

April 2001

AMAZING

Inside Report **FACTS**



Loving
DISCIPLINE

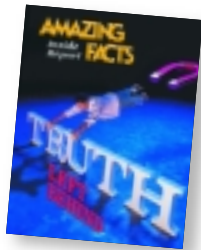
LETTERS

In the Philippines

I'm writing to let you know how happy I am with your plans for evangelism in the Philippines [see story on page 8]. May God bless you and your team.
ET
New York

Wealth of Information

Thank you for the much-used information you provided [February 2001 *Inside Report*] concerning the "secret rapture." I was raised to believe this, and I now believe otherwise—through the Word of God and not by any man. I thank you again for the wealth of information you provided.
GM
via e-mail



Faith Summit Weekend

Just a short note to say how much we enjoyed the Faith Summit Weekend meetings in Orlando. We had been able to catch quite a bit of NET New York '99 and really enjoyed hearing Doug Batchelor speak. Each night we attended, we came away with a new thought and an extra blessing. The weekend in Orlando was the same.
M&MM
via e-mail

Really Down to Earth

I am thoroughly enjoying reading the book *At Jesus' Feet* about Mary Magdalene. This is a beautiful book. I bet you couldn't write the chapter about the cross quickly because of the tears flowing in response to the mental picture of Jesus and the pain He suffered for us. Thank you so much for this book. Your writings are really down to earth so that people who don't have much education can understand the complete gospel message.
DS
North Carolina



Useful Evangelistic Materials

I am a pastor working in an unentered area in Kenya. I received a donation of books, audio tapes, videotapes, and other useful evangelistic materials

that were donated by a church for use in our area. Your audio tape entitled "When the Fire Came Down" was inside the bag, and I am writing to inform you that the cassette has been a blessing to me and to my small congregation.

ZC
Kenya, East Africa

God's Magnificent Creation

We want to thank you for the beautiful calendar you sent us for the year 2001. We truly are enjoying the scenes of God's magnificent creation portrayed each month—a reminder of His great, unfailing love.
LS
Nevada



Can't Wait Till the Next Program

I enjoyed doing the first six Amazing Facts Study Guides today through e-mail. I did these lessons 35 years ago when I was a teenager because I was just saved, and I wanted to get the diploma. Through the years, I have fallen away. I heard Pastor Doug from Amazing Facts speak on TV, and I can't wait till the next program.
BR
via e-mail

Hit a Roadblock

God is so good! I have been studying the parables, seeking to find the spiritual and physical applications. It has been such an interesting study, but recently I came to Luke 16:1-9 and hit a roadblock. I studied and prayed but could not get Jesus' meaning. Then I opened the December 2000 Amazing Facts magazine, and there was a whole article, entitled "One Shrewd Dude," about the unfaithful steward!
BW
Texas



I Was Sold

From the first time that I heard Doug Batchelor on Trinity Broadcasting Network in Maryland, I was sold. He is the most intelligent and genuine preacher that I have heard in a long time. It is because of him that I started subscribing to your Amazing Facts Study Guides. I thoroughly enjoy them, and I thank you for putting together such wonderful and truthful Scriptures.
JE
Maryland

AMAZING FACTS

INSIDE REPORT
VOL. 19, NO. 4

Cover photo by Don Satterlee

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BY EDITOR
DEBRA J. HICKS

Fruits of Repentance

I was thrilled when Robb Long, our Amazing Facts College of Evangelism outreach coordinator, told me that one of the classes he teaches covers church discipline. I have wanted to address this subject in *Inside Report* for a long time, and he graciously accepted the challenge of writing our cover article, which begins on page 4.

Church discipline seems to be one of the most widely misunderstood, abused, and ignored functions of the church. No matter where I've lived in the States, merely mentioning the term has often sparked debate or touched a tender nerve in someone who has seen it improperly administered.

I believe the main reason why discipline is such a difficult issue within the church is that the New Testament contains so many commands—such as “love thy neighbor” (Mark 12:31), “forgive men their trespasses” (Matthew 6:14), and “judge not” (Matthew 7:1)—which seem in direct conflict with the idea of church discipline. Add to this the fact that some members have an unhealthy love of conflict while others prefer to avoid it at all costs, and you have a recipe for confusion.

Believe it or not, the early church also struggled to find the balance on this subject. The church in Corinth was not only allowing open sin among its members, but the congregation was actually proud of its supposed tolerance. Paul admonished the members that the man who was sexually involved with his father's wife should be “taken away from among you” (1 Corinthians 5:2).

Evidently the church took his advice—with a vengeance. In his next letter, Paul again admonished the members, but this time he urged them to move in the opposite direction. “This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow” (2 Corinthians 2:6-7).

Paul's point was that the church's disciplinary action had accomplished its purpose. It had produced in the sinner “godly sorrow [that] produces repentance leading to salvation” (2 Corinthians 7:10, NKJV), so forgiveness and restoration to the body of Christ was now in order.

My firm belief is that if we were all to follow the counsel of Christ found in Matthew 18:15-17, then church discipline would seldom be necessary. Jesus gives several steps to follow when attempting to reconcile with a brother or sister. First we are to go to the person alone and discuss the problem we've


observed. Who knows? We might even discover that the true situation is not exactly as it seemed and that the mistake was ours! However, if indeed the person is at fault, Paul told the Galatians that “if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness” (Galatians 6:1). Most people already know when they are doing something wrong, so simply offering to pray for them and to hold them accountable will often bring the fruits of repentance.

