we’ll wait for the long-term benefits yet unseen. **BA**

What is Hope?

Hope in the New Testament is very different from the usual concept of hope in our world. When modern man speaks of hope, he almost always means the desire for a certain possibility.

- When a young man says, “I hope I get the job,” he recognizes the possibility he might *not*.
- When a mother tells her child, “I hope you learned your lesson,” she may be expressing a mere desire.

These uses of the word *hope* express a preference for one of several possible outcomes, but that’s not the hope given through God’s Holy Spirit! The Bible’s concept of hope is that of a certainty not yet experienced.

The blessed hope of the Christian is the “glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). Is Christ’s return just a possibility that might not happen? *No!* It’s a *certainty* that just hasn’t yet taken place! It’s the anticipation of a certain future. That’s the Bible’s hope!

– Loren Stacy



What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16), and how can we get there?

In the final section of Galatians 5 (vv. 16-26) walking in the Spirit is described as

1. Uprooting the evil nature (vv. 19-21). Paul’s list of “works of the flesh” here contains six sins of the body, three sins of the spirit, and eight sins of human relations. The way to defeat them is to attack them through deep-root plowing (repentance) and then replace them with better seeds.

2. Cultivating the Spirit’s fruit (vv. 22, 23). Weed and water them, one by one. Admire them in the beauty and character of Jesus: Imitate Him.

We’ll find ourselves going and growing on this Spirit-led walk as we . . .

- Look not to the flesh — our human nature — to get us there (v. 17). Trusting God’s Word and Spirit, we’ll walk in victory the sooner.
- Look not to the law (old covenant) to get us there (v. 18). God’s Spirit is a more potent resource for Christian living than a written code. The letter of the law kills, but the Spirit and words of Christ give life (John 6:63; 2 Cor. 3:6).
- Identify our besetting sins with Christ’s death and resurrection (v. 24; Rom. 6:1-11).
- Make good relations with others a top priority (v. 26).

Summary: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (v. 25). When we are in Christ by faith, we do “live in the Spirit” (Rom. 8:8-10). Our business is not to attain the life in Christ or in the Spirit; these are gifts of the gospel. Our business is to walk in Christ (Col. 2:6) — i.e., in the Spirit. By His grace and truth, we can!

— *Elder Calvin Burrell*

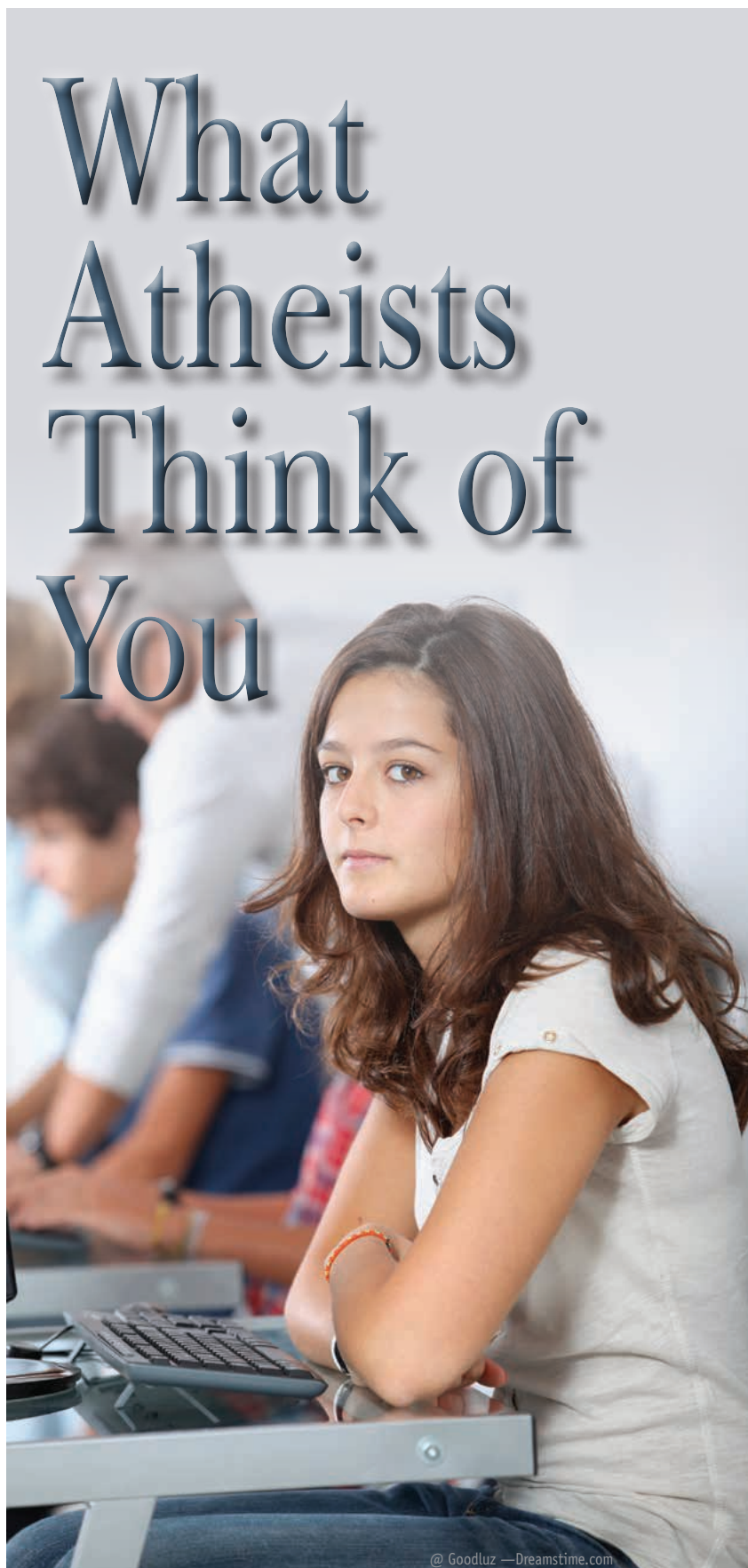
Can you give a list of the Bible’s basic doctrines?

The first and greatest Bible doctrine is that of God. It covers what we can know and teach about God’s existence, essential nature, and names; His attributes; His self-revelation and His works as Father and Son through the Holy Spirit, as recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

Other doctrines may be seen as sub-divisions of the first:

- The doctrine of the universe, man, and sin: This covers God’s work as Creator of all things and His relation to it all. It addresses man’s essential nature, his fall into sin, and his relation to God from Adam through the old covenant and the giving of the law.
- The doctrine of salvation in Christ: This covers God’s eternal plan to redeem fallen man from the penalty of sin solely by His grace at work in the life, death, resurrection, and return of His Son Jesus, and received in human experience by faith.
- The doctrine of Christian life in the Spirit: It covers God’s work to deliver the redeemed in Christ from the practice of their sin by the Holy Spirit at work in them, producing growth in faithful obedience and loving service.
- The doctrine of the church: This deals with the identity and nature, the mission and message, the structure and practice of God’s people — from the children of Israel through those who are now in Christ by a new covenant faith.
- The doctrine of God’s kingdom — past, present, and future: This traces God’s reign through the ages, showing His rule as eternal sovereign before Israel, temporal king over Israel, head of the church in Christ, Prince of Peace in the millennial age, and benevolent monarch over all in eternity to come.

— *Elder Calvin Burrell*



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The hottest battles in culture's war against faith are happening in our homes and schools.

by Ken Ryland

The gloves have come off. Modern atheists have become militant. Most repugnant to them is the idea that you should be able to pass your Christian values to your children. They have declared war on religion, particularly on Christianity. Most Christians have no idea that they, and especially their children, are the targets of this massive assault.

Many Christians know that something is wrong, that our children are turning away from our long-cherished values and beliefs. Most chalk this up to the pressures of modern society, but it's much more than that. Young people are leaving the church as never before and abandoning their family values. What the Devil wants most is to make sure there is no "next generation of Christians" in this and other Western countries. The frontline of this battle is in our taxpayer-funded school classrooms.

