



Life in the Son

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Life in the Son

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THE GOSPEL OF THE NEW CREATION RACE

PART 1

By Warren Litzman

A new gospel? Is this what is needed in our world today? Has the “grand old gospel” failed us? These are questions that hungry, sincere believers are asking today. Everywhere, we see different gospels preached that seem to be contrary to the way that the Spirit is leading many truly hungry hearts. Often there seems to be a different gospel for every ministry, and multitudes are being deceived by them. There can be only one true gospel from our Father. There can be only one true message brought by the Holy Spirit. Yet, those who claim to hear from God seem to say different things. Hungry hearts are left to discerning, on their own, what truths they are to follow, as if the Scriptures never give a distinct sound or bring a clear message. A minister once said to me that the Spirit had told him a worldwide revival would come and swamp all other truth in existence and bring about a new order. Another believer told me the Church was coming into a new day in which all the

promises of the Scriptures would come alive and the manifestation of them would be deliverance of all those needy, sick and suffering. He saw believers going into hospitals and healing all the sick and even going to cemeteries and raising the dead. While these are beautiful works, to advocate them as being the essence of the gospel is perversion. All of this smacks of some man-made gospel. Sad to say, a man-made gospel is all many Christians have ever had.

The Old-Time Gospel Has not Failed

It is not a new gospel that we need. The “grand old gospel” has not failed us. In fact, most believers do not even know what the “grand old gospel” is. It is an unbelievable fact that the Bible, which has been the most read book in history and is the very life-line of every true believer, still holds the basic truth of the gospel, but the average believer is oblivious to its message. Modern believers are constantly diverted from the truth of God’s

message by seeking their own answers, instead of God’s purpose, in the Bible. While God’s Word is dedicated to meeting human need, it’s far greater purpose is showing forth God’s purpose in mankind. God’s purpose in mankind is for Him to find a people to fill His house and train those people in His kind of love. So it is not a great revival that we need. It is not the winning of more souls that we need. It is not human success with God that is important. The problem of Christianity is much more acute than this. The real problem is in the gospel that we preach.

Now, the true Gospel must, most of all, be based on God’s ultimate intention for man. The first chronological mention of man in the Scriptures is in Ephesians 1:4, where Paul says man was chosen to be in Christ, before the foundation of the world. That means the first thought God ever had concerning mankind, as far as the written record goes, was that believers would be in Christ. I see this as God’s

prime and ultimate intention for man. To ignore the importance of this is to pervert the gospel and that is what many have done today. If you do not start with this primary “God idea,” every other place you start to understand God will be lacking. The believer “chosen in Christ” is the only foundation that the Father and the Scriptures build upon. Most in religion have failed to realize this. Keeping believers from understanding is Satan’s main objective.

The Filling of The House Is a God-Idea

Unless this eternal plan of God is in focus, the true gospel will never be known. It is the Father’s eternal plan of having sons in His house, such as Jesus, that is the substance of the true gospel. All creation, all creatures, including Satan, and all things, including evil, have to do with the Father’s plan of sons being in Christ. In fact, there is nothing in existence that is separate from God’s intention of filling His house with Christ-sons—Christians. To preach a gospel which does not embrace this God-idea of Him filling His house with sons is to preach a perverted gospel. This perverted gospel now fills the church world and is the reason multitudes of hungry hearts are bewildered as to why God does not minister to them in a greater way.

To be able to get to the true gospel, first one must see how the Father conceived and worked out His plan for sons. He saw that creating and bringing sons to His house would not serve His need. His great need, as a God of love, was to receive love from His sons. It was already proven to Him that just having created sons in His house would never bring about reciprocal love. Lucifer was a created being to whom God had given everything He could. But Lucifer did not love Him, and God saw that created beings could never please Him. So, He saw that He would have to birth the sons Himself by placing His own seed (sperm, 1 Peter 1:23) in them and giving them His own nature. It is with these God-thoughts that we begin to see the true gospel.

When Jesus met Nicodemus in the third chapter of John’s gospel, He boldly spoke to him that he must be born again. Now, this was the first time in the Scriptures that such a thing had ever been said. It was so devastating to Nicodemus that his only thought was that a person would have to enter his mother’s womb again and be reborn. It is interesting that Jesus never answered Nicodemus, but instead presented to him a mystery saying that the wind bloweth where it listeth and you cannot tell where it is coming from or where it is going. Why would Jesus not

answer Nicodemus? Why did He give a mystery? To understand this, you have to go to Paul. It is interesting that Paul never uses the term “born again.” I can see his purpose in this. He saw that the truth of God’s plan was so far beyond man’s ability to understand that it was truly a mystery. It was indeed a mystery that all the sons would be “in Christ.” It was indeed a mystery that all the sons would be “born again” with God as their Father. Paul knew that mysteries must be revealed by another, that one could not come to the understanding of a mystery within himself. He also saw that this was God’s intention. He saw this so plainly that in 1 Corinthians, chapter 2, he says that the true gospel is foolishness to natural man and can only be revealed by the Holy Spirit. The modern Church has veered away from this God-idea. Today, men seek to make the gospel a simple message, robbing it of all its divine essence. Because of this, there are multitudes of born-again believers that have no concept of God’s plan for them, for the world or for the Church.

Natural and Spiritual Birthing

But let us look much closer to the way these sons would be born again. The next time that the term *born again* is used in the Scriptures is in Peter’s first epistle, chapter 1, verse 23:

ALL CREATION, ALL CREATURES, INCLUDING SATAN, AND ALL THINGS, INCLUDING EVIL, HAVE TO DO WITH THE FATHER’S PLAN OF SONS BEING IN CHRIST.

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever.”

Notice here we are introduced to the method with which the Father would birth the sons. Rather than create them, as He did with Lucifer, He would birth them Himself thereby becoming their Father. To do this, He would put His own seed in them, just as an earthly father puts his seed in a mother and she conceives a child.

It is here that we are introduced to the heart of the true gospel. Salvation is not just a gift or a thing. Salvation is a person (Rom. 5:10). When God put His seed in the believer, there was conceived a person; a person called the Son, and that Son is Christ. With this birthing, there was fulfilled the “ultimate intention” of God—that the believer would be “in Christ.” This is why they were first called Christians (Christ-persons) at Antioch. God put his seed in the believer, and that seed was Christ—God the Son. That is what makes believers sons of God. This means that the believer, to be saved, must have another father. Salvation is not only getting a new life, Christ; it is also getting a new Father. Peter states this emphatically in this same verse when he says *“not of corruptible seed.”* The corruptible seed comes from our earthly father, direct from Satan. This is

stressed by Peter to show that our natural birthing by our natural father cannot suffice for salvation. It says you cannot change the corruptible seed into a good seed. It strongly says salvation is not a change in one’s lifestyle, but rather an exchanging of fathers. Unless believers see that there has been an exchange in fathers, from Satan (John 8:44) to God, they can never know the true gospel.

Believer Has The Very Genetics of The Father

The Father intended this birthing would produce the son who would please Him. He would not have to wait on the son to be like Him; the birthing itself would give the son His nature. Peter goes on in his second epistle to show this. He says the believer has received the very nature of God by this incorruptible seed and escapes the corruption that came by the seed of our former father (2 Peter 1:4). This means that every believer has the very genetics of Father God in him. This was God’s intention. That seed, Christ in the believer, was to be the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of the believer (1 Cor. 1:30). Never again would the Father have to depend upon a creature to be someone that pleased Him; the creature now has the very nature of God, with all His attributes. To make all of this workable, the

Father instituted the awesome works of Calvary. It all would come about by the Son. The Son is the ultimate life, the only seed and the Father’s only love.

Now, these factors—the ultimate intention of the Father, the birthing of the Father, the placing of that birthing in humans—laid the perfect foundation for the true gospel. But still the whole gospel is not in focus. To get this, we must carefully analyze 2 Corinthians 5:17:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; Behold, all things have become new.”

It is plain to see that the in-Christ message is clearly stated, but the real focus of truth in this verse is on the believer. The believer has had some thing unbelievable to happen to him. This verse says that the believer is a new creature. This is the way the King James Version puts it. Still stronger is the Amplified Translation which goes further than *“new creature”* and says *“a new creation.”* But better yet, other translations say the in-Christ believer is a *new race*. Now, this *new race* translation fits all the rest of the Scriptures, and this is the part of the modern gospel that is generally missing from today’s theology. God’s plan of salvation has created an entirely new race of people. They are not made-over people; they are not earthly people anymore; they are

SALVATION IS NOT A CHANGE IN ONE’S LIFESTYLE, BUT RATHER AN EXCHANGING OF FATHERS.

not just natural people anymore. They are a new race. There has never been anything like them on the face of the earth before. They have given up their old lives brought about by the corruptible seed and entered a new and living way of life. For them "*old things have passed away*"—their old father, old mind and old purpose.