Penitence should lead to confession of the sin. The best rule to follow is that confession should be just as public and widespread as is knowledge of the deed. If

Those who approach individuals with a sin problem should start by asking questions instead of issuing judgments or condemnations.

the problem was known to only a handful of people, then those same people are the only ones who need to hear the sinner's apology. But if the sin was known throughout the church and community, then the confession should be public.

In cases where the prescribed personal contact does not help, then we are to take one or two other church members with us to discuss the matter. If these individuals agree that the person is in trouble and if they are unable to lead the wayward one to repentance, the next step would be to get the entire church involved. Once again, it is crucial for everyone to remember that the purpose is not to quickly vote the sinner out of membership, but to attempt reconciliation. Only after the full church has spent time praying and pleading with the person should we take Jesus' advice to “let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector” (Matthew 18:17).

May we never forget that the purpose of church discipline is to bring people to repentance. Those who approach individuals with a sin problem should start by asking questions instead of by issuing judgments or condemnations. Often a person is already at a repentant state and merely needs to know how to be reconciled back to the body of Christ. In these situations, there is an open door for the church pastor or elders to lead the individual along the steps necessary for restoration into full fellowship. 



BY PASTOR
ROBB LONG

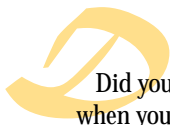


Don Satterlee

If a lamb is in the habit of wandering far away from the fold, where it could nibble on poisonous weeds or encounter wild dogs, a shepherd might be forced to take drastic measures to save his wayward sheep. In many countries the wise shepherd would, with his own hands, break one of the bones in the lamb's hind leg and then tenderly bind and splint that same leg. As the rebellious lamb heals, he becomes very dependent on and attached to the shepherd. In this way, the lamb is cured of his dangerous wanderlust.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, also keeps a watchful eye over His flock. In order to save a wayward church member from destruction, He asks His church to play a role in getting that person's attention and wooing him back into the fold.

Loving DISCIPLINE



Did you ever receive discipline from your parents when you were growing up? Were you ever disciplined at school, on the job, or as part of a sports team?

Most people can easily answer yes to at least one of these questions. But how many church members have ever received discipline from the church?

Why No Discipline?

Strangely enough, church seems to be the place where one is least likely to have experienced any form of corrective discipline. Is it because the church is a family of "model children" who always do the right things for the right reasons, and therefore no correction is ever needed? We certainly wish this were true, but I think we all know from experience that it isn't.

There are many reasons why church members often appear to have no accountability for their

behavior. First of all, there are leaders who feel that the church should be "a haven of grace and unconditional acceptance, regardless of behavior."

It's true that everybody should feel welcome to come and worship. However, when people are baptized as members, they become official ambassadors for Jesus Christ and also receive the privilege of holding church office, both of which require a higher degree of accountability.

Baptized church members should present a powerful witness for Christ. When we ignore an open contradiction of biblical truth in a member's life, we can destroy that witness. God's unconditional love has never meant an unconditional disregard for sin. Jesus not only befriended sinners, but He also encouraged them to "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

Second, the grim reality is that many churches think they are in the business of getting and retaining members at any cost. In this desperate atmos-

phere, where congregations are struggling to recruit every possible member to help balance the church budget and give the appearance of success, churches avoid corporate correction in fear that it might drive members away. In God's eyes, however, quality is more important than quantity.

Church members who never give offerings, seldom attend services, and fail to practice Christianity are not helped by remaining on the books; they are hindered! Instead of ignoring wayward members and letting them slip away from the truth, we need to lovingly point them back to Christ.

How Is It Supposed to Work?

According to the Bible, God has ordained for spiritual discipline to be administered by His church (2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Corinthians 5:12-13). He knows that church discipline, lovingly applied, will help bring the body of Christ to maturity.

However, if the church neglects this important work, the long-term result is a congregation full of spiritually undisciplined, juvenile delinquent members. In the days of Samuel, for example, the high priest Eli refused to discipline his evil children, and as a result the whole nation was spiritually crippled (1 Samuel 3:13).

As we talk about church discipline, I want to emphasize that Amazing Facts is not advocating a public flogging or execution, but merely an adoption of the principles contained in the Bible. Obtaining a clear picture of church discipline from God's Word will help us to better understand His purpose for this crucial and beneficial element of church life.

Most ecclesiastical correction is simply verbal, beginning with a gentle private reproof or a loving rebuke from two or three church elders (2 Timothy 4:2; Matthew 18:15-16). The most severe examples, in cases of stubborn disobedience, involve censure and ultimately having one's name removed from the church membership records (Matthew 18:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:12-13).

You Be the Judge

Now someone might say: "I don't want to judge. I don't think it is my business." Well, Jesus did say, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1), but He also said, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24, NKJV). What exactly did Jesus mean when He said, "Judge not"? Are we to let sin go unchecked in the church in an effort to avoid judging our fellow church members? Let's clarify this issue.

In 1 Corinthians 4:5, Paul says, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the

hearts." Notice here that the things we are told not to judge are the "hidden things." We cannot judge what we cannot see. But elsewhere Paul clearly teaches that we must judge the sinful things that are open to our view—what we can see and hear. Concerning an individual in Corinth who was engaged in open sin, Paul wrote, "Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Corinthians 5:12-13).

An elder in the church is responsible before God to judge the committal of open sin in the church. Problems like adultery, gossip, Sabbath-breaking, pornography, and open fighting among members must be addressed. Now, obviously, sins of the heart are just as bad in the eyes of God and should not be excused. What makes open sin so bad is that, since it can be observed by others, it can have the effect of encouraging other members to do the same. As Paul said, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Corinthians 5:6).