This is not an attack on public school teachers. There are many very good Christian teachers in public schools. The problem lies with the secularist philosophy of modern education, as practiced in colleges of teacher education. The war is on, and Christians need to understand the stakes in this battle.

War in the classroom

The first weapon in the atheist war against religion is to elimi-

nate overtly Christian influences in public schools. Many schools have come under attack from groups like the ACLU, threatening them with lawsuits if they continue to offer prayers at sporting events, sing Christian songs at concerts — in short, any public display of religion by students. Rather than fight against this absurdity, many school districts have simply thrown in the towel and acquiesced to the demands of anti-religious groups. After all, lawsuits are costly, and many school administrators don't have the stomach for such a fight — either that, or they secretly agree with the demands of those making these threats.

There was a time when prayer was commonly accepted in our schools, but no more. One of the first acts of Congress after ratification of the American Constitution was to publish Bibles for the express purpose of being read and taught in our schools. Compare that with today. Student Bible clubs and religious groups have to go to court just to have equal status with others meeting in our public schools, like gay, lesbian, and transgender groups. Christian kids are being hammered by atheists and secularists.

The assault on religion continues in the science classroom. One of the principal sources of contention is the insistence of explaining science through the lens of Darwinism. Everything in science today revolves around the concept of evolution, which is patently anti-religious. Even though the majority of citizens believe in some form of creation, Darwinism is assumed to undergird all scientific discussion. Other options are not permitted.

Anyone who questions the validity of Darwinism, whether student or school board, is either openly ridiculed or challenged with a lawsuit. There is no middle ground in this battle — no cry for “tolerance” toward religious people. As physicist Steven Weinberg states, “I personally feel that the teaching of modern science is coercive of religious belief, and I'm all for that.” Weinberg continues on to say that if scientists can destroy the influence of religion on young people, “then I think it may be the most important contribution we can make.”

Atheist Carl Sagan for many years had a program on PBS called *Cosmos*. His trademark slogan for that program went like this: “The cosmos is all there is or ever was or ever will be.” This program was often recommended as a supplement to classroom studies. Its message was that what we see, feel, and measure is all that exists. The supernatural does not exist.

At a 2006 conference on science and religion, Carolyn Porco, a research scientist, recommended ways to eliminate the supernatural as a subject of devotion: “We should let the success of the religious formula guide us.

Let's teach our children from a very young age about the story of the universe and its incredible richness and beauty. It is already so much more glorious and awesome — and even comforting — than anything offered by any Scripture or God concept I know.”

At a lecture a few years ago psychologist Nicholas Humphrey argued that secular teachers and professors should work to free children from the damaging influence of their parents' religious instruction. “Parents, correspondingly, have no God-given license to inculcate their children in whatever ways they personally choose: no right to limit the horizons of their children's knowledge, to bring them up in an atmosphere of dogma and superstition, or to insist that they follow the straight and narrow path of their own faith.”

Adolescent sexuality

Another strategy to discredit parental values and promote atheism is in the area of adolescent sexuality. One agnostic expressed it this way: “Against the power of religion we employ an equal if not greater power

It seems that atheists are not content with committing cultural suicide — they want to take your children with them. . . . So, the secularization of the minds of our young people is not, as many think, the inevitable consequence of learning and maturing. Rather, it is to a large degree orchestrated by teachers and professors to promote anti-religious agendas. (D'Souza)

— the power of hormones.” For him, religion is viewed as sexual repression and atheism as the means for young people to be liberated from moral restraint and indulge their sexual appetites.

Noted atheist Aldous Huxley once stated:

I had motives for not wanting the world to have meaning; consequently I assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. . . . For myself [and] my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was . . . liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom.

One recommendation of atheist philosopher Richard Rorty is that anti-religious professors at universities should “arrange things so that students who enter as bigoted, homophobic religious fundamentalists will leave college with views more like their own.” Rorty stated that students were fortunate to find themselves “under the benevolent *Herrschaft* [rule] of people like me, and to have escaped the grip of their frightening, vicious, dangerous parents.” Parents who send their children to college should be

aware that as professors “we are going to go right on trying to discredit you in the eyes of your children, trying to strip your fundamentalist religious community of dignity, trying to make your views seem silly rather than discussable.”

If you have any doubts about this agenda, think about these words of noted atheist Richard Dawkins: “Faith is one of the world’s great evils, comparable to the smallpox virus but harder to eradicate. Religion is capable of driving people to such dangerous folly that faith seems to me to qualify as a kind of mental illness.”

In response to the belief of many Christians that God speaks to them and answers their prayers, Dawkins responds, “many inhabitants of lunatic asylums have an unshakable faith that they are Napoleon . . . But this is no reason for the rest of us to believe them.”

Parental advice

If parents want to preserve their children’s love for God and Jesus Christ, they need to begin with a lot of Bible teaching and good example in the home and then consider other educational alternatives such as private Christian schools. As author and Chris-

tian apologist Dinesh D’Souza puts it:

Children spend the majority of their waking hours in school. Parents invest a good portion of their life savings in college education to entrust their offspring to people who are supposed to educate them. Isn’t it wonderful that educators have figured out a way to make parents the instruments of their own undoing? Isn’t it brilliant that they have persuaded Christian moms and dads to finance the destruction of their own beliefs and values?

The temples in which atheists and secularists worship include public schools, colleges, and universities. Christians must cease being timid believers. The world waits for us to be bold and proclaim the Word of God fearlessly. Have we forgotten our first love, or are we willing to move in front of the crowd and beckon men and women to come to Christ, the only way of salvation? Our children are looking for us to leave them a legacy of hope and victory in Christ Jesus. **BA**

Ken Ryland attends CoG7 in Wichita, KS, and serves as editor of *The Sabbath Sentinel*, published by the Bible Sabbath Association (www.biblesabbath.org). An unabridged version of this article first appeared in that magazine (September-October 2012).



If parents want to preserve their children’s love for God and Jesus Christ, they need to begin with a lot of Bible teaching and good example in the home.

The majority of these quotes are taken from chapter 4 of Dinesh D’Souza’s book *What’s So Great About Christianity*.

by Joe Corrales

When we were younger, we couldn't wait to grow up so we could do whatever we wanted and go wherever we pleased, and not answer to anyone. We saw Dad get in his car, and he simply left without thinking much of it. He was a grown man and didn't have to ask anyone's permission. He simply informed Mom and went on his way. What freedom it must have been!

It seemed to me, as a child, that adulthood was the goal and that every day waiting for it was just a waste of time. In that generation, children were tolerated and viewed as an inconvenience. They sapped all your resources. I guess this was my father's attitude, and I picked up on it emotionally, though not necessarily intellectually.

By the time we kids matured and had our own lives, homes, and families, my dad had been transformed into someone else. He finally realized that work and time with his friends were not as important as church and family.

He lost all his friends because he realized they were detracting from time spent with people he cared about. He agonized about his wasted years and wanted to get them back somehow. We provided a sort of remedy for his loss by giving him grandchildren. He didn't just love them; he celebrated them. No squirming, crawling rug rat could escape his attention. He picked them up as they made their way around the room.

Dad enjoyed each birthday party and led in singing "Happy Birthday," with a pointy hat on



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his head. Sometimes he'd call to ask about everyone during the week. If we missed a week coming over, he wanted to know what happened. He just couldn't seem to get enough of us. We enjoyed our kids' journey to adulthood more because of him. It reminded us of what we lost from our growing-up years away from our father. We certainly didn't want to repeat past mistakes.

Now we get to enjoy our own grandchildren. We want them to celebrate the journey to growing up. Their childhood should be just as important as adulthood. The point is that now that we are grown, what are we waiting for? Death?

Isn't there more to life than just getting up, going to work, having a meal, paying the bills, returning home to watch TV, and going to bed? What are you doing with your journey? The goal is not death but eternal life. What we do now may very well reflect if we spend eternity with our loved ones or end up all dressed

up in the ground with nowhere to go.