To really see this new race of people we need to hear Paul as he says that they are in Christ and therefore they are no longer Jews or Gentiles, circumcised or uncircumcised, Barbarians or, Scythians, bond or free; but Christ is all and in all (Col. 3:11). This means that when we were born again, we no longer retain our previous backgrounds, for in Christ there are no nationalities, no Germans, Mexicans, Irishmen or Africans. A new race of people were formed at Calvary and previous identities no longer matter (Phil. 3:1-9). Paul goes so far as to say that in the Spirit there is not even male or female in Christ.

Two things are obvious at this point. Paul is saying some things that are not preached in our day because we have not really understood what he was saying. Our problem has been that we have tried to make the mystery Paul writes of a simple gospel while he has repeatedly said that these things must be revealed to us by His

Spirit (1 Cor. 2:7, 9-10). What has happened to modern theology is that Christ as the life of the believer has been denied in preaching while everything the believer can "get" from Christ has been overly promoted. The end result is that the new creation race has little or no true gospel preached to them. These people who have hungered to know God haven't been taught the whole truth and the end result has been frustration. They go to the church buildings and wonder why. They know the modern servants of God could wait before God and get greater truths, but they see no waiting or greater truths. They can not quit God, though tempted at times because of their frustration with religion, because they know that they are in Christ and Christ is their all. They know the Father is dealing with them and that they are the foundation stones for the present move of God. The Father is ready to reveal Christ in His fullness to them, and these people will be the bearers of the new creation race gospel.

The question which must be answered is, What is the difference between the gospel we now hear and the gospel for a new creation race? We must go to the Apostle Paul for the answer. It is to the Apostle Paul alone that the message of the new creation race was first given. It was over

4,000 years that the Father waited for the sons to be in Christ and before He gave a gospel for this truth. What an awesome thought!

It is also important that we see the way the Father brought about His messenger for this gospel. Acts 9 tells the thrilling story of how the Father arrested Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus by knocking him down, striking him blind, and speaking out of heaven to him. Indeed, it was a tremendous event—an event Paul was to relate many times. It was by these unusual means, however, that the Father got the right preacher for the *new creation race* gospel. But first, Paul himself must experience this new race gospel. Several years after his conversion, when he had a deep yearning to know Christ in His fullness, he went into Arabia and after three years was able to say that he had had Christ revealed in him and by this revelation, he was able to give the Church this new race gospel. Receiving this gospel did not come easily to him; He had no help from any other person and as a result said plainly that no man could teach the Christ He had had revealed to him. He specifically said that he did not go to the brethren in Jerusalem who knew Jesus of Nazareth before him. He let it be known that this gospel of the new race people came straight from the Father by the Holy Spirit.

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Two Kinds of Gospels

At this same time, a breach of fellowship was growing between Peter and Paul over this new race gospel. Peter had not received, at this time, the revelation that Paul had of the Christ-life, for he only knew Jesus in the flesh, Jesus of Nazareth (2 Cor. 5:16). Later on, when Peter wrote his epistles, it is evident that he had come to the same revelation. But when Paul's epistles were written and read in the churches, there was a schism between the two. It was finally decided that these two preachers would preach two different gospels. Peter would preach the gospel of circumcision, which was man's effort to please God by keeping a law, and Paul would preach the gospel of uncircumcision, which was Christ in the believer as the only salvation. Peter's gospel was based on what men do. Paul's gospel was based on what God had already done. The issues of the gospel are the same today. Most believers are bound by a gospel that demands that they do something rather than trust the finished work of Christ at the cross. Some people teach today that to be saved one must be baptized a certain way or join a church or adhere to a certain doctrine. On and on goes the list of bogus religion. Now some of these things are not only scriptural, but will be done by

believers as an act of love. But none of these things save or bring the believer to the fullness of Christ. The simple reason is that one must be born again. This is the birthing act and is total in itself.

Once one is birthed, that is all that can be done to make a Christ-person. There is no such thing as a little bit of birthing or pregnancy. When you are born again, you have all of God and all of Christ you will ever have. A total person, Christ, is in you. It is this total birthing idea today's believers are being denied. That denial comes in the message of the circumcision, Peter's message—a message which says you can do something yourself to make it all work. So, multitudes of hungry believers have taken in such a message only to fall defeated, crying that they still want to know God.

Paul's True Gospel

The great difference between Peter and Paul's messages is that Paul saw that the new creation race was a whole new group of people that were birthed to be the way they were. Only Paul gives a gospel for these people, and it is that gospel hungry believers are seeing today. Paul goes on to say in 2 Corinthians 5:17 that old things are passed away. That means that the corruptible seed given by our earthly father is gone and all things are now operated by the new seed. No more

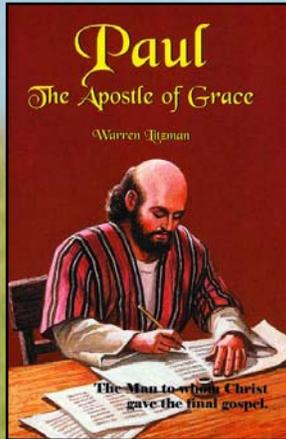
trying to change the believer. God is not in the business of just changing people. His business is that of a Father. He births the sons and gives them His perfect, unchangeable, and eternal nature. This is Paul's message and is the gospel of the new race. We see this difference between the two gospels more vividly as Paul was forced to make a distinction by saying in Romans 2:16 it is "*my gospel*." It appears that it was necessary for him to distinguish what he preached and what Peter preached at the time. It was also stated in the same way in Romans 16:25, where again he says "*my gospel*." Of course, the gospel he preached came by the revelation of the Holy Spirit, and that would make it very personal to him. This is the great lacking factor in modern preaching. Few preachers stress the fact that their gospels came to them by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Until the Spirit is able to reveal the Son in the messengers, there will be no gospel for those who are of the new creation race.

Presently, the most heard gospel in the Church today is what I call a "conglomerate gospel." It is preached as if Paul had no revelation of the Christ-life. Men preach from Genesis to Revelation as if God had not birthed a special group of people in between. The conglomerate gospel preacher often preaches

ONCE ONE IS BIRTHED, THAT IS ALL THAT CAN BE DONE TO MAKE A CHRIST-PERSON. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A LITTLE BIT OF BIRTHING OR PREGNANCY.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 20)

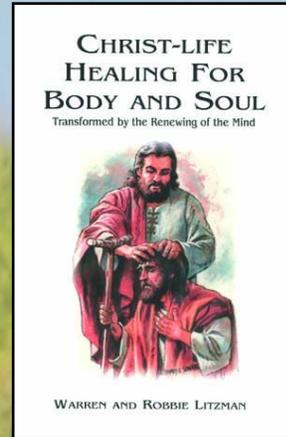
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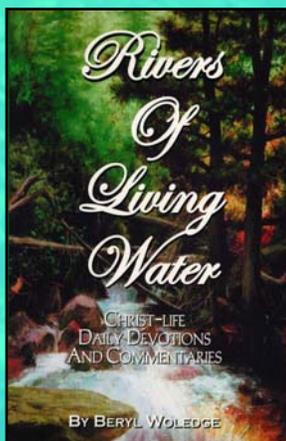
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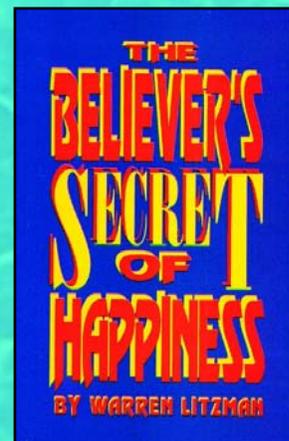
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THE CHRISTIAN AND THE OUTSIDER

PART 2

By Richard D. Cassidy

GOD OPENS DOORS TO REVEAL THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST (COL. 4:2–6)

The Apostle Paul knew a great deal about doors in his day. He spoke about those doors to anyone and everyone who would listen. He wrote at length about those doors. Of course, Paul didn't start his life the way he finished his life, did he? Oh no, not at all. We read of Paul's deliverance at the door of Damascus in Acts 9. On his way to that oldest continually inhabited city on earth, he was abruptly apprehended by God. As Warren so elegantly sums up the occasion, "Saul, who was clearly the meanest man on earth to redemption's plan, was on a murderous rampage against the early Christians, when he was knocked down, struck blind, and God hollered out of heaven at him." By the time the Lord was finished speaking with Saul, there was a new door for him; the old door no longer existed.

Some years later, Paul would come to another door, this time in his beloved Jerusalem. He specifically went there to meet with the first estab-

lished Pentecostal church and the eminent Apostles' Peter, James, John and the others, to tell of his exploits and success with Gentiles and the gospel of grace. He was soundly rejected by that council and summarily dismissed to go it alone into the Gentile world. His journey through this door would lead to two things: the success of winning the Gentiles to the gospel of Christ, and the establishment of the body of Christ beyond all boundaries of geography, politics, religions and prejudice.

