

THE Apostolic Faith

EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2022

Future Planning God's Way

BY DARREL LEE

14

A RESCUE MISSION

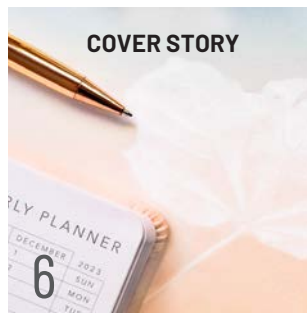
23

A PURPOSE TO PLEASE GOD

41

MERCY EXTENDED

COVER STORY



INSIDE

◀ FUTURE PLANNING GOD'S WAY

As we look to the future, "Lord willing" should continually be the attitude of our hearts.

FROM THE WORD



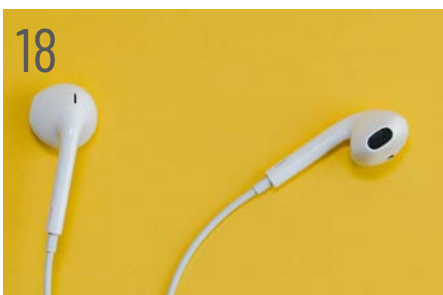
BITTER WATERS MADE SWEET

God used a tree to sweeten water for the Children of Israel, and Jesus' death on the tree of Calvary can sweeten life's hard times for us.



A RESCUE MISSION

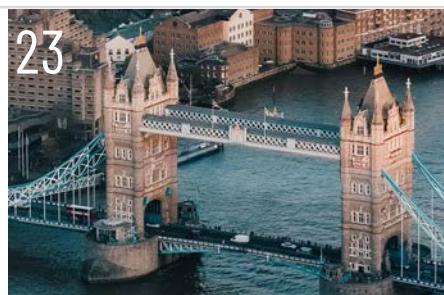
This sermon preached on the American Independence Day considers why Christ came to earth, and what it means for us today.



VITAL COMMUNICATION

God wants to speak to us. Are we listening?

WITNESS



A PURPOSE TO PLEASE GOD

God has been Christiana's Guide, Tutor, and Mentor through many challenging times.



RECRUITED FOR GOD'S OFFENSIVE LINE

Lee had six university football teams interested in him, but God offered him something they could not.



ONE CRUCIAL INGREDIENT

A necessary step in his kayak-building venture reminded Dave about the importance of faith.

THE Apostolic Faith

WORLD REPORT



TANZANIA

✦ A Headquarters Location for Tanzania



INDIA

✦ God Remedies an Unstable Roof in India



BURUNDI

✦ A Headquarters for the Expanding Work in Burundi

OUR CLASSICS



MERCY EXTENDED

Enoch escaped judgment and we can too, when we walk with God as he did.



TEENAGER OVERCOMES PERSECUTION

Edna determined to stay true to her convictions despite abuse and threats at home.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

39

To receive salvation from God, we must acknowledge, confess, repent, forsake, and believe.

A STATEMENT OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

47

We believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, and endorse all the teachings contained in it.

VIEWPOINT

By Darrel Lee, SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL

+ There is no higher honor than to have a part in the Gospel mission.

In her 2021 Independence Day sermon, Josephine McElveen noted that U.S. Special Forces at times rescue American citizens held captive in foreign lands. She related a Seal Team 6 mission as an illustration of the divine mission of Jesus. Satan holds sinners hostage, but the Lord came to rescue and set souls free.

She was speaking from experience about Christ's rescue mission, because Sister Josephine herself was once held captive by sin. Though brought up in a God-fearing home by moral parents, her family lacked the knowledge of real salvation. Jesus was only a historical figure to Sister Josephine, and her Christianity was superficial. Thinking she needed to be liberated from the control of her strict parents, she moved from North Carolina to Southern California for school. However, instead of finding freedom, she found bondage.

There was an emptiness in Sister Josephine's heart that she did not understand, which caused her to begin seeking God. One day, she got a ride to downtown Los Angeles for a medical appointment. She recalls, "Between the driver and me was a big book—a Bible. As we were riding to the clinic, the man asked me if I was saved." She responded by describing her strict upbringing that included regular church attendance. He said, "I didn't ask you that. I asked if you are saved." He proceeded to tell her that she did not need to be a slave to sin because Jesus had power to deliver her and set her free. The following Friday evening found her at an old-fashioned wooden altar bench where she saw herself as a sinner in need of a Savior. She didn't know how to pray, but cried out, "Lord, save me!" She relates, "The Lord came into my heart in a way that I never knew was possible. When I walked out of that place, it was as though I walked into a brand new world." She was rescued!

Almost immediately, Sister Josephine felt a burden for lost souls. She lived in an apartment where a dangerous gang was active. Her desire was to reach out to them. She thought, "Perhaps these young people did not have a mother or grandmother who knew about God. Maybe there was nobody to pray for them or care for their souls." **The rescued became a rescuer!**

Sister Josephine's message on page 14 speaks of Jesus' mission to preach deliverance to captives. For us who have experienced that deliverance from sin, His mission becomes ours. We are recruits in His special forces, called to help liberate souls from Satan's grip. Through the power in Jesus' Blood, we can see chains of sin broken and souls set free.

Who in your life needs rescuing? There is no higher honor than to have a part in the Gospel mission. As you read the testimonies and articles in this magazine, may you be inspired anew to reach out to the lost with the message of deliverance.

Darrel D Lee



From **THE WORD**

And the next sabbath day came
almost the whole city together
to hear the word of God.

– Acts 13:44

6 FUTURE PLANNING GOD'S WAY

14 A RESCUE MISSION

10 BITTER WATERS MADE SWEET

18 VITAL COMMUNICATION



By Darrel Lee

FUTURE PLANNING GOD'S WAY

As we look to the future, "Lord willing" should continually be the attitude of our hearts.

Have you made plans to do something or go somewhere between now and the end of the year? Likely you have, since most of us look ahead and prepare for upcoming events.

In the Book of James, chapter 4, the Apostle spoke of individuals who made presumptuous plans. They said, "To day or to tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain" (James 4:13). James did not condemn these individuals because they had planned but because they omitted any consideration of God's will in doing so. He continued in verses 14-15, "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow . . . ye ought to say, *If the Lord will*, we shall live, and do this, or that" (emphasis added).

The fact is that *none* of us knows what we will be doing tomorrow, a week, a month, or a year from now. Some people do not consider God at all when they look ahead. Others believe in God, but neglect to seek God's will. It is good to preface any discussion of our plans for the future with the words, "Lord willing." Even if we do not say the words aloud, we

always want to take into account His will for us.

PLANS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Back in 2020, my wife and I made plans to take our daughter, Alicia, and son-in-law, Rob, to Israel from April 15 to April 29. We were excited! I told the two of them that this was going to be a trip of a lifetime. Rob and Alicia made arrangements for someone to stay with their three teenage boys. We blocked out the time on our calendars, reviewed our proposed itinerary, and bought our plane tickets.

In a sense, those were tentative plans, because whether we identify our plans as tentative or not, situations can change. That is what happened with our trip arrangements. Our plans did not work out—in fact, plans did not work out for many people around the world at that time! The Covid pandemic changed everything. So, some events we expect to occur do not come to pass.

At other times, events occur that we do not expect to take place.

Just six weeks after the four of us would have returned from Israel if our trip had gone as scheduled, we held the funeral service for Rob's dad. That service was not anticipated; his dad's sudden passing was a surprise to all of us.

The fact is, in the months ahead if Jesus tarries, some things we plan will not happen and other things will happen that we never expected. We face an uncertain future! Still, whatever does occur will be what the Lord ordains. God is sovereign. He made all things, and by Him all things exist. He is in control, and He is a good God, so we want to align our wills with His.

AN OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

In both the Old and New Testaments, we find examples of individuals who failed to consider God's will when making plans and experienced the consequences.

In Genesis chapter 11, we read that the people of the earth were of one language and settled in one general area. Then, as a group, they made plans. **They said, "Let**



us make brick,” and “Let us build us a city and a tower,” and “Let us make us a name” (Genesis 11:3-4). They were entirely self-focused! So without any consideration of God, they decided what they would do.

No doubt they met together to discuss their project, calculating how tall the structure would be, what materials it would take, and how long it would take to complete it. Some historians believe that their tower may have been up to fifteen stories high by today’s standards, possibly with a temple devoted to idol worship at the top.

God was not pleased, and He changed the tower builders’ plans. He hindered their construction efforts by confounding their language so they could not understand one another’s words. Then He “scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:8), and their tower was abandoned. They had not taken “If the Lord wills . . .” into account.

A NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

In the New Testament, we read Jesus’ parable about the rich farmer. Jesus actually called him a “fool,” so many Bibles give this parable the heading, “The Rich Fool.” This farmer also had plans that were self-focused rather than God-focused. Ten times in Luke 12:17-19, he referred to “I” or “my.” When his ground brought forth so plentifully that he had

an abundance, he began planning for the future. Again, the problem was not that he planned, but that he did so without considering God’s will.

We read, “And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull

down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” But God said to him, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou



“Ye know not what shall be on the morrow . . . ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”

– James 4:14-15





hast provided?" (Luke 12:17-20). The farmer died before he could begin to use what was stored in his barns, let alone build greater ones. All his plans were futile!

If our net worth is determined by what we have, then we might feel good about our assets today. However, when we get to the end of life, we will find that just as we brought nothing into this world, we will take nothing out.

Even the potential beneficiaries of the rich farmer's goods would have eventually left those goods behind to someone else, who would have left them to someone else. As each successive heir stepped into eternity, the only thing that would matter is how that one had prepared for his or her eternal future.

Jesus warned, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). If our net worth is determined by what we have, then we might feel good about our assets today. However, when we get to the end of life, we will find that just as we brought nothing into this world, we will take nothing out. We end the same way we began: with no equity or assets. When that day comes, we want to have treasures laid up in Heaven.

A CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLE

The account of the rich farmer reminds me of a client I had many years ago when I worked as an accountant in Dallas, Oregon. Like the man in Jesus' parable, this man was a farmer. Large quantities of grain and grasses are grown in the Dallas area, and his company would fill containers with the straw and ship it to Japan. He made a lot of money doing so!

One year at tax time, he came in and told me that he was very satisfied with his financial holdings. He said that his barns were full and he was going to have to build bigger ones, though he said nothing about tearing down his existing barns. As he related this to me, I thought of the parable in Luke 12. I do not remember exactly how I responded, but I do remember thinking, *Wow! You had better lay up treasure in Heaven!* Interestingly, within two years that man was bankrupt, so his business plans were as futile as those of the farmer in Jesus' parable.

True treasure cannot be measured monetarily. We want our lives to count, and what counts is living for the Lord. We do that by submitting our desires, goals, and interests to God's plan. We pray, "Lord, I want your will to be done in all I do."

GUIDANCE FOR FACING THE FUTURE

It is far better to consult God for His plan than to ask Him to bless our plans. Before making decisions on our own, we appeal to the God of Heaven. He is our Guide and Counselor, so we ask Him what He wants us to do. God will reveal His will to us as we look to Him. Most likely, direction will not come as a voice from Heaven. However, it will be given to us as we prayerfully explore what might be God's leading in our lives. As we pray, "Lord, open the doors to what You want for me, and shut the doors that are not Your will," God will do that! He is faithful.

We do not need to know what is far out there in our future. We do not even need to know what next month or next week holds for us. We can rely upon God to direct our steps as each day comes and goes.

In James 4:14, the Apostle stated, "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow." He continued by referencing the brevity of life, saying, "What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." A vapor is transitory and seen only for a moment. Similarly, our time in this world is brief.

Since our days are limited and we do not know what tomorrow holds, some people face the future with fear and trepidation. However, that is not necessary. Jesus said, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye

provide grace to take us through to the other side of the challenge.