Celebrate the journey! Do something more with your life to make it more pleasant for others and to assure your salvation. As you journey through life, examine yourself. Are you on fire for the Lord and for the people who matter, or has your affection grown cold? Are you enduring or have you lost your grip on the things that really matter?

Enduring is the best some people do. For me, it is not enough. I want to live victoriously for Christ! I want to help as many as I can along the way. I want others to stand tall when the great Judge calls their name.

Let us celebrate the journey together. What will you do today to make the future brighter? **BA**

Joe and Martha Corrales enjoy their grandchildren and their service with New Hope United CoG7 in San Antonio, TX.



Finding Your 24/6 Rhythm in a 24/7 World



A Kentucky physician recommends a weekly
“Stop Day” for all. by Matthew Sleeth, MD

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In Sabbath-keeping
we become more
ourselves, not less.
— Eugene Peterson

A decade ago, I was chief of staff at a hospital and director of emergency services. Taking care of sick people is good work, and I loved my job. Like many physicians, I was often called a workaholic. The label didn't surprise me. For many years, I worked 24-hour shifts in the emergency room. Throughout the early years of my career, work identified both what I did and who I was.

This all-consuming passion for my work persisted until my early forties, when I read the Bible for the first time. That's when I discovered God's answer to our always-on, 24/7 culture of work, work, work.

The answer first appears in the opening pages of Genesis. God's rhythm since the beginning of time has been 24/6 — six days on and one day off. When I began adopting that rhythm, my entire life changed for the better — physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Weekly pause

What does the word *Sabbath* mean? It simply means “stop.” That's all. The Hebrew people didn't have names for the days of the week. There was one-day, two-day, three-day, four-day, five-day, six-day, Stop Day.

The fourth commandment says that we don't work on Stop Day. We don't make our

sons work; we don't make our daughters work; we don't make anybody in our household work. We don't make strangers work; we don't make illegal aliens work; we don't make minimum wage employees work. We don't make anything work, including the cattle and the chicken and the sheep. We stop. We cool our jets. We just idle our engines on that day.

When my wife, Nancy, started teaching, she had a student named Clinton. His essay on the first day of class was three pages long. It didn't have a comma; it didn't have a period; it didn't have a paragraph in it. It was a three-page, run-on sentence.

I don't think God intended our lives to be like that paper — just one long, run-on sentence. The work of our life is meant to be punctuated by rest. Musicians talk about this. They say that it's not the notes that make the song but the pauses in between the notes. This rhythm is equally true for our lives.

Grounded in Sabbath

The word *holy* first occurs in the second chapter of Genesis. The seventh day is blessed as holy because the Lord stopped and rested. Stopping and resting are the working definitions of *holy*. We are introduced to the creative aspects of God through the making of the heavens and the earth, but we learn about other qualities of God through the concepts of rest and stopping. These two concepts are not the same. Rest is done by stopping. By coming to a stop, we give rest a place to happen. We make rest possible.

But instead of resting, we

move and move and don't stop to know what we are walking on. We are ungrounded. No place means much of anything to us. When no place is our home, then the whole earth is reduced to a commodity. The most we can be is consumers.

The Sabbath commandments contained in the Old Testament set the worth of all things. The ground is allowed to rest every seventh year. The newborn calf cannot be taken immediately from its mother. The fruit tree has a right to exist in a time of war.

I do not advocate the throwing over of civil law in favor of Old Testament law, but I do believe in the inherent worth that God places in His creation. Often we see no worth in what the Lord created beyond its mere utilitarian value. We talk about forests as timber and flowers as bouquets. Yet when God placed the trees on the earth, He said that they are pleasing to the eye (Genesis 2:9). He dresses the lilies of the field more lavishly than a king (Matthew 6:28, 29). God's soliloquy to Job is about the mystery and beauty that creation has beyond its usefulness to humanity.

When we take Paul's words to the Colossians to heart — "Everything was created through

him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together" (Colossians 1:16, 17) — we realize that the very ground we walk on and the air we breathe are the constant outpouring of God's creativity and love.

Resting in rest

I have a memory from when my kids were younger that defines Sabbath rest for me. We lived in a house that had a big attic with a window on either side. The only thing in the attic was a hammock and a pull rope. The kids and I went in there one evening when it was too cold outdoors but was perfectly warm inside. As I lay on the hammock, my son, Clark, was on one shoulder, pulling on the rope, and my daughter Emma on the other. I read a book to them, and, at the end I put the book on the floor. In that quiet, while the swaying of our hammock slowed down, they both fell asleep.

I think that heaven is going to be a whole lot more like that moment than the typical Monday at work. When practiced regularly, Sabbath becomes a piece of heaven that can be taken with us into the other six days of the week.

Rest is done by stopping. By coming to a stop, we give rest a place to happen. We make rest possible.

What's missing matters

Why in the last few decades has the church decided to throw out the fourth commandment? Why have we dismissed our day of rest? Which commandment are we going to throw out next?

Now Jesus isn't a legalist. Instead, He's about the intent behind the laws. So if the Ten Commandments say, "Don't kill somebody," Jesus says, "Don't even call them a jerk." If the Ten Commandments say, "Don't commit adultery," Jesus says, "Don't even cruise the Internet looking for racy pictures."

So what does Jesus have to say about the longest of the Ten Commandments — to keep a day of rest once a week? He clarifies that this is a day dedicated to God, so it's OK to feed the hungry. It's OK to take care of the sick. It's OK to go and rescue an animal. But we're still supposed to "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy."

The Bible is about people trying to have a relationship with God while existing in a fallen world. Yet in our twenty-first century culture, we're not content to just live in a fallen world: We're putting rocket boosters on our backs to accelerate our descent.

A day of rest counteracts this trajectory. It's about restraint.

And that restraint is needed now more than ever.

Be still. Know God.

For me, one of the most profound lines in the Bible comes from Psalms. God says, "Be still and know that I am God."

As you prepare for your next Sabbath, try meditating on this scripture. Then take one word from the end of the line, each time you say it.

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am.

Be still and know.

Be still.

Be.

Stop Day is when you're no longer just a human doing; you're a human being. Just be.

Sabbath for us

Sabbath doesn't just happen. You have to prepare for it. The day before the Sabbath, my wife and I always clean the house. We pay bills, answer e-mails, go grocery shopping, and prepare food so that on the Sabbath we can truly rest.

Sabbath morning we almost always take a long walk. Nancy reads the Bible. I take a nap. We rest in rest. If there's an important deadline approaching and it

seems like we just have to get it done, we stop. We trust in God's promise that six days of work each week is enough.

If you can't imagine twenty-four hours of rest, start with four or six hours of holy rest. Stopping is about restraint. It's not about doing everything that we can do. It's about finding the peace of God that passes all understanding.

The Sabbath was not meant to be saved by humanity; rather, humanity was meant to be saved by the Sabbath. I know from first-hand experience. After practicing the Sabbath for almost a decade, I have seen how it has saved me from the disease of workaholism. It has saved countless numbers of my patients from the physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences of unremitting stress. If practiced regularly, the Sabbath can save you too.

I pray that you remember to open this gift of stopping one day a week. I pray that you find peace in this weekly oasis of time. I pray that you will be still and that, through rest, you will come to know God. And it will be good. **BA**

Matthew Sleeth, MD, a former ER physician, is the executive director of Blessed Earth and author of *24/6: Prescription for a Happier, Healthier Life* (Tyndale, November 2012). He lives in Lexington, KY, with his wife, Nancy, and two children. Scripture quotations were taken from the *New Living Translation*.



Stopping is not about doing everything that we can do. It's about finding the peace of God that passes all understanding.

Why We Advocate the Bible

Fifteen reasons to take up the Book and read.
by Calvin Burrell

1 Its impact. God's Word consistently leads to improved life and living for those who accept and practice its core teachings.