The great apostle also came to know quite well the prison doors of Rome. As we know, Paul's letter to the Colossian saints was written while under house arrest in Rome, as were the letters to the Ephesians, the Philippians and Philemon. To my fertile mind, it is a bit ironic that in Paul's prayer request to the Colossian community he would ask specifically for "God to open a door to speak the word." This man could do such a thing, not out of some sort of frustra-

tion or fear, but because of his unwavering focus on the Cross of Christ and His precious gospel of grace.

Through the years there would be many more doors through which Paul would venture. Some of these adventures held great peril and personal grief to such an extent that it might cause the likes of you and I to despair and possibly defect from the cause to which we were called. I rarely read of this man's exploits that I am not made to recall his commission on the first day of his conversion to Christ. Do you remember what he was told by a frightened Ananias in Damascus? Well, listen again perhaps for the first time, and you'll gain a clearer understanding of this man's Christ-life love:

"And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and

enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:10–16).

Do you suppose that there was a chance that Paul would ever see this event in his life diminish or even fade away? Not even a slim chance! In fact, I believe this event was the sum and substance of his determination to accomplish that which the Lord had called him to do. Now then, understand clearly that this was a one-time event that was to commission one man and one man only. No other person in all of the New Testament had such a call of God. Peter didn't have such a commission, neither did James or John or any of the original disciples of Christ—only Paul. We cannot slight these other men, and by no

means ought we to do such a thing. But they were not made of the stuff of which Saul of Tarsus was made. In fact, Paul would come to see at a later time that he was created for this mission before the foundations of the world, as he would so elegantly assert in his letter to the Galatian church:

"But when He, [Christ] who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus" (Gal. 1:15–17).

We are encouraged by the Apostle to follow him as he followed Christ, providing we need an example. But we are never to know, nor are we ever to experience, his call to Christ, anymore than I can experience yours, or you experience mine. The same rationale applies to our daily living, for does not Paul tell us to "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*" (Phil. 2:12). This we do every day we live while at the same time being mindful also of doors, as well as outsiders. Paul is locked up, but that in no way stifles his thought or vision which transcend his current predicament. And so, he

asks the Colossians to pray for an open door for the Word to continue into those lands and to those people who have not heard.

I want to utilize the remainder of this article to speak about you and me as Christians and about those who are not as you and me, but who are outsiders. Outsiders, what horrible images that brings to mind, Amen?

To be found outside of Christ in eternity is to be found inside an eternal hell. That ought to burn deeply in our spirit, so much so that we will do all that we are able to tell our Jesus story to all who will listen. I do not want anyone to go to hell, period.

Do you? Do you want anyone to go to hell? You wouldn't if you understood eternal hell.

The closing words of this epistle are really quite descriptive of ordinary life under the leadership of Christ and the Holy Spirit. These words turn the believer's attention outward in order that they might recognize their responsibility to make the truth of the gospel known to those outside of the Christian community. Paul isn't just throwing a bunch of new thoughts together that will encumber the saint, but rather very specifically challenges them with a simple outline as to how this Christ-life message must be spread.

His challenge honestly answers realistically the

TO BE FOUND OUTSIDE OF CHRIST IN ETERNITY IS TO BE FOUND INSIDE AN ETERNAL HELL. THAT OUGHT TO BURN DEEPLY IN OUR SPIRIT, SO MUCH SO THAT WE WILL DO ALL THAT WE ARE ABLE TO TELL OUR JESUS STORY TO ALL WHO WILL LISTEN.

question, What can an ordinary group of Christian believers do to make sure that outsiders hear of Christ? Paul has to assume, quite frankly, that those in Colossae are committed by lip, as well as by life, to witness to the saving message, while accepting the fact that comparatively few individual Christians are to be preachers. So, the balance and the thrust of Paul's instruction, I believe, can be appropriately divided into the following two thoughts:

1. Speaking to God about people (vv. 2-4)
2. Speaking to people about God (vv. 5-6)

Speaking to God about People

Effective evangelism begins with persevering prayer, providing that the one praying understands clearly what evangelism is. And what is evangelism? Good News! Paul and Epaphras are conspicuous examples to the Colossian saints in this mighty work where Christian leadership so often fails. Paul's prayer request of the church is for them to continue steadfastly, to persevere. To persevere is to busy oneself with the task at hand, rather like that energetic little old widow who gave her local magistrate no rest until he heard her and did as she persisted. So, what do you suppose had happened to the Colossians that caused Paul to write as he did?

Had they grown sleepy and dull of challenge so as to not pray and not be watchful? What was happening? Epaphras shared with Paul that the social elements of the city had crept into the church and was reeking havoc on the fellowship, the worship, and worst of all, the truth of his gospel. A crisis was brewing on the horizon, and in a prayerless church every enemy of the truth is able to do its best work.

Paul's emphasis on thanksgiving is, as we must know by now, a full characteristic of this epistle, and is always in the forefront of Paul's thinking. Here thanksgiving is the best and necessary companion of the prayer that causes us to persevere. Prayer can no more exist without praise than true praise can exist without prayer: the one is the fuel for the other.

But, we have to ask ourselves, for what specifically and particularly are these saints to pray? Paul's request leaves no room for guessing, nor is it just a simple exchange of prayers of like kind, meaning, I'll pray for you and you pray for me. No sir; he asks for their prayers because of his known commission to preach the gospel. This is God's calling on him, and a prison sentence cannot alter the divine orders he had clearly received. Significantly, then, he does not ask them to pray that God would open the doors

of the prison for his release, though he is no superman without feeling for his current condition, for he did not wish to languish there any longer than he had to. Those doors might well open if he would stop his preaching, for this he was told over and over again. However, he is there on account of the things that he must suffer, remember? But, with a mind clearly set on victory, the apostle asks for yet another open door, or a God-given opportunity, so that he may "*declare the mystery of Christ.*" Nowhere else in all of Paul's writing does he use the term *to declare* to describe his preaching. Here, it seems, that to describe Christian ministry as a declaration of something previously hidden is to make Christian preaching a part of the continuing process of revelation. This is a startling concept which is in desperate need of rediscovery today. The revelation of God in Christ has already been given in history, and we have it written in Scripture. But, it must also be spoken by God's servants if people's minds are to be opened to the truth. In this sense, every Christian sermon should be an eye-opening and ear-opening experience. It is by human speech that truth is made clear and made known. And remember, this had been the actual experience of the

THIS IS GOD'S CALLING ON PAUL, AND A PRISON SENTENCE CANNOT ALTER THE DIVINE ORDERS HE HAD CLEARLY RECEIVED.

Colossians who had come to learn and understand the truth through the preaching of Epaphras.

As for you and me, do we not gather to do the very same thing? Have we not desired with a continuing desire to learn; to have our eyes and ears opened to the truth? Are we not all fascinatingly in love with the word and treasure its continuing revelation as we grow deeper in our own relationship to Christ? Why, of course, we do all of those things and more. That's why you and I are continually seeking opportunities to learn.

It is of great interest that the first duty of the Christians in Colossae was to open their mouths in prayer for those preachers of the gospel whom God had evidently called to do that work. It was not, by inference, their first duty themselves to preach. The fresh and necessary awakening of the churches today to the concept of 'every one a minister,' and the mobilization of all Christians to take the gospel into their world, should not be allowed to ever tone down the truth of the gospel.

Those who preach among the churches without gift or a call from God will not greatly advance the cause of truth; even more certainly, those believers who mistakenly feel called to preach in the home and at work, indeed among all the normal affairs of life, will hardly win

a hearing for their Lord. A person who declares himself to be called to preach and not preach Christ every time that he stands, in my opinion, is not fit to stand in that sacred place, and ought, with all speed, make a hasty retreat to his seat and sit and be silent. These are those who are most likely to face closing doors rather than opening doors, and, if not sent to prison, may, most likely, wind up in social isolation, as they should.

But surely, some of you may be protesting in silence, the lips of Christians are not meant to be sealed, are they? Of course they are not! I see it this way, if I believe, must I not speak? That answer hopefully will be discovered in my final point.

Speaking to People About God

It is an absolute truth that the Christian does have the responsibility of speaking to people about God. Just as there is an 'ought' about the apostle's speaking to people about God, so there is an 'ought' about the Colossians speaking to people about God. Paul helps his readers understand more clearly what he means when he says they are to pray for him that he might speak and make the gospel and the mystery of Christ known as he "*ought to speak.*" He then in turn gives them sound advice so that they may know how they "*ought to answer*"

everyone who may ask them about God. This is clearly the great problem with so many Christians in today's world; they tragically do not know how to answer every man's questions concerning this gospel, much less the mystery. Many saints will have an opinion as to an answer that should be given to a question, but that does not conclude that they know what they are talking about. Here in lies the problem of a lot of preaching and testimonies as well.