In regard to personal wrongs, Matthew 18:15-17 says: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

In this passage we find a threefold appeal designed to bring about repentance in a member who has fallen into sin. The process ends in the ultimate act of church discipline. Reluctantly, the church must dis-fellowship an unrepentant person from the body. But in so doing, the church is certifying a heaven-ordained truth—that unrepentant sinners shall not

Most family counselors agree that children actually want boundaries and loving discipline, because these give order and security to their lives.

I believe that we, as spiritual children, are no different. We need (and deep down want) structure and discipline. Without them, we lack security and certainty as to how to live and behave as Christians.



Don Satterlee

inherit the kingdom of God. The church on earth and the church in heaven agree as one. Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18).

Family as a Model

We often speak of the church as "the family of God," and truly the family is a microcosm of the church. Accordingly, the church family needs spiritual fathers to provide godly leadership and occasional discipline for its members. Elders, as the most spiritually mature members of the family, are blessed with the responsibility of helping the spiritual children mature to the full stature of men and women in Christ.

In 1 Timothy 3:4-5, the apostle Paul tells us that one of the indicators of how well an elder will lead in the church body is the state of his own family. According to Paul, the parallel of headship in the home and headship in the church is so close that success or failure in home leadership will almost certainly result in a corresponding success or failure in the church. In describing the elder's primary responsibility, both at home and at church, Paul uses the word "rule." The elder is to rule well in the home and in the church.

I think the goal of nearly every father is to see his children grow up to be independent, responsible, and contributing members of the community. In order to realize this goal, loving discipline is a vital necessity. Spoiled children raised without proper discipline are often selfish, unprincipled, profligate, and irresponsible as adults. Worst of all, they are usually unhappy, dissatisfied, and unsuccessful in life—especially where relationships are concerned. And again, what is true in the family is true in the church. Uncorrected church members are likely to be selfish, irresponsible, and spiritually unprincipled, with the corresponding negative attitudes that mar their Christian lives.

As a parent, I understand that there are right and wrong ways to discipline my kids. If I yell, scream, and hit them in anger, the punishment is mainly for my sake, and that is wrong. However, if I calmly, caringly, and almost reluctantly administer consequences for wrong behavior, my discipline is mainly for their sakes, and that is redemptive and right.

It is the same in church. If I confront members in anger and frustration, with an

accusatory tone and a provoked spirit, my motive is wrong and the results will not be good. In fact, my sin may be worse than the one I am correcting! However, if I go to an erring brother in love, and with a concern for his eternal welfare, my mission is redemptive. If I carefully explain the reasons for the church's disciplinary measures against him while appealing for submission to the discipline of the body and a change in his behavior, then God can bless the results. I *must* go with the burden that the erring one will be lost if he does not break off his sin. Only then can I successfully deliver God's loving message of warning before my brother becomes emboldened in sin and fastened in its cords.

The Desired Effect

I have concluded that when it comes to discipline, one of my chief duties as a parent is to teach my children to reason from cause to effect. I must lead them to the inward conviction that there are always definite consequences as a result of what they do and say.

In the absence of discipline, children get confused about what is acceptable and what is not. They are left to draw their own conclusions, which are generally wrong. And in the face of idle threats that are never realized, their hearts do not respond to clear warnings of coming judgment contained in God's Word. They may conclude that God will treat them as they have been treated by others in authority—with idle threats of punishment that never really comes. By failing to administer proper discipline, I may inadvertently be setting my children up to be lost!

Once again, what is true in the home is true in the church. In the spiritual realm, the consequences of sin are not always immediately apparent. As a result, we can easily become lax and deceived into thinking that there will never be any consequences.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 says, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Think about this powerful principle. When there are no apparent consequences for wrong behavior, we are much more inclined to repeat that behavior. If we are not careful, we can become emboldened in rebellion against God and His law.

For example, a person who takes up smoking has heard the warnings against tobacco and is aware of its effects on the body. But when his health does not seem to suffer any immediate negative repercussions, he concludes that he is an exception to the rule and that he can smoke without ever experiencing the detrimental side effects. In time he will pay a definite price, often when it is too late to reverse the damage. That's why the Bible says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).



Photodisc

There is a pattern in families that sometimes repeats itself in the church. Some well-meaning but indulgent parents are reluctant to ever discipline their children, for fear they will run away. The result of this approach is a form of sad domestic tyranny, with the children ruling the roost.

In the same way, pastors and members are hesitant to administer any form of accountability or corrective discipline for fear that the recipient will leave the church.

However, in healthy families, children do not run away when their parents correct them because there is a deep sense of love and commitment. It should be the same in a healthy church.

There are right and wrong ways to discipline children. If a parent reacts violently to their mistakes, screaming or hitting them in anger, the punishment is merely a way to "get even," and that is wrong. However, if a parent calmly, caringly, and almost reluctantly administers consequences for wrong behavior, that discipline is for the sake of the child, which is redemptive and right.

It is the same in church. If a member confronts another in anger and frustration, with an accusatory tone and a provoked spirit, then his motives are wrong and the results will not be good. In fact, his sin may be worse than the one he is trying to correct! However, if he goes to an erring church member in love, while appealing for a change in behavior, then his mission is redemptive and God can bless the results.