2 Its beauty, harmony, and design. The Bible is complex, but its essential message is neither complicated nor contradictory. The more it is read and studied, the more impressive is the glory of its big truths and the marvel of its intricacy and interconnectedness.

3 Its source. Scripture came through imperfect men, to be sure, but those men gave the world its highest vision of faith and morality. From whence came this noble, uplifting content? Each writer was assigned his inspiration from above.

4 Its theme. The Bible dares address our longings to know how and why everything began, man's role in it, and how it all ends. To know God.

5 Its content. The Scriptures record the greatest story ever told: the love of God. It came first through the checkered histories of Adam and Israel and finally through the matchless story of Jesus, the second Adam, the true Israel.

6 Its durability. Through composition and canonization,

opposition and persecution, fire and flood, defeat and victory, the Bible has stood the test of time.

7 Its friends. People we respect the most are often those who have most treasured and obeyed the Word. The happy weight of their influence compels us to explore its pages, as they did.

8 Its addressees. God's Word is given to every race, nation, tribe, and tongue — all who will believe. It is *people* who need the Lord — and find Him in the Bible.

9 Its evidence. The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are supported by far more manuscripts than other literature of antiquity. The fact that today's Bibles have the essential content of what was delivered through Moses, recorded by Ezra and the scribes, preached by prophets, and written by apostles is well established.

10 Its validity. The Book that can justly claim first interest of readers is one truly based on and pointed to universal reality — what is. God's Word traffics in such truth — real light for real life.

11 Its standards. The way taught in God's Word is

unmatched in the world's religions, or outside them. Its moral and ethical principles are specific and sustainable, requiring the highest commitment and producing the best fruit.

12 Its salvation. Scripture takes our sin problem seriously — its reality, its result, its solution. From sin's penalty we have been rescued by the grace of the divine-human Savior. From sin's practice we are being rescued — energized for better things — by the eternal Spirit. The Bible tells us so.

13 Its characters. Not super-human or perfect, the personalities of Scripture are men and women like us. They cast themselves upon God's words of mercy and truth and found them trustworthy.

14 Its power. When the Bible is consistently read with faith, people live differently — better! — than they did before. It's called "Word power."

15 Its core. The Word is all about faith, hope, and love. Without faith, we have no purpose. Without hope, we have no promise. Without love, we have no presence. Embrace these transcendent three as you travel the Bible's "Route 66." **BA**



One Bible word, it's true, carries content and the dynamic potential to convey the gospel better than any other. The **word** here is a common four-letter English word. On these pages, in your heart, and in our church, you fill in the blank!

The Bible says

- God is Spirit, God is light, God is _____.
- Faith, hope, and _____ remain; _____ is the greatest.
- God gave ancient laws to man; _____ is the greatest.
- Christ also gave commands to His disciples; _____ is the greatest.
- Many powerful forces are at work in the world; _____ is the greatest.
- Many enemies would separate us from God; His _____ is greater than them all.
- Lots of good news is found in the Bible; God's _____ is the greatest news of all!

What word . . .

covers all sins?
 rejoices in truth, not evil?
 suffers long, is kind, never fails?
 bears all, believes all, hopes all, endures all?
 is not arrogant, boastful, envious, rude, provoked, or selfish?
 is the greatest of God's attributes and of the Christian's fruit?
 1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:22, 23; 1 Peter 4:8

"But above all these things put on _____, which is the bond of perfection" (Colossians 3:14).

"And above all things have fervent _____ for one another, for ' _____ will cover a multitude of sins'" (1 Peter 4:8).

Proof #1: "By this we know _____, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16).

Proof #2: "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have _____ for one another" (John 13:35).

_____ word: agape
 _____ verses: John 3:16; 1 John 3:16
 _____ chapter: 1 Corinthians 13 (AV: charity)
 _____ books/chapters: John 13, 14, 15; 1 John 3, 4, 5
 _____ commands: " _____ one another" (13 times)
 _____ group: God and people
 _____'s time: Now! You can't _____ yesterday or tomorrow; it must be in present tense.

*The word of the heart and in the blank is **love**.*



Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that. — Martin Luther King, Jr.

I have decided to stick to love . . . Hate is too great a burden to bear. — Martin Luther King, Jr.

Let all **bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking** be put away from you, with all **malice**. And

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To the Church

Dear friends,
let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love (1 John 4:7-12, NIV).

This text helps us understand God's love and tells us to love others. This is not love in words only. It is not the world's idea of love but rather unselfish, self-sacrificing love. It is love on a deep level: trust, respect, and accountability. We need to spread this love in our church so that all members who walk in can turn to their neighbor and open their hearts if they are hurting, or praise God when they see Him working. This love benefits the members and is a beacon of God's infinite love to the world.

This church is my family. I grew up here. I've spent too much time with pain in my heart concerning its welfare. I'm tired of complaining and watching it fail in doing God's work in this world. If this body is sick, then I'm part of the problem. We cannot let our church fall apart because of our own actions. We cannot forget to put God at the forefront, His commands in our hearts. The love we have is the infinite love of our Creator.



We live in dangerous times. All around us we see the immoral, the corrupted fighting against the standards God has given. The church may be under attack from the world, but it's our own fault if we fail. If we're not loving the brother and sister beside us, if every word we speak and every conversation we have does not dig deeper, we fail our families, our church, our world, our God.

We should walk into this church and see 150 shoulders to cry on. People should push each other to see God in their lives each week. It may be impossible to know and truly love everyone here on a deep level, but my mom always says, "Many hands make light work."

One of my father's favorite verses is Revelation 3:20: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (NIV). We are called to be Christlike, to walk as He walked. We should knock on others' heart-doors as Jesus does. Many people will not answer the door. Even in this church there may be those who will choose not to accept our love. But we cannot know who will open doors to us if we never knock.

Move around this church as though we are all your family and not just the people you drove here with. Knock on doors you never dreamed of. Do everything with love. The rewards we find with new friends and new family are great, and the eternal reward is unimaginable.

— Ross Smedley
Denver, Colorado

be **KIND** to one another, **tenderhearted**, **FORGIVING** one another, even as **God in Christ forgave you** (Ephesians 4:31, 32).



My Journey

Filling the Emptiness

by **Zazzi Pico**

I grew up in the land of eternal spring, Guatemala, and my family attended the Church of God (Seventh Day). Even though my parents tried to raise me as a Christian, I was rebellious and hated church. It was boring and legalistic. I couldn't understand Jesus caring how I dressed or if I wore a veil on my head to be saved.

'Holy war'

When I was a teen, I started playing guitar, wishing to be cool and to be admired by other people. When I joined the youth group, I gained popularity because of my playing. Soon I became one of the leaders of the "renewing movement" in the Church.

However, certain local leaders believed that the only "holy instrument" was the piano and that other instruments were dedicated to Satan. Under their scrutiny, I struggled to believe that a true Christian could have fun, en-

joy life, and be cool at the same time. Holiness seemed unattainable when I compared myself to these apparently self-righteous individuals.

My parents desperately tried to keep me in the Church and in God's ways. Though they did this out of love, I felt they were too strict and too holy. I couldn't tell them about my thoughts or desires because they wouldn't understand.

So I grew up in silence, pretending to be a good girl while secretly doing things they wouldn't approve of. They thought they could save me. I knew they couldn't.

Happily ever after

Thirsty for love, I desperately needed something to fill my emptiness. I thought I found the answer when I met a charming, handsome man and decided, at age 19, to marry him.

But I discovered that I couldn't attain happiness with him. Promiscuous and violent, he began beating me soon after we married. After each time he would

plead for forgiveness and promise it would never happen again.

So began a vicious circle of abuse and promises that lasted three years. One day my husband accused me of being unfaithful, and threatened to kill my entire family, as well as our little daughter, Sheila, and me if he found me in his house when he came back. Later I discovered he just wanted to get rid of me to marry the woman with whom he was having an affair.

I took my belongings and my precious daughter with me to my parents' place and filed for divorce. For the first time in my life, I experienced deep depression. I lay in bed crying for days without eating. There was no divorce in my "holy" family. How could God even look at me now? I was a failure.

