

THE Apostolic Faith

EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021

STEADY *and* UNSHAKEN



WITNESS
FROM MUSLIM TRADITIONS
TO FAITH IN CHRIST



WORLD REPORT
A CONTINUING LEGACY
IN JAPAN



CLASSICS
PLUNGE
IN!

6 STEADY AND UNSHAKEN

FROM THE WORD

THOUGH OUR WORLD IS IN TURMOIL, THE POWER OF GOD CAN HOLD US STEADY AND FOCUSED ON A UNIFIED GOAL.

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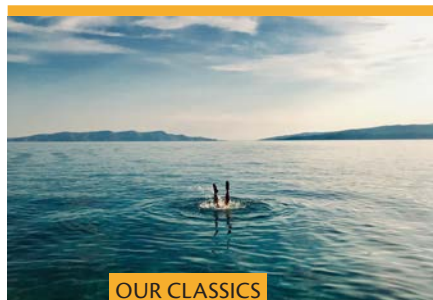
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VIEWPOINT

By Darrel Lee, Superintendent General



THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ENLARGED BY THOSE WHO EMBRACE THE HERITAGE WE HAVE IN CHRIST.

We are familiar with the figurative statement, “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” It is used most often when we notice that a son is much like his father, or a daughter much like her mother. A similar Biblical principle is that servants should be like the Master. A look at the Apostolic Faith in Zambia illustrates how this works in practice.

In a recent report, East Africa District Superintendent Boniface Banda (see his sermon on page 11), wrote of the beginning of the Apostolic Faith in Zambia fifty years ago. In those days, there were no luxuries to make missionary trips easy and there was a lot of persecution toward believers. Yet, through the zeal of one man in particular, God established His work. Robinson Sanana had led an unsavory life before his conversion. He was born in Zambia but was living in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) when some people of God held an outdoor service in front of his house. He heard the Gospel message and gave his heart to God, and his life was radically changed. He began to live for the Lord.

Soon, God called Brother Sanana to return to his native country with the Latter Rain Gospel message. In 1970, he became part of a team that traveled to Zambia to conduct evangelistic services in several towns. Many were saved during those services, and the following year, Brother Sanana returned and began leading the Apostolic Faith work there.

Between 1971 and his passing in 1992, many more souls were saved and numerous branch churches opened. One of those individuals was Timothy Kaibula, who had become skeptical of all religion until he experienced salvation in 1980, and then his perspective changed drastically. He too

dedicated his life to God’s service, and in 1992, he was appointed District Superintendent of Zambia. His prayer was that “the Lord will help us to raise up a standard in our country and to share the Gospel as it should be.”

The Lord honored Brother Kaibula’s desire as he served faithfully until his sudden passing in 2019. At that time, Brother Banda was appointed as the new leader. Just as Brother Kaibula’s zeal built on the foundation of evangelism that Brother Sanana had laid, Brother Banda has continued with the same vision of spreading the Gospel in Zambia and beyond, including Tanzania and other locations. Today we have over one hundred churches in Zambia and ten in Tanzania. Souls are being saved and the Gospel work in East Africa is expanding.

We see the spiritual children reflecting the evangelistic zeal of their parents. Each of us can do likewise, looking to the example of those who were instrumental in our own conversion, and following in their footsteps. Ultimately, the originating Source of all evangelistic zeal is Christ, who went from place to place sharing the Good News when He lived on this earth. As children of God, may we be known by His characteristics, especially His love for the lost and His commitment to carrying the message of salvation to every soul.



From THE WORD

O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

— Psalm 119:5-6

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OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW



By Darrel Lee

STEADY AND UNSHAKEN

THOUGH OUR WORLD IS IN TURMOIL, THE POWER OF GOD CAN HOLD US STEADY AND FOCUSED ON A UNIFIED GOAL.

For this generation, we live in globally unprecedented times. Along with the COVID-19 pandemic, a range of economic, political, and cultural disruptions came forcibly upon us in the space of a few months' time. However, while the past year or more has indeed been extraordinary for this generation, it is not unparalleled. Former generations have experienced challenging times as well.

During my teen years in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a cloud of uncertainty hung over our nation. The United States experienced assassinations, the Vietnam War, violent protests, drug experimentation and resulting overdoses, a sexual revolution, the legalization of abortion, and the resignation of a president, among other things. Older generations experienced the Great Depression, World War II, the Korean War, and other unsettling events. This reminds us that at some level, every generation is shaken by circumstances, and must come to grips with the reality that we live in a broken and divided world.

In chapter 2 of the Book of Haggai, we find reference to things on earth being shaken. The concept of shaking brings to mind an unsourced illustration that I read recently. It went something like this:

If you go to the southwest desert and catch one hundred red fire ants and one hundred large carpenter ants and put them in a jar together, at first, nothing will happen. However, if you violently shake the jar and dump them back on the ground, the ants will fight until they eventually kill each other.

They fight each other because the red ants think the carpenter ants are the enemy and vice versa. However, the actual enemy is the one who shakes the jar.

That is exactly what is happening in society today. We have liberal versus conservative; socialist versus capitalist; Democrat versus Republican; pro-mask versus anti-mask; and class warfare pitting one ethnic group against another ethnic group.

The question we need to ask ourselves is, “Who is shaking the jar, and why?”

Applying this illustration to the spiritual realm, we know that many of the upheavals in this world are caused by Satan, and that his purpose is to destroy. However, we do not need to allow ourselves to be shaken by his devices.

SHAKEN OR UNSHAKEABLE?

In the New Testament, the writer of the Book of Hebrews looked back to the prophet Haggai’s words, and noted that there would be a “removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” He admonished the early Christians to whom he wrote, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:27-28).

This verse indicates that there are tenuous and temporal things that can be shaken—aspects that relate to the order of this world. There are also enduring and eternal things that cannot be shaken and will therefore remain—attributes that relate to the order of Heaven, such as charity, heart purity, and Christian unity.

COMPETING VOICES

Both Haggai and the writer of Hebrews referred to God’s voice. He still speaks today. However, the chatter of twenty-four-hour cable television pundits, radio talk show hosts, and internet venues also compete for our attention, contributing to widespread uncertainty and instability. To be guided by those voices is to be held hostage by the enemy of our souls, though we may be unaware of their influence. May the Lord help us to discern between the competing voices of our day, so we can hear God!

Many of the voices in the world are terribly flawed. They have promoted contrived narratives, redefined words and phrases, and rewritten

history—and the consequences are anything but edifying. The voices that speak the loudest and most frequently may not be the best ones to listen to. Quiet and content individuals often have more to offer, even if they rarely speak.

When it comes to voices, Satan often roars. We read in 1 Peter 5:8, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” We cannot outrun, outtalk, or outwit the devil. He is an adversary from another world, even if he is limited to using the weapons of this world. Ephesians 6:12 tells us, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” If our conflict *were* against flesh and blood, perhaps our ingenuity, intellect, or strength would suffice. After all, those qualities are among some that our “enlightened” culture views itself to possess. But look around and tell me: Are the weapons employed by this world working?

When we see virtue and morality being defined by a fallen human race rather than by Scripture, we understand the lament of the prophet Isaiah, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isaiah 5:20-21). Our culture accepts and even promotes the depraved human condition indicted by the Bible. More and more, those who teach the Bible are openly condemned for being intolerant and fomenting hate.

THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

The Christian response to the events of these past months stands in contrast to the response of the world. In fact, the Christian response is different from the world’s response *every* year. The world’s response to the challenges in society is often to fiercely debate and call it “having a conversation.” The world castigates those with a different viewpoint, demands retribution, and sometimes even damages property and relationships in order to call attention to their demands.

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness.”

FROM THE WORD

The Christian response, on the other hand, is patient, and full of grace and forbearance. We are instructed in Ephesians 4:31-32, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." One response is destructive and tears down, and the other response is productive and builds up.

Our response is different from the world's because our goal is different than the world's goal. Colossians 3:1-2 instructs us to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Our affection cannot be divided. The more we focus on Heaven, the less interest we have in becoming deeply involved in matters that pertain to earth. In light of eternity, it is futile to focus on making the world a more comfortable place for sinners to live while they are on their journey to Hell. Instead, we want to focus on inspiring others to prepare for eternity in Heaven. Rather than devoting so much energy to things below, we want to be like Abraham of old, who "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

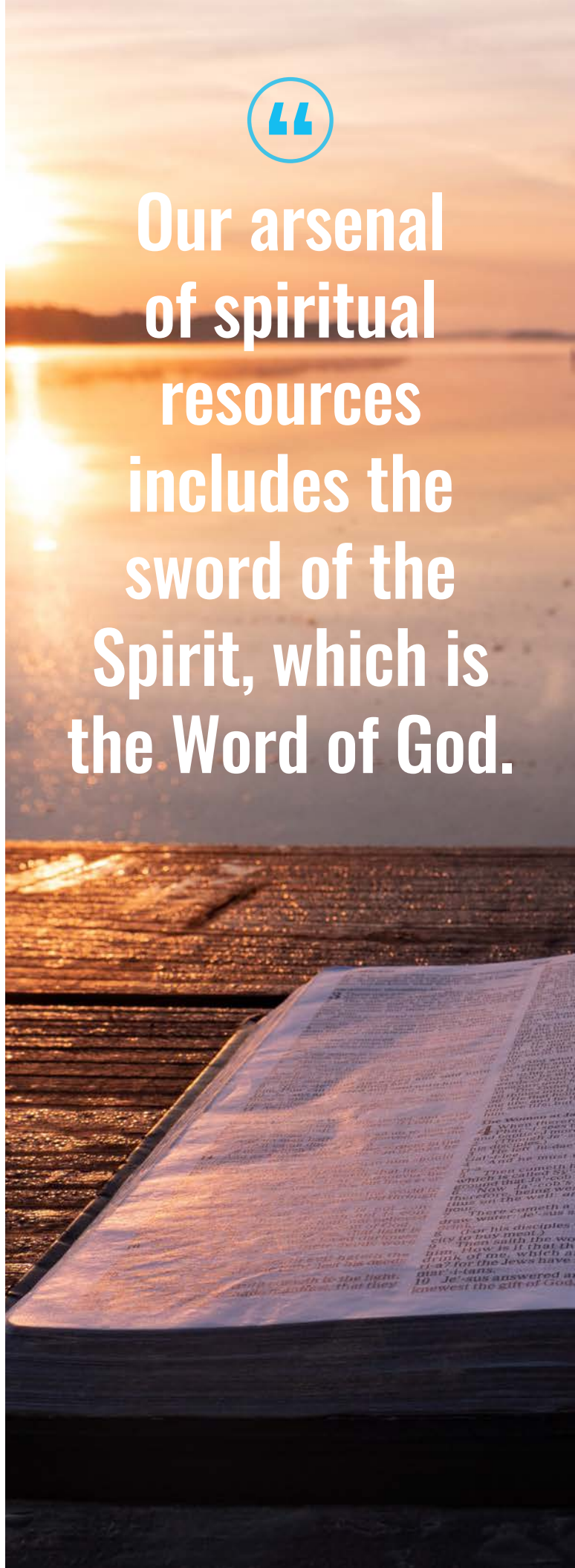
SPIRITUAL RESOURCES OVERCOME SPIRITUAL FORCES

The Apostle Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 10:3 that "... we walk in the flesh." In other words, we admit our humanity. We acknowledge the limitations of our physical and mental capacities, and accept that we will not always get everything perfect. Because of our human limitations, grace is our friend and a valuable weapon in spiritual warfare. We are thankful when we are the recipients of grace, whether that grace is from God or from others, and we want to extend that same grace to others.

Paul went on to say that although we walk in the flesh, "... we do not war after [in the same manner as] the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). The challenges facing our world today cannot be overcome using the



Our arsenal of spiritual resources includes the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.



strategies of the world. The forces of evil can only be overcome by spiritual resources.

Our arsenal of spiritual resources includes the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. That is why we declare God's Word rather than advocating for social agendas. Current narratives are subjective and therefore are often divisive. The Word of God unites us, in spite of varying personal viewpoints. We want those we interact with to leave our presence feeling blessed and thankful to God, rather than angry. We will be far more likely to succeed if we elevate God's Word rather than focusing on current issues.

God's Word is alive, active, searching, revealing, and it has the power to operate on and change human hearts. So rather than being driven by the current news cycle, our interactions with those around us should be inspired by the living Word of God and led by the Holy Spirit. The news cycle approach shifts attention away from God's Word and away from our focus. It is a distraction that undermines our effectiveness as Christians, and could even cause our own faith to be shaken.

OUR MISSION IN THE WORLD— ADVOCATING FOR THE GOSPEL

Our mission as Christians is simple and clear: it is the Great Commission. We see that mission demonstrated in the Acts of the Apostles from start to finish. The title of the book suggests activism, but it is modeled differently than the type of activism that takes place in much of society today. Near the beginning of the book, Acts 1:8 says, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The book concludes by stating in Acts 28:30-31: "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." These two passages not only describe the activities of the Apostles and Paul at the beginning and end of the book, but also what they did between the first

and last chapters. They were advocating for the Gospel—being witnesses for Jesus Christ.