Photodisc

At certain times in the past, God Himself intervened with drastic judgment against emboldened sinners, like Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu, who substituted their own fire for the Lord's (Leviticus 10:1-3); Ananias and Sapphira, who conspired to lie about their gift to the church (Acts 5:1-11); and Uzzah, who irreverently touched the sacred ark (2 Samuel 6:6-7). Through these judgments, the Lord has made known to His people in all ages that He cannot tolerate high-handed rebellion in His children. Such instances of direct divine intervention are rare because, for the most part, God has given the responsibility of intervention to the church, which is to act as His body. Even in the Old Testament, God normally instructed His people and leaders to carry out His judgments. This was true of the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36), of the Israelites who committed harlotry with the Midianite women and their god (Numbers 25:1-5), and of Achan and his household (Joshua 7:10-26).

A Case in Point

The results of little or no church discipline are depicted in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. In the church at Corinth, there were no consequences for even the grossest, most obvious outward sins. Even worse, the Corinthian members were taking pride in the fact that they had no church discipline. Perhaps they believed that they were exhibiting great love by their "hands off" approach to managing the behavior of their members. However, Paul knew that this wasn't love at all. In fact, their approach was causing people to be eternally lost. That conviction is what prompted Paul's urgent warning that those engaging in these open sins would not "inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9).


Another undesirable effect of a lack of discipline in the church is that Christians often resort to the civil courts. I believe that is why, on the heels of his discussion of open sin and no discipline in the church, Paul speaks of Christians going to court with other Christians in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8. When the church

refuses to curb the sinful behavior of its members, and people cannot find justice in the church, they do one of two things. Either they simply endure an injustice at the hands of a fellow church member, or worse yet, they resort to the civil courts for redress.

The Reputation at Stake

Perhaps most importantly, church discipline concerns the character and reputation of God Himself. If the church does not carry out its disciplinary role, people are lost and the name of God is dishonored. If the church tolerates open and undisciplined sin in its membership, a shadow is cast upon God, portraying Him as a weak, indulgent Father, and His name is "blasphemed among the Gentiles," as Paul reminds us in Romans 2:24.

What an awesome responsibility we have, in light of the fact that the world judges God by His church! It is truly amazing to consider how patient the Lord is as He allows us to misrepresent Him to the world while He appeals to us to perform the work He has entrusted to us for the glory of His name.

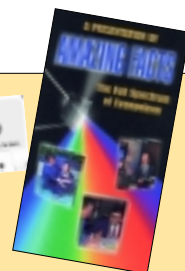
As we seek to apply the biblical principles of church discipline, let us not forget that God is not only just, but also merciful. Even when someone must be separated from the church, Jesus said to treat the erring one as a pagan or a tax collector (Matthew 18:17). Following Jesus' counsel means that this person should be treated as one to be won to Jesus through prayer and loving ministry. Truly, God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). 

Loving Discipline

A sermon on this subject by Doug Batchelor is available on video or audio cassette tape.

\$14.95 videotape

\$3.00 audio cassette



Prices above do not include shipping. California residents add 7% sales tax.
To order, visit our online store at www.amazingfacts.org or call 1-800-538-7275.

From the Inside

Filipino Church Leaders Expecting 10,000 to Attend 14-Day Crusade

Gospel workers in the Philippines are spreading the news of Doug Batchelor's upcoming televised crusade series, which begins April 22 in Metro-Manila.

Pastors and lay persons are distributing 6,000 handbills and 3,000 posters. In addition, Bibles are being printed in three of the local languages—8,000 in Tagalog, 1,000 in Ilocano, and 1,000 in English.

Church leaders there expect the Cuneta Astrodome, which seats 10,000 people, to be filled to capacity. Arrangements are being made to bring people to the stadium by bus from all over the island of Luzon, which covers approximately 40,000 square miles.

Pastor Batchelor will speak every evening for 14 consecutive days, and his sermons will be based on the popular "Millennium of Prophecy" series. Large baptisms are being planned for April 28 and May 5.

Event coordinator Gary Gibbs and Amazing Facts media director Cheridah Walters have been planning for the event for several months. Walters says it will be "a global effort and a global broadcast."



Beginning later this month, Pastor Doug Batchelor will hold a 14-day series of meetings that will be televised throughout the Philippines and the world. A crowd of 10,000 is expected to fill the Cuneta Astrodome, which is along this street in Metro-Manila.

The meetings will be televised not only on stations that regularly carry Amazing Facts programming, but will also air throughout the world on 3ABN downlinks, cable stations, and other TV networks. In the Philippines, there will be 1,500 satellite viewing sites in addition to the live meeting in Metro-Manila.

Please join us in praying that the Holy Spirit will anoint Pastor Batchelor as he ministers in this exciting mission field, where only 3 percent of the population is Protestant. We expect God to change many lives during the upcoming crusade.

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Bible Answers

With Pastor Doug Batchelor



Did Jephthah put his daughter on an altar and kill her, as Judges 11:30-40 suggests?

Jephthah vowed that whatever first came out to meet him upon his return from a victorious battle, he would offer as a burnt offering (verse 31). When his daughter was the first to greet him, Jephthah said to her, "Thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back" (verse 35). She answered, "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon" (verse 36).

The chapter goes on to say that he "did with her according to his vow which he had vowed" (verse 39). Notice, however, what she said in verse 37: "Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity." She was not bewailing her death, but her virginity.

I believe that what Jephthah did to fulfill his vow was similar to what Hannah did with Samuel (1 Samuel 1:27-28). He brought his daughter to the sanctuary, and she was consecrated to the service of the Lord, which meant she was to remain celibate.

There are several biblical reasons why I believe Jephthah did not kill his daughter, but instead consecrated her to the Lord's service.

First, human sacrifices were an abomination to Jehovah (Leviticus 18:21, 20:1-3; Jeremiah 32:35). We are told in Judges 11:29 that "The spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah." Do you think that with the Spirit of the Lord upon him, he would have executed his daughter?

