

December 2000

AMAZING Inside Report **FACTS**

*One
\$hrewd
Dude*



LETTERS

Best Thing in 30 Years

I am thrilled that you are online. I have been e-mailing all of my friends and family and sending them different topics. This is the best thing that has happened since I became a Sabbathkeeping Christian 30 years ago. I am also very pleased to see Doug on TV so often. He is a tremendous instrument for the Lord. I will be supporting your program monthly. May the Lord richly bless your ministry with many souls won for Christ. If there is anything I can do besides pray and help out financially, please let me know.

JG

via e-mail

A Prayer Answered

After losing a close friend (our future daughter-in-law) in an auto accident, I was really depressed. Then after asking God to help me put my grief to rest, I happened onto your broadcast about death and burial. I must say it was a prayer answered. Since then I haven't been able to get enough information. I keep thinking, "I've read this before; why did it take so long for me to understand?" I want to thank you for all of the encouragement and the great programs.

AE

Georgia



Going Into All the World

I really appreciate your ministry, and since we've moved our services to Saturday, from now on I will listen to your TV program every Sunday.

I congregate in a Brazilian First Baptist Church and always witness via the Internet to people in my home country. They don't have many resources as far as media goes, though, and they're always asking me if I know of a website or radio program. The only one I

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can refer them to is yours (www.bibleuniverse.com) because it's the only one translated into Portuguese.

I'd like to thank you with all my heart, because you are really going into all the world to make disciples.

ME

California

An Ex-Prisoner Made It!

Pastor Doug, I watch your program every day. I found the Lord on Nov. 18, 1995, in prison. The Holy Spirit impressed me to write when I heard your testimony. God has delivered me also from a dirty mouth, drugs, drinking, and riotous living. When I saw and heard that you had been in jail also, God encouraged my heart through your testimony. I'd love to share your testimony with the prisoners. I don't know if you realize how much of a blessing it is to the inmates that an ex-prisoner made it. Thanks and glory be to God!

TT

Pennsylvania



The Great Joy of Religion

Please pass on my deepest thanks to the rest of the Amazing Facts team. You have helped me realize the great joy of religion again, and I am now trying to pass on that joy to my family and friends with the help of the Amazing Facts tapes, Study Guides, etc.

SR

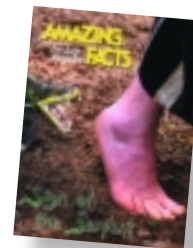
via e-mail

Theme for Our Sabbath School

I appreciated the article "I Love My Church" [June 2000 issue] and read it at our Sabbath School in Ridgetop. We also gave folks in the congregation a chance to tell why they loved their church (either locally or worldwide). Thank you for providing the theme of our program that day!

HK

Tennessee



I've Found Peace and Happiness

I was greatly blessed by your worldwide evangelistic seminar and was also baptized. Since then I have found peace and happiness. I no longer carry around unnecessary anger for the people who have hurt me, and I thank God for that. I still have my struggles, but by the grace of God, He will see me through. Thank you very much, and may God continue to bless you and your ministry.

MC

Trinidad and Tobago



INSIDE REPORT
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BY EDITOR
DEBRA J. HICKS

A Plan That Worked!

I was barely a teenager when I first heard the oft-asked hypothetical question: “If your house were on fire and you could escape with only what you could carry in one trip, what would you take?”

It’s a good question, because every now and then we should re-examine our priorities and think about what’s really precious in life.

It didn’t take long before I was ready with my answer: photo albums. My mom is a shutterbug, and we had always thoroughly enjoyed being able to relive so many happy memories through her pictures. In a fire, they would be lost forever unless the negatives had been stored in a different building.

More than half of my classmates had listed “a Bible” among the items they would grab on their way out the door, but I thought that was downright silly. Yes, it is great that so many considered a Bible as one of their most prized possessions, but I reasoned that Bibles are plentiful in America and could thus be easily replaced.

Funny thing is, I’d have a different answer today. Along with my childhood photos and wedding album, I’d now flee a burning house with my trusty little study Bible in hand, because it preserves almost as many memories and is a source for just as much joy. What is different today is that I could no longer find a Bible like mine in my local Christian bookstore. It isn’t a family Bible, nor is it antique. Its value lies in the markings that I alone would appreciate. You see, for the past six years I’ve filled it with notes and cross-references and underlinings and questions that enrich my Bible study every single day.

Probably the first thing I ever did to personalize my Bible was to underline every Scripture song I know and draw tiny music notes beside each one. That has proven to be a source of incredible joy to me through the years, and I’ve highlighted more than 75 such songs from Genesis to Revelation.