Resist the devil. James went on to tell his readers, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Do not have a conversation with the enemy of your soul beyond telling him,

to go anywhere, and to accept whatever the Lord wanted in our lives. We were determined to separate ourselves from the world and from all those who would negatively influence us. And the Lord helped us! To have a successful walk with God, that

Most likely, direction will not come as a voice from Heaven.

shall put on" (Luke 12:22). A few verses farther on in that same chapter, He admonished, "Fear not . . . for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). God will provide what He knows we need. Not only will He provide for our temporal needs, but He will give us grace to face any challenges presented to us tomorrow or any time in the future.

ENSURING WE ARE IN THE WILL OF GOD

As we anticipate God's plan for us in coming days, the Apostle James gives three specific measures we can take to ensure we are in the will of God.



Submit to God. James' first instruction was, "Submit yourselves therefore to God" (James 4:7). When we do this, we subordinate our wills to God's will; we accept that whatever God brings or allows in our lives is aligned with His purpose for us. It is according to His sovereign will. Even if what we face is the result of our own previous poor decisions, God is sovereign. As we submit to God, we can depend upon Him to

"Get thee behind me, Satan." Hold a conversation with the Lord. Look Heaven's way! Plead the Blood of Jesus, and the enemy will flee from you. The devil cannot overcome the Blood.



Draw nigh to God. James' third instruction was, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8). In order to get saved, it took the Lord reaching out to our hearts and convicting us of our sins. God initiated the action to bring us to Him. However, when it comes to drawing nigh to God, we can employ measures on our own to accomplish that. We can set ourselves to pray. We can set ourselves to study the Word of God in a systematic manner. We can determine to draw closer to the Lord in every way available to us. When we do so, we will find that He comes closer to us.

MAINTAINING OUR SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT

We want to maintain the same commitment we had when we first were saved. When God transformed our lives, we were willing to do anything,

mentality and spirit of total commitment must continue.

The enemy of our souls wants to prevent us from making Heaven our eternal home, and he will use any measure at his disposal to accomplish that purpose. However, God has a purpose too, and that is to help us overcome every attempt of the enemy. So we need not fear the challenges that will confront us in the future. God allows trials for a reason, and they will always be for our good.

As we think about the days and weeks to come, if Jesus tarries, let us accept God's plan for our lives. Let us determine that "Lord willing" will continually be the attitude of our hearts. Then, whether our personal expectations carry through or trials come our way that we never expected, we can rest in the assurance that God is in control and that He does all things well. ❖

Rev. Darrel Lee is the Apostolic Faith Superintendent General.



By Bill McKibben

BITTER WATERS MADE SWEET

God used a tree to sweeten water for the Children of Israel, and Jesus' death on the tree of Calvary can sweeten life's hard times for us.

In the first twenty-one verses of Exodus 15 we find what is known as the Song of Moses. It is a poetic celebration of God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian enslavement, and in a broader sense, it praises God's great power to do what no other god anywhere, at any time, could do.

The events that led to this triumphal song began when God heard the cries of His people enslaved in Egypt. Through Moses, God sent the message to Pharaoh, "Let my people go, that they may serve me" (Exodus 9:1). Pharaoh was stubborn and tried to retain control, but God sent plagues on Egypt, culminating in the death of the firstborn throughout the land. Broken by this, Pharaoh let the Jewish people go, but soon regretted his decision and pursued after them to the Red Sea. With Pharaoh's army behind them and the Red Sea before them, the Children of Israel did not know what to do. Then, they cried out to

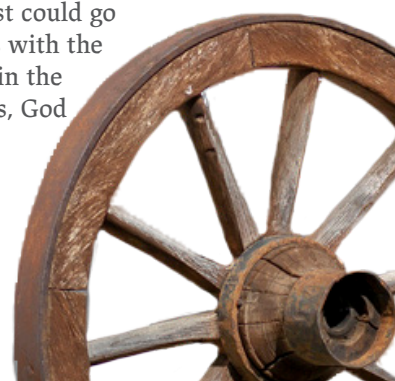
the Lord and He parted the waters so that they walked through on dry ground! Pharaoh's men pursued, but God caused their chariot wheels to fall off. Then the waters returned, drowning the Egyptian army.

What a miraculous deliverance! All of Israel rejoiced, singing with Moses, **"Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"** (Exodus 15:11-12). The words of the song seem to indicate that the Israelites had complete confidence in God to lead them forward. However, within days they would encounter a new challenge and their confidence would be gone.

Following the Red Sea crossing, God led His people into the wilderness of Shur, and for three days they found no water. In the desert, this is not a small thing; it is a matter of life and death. When they finally came to a place where

there was water, it was bitter. The people reacted by murmuring against Moses, and they named the place *Marah*, which is the Hebrew word for "bitter." Yet, Moses knew what to do and turned to God for help. He "cried unto the Lord," and God was faithful to answer. "The LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet" (Exodus 15:25).

After their great deliverance, the Israelites may have expected that the rest of the journey would be without incident. That is not how life works, though; there are ups and downs. Life sent the Children of Israel bitter waters, and sometimes life sends us bitter waters. After a spiritual victory, we can go on to experience sickness, loss, isolation, persecution, economic difficulties, and the list could go on. Yet, as with the Israelites in the wilderness, God



offers a remedy for life's bitter waters.

God showed Moses a tree, and He also shows us a tree. **Our tree is Calvary, the Cross upon which Jesus died.** It was the most bitter symbol of death known in the Roman world, but it has been transformed into a symbol of sweet hope and redemption by the Blood of Jesus Christ! To those who are overwhelmed with the bitterness of sin, the Cross symbolizes the sweetness of salvation. It is forgiveness for sin through faith, repentance, and a surrender to God's will. For the redeemed, the Cross—that tree that Jesus hung upon—is available for us to place into the bitter waters of life that come our way. It is the remedy for any trouble we may encounter.

THE REMEDY FOR A BITTER ATTITUDE

One of the dangers that exists when we face bitter waters in life is that they can cause feelings of bitterness in our souls, and that is a serious problem. In Hebrews 12:15, we are told to be diligent in our faith, "lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." If we start to harbor resentment over our circumstances, we will become troubled not only spiritually, but physically and emotionally as well. In addition, as this verse notes, our attitude will affect those around us.

Sometimes bitter feelings stem from our interactions with others.

After a spiritual victory, we can go on to experience sickness, loss, isolation, persecution, economic difficulties, and the list could go on. Yet, as with the Israelites in the wilderness, God offers a remedy for life's bitter waters.

”

Maybe we feel we have been slighted or offended by another individual. The Word of God gives very practical advice for how to respond. We read in Ephesians 4:31, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." We must make a conscious decision to lay aside



“Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead.” – Ruth 2:20

negative thoughts and forgive quickly before resentment has opportunity to take root.

Some have been hurt so deeply they feel they cannot forgive. However, this is not something we have to do in our own strength—God will help. Continuing in Ephesians, the next verse says, **“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”** Christ suffered and died to

forgive all our sins, and His love will help us extend forgiveness and grace to others. When bitter feelings threaten to rise in our hearts, we can overcome them by remembering the Cross and all Christ has done for us.

THE REMEDY FOR LIFE’S “BITTER WATERS”

In the Book of Ruth, we learn about a woman who experienced some “bitter waters.” Naomi was

an Israelite who married and had two sons. When a famine came to the land of Israel, she and her husband moved their family to the neighboring country of Moab. While there, her husband died, and she became a widow. Her sons married and thrived for a time, but then they died also.

These were tough times for Naomi. She decided to return to her homeland, and her daughter-in-law Ruth insisted on

Naomi had no money or possessions, and as a widowed woman in that culture, she had no status. Without a male heir to inherit her husband’s land and continue the family name, she could not keep the property, so she had to put it up for sale.

”

joining her. When Naomi arrived in her hometown of Bethlehem and was recognized, she told the people, “Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full and the LORD hath brought me home again empty” (Ruth 1:20-21). Naomi had no money or possessions, and as a widowed woman in that culture, she had no status. Without a male heir to inherit her husband’s land and continue the family name, she could not keep the property, so she had to put it up for sale.



However, Naomi never turned her back on God, and in time He made provision for her. One of her husband's kinsmen was a wealthy man named Boaz. Ruth went to glean in his fields, and because she found favor with him, he instructed his reapers to leave behind barley for her. When Ruth showed her mother-in-law how much she had gleaned, Naomi said, "Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead." Then she said, "The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen" (Ruth 2:20). Naomi saw God at work in this. Under Mosaic Law, a widow's land could be redeemed by a near kinsman if he were willing to marry her and produce an heir to inherit her previous husband's property, as well as carry on his family name. In fact, the word translated here as "kinsmen" comes from the Hebrew *go'el*, which means "kinsman-redeemer." In this case, Boaz married Ruth, redeeming her husband's inheritance and thereby Naomi's.

Boaz and Ruth eventually had a son named Obed who became the grandfather of King David and an ancestor of Christ. When Obed was born, the women of the town said, "Blessed be the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman [a redeemer] that his name may be famous in Israel" (Ruth 4:14).

When life seemed unfair to Naomi, God had not forsaken her. She remained faithful and God provided a kinsman-redeemer to buy back what she could not. We have a Kinsman-Redeemer also. His name is Jesus! His name is famous in Israel and throughout the world. There is no redeemer like Him—He gave His life on

a tree to purchase us from the bondage of sin. He also promised to supply our every need and to be with us always, even unto the end of the world. There is no type of "bitter water" in life that He cannot overcome.

WE HAVE JESUS!

There is a sister in our Seattle, Washington, congregation who is in her nineties. A few years ago, she shared her testimony on Mother's Day. She said that when she was a child, her grandmother took her to Sunday school. Then at age eleven, after her father received salvation, she declared, "I want that." She prayed and God saved her.

Later, she grew up, married, and had five children. When she was in her late twenties, her family moved to Seattle from the southern part of the United States. They lived here in the 1960s, which was not necessarily an easy time for an African-American woman to raise a family in a West Coast city, but there she was. After fifty years of marriage, her husband died. One of her sons passed away as well.

The last time I visited her, she had eighteen grandchildren, and several were at her house. As I talked with her, I asked her to share some of the hard times in life that she had experienced. She just chuckled and said, "**But Pastor, we have Jesus.**" She had not one complaint, because when she was eleven years old, God showed her a tree—the Cross of Jesus. She had been putting that tree into the bitter waters every time they came up, and the waters kept coming back sweet! God will do the same for us if we will

continually look to the Cross.

We wish every day could be a Passover deliverance and a Red Sea parting, but life is not like that. Difficult times will come to every one of us, but we can be encouraged for God has shown

When life seemed unfair to Naomi, God had not forsaken her. She remained faithful and God provided a kinsman-redeemer to buy back what she could not. We have a Kinsman-Redeemer also. His name is Jesus!



us a tree. Calvary's tree stands strong today and is available to cast into the bitter waters that come our way.

If past events have left you feeling hurt or discouraged, cast your cares on Jesus and let His sacrificial love bring healing.

If you are going through a difficult situation now, remember that God has not forsaken you; He is your Redeemer and He has a plan to provide for you. Whatever awaits us in the future, we can face with the attitude, "But we have Jesus!" God has shown us a tree, and our bitterness can be made sweet today. ❖

Rev. Bill McKibben is the Apostolic Faith Director of East Asia Work and pastor of the church in Seattle, Washington.



By Josephine McElveen

A RESCUE MISSION

This sermon preached on the American Independence Day considers why Christ came to earth, and what it means for us today.



Shortly after Jesus began His ministry, He went to the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth on the Sabbath and stood up to read. The Book of Luke records that He was handed the scroll of Isaiah and, turning to a certain passage, read, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the LORD." After reading, Jesus closed the book and sat down. Then, with all eyes still fastened on Him, He declared, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:18-19, 21).

Jesus came to this earth with a mission, and we can see that mission outlined in these verses. It was not to set up an earthly kingdom as some were expecting of the Messiah. His mission was to do the will of His Father. It was to preach, to heal, and to deliver. Ultimately, He came to die so we could be set free!