Second, Jephthah had it in his power to redeem his daughter. Leviticus 27:2 says, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow, the persons shall be for the Lord by thy estimation." In other words, if your first-born was consecrated to the Lord, you weren't supposed to offer him as a sacrifice; you were to pay a price or offer an animal in his place.

Furthermore, only a priest was allowed to make a burnt offering (Leviticus 17:1-9). Remember how Saul got into trouble when he tried to assume the prerogative of a priest (1 Samuel 13:6-14)? What

priest would have been willing to offer Jephthah's daughter, knowing this was an abomination to God?

Finally, the Bible says she bewailed her virginity, that she knew no man, and that the Israelite women went yearly to lament, or to comfort, her (Judges 11:38-40). Where did they go? They went to the temple, because her life was consecrated to the Lord.

Perhaps you are thinking, "Well, God asked Abraham to kill his son." True, but also remember that God stopped Abraham from doing it. Abraham did not kill Isaac, his son; God prevented him from carrying out His command. If Jephthah was led to victory by the Lord and willing to fulfill his vow, don't you think God would have stopped him before he shed his only child's blood?

I think it's clear what happened. Jephthah consecrated his daughter to the service of the sanctuary.

When was the Bible first published?

The Bible was first published in the mid-15th century when Johann Gutenberg invented a new form of movable type that eventually led to the mass production of books. The Gutenberg Bible was printed in Mainz, Germany, around 1454 or 1455, and it was the first major book printed in the West. About 180 copies were printed, and significant parts of 48 copies still remain.

However, the Bible was preserved and duplicated for many centuries before Gutenberg published it. The books of the Old Testament existed before Jesus was born, and both He and His disciples called them "the law and the prophets" (Luke 16:16; John 1:45).

The Jews guarded the Old Testament Scriptures so carefully that if a scribe made a single mistake while making a copy, he had to destroy the entire manuscript! It was a life's work to make sure that every letter was just right, and curses were pronounced on any scribe who dared to alter God's Word in any way.

This careful work paid off. The text of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which existed before the time of Christ, is almost exactly like the versions we have today.

After Jesus died, Mark, Matthew, Luke and John penned their Gospels and Paul wrote his letters. Many years later, godly men began to assemble all of the writings from the time of Christ, which they referred to as the New Testament. By A.D. 300, all of these books had been compiled to form the Bible that we still use today.

Tune in to Pastor Batchelor's live nationwide call-in radio program, *Bible Answers Live*, on Sunday evenings. Send for a free program guide or visit the Amazing Facts website to get detailed information about the station(s) nearest you.



BY

MATTHEW JON MOORE

Like Good Music

Eventful Series in Pennsylvania Ends on a Happy Note

On the Tuesday before the Amazing Facts seminar began in Coudersport, Penn., I went to the host church to try to get a feel for what the evangelist and his meetings would be like.

I hoped to talk directly to the evangelist, Rich Cavaness, but I had no way of knowing if he would be there. An older gentleman who was tending the church lawn told me that he thought someone was in the building, but he wasn't sure who it was.

I entered the church through the basement and immediately called out to see if anyone was there. I didn't hear a response, so I slowly made my way upstairs to the sanctuary, calling as I went. I received no answer but felt that I should stay a little longer, so I read aloud some passages of Scripture from an

open Bible that was in front of the pulpit. Then I went to the front entrance and read aloud from a bulletin.

Finally I decided that no one was there, but I wanted to use the bathroom before I left since it is a 40-minute drive from Coudersport to my home in Crosby. When I got to the bathroom door, which is next to the church's library, I heard the muffled sound of

someone talking behind the library door. I was hopeful as I knocked on the door and opened it. Inside the library was a gentleman who fit the image I had seen of Rich Cavaness in *Inside Report!* He signaled with his hand for me to wait a minute because he was on the phone. When he was finished, he introduced himself to me, shaking my hand and smiling. The time quickly flew by, and we ended up talking for a couple of hours, discussing my faith and my desire to preach the gospel. He invited me to the evangelistic meetings, and I told him that I would attend if it was the Lord's will.

Thankfully, the Lord God enabled my wife, Neola, and me to attend every meeting! Although I had already been introduced to everything presented at the seminar, hearing the information again dotted a lot of "i's" and crossed a lot of "t's" for me. Coming together with fellow believers was also a great boost. At the time I was not a member of any church but

was very familiar with the Amazing Facts ministry. I have never felt more welcome with a group of people than I did in the midst of this congregation.

Rich Cavaness and his wife, Heather, conducted the seminar beautifully. Their daughter, Sarah, enthusiastically played a part in the ministry by handing out books and pamphlets. She acted very mature for her 9 years. Their 7-year-old son, whom I called "Superman Jonathan," did a great job at being a young boy. He has a lot of energy!

Not Part of the Program

The seminar was eventful. During one meeting, a visitor spoke up loudly, taking great offense to some things that the evangelist was saying. He appeared to be concerned for the audience, and I believe that he took it upon himself to protect them from what he thought was an attack on truth. After the meetings, he had some Catholic material to share with us. This brother, as I began to call him (for I believe that he was sincerely seeking the truth), is at the crossroads, and I am eager for him to see the light.

Another man also interrupted the meetings, but I do not think that he was truly seeking to know the Almighty God. On one occasion he had gotten into arguments with other members of the congregation and grew so frustrated that he dropped his Bible on the floor and said: "Don't look in here for all your answers. If you are 'Spirit-filled' and in God's will, you do not need the Bible."

After a few nights of the series in Coudersport, this man took his wife and children with him and left, saying he would never come again. However, he did show up again—on the very last night.