It is noteworthy that we learn more about the cultural condition of the Roman Empire from religious and secular history than we do from the Bible. That is because the mission of the Apostles was not to reform Rome. Rather, they taught the New Testament church how to be "light and salt" in their environment. They targeted the underlying carnal condition of the human race rather than emphasizing the symptoms of their culture's dysfunction. When they did note the symptoms, it was in order to point their readers or listeners to the remedy.

If we confront the problems of our society using the tools offered by our society, we are doomed for defeat, as evidenced by what we see around us

today. In our church services, rather than

being active in protesting the evils of our generation, we want to be active in advocating for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Rather than preaching against the sins of the world, we want to preach Jesus! We want to present something different from what individuals are bombarded with from other voices in society.

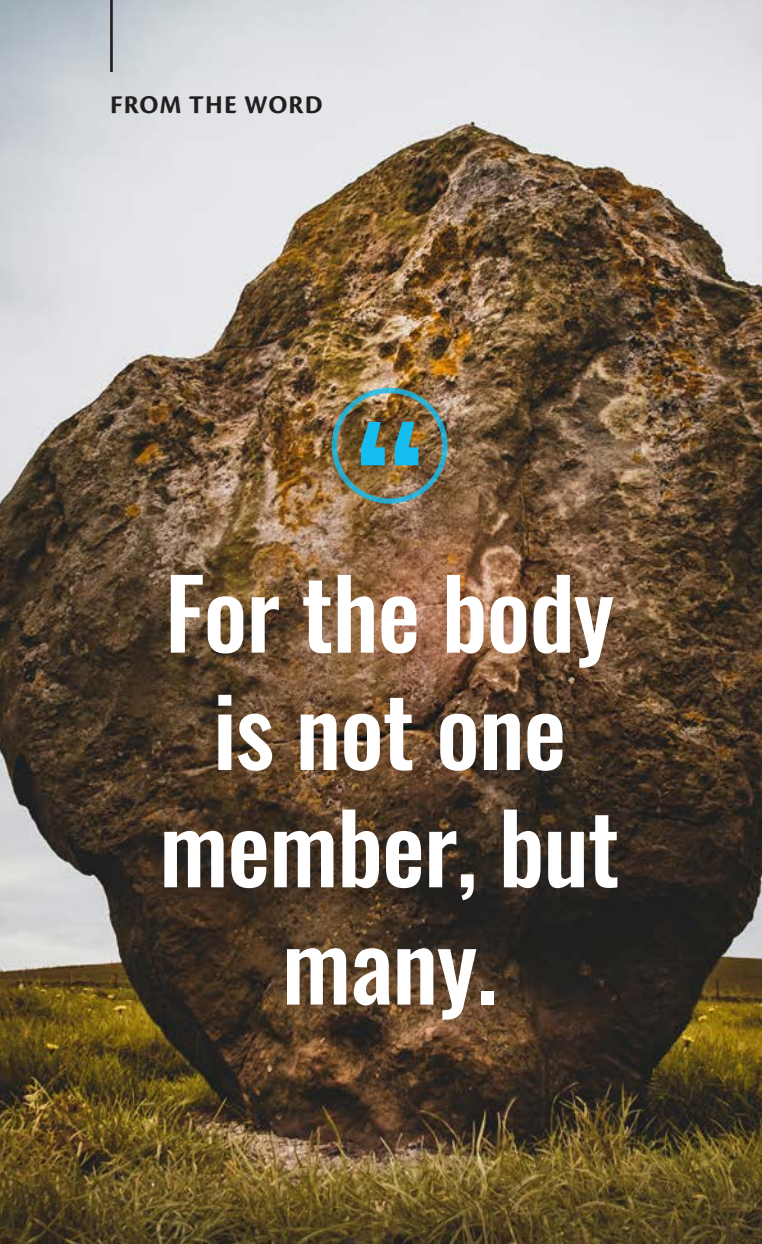
We value and pray for devout leaders who are seeking political solutions. However,

righteousness cannot be legislated. A change of heart cannot be successfully mandated by an act of Congress or an executive order. When it comes to politics, Christians of good conscience can have polar opposite views on how to address what both agree are clearly Biblical issues of morality. Since viewpoints are subjective, at church we want to avoid focusing on anything that undermines our efforts to emphasize the remedy offered through the Blood of Jesus.

OUR MISSION IN THE CHURCH— PRESERVING AND PROMOTING UNITY

In the Church body, it helps to be reminded of the devil's methods. We read in 2 Corinthians 2:11 that we must do so, "lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." We could also read that verse, "We are not ignorant of his purpose." Satan's purpose is to steal, to kill, and to destroy. And one of his devices is to attack the unity of the Body of Christ.

“
... avoid focusing on
anything that undermines
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of Jesus.”



For the body is not one member, but many.

In the Apostolic Faith Church, we have noticeable (and some unnoticeable) differences. We live in different parts of the globe. We are different physically, and have different personalities. We are diverse culturally, sometimes even within the same ethnicity. We have different preferences and opinions, talents and abilities. We are different individuals!

As an example, my wife, Debbie, and I are not alike creatively. She has beautiful penmanship and is quite artistic. My penmanship is horrible and I can hardly draw stick figures. On the other hand, she claims to be very weak in math and thinks I am strong. (Actually, she is being modest about her skills because she is a quilter, and that requires geometry.) The point is, although we are united in marriage, we have differences!

On vacation a few years ago, Debbie and I rented a bicycle built for two. The bicycle had two

seats, two sets of pedals, and two handlebars. The front handlebars steered the bicycle, and the back handlebars were just for the person in back to hold on to. They were attached to the front seat, and on the bike we rented, that seat was loose. As we rounded the first corner, I leaned into the turn and steered that direction. However, Debbie, who was seated behind me, leaned the other way. This twisted my seat, so you can visualize what position that put me in. That was not unity! However, we eventually figured it out and enjoyed our unified bicycle ride.

Paul the Apostle acknowledged in 1 Corinthians 12:12-14 that differences exist in the Body of Christ—the Church. We read, “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.”

In spite of our differences, however, we want to have unity. In Ephesians 4, Paul urged the believers in the church at Ephesus to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3-4). True unity will take endeavoring!

The source of division is carnality and its outcome is destructive. The source of unity is Christ and its outcome is productive. It is what the Psalmist alluded to in the 133rd Psalm, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” As believers, we may be geographically and even culturally distanced one from another, but we can be perfectly blended in beautiful harmony despite external circumstances. The Word of God and the sanctifying power of the Blood of Jesus has brought us together, and the power of God can hold us steady and unshaken, and with a unified goal.

Between now and when the Trumpet sounds, may all of us maintain our focus on God. As we determine with one heart to let His name be glorified in all we do and say, we know our love and unity with one another will thrive, and souls will be saved in these last days of the great harvest before Jesus returns. ■

Reverend Darrel Lee is Superintendent General of the Apostolic Faith Church.

QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT

THREE WAYS WE CAN KEEP THE FIRE OF
GOD'S LOVE ALIVE IN OUR HEARTS.



By Boniface Banda

In 1 Thessalonians 5:19 we read the instruction, “Quench not the Spirit.” The word *quench* means to extinguish or put out a fire by using water or some other means. If something has been quenched, there is no more life in it.

The devil wants the Spirit of God to be extinguished in our lives. He is working in these last days to attack three resources that are necessary in the life of a Christian to maintain spiritual health: the Word of God, prayer, and family worship. By understanding the attacks of the devil in these areas, and guarding against them, we can ensure that the Spirit is not quenched in our lives.

THE WORD OF GOD

“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful” (Matthew 13:22).

There are many things in our day that choke the Word of God. We live in a busy and fast world because of the pressures of this life. Some hardly have time to even cook whole meals, they rely on fast foods that have little or no nutritional value. However, such a busy and fast life should not take away our time for reading the Word of God. We do not want to treat the Word like food we quickly warm in the microwave.

In Joshua 1:8, we are told how we need to value the Word of God—we must always meditate on it. When we read it, we need to stop and digest it. We cannot quickly read the Word of God like a newspaper, selecting what we want to read and what we do not want.

We must ask ourselves two very important questions—how often do we read the Bible, and how long do we spend reading it? We need to deliberately and consciously spend a considerable amount of time studying the Word of God. If our physical bodies need to be fed three times a day, and sometimes also snacks between meals, how much more do our souls need nourishment? In Matthew 6:33, Jesus tells us to seek the Kingdom of God first. God knows our economic challenges and that we

FROM THE WORD

need many things in our lives, but even then, He calls for us to put first things first.

Sunday school lessons are vital for us. Even if we have already learned the lessons some time back, we cannot say we already know it all. Sunday school is also an opportunity to pass lessons on to new converts. How do we value Sunday school lessons? How do we value the memory verses? Do we just see them as mere words? We shouldn't just set it aside, only remembering to go through it quickly on Saturday evening. The Word of God is what keeps us from sin. It is what helps us to know the mind of God. With God's Word in our hearts, we will be better equipped to obey Him, and His Spirit will not be quenched in our lives.

PRAYER

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

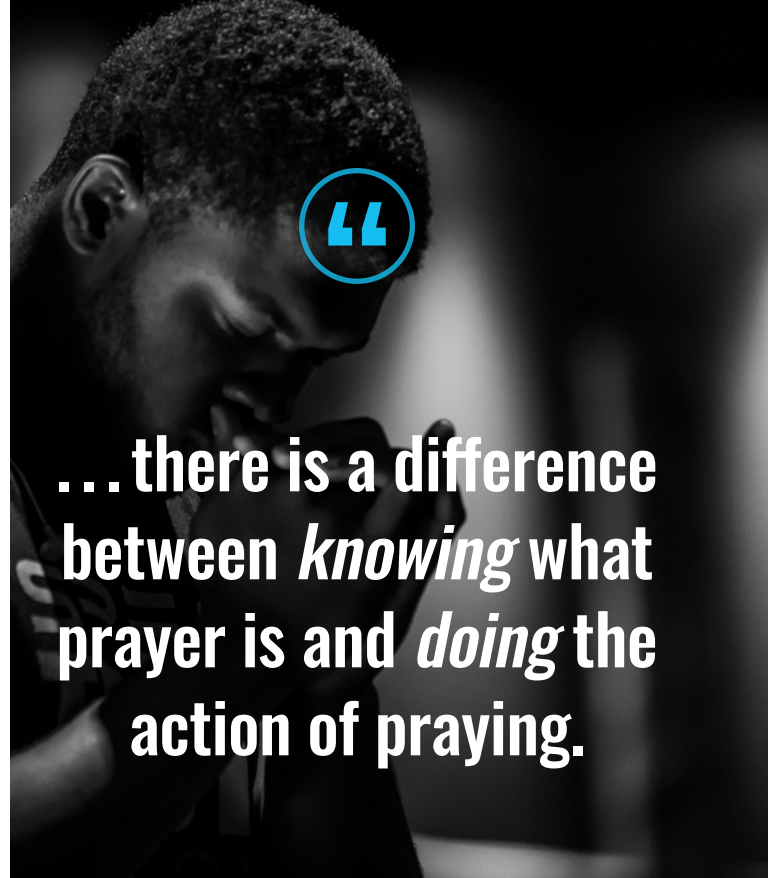
We all know that prayer is talking to God. But there is a difference between *knowing* what prayer is and *doing* the action of praying. Is it possible to faint? Yes it is. No wonder Jesus encourages us to pray always.

Luke 6:12 gives us the example of Jesus himself. The Son of God, who came from Heaven and had all power, prayed. He lived a life of prayer. Why would Jesus pray the whole night? Because His ministry did not depend on experiences. Jesus always wanted to be connected to God the Father and the Spirit through prayer.

A Gospel chorus says, "Jesus started with prayer and ended with prayer." Jesus depended upon God through prayer, and we must determine to do so too, because it is possible for the spirit of prayer to be quenched.

A clutch plate is what allows a vehicle to transition into gear. If the clutch plate is broken, the vehicle will not move no matter how good the engine may be. Prayer is the "clutch plate" that connects us to Heaven. If we are going to be sound Christians who not only look good on the outside but indeed are connected to Heaven, then we must pray.

If ever there was a time that we must pray, it is now. We are moving against the wind in these last days. We are in the final minutes of the battle because the devil knows that his time is short (see



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Revelation 12:12). We must not allow our spiritual lives to be quenched by neglecting to pray.

FAMILY WORSHIP

"And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:17-19).

God knew Abraham, and knew he could be trusted to faithfully pass on to his children and household the importance of following God's ways. God sees our homes every day as He did Abraham's. We want to follow what Abraham did and be faithful examples and teachers for our families.