There are elite groups in America known for being able to carry out difficult missions. One of these is the Navy Seals. When an American citizen is taken captive on foreign soil, the Navy Seals are among those called upon to perform a search and rescue operation. For example, in October 2020, Seal Team 6 rescued an American taken hostage in the country of Niger. Another of these elite

groups, called the Green Berets, was active during the Vietnam War era. As part of the Army Special Forces, these soldiers were trained to go behind enemy lines and recover downed pilots or rescue prisoners of war. They were prepared to carry out the most dangerous operations at all costs. In some situations, they expected to either be wounded in action or give their lives for the success of the mission. Not to discredit the rest of our military, but the members of the U.S. Special Forces are called when there is a specific mission others cannot do.

Jesus came with a specific mission, and He did not allow anything to

deter Him. When He first told the disciples of how He would suffer and die before rising again, Peter tried to rebuke Him. Peter said, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." However, Jesus responded, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matthew 16:22-23). He had a mission! He came to die, to give His life for us as our sacrifice, and He went all the way to Calvary.

The Navy Seals and the Green Berets carry out their duties no

The Creator allowed himself to be abused and scorned by the created, because He had a mission.

matter how difficult or dangerous the assignment. **If men can be that dedicated and focused, how much more the Son of God?** He set aside His Heavenly authority for us. At any time, He could have called legions of angels to come to His rescue, but He did not. The Creator allowed Himself to be abused and scorned by the created, because He had a mission.

Today, we can be glad nothing deterred Jesus from His purpose. We can still benefit from everything He came to accomplish.

TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

The first part of the mission Jesus came to fulfill was to "preach the Gospel to the poor." Jesus came to earth bringing good news for all, but not everyone was willing to receive it. Therefore, He preached to a select group of people—the poor in spirit. When people are poor in spirit, they

know they have a need, and they are more open to receiving. Jesus said, "**Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**" (Matthew 5:3). When the disciples asked Jesus why He spoke in parables, His answer was, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matthew 13:11). His message was to those who were able to recognize their need.

In any church service, there could be some who have never heard the good news that Jesus saves from sin, and they have an obvious need. We never know who is in the mix, but God knows every heart. At the other end of the spectrum, are those of us who have been saved for a long time, and our need to hear the Gospel message may not seem so obvious. However, to grow spiritually, we must continually receive God's Word into our hearts and apply it to our lives. **When we are too satisfied with our current spiritual state, we risk becoming stagnant.** May God help us to be needy; the good news is precious to those who are poor in spirit.

TO HEAL THE BROKENHEARTED

Jesus also came "to heal the brokenhearted," including those who are grieved by their sins. We learn from Psalm 51:17, "**The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.**" True repentance comes from brokenness. We cannot receive salvation until we can see ourselves as God see us. We must come to a place where we stop

making excuses for our sinful actions and admit, "I am a sinner in need of a Savior."

That is what the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart when God saved me. I was raised in a Christian home and had a spiritual pedigree. The names of my paternal grandparents were on a plaque at our church, and I saw this every time I walked by. I know what religious pride looks like, but I thank God for a broken spirit. One

True repentance comes from brokenness. We cannot receive salvation until we can see ourselves as God see us. We must come to a place where we stop making excuses for our sinful actions and admit, "I am a sinner in need of a Savior."

day a driver tried to witness to me by asking if I was saved, and I became defensive. The "lawyer" in me came out and pled my case. I gave the man my credentials. I let him know I was not a heathen; I was raised in the church. I went to Sunday school every Sunday, and we had family devotions. In response, he said, "I didn't ask you about any of that. I asked if you are saved." I got the message, and my heart was broken. The Lord caused me to see myself as a sinner in need of a Savior.

God calls us to brokenness, but He does not leave us broken. When we repent of our sins, He forgives us and brings healing to our lives.

Before salvation, my Christianity was superficial. This left me with an emptiness in my heart, so when the bus driver invited me to church, I went. During the service, I felt true Holy Ghost conviction for my sins and wept, because I needed Jesus. After the meeting, I went to the front and knelt by the little wooden altar bench and prayed, "Lord, save me!" Jesus came into my heart in a way I never knew was possible. He did something real in my life. He took away my sin and filled the emptiness in my heart with His love.

When we come to God with a broken and contrite heart, He will heal us.

TO PREACH DELIVERANCE TO CAPTIVES

Another part of Jesus' mission was "to preach deliverance to the captives." Sin has us bound from birth. Adam brought sin into this world, and everyone born since has inherited his sinful nature. The Psalmist said, "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). **Whether we know it or not, we are all in need of a Savior.**

In our sinful state, we might look upon someone who has an addiction to drugs or alcohol and think, *At least I am in better shape than that person.* However, we can be just as bound by less visible sins such as pride or being unwilling to forgive, and God takes all sin seriously.

It is even possible to be a respected church member and be captive to sin. We have heard testimonies from people who were faithful in ushering,

singing, or teaching while still in captivity. While some were backslidden, others had never been saved and were ignorant of their spiritual condition. Sometimes, people raised in a church environment have learned to behave like Christians and don't realize their need for salvation.

No matter our circumstance, God does not want us to remain in captivity—the Holy Spirit is faithful to convict of sin, from the most visible to the hidden, and Jesus paid the price for our redemption.

TO SET AT LIBERTY

I believe that when an American is taken captive in a foreign land, that nation knows that our soldiers will be coming. They don't know how, they don't know when, but they know someone is coming to deliver the captives. This is a privilege of being an American citizen, but there is a greater assurance of deliverance that God has given to people of all nations. Not only did Jesus preach deliverance, but He provided it. In Romans 6:23 we read, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Our sins had led us on a path of eternal separation from God, and the only remedy was a perfect sacrifice. That is why Jesus came—He had to pay the price. Nothing and no one else could fulfill the requirement and satisfy our Holy God. Jesus paid the ransom, taking our sins upon Himself and going to the Cross to "set at liberty them that are bruised."



What happened in our hearts when we repented of our sins was real. Jesus set us free, but we must do our part to remain free. The Word of God says to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). To continue walking in victory, we must daily submit to God’s authority. The Apostle Paul said, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Corinthians 9:27). The devil is subtle. Sometimes small irritations can result in negative thoughts. If we allow these thoughts to continue, we can become accustomed to them, and this can lead to sin. We can get used to walking in our own ways. Therefore, it is important to daily ask God to search our hearts and help us submit to His will.

It is also important to be sensitive to God’s Spirit. **When we do or say something that is contrary to God’s will, the Holy Spirit will check our hearts, and we must heed the warning.** One time, our Superintendent General and his wife were coming to visit our congregation in Washington D.C., and I began preparing. After I had cleaned one office and started on the second, my watch vibrated and displayed the words, “Take a rest.” It did this because it had been programmed to, but God

knows all about us. He knows our makeup, what will tempt us, and when we are in spiritual danger. When the Holy Spirit checks us, we must not ignore it. When we are in conversation and the Spirit says, “Check,” we need to listen. The Bible instructs us in Galatians 5:1, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” I felt fine while cleaning and could have continued, but knew the check was for my own good and stopped. If we will ask the Lord to help us yield to the checks of the Spirit, instead of continuing in our own ways, He will keep us.

THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD

Jesus came with a mission, and He has never deviated from it. He came preaching “the acceptable year of the Lord,” meaning the door to salvation was open. That door remains open today. The special forces have been sent—the Holy Spirit is calling the captives to deliverance. He is convicting people of sin to bring them to a place of brokenness where they can say, “I need Jesus.”

If you have not experienced salvation, don’t defend how good you are or list your family credentials. God does not have any grandchildren, only children. Jesus accomplished His mission

on the Cross, so you could live in newness of life. While the invitation continues to go out, repent and be set free.

We are living in the last days. Jesus is coming back for His Church, and He gave us a prerequisite. He said it would be a “glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Ephesians 5:27). That “any such

When the Holy Spirit checks us, we must not ignore it. When we are in conversation and the Spirit says, “Check,” we need to listen.



thing” concerns those of us who are saved. These are the things the Holy Spirit brings to our attention with a check. If the Holy Spirit is checking your heart, heed the warning and surrender fully to God’s will. If you do, you will be among those Jesus is looking for upon His return.

We thank God that Jesus came and gave His life a ransom that we might walk in freedom. His mission is still in operation today, and if we will take advantage of it, we can have victory. ❖

Rev. Josephine McElveen is the Apostolic Faith District Superintendent of Southern and Eastern Churches in the United States, and pastor of the church in Washington, D.C.



By Dave Lambert

VITAL COMMUNICATION

God wants to speak to us. Are we listening?

In the Word of God we find an amazing truth about communication—the fact that God, the Creator of the universe, desires to have fellowship and communion with man. Both the Old and New Testaments bear this out.

In the first book of the Bible, we read that the relationship between mankind and God was a beautiful, unbroken exchange where God would come in the cool of the day to walk and talk with Adam and Eve. What an experience that must have been! However, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sin entered their hearts, that relationship was severed and the nature of communication between God and man changed entirely.

In the New Testament, we read, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds” (Hebrews 1:1-2). God has always implemented ways to communicate with man, but in these last days, He speaks to us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is necessary in any relationship. Back when my wife Rosie and I were anticipating marriage, we lived about three hours apart. We had only two ways to communicate: by telephone and by writing letters. And when I say “telephone,” I am not referring to a mobile device. Back then, the telephone was an instrument hooked into a wall jack, and if there was another phone in the same house, someone else could listen in on the conversation. There was not a lot of privacy! Letter writing had its own set of challenges; my penmanship back then was better than it is now, but Rosie still had to decipher it. So it took time and effort to communicate. (It was worth the effort, by the way!)

Communication enables us to share our feelings, opinions, and expectations with another individual. It is how we exchange information and give instruction. However, effective communication is more than just one person expressing thoughts. There must be

receptivity—an understanding of what is being communicated and then a response to it.

In our spiritual lives, communication is critical to salvation. **The Lord initiates the connection by calling after our hearts, but we must respond to His voice.** We read in 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The fact that we must “confess” implies a dialogue with God. When He deals with our hearts, we should respond by admitting our sins and repenting.

In the Old Testament era, God ordained a different way for people to approach Him. Those who wanted access to God had to bring animals and depend upon the priests to sacrifice them in order to obtain atonement for their sins. Communication was not a personal connection as we can have now. Jesus Christ provided a better way when He offered up Himself as a sacrifice for sin. As He was dying on the Cross and His blood spilled to the ground, there was a great earthquake. The veil of the Temple tore from top to bottom, opening



- ✓ God speaks through adversity
- ✓ God speaks through children
- ✓ God speaks through nature
- ✓ God speaks through testimonies
- ✓ God speaks through sermons
- ✓ God speaks through music
- ✓ God speaks through His Word

access to the Holy of Holies. Today, we do not need to approach God through a priest or offer continual sacrifices. The death of Jesus Christ gave us direct access into the presence of God himself.

In the Word of God, we read of different ways God has communicated with people through the ages regarding their need for a right relationship with Him, in order to instruct and guide them, and for a variety of other reasons. Following are some of the ways He communicates.



GOD SPEAKS THROUGH ADVERSITY

Although trials may come our way for a variety of purposes, sometimes He allows a difficulty to teach us. This is not done as punishment, but as a corrective measure based on love and concern. Hebrews 12:11 says that “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Sometimes trials are the only way the Lord

can reach us, so He permits them out of mercy.

One example is the account of Jonah. Jonah was a prophet, so he

Sometimes storms have a way of revealing things we need to see, and that was the case with Jonah.

was accustomed to hearing God’s voice. When God told him to go to Nineveh and preach repentance, he understood. However, he did not want to do what God instructed, so he boarded a ship headed to Tarshish instead. Consequently, God sent a great storm to get Jonah’s attention. As it grew worse, the mariners on board the ship became afraid for their lives. Finally, they cast lots and God revealed it was Jonah’s fault that this great storm had come upon them.