I knew that something was going to happen that night. I could tell by the way Brother Rich delivered his message; it was like good music. He was an excellent speaker at every meeting, but on some nights he was especially right on target.

After the meeting, the man came over and asked me a question. I thought: "He must have some special request. It is the last meeting, after all." But as he went on, I became confused. I didn't understand the point of his questions. Then his voice rose, having in it a tinge of disgust.

Next he started bragging. He said he had sold everything to be a witness within the will of God, that his car had more than 200,000 miles on it because of all his traveling, and that his family lived on donations that came especially from in-laws. He

Photos courtesy of Rich Cavaness



Matthew Moore (right) had already heard the truths presented at the seminar because he had been watching Pastor Doug Batchelor on television for several months.



New member Matthew Moore says, "I have never felt more welcome with a group of people than I did in the midst of this congregation" in Coudersport, Penn.

Soon the angry man was on his way out of the church. The man who bragged about being kicked out of many churches was ironically kicking himself out! Not one person asked him or his family to leave.

I believe that all of this is a good testimony of how well the Lord has blessed the Cavaness' ministry. In some churches today, the devil sits gleefully among the audience because of what is being preached. Sometimes he can even be found preaching at the pulpit, smiling and smug.


Satan was not happy with our meetings, though. No, he was extremely mad. I believe the disturbance, and the way Rich and Heather handled it, witnesses well for their ministry. May God bless them.

A Day of Glorious Victory

Sept. 2, 2000, brought a wonderful baptismal service. What a day! Victory was given to Rod Kinley Jr., who for many years had been in the midst of a raging conflict over truth. Through it all his mother, Faye, remained faithful and prayed fervently for his heart to be won to the truth. What a delight it was for Faye to see her son get baptized and become a full member of God's last-day church!

Likewise, on this day my wife and I were rebaptized. After many years of searching for the one true body of Christ, we had found it! We also renewed our marriage vows, this time taking off our rings instead of putting them on. I have yet to have a more joyous day than that one.

The next day, Sunday, while having a quiet moment in our home, I asked my wife if she realized what had happened. She gave me a puzzled look.

"We are now members," I told her. That was all I had to say. 

Editor's Note: Though few Amazing Facts seminars experience such outright attacks by the enemy, the conversion of sinners is always a thrilling drama of grace in action.

asked why everyone else had not done the same thing and declared that they were not giving their all if they had not. A woman who was not a member but who seemed to have enjoyed the seminar spoke up to attempt to answer his question. This just enraged the man.

I began searching for the passage that states, "Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil" (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). Just as I found it, I heard him shout, "You have no right to interrupt. You are a very rude woman!" I looked to the back and saw the man looking red-faced at Heather Cavaness. It looked as if he might hit her. She stood her ground and did not look afraid. Praise the Lord!

I quietly got up and walked over to where the commotion was, wondering if I might need to do some blocking. I looked behind me and motioned for my wife and son to sit back down. The irate man had moved on to argue with someone else, and I went to Heather to show her the passage. I knew that she had seen it before, but it seemed like the right thing to share at the time. She read it and nodded her head in agreement.



Pastor Gary Reece (left) and Amazing Facts Evangelist Rich Cavaness (right) proudly introduce Neola and Matthew Moore (with their son Justin) and Rod Kinley Jr. to their new church family in Coudersport. These three new members were baptized on Sept. 2, 2000. The Moores also renewed their marriage vows on that day in a beautiful ceremony dedicating their marriage to the Lord.



BY
BRINA PITTMAN

“The Best We’ve Ever Tried”

Pastor Ignites 5 Churches With Unique Outreach Idea

Earl Simmons, an energetic pastor of five churches in Illinois, has designed a unique Bible study program that incorporates the Storacles of Prophecy lesson series and the Millennium of Prophecy videos produced by Amazing Facts.

“This is the best Bible study approach we’ve ever tried,” says Pastor Simmons. “We’re really excited about it.”

The area in Illinois where he ministers, which includes the DuQuoin, Mt. Vernon, Centralia, St. Elmo, and Donaldson churches, has been a difficult one for evangelism in the past. But since Pastor Simmons launched this new program last spring, 11 people have been baptized, adding new members to each of his five churches. In addition, more than 80 others continue to study.

It all started when Pastor Simmons attended an evangelism preparation meeting in Chicago. He heard a woman explain that she had been successful in starting Bible studies by placing free Bible lessons and explanation letters in plastic door-hanger bags, and then distributing them to people’s homes.

Pastor Simmons decided that the “plastic bag Bible study approach” would be perfect for sharing the Millennium of Prophecy videos he had purchased.

“The Millennium of Prophecy videos have something nice,” Pastor Simmons explains. “They have the Storacles of Prophecy lessons that go right along with the videos.”

This program was just getting started when a young woman named Kelly Tedrick contacted Pastor Simmons. She explained that she had been watching Doug Batchelor on television for several weeks. Desiring to learn more about the Bible, Kelly had written to Amazing Facts for the location of a church in her area. Pastor Simmons introduced her to the Millennium of Prophecy videos and asked some of his church members to begin regular visits with her.

Each week Kelly eagerly awaited the Bible studies and videos. “I could not wait to go through the lessons,” she recalls. “I was learning so much that made sense, and the videos made my lessons much, much better.”

As her studies continued, Kelly realized that she had found the truth, and on April 22, 2000, she was baptized.

Kelly now rejoices in her newfound faith. “During the past five years,” she says, “I’ve been wanting to understand the Bible. I wanted a real relationship with God, and I wanted to know the truth. After studying with many different churches, I’m so glad I finally found something that really goes with the Bible. I can finally understand!”