Family worship is another area that is under attack during these last days. Satan wants to remove this vital practice from our homes. When our lives are too busy, our children become vulnerable to the influence of the teachings of the world. Consider that children may only spend a few hours in church each week, and the rest of the time is spent at home, in school, in their community, and elsewhere. One

minister said, “If parents do not fulfill their spiritual responsibility, Satan will shape the children in his mold.” Our children are vulnerable to the mold of the devil, so we must do all we can to protect them.

The world today is suffering from juvenile delinquency because society has thrown away the Word of God. Television and video games may be fun for children, but they can also be dangerous. We need to know what our children are exposed to at all times. There is a false teacher out there who will take advantage when parents are negligent.

We must know our children. We need to know their character traits and counsel them with the Word of God, correcting them in love. Negative traits that are uncorrected and uncontrolled are what lead to child delinquency.

We also need to have family worship time. Children should not be strangers to the Word of God. As parents, we lead by example. We should not only send our children to Sunday school, but also read the Word of God and attend church with them. If we come to church late, after Sunday school is over, our children will see it. As parents, we are their life coaches. If they notice that we force them to read the Bible but don't read it ourselves, they will not value the Bible. If they have never seen us kneel down to pray at home, they will not see the value of prayer. When we are mindful to read the Bible and to pray

together as families, we will protect our spiritual lives and protect our children's lives too.

CONSIDER THE TIMES

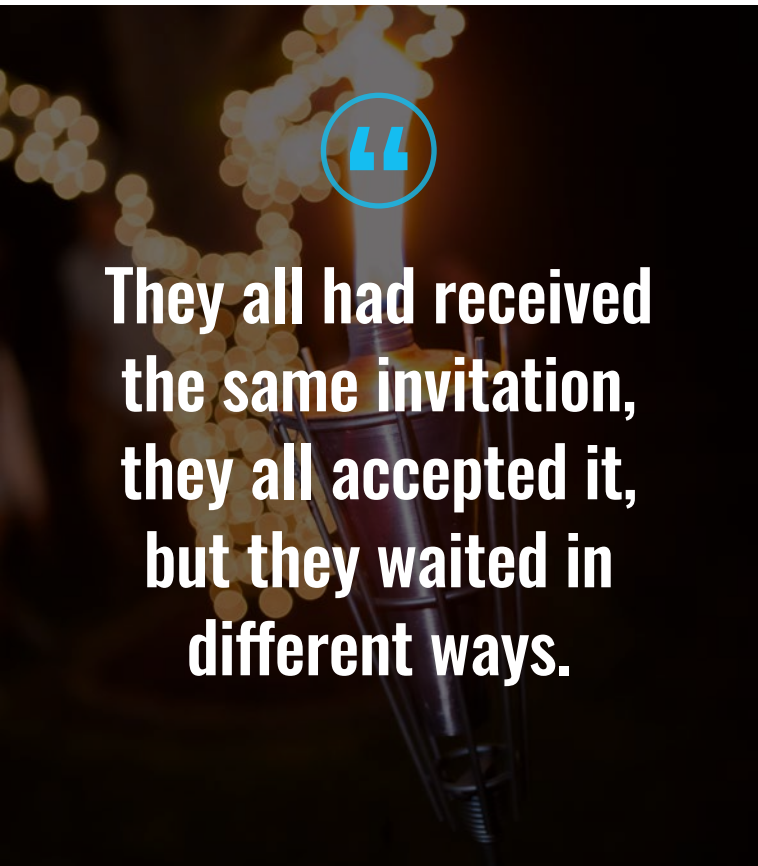
We are living in perilous times. These are times in which the love of many is waxing cold. The devil is not concerned about unbelievers because they are already his. He targets the true Christians and wants by all means to make them cold, relaxed, and entangled with the affairs of this life so that Jesus' Second Coming will take them unaware.

In the Bible, Jesus gave a parable of the ten virgins “which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom” (Matthew 25:1). They all had received the same invitation, they all accepted it, but they waited in different ways. Five of them were wise because they prepared adequately. They carried with them some oil in their vessels because they did not know the exact time of the Bridegroom's coming. The other five virgins were foolish because they did not prepare. Perhaps they thought they had enough oil already, and carrying extra would be doing too much since their lamps were already trimmed and burning. Perhaps they got busy with other things and neglected the most important thing—the oil. They thought they were ready, but they did not know that their oil was slowly depleting and their lamps were getting dim. In that state, there was a cry that the Bridegroom had come! Alas, their lamps had gone out. They were not ready to meet the Bridegroom and the door was shut.

In these last days, we are waiting to meet our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. There will be a “midnight cry” for all to meet Him in the sky, but only those who are ready will meet Him. The return of our Lord Jesus Christ is eminent; we must trim our lamps and keep the oil of the Spirit full in our lives.

We must not allow the enemy to be successful in attacking our reading of the Word, our prayer times, and our family worship. We do not want the Spirit of God to be quenched within us. Therefore, let us be diligent in guarding these vital aspects of our walk with God, and purpose to continue in the faith until the day of His appearing. ■

Reverend Boniface Banda is the District Superintendent for Apostolic Faith Churches in Zambia and East Africa.



**They all had received
the same invitation,
they all accepted it,
but they waited in
different ways.**

SIX FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

A CLOSER LOOK AT SOME OF THE CORE BELIEFS OF CHRISTIANITY, AS SET FORTH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE BIBLE.



Taken from a Bible study by Mark Staller

The first chapter of Genesis records that God created our world in six days. The logic of the Genesis account is that in the first three days of the Creation, God made three contrasting realms: on day one, the realms of light and darkness; on day two, the waters above and below the firmament; and on day three, the dry land, which was set apart from the waters below. During the next three days of Creation, God populated these contrasting realms: on day four, He made the sun, moon, and stars to fill the realms of light and darkness; on day five, He created fish and fowl to fill the waters above and below; and on day six, He created animals and humans to fill the earth.

Just as the physical world is populated by the wonderful things God created, so our belief system can be populated by the foundational truths found in the Book of Genesis. In particular, the opening three chapters give information that

form the basis for the Christian worldview—the core beliefs that give us an understanding of our existence. While these truths are reiterated and reinforced elsewhere in God’s Word, it is notable that they are initially established in the first pages of Scripture. The accounts of the Creation, the first temptation, the fall of mankind, and the remedy for sin provide the foundation upon which the rest of the Bible teachings stand.

We live in a day and age when the core beliefs of Christianity are being undermined and eroded. Psalm 11:3 asks the thought-provoking question, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” Indeed, it is vital that we clearly understand and cherish the foundational truths of the Bible. Of the many truths found in God’s Word, let us take a closer look at six found in Genesis 1-3, to reinforce and reaffirm our Christian worldview.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

#1

THIS VISIBLE WORLD WAS CREATED BY AN INVISIBLE GOD.

Genesis 1:1 begins, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” The following verses relate that our Creator spoke the entire universe into existence. God said . . . and it was so. Hebrews 11:3 reiterates the Genesis account: “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

From these verses we understand

that the physical, material world we live in has not always existed. In fact, the physical world is not even the most important part of existence. There are two key aspects to reality: the physical and the spiritual. Other ways to describe them would be the material and the immaterial, the natural and the supernatural, or the visible and the invisible. Natural science has discovered some amazing truths about the material world, but God’s Word reveals the awesome truth that the visible world is undergirded and sustained by a supernatural, invisible God. He has preeminence and is Lord of both the physical and spiritual realms (see John 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17; Nehemiah 9:6; Romans 1:20).

Stand firm upon the foundational truth that the supernatural, spiritual realm is real. God and Satan, Heaven and Hell, and angels and demons are not religious fantasies. Life in the physical realm is permeated and impacted by the spiritual. ♦



God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. - John 4:24

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. - 1 Timothy 1:17

Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. - Nehemiah 9:6

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. - Romans 1:20

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

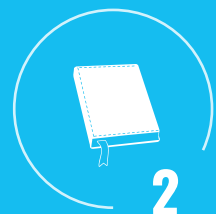
#2

THE GODHEAD IS A PLURALITY.

Although the Trinity is revealed more clearly in the New Testament, the triune nature of God is established from the initial chapters of Scripture. Genesis 1:26 records God saying, “Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness . . .” In Genesis 3:22, after Adam and Eve had eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God said, “Behold, the man is become as one of *us*, to know good and evil” (emphasis added in

both verses). The words “us” and “our” indicate the plurality of God, even while He is one God.

The Gospel of John begins by intentionally echoing Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Here we see Jesus Christ, the Word, specifically presented as the Creator. Indeed, a core Christian belief is that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God and were all active in the Creation of our world (see 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 John 5:7). Jesus Christ was not just a man; He is also a member of the Godhead and equal with God the Father and



But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. - 1 Corinthians 8:6

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. - Ephesians 3:9

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. - Colossians 1:16

(CONTINUED: THE GODHEAD IS A PLURALITY)

God the Holy Spirit (see Colossians 2:9; Philippians 2:6), making Him uniquely qualified to carry out God's plan of redemption.

Hold tightly to the foundational truth that our one God is triune. We were created by, and we worship, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. ♦

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

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and

these three are one. - 1 John 5:7

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. - Colossians 2:9

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. - Philippians 2:5-6



HUMAN BEINGS ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.

After making the earth and all the animals that dwell in it, Genesis relates that God chose to create a special being who would have dominion over all the earth: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26). Human beings are unique and especially valuable because we are made in the image of God. God's other creatures are wonderful, but they are not made in His own likeness. Because we bear His image, every human is precious and worthy of honor and respect.

Genesis 2:7 also stresses mankind's unique status: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis does not record

that God breathed into the nostrils of any animals; only Adam received the breath of life from God, and only his descendants have immortal souls. Thus, as human beings, we are part of both the physical and spiritual realms: we have material bodies that are animated by immaterial, eternal souls. Furthermore, our immortal souls are more valuable and more precious than all the material riches of the world (see Matthew 16:26).

As image bearers of God, humans have some amazing abilities that should be treasured and appreciated. For example, we have creative power. Like God, we can imagine things and then bring them into existence. We also have aesthetic awareness; we can look upon the beauty in the earth and sky and see that it is good. We can contemplate and comprehend (at least to some extent) immaterial spiritual concepts such as justice, mercy, grace, and love. And because we are made in God's image, we can freely choose to love and serve Him, just as He freely chose to create us and give us a free will.

Grasp fully the foundational truth that you and every other human being are made in the image of God. The Bible makes it clear that Adam and Eve represent *all* of humanity, not just the Hebrew people. The members of every ethnic background are made in His image. The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is universal (see Acts 17:24-26, 28). ♦



For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? - Matthew 16:26

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. - Acts 17:24-26

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. - Acts 17:28



HUMAN MALES AND FEMALES NEED ONE ANOTHER.

The second chapter of Genesis reveals how men and women are interdependent. Genesis 2:18 records God saying, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” God took a rib out of man (Adam) and fashioned a woman (Eve), and brought her to the man. Adam then declared, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Genesis 2:23).

Just as Genesis presents God as a plurality, it also presents man as a plurality. Genesis 5:1-2 states, “In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he *him*; male and female created he *them*; and blessed *them*, and called *their* name Adam, in the day when *they* were created” (emphasis added). Adam is referred to as both “he” and “they” because the Hebrew word translated *Adam* is both the proper name of the first man and a word which refers to humankind, including both male and female human beings.

From the previous foundational truth, we understand that men and women are equally valued because they are equally made in God’s likeness. They have the same intrinsic worth. If

you are a boy or a man, you can and should accept and embrace your God-given maleness. If you are a girl or a woman, you can and should accept and embrace your God-given femaleness. Males are not superior to, nor do they have dominion over, females. Females are not superior to, nor do they have dominion over, males. At the same time, males and females cannot be independent of each other. Only together do they comprise humanity.

God designed males and females to work and live in complimentary, “helping” relationships, not to engage in a power struggle between the sexes. Males are not better off without females, and females are not better off without males. Boys and girls need both men and women in their lives. Furthermore, from the very beginning of the sacred Scriptures, the marriage relationship between a man and a woman is presented as the most intimate relationship possible between humans: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). This model of males and females, whole-heartedly committed to working and living together in holy matrimony, is also explicitly endorsed in New Testament Scripture, including by Christ (see Ephesians 5:28-31; Matthew 19:4-6).

Lay hold of the foundational truth that human males and females need one another. Husbands and wives are meant to appreciate and support their spouses; fathers and mothers are to model to their children how men and women should love, honor, respect, and help one another. All men and women in the family of God have positions as spiritual fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, and sons and daughters. The roles of men and women in humanity are inseparable. ♦



So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet bated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. - Ephesians 5:28-31

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. - Matthew 19:4-6

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

#5

HUMAN BEINGS ARE BORN IN A SINFUL AND FALLEN STATE.