Sometimes storms have a way of revealing things we need to see, and that was the case with Jonah. He told the men that he had fled from the presence of the Lord, so they should throw him overboard. When they reluctantly did so,

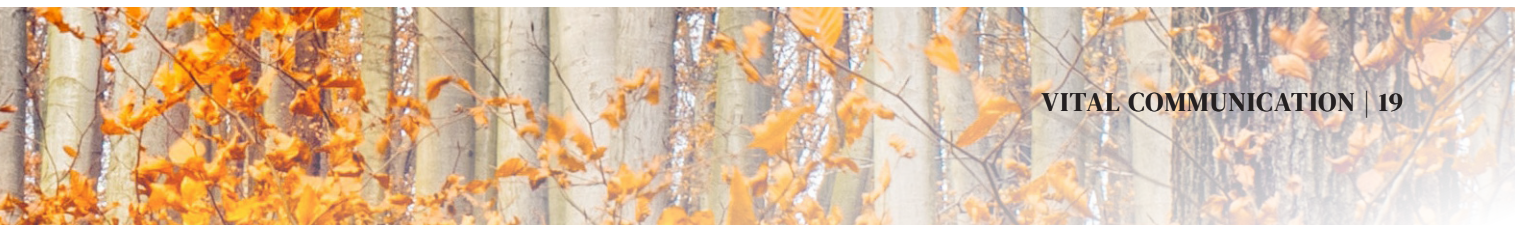
immediately the sea became calm. God had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, and the prophet was in the belly of that fish for three days and nights. At last, he cried out to God. Aren’t we thankful that even if we are slow to reach out to God, when we do so He hears us and responds? God undertook for Jonah, and the fish spit the prophet out on dry land.

God’s method of communicating with Jonah had the desired effect. Jonah told God, “I will pay that that I have vowed” (Jonah 2:9). And he did! He went to Nineveh and proclaimed, “Yet forty days and Nineveh will perish.” As a result, the people of Nineveh “turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not” (Jonah 3:10). **A city was spared because Jonah finally did what God instructed, even though God had to communicate with him in a unique way.**



GOD SPEAKS THROUGH CHILDREN

We read in 2 Kings that God used the words of a little maid in the home of the Syrian commander,



Naaman, to resolve a desperate situation. Naaman was a mighty man of valor, but he had leprosy. In the natural, there was no hope for him. However, a young maiden serving in his home told his wife, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy" (2 Kings 5:3).

Based on her words, Naaman went down to the prophet's house, where he received some instructions. Though Naaman almost let pride rob him of his healing, he finally did as the man of God had instructed: he dipped seven times in the Jordan River. When he came out of the water the seventh time, his skin was completely clear of that disease. What a wonderful miracle! Naaman was not only changed externally, but internally as well. He made a vow that he would never again worship any other god except the God of Israel. None of that would have happened if the young maiden had not been willing to communicate her faith. We do not want to dismiss children, especially if God uses them to speak to us. We want to be humble enough to listen.



GOD SPEAKS THROUGH NATURE

Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." God speaks through His creation, and Nick Segres Sr. was one who experienced that. Brother Nick was born and raised in a Christian home, but he rebelled against his Christian upbringing. He began hanging out with the wrong crowd and heading down the

road of sin. However, God got his attention. One evening as he was walking to a dance, he passed the church and heard people singing and praising the Lord. Something in his heart said, "You need to go inside." Brother Nick testified that he looked up in the sky and pointed out the brightest star he could see. He said, "Lord, if You want me to go to church, let that star fall from the sky." As he lowered his hand, that star fell right along with it. God was speaking! Brother Nick did not get saved that night, but from that moment on, he was aware that God knew exactly where he was and what he was doing. A short time later he turned his life over to God.



GOD SPEAKS THROUGH TESTIMONIES

We read in Psalm 66:16, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." Charles Rodman was one who was impacted by the words of people declaring what God had done for them.

Brother Rodman was an ordained minister and the pastor of a church on the East Coast. He was an educated man and could read the Bible in both Greek and Hebrew. However, he never knew that a person could be saved from sin and live a life of victory. That changed one afternoon when Brother Rodman was here in Portland, Oregon, for a conference. As he

was walking in the downtown area, he came upon a street meeting being held by people from this church. Individuals were stepping forward and telling how Jesus had changed their lives, taking out the sin and defeat. Brother Rodman said it was like a lightbulb came on and he knew in a moment that was what he needed. He went to a church service that afternoon and prayed at the altar. Although he did not get saved there, on his way back to his hotel room that evening, the peace of God stole over his heart and soul and he knew the work was done. God had reached his heart through testimonies.



GOD SPEAKS THROUGH SERMONS

In 1 Corinthians 1:21 we read that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." John Clasper was one who heard the voice of God that way. Brother Clasper and his wife had come to Portland from Scotland, and his wife had begun attending services at the Apostolic Faith. To please her, Brother Clasper agreed to go with her one Sunday morning. As he sat in that church service, the preacher spoke about hypocrisy and people who claimed to be Christians but were living ungodly lives. The words convicted Brother Clasper, and he determined he would never go back. However, when the next Sunday came around, his wife invited him again. He refused. He went out in the back yard and lit up a big cigar, but God spoke to him, saying, "You'd better go."

They were late for the meeting, but they were not late for the



sermon. Once more, the preacher spoke about hypocrisy. Brother Clasper said he felt like the preacher was pointing right at him. He even accused his wife, "You have told these people something about me!" She had not; it was the Spirit of the Lord revealing the truth to him through the preacher's words.

Brother Clasper went to work that afternoon, and as he worked in the machine room, all he could hear was, "You hypocrite! You hypocrite! You hypocrite!" Finally, the conviction on his heart became so heavy that he dropped to his knees right there in front of his coworkers. He called out to the Lord, and there God saved him. God had used the "foolishness of preaching" to speak to his heart.



GOD SPEAKS THROUGH MUSIC

Gary Bertram recalls that several years before he was saved, his dad died unexpectedly from a heart attack. The whole family was distraught, and Brother Gary was sitting in his living room one afternoon, trying to come to terms with what had happened. He was listening to a rock and roll station out of Seattle, Washington, and a woman came on and began to sing "Amazing Grace"—on a rock and roll station! Brother Gary knew nothing about salvation, but as he listened, tears began to run down his face. After he was saved some time later, he looked back and

realized that God used that song to speak to his heart.



GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS WORD

We read in Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Other passages let us know that the entrance of God's words gives light, and that Scripture contains the keys to eternal life. God is faithful to instruct us through the Bible.

At times, God's Word gives us direction. Proverbs 3:5-6 encourages us, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." When we are uncertain about what to do in a situation, God communicates and reveals His will. Psalm 32:8 says "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." The Lord will teach us if we will listen to Him speak through His Word.

Throughout the Bible, we read of other ways God has communicated with people. God called Moses through a burning bush. He rebuked the foolishness of Balaam by speaking through a donkey. He spoke to Ezekiel through a vision, and to Joseph and Paul the Apostle through dreams.

Why does God go to such great lengths to communicate with us? Why does He use so many ways to call after hearts? His Word gives the answer: it is because of His great love and compassion for mankind. In 2 Peter 3:9 we are assured that it is not God's will that any should perish, but that

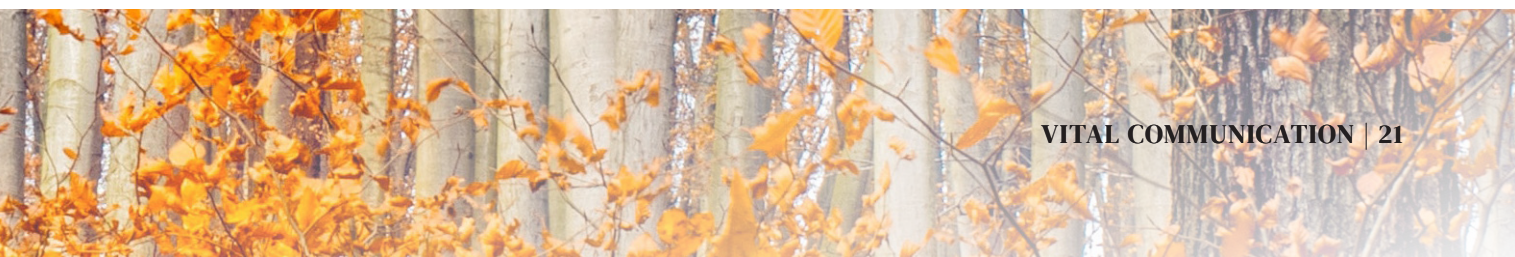
all should come to repentance. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). So the Lord, in His love and His mercy, reaches out to us and communicates with us about our need to seek Him.

A WARNING

God's Word warns of the dangers of ignoring the voice of God. Proverbs 29:1 says, "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." One of the most foolish, dangerous, and reckless things an individual can do is to ignore God when He calls. Tragically, people do that every day, but each time a person turns his or her back on the Lord, that one is gambling with eternity. We read in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The same truth is expressed in Hebrews 13:5, "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

We want to heed those warnings. God extends mercy and grace today. If you have fear or uncertainty about the future, you can get that settled with the Lord. Tell Him about it! Communicate with Him in prayer. If God is calling you to repentance or drawing a consecration out of your heart, give the Lord what He requires. He has been faithful to reach out to you, so respond today. If you do, you will never regret it!

Rev. Dave Lambert is the pastor of the Apostolic Faith Church in Portland, Oregon.



WITNESS

And all bare him witness,
and wondered at the gracious words which
proceeded out of his mouth.

And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

- Luke 4:22

23 A PURPOSE TO PLEASE GOD

29 ONE CRUCIAL INGREDIENT

25 RECRUITED FOR GOD'S OFFENSIVE LINE

34 EVIDENCE



A PURPOSE TO PLEASE GOD

God has been Christiana's Guide, Tutor, and Mentor through many challenging times.

My parents taught me about the Gospel from my earliest days. The Bible was an open Book in our house, and my siblings and I were instructed from it daily. I remember that even as a young child, I had a problem with sin in my life. I would fight, tell lies, disobey my parents, and always wanted to have my own way. My parents told me to ask God for forgiveness and pray through to salvation, and one glorious day early in my childhood, I did that. I asked God for forgiveness, and He wonderfully saved my soul. My parents and teachers at church taught me to continue seeking God, and soon He sanctified me. The root of sin was taken out of my life, and the joy of God filled my soul!

The change God made in my life was something that others could see. The students at school would say about me, "God has helped Christiana; she is a child of God." I became obedient to my parents, had more patience, and was friendly to my peers and siblings.

From an early age, God helped me understand that salvation was a very special gift and that I was a treasure to Him. He taught me to value living a holy life, one that is different from the life of an unbeliever. He gave me a sensitivity so that while growing up, anytime my heart would begin to go astray, the Spirit of God would warn me and remind me that I was to be set apart from



The Odudu family at their oldest son's graduation.

the world, living in holiness unto the Lord. Then I would tell God I was sorry, and clear up that matter with Him. Thank God, that relationship with Him has been an anchor in my life.

As I got older, God gave me a desire to read the Bible, and I loved to tell my friends what the Lord had done for me. I really wanted to work for the Lord, and was invited to join the children's choir. I sang during all of my primary and secondary school years. God also helped me learn a musical instrument to play for Him. Then during my high school years, He baptized me with the Holy Ghost. From then on, I became

even more zealous for the Lord and loved to pray. My greatest desire became to serve God to the very best of my ability.

.....

We did not understand God's plan or how things would work out, but He encouraged us to keep trusting in Him. I clung to the promise in Psalm 34:10. "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing."

Before I married, my mother became sick and passed on to her reward in Heaven. That was the first time I faced the reality of death, knowing that I could never see my mom again in this lifetime. It was a tough time for me, but God walked with me and was there for me. Seven years later, the Lord took my father also, and again God was a great help and support. Though I have no mother or father, God has been my Guide, Tutor, Mentor—He is everything to me!