When Pastor Simmons introduced the Millennium of Prophecy Bible study program to each of his five churches, he had no problem finding members willing to serve as instructors. More than a dozen individuals were eager to get involved with the program right away. After mailing out cards offering free Bible studies, the volunteers filled plastic bags with the first Millennium of Prophecy video, two Storacles of Prophecy lessons, a letter of introduction, and a brief questionnaire. Next they delivered each bag to the homes of individuals who had already returned the sign-up cards.

Since those first plastic bags were distributed, many people have begun to study, and now all five of Pastor Simmons’ churches have purchased five sets



Photo courtesy of Earl Simmons



Pastor Earl Simmons (right) had no trouble at all finding more than a dozen individuals who were eager to try the “plastic-bag method” of generating Bible studies. Each Bible instructor delivers one Millennium of Prophecy video and two Storacles of Prophecy lessons each week to someone who has responded to their offer for free in-home Bible studies.

Photo courtesy of Earl Simmons



After watching Pastor Doug Batchelor on television for several weeks, Kelly Tedrick (right) wrote to Amazing Facts asking how to find a good church in her area. She was put in touch with Pastor Earl Simmons, who introduced her to the Millennium of Prophecy videos. Church members Helen Johnson and Nancy Alstat began visiting Kelly regularly, and Kelly says that she couldn't wait for them to arrive each week.


of videos for this program. Each week the Bible instructors deliver two Storacles of Prophecy lessons and one video to the students. It takes about 13 weeks for a typical student to complete the series.

Pastor Simmons has been very pleased with the results of using the Millennium of Prophecy videos. "People love to watch them, and they keep on with them," he says.

Throughout his 36 years as a pastor, Earl Simmons has desired to take Jesus' words in Matthew literally. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," Jesus challenged, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

As is evident from the many who are studying and from the 11 individuals who have been baptized so far, Pastor Simmons' plastic-bag Bible studies are reaching many who long to know of Christ's love.

In order to help others who are interested in using a similar approach, Pastor Simmons has prepared a 35-page manual that explains the program.

He praises God for the success of this new Bible study idea in Illinois, and he believes people in other areas will find it useful as well. "I think I've hit on something good," he says. 

Want to Find Out More?

If you'd like to find out more about what made this program so effective in Illinois, contact Pastor Earl Simmons to request a copy of the instruction manual he has developed.

Please send \$4.00 to:

Bible Instructors Program
3305 Sunset Terrace
Marion, IL 62959

It Only Takes a Spark ...

Matthew Campbell and his family are leading new lives now as a result of their decisions to accept Christ as Lord and to be baptized into His remnant church.

It all began when Matthew's stepfather, Bob Naughton, was rebaptized in December of 1998 after attending The NeXt Millennium seminar with Pastor Dwight Nelson. While Bob did start taking his younger son, Alex, to church with him, he did not want to pressure his wife, Pam, or son Matthew into decisions for Christ.

Nevertheless, Bob's choice sparked an interest in his entire family. "I could see a real change in him," says Pam, "and it really affected me."

Matthew agrees. "He was so happy. It seemed like he had turned his life around, and ... I wanted the same thing."

When the Amazing Facts Millennium of Prophecy seminar presented by Pastor Doug Batchelor was downlinked to Bob's church in the fall of 1999, both Matthew and his mother attended.

Matthew remembers that on one night, Pastor Batchelor said something that made it all come together. "He said that if you're going to be a Christian, you have to give your life completely [to Christ]," recalls Matthew. "He also said it was worth it. I just got to thinking, 'That's right; it *is* worth it!'"

"Up until that time I had been into fishing and basketball, and I just had things that were keeping me away from being baptized. I was wondering if I should even get baptized because I didn't want to give those things up. But when I heard that, I decided, 'This is important!'"

Both Matthew and his mother soon made decisions for Christ and were baptized on Dec. 11, 1999, in the Summerdale Church in Georgia.

Pastor Carl Currie says, "One of the most thrilling experiences of my 60 years as a pastor was when Bob was rebaptized and then later his wife and Matthew were baptized."

As a result of the Amazing Facts seminar, Matthew's life has been changed. A sophomore at the public high school in Trion, Ga., he now faces a field of opportunities each day to share the love of Christ in his community and school.

"No one else at my school is a Sabbathkeeping Christian; I'm the only one," Matthew explains. "There are people from many different denominations at the school. I talk to a lot of different people and ask them about their beliefs and if they ever study their Bibles and if they believe in their church's beliefs. I even talk to teachers."

As Matthew and his family continue to share the story of Christ, they hope that others may come to experience the same joy and peace they have found.

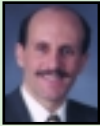
—Brina Pittman



Bob Naughton's decision to follow Christ made him so happy that soon his wife, Pam, and their sons Matthew and Alex wanted to find out what being a Christian is all about.

Meet Amazing Facts

You are invited to meet the members of our Amazing Facts team at any one of the following locations. This schedule is subject to change without notice, so please call Amazing Facts to confirm appointments or get more information.