In the second chapter of Genesis, we read that God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and gave them permission to eat of every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told them, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Chapter 3 records the serpent telling Eve that if she ate of that tree, she would become like God, and then the serpent said, “Ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4-5).

The great tragedy of Genesis 3 is that sin and death (both physical and spiritual death) entered into the world. Adam and Eve yielded to temptation and ate of the forbidden fruit, and immediately they were ashamed and separated from God (Genesis 3:6-7). Their fall into sin thrust mankind into a fallen spiritual state. Consequently, Adam and Eve, and the very earth itself, suffered from the curse of sin. God drove them out of the paradise of Eden to prevent them from eating from the tree of life (Genesis 3:23-24).

Humanity’s fall into sin is quickly confirmed in the next few chapters of Genesis. Chapter 4

describes how Adam and Eve’s firstborn son, filled with jealousy and anger, murdered his brother. In chapter 6 we read that as the human family began to multiply, “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). God destroyed the wicked off the face of the earth in the Flood, sparing only righteous Noah and his family. Afterward, God promised He would never again destroy every living thing, for “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Genesis 8:21).

Thus, from the very beginning of the Biblical record, humankind is presented as a mixture of good and evil. We are made in the image of God and are “crowned . . . with glory and honour” (Psalm 8:5). Yet, we are “shapen in iniquity” (Psalm 51:5), with hearts that are evil from our youth. Like God, we can do good and bless ourselves and others; unlike God, we can also freely choose to do evil and harm ourselves and others. And because of the first sin, all of humanity is born with a sinful condition—the carnal nature inherited from Adam that makes one prone to sin and wrongdoing (see Romans 5:12; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8).

Fully acknowledge and accept the foundational truth that human beings enter the world as sinful, fallen creatures. Though made in the image of God, in a fallen state we fail to live up to our potential. Humans often pervert and misuse the powers and abilities God has given them because they desire things that are wicked. For this reason, humans are the source of much of the moral evil that is in the world. ♦

Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. - Romans 5:12

Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin? - Proverbs 20:9

For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. - Ecclesiastes 7:20

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. - Isaiah 53:6

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

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. - 1 John 1:8



5

HUMAN BEINGS NEED GOD.

Although human beings are the source of much of the moral evil in the world, our Christian worldview does not limit the struggle between good and evil to interactions between individuals. That conflict is played out in both the physical and spiritual realms (see Ephesians 6:11-12). The battle between good and evil reached even to Heaven when Satan and his angels were cast down to earth (see Revelation 12:7-9), and we know it continues today as our adversary the devil “walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

In the third chapter of Genesis, Satan appeared as the serpent who seduced Adam and Eve into sin and death. God cursed the serpent and then said, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15). This pronouncement was

the first prophecy of the coming Savior. On the Cross of Calvary, Jesus, who was of the seed of the woman (see Galatians 4:4), was bruised by Satan. However, through His sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, Jesus soundly defeated Satan by giving mankind a way to escape sin and death (see Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 55-57). The hope of a Savior, first given in Genesis 3, was made a reality through Jesus Christ.

The good news of the Gospel is that even though there was a serpent in the Garden of Eden, there was also a Lamb—Jesus Christ, the sacrificial “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Revelation 13:8 proclaims that He was “slain from the foundation of the world,” indicating that from the beginning of our world, God ordained that Christ the Lamb would redeem and restore us to a right relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Embrace and confess the foundational truth that human beings need God. Because we are born in a sinful and fallen state, we cannot save ourselves from sin and death. We must repent and ask forgiveness of our sins so that Jesus our Creator God can become Jesus our Savior God. It is He that made us, and not we ourselves (Psalm 100:3), so it is He that can save us, and not we ourselves. ♦

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. - Ephesians 6:11-12

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. - Revelation 12:9

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. - Galatians 4:4-5

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

- Hebrews 2:14-15

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. - 1 Corinthians 15:21-22

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. - 1 Corinthians 15:55-57





THE CULMINATION OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

We have focused on the foundational truths in Genesis 1-3 and how they inform our worldview. However, to fully grasp the foundational truths of the first three chapters of the Bible, we must compare them to the last three chapters of the Bible. Whereas the opening chapters give us the foundation of our worldview, the closing chapters present the culmination of our worldview. Genesis 1-3 and Revelation 20-22 act in many ways as “bookends” that hold together the entire sixty-six books of Scripture.

The last three chapters of Revelation parallel and mirror the first three chapters of Genesis in order to reveal to us not only humanity’s past failure, but also our present and future hope. Whereas Genesis 1-3 depict the tragic fall of humankind, Revelation 20-22 foretell our triumphant restoration. The opening of Genesis could be titled “Paradise Lost,” and the closing of Revelation could be titled “Paradise Regained.”

In comparing these chapters from Genesis and Revelation, a marvelous symmetry emerges:

- ✦ Genesis 1:1 relates that at the beginning of time, our current Heaven and earth were created; Revelation 21:1 says that at the end of time, God will create a new Heaven and a new earth.
- ✦ In Genesis 3 the serpent tempted and deceived Eve; Revelation 20 tells us that Satan, “the old

serpent,” will be bound and cast into a bottomless pit for one thousand years, and eventually the devil “that deceived” will be cast into the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever and ever.

- ✦ When Adam and Eve gave in to temptation and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, death was born into our world; Revelation 20:14 states that at the end of this present world, death itself will be cast into the Lake of Fire—death will die!
- ✦ Genesis 2 describes a river that “went out of Eden to water the garden.” In the new Heaven and earth described in Revelation 22, there will be a crystal-clear river of water of life that flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Christ the Lamb proclaims, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”
- ✦ In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve were driven from Eden and barred from eating of the tree of life; in the restored paradise described in Revelation 22, the tree of life flourishes by the river of life, and those who obey God’s commandments have the right to eat of the tree.
- ✦ Genesis 3 relates that the consequences of the sin of Adam and Eve included a curse upon the earth and humankind. This curse still exists: we are subject to tears and sorrow, pain and suffering, sin and death. However, in the new Heaven and earth, Revelation 22:3 proclaims, “There shall be no more curse.” Revelation 21:4 describes mankind’s joyous future: “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”
- ✦ After Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, Genesis 3 says they were ashamed and hid themselves from God. Sin severed their relationship with their loving Creator, and they became separated from Him. Separation from God in Genesis 3 is transformed into restoration to God in Revelation 21, when “the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” God promises, “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”

WHEN THE LAST THREE CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE ARE READ IN TANDEM WITH THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS, OUR PLACE IN THIS WORLD BECOMES CLEAR: WE ARE ONLY STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH.

Although the last three chapters of Revelation parallel the first three chapters of Genesis in these remarkable ways, there are two important differences between the paradise in Eden and that described in Revelation 21 and 22. First, the paradise described in Eden was in a rural setting where Adam was tasked by God with dressing and keeping the garden, and Adam and Eve were the only two humans who briefly experienced the idyllic existence in Eden. In contrast, the future paradise described in Revelation has an urban setting: John the Revelator saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven. John described the marvelous city at length, with its streets, foundations, walls, and gates made of pure gold and many precious jewels. More wonderful than the building materials is the massive size; whereas the garden of Eden held only Adam and Eve, the New Jerusalem will be large enough to hold all the descendants of Adam and Eve who have been redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb!

A second difference in the Bible “bookends” is that the world God created in Genesis contains both darkness and light. In contrast, God’s new Heaven and earth will have no need of a sun or moon because the glory of God and of the Lamb will provide it continual light. Revelation 22:5 proclaims that the servants of God “need no candle, neither the light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

When the last three chapters of the Bible are read in tandem with the first three chapters, our place in this world becomes clear: we are only strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Hebrews 11:13). We cannot return to Eden, but Jesus Christ has gone to prepare an even better place for us (John 14:1-3). As we hold faithfully to the foundational Bible truths given in Genesis and look forward expectantly to our heavenly home described in Revelation, we will be among the people described in Hebrews 11:16: “Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.” ■

Reverend Mark Staller is the pastor of the Apostolic Faith Church in Tehachapi, California.



These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. - Hebrews 11:13

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. - John 14:1-3

WITNESS

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. – Ephesians 4:29

23 GOD TRAINED ME TO
TEACH MY CHILDREN

27 FROM MUSLIM TRADITIONS
TO FAITH IN CHRIST

31 GOD BROUGHT
ME THROUGH!

34 EVIDENCE

GOD TRAINED ME TO TEACH MY CHILDREN

GOD TAUGHT THIS MOTHER FOUR SIMPLE FAMILY ROUTINES FOR RAISING HER SON AND DAUGHTER IN THE GOSPEL.



By Jodie Hinkle

While driving in my car one afternoon in September of 1987, I tuned into a Christian radio station and heard the Gospel message. Realizing that I was a sinner in need of a Savior, I pulled the car over into a parking lot and prayed. There, the Lord wonderfully saved me, changing my heart, and setting me on a new course of following Him.

Not long after that, a friend told me about a verse in the Bible that says, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). She said this verse was a promise from God that could be claimed for my husband who had been raised in the Gospel, but was not a Christian at that time. I did claim that promise for my husband, but also thought of our young children. We had a son,

Cameron, who was nearly five years old, and a daughter, Catey, who was three, and I wanted to see them get to Heaven, too. However, who would train them in the Gospel way since my husband was not a Christian and I knew almost nothing of the Gospel myself? It seemed God would just have to train me up in how to “train up” our children as I went along, and that is exactly what He did.

Through a series of lessons, God showed me to establish a few simple routines as a family. If done consistently, these would result in our son and daughter learning about the Gospel, how to live it, and the value of it. The lessons included instruction to pray as a family, read the Bible together, practice Gospel principles as a household, and put down roots at church.



LESSON ONE: PRAY AS A FAMILY

One evening, I stood in the doorway of my children's bedroom listening to them argue as they got ready for bed. In frustration I asked the Lord what could be done about their bad attitudes, and immediately, the first lesson followed. I was reminded of a recent incident, and the question came to mind, "What did you do about your own bad attitude when things didn't go as you had planned?" At the time, I had prayed, and the Lord had miraculously changed the circumstances, which also changed my attitude. More significantly though, I had prayed beforehand, asking the Lord for His strength to do the right thing throughout the day, and to keep and guide me. As I thought on this, I realized that my children needed the Lord's strength for each day as much as I did.

Before bed that night, we discussed how the day had gone for each of us. Then we prayed, thanking God for the day's blessings, asking help for the things troubling us, and requesting salvation for our loved ones. The next morning, we prayed again, praising God for His goodness and asking help for the difficulties ahead. Later, I wrote in my diary, "January 31, 1988: Instituted a time of family worship."

When my son started school, our morning prayers took on new importance. He was introduced to swear words, peer pressure to do wrong, and beliefs contrary to the Bible. We added to our prayers that a protective hedge be placed about him, both spiritually and physically. Over the years, our requests became more specific, such as asking for help to take a stand against some things or resist certain temptations.

It was not always possible to pray as a family, but we were consistent over time, and the benefits of having a prayer routine soon became evident.

Reviewing our day with the Lord in the evening helped to minimize the children's anxieties and frustrations, allowed me to become aware of what was going on in their lives, and made us all more appreciative of the good things God provided for us on a daily basis. Meanwhile, praying in the morning prepared us for the spiritual battles of the day.

I had thought only adults needed prayer, but I learned that the Lord is a help for even those of a very young age, and it is never too early to establish the practice of praying regularly.

LESSON TWO: READ THE BIBLE TOGETHER

In January of 1988, I began attending the Apostolic Faith Church, where a relative had been taking my son and daughter to Sunday school. One morning, I had a conversation with the person sitting next to me in the pews, and this resulted in a second lesson from the Lord. I commented, "My children keep asking if I know my verse, and I do not know why." The person next to me replied, "Well, don't you ask them if they know *their* Sunday school memory verse?" I did not know they had one, but after investigating, I learned the church provided Bible study materials even for ages five and under. I had excluded Cameron and Catey from reading the Bible with me, thinking they would not understand it and could not benefit from reading it. Now, I saw that with a study plan designed for their ages, they too could learn from God's Word.

We began a Bible study routine patterned after the Sunday school curriculum, and I wrote in my diary, "February 18: The children and I now read a Bible story at breakfast." That morning, we also practiced their memory verse, which over time went from being a short verse once a month to a long verse every week. We did evening Scripture readings as well, accompanied



by activities to keep them interested. At first, these were as simple as rocking dolls in baskets while learning about Baby Moses or brandishing slingshots during the account of David and Goliath. Eventually, we used a “Bible Activity Jar” filled with task cards. Each evening, we removed a card and followed its instructions either during or after the Scripture reading. Among the tasks were, “Illustrate with watercolors,” “Recreate on felt board,” “Answer trivia questions,” and “Play a Bible board game.”