Second chance

I felt if I could be baptized, my sin would be forgiven and I would get a fresh start.

After taking the lessons required, I was baptized. I felt clean for a while, but the emptiness eventually came back. I wanted to live a holy life and not offend God with my physical and love needs, so I decided to marry somebody else.

I met the love of my life (I thought) and couldn't wait to marry him. When our son, Oscar, was born a year after we married, I was so happy! But then I noticed his father also had issues with violence. This time when he tried to hit me, I beat him back,

and war started: name-calling, cheating, hatred. I became bitter and hardhearted. After six years, I admitted this second marriage too had been mistake.

Freedom

What was wrong with me? How could I face God? He had given me another chance, and I'd wasted it.

My kids don't need me as a mother. I'm a danger to them. I decided to end the marriage and escape. I told my parents that I was just going to work for a while and find myself. I left my two treasures with them, knowing my parents could raise them better than this failure of a woman.

Being where nobody knew me was like a sinner's paradise. I could do whatever I wanted, and nobody would care. Soon I found myself drinking, smoking, getting high to numb my pain, and indulging in sex. I tried to commit suicide two or three times.

This lifestyle became incredibly painful. No drugs, high, or men would ever make me happy again. I cried every night when I thought of my kids and how much I missed them.

Reunion

That's when I met Robert again. I had dated him when I was 18 but later met my first husband. I always thought of Robert as the prince of my fairy tale and wondered how my life would have been had I stayed with him.

Now fourteen years later, Robert was also looking for answers to his hurtful past. We tried to pick up where we left off, but there were too many painful memories of bad choices and failures. Heartbroken and depressed, Robert relieved his pain through alcohol and drugs.

We decided to patch our lives together and work to find happiness. We found it when our two little ones, Bobby and Zazzi Faith, came along. But after hurting each other with our bad habits and actions (adultery), I ended up at the verge of divorce again.

Rescue and restoration

In the depths of this pit God found us and showed us He still loved us, despite what we had done. The Bible says that God loves us so much that even when we were still sinners, He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins, forgive us, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Though salvation seemed too good to be true, Robert and I still believed and prayed to our amazing God. Now we had hope! We decided to trust Him and put our lives in His hands.

Marriage, I have learned, is about commitment and mutual respect. Most of all it's about loving God and letting Him be the center of your family. After eighteen years of marriage, my home is now a refuge where I can find peace and happiness. We have troubles and issues, but we know that He will calm those storms.



Work in progress

In 2003 God called me as a worship leader at the congregation in Las Vegas. Now I can share the miracle He did in my life and hopefully touch someone's life.

The Bible says that God loves sinners, and those He has forgiven much — me — may sense His love even more. My life was broken into many pieces, but God gently put it together until He made me whole. That empty space in my heart is now full with His love.

I no longer seek to renew the Church of God (Seventh Day). Instead I seek to renew my heart. I rejoice in His grace made new every day. And I realize it's not about being perfect, but about being forgiven. **BA**

Note to readers: With this moving testimony by Zazzi Pico, we renew the "My Journey" feature in BA. If you have a personal experience story to tell of God's faithfulness, please send it to the editor for consideration here.



The Scoop

Every ear-tongue combo needs periodic reminders of gossip's lethal work. **by Jeri Darby**

“What’s the fastest way to deliver a message?” a friend asked. She followed with “Telephone, telegraph, or tell-a-woman!”

I chuckled with her but later thought, *How sad*. I loved this woman dearly but had learned not to share anything with her that I would not publish in the local paper. Women are stereotyped as excessive talkers, and some rightly so. But gossip slithers through the lips of both male and female.

Gossip wears many disguises and can strut into the middle of conversations posing as innocent chitchat. There are praise gowns, humor threads, anger workout suits. A particular woman careful-

ly camouflaged gossip in prayer garb before she proudly paraded it. This costume is preferred by most Christians.

“My co-worker — you know him. He lives . . . he works . . . he’s on drugs . . . his wife left. Remember to pray for him,” she ends with a religious flair. But I have no desire to hoard facts or fallacies.

We often sat in meetings together. I tried muting her conversations by mentally vacating, etching to-do lists, or focusing on other things. But my efforts to avoid consuming this deadly gossip were futile. Proverbs 18:8 says, “The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man’s inmost parts”

(NIV). True or false, gossip can have lingering negative effects.

Talebearers

“I want to tell you something. Do you promise to tell *no-oo-body*?” This stipulation often precedes intimate sharing, but the oath not to tell is often broken. This breach can be painful, resulting in anger, bitterness, and volcanic relationships.

A friend shared her frustration concerning a relative. “She goes from house to house collecting people’s business and passing it on. One time I shared something with her and emphasized, ‘Don’t share this with anyone!’”

The relative agreed. “The next thing I knew, she was back over repeating the very same story to me, full of inaccurate details!” Then she ended with, “I can’t remember who told me this.”

Talebearers are easily recognizable. They gravitate toward lower forms of communication centered on others, rather than on ideas or events. They are not interested in your pain or your cure — just your tale. They are masters at thrusting baited questions like fishing lines. Then they reel in juicy details and leave with the scoop — a prize catch!

What lies beneath?

Habitual gossipers are proud to know and eager to share what’s really going on. They upload private information about others and download it into public gatherings. Like a cancerous cell, it spreads while mutating the contents along the way. By the time the tale is repeated and distorted, it’s barely recognizable — even to the subject.

Why is gossip so prevalent?

Mainly because of tolerance, but it also stems from insecurity: A repeated story places the emphasis on others, rather than on ourselves. Boredom can lower the gossip threshold if we're not careful. Some enjoy conversation only when it unveils some unknown personal tidbits about others. Some experience an inflated sense of importance based on their reputation of knowing the "real deal." Gossip is a learned behavior that becomes a custom.

First Timothy 5:13 says, "Besides, they [younger widows] get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to."

One woman took extra measures to fulfill the role of busybody. As she drove her car, an ambulance sped past us with blaring sirens. She commented, "If you were not with me, I would follow it." This woman was known for her flashy chitchat loaded with juicy details about anything and anyone. The need to know seems to be ingrained in the DNA of some and is often accompanied by the need to tell. At any cost, they are going to get the scoop.

A time to speak

"I have often regretted my speech but never my silence" (Pubilius Syrus 100 BC). One day vicious gossip erupted while a group of co-workers perched at the workstation. They felt that a co-worker's authority and duties exceeded her skills and education. The target of the malicious gossip was a beautiful Christian

woman. Her faith was the rock sustaining her.

Despite tremendous personal sufferings, she was always professional, smiling and glowing with the love of God. It was obvious that envy and jealousy were at the root of their unrest.

The opportunity to respond scampered as I sat in silence. Later, I knew exactly what I wished I'd said. Disappointed and challenged, I decided this would not happen again.

My commitment to this decision was soon tested during the next meeting with the woman who always shared too much. "You know her. She . . . and . . . remember her in prayer. . . ."

Gossip strolled in right on cue. Taking a deep breath, I said, "You are sharing too much information" while I maintained firm eye contact.

Her expression was pained. "It's not gossip! I just wanted you to know what things to pray for." She sadly couldn't see the problem, but from then on she began self-editing her input in my presence. "I better not say that. You may feel it's gossip."

Wise choices

I choose to have little to no contact with some people due to their commitment to gossip. Like wood to fire, the tongue is the fuel that keeps gossip spreading.

We can't always choose what's spoken in our presence, but we can choose our response.

A consistent decline of gossip offered by others sends a clear message that "I am different" — set apart. Eventually others will leap over you to connect with known gossip receptacles.