When thinking about marriage, my prayer was that God would choose a man for me who loved Him, so that we could serve God together and raise our children in the Gospel. Today, my husband and I have been together for over thirty years, and I can say that the Lord answered my prayer. He gave me a husband who also desires to be working for God most of all, and who has supported me in trying times and encouraged my faith.

God blessed our home with three children. While our oldest was in high school and the youngest was in elementary school, my husband lost his job. That was a very challenging time for us. He pursued a number of businesses, but none succeeded. During those years, we did not understand God's plan or how things would work out, but He encouraged us to keep trusting in Him. I clung to the promise in Psalm 34:10,

"The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing."

As we continued to look to God for direction for our livelihood, an opportunity opened to emigrate from Nigeria to the United Kingdom. We prayed together as a family, looking to God with fasting, and soon the news came that all five of our family members were approved to emigrate. We knew God was opening doors for us, so we proceeded. I later heard that some families were split up because not all of their applications were approved, which confirmed to me that God had worked miraculously on our behalf.

In 2004, when our children were ages ten, thirteen, and sixteen, we moved from Nigeria to the United Kingdom. Relocating was difficult in many ways, but God helped us. I had been a high school teacher in Nigeria and wanted to continue at that level in the United Kingdom. That required me to attend university and earn my credentials again, which the Lord helped me to do despite a number of obstacles. However, I later found out that teaching high school in the United Kingdom was even more challenging than I had envisioned. As I kept looking to God, He opened a new opportunity for me to retrain and teach a different age group, which I have enjoyed ever since.

I cannot help but praise God for godly parents who helped me see the goodness of the Gospel before I knew of anything else in this world. Serving God has been a source of great blessing and joy in my life. God has always been there for me, and when I pray, He hears and answers. By His grace, my desire is that every part of my life should be pleasing to Him. ❖

Christiana Ola-Odudu attends the Bexley Apostolic Faith Church in London, England, where her husband serves as the Regional Superintendent of Mainland Europe.



RECRUITED FOR GOD'S OFFENSIVE LINE

Lee had six university football teams interested in him, but God offered him something they could not.

God has been faithful and longsuffering to me throughout every step of my life, and I am so thankful. He always knows just what is needed and is there to provide and help.

My mother had a hunger for the things of God. Although she had been raised to attend church, she observed that there was no difference between the people who attended and those who did not. The churchgoers smoked on the church steps before they went in, and their conversations were tainted. When they came out of the church, they went back to smoking and their tainted conversations. She decided that if God was real, the religious system she was seeing was definitely not working.

She took her Bible and began to search the Scriptures for the truth. After months of reading the Word of God, she came to the realization that she needed to ask Him to make a change in her life. At her bedside, she laid out her Bible and prayed, asking God to make her the new creature she had read about. Right there, God miraculously saved her. From that time on, she was a devout Christian and began to raise her five boys in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She taught us every day about the goodness of God and that there was a Heaven to gain and a Hell to shun. She regularly

gathered us in the living room and had us memorize Scripture and sing.

We lived in Roseburg, Oregon, and in 1964, we were invited to the Apostolic Faith Church. My mother went to a Sunday evening service, and she looked over the literature, reading the doctrines taught by the church. She realized that this was the church we needed to attend because it stood for exactly what she believed the Bible said.

As I was growing up, many of the people in the church were role models for me, including our pastors and ministers. When Sister Lois Allen was our pastor, she would meet us boys on the church steps and ask us when we were going to give our lives to the Lord. That put conviction on my heart, so I would try to avoid her.

One day she stopped me on the stairway that led into the sanctuary and said, "Lee, when are you going to give your life to the Lord?" As I hesitated, she said, "You may not care where your eternal home will be, but you need to understand that you're going to be responsible for where these young people are going." I turned and saw the younger boys who were following me up the stairs. I said to her, "How is it *my* responsibility?" Immediately she said, "If you watch these children,

I turned and saw the younger boys who were following me up the stairs. I said to her, "How is it my responsibility?"

she began a pleasant conversation with me, it completely destroyed my defensive attitude. God knew what I needed.

The next day was Sunday morning, July 4, 1971, and I don't remember who preached or what the sermon was

about. What I do remember is that during the whole service, I knew that I needed to get right with God. At the invitation to pray, I went forward and asked God to come in and give me the peace that others talked about. Just as clearly as an audible conversation with someone across the altar bench would have been, the Lord's words came to me: "Lee, would you be willing to give up football to have this peace?"

they act just like you, so your actions may lead them away from God. Do you want to be responsible for that?"

Her words drove a dagger into my heart. I realized that my choices were going to affect others, and that I needed to make a decision. I was not considered a bad young man—I never smoked, drank alcohol, or did drugs. Yet I knew in my heart and from the Word of God that I needed to have a change. I needed to ask God to come in and forgive me. There was no escaping that.

Football was important to me. I loved it, and people said I was good at it. In my second year of high school, I was six feet two inches tall, weighed 235 pounds, and could run the forty-yard dash in nearly record time. And God wanted to know if I would give up football. I prayed, "Yes, Lord, I'll give up football. I'll give up everything to have this peace." As soon as I made that consecration, such a joy and peace came into my heart. It was a peace that truly passed all understanding. I felt as if I was walking six feet off the ground!

A week later, I was still at the camp meeting and a gentleman at the altar asked me what I was

When I was sixteen years old, my mother brought us to camp meeting in Portland, Oregon, but by then I had become bitter and wanted nothing to do with the Gospel. Although she insisted that I attend for at least one week, my plan was to just sit through the services that week and then go home.

Thankfully, God had a different plan. After arriving at the campground resentful and upset, I was walking by the tabernacle when a young lady said hello to me. God can use simple things to get our attention, and when

A week later, I was still at the camp meeting and a gentleman at the altar asked me what I was

praying for. My reply was that I needed to be sanctified. As he began to pray with me, more joy and peace came into my life than I had ever experienced before, and I knew that was my sanctification. I got up to go tell my friends about it, but the gentleman stopped me and said, "You could stay here and get your baptism too." So I knelt back down and prayed again, just wanting to get closer to God. In a wonderful way, the Lord gave me the baptism of the Holy Ghost. That was a great camp meeting!

When we returned home, it was soon time for football daily doubles to begin. I had told God that I would give up football, and I knew that's what I needed to do. The phone calls started coming to ask why I wasn't at the two practices each day. When I told the coaches I'd given up football to serve the Lord, it became a very difficult time in our house.

My father was a moral man and taught us many good lessons in life, but he was not godly. One thing he enjoyed was seeing the names of his boys on the sports page telling how they had scored touchdowns or made a winning kick or goal. Dad was proud of his boys! When he found out that I was no longer going to play football, he disowned me. For the next two years, he hardly spoke to me. He did not want anything to do with me because of the shame that he said I brought upon him. His co-workers began

to tease him about his son giving up football for religion. He could not deal with the heckling and his frustrations were taken out on me.

Meanwhile, it was necessary to respond to the coaches. The head football coach researched how many professional football players professed to be Christians and came up with a list of ninety-six. He asked, "If these people are Christians and they play football, why can't you?" God gave me the wisdom to say, "It may be fine for them, but this is what God asked *me* to do!"

The school athletic director called for me to come to his office. He pulled out a file and showed me six letters of intent from major colleges for football scholarships, even though I was only in my second year of high school. They believed I was that good. The athletic director could not comprehend that I was willing to give that up "to be religious." I replied, "It's not about being religious. It's about having this peace in my heart that God gave." Additionally, I told him my dad had taught me to be a man of my word—if a promise was made it needed to be kept. God helped me to hold fast to the promise I'd made to Him.

God knew the future and was watching out for me. The young lady who had talked with me at camp meeting became my girlfriend and later my wife. Back then there were no cell



(Top to bottom) Lee's high school graduation photo; Lee and his wife on their wedding day in 1974; A recent photo of the Spakouskys.

phones and long distance calls were expensive, so we wrote letters, sometimes two or three per week. We saved them—Barbara has 214 of my letters and I have 211 of hers! She was an encouragement to me. My pastor also took me under his wing, allowing me to come to the church on Saturdays to help. He treated me like a father would his son and gave such encouragement to help me realize that God did care.

Barbara's family lived in the San Francisco Bay Area, and they came to my high school graduation. My parents gave permission for me to go back with them and look there for work. I decided that if I didn't get a job in two weeks, I would return to Roseburg.

My first day in the Bay Area, before I even had an opportunity to open a newspaper, I was offered a job. That morning, when Barbara's dad arrived at work, he was asked if he knew anyone looking for a job. He suggested they call me, and then they asked to see me right away. Barbara's dad introduced me to the general manager in the afternoon and I started work the next day. That began my career path for the next forty-six years in the rock-crushing equipment industry, with God helping to protect and advance my position many times over the years.

God restored me into favor with my dad and completely healed the breach that had come because I stopped playing sports. Once I had

a full-time job, Dad saw me as being successful, and he came to the Bay Area when Barbara and I were married in 1974. Years passed, and then when he was eighty-two years old, he attended special meetings at the church in Roseburg. From the moment the first note of music was played, Dad wept throughout the service. As soon as an invitation to pray was given, he went forward, and God changed his heart.

Over the years, at times I wondered why God asked me to give up football. Nearly three decades after the fact, an old friend shared with me how much my decision to quit sports and serve the Lord had influenced him and some of our peers to be committed to God. That meant so much to me. While I never regretted the decision to obey God, it was so encouraging to know that it had a positive impact on others.

God has directed Barbara and me in every step of our lives, even in the difficult times. He gave us a son and a daughter, and now we have three grandchildren. We have had sickness, financial issues, and other events that come to many people. Yet God has always been there to take the heavy end of every load, and has guided in each decision that had to be made. God is good! I am so thankful for Him and what He's done. ❖

Lee Spakousky and his wife attend the Apostolic Faith Church in Pullman, Washington, where he serves as a minister.



ONE CRUCIAL INGREDIENT

A necessary step in his kayak-building venture reminded Dave about the importance of faith.

Several years ago, I took a boat-building class in which we made fiberglass kayaks. The instructor guided our group through all the preliminary steps of selecting the design, preparing the mold, and cutting the fiberglass fabric into the proper shapes. When all was ready, our instructor emphasized the importance of one crucial step: the necessity of adding a catalyst to the resin that we would apply to the fabric pieces before layering them into the mold. The polyester resin would remain a liquid until the catalyst—a small quantity of liquid hardener—was added. That hardener would activate a chemical curing process. The instructor emphasized that the success of our finished product would be dependent upon thoroughly mixing in that hardener. He recounted that in one case, a kayak builder forgot to add it, and the result was a complete loss.

FAITH IS A CATALYST

The importance of adding the catalyst brought words from the Book of Hebrews to mind, “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard

it” (Hebrews 4:2). The word “them” refers to the Israelites of Moses’ day, but they had a problem we still

see in our era—individuals who know a great deal about God but have no personal faith or experience with Him.

People in the United States have virtually unlimited access to God’s Word; anyone can obtain a Bible. Many have had instruction in righteousness and encouragement in the Gospel. Access to God’s Word and godly instruction certainly are valuable components in building a strong Christian life, but they must be “activated” by being mixed with faith. In this sense, faith is a catalyst—a necessary ingredient that must be present in order to achieve the desired result. Without this crucial element,

We begin our spiritual journeys when we exercise the catalyst of faith in the remedy Jesus Christ provided through His death on the Cross. Through faith, we believe that God hears and forgives our sins when we repent and call upon Him.



all efforts toward spiritual growth will result in a complete loss.

At times, individuals may claim that they have no faith. However, we read in Romans 12:3 that “God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith.” In our boat-building endeavor, those in our group

had clear guidance from the instructor regarding the appropriate quantity or “measure” of catalyst needed. Similarly, in our Christian walks, God will never fail to furnish each of us with an appropriate measure of faith for the challenges that confront us.