Having a Bible study routine made learning the Gospel easy and fun. And even when the children did not understand what we were reading, God’s Word was planted in their hearts. We see the benefit of this in Paul’s words to Timothy, “From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation” (2 Timothy 3:15). At some point in Timothy’s life, the Scriptures he had been taught as a child took hold in his heart and he was able to apply them.

The same was true in our family. Catey once testified that as a child she learned her memory verses only to please her teachers. Then one day, as a young person, she encountered a situation where she needed help, and one of those verses came to her mind. Right then, she made the connection that the Bible promises she had learned as a child were real and available to her. My children *were* too young to comprehend the Bible when we began reading it together, but not too young to begin storing up promises for later use.

LESSON THREE: PRACTICE GOSPEL PRINCIPLES AS A HOUSEHOLD

One day after praying together, I asked Cameron and Catey, “Do you talk to God when Mama is not praying with you?” When they both answered no, I realized they needed to experience the Gospel for themselves, not just through me. This led to lesson three. The



Seeing how we applied God’s Word in our home gave my children a foundation for obeying God on their own.

Lord showed me to start a new habit of involving the two of them in household spiritual matters. This meant giving them an explanation when applying God’s Word through rules, including them in praying about family concerns, and rehearsing answers to prayer together.

Applying God’s Word: There were a lot of new rules in our home after I became a Christian, and I had not said why. Now I explained that we were careful about our books, games, and movies, because King David had looked at something he should not have, and sinned. Afterward, he repented in great sorrow, and then lived by this rule: “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes” (Psalm 101:3).

The next time a new rule was implemented, I wrote in my diary, “April 10, 1988: We have stopped using slang exclamations and oaths, because Jesus said, ‘Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil’ (Matthew 5:37).”

Seeing how we applied God’s Word in our home gave my children a foundation for obeying God on their own.

Praying About Family Concerns: Previously, my husband and I had shielded our children from all family concerns, but now I included them in praying over new needs whenever possible. On one occasion, we needed groceries, but the bank would not release funds without a check, and my check order had been delayed. We gathered in the living room to pray, and then searched the house. We found three temporary-issue checks in the mailbox, an unused check in an old checkbook, and my husband’s uncashed paycheck. My daughter held them up and exclaimed, “When you ask God for checks, you get checks!”

As new concerns arose, we became accustomed to immediately praying about them together. One afternoon, a bee got into the house and buzzed wildly as I swatted at it. Suddenly, Cameron took off running toward his room. I followed, thinking

he was scared, but found him kneeling beside his bed, praying. A moment later, the bee flew out the open front door.

Praying together over problems big and small taught my children to turn to God for their needs, and gave them first-hand knowledge that He hears our prayers, has compassion, and can do all things.

Rehearsing answers to prayer: The Bible instructs us to show “the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.” The reason given for this is “that the generation to come might know them . . . that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments” (Psalm 78:4, 6-7).

Prior to reading this verse, it had not seemed important to share answers to prayer with my children. However, I now added this to our Bible activity jar, with a card titled “Categories.” This was a game where one person would state a category, such as “Lost and Found,” and then each in turn would name a corresponding answer to prayer. The one who outlasted the others was the winner.

Rehearsing answers to prayer helped all of us remember and appreciate what God had done, as well as trust Him for the future.

LESSON FOUR: PUT DOWN ROOTS AT CHURCH



One evening after church, I observed my son talking with a group of boys his age, and the Lord took the opportunity to teach another lesson. He brought to my attention that each of those boys came from a family of Christian parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. He showed me that they were like trees with vast root systems helping to anchor them in the Gospel. I realized that my children needed a larger root system.

From that point forward, I made sure they took part in as many youth activities among church families as possible, from children’s meetings to



They were needed to show up, be in their places, and do their parts to help further the Gospel.

birthday parties. My hope was that they would make friends at church who would eventually become part of their “root system.”

That same year, Cameron and Catey were asked to participate in the church work, and we took advantage of every opportunity. Some of my diary entries for them in 1994 included, “April 10: Assisted in the church nursery . . . April 15: Handed out microphones during the testimony service . . . April 17: Played in the junior orchestra.”

Eventually, my children did make friends among the young people, but more than that, they became part of the entire family of God. The support and encouragement they received, and also that they were counted on to give, had the effect of anchoring them in the Gospel through their connections with God’s people. Meanwhile, participating gave them a sense of purpose, responsibility, and belonging. They were needed to show up, be in their places, and do their parts to help further the Gospel.

Applying God’s instruction for training up my children was not a guarantee they would take the way of the Gospel. However, it equipped them to make an informed decision. It gave them the knowledge of how to obtain salvation and live a victorious Christian life. It also showed them the value in choosing the Gospel—God’s goodness to us while we are here on earth, and the hope of Heaven in eternity.

Both of my children have chosen to serve God, and when my youngest graduated from college, I went to the altar full of gratitude. I prayed, “Lord, thank You for training up my children in the Gospel,” and then after thinking on this, I had to add, “And thank You for training up me as well.” ■

Jodie Hinkle is a member of the editorial staff at the Apostolic Faith world headquarters in Portland, Oregon.

FROM MUSLIM TRADITIONS TO FAITH IN CHRIST



IN CHRIST, OLA FOUND SOMETHING HE HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED: POWER TO LIVE WITHOUT SINNING.

By Ola Balogun

Growing up, I was raised in a wonderful, loving home in Nigeria. There were nine of us including my parents and six siblings. Ours was a Muslim home, and our parents brought us up well with good moral values. The central mosque in our community had been built by my grandfather, so our family had a bit of a legacy around us. We were not fundamentalists, but we practiced the daily prayers, the fasts, and the special sacred events. I tried hard to live the right way and to be a good person, and my parents were proud of me. When I explained to them one day that their careful training was actually the springboard that led me to Christ, they were devastated. They fully rejected the idea that one of their beloved children would convert to Christianity.

It was in 1987, during my time at university, when God began to deal with me. I appeared to be a good person, but I knew there was sin in my life. Despite not believing a person could live a sinless life, I still had standards of morality and continually failed to meet my own standards.

One day, the thought occurred to me: What would happen if you got in a car accident and died? I felt that I would go to Hell. In spite of my attempts to convince myself that couldn't be true because I was a good person—everybody knew me to be so—I could not convince myself that I would make Heaven. I felt condemned.

Those doubts made me want to know for sure how to get to Heaven, and other questions weighed on me as well. I wondered why evil things were happening in the world, and why there was such fierce disagreement between the Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. I thought there must be answers to these questions, and the genuine desire of my heart was to find them. I longed to know the truth.

I held an allegiance to my parents' religion, though my knowledge of the Quran was very limited, so I began to study a translation of the Quran in order to dig deeper into what it taught. At the same time, there was a group at school who gave out pocket-sized New Testaments, and after receiving one, I decided to read it too. Thus, I found myself reading both the Quran and the Bible simultaneously for the first time.

In the New Testament, I started right at the beginning with the Book of Matthew. When I got to the Sermon on the Mount in chapter 5, the Beatitudes and Christ's teaching to love even your enemies struck me deeply. It was clear to me that the kind of life Jesus described was not normal or conventional wisdom. A person could never live that way naturally; it could only be divine.

I felt in my heart that if there is a way for a person to actually live that way, it must be the true religion, and that person would definitely make Heaven.

Sitting there in my room, I fell under heavy conviction for my sin, and without understanding what was happening, began confessing my sins. I poured out my heart to the Lord. My prayer was essentially this: “God, if You can make a change in my heart to make me able to live the life described in the Sermon on the Mount, then I will follow You to the ends of the earth.” Suddenly and instantaneously, the Lord transformed my heart. He took out the sin in my life! My moral upbringing had kept me from many outward sins, but when

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Had it not been for the grace of God, I wouldn't have been able to withstand that period of persecution at home

God saved me, my very desires were changed. I was able to tell the truth without a single lie! I did not understand what had happened or much at all about being a Christian. All I knew was that I had prayed an honest prayer, and my life changed. I could finally say with certainty that Christianity was true because I had experienced being born again for myself.

REJECTION FROM MY FAMILY

My parents were extremely upset about my conversion, and they thought I had lost my mind. My mother was often in tears, believing she was losing her son. My father argued, trying to convince me I had to continue in our family's Muslim heritage. They brought me before a panel that was meant to persuade me to change my mind. Our local community leader was there, as well as the leader of our local mosque and some of my family members. They wanted me to recant my salvation and became very adamant, yet the Lord helped me to remain calm. I told them that if it was something I had done myself, I would recant, but what had happened was beyond me. I could not deny what God had done.

Many times in the coming years, my father would sit me down and lecture me for hours about how my decision to become a Christian was a mistake.

Though I knew it was all done out of love for me, it was very difficult to take emotionally. Once, my mom became so angry that she burned some of my Christian books in the house. She gave me the impression that she had even burned my Bible, though later, after her passing, I learned that she had just hidden it away. Even through that, the Lord gave me grace not to be angry or complain in response, which made an impression on my parents.

My two grandmothers also tried to compel me to change my mind. They knew the pressure my parents were going through because of my conversion, and they begged me to at least wait until I moved out of the house to become a Christian. All of my siblings and cousins were against me as well.

My family's problem with Christianity was the doctrine of the deity of Christ. They disagreed with the fundamental teaching that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Of course, the Sonship of Christ and His atoning death at Calvary is the very essence of Christianity. To reject Christ's deity is to reject everything, because without Him there is no power to live without sin. Without Him, all we would have is self-righteousness and trying in our own strength to live a good life, which is what I had before. Christ is the One who provided what my soul had longed for, but my family could not understand that.

Had it not been for the grace of God, I wouldn't have been able to withstand that period of persecution at home, because I did genuinely love



(Above) Ola with his mother in the U.K..

my parents and never wanted to hurt them. But the love of Christ surpassed everything else in my life. My family thought they could force me to do what they wanted, but what they did not anticipate was

(Below) Ola with his wife, Remi.

that they were not fighting only me. They were fighting against the Lord in me! It was God's Spirit that enabled me to stand for Him.

ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH

As a new believer, my heart yearned for more of the truth. I joined the Christian fellowship group on campus and attended several conventions, and

eventually joined a Pentecostal church. However, my experience during that time was mixed because one minister would preach the truth, but then another would say something a little different, and it was confusing to me. They also taught people how to speak in tongues; we learned to switch it on and off at any time. However, they did not teach how to live without sin on a daily basis. I had a close friend who said he was saved, but after a while he started smoking again. Because of the misleading teachings, he thought he was still saved and only needed to be delivered from an evil spirit. We were exposed to many of what they called "deliverance sessions" for a spirit of lying, a spirit of fornication, and so on. They went through deliverance session after deliverance session without finding any real victory. I felt there must be something deeper than what this church taught, but I became troubled to the point of questioning whether to give up on churches altogether.

I had read books by John Wesley and liked what he wrote, but I thought the Gospel he preached did not exist anymore. In time, though, God directed

me to the Apostolic Faith Church through one of my friends. Upon hearing the truth preached there, my heart warmed with it. The way the Word of God was expounded, and the simplicity of the Gospel that was presented, was something fantastic to me. There were no deliverance sessions because it was understood that when the Son of God sets you free, you are free indeed! I loved what I heard so much.

When I learned about sanctification at the Apostolic Faith, I sought for it and realized I had already received it, and in a prayer meeting God confirmed it in my heart anew. Upon reflection, I understood that even before having heard about the experience, God had led me to yield my life further to Him, and as I did so, He sanctified me. I distinctly remember the change it made in me. Prior to receiving sanctification, resisting the pressure from my family was very hard. I would never compromise on matters of sin, but there was a part of me that still wanted to please them. Once I was sanctified, that internal struggle between pleasing my family or the Lord ended; my only desire was to please the Lord.

One example of that revolves around the common tradition in Nigeria of making special drinks that were believed to have protective spiritual powers. This was a common practice in Nigeria. After I was saved, I did not want to take those drinks anymore, but I also did not want to be in conflict with my family about it, so I decided to give in on that issue. I had read in 1 Corinthians where Paul said that eating meat which has been offered to idols is not a sin because the idols are not real, so I justified my decision by telling myself that drinking my family's concoctions was not a sin, though they certainly did not provide spiritual protection. However, the moment God sanctified me, the struggle in my heart to stand up to their pressure was over. I gave my parents a final no regarding those drinks, and even they could see the change in my attitude because they never brought it up again.

Soon I attended my first camp meeting. There, the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Ghost was expounded in a way that I had never heard before. Realizing that my previous understanding had been a false teaching, I embraced the truth and received that experience too.

After returning home from camp meeting, the infilling of the Holy Spirit empowered me in such a way that I almost felt fearless. The ongoing persecution from my family had been a continual burden, but after being filled with the Spirit, it was so much easier to weather the storms. When people in my community would mock me, it was not a big deal anymore. I even had new boldness to share the Gospel. Previously, I had mostly tried to avoid

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We told the Lord we would accept His will if He did not want us to have children, but God assured us that He would give us a child.

confrontations about my faith, but afterward, there was a new courage to share with my friends. The baptism made serving God a lot easier for me.