While the Apostle Paul is looking for opportunities for direct evangelism and teaching, the typical Christian in Colossae is to look for many opportunities for responsive evangelism. So then, if I have made a correct distinction between the two, it immediately commends itself by its sanity and its realism. In more simple terms, it just makes good sense to know the difference between preaching and testimony. Tremendous harm can be done by sincere believing people who feel compelled to preach and to testify to those people with whom they mix at work, in the backyard, or the grocery store. We ought to be ready, prepared and confident with what we know about our Lord when we are called upon to speak. More often than not these confrontations often bring about devastating results, and the consequence of these confrontations, quite

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frankly, produces a discouragement sufficiently severe at times to lead to a total dropout from speaking further; so the Christian abandons his 'ought' to speak altogether.

So, Paul's advise to the Christian is not along the lines of possessing in ones self a better lingo or clever techniques, which, by the way, seems to be the thrust of evangelism in our day, in approaching people. Rather he turns the problem right around so that the Christian can see their responsibility in a much more promising light. Their privilege, simply stated, is to answer everyone who asks. That is to say they are to respond to the questions of others rather than initiate the conversations on leading topics; in other words, Christians are to accept open-doors, rather than opening the door. That just makes good, sound, rational and common sense; does it not? We don't find a lot of that sort of teaching in the modern church theology and the result has seen fewer and fewer doors being opened for a legitimate and loving witness.

This does not mean, and I am emphatic about this, that we sound the retreat and do nothing, I am not saying that at all. Paul evidently believed that opportunities for witness and explanation are to be found everywhere, for everyone is looking to discover answers about life and its meaning.

Also, Paul evidently thought that believing Christians should be found everywhere too, ready to take on any opportunity to tell the Jesus Story.

It is obvious, to me at any rate, how the strain of being a witness is removed from conscientious Christians. The pressure to raise certain topics and to reach certain people can make it difficult to live or talk in a normal way. In any case, we go to the office to work, and certainly not to evangelize. But, at the same time, we are ready and unapologetically willing to respond when the door is opened; discovering how much more serene and successful our daily duties become opportunities for the Lord to work in us and through us. It opens the way, too, for a greater dependence of God's leading as well as for a more relevant and sensitive witness, which He will make suitable to each individual, speaker as well as listener. Now then, remember, when the outsider has chosen the time and the place and most importantly the subject, how wonderfully free is the Christian then to open his mouth graciously and with salt and then joyfully and in all graciousness tell the good news of Jesus.

Conclusion

Finally, the qualities that will make for effectiveness in answering everyone are phenomenally well chosen and thor-

oughly balanced. The Christian must conduct himself wisely toward the outsiders, but wisdom is not to be used as an excuse for too much caution. The Christian is to make the most of the time available, and time, as we all know, is always in short supply. It is never easy to hold these two aspects together, that is time and availability. The new convert, typically, is bowled over with an urgency in his spirit, but can lack tact, discretion and knowledge. The older Christian has the wisdom of experience, but often lacks the zeal and tactfulness in conducting his witness. There is also a balance in speech that must be learned as well, by both the young and the old. There is no excuse for inappropriate vocabulary in such eternal matters.

Christians must always be gracious, especially when answers provoke argument. But gracious words can be insipid and dull, so the apostle asks for some seasoning as well in their speech. Too much of the salt is lacking in our day! It is not good to try to blend salt with witness, but it is not too much to say that our answers should compel interest as well as attention when we speak. I have learned over the years that a stimulating vocabulary is an important characteristic of our speech and conversation that wins people's attention and interest. What most outsiders

REMEMBER, WHEN THE OUTSIDER HAS CHOSEN THE TIME AND THE PLACE AND MOST IMPORTANTLY THE SUBJECT, HOW WONDERFULLY FREE IS THE CHRISTIAN THEN TO OPEN HIS MOUTH GRACIOUSLY AND WITH SALT AND THEN JOYFULLY AND IN ALL GRACIOUSNESS TELL THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS.

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EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE SON

HAVING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS PART 1: THE FATHER'S FOUNDATION

By Alice Scott-Ferguson

One of our young grandsons clearly caught the connection. When his daddy told him—in an effort to curb unedited and unsolicited transmission of their family news—that some things should remain within the inner circle, he responded, “But Nanny and Dandan are family!” He did not consider for a moment that his beloved grandparents should be anything but privy to his family’s affairs; an opinion with which we disagree, by the way!

We cannot escape our interconnectedness to other people. Nor can it have escaped our notice that relationships are often fractious as seen in sibling rivalry, periodically abrasive as we deal with difficult people and frequently fraught with impermanence as experienced in adult attachments especially in marriage. Little wonder that this topic is so popular in magazines, talk shows and serious writings alike. In the field of relationships, every acre is mapped out—from a multitude of marriage issues through family dynamics to relationships in the workplace. In the book-

store the other day, I noticed the amusing title *Relationships for Dummies* written by Kate M. Wachs.

Whether we are inept or skilled, there is a rich repository of guidance and enhancements available to assist us in our quest to co-exist with and even enjoy our various and sundry connections. I have, out of necessity, come up with my own rubric that has helped me negotiate some considerable roadblocks and toxic swamps to enjoy healthier living with, and connectedness to, the rest of the race. Not surprisingly, the starting point is God. We have no lasting hope of ever improving if we do not understand how He relates to us. Then, and this may come as a surprise; we need to examine how we relate to ourselves before we can relate well to others. I have selected three components of healthy interaction for discussion: love truth and acceptance. In this issue, we will examine these elements in the way the Father relates to us. In future articles we will look at relating well to ourselves, then having healthy connectedness to those around us.

Lavish Love

At the risk of stating the most obvious foundational fact, He simply, completely and totally loves us. God’s love is a choice that has no bearing whatsoever on our lovability quotient. I started out 2005 on a “Read Through the Bible in a Year” regime, which was a commitment that did not particularly appeal to me. However, I decided to engage in this daily task and, now that I am approaching it with a much more enlightened perspective than in previous times. The result is a refreshing revelation of the love of the Father for his world.

He is utterly consumed with us and has been from the beginning. Every excruciating detail in the Old Testament concerning the rituals, the sacrifices, the construction of the temple with its accompanying accoutrements, is solidly framed in love. His provision, protection and purposes were always intended to demonstrate His love for His people. Of course, everything that was then external is now internal in the person of Christ and that union constitutes a far superior and satisfying rela-

tionship. However, God's connection to humankind was, is and ever will be, cemented in love.

Yet, in our grudges and griefs alike, the solid ground of this grand passion often fails to anchor our souls. Even at journey's end, His love can still elude us. I am moved by what the writer Eve Kavanaugh observed. "I have been shocked by the number of Christian men and women who come to their deathbed knowing nothing about the God of love and mercy. They have known instead the judge of impossible standards and they have been, naturally enough, afraid to meet God."

If we are going to fully enjoy the Father's relationship with us, then believing in His love is the first step. Someone has said that indifference, not hate, is the strongest enemy of love. Jesus and Paul each earnestly prayed that we would not grow indifferent to this great affection, but rather become vibrantly aware of the truth of God's forever faithfulness to us. It is good to be reminded of our Savior's passionate plea that we be established in our relationship with the Father as recorded in John 17. In Ephesians 3:14-17 we read of Paul's bold beseeching for believers to know the love of Christ that, paradoxically enough, passes knowledge.

Recalling the biblical accounts of God's breath-taking care of our flawed,

fumbling, and often faithless forefathers is what we need when we begin to lose sight of the limitless horizon of the Father's love. As Brent Curtis and John Eldredge write in their eloquent book, *The Sacred Romance*, "Life on the road requires recollection of our Love's past deeds on our behalf and his promise of continued faithfulness to us."

Knowing the love of the Father in times of crises certainly makes life on the rocky road a bit more bearable. For example, do we know His tight embrace of love when guilt and shame have railroaded our lives—when we hear the clang of the prison door close behind us? Do we know his pain-filled love as we stand before the judge in the County courtroom and hear him pronounce the dissolution of our marriage? Do we know the heart-wrenching love of a Father who stands with us when we look at the still form of our senselessly shot child? We need more than a dogma in moments like these. We need more than a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures; we need to know Him of whom the Scriptures speak. "*This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*" (John 17:3 NKJV, emphasis added).

Trustworthy Truth

As we surrender to the arms of this all-consuming love, we are able to step out

in trust and find something very firm and substantive underfoot. This is the second building block of the Father's relationship with us: Truth. We cannot have love without its marriage partner, truth (John 1:17). Just as we have been suckled and weaned on tender, easily entreated love, we can equally drink deeply of the Father's trustworthy veracity. His gentle voice of direction and conviction is in stark, indisputable contrast to Satan's accusing harangue. He does not devour us; rather His voice affirms us and we are confident that God can no more lie to us than He can stop loving us.