It takes courage to do the right thing, but it becomes easier with practice. Those with wholesome tongues will gravitate to you, identifying you as positive and trustworthy. Form relationships with those committed to the instructions in Philippians 4:8:

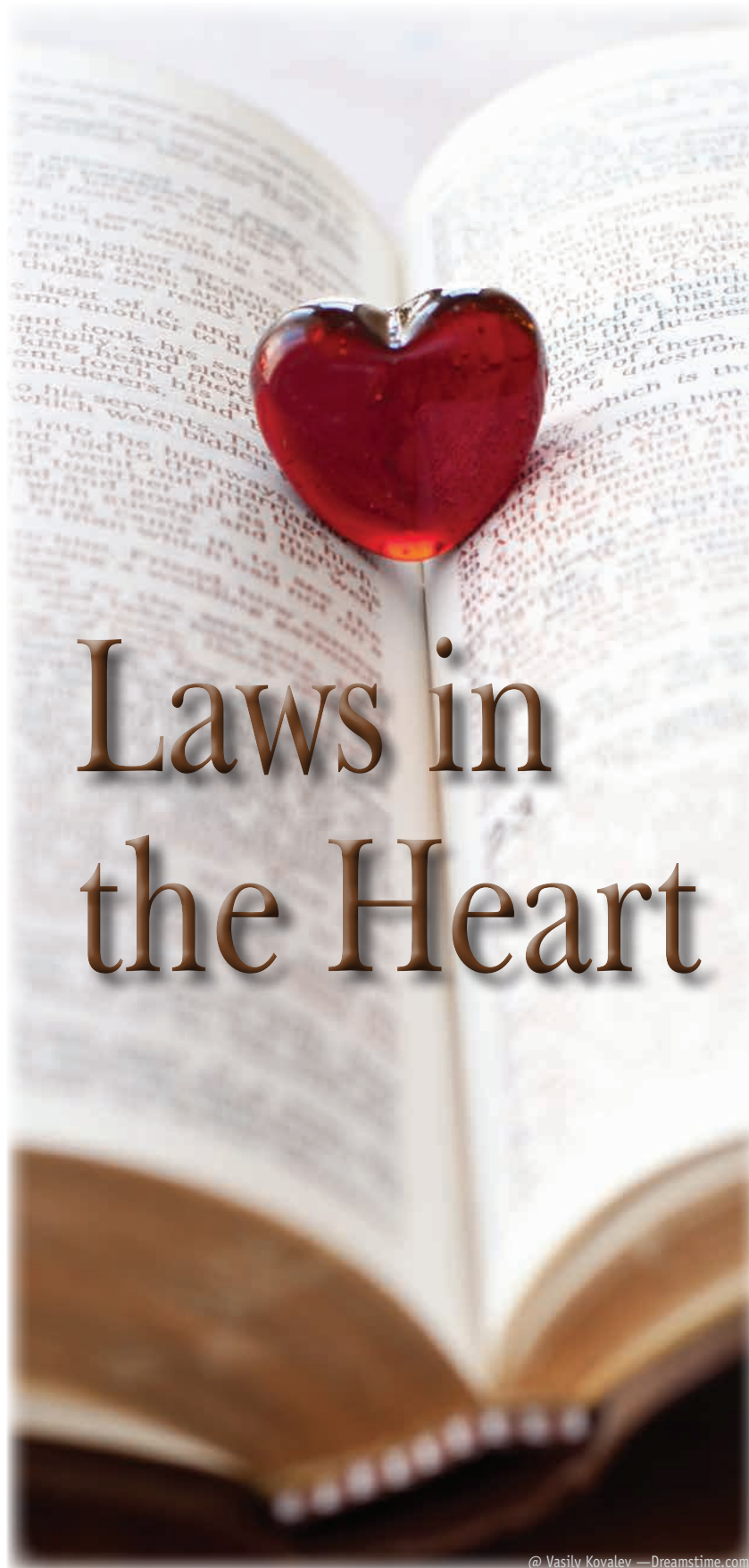
Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things.

Has God provided a need in the nick of time? Has He dried tears and comforted you in the midnight hours? Has He sent words of comfort that only He knew you needed to hear? That's the scoop we should be sharing with others. **BA**

Jeri Darby writes from Bay City, MI. Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version*.



We can't always choose what's spoken in our presence, but we can choose our response.



Laws in the Heart

Something is written inside us when we come to Christ and the new covenant gospel. What is it? **by David Kidd**

Laws in law books? That's normal. Laws in a courtroom? That's normal too. Laws written in the heart? Now that's a strange concept. Laws are made to break, aren't they, as long as you don't get caught?

The Bible says that, under the new covenant between God and man, His laws are engraved — no longer on stone but on the hearts of all believers.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts . . . In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away (Hebrews 8:10, 13; see also 10:15-17).

But wait! Many laws and commands are found in the Bible, especially in its first five books. Which laws does God write on the hearts of His people in Christ? Consider the main contenders.

Law of Moses (Torah)

The Torah includes the Ten Commandments written on stone by the finger of God and the laws of Moses written in a book — over six hundred laws. The Sinai covenant that recorded them has been replaced by the covenant written and sealed in

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Jesus' blood. Shall we conclude that the whole Torah is now irrelevant?

The apostle Paul writes that all Scripture is profitable for us (2 Timothy 3:16), that "the law is good if one uses it lawfully" (1 Timothy 1:8). Many of the Mosaic laws express timeless truth we all agree with. Let's not be too fast, then, to say that the Torah is obsolete for Christians — an extreme position.

At the other extreme, some would impose the whole Torah on believers, by a misuse of this text: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly . . . till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17, 18).

Since Jesus offered Himself as the true Lamb of God to take away sin, the sacrificial sections of the Torah are fulfilled! Regulations concerning a most sacred piece of old covenant law, Passover, are no longer binding. Christ is our Passover!

Laws pertaining to the Levitical priesthood and tabernacle no longer apply "in Christ," nor do those "concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation" (Hebrews 9:10). Other Mosaic ordinances required stoning those who broke Sabbath or demanded separation of Jew and Gentile (Leviticus 22:10, 11; Deuteronomy 14:21; 15:3; 23:3-6, 20).

We may safely conclude that Moses' entire law package will *not* be written on our hearts today. Nevertheless, much in the Torah defined sin for Israel and

still defines it for Christians. This leads us to the next candidate for the law God writes on our hearts.

Moral laws

God's moral laws define righteous and unrighteous conduct. Torah contains many such laws. Christians generally agree that the prohibitions of sexual contact with close kin, with the same sex, or with animals (read Leviticus 18, where these are described as abominable) remain relevant. Similarly, judgments about paying employees swiftly, not cursing the deaf, and loving our neighbours (Leviticus 19:13-18) embody timeless truth for all people.

Most Christians affirm the moral nature of the Ten Commandments. Even the fourth (Sabbath) command is inherently moral. Overworking employees disturbs their relationship with God, brethren, family, friends, and the needy. Working ourselves too hard does the same.

God's moral standards do not change (Hebrews 13:8). What was once an abomination to Him

surely still is. Hence the moral law constitutes a part what He now writes on our hearts.

Law of love

Others add love to our heart-law, on the strength of Paul's writings: "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Galatians 5:14; see also Romans 13:8-10).

The point of these verses is that if we are guided by God's love, we will fulfill His law. Love is a great motive — the more excellent way. An attitude of true love toward God and our neighbor will lead us to act appropriately toward him. Rather than a single law written on our hearts, however, love is the spiritual dynamic that helps us fulfill all of God's righteous requirements.

Simplifying everything down to love carries a danger with it. Some fall into the error of thinking they don't need the Bible. Their idea of love becomes very much a private, self-serving concept. Subjective notions of love can bring us into conflict with God's Word. The Bible says to



Rather than a single law written on our hearts, however, love is the spiritual dynamic that helps us fulfill all of God's righteous requirements.

expel a heretic from church. We may love him and counsel more tolerance, but there comes a time when God's love says *no!*

Or the Bible prohibits certain "love" relationships, but our love may say, "As long as we aren't hurting anyone, it's OK." The Scriptures say that the law is *summed up* by love, but a summary does not replace what it summarizes. Never forget Jesus' words: "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). And John's: "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3).