SENT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

In my mid-twenties, my parents decided that I should move to the U.K., hoping that sending me abroad would get me away from my church and possibly away from Christianity. I was not concerned about losing my faith, but I also had no desire to move and never gave it much thought because the emigration process is generally very difficult. However, I had been born in the U.K. and lived there for the first six years of my life. Though I had always known of my birthplace, my parents had never told me that I was also legally entitled to go back. Still, I did not want to go because I was enjoying the Gospel and was content where I was in Nigeria. However, the Lord showed me that as a believer, it is necessary to seek His will before making decisions and not make decisions on our own. While praying, I started the process of relocating alongside two of my siblings who were also born in the U.K. There were major hurdles in the way, but God removed every one and made it clear that He wanted me to move.

At age twenty-six I arrived in the U.K. The Lord helped me to switch careers and eventually find a job despite a national recession, and He has guided

my career ever since. I joined our church in London, and in time met my wife, Remi. We were married in 1996 and have had a wonderful marriage. We faced some challenges early on when she suffered a few miscarriages and also a stillbirth. We told the Lord we would accept His will if He did not want us to have children, but God assured us that He would give us a child. Despite those heartbreaking times, we kept believing the Lord, and for seven years He gave us peace and patience to trust Him.

Finally, in 2003, our son Samuel was born. We believed the Lord would do it, and in His own time, He did. That was a huge milestone in our lives.

Just prior to my move to the U.K., my mother fell ill with cancer and passed away.

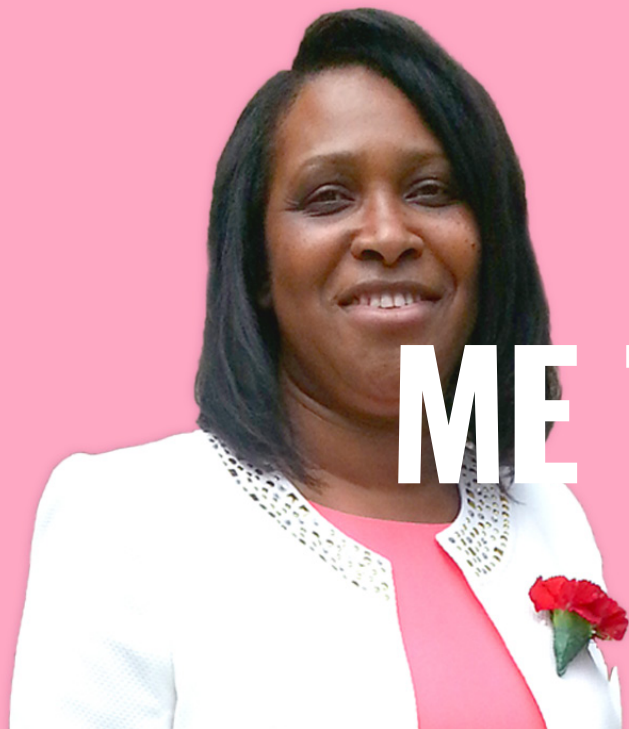
However, during her sickness she softened toward the Gospel and allowed ministers of the church to come pray for her regularly. After her death, one of my uncles said my mom told him that Jesus had touched her and healed one of her symptoms. We have hope that she prayed and received salvation before she passed. My father eventually acknowledged the truth of the Gospel, and we remained very close until his death. It is my hope that he made his peace with God before he passed. I thank God that three of my siblings have embraced Christianity.

The Lord has been so good to me. I couldn't ask for more. I cherish how the Gospel is so simple, yet so powerful in the transformative effect it has on lives. The Gospel means everything to me. My desire is to continue to love the Lord and give my all to Him until I make the goal of Heaven someday. ■

Reverend Ola Balogun is pastor of the Peckham Apostolic Faith Church in London, England.



(Above) The Balogun family in 2015.



GOD BROUGHT ME THROUGH!

ROSEMARIE FOUND THAT DIFFICULT CHALLENGES ARE WHAT REVEAL GOD'S POWER.

By Rosemarie Charles

My family was not Christian when I was a child, and I only knew a little about God from attending a Catholic school that required us to go to mass regularly. However, today I can say that although I was not thinking about God, He was thinking about me. My parents decided to relocate from Jamaica to the United States for work when I was about seventeen years of age, but my siblings and I were not able to go with them, so my three younger brothers went to live with our grandparents and I moved in with a family we had known for a long time. Since that family attended the Apostolic Faith Church in Kingston, while I lived with them I had to go also.

One week, the Kingston church held its annual convention of special services. I had no plans of giving my life to God at that time—during the services my friend and I just goofed around. We did not take it seriously at all. In fact, the meetings always ended with an invitation to come forward and pray, and we used to try to hide somewhere so we wouldn't be called to the altar.

On a particular night, one of the brothers called us to the altar, and we tried to turn away from him but in doing so we ended up going straight

to the altar instead! We didn't know that God was working out a plan. I knelt down but was not really praying, and then I looked at my friend and saw that she was praising the Lord. The situation got serious for me after that because I knew that if she got saved, she would no longer do a lot of the things we used to do together, and I would be alone. At that moment, the Lord helped me to make the best decision of my life—to pray for salvation. As I prayed, God came into my heart and became my personal Lord and Savior, and soon I was praising Him too. When I opened my eyes, I knew I was different. I felt so clean and so new! The place was brighter and everyone looked different to me. And I thank God that He did not stop there with salvation, but He also sanctified me and took away my desire for sin. I am so glad for the change God made in me.

At the age of eighteen, my parents sent for me and my siblings to join them in the United States, and when I arrived I started attending the Apostolic Faith Church in Brooklyn, New York. One year, at our annual East Coast Youth Conference, I was just sitting in the pews when the power of God came over me and urged me to pray. I went to my knees right there, but then felt an urge to go to the altar. When I got there,

the Lord did something powerful—He showed me wonderful things and showered me with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, with the evidence of speaking in tongues. It was so amazing.

My husband and I met at church and got to know each other better when we both traveled in a small group to camp meeting in Century, Florida. After that, we started spending more time together and felt God's leading in the relationship, and a couple of years later we married. God blessed us with four wonderful children and we did our best to serve Him as a family.



Rosemarie and her husband, Garfield, at Portland camp meeting in 2019 with their four children: (left to right) Kyra, Azaria, Xavier, and Christian.

Our youngest child had a severe case of eczema from the time he was born—his whole body was covered in a rash that made his skin dry and itchy, and he would scratch and scratch until he bled. Doctors were not able to help us; the ointments they prescribed never worked. I tried researching his condition on my own and tracking his diet to see if the rash was some kind of food allergy, but I found no answers. He couldn't sleep at night for more than a couple hours at time, so my husband and I would take turns staying up with him as he screamed and cried in pain. I was thankful to be a

stay-at-home mom who could be there to care for him, but at the same time my heart ached to see him suffer. Our whole family was affected by what he was going through. Every night was agony, and in the morning we started the day by washing his wounds again. In prayer I would cry out to God, wondering how long this would go on.

When our son was about two years old, an old friend of mine visited Brooklyn and she was surprised to see his condition. She encouraged me to keep believing that God can heal, and she invited me to bring him to spend a few days with

her. We agreed to go, and when we got there she had a special diet in mind for him. I didn't think it would really make a difference, but the first night we stayed with her, our son slept through the night! I could not believe it—I forgot he was even in the room with me! We continued that careful diet and his condition improved dramatically. Shortly after that, the Lord brought to my mind a doctor who had once been recommended to me. I hadn't pursued it

because no doctor had been able to help us before, but when the Lord brought the name back to my mind, I decided to look into it. That doctor gave us a new ointment that finally made a difference; it was another huge improvement in our son's condition. Today he is healthy, is no longer plagued by eczema, and does not have to eat such a restricted diet either. We give God all the praise!

In September of 2011, I was diagnosed with Stage 2 cancer. At that time, our youngest child was only about six, and I was homeschooling the youngest two. When the doctor first told me the news, it was very scary, but what came to mind was the account of Job and how he continued to worship God despite all he suffered. Even though

the diagnosis was alarming, I knew God was able to bring me through.

Being sick with cancer was difficult, and at times I felt like I was in a dark place. A couple months after my diagnosis I went in for surgery, and my stay in the hospital was particularly hard on me. I was supposed to be discharged after five days, but it was going on seven days and I still could not leave. I had our children on my mind and just wanted to be with my family. Feeling low, I began to wonder where God was. In my head I knew that God is always with me, but I wanted to feel His presence and to hear from Him. I tried to read my Bible but I could not make sense of what I was reading, so I decided to put on some Gospel music to encourage myself. Then a nurse came into my room that I had never seen before. She must have realized I was a Christian because of the music, and she let me know she was a Christian too. I told her about my feelings, and she encouraged me and reminded me to count my blessings. The nurses were usually busy and would just quickly check on me and then leave, but she stayed there a while longer talking with me, until someone else came and called for her. After she left, I didn't see her again until the day I was discharged. I knew God had arranged for her to be in my room exactly when I needed encouragement.

Through everything I experienced with cancer, I can see that God's hand was in it. It was not always easy, but God was with me during the bad times and He kept me. He brought so many people into my path, and used that trial to draw me closer to Him and to teach me to trust Him more. I am also grateful for my family and my church who supported and encouraged me. Praise God, I have been cancer free for almost ten years now. I don't know what the future holds, but I choose to trust that God knows and He will help me through whatever lies ahead.

God has blessed my life so much that sometimes I almost forget about the trials He has brought me through. However, I do not take for granted anything He has done for me. I thank God for the difficult times, because through them we can look back and see what great things He has done. ■

Rosemarie Charles attends the Apostolic Faith Church on Lafayette Avenue in Brooklyn, New York, where her husband is a minister.

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."

EVIDENCE

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES OF VICTORY!



LAURA CARRERA DE PICHARDO

Haina | Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic, I grew up in a very religious home. My grandparents were Roman Catholic, and they taught me their faith. I was consecrated in that religion and often went with the priest to various camps and churches across the country to give the catechism [a traditional presentation of the Catholic doctrines].

When I was sixteen, I had a friend in high school whose home I visited often. Her parents were Christians, and they talked to me about the Gospel, expounding from God's Word. At first I did not accept what they were saying, but then I borrowed a Catholic Bible from a priest. I started reading it, and one day I came to these words in 1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." I had been taught that my mediator was Mary, the mother of Jesus, but here the Word of God was saying Jesus is the only mediator. When I saw this, I did not rebel against the Word, but instead opened my heart to the Lord. My friend's mother helped me pray, and the Lord saved my soul. From that day forward, I did not return to the Catholic Church, recite prayers, or give the catechism anymore.

About a month later, I heard a sermon on the importance of receiving sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The message had a great impact on me, and I began to consecrate my life to God through fasting and prayer. During this time, I learned to pray without ceasing. Whether I was working, studying, or in bed, my heart was continually crying out for God to sanctify and fill me. Then one day while praying, I felt the presence of God in a powerful way. I cried out, "Lord, sanctify my life and fill me with your Holy Spirit." As I continued worshipping, God sanctified me.

The next church service was a prayer meeting, and that evening the Lord filled me with His Holy Spirit and changed my language. Since then, having the power of God in my life has strengthened and sustained me. God helped me to live for Him in high school, and soon my classmates noticed a change in my behavior and conversation. I was no longer interested in hearing words that were displeasing to God or in listening to worldly music, and I loved to read God's Word.

In 1971, when I was twenty, I married Andres Pichardo Richards. God blessed our marriage with five children, and then when his sister and her husband passed away, their three children became part of our family. We are thankful for all of the children God has given us. It has been a privilege to show them His love and instruct them in His ways. We have always enjoyed going to church as a family and serving God together. We thank Him that there is unity among us, such that if one has a problem, we all have a problem and pray about it. There have been times when the enemy of our souls has risen to destroy us, but God has fought all our battles, and He still goes before us. We have a promise that as long as we remain in His care, victory is sure.

After my children were grown, I decided to go to university and study odontology to become a dentist, and God went with me. He helped me to let my light shine to the other students, and occasionally different ones of them would ask me to pray about a situation. I would pray with them and for them, and then later, they would tell me how God had worked on their behalf. It was wonderful to witness this.

I also saw the Lord working in my family. My mother was not a believer when I received salvation, and I wanted her to have it too. I began praying and fasting for her, and after twenty-two years, she prayed and God saved her. Now she is with the Lord in Heaven.

For over fifty years, I have depended on God and He has been my strength and help. Many difficult situations have come along, but God has always been there. I praise Him for all He has done. ■



PHIL WONG

Langley, British Columbia | Canada

I grew up in Malaysia, and as a young boy, the Lord let me know that there is a God in Heaven. However, I knew almost nothing about Him because I did not come from a Christian home.