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

Faith is defined in Scripture as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). As I considered how faith acts as a catalyst in our spiritual lives, several specific areas where faith is necessary came to mind.

Faith is needed to receive salvation. When Jesus walked this earth, the Jewish people thought they had to keep all the rules of the Law in order to be acceptable to God. However, Paul taught the Early Church that a man was not justified by adherence to the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ, “for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Galatians 2:16). Ephesians 2:8-9 repeats the

same principle and emphasizes the necessity of faith: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” This required a radical shift in thinking for the Jews, who were accustomed to “earning” righteousness by their works.

In Acts chapter 16, we find an example of salvation by faith. A mighty earthquake had opened the doors of the prison where Paul and Silas were confined for preaching the Gospel. The Philippian jailer, fearing all the prisoners had escaped, fell down before the two men and cried in desperation, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Paul responded, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:30-31). Faith was a necessity!

We begin our spiritual journeys when we exercise the catalyst of faith in the remedy

Jesus Christ provided through His death on the Cross. Through faith, we believe that God hears and forgives our sins when we repent and call upon Him. Then, by God’s grace, the work of salvation is done in our lives, and we stand before God as though we had never committed sin.

Faith is necessary to have true peace and joy.

In Romans 5:1-2 we read, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Being reconciled to God—having no sin blocking our relationship with Him—is a wonderful feeling! Times of adversity and trial may still come into our lives, but in spite of any outward circumstances, that inner

peace will remain. Peace with God also allows us to live without fear of death or where we will spend eternity.

Faith is required to receive divine healing.

James instructed, “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5:14-15).

We find many examples in God’s Word of times when Jesus healed in response to faith. For instance, Mark 5:25-34 tells of a woman with a longstanding affliction who believed Jesus could heal her. When she finally was able to press through the crowd around Jesus and touch His garment, she was instantly healed. Jesus knew who had touched Him, but He wanted the woman’s faith to be declared, so He stopped and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” The disciples were puzzled at Christ’s inquiry since there was a large crowd pressing around Him. However, the woman knew what had been done and she fearfully stepped forward to acknowledge it. Christ’s response in verse 34 was, “Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.” It is faith—not need, doubt, or fear—that moves the hand of God.

In another passage, we read of four men who brought their lame friend to Jesus for healing. Mark 2:5 says, “When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee” and then, “Arise, and take up thy bed” (verse 11). The lame man stood up, picked up his bed, and went home! It was his faith and the faith of his friends that caused Jesus to heal him.

THE BENEFITS OF FAITH

In addition to times when faith is necessary to achieve the desired result, there are also great benefits that come with an exercise of our faith.

Faith will encourage others. The writer of Hebrews referred to being surrounded by a great “cloud of witnesses” (Hebrews 12:1), alluding to the heroes of faith described in the preceding chapter—individuals like Noah, Abraham, and Moses who proved God in challenging

circumstances. These Biblical examples are for our benefit; they are there to strengthen and encourage our faith.

Many of us have also been blessed with a host of peers whose answers to prayers encourage us to exercise our faith. I recall a time some years ago when someone else’s faith encouraged mine. As a carpenter by trade, I try to be mindful of the potential hazards in that environment. However, one day a moment of carelessness with a framing nailer resulted in a three-inch nail curled through my index finger. A reflexive response—no doubt coupled with some shock and adrenaline—resulted in me extracting the nail myself. After some deep breaths and an examination of my injured finger, I came to the possibly questionable conclusion that since the nail was out, there was nothing more medical science could do for me. So I went ahead and finished out an increasingly painful workday.

By the time I went to bed that night, however, my finger was so swollen and painful it seemed sleep would be impossible. Then I recalled a sister’s testimony that gave me encouragement. She had shared that one evening when a severe headache was hindering her sleep, she put a church paper on her head and soon the pain subsided. Those of us listening knew she did not think there was some “magic” in that paper, but rather that she was claiming the faith of church workers who pray over all our Gospel publications before they are distributed. I thought, *I can do that*. I found a church tract and wrapped it around my finger with a rubber band, and in a short time, I was asleep. In the morning, I discovered the swelling and the pain of my injured finger had subsided significantly. God had done for me what He had done for others, and I was thankful for that sister’s testimony which had encouraged my faith.

Faith provides protection in trials. Because we live in a sin-filled, troubled world, we will face challenges in life. Our faith is what helps us through those times. Ephesians 6:16 tells us that faith acts as a shield to protect us from our spiritual enemy’s efforts to overcome us.

Some years ago, one of our ministers from Nigeria testified about facing two armed robbers wielding machetes. He and his companions had

stopped alongside the highway to deal with an overheated van engine when they were unexpectedly attacked. As one robber dashed toward him, the Lord put a holy boldness in this minister's spirit. He stood his ground and simply shouted "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" At the mention of that Name, the robbers took to their heels and fled into the bush. That was a case of physical protection, but when our faith and trust is in God, He also offers spiritual protection from assaults that may not be so outwardly evident.

Faith helps us appropriate God's promises.

God's Word contains many "exceeding great and precious promises" (2 Peter 1:4) that cover the whole spectrum of human needs. However, it is up to us to find those promises and believe God will honor them for us. In other words, we make our requests "mixed" with faith.

I recall a time a number of years ago when I needed to mix some faith with God's promises of provision. As a self-employed contractor, I had experienced some of the fluctuations of work that occur in the construction industry. Up to that time, though, whenever my work slowed down there was a job on the horizon. In this instance, the situation was different. I knew of no jobs coming my way—there had been no inquiries or requests for bids. Of course, I prayed, and started contacting all the builders I was acquainted with, but nothing emerged. Next, I drove around neighborhoods and subdivisions where jobs were starting, with the intention of asking if the contractor would take bids. Again, my efforts were ineffective.

At the end of another day of fruitless efforts, I began reviewing my attempts to find work and pondering God's promises to meet our needs. As I searched my heart, an almost tangible assurance seemed to envelope me. I wondered if God could be preparing me for some complete change in career or environment. There was actually a sense of adventure in what might be revealed! Whatever happened, I knew the whole matter was entirely in God's hands.

Well, it turned out God had not planned a change in career or environment. Apparently my faith needed to be stretched and strengthened! A short time later, a builder I did not know called and asked if I would be available to frame a couple of houses. Of course, I agreed. When I was part way through

framing the second house, he asked if I could do the siding as well. However, I had to respectfully decline because by then I had so much work lined up there was no more room in my schedule! God had proved once again that "there hath not failed one word of all His good promise" (1 Kings 8:56).

Faith can impact the generations who follow us.

Paul wrote to Timothy, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also" (2 Timothy 1:5). When our faith is strong and true, it can be passed on to others, including our family.

God allowed me to be raised in a godly environment, with grandparents, parents, and numerous aunts and uncles who prioritized loving and serving God. Seeing those examples of trust and obedience has had a great impact on my own faith. Through the years, I have benefitted from their prayers, counsel, and support, and have been encouraged to do my best to pass on those same benefits to the next generation.

FAITH IS PLEASING TO GOD

We cannot succeed spiritually without faith. The writer of Hebrews asserted, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). It doesn't matter if we think our faith is small. In another place, the Bible asserts that great things can be accomplished through faith that is merely the size of a mustard seed. The conclusion is obvious: it is not the amount that counts, but the belief in our hearts that God will always be true to the promises of His Word. When God sees our faith, He responds!

Looking back on my experience in kayak building, it still seems remarkable that a small quantity of catalyst was so essential to a successful outcome. As I consider the spiritual parallel, I am assured that God can accomplish great things when we mix faith with the petitions we bring Him. ❖

Dave Green is a building contractor and attends the Apostolic Faith Church in Portland, Oregon.

EVIDENCE

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES OF VICTORY!



JOSEPH ASAYA

Portland, Oregon, United States

In April of 2019, God did a miracle for our daughter Serena, who was almost five at the time. One Sunday afternoon we came home from church as usual and after having lunch, sat down to relax. Our daughter Sarah went upstairs to practice her viola and Serena followed. Several minutes later, my wife and I heard a sharp scream, and Sarah brought Serena to us. She had been spinning in a swivel chair and jumped out, landing on her hand. Now her hand was dangling, completely broken. We were not prepared for something like this. Being new to the Portland area, we did not even know where the nearest hospital was. However, we called a friend who directed us, and we took her to the emergency room.

There, the severity of the situation struck me. Serena's arm was swollen and broken, and they had to cut through her dress to get to her hand. I felt helpless seeing my daughter in pain, but God was there, and I knew He could take care of anything. Today, Serena's arm is perfect, it is completely healed.

When I think back on that situation, I am reminded to count my blessings. I am very thankful for this Gospel. It has been a real comfort for me and for my family. I pray for God's strength as I continue in His grace until He takes me to Heaven at last. ❖

CLIFF PAULSEN

Portland, Oregon, United States

This Gospel found my grandparents over one hundred years ago through literature published by the Apostolic Faith people. I am so thankful they chose to take this way and followed the Lord all their lives. My parents were raised in Christian homes, and I am glad they chose to follow the Lord as well. I was raised in this Gospel and heard the testimonies of the old-time saints who had been saved forty or fifty years. As a kid, I wondered how that could be, but now looking back, I see that it's been fifty-nine years since the Lord got hold of my heart.

I was fourteen years old and preparing to start at Benson High School in a few months. The Lord was dealing with my heart that summer, and He just reasoned with me saying, "Cliff, if you will take Me to high school with you, the rest of your life will be a whole lot easier." It just made sense. That night I prayed and asked God to give me what I had heard about all my life in testimonies, and what I had seen my parents and grandparents live. That was the best thing I ever did. The Lord came in and forgave my sins, saved me, and has given me a good life.

Later, God sanctified me and baptized me with the Holy Ghost. When I was praying for my baptism, I wasn't very demonstrative at all. The enemy said to me, "You won't receive it, because you won't be able to pray out loud." I didn't know anyone who had received the baptism without praying out loud, so I just asked God for a hunger. As the hunger grew, I couldn't hold in my joy, and pretty soon, I was shouting praises. Then that same old enemy came along and said, "Now look what you have done. Everyone is watching you." I realized right then that he was going to oppose me no matter what I did. From then on, I quit listening. Then God came down and filled me with the Holy Ghost, and it was so precious to me; I never wanted to lose it.

God blessed me with a Christian wife and children who are married now, and we are all saved and serving the Lord together. A few years ago, we had the privilege as a family to go to Israel for a couple of weeks. As we visited the Temple Mount, our Israeli guide told us that the Dome of the Rock sits right over the Holy of Holies, which was part of the Temple. Then we walked to a certain area and were told, "This is the closest one can get to the Holy of Holies." I couldn't help but think, *You have missed the whole point*. When Christ died, the veil in the Temple was rent from the top to the bottom. This opened the way into the Holy of Holies, and I have been there!

The peace, joy, and happiness that comes from serving the Lord is real, and I wouldn't exchange it for anything. I am so thankful the Lord has kept me. ❖



VIOLETA BRISTOL VANPUTTEN

San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic

I thank God for the salvation of my soul and the forgiveness of my sins. I thank Him infinitely for all He has done in my life, because He has provided many blessings for my family and me.

My grandson was born with a kidney condition that affected him from the time he was three months old. The doctors said there was nothing more they could do for him, but God healed him. Today he is fourteen years old. Then last year, my son came down with Covid and he was so sick. I have the practice of anointing and praying for my children in my home; I anoint them and put them in God's hands. I was the one caring for my son while he was sick and I prayed, "Lord, You know my age and my condition. You know about my grandson's kidneys. I know You healed Him, but this Covid is nothing good. I put my household in Your hands." I also prayed according to Psalm 91, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Him I trust. You deliver me from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence." Glory to God, no one else came down with Covid. After sixteen days, my son returned to see the doctor, and he was free of Covid and every one of us was too.