In addition, His timing is exquisite. Unlike our bumbling, self-indulgent pronouncements to correct others, God's truth intercepts our journey at precisely the right time in order to deliver us—when we are ready to hear. Though the truth may be piercing in its raw reality and hard to face, it is always hinged to hope. The Father's persuasive, insistent voice emanates from the inside—not from the babble of external voices. (Job's comforters come to mind). Consider this helpful assessment that someone offered me many years ago on how to distinguish my Lord's truth from purveyors of lies. The Father's voice is always absent of fear and full of hope in every situation. God's moti-

IF WE ARE GOING TO FULLY ENJOY THE FATHER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH US, THEN BELIEVING IN HIS LOVE IS THE FIRST STEP.

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EQUALITY AND TRUE FELLOWSHIP

By Don Byrd

True fellowship between born-again believers is such a wonderful thing. Have you ever tried to fellowship with someone and found that you were unable to do so but you did not know why? Then later you met someone you did not know and fellowship seemed to be spontaneous between you both. Again, you did not know why it happened as it did. Fellowship did not function when you gave it your best effort, but it did function when you put forth no effort at all. This is due to the fact that there was no equality in the former effort and equality was a fact in the latter. Equality is necessary for fellowship to function in total unity. Our Father fellowships with believers on their level of understanding and not beyond that level. This generates the question as to what is genuine equality.

Brightness of His Glory, Image of His Person

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his

power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3).

To understand equality it is best to start with the Father and His only begotten Son because this is where equality and true fellowship exists. Hebrews 1:3 defines the Son’s nature and the express image manifested as that of His Father which declares the Son’s equality with the Father. The Son had the very same nature as does the Father because His nature came from His Father with no variations whatsoever in the nature. I say this based on the fact that nature cannot be changed! This simply means the Father and His Son are totally equal in nature. This desire for equality did not originate with the Son, but it is what the Father wanted for His Son and for Himself. The Father desired to have someone of equal constitution; for only therein can true fellowship be found. It is this equality with the Father that became the prime accusation toward Jesus; it was used to accuse

Jesus of blasphemy and ultimately took Him to the Cross.

“Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:18).

Why total equality? It is my understanding that total equality is the basis of true fellowship.

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).

Fullness of fellowship becomes very difficult when it is between two entities of unequal ranks or of different levels of understanding. It is my understanding that this is the prime reason our Father wanted His Son to be His equal. Hebrews 1:3 so beautifully describes this as *“the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person!”* The brightness of his glory and the express image of his

person is total equality; and this is called nature; and that same nature is in both the Father and His Son! The highest level of fellowship can be achieved under these circumstances. This is why equality is necessary if genuine fellowship is to be achieved in its purest form and fullness. Fellowship in fullness is achieved when it functions from the inborn nature because this is where equality is found. The believer can fellowship with the Father and His Son because he shares the same nature with the Father and His Son with no variations in nature.

Fellowship of the Believer

It is fairly easy to understand why the Son and Father share the same nature, but where does this leave the born-again believer?

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1

John 1:1–3, author’s emphasis added).

These verses very plainly state that the believer’s fellowship is also with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. To participate in the fullness of this fellowship necessitates that the believer have equality with the Father and His Son. Of course, this needs an explanation. Believers most often confuse many aspects of Christ that are not included in the believer’s birthing by *“Christ in you.”* There are many things that Christ is, and has, in His God-ship that the believer does not receive. The believer receives no godly deity when he is born again. God’s deity does not pertain to His Fatherhood toward the believer. This is where the believer must learn to make a keen distinction in the Father part of God from all else that He is. For example, God can create worlds without end and universes that boggles the people’s minds. God can and did create these out of nothing!

Even though believers are born again and are God the Father’s sons, they cannot create anything out of nothing! Born-again believers cannot create an angel or give life to an angel. Believers cannot walk on water, turn water to wine or resurrect the dead. The believer is God’s birthed offspring; but his capacity to perform miracles has nothing whatsoever

to do with being the Father’s son.

Only the birthing through Christ in you qualifies one to be the Father’s son. The only part of God that was placed in the born-again believer is the part that allows believers to have the same Father as does Jesus Christ our Lord! Only the Son-part of Christ is birthed into the believer. Signs, wonders and miracles will never reach the magnitude as being God’s children and just having, and knowing, Christ in you! At their best, signs, wonders and miracles will pass away. The blind man that was healed died; the lame that was healed died; Lazarus that was raised from the dead later died again. Death ended each of these miracles; so the signs, wonders and miracles are all gone. Death destroyed them but not even death can destroy the Father-Son relationship. Death can not separate the born-again believer from God, our Father, and from Christ Jesus, our Lord.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38–39).

What does the birthing do that miracles could not do? The birthing gives

SIGNS, WONDERS AND MIRACLES WILL NEVER REACH THE MAGNITUDE AS BEING GOD’S CHILDREN AND JUST HAVING, AND KNOWING, CHRIST IN YOU!

every born-again believer the same Father as that of Christ Jesus our Lord! At the birthing, the believer's old sin-nature is totally out and the believer receives a totally new nature. Now that constitutes equality in fullness. How can I say that the new birth brings total equality to born-again believers? I do so on the basis that the believer received a new nature and that nature cannot be changed. Before creation, Christ received His Father's very nature with absolutely no differences. When the believer is born again, that believer receives Christ's nature which came from God, the Father, before creation. Nature cannot be changed! Every born-again believer has the same Father and same nature; and that is the only thing that brings equality.

Jesus wanted to share His Father with every believer! If every believer has Christ's Father, then every believer is equal to Jesus in His Sonship and nature. This is due to the birthing wherein the believer receives Christ's nature at birth. I recently heard that there is a movement that intends to remove gender from the Bible in an attempt to make men and women equal. Changing the Bible to do away with gender is not what makes believers equal, but having the same Father does constitute equality in its fullness. Having the new nature means that every

born-again believer is totally qualified to participate in the fellowship that is found in 1 John 1:3. This fellowship is totally available to believers through the "*Christ in you*" nature; but most believers never participate in that fellowship. Our Father totally trusts His nature in every born-again believer because He most definitely knows the composition of the nature and how that nature functions. Then what is wrong with Christianity? The only problem born-again believers have is a mind problem because the believer's mind is not the same as that of the Father and His Son. When the believer is born again, the believer receives a totally new nature; but the believer's mind remains exactly the same as it was prior to being born again except he now believes. A new nature and an old mind creates a gigantic problem for newborn believers. The born-again believer now needs a mind that fits his new Christ in you nature birthed in him. Many preachers do not know that the born-again believer is perfect in spirit but not perfect in soul/mind. "*But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit*" (1 Cor. 6:17). This means the born-again believer is perfect in spirit but is absolutely not perfect in his thinking. However, the born-again believer receives everything that Christ is as the Father's Son when the believer is born again. When God the

Father put His seed, His Son, in the believer that automatically gave the believer the same Father as that of the only begotten Son! An example of equality is found in the last line of Romans 8:29. "*...that he might be the firstborn among many brethren*" (Rom. 8:29). This does not say, That he might be the firstborn among many gods! When the statement is made that the believer receives all of Christ as the Father's Son with nothing in reserve, it applies to His Sonship, not His deity. In essence, this means that the believer now is a new creature and that God is the believer's Father. Christ in you gives the believer the same Father that the only begotten Son has. This needs to be forever settled in the mind of the born-again believer. The birthing did not make the believer a new god; but it did give the believer a new spiritual Father! What makes Christ the Father's Son? Both Christ the Son and the born-again believer have the same nature and nature comes from a Father. Thus, the born-again believer is able to have complete, total and equal fellowship with the Father and the Son as described in 1 John 1-3! This fellowship will never function on the basis of signs, wonders and miracles but solely on the basis of equality of natures. The born-again believer is a bona fide son, not a god that can work miracles; and

MANY PREACHERS DO NOT KNOW THAT THE BORN-AGAIN BELIEVER IS PERFECT IN SPIRIT BUT NOT PERFECT IN SOUL/MIND.

as sons, all believers can have total fellowship with the Father and the Son.

Equality in the Father's family is what the Father and Son wanted from the onset! This is the equality of the last line of Romans 8:29: "...that he might be the first-born among many brethren." If the believer has the same Father as does Jesus Christ, our Lord, then that makes them brothers. As glorious as angels are, they cannot participate in this fellowship. Oh, the magnitude of the magnificence, sufficiency, and gloriousness of this grace of ours manifested in this!