My father was an atheist and my mother believed in Buddhism. I did not hear the message of salvation until I was twenty-one years old and had the opportunity to go to school in San Francisco. I arrived there on a Wednesday, and on the following Sunday, I went to church with my brother who had received salvation the year before.

The morning I walked into the church service, I felt like the Lord was telling me, “Phil, I have brought you to this place.” I don’t remember what the message was, and I did not get saved that day, but I wanted to return. It was the love of God and the love of His people that brought me back. They made me feel at home, and being a foreign student, that touched my heart.

After a few services, I began to feel the conviction of the Lord. He helped me realize there was sin in my heart. I came from a strict home where we were very careful not to do anything bad. However, when my parents were not around, I did things that were not right. God began to remind me of those things and show me what was in my heart. When I finally understood that I was a sinner and Jesus could save me if I repented, that is what I did.

God saved me, and then everything in my life changed. Christ and the church became first in my life. I went to school, to work, and to church. That was it. I am so thankful, because living as a student in a foreign country, I was away from my parents and had the idea that I could do anything I wanted. This is true of a lot of foreign students. I could have easily been sucked into a culture of immorality at that time. However, God was faithful and kept me from a life of destruction.

I am thankful for the message of salvation and for God’s faithfulness. I want to continue to be true to Him and serve Him. ■

RODICA MUSGRAVE

Portland, Oregon | USA

When I was three years old, I had a bad case of whooping cough. My parents later told me that they thought they were going to lose

me, but they prayed and I got better. Even so, over the years I have continued to have a cough. Around 2005, I was diagnosed as having scar tissue on my lungs. That would not have been worrisome, except that in 2010, I had some bad infections which complicated the condition. I considered having surgery, but got better. Also, I prayed at the time, “Lord, You could heal me if You wanted to,” and I felt the Lord respond, “My grace is sufficient for you,” so I left it at that.

The doctors told me that I would probably have chronic infections from then on, and my condition could worsen. I thought, Well, God’s grace is going to be sufficient, and I kept praying, and His grace was sufficient. Though the congestion got worse sometimes, the Lord helped me every day.

Then on January 23 of 2018, as I was saying my morning prayers, I felt the Lord touching me. There was nothing out of the ordinary that morning—it was not a really powerful prayer meeting, but I felt the Lord’s touch. I asked, “Lord, are You touching my lungs?” The heaviness that I had felt lifted and I could take a deep breath. Also, I did not have all the congestion or wheezing that I had fought over the years. The Lord had healed me!

I am so thankful that God’s grace is sufficient for us, and sometimes He surprises us with blessings we were not even praying for. ■



WORLD REPORT

*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the
ends of the earth: for I am God,
and there is none else. – Isaiah 45:22*

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OUR CHURCHES WORLDWIDE

A CONTINUING LEGACY IN JAPAN

JAPAN DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT RETIRES AFTER LEADING THE WORK IN KAWASAKI SINCE 1962.

After nearly six decades of service, Reverend Hidehiro Ouchi has retired from the positions of Japan district superintendent and pastor of the Kawasaki church. In acknowledgement of his years of faithfulness, the Kawasaki congregation had a retirement celebration for him following the Easter Sunday service on April 4, 2021.

Forty-one people attended the service in person, and others joined through an online platform from locations including Nigeria, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

For the Easter message, Reverend Ouchi preached his last sermon as pastor of the Kawasaki church—a position he has held for fifty-eight years. He took his text from Luke 24:1-8, and throughout the message, shared experiences from his life. He closed by saying, “I am thankful God has been my Shepherd for sixty-five years.”

The sermon was followed by a water baptismal for three new converts. Reverend Ouchi baptized them, and then they were each presented with a certificate and flowers.

The retirement celebration followed, acknowledging Reverend Ouchi's many years of service. He became the Kawasaki pastor on October 14, 1962, and the Japan district superintendent on May 5, 1968. His wife,

Sumie, was also acknowledged for her faithfulness—the two married in December of 1962.

Upon hearing of Reverend Ouchi's retirement, many people sent letters, including several district superintendents and the children of Arthur and Miriam Allen, the first Apostolic Faith missionaries to Japan. While most of the letters were shared privately, those from Superintendent General Darrel Lee and Director of East Asia Work Bill McKibben were read to the congregation.

Reverend Ouchi then gave a heartfelt greeting

and shared his favorite memories of the Allens, who were instrumental in his own conversion and in founding our work in Japan. He also spoke of the start of the Kawasaki church. He said that in the beginning, many who lived near the church were only interested in the English lessons given by the missionaries, but God used that interest for eternal purposes.

Many people came to know Jesus through that outreach. Several of the older saints in the congregation

were converted in those days.

Mrs. Ouchi also spoke, giving a warm greeting and expressing gratitude for God's love and leading over such a long period of time. Following this, the Ouchis were presented with a bouquet of flowers and a special gift of a wooden shield engraved with Scripture.

The Kawasaki Board of Directors now assumes oversight of the work in Japan. They are thankful for young people who are accepting the challenge of continuing the Ouchi's faithful example in sharing the Good News of the Latter Rain Gospel. ■



Rev. Ouchi and his wife, Sumie, with flowers at the special Easter service.

THE APOSTOLIC FAITH WORK IN JAPAN

The Japan work had its start in 1950 when a group of harbor workers from the Portland congregation met the first Japanese merchant ship to arrive on the West Coast after World War II. They invited everyone aboard to a church service, and fifty-two men responded. The work continued from there with hundreds of Japanese crewmen attending services at the Portland headquarters church over the next few years.

A burden for the spiritual welfare of the Japanese visitors and their families began to lay heavy on the hearts of some of the Portland workers, so in 1952, an exploratory trip was made to Japan to investigate the possibility of establishing a branch church there.

After the trip, it was determined that the interest shown by the Japanese people warranted a resident missionary. In February of 1953, the Reverend Arthur Allen and his wife, Miriam, along with their two

children, left their home in Portland and moved to Tokyo. Soon after their arrival, they began studying Japanese, giving English lessons, and sharing the Gospel message.

*Rev. Ouchi
with a
group of
Sunday
school
students.*



The missionaries were invited to hold church services in quarters provided for ship crews by the Japanese government. The facility was also used for other activities, so sometimes they gathered beneath the stars for their time of fellowship and worship. When a rented hall became available in Kawasaki,



**HIDEHIRO AND
SUMIE OUCHI**

God has been so gracious to me. When I was in college studying to be an attorney, a friend invited me to go with him to the Apostolic Faith Church in Ota, Tokyo, to learn English. Missionaries Arthur and Miriam Allen had come from the United States with their children to start the church. Brother Allen conducted the services and Sister Allen taught English conversation classes. I went to both, not knowing anything about my heart's condition and not having any purpose for my life.

Soon, I found that there were more important things in life than learning English, like the salvation of my soul and having peace with God. As I listened to the preaching, I realized that I was a sinner. One sermon in particular spoke to my heart. Brother Allen said that a young man was questioned about what he planned to do with his life. He answered that he would get an education. Then he was asked, "What then?" He said he would get established in business. "What then?" He would marry. "What then?" When the conversation came to the end of the young man's life, he was asked again, "What then?" Through the sermon, I realized that one day I would stand before God in judgment and would have nothing to show for my life if I did not serve Him.

When I was twenty years old, I went to the summer camp meeting. There, I repented of my sins, and God forgave me and changed my heart, giving me peace and joy within. He also gave me a purpose in life, and I left off pursuing a career as an attorney.

A few years later, God sanctified me, and then in 1962, at age twenty-six years old, He baptized me with the Holy Ghost. In October of that same year, I was sent to pastor the new church in Kawasaki, and a few months later, Sumie and I were married. The Lord has helped us for many years now, and has been so good and merciful. I hope to follow Him all the days of my life. — *Hidehiro Ouchi*

they moved the services there, and also held cottage meetings. God blessed with the salvation of souls, and numbers were added to the group until about forty were gathering weekly.

As the congregation grew and interest mounted, it seemed impossible to rent a suitable place of worship, so it was decided that the best thing to do was to build a church. Land was purchased in the city of Ota, about six miles from Kawasaki. On that plot, in a fine residential district, Japanese craftsmen built a beautiful church with offices and an attached parsonage. It was dedicated in 1954 as the first Apostolic Faith Church in Japan.

In 1955, a printing press was purchased in Japan, and the Ota congregation took over responsibility for producing a Japanese edition of the Apostolic Faith paper. Formerly, the Portland headquarters had been printing and distributing this paper to over five thousand households in Japan.

In Kawasaki, cottage meetings continued with a small group worshiping together twice a month.

Since their arrival, the missionaries had desired to establish a permanent place of worship in this part of Tokyo, and often looked for land. However, the price was always too high. Then in 1962, God provided the necessary means for the purchase of land, and the United States Army donated a surplus barracks. The building was dismantled and then reconstructed on the church site by Reverend Allen and members of the congregation. On October 14, 1962, Hidehiro Ouchi became the pastor of the new church, and it was dedicated a month later on November 18, 1962.

In 1968, Apostolic Faith General Overseer Loyce Carver visited Japan. On May 5, he ordained Reverend Ouchi as the Japan District Superintendent, and the Kawasaki church became the Japan headquarters. Later, the Ota church was sold, and a portion of the funds was used to build a new church on the Kawasaki site. It was dedicated on October 24, 1971, and still serves as the Japan headquarters today. ■

When I was sixteen years old, I saw a crowd gathered in front of the Kamata railway station in Tokyo. It was a street meeting being held by people from the Apostolic Faith Church. At the close, they invited everyone to their church for an evangelistic service, and I followed them.

After that first invitation, I began attending the Sunday services when I had no work, which was twice a month. I learned that God created Heaven, the earth, and even me. I also learned that I was a sinner in need of a Savior.

When I had been going to church for about three months, I heard a minister preach from John 3:16 on the love of God. He said God sent His Son to die for my sins. I believed on Jesus and prayed, repenting of my sins, and God forgave me and saved me. I was so happy and thankful that all my sins were forgotten!

In the church services, I was taught to put the Lord first in my life. As I attempted to do this through prayer and consecration, God gave me the Scripture, "Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45). This

gave me confidence to receive sanctification, and whenever I doubted later, the Lord reminded me of this verse.

About a year after I received salvation, I was by a riverbank and felt called to make deeper consecrations. The Lord spoke to my heart, "Take up your cross and follow Me." I wondered how I could ever work for the Lord, but I yielded to His call.

When I was nearly nineteen, I felt led by the Lord to marry Hidehiro. After I made the decision to marry, my circumstances at home changed greatly because my family was opposed to the marriage. I prayed to the Lord, weeping, and He assured me that His ways were not my ways, and He would bless me if I followed Him. Now, my husband and I have been married for fifty-eight years, and the Lord has truly blessed our lives.

There have been times of trial and sickness, but the Lord has been our Shepherd and Healer. When I was forty-five, I needed surgery for a hemorrhage. As I was wheeled into the operating room, these words came to mind: "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee," and, "I have made, and I will bear: even I will carry, and will deliver you." After leaving the hospital, I searched the Bible for these verses, but could not find them. Then one day, my husband preached from both of them, Joshua 1:5 and Isaiah 46:4. The Lord is so good, and His promises are true! — *Sumie Ouchi*

SHORT TAKES

A NEW COUNTRY LEADER FOR BENIN

An installation service was held at our Benin headquarters in Cotonou on May 9 to dedicate Marcellin Kploka as their new country leader. He succeeds Marcellin Hounmenou, who had held the position from 1997 until his passing in March.

Prior to the installation, Reverend Gabriel Ajayi led a team of four from the Western and Central Africa (WECA) headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria, to meet with the Benin Board of Directors and confirm the selection. There was unanimous agreement among them. Later, the pastors, workers, and all present at the installation service showed their full support for the appointment as well. When the ministry prayed over him, the congregation concluded with a hearty "amen."

NEW DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT AND BOARD MEMBERS FOR WECA



Left to right: Rev. Emmanuel Moh, Rev. James Tifase, Rev. Gabriel Ajayi, and Rev. Edet Bassey.

On May 30, a service was held at our WECA headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria, to install a new WECA district superintendent, three Nigeria board members, and a treasurer. The Nigeria Board had met last year and decided to make these changes, but those plans were delayed due COVID-19.

The new WECA District Superintendent is Reverend Gabriel Ajayi, who has been serving as a regional overseer and board member. He succeeds

Reverend Adebayo Adeniran, who has retired. It was also announced that Reverend Isaac Adigun, the Western Europe District Superintendent, is scheduled to assume the WECA district superintendent position later this year. His UK successor is yet to be named, but an installation service is set for November.

The other appointments were Board Members Edet Bassey, Emmanuel Moh, and James Tifase, and Treasurer Adebayo Oladokun. These are to fill vacancies left by recent retirements and deaths.