Doug Batchelor



John Bradshaw

Doug Batchelor

April 22-May 5
Cuneta Astrodome
Manila, Philippines

Brian McMahon

April 20-May 26
Paradise Church
4575 S. Sandhill Road
Las Vegas, Nevada



Rich Cavaness



Byron Corbett

John Bradshaw

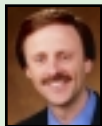
April 20-May 26
Hayward Church
26400 Gading Road
Hayward, California

Jack Pefley

April 20-May 26
Conference Center at the Utah Fair Park
155 N. 1000 West
Salt Lake City, Utah



Steve DeLong



Gary Gibbs

Rich Cavaness

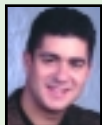
April 7-May 5
Holiday Inn
210 Ludlow Street
Warren, Pennsylvania

Dennis Priebe

April 20-21
Guthrie Church
1624 W. Noble Street
Guthrie, Oklahoma



Lowell Hargreaves



Jaime Jorge

Byron Corbett

April 14-May 12
Spartanburg Church
1217 Reidville Road
Spartanburg, South Carolina

April 27-28
Greenville Church
1211 Commerce Drive
Greenville, Texas

May 4-5
Amity Church
705 S. Hill Street
Amity, Arkansas



Brian McMahon



Jack Pefley

Steve DeLong

April 1-30
Richmond Conference Center
6531 W. Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia

John Silvestri

April 21-28
Gladstone Park Church
1475 Ohlson Road
Gladstone, Oregon



Dennis Priebe



John Silvestri

Lowell Hargreaves

April 20-May 19
Lincoln Church Plant Project
Glen Edwards Middle School
Spirit Auditorium
204 L Street
Lincoln, California

Verne Snow

April 20-May 26
Huntington Church
5804 E. Pea Ridge Road
Huntington, West Virginia



Verne Snow

Special Recognition

In Loving Memory

Vern Anibal by Ann Borris
Dr. Larry Ashley by Dorothy Hughes
Grace Baker by Penny Miller
Charles M. Borris by Ann Borris, his mother
Peter W. Borris by Ann Borris, his wife
Myrtle Bristow by E. Floyd Bristow, her husband
Dr. Harold C. Brockmann by Ruth & Frank Waxter
Glen Brown by Gordon & Jackie Tall
Shannon Burton by Emanuel & Cathy Pavlik, her parents; by Dorothy Workman, her great-grandmother; by Joel & Kendra Burton, her brother & sister-in-law; by Sam & Barbara Moore
David Byrd by Mr. & Mrs. Bill Byrd, his parents
Arline & James M. Canty by Diana Canty Pierce, their daughter
Beatrice Case by Linda M. Whicker
Betty A. Casey by William Opincar, her brother-in-law
James Catledge by Juanita Catledge, his mother
Derwood Chappell by Jean Chappell, his wife
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Ellen Clark by Carol Morris
Dean W.B. Clark by John & Perle Westberg
Joe Crews by Lu Ann Crews, his wife; by Bob & Treva Burgess; by Mr. & Mrs. William Lowe
Elva Darnell by Leda C. Smith
Harry & Ella DeJong by Almetta & Ward Versteegh, their daughter & son-in-law
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Marjorie Dickinson by Robert Moisescu
Fern Prout Dirksen by Phyllis Wright, her daughter
Harriet Echols by Lu Ann Crews
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Jewel B. Foutch by Gayle F. Tyroff, his daughter
Lynn W. Fox by Drusilla Fox, his wife
Robert L. Gardner by Patti A. Escarza, his daughter
Ruth Gesler by Betty Phillips
John N. Grosboll by Ann Borris, his sister
Mary Gulka by Matt & Olga Tachenko
David E. Haines by Ollie Haines, his wife
Perry Hall by Mary Lou Peckham
Roma R. Hays by Ruth Hays, his wife
William Henry by Warren & Phyllis Wright
Edward & Martha Herr by Vonsella & Floyd Scott, their daughter & son-in-law
Joseph Herzberg by Kathy Woodhall, his daughter
Francis A. Hogan by Charles E. Hogan
Bernice Hook by Aaron & Ellen Harder
Ellen & James Howell by Gayle F. Tyroff, their granddaughter
Smoky (Bruce) Hueston by Juanita Catledge, his sister-in-law
Albert & Sarah Huether by Joe & Della Trenchuk
Bill Huether by Joe & Della Trenchuk
Noble Jenkinson by Evelyn Jenkinson, his wife
Dr. Aaron Jonan by Erlien Jonan, his mother
Stan Kaufman by John & Idy Freeman
Glenn E. Kingery by Nellie Kingery, his wife; by Cynthia & Sandra Kingery, his daughters
Harold Kravig by Bonnie Lorenz
George E. Lacey by Phyllis Lacey
Ruby Lambert by Velda Tikker
Verdene Lawless by J.D. & Wanda Davis
Alan Dean Long by Pauline B. Long, his mother
Pastor J. Murray Long by Pauline B. Long, his wife
Edwin Low by Vyvyan Low, his wife
Jack Lynn by Vonsella & Floyd Scott, his daughter & son-in-law
Arthur Maples by Leda C. Smith

Amazing Facts is happy to recognize contributions to the ministry that are made, in lieu of flowers, as a tribute to the deceased or as a thank offering celebrating significant milestones in the lives of friends or family members. Listings normally appear three to four months after donations are received. Be sure to include first and last names and please type or print legibly to ensure correct spelling. Due to space limitations, a maximum of five names will be printed per donation per issue.

Fritzie Maples by J. Wayne Maples, her husband
Earl & Edna Marlin by Helen Marlin
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George Willey by Ruby Willey, his wife
Oma Wodley by Ruby Willey, her sister
John Woodhall by Kathy Woodhall, his wife
Pastor Earl Wright by Ken Cortner
Leonard & Edna Wright by Warren & Phyllis Wright, their children

Happy Anniversary

Robert & Rebecca Fisher (31st)

Happy Birthday

Vernon Springer (80th) by Elva Springer, his wife

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