I am not better than anyone else that I should deserve God's mercy, but I thank God because He is good and His mercy has no end. As long as we are in this world, we have to go through difficulties, but God is still on His throne and He will work in us according to our faith. He has worked in my home in a very special way, and I praise Him for it. ❖

AUDREY BUSHEY

Roddickton, Newfoundland, Canada

God is available at all times, whether it is morning, noon, night, during lockdown, on the road, or in the air. We cannot go where He is not, because He is everywhere. On July 16, which was my birthday, I woke up and quickly realized I was not feeling well. I got out of bed and struggled to get ready for work, not wanting to call my employer and tell him I could not make it. Eventually, however, I gave in and went back to bed. I was so sick all that day that I could only get up for short periods of time.

By about nine in the evening, I was not feeling any better, and was maybe even a little worse. I texted Pastor and Sister Hewlett and asked them to pray for me during their evening prayers. Then, as I laid my cell phone on the dresser and turned to get into bed for the night, the words came to me, "Ask and ye shall receive." This was followed by the thought: *Why don't you call them and ask to be prayed for over the phone?* I texted my request and then sat down in a chair and called them. Pastor Chris answered the phone, and right away it was as if he were connected to a Heavenly powerhouse. The three of us prayed, along with my husband, Wilson, and the Lord's presence came into the room and touched me! It felt just like being in church.

It is always good to obey the Voice of the Lord. If there is a problem, bring it to the Lord. He cares about the little details of our lives as well as the big. ❖

WORLD REPORT

Because thou has kept
the word of my patience, I also will keep
thee from the hour of temptation,
which shall come upon all the world,
to try them that dwell upon the earth.

– Revelation 3:10

37 A HEADQUARTERS LOCATION FOR TANZANIA

38 GOD REMEDIES AN UNSTABLE ROOF IN INDIA

39 A HEADQUARTERS FOR THE EXPANDING WORK IN
BURUNDI



SHORT TAKES

Brief reports from our churches worldwide.

A HEADQUARTERS LOCATION FOR TANZANIA

The saints in Eastern Africa have been longing to see the Apostolic Faith anchored in Tanzania. And now God has provided funds, through donations to the Portland headquarters, to purchase land in Tanzania for use as a headquarters and camp meeting site.

The work in Tanzania began in 1992 and has grown to include thirteen locations, primarily in the southern region. Recent special meetings held by teams from our Eastern Africa headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia, indicate the work is ready to expand further. However, the current Tanzanian headquarters church is not equipped to meet the challenge. The location, near the main business district in Nzovwe, Mbeya, is inconvenient. Also, the building is not large enough for a camp meeting congregation, and the land leaves no room to expand.

In 2019, discussions were held about how to raise funds for the purchase of a new headquarters



(Top to bottom) A group photo of the Mbeya congregation; Inside the Mbeya church.



location. The goal was a more accessible parcel of land which could accommodate a larger church, an office, and a mission house. Several ideas were found to be viable but all projects except for one were cancelled due to Covid. When it became clear that it would not be possible to buy land, the limited resources that did come in were diverted to renovating the existing headquarters church.

Many prayed about this situation, and earlier this year, God provided the means for purchasing land. Praises went up and workers began to look for a suitable property. Since then, it has been discovered that the Tanzania work must reregister with the government. The Eastern Africa saints continue to praise God while seeking His guidance on both counts. ❖

GOD REMEDIES AN UNSTABLE ROOF IN INDIA



The Pedapudi congregation in India is rejoicing in the construction of a new church, which they hope to dedicate by the end of October should the Lord tarry.

The new building is much needed as seventeen families have been added to the congregation since the spring of 2020. This has increased attendance from fifty to ninety, which is more than the old building can accommodate. For some time, services have been held with a portion of the congregation standing outside, watching through the windows.


Initially, it was thought that the lack of space could be remedied with an addition to the existing church. However, at the start of construction in January, it was discovered that the roof was cracked and unstable. There was a danger of it falling in, so services had to be halted. When it was clear that the roof could not be repaired, the saints began to pray for a solution. God answered by providing funds to build a new, larger church.

Construction began in April, and God supplied a good team of builders and workers, causing the work to go much faster than expected. When the front doorpost was put in place, the pastors and their wives gathered. They prayed that all who entered through it would feel the Spirit of the Lord and give their hearts to Jesus.

There is much interest in the building project among the families in the neighborhood. The congregation is seeing God's hand at work and prays the new church will help add many more souls for His Kingdom. ❖

(Above) Various stages of the construction project of the new Pedapudi church.

(Top) The current status of building progress for the new Burundi headquarters.



A HEADQUARTERS FOR THE EXPANDING WORK IN BURUNDI

Construction has begun on an Apostolic Faith headquarters church in Burundi. Its location is in a suburb of Bujumbura, which is Burundi's largest city and main port. Land was purchased for this project in 2019 and our congregations in this country have looked forward to this event ever since.

Edouard Nimubona, the Country District Superintendent, sent a report of the construction progress. He said the building project has been divided into three phases. The first phase, which included preparing the ground and laying a foundation, was completed on April 2. The second phase of raising the walls, installing doors and windows, and adding a roof, began immediately and continues as funds become available. To date, a majority of the walls are up and a temporary roof has been placed over the main space to allow for services while construction is ongoing. The final phase of the project is expected to encompass plumbing and electrical work, flooring, and finishes. Once complete, the headquarters church will include a sanctuary, prayer room, children's hall, and bathrooms.

There has been an increasing need for a headquarters church to lead the Burundi work as it has expanded. What began in 2017 as a single Apostolic Faith group led by Brother Edouard has grown to include ten locations. In 2018, a team from our East Africa headquarters in Zambia traveled among the groups for three weeks holding revival services. They reported that the response was good and several new converts were water baptized. Souls continue to be saved and added to the church. Two revival services held in 2021 had a combined attendance of over six hundred, and nine received salvation while three were sanctified.

The headquarters church is especially critical for the Bujumbura congregation. After the expiration of a three-year lease earlier this year, they have been left without a place of worship. Currently, they gather in their homes to encourage and pray for one another. However, their activities are limited as the government does not permit conducting in-home church services.

We pray this construction effort will be used for God's glory to establish the Burundi saints in the faith and add souls to His Kingdom. ❖

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

ACKNOWLEDGE "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." *Romans 3:23*

"God be merciful to me a sinner."

Luke 18:13

CONFESS "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." *1 John 1:9*

REPENT "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." *Luke 13:3*

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." *Acts 3:19*

FORSAKE "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him...for he will abundantly pardon." *Isaiah 55:7*

BELIEVE "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:16

If you are a new Christian, contact us and request the tract entitled "Starting Out."

OUR CLASSICS

For with God nothing shall
be impossible.

– Mark 16:37

41 **MERCY EXTENDED**

44 **TEENAGER OVERCOMES PERSECUTION**

By Leon Dicks



MERCY EXTENDED

Enoch escaped judgment and we can too, when we walk with God as he did.

◆ This message was preached in July of 1982.

In Genesis 5, the lives of a father and son are summarized in a genealogy that reads like an obituary column. We might wonder how there could be anything in an Old Testament obituary that would help us get to Heaven. However, God often uses symbolic types and shadows from the Old Testament to speak to our day, and that is what we find here.

The record of the son reveals that he was the world's oldest man, living nearly a millennium. His obituary reads, "And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech: **and Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years**, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died" (verses 25-27). There was a secret to Methuselah's long life. God had a reason for letting him live so long. To discover the secret, we must examine the life of his father, Enoch.

ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD

We are told in this account, "Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat

Methuselah: **and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years**, and begat sons and daughters" (verses 21-22). One thing to note in this statement is that the verb "lived" changed after the birth of Methuselah. At first, Enoch "lived" sixty-five years—he was just living. But after Methuselah was born, he "walked" with God. Enoch went from just *living* to *walking* with God. This does not mean he went strolling down the street hand in hand with God. No, Enoch had determined that he would live in harmony with God's known will.

Today, there are some who say we cannot walk with God because we cannot be perfect. However, if our sins have been forgiven and we are intent on following God, He will keep us, and that is perfect enough! Hallelujah! May God help us to go from merely living to walking with Him as Enoch did.

Periodically, people take inventory of their lives. Many do this at the beginning of a new year. They consider their successes and failures and try to make a new start in different areas. In the Apostolic Faith, we tend to take a spiritual inventory during camp meetings. This is a good practice, but it doesn't have to wait until camp meeting. Anytime the Word of God goes forth is a

good time to examine our lives, renew our consecrations, and make certain we are walking in God's will.

A MYSTERY IS SOLVED

According to this account in Genesis, Enoch walked with God for three hundred years. Then when he was just three hundred and sixty-five years of age—not very old compared to the men of that day—the narrative of his life abruptly ended. This summary of his life tells us nothing more about Enoch except, “He was not; for God took him” (verse 24). It does not say how that happened or where Enoch went. The Old Testament writer leaves it right there. However, for further understanding of what took place we find the writer of the Book of Hebrews filling in the gaps. He

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him.” Hebrews 11:5

said, “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him” (Hebrews 11:5). **The word *translated* can be defined as “changed, taken, removed,” and even “raptured.”**

Though the word *raptured* does not appear in Scripture, this concept was spoken of by Paul in reference to the Lord’s Second Coming. In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 he said, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” This event will take place. It was foreshadowed by the translation of Enoch. Just as Enoch was taken by God before the Great Flood, the Church will be “caught up” and removed from this world to escape the coming judgment of God.

Paul spoke of the Rapture of the Church again in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. He

said, “Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” In this passage, Paul said he was revealing a mystery, and I believe Enoch’s disappearance was a mystery at the time it happened. Perhaps his family waited for him to come home that evening, and the hour grew later and later. They may have worried he had been robbed and left by a roadside somewhere. Maybe they called together friends and formed a search party. After a while, they would have given up the search. Maybe they never knew exactly what happened, but God gave inspiration to the New Testament writer to let us know what took place. Enoch did not just disappear and die in the mountains, but he was translated. God took him!

THE SECRET TO METHUSELAH’S LONG LIFE

More insight into the life of Enoch can be gained from Jude 14-15, which states, “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” Enoch was a preacher, and he prophesied about the coming of the Lord.

In his ministry, he may also have spoken of the coming of the Great Flood. We know that God later revealed this to Noah, and it is possible that Enoch, as a prophet of God, knew of it too. Whether he knew or not, at the birth of his son, he gave the child a name of prophetic significance. In the Hebrew language, *Methuselah* means “his death shall send.” Seemingly, this was a sign from God that at the death of Methuselah, He would send judgment as that is what happened.

How would we have lived our lives if we were Enoch or Noah and knew that God’s judgment was coming

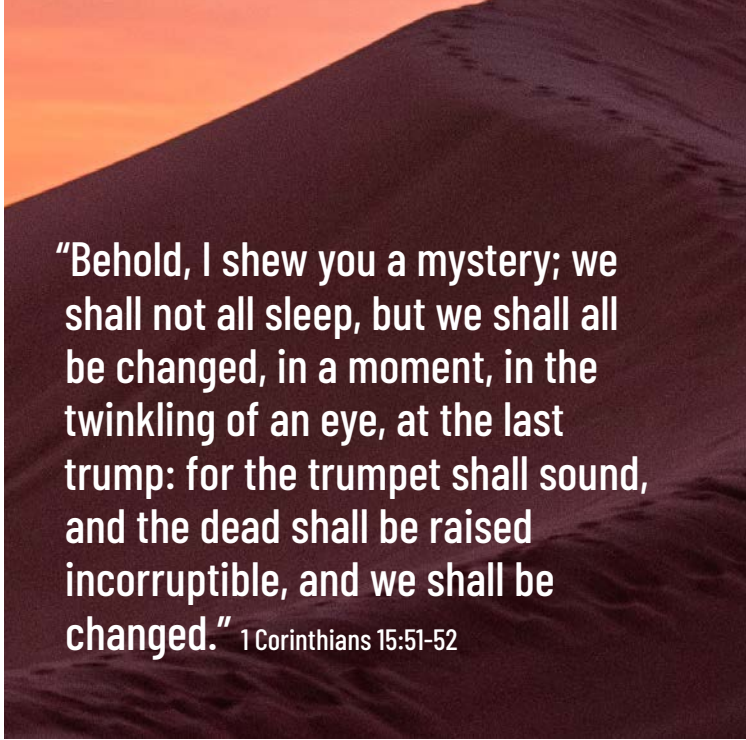
soon to all the world? Well, it is not far off today. Hopefully, we live with a sense of urgency to share the Gospel message, pray for the souls of the lost, and draw closer to God. That is how Enoch lived. Praise God! Day by Day, he walked with the Lord.