The appointees all have the support of the WECA regional overseers, ministers, and workers. At the installation service, the congregation also showed their support by standing for each before the ministry prayed over them, consecrating them to God's service.

VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS IN ST. VINCENT

The Soufriere volcano on the island of St. Vincent began erupting on April 9, spewing both lava and massive clouds of ash. Eruptions continued for two weeks, leaving a thick coating of ash across the St. Vincent and the nearby islands of the Grenadines and Barbados. This was followed by heavy rains, which caused compounding problems of flooding and mudslides. The results were devastating as much of St. Vincent's drinking water was polluted by ash and 16,000 people were evacuated from their homes. So far, no deaths have been attributed to the natural disasters.

Our District Superintendent of St. Vincent, Christopher King, confirmed that everyone from our nine congregations on the island remain safe. He noted that the road to our church in Fancy was wiped out and the two nearest villages were destroyed. All of our churches have been impacted to some degree as they are all relatively close on an island that is only eighteen miles in length.

In early May, a donation from the world headquarters in Portland was sent to help the saints on the island recover. In response Reverend King wrote, "Please convey our heartfelt thanks to all. God bless you as you continue to bear us up in prayer, as we do the same for you." ■

OUR CLASSICS

*The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want. – Psalm 23:1*

42 PLUNGE IN!

45 A LONGING HEART SATISFIED

PLUNGE IN!

AMAZING BLESSINGS AWAIT THOSE WHO ARE WILLING TO SUBMERGE THEIR LIVES IN THE GOSPEL!

*Originally published
in the November 1995
edition of our magazine.*



By Allen Friesen

A few years ago our family lived in Central Point, Oregon. Our house there had a 16-by-32-foot swimming pool so we would often have some of the folks from the church come over to swim. Many times, after working hard all day, I would be tired, hot, and miserable. On the way home in the evening, I'd entertain the thought of jumping in that pool. Instead, when I got home, I'd go sit on the patio in a chair and just look at it. Other people would come over. Some would walk up to the pool and stick a toe in to test the water. Some would put one foot in and pull it out quickly. Others would walk out and just jump into the deep end. One big splash, and they'd come up from the bottom and say, "Oh! This is great! Come on in!" On many occasions I'd just sit there, exhausted and hot, and reply, "No, I'm too tired." They didn't convince me. Despite my desire for a refreshing dip, I didn't put forth the effort to plunge in.

Ezekiel 47 has a passage of Scripture that deals with "plunging in." We read, "Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters

on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over" (Ezekiel 47:2-5).

This passage causes me to consider what it is like to dabble around the edges of the Gospel. It's possible to be around the

blessings of the Lord without fully appreciating what God has given. One can go to church, sing the songs, and smile as big as the next person. Everyone else might think everything is going great, but inside there is misery, and I can say that from experience.

Ezekiel tells us, further on in that same chapter, that there are going to be some marshy places around the perimeter of the water, and I have been there spiritually before. Life isn't enjoyable in the marshy areas. Thankfully, however, we do not have to stay there.

As we examine what happened when that man in Ezekiel began to measure, we find that he got out into some ankle-deep water that was living and moving. Maybe he'd been walking the dusty trails for a long time, so when he got out there in that cool water, it probably felt really good! The man measured out another thousand cubits, and suddenly the water was up to the knees. That must have felt even better. The water kept getting deeper, but the part I like the best is when the man measured out another thousand cubits, and it became water to swim in—water so deep Ezekiel didn't know its depth, waters that overflowed him when he jumped in!

As we compare these waters to the Gospel, we realize that a spiritual parallel can be drawn. The question is, "What are we going to do about it?"

“Somehow, I recognized that God was working on me. I felt that I had already consecrated my life fully to the Lord, but He wanted me to go even deeper.”

Possibly we've been praying and living Christian lives for years, but have we been fully immersed in the glories of the Gospel? Or have we just stood around the edges observing, maybe just "sticking a toe in" from time to time? Are we thirsty right now? Do we desire something more from God, or are we one of those who is wading in ankle-deep water and has become satisfied with that? Yes, it feels good to know that we're God's children, but there are deeper depths to which God wants to take us. Whether we've been saved just a few days

or for many years, we're going to find out that the deeper we go, if we let the Spirit of God submerge us and take over our lives, we're going to experience things so

amazing that we won't be able to explain them.

Three years ago, I was very sick for a period of many months. I remember the times at night when the pain was so great that I couldn't even pray. Eventually, I had to learn to walk all over again. Sometimes at three in the morning I'd be sitting in my recliner in such misery that all I could say was, "Lord, help me!" Somehow, I recognized that God was working on me. I felt that I had already consecrated my life fully to the Lord, but He wanted me to go even deeper. I realize now that He was trying to tell me, "Al, jump in! Just jump in! I've got something for you that you can't even understand now."

I remember the night, as I was sitting there in pain and agony, that something within me plunged in. I can't tell you exactly how it all happened, but something took a turn in my life that night. At one point I thought I might die, but God had other plans. I was still in terrible pain, but the Lord was doing something for me! I remember praying for my loved ones, my children, and the people in our church family. I would go down the list, and ask the Lord, "What is it going to take? I want to see them saved! I want to see them won into the Kingdom of Heaven. I don't know what it's going to take, but in some way speak to their hearts. Save them!"

Having prayed like this for some time, my wife finally pointed out that maybe my illness was

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Let's do it.
Let's just
take a big,
deep breath
and jump.
Whatever
kind of
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doesn't
matter.

how God was answering our prayers. With new resolve, I told God that if a sickness was what was needed to bring someone into the Kingdom, I would be willing. Not long after that, there was a turn in my physical condition. Suddenly, I began to get better! The pain began to subside. For eight months I hadn't slept more than an hour in a twenty-four-hour period, but then one night I slept five hours. The next morning, I was absolutely flabbergasted. I realized that I had truly plunged in! Somehow, the Lord helped me to find deeper waters of the Gospel. I want to stay out here in that deep water.

If you've never plunged into the Gospel, if you've only waded around on the edges, or if you've become bogged down in the mud, listen! Get away from there, and begin to plunge in. Get out where there is water to swim in. Get out to where God can do something in your life. If you don't know that you're saved and that your peace is made with God, there is an opportunity for you today. Yes, the water is available. It might only be ankle deep at first, but get in. Whatever it takes, get into it! Maybe you're only knee deep. You can go a little deeper! The Lord has plenty there for all of us, and enough to spare, but there is something we have to do. We can't stand by on the sidelines. We can't just stick a toe in the water to see if it's comfortable. We must throw our lives into service for the King, and then rejoice as the waves of His Gospel wash over us.

Let's do it. Let's just take a big, deep breath and jump. Whatever kind of splash it makes, it doesn't matter. Forget about living around the edges. Get out where it's deep, where you can fully enjoy the blessings of the Lord. Remember, it is His good pleasure to give His children the Kingdom. He's more willing to give than we are to receive. With both feet, let's jump in and prove that the Lord has something extra special for us. ■

Reverend Allen Friesen was called to the ministry in 1972, and was a pastor in Denver, Colorado; Chehalis, Washington; and Medford, Oregon. In 2001, he began full-time work at the Apostolic Faith World Headquarters Office in Portland, Oregon, ministering to the sick and shut-ins for ten years. He passed away in December of 2019.



**AS A CHILD, SOLVEIG LONGED
FOR SOMETHING, BUT SHE
DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS.
SHE FOUND IT IN CHRIST!**

A LONGING HEART SATISFIED

By Solveig Salthe

My life is rich in every way; I have good health, a large family around me, and many good memories of a long life. The greatest blessing of all, though, is the love of God. His grace is new every morning, and I am filled with gratitude for His presence in my life.

I was born in Arendal, Norway, in 1918, and was raised as one of nine siblings during difficult and lean times. My parents struggled to make ends meet as there was little work to be had. We were fortunate, however, because we had an extraordinary father. He was good and kind in every way, and always had time for his children.

As a small child, there was a longing down in my heart for God. We were sent to Sunday school, and that was the highlight of every week for me. At Sunday school, I heard things that I could never forget, and for years I longed to have a personal experience with God. We brought home little booklets of Bible verses and children's songs, and I often took these and sat alone in a corner with them. As I sang to myself, tears would run down my cheeks. I was longing for something, but did not know what.

At age fourteen, I got a job as a housekeeper, and worked long hours. Every single day of the week, I left home early in the morning and returned late in the evening. The salary was not very good, but I was happy to have a job, and the family I worked for were decent people.

When I was seventeen, I went to a summer beach party, and I met Norvald. He was from Stavanger, but had taken a job at a rubber factory in Arendal. It was love at first sight! We quickly became a couple, and I was so happy to have found such a handsome man. When Norvald told me he came from a Christian family, I was delighted and asked if we could become Christians too. He said no, he did not want to be a Christian, but if he ever did become one, he would not set foot in his parents' church—the Apostolic Faith!

Norvald and I married in 1938, and made our home in Arendal. Soon we had a daughter, and it was a good life, even though it was difficult to find work. During World War II, revival came to the city, and one evening in 1944 when Norvald and I were out for a walk, we heard beautiful Christian music coming from one of the houses.

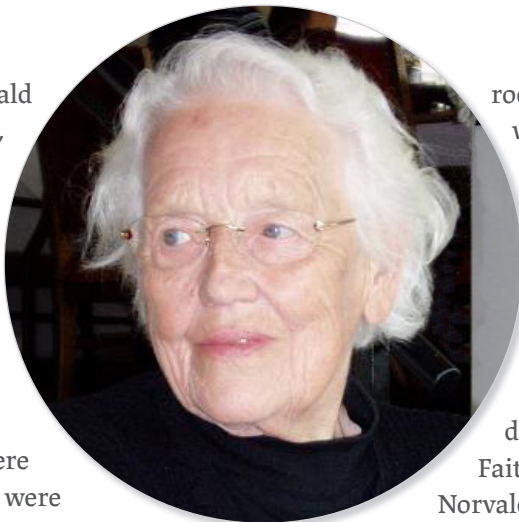
As we passed, I noticed that Norvald bristled and his behavior changed, but nothing came of it, and we went home as usual. A few days later, we were invited to visit my uncle for an evening of music. Norvald took his flute and we looked forward to a pleasant evening. Among the guests were some people who had recently received salvation and were eager to convert others. While we were inside playing our instruments and singing, they remained outside, kneeling on the stairs and praying for us. After a time, they came in and asked if we would also pray and be saved. It so happened that we did want to, and we both knelt that night and were born again.

Norvald smoked a pipe at that time, and because of the war, it was difficult to get good tobacco. Earlier that day, we had visited some acquaintances, and he had come home with his pockets full of tobacco. As soon as

we returned from my uncle's house, Norvald threw all that precious tobacco right into the wood stove, and

he never smoked again. That was just one of the many changes that took place in our lives. We were passionate about the Gospel from the first moment, and attended church as often as we could. It soon became known around town that Norvald and Solveig had become Christians.

Not long after this, I was at home one day with our two daughters while construction work was going on outside our house. I had laid our youngest, a baby, down for a nap, when I heard the demolition foreman shout, "Fire in the hole!" At the same time, it was as if a Voice told me to pick up the baby and run outside. I hurriedly took both girls out to the yard on the opposite side of the house, and almost immediately, there was a loud bang. When I entered the house again, I saw that the window in the bedroom was broken, and in the crib where the baby had been was a huge



rock! The whole side of the crib was broken and there was dust and dirt all over it. Trembling, I left the house thanking God for saving my child!

When the war was over, we moved to Stavanger to find work. After getting settled, one of the first things we did was seek out the Apostolic Faith Church. This was the church Norvald had grown up in. It had been established in 1912, which was the same year his parents had become Christians, and the year he was born. We knew it was where we belonged, and the people of the church became our extended family.

Over the years, we enjoyed the Gospel in every way, though at times there were trials. When I was fifty, I had tumors in my abdomen, and I was sent to the hospital for treatment. It was scary, but God kept His hand over me, and I have been healthy ever since.

We actively participated in the work of the Lord, and eventually Norvald became

... a Voice told me to pick up the baby and run outside. I hurriedly took both girls out to the yard on the opposite side of the house.

a minister, and then in 1975, he became the Stavanger pastor and the Scandinavia District Superintendent. While his position kept him in front of others, I preferred to serve the Lord behind the scenes. Working in the Kingdom of God gives great blessings, and even today at age ninety-three, I enjoy taking an active role in the church.

My dear Norvald died fifteen years ago, and even though I am alone now, God is always with me. I am grateful for every day that I wake up healthy and can look forward to my morning devotions and prayer. God is good! ■

Solveig Salthe attended the Apostolic Faith Church in Stavanger, Norway, from 1946 until she went to her reward in 2014 at the age of ninety-six. During those years, she served the Lord in many capacities, including supporting her husband for twenty-six years as the Scandinavia District Superintendent.

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 endowment 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.

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