This is what the Son wanted for the born-again believer, and this selfless spirit pleased the Father. The Son wanted the born-again believer to have His Father as their very own, personal Father so He made this a reality through the eternal work of the Cross and the birthing of Christ in you. Thanks be to our Father and His most precious, loving, gracious Son who gave His Father to us! Most believers know that the Father gave his only begotten Son to believers, but most believers do not know that the Son gave His Father to every born-again believer! Most believers that have been born again do not yet realize who now lives in them. It is Christ in you that constitutes the birthing. "*The brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*"

resides within every born-again believer! Now I ask you, what greater thing is there that you could possibly have living in you? What more would any born-again believer desire than "*the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*" alive within? Why would any born-again believer seek a miracle when they could seek to know more about the birthing of Christ in you wherein God becomes Father to the believer and family equality with each other becomes a reality?

Removing gender from the Bible in an effort to bring equality will absolutely not bring equality. Equality is established when believers come realize that they share the same Father. Gender does not exist in Christ when the believer is baptized into His death.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3).

Death does not recognize gender and it ultimately removes all gender. Gender has to do with the physical body only. The nature birthed in the born-again believer has no gender.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

The group that is removing son from the Bible to do away with gender must also

remove the words *father, mother, man, men, woman, women, male, female, him, his, her, etcetera*, from the Bible. Then there are such words as *Adam, Eve, Abraham, Sarah, Jesus, Paul, Mary*, and so on, because these names are also indicative of gender. What is missing in this scenario is that there is no gender in that which is spirit! There is no gender in Christ and the Christ nature in you is neither male nor female. Being placed in Christ will automatically, absolutely, positively remove gender! If being placed in Christ does not resolve the gender issue, then there is no hope that it will ever be resolved. The problem is not one of gender but a lack of the understanding of the grace of our Father and His Son. Grace includes the "*whosoever*," which includes every human being. Our Father knows how to be Father to every person who is born-again through Christ Jesus, our Lord. The problem is believers do not know how to let Him be Father. "*I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son*" (Heb. 1:5) is one of the greatest declarations made in the entire Bible. Our Father knows how to be Father even if genders exist; but our Father is Father only to believers in Christ wherein there is no gender.

True fellowship is on the basis of nature and not on any other principle or foundation. Why do believers

EQUALITY IN THE
FATHER'S FAMILY IS
WHAT THE FATHER AND
SON WANTED FROM THE
ONSET!

need equality? In Christ is the only place genuine equality is found and the reason it is given to believers is not to do away with gender but to allow believ-

ers to be able to participate in the fellowship of the Father and His Son.

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may

have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3). †

(NEW CREATION—CONT'D
FROM PAGE 7)

WHAT GOD REALLY
WANTED WAS A SON TO
MAKE A FREE DECISION
TO LOVE HIM AS
FATHER.

Abraham as a knower of the truth. Abraham had no concept of Christ in him or of the birthing. While we can see Jesus in Abraham as we look back—for Christ said that all of the Scriptures testified of Him (John 5:39), there is no life in Abraham for us. Not only this, there is no Christ-life anywhere in the Old Testament; though Jesus is alive there in a prophetic sense, there is no message for the new creation race. That message comes only by the revelation of Christ as the believer's life. The abounding ignorance of the Christ-life has brought about a mixture of gospels that is deceiving multitudes. One preacher says God can do anything if you believe, and then he tells the people that if they don't give him money he can't continue. If God can do anything, can He not supply the preachers need too? This is a mixture of truth. Hungry believers cannot grow on such a gospel. Another preacher lives a lifestyle of the rich and famous yet preaches that Jesus was humble, meek and lowly. This is the mixture gospel.

Important Ideas For A New Race Gospel

Aside from all of this, however, the Father has sent a move of the Spirit to His hungry people and they are hearing and living a gospel for the new creation race. They are a people that will never again imbibe the juice of carnal religion. They are knowers who know in whom they have believed. They are through with philosophers and promoters. But just what are the real issues denoting the new creation race gospel? I believe there are several ideas where the hungry believer can start to renew his mind to seeing Jesus as his all and in all. Here are some ideas leading to a gospel of the new creation race.

1. *Salvation is a person.* While this has been previously mentioned, much more attention should be given to this subject. The modern Church has generally missed the essence of God's plan by not seeing this truth. There can be no firm foundation in any believer without understanding what led the Father to save mankind in this way. Before the foundation of the world was laid, the Father had

already faced the issue that to create a free moral agent able to make a decision was not enough to get what He wanted. What He really wanted was a son to make a free decision to love Him as Father. Lucifer exemplified the created being who failed God, even though he lived right in the presence of God and had full liberty to do as he pleased. He did as he pleased, not what pleased God. A son is not created. A created being will never have the spirit of the family. There had to be another way to get true sons and yet leave the creature a free moral decider.

This was when the Father “*chose the sons in Christ*” (Eph. 1:4). But to get the sons in Christ would be the heart of God's plan. He would birth them by putting His own seed in the creature (1 Peter 1:23). That seed and the way He would put it in the creature would be the great mystery of Godliness. His seed would be that part of Himself known as God the Son, the only son that ever pleased Him. By placing that Son in the creature, He would have His own nature (His life and spirit) ever working in them. †

are hearing from too many Christians these days is “Bible speak,” which they neither understand nor do they want to hear.

So, what to think about Paul’s thinking? Perhaps the abiding impression left by this most practical section of the Colossian letter is that there is never a time, according to Paul, when our responsibilities to the outsider can be totally absent from our mind.

ALWAYS we must be praying for God to provide opportunities for the gospel to be preached to them.

ALWAYS we must gladly take those opportunities, however unfavorable our

own circumstances or situations may be.

ALWAYS we must use those fleeting moments for Christian response when outsiders give us the opportunity to tell the Jesus story.

ALWAYS we must be ready to answer the inquiring one, the outsider, no matter how far off they may be in their understanding in spiritual matters.

And ALWAYS we must seek the wisdom and grace of God the Father with words that will awaken and stimulate the appetite of the Outsider for the things of Christ Jesus.

We know the story of Jesus, and Jesus would love to hear you tell that story

to those whom he will send to you!

Remember, only you are able to tell the Jesus Story your way; so tell it. You cannot be wrong in the telling, and you can win an outsider to the Lord. Then the outsider will have his own Jesus story thanks to a Christian who loves to tell the story! †

(Richard Cassidy taught this message at the 2004 Ridgecrest Christ-life Campmeeting in Ashville, North Carolina. He pastors a beautiful Christ-life Fellowship in Rogersville, Tennessee. The next Campmeeting is July 30, again at Ridgecrest. Make plans to join us.)

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(EVERYDAY LIFE
—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)

vation for speaking truth is to grow us up in Christ, to keep us from destruction and if we have already chosen the prodigal path, to beckon us back.

As Jesus was about to leave this earth, He gave a glorious pronouncement that, to me, exemplifies truth. *“Let not your heart be troubled; you 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.”* (John 14:1–2 NKJV, emphasis added). In other words he is so committed to telling us the truth that he would have let us know if there was no mansion awaiting! Our God will always keep His word.

All-Embracing Acceptance

Given these two solid building blocks of love and truth that God uses in creating a relationship with us, it is not too much of a stretch to believe that a third foundation, acceptance, is securely in place also. Acceptance is a close cousin to approval and, because we expend so much energy trying to secure these in our

relationships both with God and man, what a sweet relief it is to know that we are unconditionally accepted in Christ Jesus, the beloved. As the famous bard Shakespeare said in one of his sonnets, Love is not love that alters when it alteration finds...it is an ever fixed mark. That looks on tempests and is never shaken. How true this is of our God. His relationship with us is not disturbed by our changes no matter how radical they are. No matter how far we stray, how willful our mind-set or how idiosyncratic our personality, our Father embraces us in our entirety at all times. Nor does He distance Himself when our reputation slips for He is ever confident that His love and gentleness will woo us back, that His piercing, releasing truth will turn us around and that nothing in our prodigal path will be wasted.

There is only “plan A” in the Father’s file. His sovereignty and our choices weave together in the mystery of concurrence—all will be for our good and His glory both of which are inseparable components of the close relationship we have with our heavenly Father. Unlike unhealthy

human relationships that are so prone to toxicity, loss of identity and blurred boundaries, God is always God in the equation. The distinction is always clear for He is ever the Creator and we remain the created. The result is life giving and full of health.

Carolyn Custis James sums up this amazing connection so well in her wonderful book *When Life and Beliefs Collide*. “The cross brings everything together—sovereignty, goodness and glory. But the cross also tells us that sovereignty, goodness and glory are family matters. Our lives weren’t planned by a disinterested sovereign in heaven but by an involved Father whose heart is bound up in the lives of his children. Every inch of the way, our Father is working to accomplish his purposes—to deepen our relationship with him and cultivate the family resemblance in us.”