Law of Christ

Some will say God writes only the laws of Christ on our hearts. Two texts refer to such a law.

In 1 Corinthians 9:21 Paul writes of "not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ." How can Paul be both? When one recognizes that the Father and Son are in full harmony concerning right and wrong, it makes more sense. Revelation 14:12 shows this by defining the saints as "those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." God and

Christ do *not* have different laws. Jesus' commands will be on our hearts, just as God's moral laws are. There is no difference between them.

Another mention of the law of Christ is Galatians 6:2: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." We help our brethren with their burdens because our Lord commanded it. All His timeless words are on our hearts.

Law of conscience

The reader may be seeing that the answer to our "Which laws?" question is — a combination of things. Our individual consciences add to this combination. James writes that "to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (4:17). Any time we act against what our conscience, or our faith in God, tells us to do or to refrain from doing, we sin (see Romans 2:13-16; 14:23).

The Holy Spirit guides us to respect the spirit of the law. Hence the law in our hearts becomes broader and more extensive than any written code.

God writes His law

If God is the writer and He is not the author of confusion, then why don't all Christians have the same laws on their hearts?

Satan, false teaching, entrenched tradition, and our own slackness in studying God's Word all have a lot to do with this. Let us not make too much of the differences, however, as most Christians disagree over only a small percentage of God's revealed laws.

The greater issue, then, is not so much which laws but rather the condition of our hearts toward what He has written there. Do we have a passionate heart for truth that we know represents God's will? Do we pay due regard to the spiritual intent of the law? Do our hearts break when we know we have sinned? Do we yearn for God's righteous ways, as King David did when he wrote Psalm 119?

I will delight myself in Your commandments. . . . The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver. . . . Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day (vv. 47, 72, 97).

Let's yearn for God's righteousness as David did! **BA**

Jesus' commands will be on our hearts, just as God's moral laws are. There is no difference between them.



David and Angela Kidd serve the Church in Adelaide, South Australia, and around the world.



Dawn at Deer Lake

*Across the lake and behind the trees
a drowsy train whistle blows.
Daybreak greets me softly,
yet crisp morning air
chills a fog of sleep from my thoughts.
Peace is most tangible to me
on these early mornings.
Warmed by the cup in my hands,
I sip flavored coffee with cream.
Steam rises from the cup as if it were
my spirit
joining the splendor of God before me.
Water dozes under the dock, splashing
restfully.
Rolling slowly, it sputters, causing
boats to dance.
The fragrant beach lay wet and
smooth
connecting water to land.
Towering trees raise leafless limbs
to heaven in praise.
Breathing in the dulcet dawn,
my ransomed soul wells up and
breaks forth in worship.*

Lisa Hefling





North American Women's Ministry

Grace Sanchez, Director

BA Trivia

Here's a list of titles our magazine has been known by over the past 150 years:

- 1863 - *The Hope of Israel*
- 1872 - *Advent and Sabbath Advocate and The Hope of Israel*
- 1874 - *Advent and Sabbath Advocate*
- 1888 - *Sabbath Advocate and Herald of the Advent*
- 1900 - *Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom*
- 1972 - *Bible Advocate*

In 1996, *BA Online* hit the Internet. On the recently redesigned site, you can still view each issue in FlippingBook or PDF, but you can also read a featured article, comment on it, and share it with others.

The site is still under construction, so look for new features in the future. You'll be glad you came!

baonline.org

I have come to believe that ministry is neither for the faint of heart nor for those wearing rose-colored glasses. Living-and-breathing ministry often means living with pain, disappointment, and misunderstanding between the times of exceeding joy and sweet success.

I choose to focus on joy and on those who unselfishly give their time and talents to make it all happen. One sweet success was the 2012 National Women's Retreat in Portland, Oregon, where 100 women and girls came together for instruction, inspiration, worship, and fun. For NAWM's first bilingual retreat, I thank these sisters for their patience in our struggle with equipment. It is our ministry's dream to experience a new generation of young girls and young mothers participating with such loving spirits, desiring to be mentored and to mentor.

I think of our sisters and brothers at *Afterglow* who continue using their talents and blessing the readership. Month after month they put the "little paper" in their readers' hands to be enjoyed. *Afterglow* brings encouragement and inspiration for all. It also brings news of friends and family.

Another sweet success took place in Los Angeles, California, at the 25th anniversary of the Hispanic Women's Retreat. The Spirit reigned throughout, as noted by the hotel staff. Praise from within is expected; praise from without is humbling and honors God. Such was the setting when nearly 400 women gathered to be fed from a well-chosen theme: "Vessels of Honor." I am always impressed by the unpretentious, often unnoticed service that prayer warriors deliver on bended knee.

Plans are in the making for a grand time of sharing at our 2013 convention in Omaha and for the 75th-year celebration of our beloved ministry in 2014.

Warmest regards from the sisterhood,
Grace



SHINE's Haiti Mission

SHINE's Medical and Dental Mission to Haiti (March 25 - April 1) quickly approaches. Applications came late in 2012. Team members will be selected and notified in January.

Haiti is the poorest country of the Western Hemisphere. In 2010 an earthquake struck close to Port-au-Prince, the capital city, killing more than 300,000 and leaving another million homeless.

CoG7's General Conference collected Disaster Relief funds for Haiti and is in the process of distributing them as the situation there is assessed. Several members have made trips to Haiti, offering assistance of food and clothing, medicines, and other items to two Church orphanages there.

The SHINE mission team will now conduct a medical and dental clinic in Haiti. Pastor Ruben Frausto (Sacramento, California) recently visited this country to plan for the upcoming visit. Facilities for the clinics and housing, care, and security for the mission team were evaluated. Medication needs are being assessed and their delivery arranged. Dental equipment is being secured. Mission expenses will be aided by a portion of the Disaster Relief funds mentioned above.

SHINE solicits your prayers — for planning and successful operation of the clinics, for the Lord's will in this venture, and for peace and progress in Haiti.



The 2013 General Conference Convention is scheduled for July 1-6 at the Omaha Hilton's Century Link Center, Omaha, Nebraska.



Events. Throughout the year, CoG7 retreats, rallies, and other events happen that are geared for young adults. To spread the word about upcoming events, send information to sword@cog7.org to post on our website (sword.cog7.org) and on the SWORD Facebook page (facebook.com/CoG7YoungAdults).

District representatives. SWORD representatives provide organization and leadership to ensure a successful program in each district. They visit churches, organize and promote district events, and assist with young adult programming at the national level. Does your district have a SWORD district representative? Talk to your district's superintendent or board about making sure your district is holding young adult events.

Local leaders. Please send the church name, name and e-mail of your local young adult leader, and number of young adults in attendance to sword@cog7.org.


— Christy Lang

Spring Vale Academy

Sign up for
second semester!
Contact 989-725-2391





Place to rest.  Still Waters Prairie Retreat (SWPR) in Alfred, ND, is owned and operated by CoG7 brethren. Among its several facilities are the renovated town school (shown here), with a large meeting room and stage, two classrooms-bedrooms (sleep 12), a furnished kitchen-dining area, two modern baths, and a large outdoor playground with fire pit and grill. The retreat center's primary focus is to serve those who minister — pastors and their families. Learn more about SWPR at baonline.org. To schedule a getaway, contact Terry or Cathy Schlenker (eatbeef@daktel.com; 701-489-3583) or Brad or Karol Ciavarella (Brad@Ciavarelladesign.com; 605-999-9456).



Pastor Hendricks Dies

On Friday night, November 23, in London, England, Pastor Erlo Hendricks, long-time leader of the Church's British Conference, slipped into the peaceful sleep of death. He was 80. Funeral services were held on Thursday, December 13. With firm hope in the gospel of Jesus Christ, we thank God for the life and ministry of Pastor Hendricks and pray for his wife and family in their loss.



Pastor Robert L. James of Ft. Myers, FL, traveled to St. Martin (French West Indies) at the request of G.C. Missions and a church on that island. In the final days of a month-long crusade, Pastor James preached and assisted the church to organize and affiliate with CoG7. Thanks to him — and welcome to the new church in St. Martin!