God is longsuffering, and that is the secret to Methuselah's long life. Not only did he live his natural

God wants to see all men saved and He continues to extend mercy today. Isn't God good? I believe we have already come to the end of the Gentile age, and God is waiting, holding back judgment. All the prophetic signs pointing to the Return of Christ and the start of the tribulation period have been fulfilled.

lifespan, but God extended his life to beyond what anyone had ever lived. This was an extension of love and compassion toward all those who lived in the days of Noah. God saw the wickedness of man and the handwriting of judgment was on the wall. Yet, He held back the flood waters, telling Noah, "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Genesis 6:3). By the mercy of God, man was given another one hundred and twenty years. Then Methuselah died, and in that very year, God sent the flood waters to destroy all the earth.

We are thankful for the mercy of God. The Apostle Peter said He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). God wants to see all men saved and He continues to extend mercy today. Isn't God good? I believe we have already come to the end of the Gentile age, and God is waiting, holding back judgment. All the prophetic signs pointing to the Return of Christ and the start of the tribulation period have been fulfilled. When Jesus spoke of the end times in Luke 21, He gave the parable of the fig tree concerning the Jewish nation. Then He said, "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (verse 13). The Jewish people returned to their homeland in 1948, and in 1967, they regained the city of Jerusalem. The prophecies concerning the nation of Israel are complete. We are on mercy's ground, living on borrowed time!



"Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

A DAY OF GRACE

Though we are living in a day of grace, just as in Noah's time, it will not last forever. When Noah entered the ark, God shut the door, and the day of grace was ended. For one hundred and twenty years, God had extended mercy. During that time, Noah was a preacher of righteousness, warning people of the coming flood and destruction, but no one except his own family believed.

The people of that time had never seen rain—the ground was watered by a mist. There were probably many who scoffed and said it would never happen. There are many today who believe the Rapture is a myth and the tribulation will not take place. However, the rain did fall, and I imagine there were many banging on the door of the ark asking to be let in. No doubt there were many prayers that went up during the storm. Many people pray when they are in trouble, but for those of Noah's day, it was too late. God had shut the door and the day of opportunity for that age had ended.

The door of this age will soon be closed as well. We want to make certain we have repented of our sins and are walking in harmony with God's will. When the last trump sounds, we want to be among those who are caught up to meet Jesus in the air. ❖

Rev. Leon Dicks was saved in Brooklyn, New York, in 1949, and served as pastor of the Apostolic Faith Church in that city from 1958 to 1989. He was also the District Superintendent of the Southern and Eastern United States work from 1985 until his death on March 17, 1989.



By Edna Crawford



TEENAGER OVERCOMES PERSECUTION

Edna determined to stay true to her convictions despite abuse and threats at home.

◆ This testimony was originally published in the March 1986 edition of our magazine.

God's love won my heart when I was a schoolgirl of twelve years old. I was brought up in a humble home in Louisville, Kentucky, and was faithfully sent to Sunday school and church. The fear of God was planted in my heart at an early age, but the Christian life was not exemplified at home. There was quarreling, and the Name of Jesus taken in vain. Eventually our family went through the divorce court. Many times I wished I had never been born.

In the spring of 1906, we moved out West to Portland, Oregon. My grandfather, a Civil War veteran living in Portland, wrote and invited us to come. At the time, I wondered why we had to sell everything and move so far away. Later, when I saw God's hand in this wise decision, I stopped questioning.

One Sunday morning I went to our little neighborhood Sunday school. Some of the children in our class told of a camp meeting being held in the Montavilla district, a suburb of Portland. I had no idea where the location was, or the name of those who were holding the camp meeting, but God put a desire in my heart to find out where these services were being held.

It was a hot afternoon in July, 1909, when we started out to find the camp meeting. There were few paved walks in those days—mostly dusty, dirt roads. We grew tired of walking and sat on the porch of a grocery store to rest. Across the street stood a woman

As I prayed, the tears started flowing from my eyes. I saw myself as a lost soul who needed God's mercy. It did not take long for the Lord to answer, and I could feel that load lift from my heart. Unrest and grief disappeared, and in their place came joy, peace, and happiness.

”

with a Bible in her hand, waiting for a streetcar. I ran to ask if she knew of a camp meeting being held in that district. She replied, “Just up this street about a block.” When we found it, a meeting was in progress in a large canvas tent. The minute we entered I felt a calm come over me, and I knew I had found what I was looking for.



Replica of a Portland, Oregon, street car from the early 1900s.

I don't remember anything the minister said, but the Spirit of the Lord was dealing with my heart. He showed me I was a sinner, and I needed to repent. An invitation

was given to come forward and kneel at the altar of prayer. I didn't know how to pray from my heart or what to say to the Lord, but one of the Christian women who was kneeling by me said, "Ask God to be merciful to you a sinner." I repeated the prayer after her, word for word.

As I prayed, the tears started flowing from my eyes. I saw myself as a lost soul who needed God's mercy. It did not take long for the Lord to answer, and I could feel that load lift from my heart. Unrest and grief disappeared, and in their place came joy, peace, and happiness. I had tried to adjust myself to going through life with a broken heart, but that day the sunlight of Heaven broke in upon my soul. Jesus washed my sins away, and I knew I belonged to Him.

After I became a Christian, I was severely persecuted by my family. In anger and blasphemy, I was beaten many times without cause. I longed for the fellowship of God's people but was kept away from the Apostolic Faith meetings for months. I was taken before the Juvenile Court with no other charge than the fact that I wanted to go to church and serve God. In a miraculous way the Lord undertook for me, and I was granted permission to go to the church twice a month, which brought great joy and encouragement to my soul.

I was not of age and did not want to disobey my mother, because I knew God's Word said to obey your parents. I was confident He would never forsake one whose trust was in Him. Many times when going

Edna with her husband, Raymond, who served as the Apostolic Faith General Overseer from 1936 to 1965.



through great trial and testing, I read Psalm 27:10, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up." Thank God for the Arm that is stronger than mine because it kept me under those conditions.

Because I was not allowed to go anywhere with friends, I stayed close to home and read God's Word and prayed often. Promises from the Bible brought me courage and strength. Repeatedly I came home from school very tired after having walked several miles, only to be met at the door and told I was not wanted at home. I was called abusive names that cut deeply into my heart, but there was no other place for me to go.

I wanted whatever the Lord had for me and sought for sanctification. He did not disappoint me but sanctified me wholly. Then I still hungered for more of the Lord. The Apostolic Faith people told me of the mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. I sought it incessantly, and within a few days the Lord poured out this blessed experience upon my sanctified soul.

It certainly pays a thousandfold to live for Jesus. He has given me many years to work for Him. What a glorious privilege has been mine!

My birthday was on Christmas Day, and eagerly I looked forward to when I would be of age. That very day I was again asked to leave home. I packed my few belongings in an old suitcase and left. Before long, the founder of the Apostolic Faith Church asked me to live in her home. My joy was almost more than I could contain, but that is just like the love of Jesus toward one who will follow in His footsteps.

Arrangements were made for me to attend a business college, and then I worked for Honeyman's Hardware Company, where I typed letters and did bookkeeping and

other clerical tasks. Before long, I was asked to work in the Apostolic Faith Church office. From that day to this, I have had the privilege of giving God my life and my strength.

Because I was not allowed to go anywhere with friends, I stayed close to home and read God's Word and prayed often. Promises from the Bible brought me courage and strength.

After years of praying, I was reconciled with my family and saw some of them pray through to salvation. My father lived a sweet Christian life during his last years, and my mother was saved too before she died.

God also performed mighty miracles of healing in my body, and for members of my family. An auto accident left me with internal injuries, and I suffered much for eight years. Then, one day after walking over two miles, something I had not been able to do for years, I suddenly realized that God had healed me.

My older brother was dying of a ruptured appendix, but through prayer, he was healed. My nephew had leukemia and there was no earthly hope or help for him. A request was put in for prayer, and God reached down His mighty Arm, raised him up, and added years to his life.

It certainly pays a thousandfold to live for Jesus. He has given me many years to work for Him. What a glorious privilege has been mine! And after our work on earth is done, there is that hope of seeing His blessed face. What a day that will be! ❖

Edna Crawford was wife and secretary of Reverend Raymond Crawford, the former Apostolic Faith General Overseer. She worked in the Portland headquarters office until shortly before her death in 1986 at the age of eighty-nine.

A STATEMENT OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

We believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, and endorse all the teachings contained in it. Following is a summary of our basic doctrines.

THE DIVINE TRINITY consists of three Persons: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost, perfectly united as one. *Matthew 3:16-17; 1 John 5:7.*

REPENTANCE is a godly sorrow for and a renouncing of all sin. *Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 4:17.*

JUSTIFICATION (or salvation) is the act of God's grace through which we receive forgiveness for sins and stand before God as though we had never sinned. *Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17.*

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION, the act of God's grace whereby we are made holy, is the second definite work and is subsequent to justification. *John 17:15-21; Hebrews 13:12.*

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST is the enduement of power upon the sanctified life, and is evidenced by speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. *John 14:16-17, 26; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4.*

DIVINE HEALING of sickness is provided through the atonement. *James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24.*

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS will be as literal and visible as His going away (*Acts 1:9-11*) and will consist of two appearances. First, He comes to catch away His waiting Bride. *Matthew 24:40-44; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.* Second, He comes to execute judgment upon the ungodly. *2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 14-15.*

THE TRIBULATION will occur between Christ's coming for His Bride and His return in judgment. *Isaiah 26:20-21; Revelation 9 and 16.*

CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN is the 1000 years of peaceful reign by Jesus on earth. *Isaiah 11 and 35; Revelation 20:1-6.*

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT is the final judgment when all the wicked dead will stand before God. *Revelation 20:11-15.*

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH will replace the present heaven and earth, which will be destroyed after the Great White Throne Judgment. *2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 21:1-3.*

ETERNAL HEAVEN AND ETERNAL HELL are literal places of final and eternal destiny. *Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 16:22-28.*

MARRIAGE is a covenant between one man and one woman that is binding before God for life. Neither person has a right to marry again while the first companion lives. *Mark 10:6-12; Romans 7:1-3.*

RESTITUTION is necessary, wherein wrongs against others are righted. *Ezekiel 33:15; Matthew 5:23-24.*

WATER BAPTISM is by one immersion "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." *Matthew 3:16; 28:19.*

THE LORD'S SUPPER is an institution ordained by Jesus so that we might remember His death until He returns. *Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23, 26.*

FOOT WASHING is practiced according to the example and commandment Jesus gave. *John 13:14-15.*

You may obtain additional information about these doctrines and learn about our other publications in both English and foreign languages by writing to the Apostolic Faith Church at 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. or visiting our website at www.apostolicfaith.org. Before these magazines are sent out, they are always prayed over for the healing of the sick and the salvation of souls.

The Apostolic Faith (ISSN #2475-9988-print; ISSN #2572-4401-online) is published quarterly by the Apostolic Faith Church, 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. and is available free of charge. Periodicals postage is paid at Portland, Oregon. Postmaster: please send address changes to The Apostolic Faith Church, 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A.

YEARLY PLAN

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

1

2

3

4

5

6

7