Our God has set up a splendid archetype for relationship with us, His family. Using this model of love, truth and acceptance, in the next issue we will explore how to apply these to establish a healthy, accepting relationship with our own dear selves. †

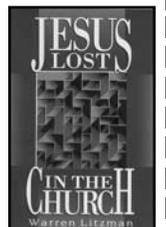
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GOD MEANS IT FOR GOOD

By Ed Gardner

I recently shared with a friend that the greatest asset, and the largest obstacle, to my discovery of the Christ-life and union with Him has been my mind. I was urged on by a mysterious knowledge that there was more to life than the ups and downs that most of us experience as Christians. Then my mind wanted to dissect this information to figure out how it worked and try to control it by mastering its secret power. Which brings me around to my theme, God means it for good.

I have come to find out that it was the mind of Christ in me the entire time providing me with precisely what was needed, molding me to the point where I could recognize the promised conformity to the image of His Son. I had to ask myself if I really believed that every dead-end faced, every door opened, was His perfect way to guide me to my present awareness rather than my efforts to thwart His divine efforts of grace. All I know is that it was all as He had planned. It was necessary for me to spend time (not waste time) spinning my plans in vain, for only then could I truly be convinced of the futility

in doing such, and be cornered into giving up all self-effort. My illusionary will had to be broken, and my will was just as strong as anyone else's. So now, you will not hear me complain about "wasted years"; there is no such thing in Christ. If we look at the worst offender, acknowledging forgiveness on his deathbed, he cannot justifiably suggest that God should have come sooner, nor reason that his life drenched in sin prevented God from gaining entrance. How absurd! The released, manifested power of God through the Holy Spirit is irresistible. When we see God in total control, we see the focused picture and gain insight for those around us.

Knowing (not just believing) that God means it for good releases us from the habitual manipulation of circumstances that we perform "for God." There is no need to manage the affairs of a prodigal brother or sister, son or daughter; for we can release them to the power of God by simply acknowledging that God is accomplishing whatever He desires in their lives. What a release! How does it work? I refuse to offer them suggestions.

It is clearly much more pleasant sitting in my recliner viewing in my mind His finished picture, and not trying to produce it myself. I came to realize that, in faith, I contain the answer, and all questions then become irrelevant.

I have come to know that it is God's job to supply; so why question if He is still in operation? Believe (or better yet, know) that He means it for good, even if we cannot discern the mechanics of His plot. Here is where we stop trying to install our own plan. By interfering, you will not hinder God's work, that is impossible. But it will cause you further frustration and emptiness. But guess what? God meant even your interferences for good.

Do you begin to see? Are you ready to sit down in faith and be used? Do you finally recognize the awesomeness of God that encompasses all? It is all so elementary. A child's mind can comprehend and accept it; but for some reason we must make it all complicated. But even that is God's way of breaking through to most of us. God means it for good, and best of all, it works. †

ESTABLISHING THE FINAL GOSPEL

By Dwight Davis

“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6–9, NKJ).

Paul: Follow My Gospel Only

Paul clearly declares to the church that the gospel he has preached to them is the gospel for every Spirit-birthed son of God. In fact, Paul makes it abundantly clear that there may be others who will attempt to trouble us and pervert the gospel of Christ. Paul also draws a clear line in the sand and says that if any other man or even an angel from heaven come our way and

preach another gospel, we should let him be accursed. *Anathema* is the Greek word used for “accursed,” and found only four times in the New Testament, with two of them being in two verses of Galatians 1:6, 8 and 9. *Anathema* means a vow to give one up for destruction, curse, or ban from the presence of Theos or God forevermore. Paul clearly states that the church should make a firm gospel discernment and distinction. They should listen, heed, and follow the gospel of the grace of Christ, the final gospel. All other religious gospels of man, that commingle law and control, should be considered sent from hell itself. According to Paul, those who preach such a message should be sent to hell. That may seem a little strong to you. However, realize that untrue and perverted gospels are sending men and women to hell every day, where there is no saving grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was saying that it would

be far better, if these perverters were sent to hell to keep them from leading others astray.

Christ’s Cross Put Moses’ Gospel to Death

There are two main gospels we must clearly understand. The first is the gospel of the restoration of Adam, which was given for temporal sons under the circumcision of the law until Pentecost. Today’s Christians mistakenly believe that this gospel began with Jesus of Nazareth. However, it began with Moses when God first gave him the law on Mount Sinai. Jesus came as the last Adam to fulfill that gospel in His body. Jesus put believers’ old man, Adam’s nature, to death on the cross (Rom. 6:6). Jesus put the original sin of Adam to death on the cross (Rom. 5, 12, 18). Jesus also put the law contained in ordinances to death on the cross (Eph. 2:15). Paul said that Christ “wiped out the handwriting of the requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us,

having nailed it to the cross” (Col. 2:14).

What are those “*hand-writing of ordinances*”? That was the gospel of Moses, the restoration of Adam. If the old man, old nature, and the law were put to death in Christ, that gospel was put to death also. Paul refers to Jesus as the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) because every tie that we had with Adam was put to death on that cross. There is no longer a Moses gospel to restore Adam and make him better. Adam’s sin-nature and its ties to us are now dead.

The church needs to stop trying to revive Adam with revivals, for we are no longer tied to Adam, but are new creatures in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17). We no longer revive the old man, for he is dead in the body of the last Adam, Christ. The church needs to stop trying to reform Adam with laws and doctrines, for these are the old things that in intervals are passing away with the transformation of the mind. The church needs to carefully discern and hear the voice of the Holy Spirit who is teaching and revealing Christ in us as us. The soulish part of man was not put on the cross. When we received salvation, through the seed of the incorruptible word of God, Christ in all of His fullness was implanted in us by the Holy Spirit. We received a new nature, the divine nature of God in Christ (2 Peter 1:4). We received the

fullness of Christ in person (Gal. 2:20) and in Spirit (Rom. 8:9). His Spirit makes us complete in Him (Col. 2:10).

Early Church Begins with a Commingled Gospel of Law and Grace

God in His love and grace allowed a commingled gospel to continue in the Church for a season until the time appointed by the Father. The Church began on the Day of Pentecost with God birthing about 3,000 new sons and with 100 percent grace in effect from that day forward in this church age. There is just a single church age for sure, beginning at Pentecost. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached an Old Testament message of God’s dealing with Israel. There was not anything for salvation in that message until Peter, near his conclusion, finally got to Jesus Christ, the one they crucified. With *Jesus Christ and Him crucified*, the Holy Spirit had something to finally prick their hearts with the conviction of sin and a need for salvation. *Jesus Christ and Him crucified* was the part of the message that God used to save them. The first instruction out of Peter’s mouth to these new converts was to repent (Acts 2:38). Repent means a change of mind with a new course of action. The Church needs

serious discernment of the Lord on this matter. If I have to do anything to effect God’s salvation, then how can I be fully trusting in the 100 percent finished work of Christ on the cross? Perhaps, there is another perspective to view this situation. If Christ completed my salvation on the cross, then how can I do anything to effect my salvation today? Religion gives things for us to do and add to the finished work of grace in such subtle ways that religion commingles law and man’s works with grace into a religious doctrine.

Clearly, the Church knew a lot about the Jesus in the Mary body and taught that gospel. The Church certainly had signs, wonders and miracles flowing in their ministry. In all outward appearance, the Early Church seemed filled with the ideal operations of God for man on earth. Let’s look closer and really examine these things. Did the Church know that all things were happening because of the resurrection life of the Lord in them as them? Did they even know that Christ was actually living in them as their life and expression? Were they getting to know Christ and the Father in a closer way in this new creation life relationship? The answer is ‘no’ to all the above. The testimony of

THERE IS NO LONGER A MOSES GOSPEL TO RESTORE ADAM AND MAKE HIM BETTER. ADAM’S SIN-NATURE AND ITS TIES TO US ARE NOW DEAD.

Acts chapters 2 through 8 and the epistles about the Early Church for these first two years has not one statement, declaration or teaching of this new creation life gospel of Christ living in them. The disciples didn't know that Christ was actually in them even though Jesus clearly instructed them that the Holy Spirit would teach and reveal that to them. Jesus prophesied that this clear union of them in Him and Him in them would begin on the Day of Pentecost (John 14:20).

The Lord Reveals to Paul the Gospel of Grace

The Early Church commingled law and grace until Jesus specifically called Paul. The Father sent the Holy Spirit to reveal the gospel of His Son in Paul (Gal. 1:11-12). This was clearly orchestrated by the Father in His timing (Gal. 1:15-16). Paul's conversion and revelation began about A.D. 32, or three years after the Church began. Let me assure you, Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, called Paul to be an apostle of this gospel of grace to the Church. The Holy Spirit ensured that this gospel of Christ in us was fully revealed in Paul over a three year period (Gal. 1:15-18). The Lord called Paul to bring this message and gospel of Grace

to the children of Israel and then outward to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). The Holy Spirit ensured that Paul and Barnabas were called and sent on Paul's first missionary journey to the Gentiles (Acts 13:2, 4). Paul was faithful to share only the revealed mystery of the gospel of Christ in us as our life, wisdom, knowledge, righteousness and holiness. This certainly did not make it easy for Paul. While the Gentiles were glad to hear the message of grace (Acts 13:48), the Jews rose up and stoned Paul nearly to death and dragged him out of the city (Acts 14:19). Let me assure you, nothing has changed much today. Religious people still attempt to put to death the messengers of this gospel of grace. Why? They know this message will eliminate their commingled gospel resulting in a loss of their control over the people.