**Lord's Supper date:
The Church's annual
communion service
in every congregation
is scheduled for after
sunset on Sunday,
March 24.**

A Collie and a York-A-Poo

by Ken Knoll

Ministerial Council in Portland (October 29 - November 3) reminded me of our daughter's family dogs. Oreo is a Border Collie; Sweetie is a Yorkshire Terrier - Poodle cross. Oreo is old and has been with the Langs for years; Sweetie is the new dog on the block. Big Oreo can be grumpy; small Sweetie is lively and can be annoying. Oreo herds our grandchildren with his body and bark; Sweetie is still learning what life is all about.

When they first brought Sweetie home, I thought Oreo would kill that little thing. But those two soon took to each other. Sweetie would nip at Oreo and *yip, yip, yip* until he got up and chased her. With arthritis, he couldn't keep up; she ran circles around him. But Oreo enjoyed the play and sometimes initiated it. Or he would grump and snarl a little, telling Sweetie that enough was enough already.

Seeing their tug-of-war with a doggie toy was fun. Both growled, and Oreo often just stood patiently while Sweetie strained with all her might. He'd then let her have the toy, deferring to the pup.

Oreo died recently of some dog ailment — fine one day, gone the next. Sweetie whined when they carried Oreo to the vet. She still misses him; they were good for each other.

Council was a treat this year, reminding me of those dogs. We studied the Holy Spirit and experienced our topic in discussion, worship,



Elders Fauth, Walker, Sanchez, Coulter, Hernandez, Morrow, and Kauer were honored.

and planning together. The many younger pastors there encouraged me. I can be aching and grumpy, like Oreo. Like Sweetie, younger pastors had great energy and nipped at the heels of us older guys: "*Yip, yip, yip!* People out there need Jesus, and we should be doing outreach projects during council time. *Yip, yip, yip!*" I growled a bit because I'm tired and can't do all I once did. But like Oreo and Sweetie, I tell you, we need each other!

I appreciate the zeal and passion of young ministers. When I growl at you, please hear it in memory of Oreo, gently herding his flock (our congregations) with experience and care. I love the new life you bring. My heart is lighter just knowing that my grandchildren will have strong pastoral leadership because you answered the call.

Old dogs and new pups united, CoG7's future is bright. Led by His Spirit, we can work together to build the kingdom. And we will!

Columbia River and Mount Hood from the hotel.

Gathering with "pups."





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International Congress

Africa's Convention



Where? Omoku District, Rivers State, Nigeria

When? December 18-22, 2013

With organized churches in a dozen countries and contacts in several more, the continent of Africa has seen good CoG7 growth in recent years. The convention planned for late 2013 will be "history in the making," and you can be a part of it.

To learn more, contact Robert Ikechukwu Crawford, IMC's Zone 5 representative for all of Africa (robertashcrawford@hotmail.com) or phone him at +44 7402484716 or +44 1452501605.

Congress Business

Here we share resolutions adopted by the International Ministerial Congress (IMC) near London, UK, in August 2012:

- That the national churches in Chile, Venezuela, and Paraguay be accepted into IMC membership.
- That non-Spanish-language countries in Zone 2 become a working part of Zone 1 instead.
- That all member countries provide their e-mails and postal addresses to IMC officers and zone representatives to facilitate communication.
- That all member countries communicate regularly with IMC officers and zone representatives, including an annual report of main activities and

other national matters, to be sent by March 31 of the next year.

• That IMC officers schedule and announce an official congress Sabbath, during which information will be provided to congregations and prayers will be offered for the Church's worldwide work. Also, each member country will collect and send a Change for Your World offering to support the activities of the Church internationally.

We sincerely thank the presidents of IMC member conferences for their support of the congress.

— *Min. Ramón Ruiz Garza*
IMC President

IMC officers have appointed these zone representatives for the next four years: Whaid Rose - Zone 1 (North America and English/French-speaking Caribbean); Carlos Ceron - Zone 2 (Mexico, Central American, Spanish-speaking Caribbean); Jorge Gillig - Zone 3 (South America); Jacob Rao - Zone 4 (Asia); Robert Crawford - Zone 5 (Africa); Phil Kordahi - Zone 6 (Pacific Rim: Australia, Philippines, Indonesia, etc.); Paulo Coelho - Zone 7 (Europe).



2012 IMC attendees gather round national flags (L to R): Miguel Santacruz of Guatemala; Ernesto Frausto (representing SHINE) of the United States; and Jesus Amilcar Salmeron, pointing to his flag (El Salvador).



In Balance

Authentic Christianity involves finding balance between orthodoxy and orthopraxy, between the indicatives and imperatives of Scripture, and the “already” and “not yet” of our faith.

Orthodoxy is right belief; orthopraxy is right behavior. Indicatives point to what God has already done in Christ. Imperatives call us to live in light of what God has done. “Already” points to completed elements of our faith; “not yet” points to what’s still future.

Unfortunately, we tend to treat these as opposites, naturally emphasizing belief over behavior, what we do over what God has already done, and future hopes over present realities.

But orthodoxy and orthopraxy are two sides of the same coin, not opposites. Our doctrine and theology must be matched by our lifestyle and conduct. Biblical imperatives should not be separated from their corresponding indicatives. The “already” and “not yet” are not contradictions or substitutes for each other.

Right belief about God’s existence is no big deal, says James. The Devil shares that conviction, but he’s still the Devil (James 2:19). What matters is the translation of belief into behavior.

In Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians we see Paul’s pattern of explaining our position in Christ in the first half of the letter, followed by his exhortation to godly living in the second half. He establishes our position and then prescribes our practice. We are; therefore, we ought.

And in Romans 8, Paul’s reminder of the reality of life in Christ through the Spirit (vv. 1-17) is followed by a discourse on the “unrealities” of our faith (vv. 18-25). Though delivered from sin’s penalty, we still wait for deliverance from sin’s presence. The physical creation groans for deliv-

erance, and believers also groan for the redemption of our bodies.

Quest for truth balanced with quest for Christlikeness results in what my friend calls “charitable orthodoxy” – debating our differences and loving each other in the process. He confesses that his church has historically “majored on truth but struggled with grace.” Sad commentary, for truth and grace aren’t opposites; they come in the same package: Jesus (see John 1:14-17).

And the same holds true for unity and truth. In his article “Against the Stream” (*Christianity Today*, September 2012), Timothy George reminds us that though they tend to pull us in different directions, unity and truth aren’t opposites. We promote unity at the expense of truth or the indicative of truth with no regard for the imperative of unity. Yet in John 17 Jesus not only affirms that God’s Word is truth but also prays that those who receive the truth of God’s Word would be one. George concludes, “We cannot be faithful followers of Jesus unless we heed both parts of his prayer.”

Truth matters, but the world doesn’t care how much we know until they see how much we care. When we find balance in these areas, our walk becomes the evidence of our faith; church becomes what we are, not something we do; and those who make up the church – broken people, each of us a potentially dangerous heap of conflicting emotions and motives – become living proof of Christ’s redemption, complete in Him and still hoping for our full redemption.

– Whaid Guscott Rose
Conference President





2012 Disasters Relieved



Our Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) last year sent aid to flood-stricken regions in Kenya, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Philippines, and the New York area after Hurricane Sandy. These gifts ranged from \$2,000 to \$6,000 each. Also, DRF sent more than \$10,000 in 2012 to tornado victims in Alabama and Missouri and \$5,000 to orphanages in earthquake-ravaged Haiti (see also SHINE report on p. 27).

As 2012 ends, less than \$12,000 DRF is available for future needs. If you've been blest to help replenish this fund, we'll be ready to assist *when*, not *if*, the next natural disaster strikes. Thank you for sending your DRF offering to the General Conference, P.O. Box 33677, Denver, CO 80233. Or give online at cog7.org.

**DISASTER
RELIEF FUND**