The Father Waits for the Church to Accept the Gospel of Grace

The Church continued to preach a commingled message of law and grace from Pentecost. Think about this. Our heavenly Father's eternal plan began before creation of all things, when He first chose us to be in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). His Son, the Lamb, was slain before the foundation of

the world in His plan (Rev. 13:8). Jesus had just completed His perfect and complete sacrifice on the cross to reconcile us back to the father (1 Peter 1:20; Rom. 5:10). Our Father was fully satisfied with His redemptive work on the cross, proven by the fact that He raised him from the dead and placed Him in all authority as head of the Church (Eph. 1:20-23). When we were spirit-birthed and placed into the body of Christ (1 Peter 1:23; 1 Cor. 12:13), we became new creatures in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). We are now saved and live by Christ's resurrection life in us (Rom. 5:10; 1 John 5:11-12). Our heavenly Father, rich in love, mercy, and grace, allowed the Church to continue preaching this commingled gospel for a season because the kingdom was still being offered to Israel (Acts 28:28). This also gave Israel additional opportunity to change and receive Christ as Lord and Savior.

The Lord Corrects Peter's Gospel

Some time had passed and Peter was sent to Cornelius' house (Acts 10); and one day Peter saw a vision from the Lord. A net was let out of heaven three times (Acts 10:9-16). The Lord clearly attempted to reveal to Peter that He wanted all men, including Gentiles,

RELIGIOUS PEOPLE STILL ATTEMPT TO PUT TO DEATH THE MESSENGERS OF THIS GOSPEL OF GRACE. WHY? THEY KNOW THIS MESSAGE WILL ELIMINATE THEIR COMMINGLED GOSPEL RESULTING IN A LOSS OF THEIR CONTROL OVER THE PEOPLE.

to hear His gospel of grace.

The Revelation of the Mystery of Christ in Us Is the Final Gospel

Peter did not fully grasp the importance of this final gospel and its finality to all things of law. He continued commingling. Paul rebuked Peter to his face about commingling when Peter came to Antioch (Gal. 2:11–21). It was this very event when Paul openly declared before Peter and all the Jews, that “*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*” (Gal. 2:20). I don’t live by the law any more. The law was put to death on the cross. Christ is now my life. I don’t live by circumcision any more. Those ordinances were fulfilled by Christ and put to death on the cross. Christ is now my life. I don’t even live by my own faith. “*The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God*” (Gal. 2:20). We weren’t saved by works of the flesh (Gal. 3:1–2), and we do not keep or maintain our salvation by works of the flesh (Gal. 3:3). The revelation of Christ in us as us in the Christ-life is the final gospel to the Church.

This is why Paul drew, as it were, the line in the sand. There is no other gospel authorized for the Church today. If an angel

or any other man would come and preach a different gospel, it would be a perverted gospel; and we should refuse it. Eternal life exists only in Christ. Only through Christ in us do we have eternal life. Only by Christ living in us as us is there true expression of His Spirit. It is the person, the Spirit, of Christ living in us that is the true nature and reality of the Christian life. *I live, yet not I but Christ*, is more than a verse; it is a living reality.

Before Paul’s first missionary journey began, Barnabas sought out Paul and brought him back to Antioch; and they assembled the Church and taught a great many people for a whole year (Acts 11:26). This was where the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). Paul was faithful to teach the final gospel. Paul clearly taught them that it was Christ living in them by a spiritual baptism into the body of Christ, now permitted through the complete grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. Out of ridicule, some others saw Christ in those followers and mockingly called them Christians. The fact is that they really did see Christ in them.

Paul said we worship God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). The final gospel is centered, focused

and revolves around Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). When religion mixes law and flesh doctrines and teachings with the final gospel, it gets a perverted doctrine. Paul clearly declares that those who mix the law and flesh, and mind earthly things, are enemies of the Cross of Christ (Phil 3:19). Paul walked, lived and taught in the revelation of the mystery of Christ in him (Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:27). Paul desired “*to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery*” of Christ living in us as us (Eph. 3:9). The revelation of the mystery is the heart of the final gospel. Any other gospel that does not lead us to focus on the revelation of the mystery of Christ in us as our life, or adds anything to the finished work of Christ on the cross is not the final gospel. People living with any other gospel attempt to live their own separate lives in various bondages as Christian actors and actresses. Our Father intended that we know the life and reality of His Son living in us as us. Our Father desires that we live a Christian life of liberty, tapped into the mind of Christ. By this we will have full expression of Christ living through us to be and do the Father’s will. Our Father wants us, through Christ in us, to have a rich and loving fellowship with Him forevermore! †

I DON’T LIVE BY THE LAW ANY MORE. THE LAW WAS PUT TO DEATH ON THE CROSS. CHRIST IS NOW MY LIFE.

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Specific dates represent the Litzmans' visit to each Fellowship.

Call or email the contact person in your area for regular weekly or monthly meeting dates and location.

CALIFORNIA

PLEASANTON (DUBLIN)

10 a.m. Aug. 21
Allen & June Unfried (925) 846-8218
unfried@comcast.net

SACRAMENTO

5 p.m. Aug. 21
Joanne Gibson (916) 988-7783
gibsonarabianstud@earthlink.net
George & Cynthia Moll (916) 660-0309
jmpaint@quiknet.com

COLORADO

GREELEY

Mondays 7:15 p.m.
John and Jill Powell (970) 336-9433
jill@innatesources.com

CONNECTICUT

SOUTHINGTON

5 p.m. July 9
Nat & Judy Florian (860) 677-8693
nat@floriantools.com

INDIANA

INDIANAPOLIS

7:30 p.m. July 7
Larry and Michelle Phillippe (317) 862-6896
phillipel@indy.raytheon.com

KANSAS

WICHITA

7 p.m. June 4
Paul and Jennie Marsh (316) 284-0990
swampy@southwind.net
Cliff and Shirley Gardner (620) 662-8203
cgardnr@ourtownusa.net

LOUISIANA

HOUMA

11 a.m. June 19
Frank and Andrea Blakeman (985) 876-1800 Blakeman@inter-
net8.net

PEARL RIVER

7 p.m. Thursdays
Jerry and LaVerne Brown
(985) 863-6484

OHIO

CLEVELAND

7 p.m. July 8
Jim and Lyn Seward (440) 888-2260
jimlynsew@cox.net

OKLAHOMA

TULSA

Regular Meeting: 4th Friday of the Month
David Tegarden (918) 224-7130
drtegarden@juno.com

OREGON

SALEM

10 a.m. Aug. 20
George and Beverly Mallette (503) 581-6715
geocmal@comcast.net

TENNESSEE

ROGERSVILLE

10 a.m. June 12
Richard Cassidy (423) 921-8372
rdcassidy@planetcc.com

TEXAS

DALLAS

Sunday Meeting

June 5, 26; July 17, 24; Aug. 14, 28

Men's Lunch

11:30 Call 214-391-0488 for location.
June 15, 29; July 13, 27; Aug. 17, 31
Dallas Office (214) 391-0488
litzman@christ-life.org
Don Byrd (940) 458-4882
don.byrd@juno.com

HOUSTON

10 a.m. June 18
Vickie Swaim (936) 448-1316
vsswaim@consolidated.net
Isidoro and Isabel Canales (713) 941-8973

TYLER/LONGVIEW

Every Sunday, except when the Dallas group meets.
Please phone for times and meeting location.
Ed and Jenny Gardner
(903) 561-1029
egardner@tsnc.net



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Asheville, NC

July 30- Aug 4, 2005

Camp Theme: The world is a schoolhouse where we learn Christ in us (Col. 1:16-17).

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State: Zip:	Child 4:	Age:
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Date:	Enclosed Payment Amount: \$	Check #

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Name on Card:	Signature:

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Will you need airport transportation? _____ For how many in family? _____

Special Needs: _____

Before making flight reservations, please consider the following information for airport shuttles by CLF: Camp registration begins 3 p.m. July 30, with dinner at 5:15 p.m. Camp ends with breakfast at 7 a.m. Aug. 4, with checkout no later than 11 a.m.

CLF provides Asheville airport shuttles on July 30 and Aug. 4 only. Contact Ridgecrest at 800-588-7222 for other arrangements. For more information regarding airport shuttles by Christ-life Fellowship, please contact Roman Guenther at romstar@proaxis.com, or call 541-929-5382, fax 541-929-2994.

* Form must accompany a deposit to hold reservations.

**If you need airport transfers, please submit the Flight Information Form

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