It wasn’t until I became a member of Pastor Doug Batchelor’s church in Sacramento that I began marking favorite Bible texts and powerful promises. If you’ve ever listened to tapes of his weekly sermons, you might have noticed that he often says, “If you underline in your Bible as I do, this is a great verse to highlight and remember.” Soon after I started marking these Scripture gems, I found that God often speaks to me through them during times when I need encouragement, motivation, or counsel.

In terms of studying the Bible with others, the markings I treasure most are those I made in 1999—the first year I reached my long-held goal of reading through the entire Bible in one year. Many,

many times I had started in January with the book of Genesis and gotten bogged down either in Leviticus or halfway through 1 Chronicles. Have you ever had a similar problem?

If so, perhaps you’d like to try the method I used, which starts in four different books at once: Genesis, Psalms, Matthew, and Acts. This Bible Reading Plan requires a few more bookmarks, but I can’t think of any other disadvantages. Here’s what I enjoyed most:

- I got to focus on the life of Jesus by reading a portion of the Gospels every single day of the year.

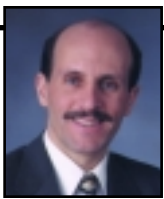
Many, many times I had started in January reading the book of Genesis and gotten bogged down either in Leviticus or halfway through 1 Chronicles. Have you ever had a similar problem?

- I saw, more clearly than ever before, the incredible unity of the Scriptures. Often I’d be reading an Old Testament prophecy at just about the same time I found its New Testament fulfillment! Before long my little Bible contained hundreds of tiny cross references that show me where to look for verses that are closely related to the one I’m studying.

- I found my goal to be more reachable than before because the plan is based on 25 days’ worth of readings per month. That gave me several “free days” each month during which I could catch up if I ever fell behind. Those came in handy for me a few times and helped keep me from feeling frustrated or hopelessly off-track.

If you’re interested in receiving a copy of this plan, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to me and mention that you’d like the Bible Reading Plan. And if you want to start by the new year, be sure to get it in the mail right away!

There are countless promises connected with reading God’s Word, and I’ll share my two favorites. The first is “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). The second is Hebrews 4:12, NKJV, which says, “For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”



BY DIRECTOR-SPEAKER
DOUG BATCHELOR



Don Satterlee

One \$hrewd Dude

In Luke 16:1-9, Jesus tells His disciples a parable about a man who today would likely be described as “one shrewd dude.” He was employed by a wealthy citizen who had hired him to be the administrator, or manager, of his farm and all of his goods.

In what is better known as the parable of the unjust steward, Jesus said that this wasteful servant had been squandering and mismanaging his master’s resources. One day an accusation was brought against the man, and apparently there

was substantial evidence that he wasn’t doing his job very well. So the master of the estate called his employee and told him that he was about to be dismissed.

In addition, the landowner set a date for judgment. There would be an audit—something like a meeting with the Internal Revenue Service. The master would get out the records for review, and at that time the steward would have an opportunity to present records to defend himself against the charges.

This ominous news struck fear into the heart of the incompetent servant, for he knew exactly what the outcome of the investigation would be. Quickly he formed a plan whereby he hoped to salvage his future.

Evidently this manager didn’t know the books very well, because when he called together all of his master’s debtors, he had to ask each one, “How much do you owe?” He was supposed to know that. The financial records were obviously a total mess.

The master might have had scores of debtors, but only two are mentioned in this parable. As each reported the status of his account, the shrewd steward told him to reduce the bill drastically, in one case cutting it in half. In this way the man was able to engage his master’s debtors to participate in his dishonesty. That way, when he later stood in the unemployment line, they would have no choice but to be friendly to him and receive him into their homes. Otherwise he could expose them as accom-

An Amazing Fact:

The U.S. Commerce Department says about 4 million people are caught shoplifting each year, but for every person caught, an estimated 35 go undetected. If these statistics are accurate, it means that 140 million shoplifting incidents occur each year in a nation of 260 million people.

According to a study in Washington, few shoplifters steal out of need; 70 percent are in the middle-income bracket and 20 percent have high incomes. Only 10 percent would be considered poor. Hotel managers count on one of every three guests stealing something.

Furthermore, according to insurance statistics, 30 percent of all business failures each year are a direct result of internal theft. Security officials estimate that 9 percent of all employees steal on a regular basis and that 75 percent of all employees in retail establishments steal to some degree, taking three times as much as shoplifters.



PhotoLink

plices in his crime. Needless to say, he made a lot of shady friends outside his master's household using the master's resources.

Praised for His Dishonesty?

Next comes the part of the parable that many Christians find difficult to understand. The Bible says that after the master reviewed the books and saw what his dishonest employee had done, he commended the man "because he had done wisely" (verse 8).

This statement mystifies a lot of people. They say, "Wait a second; is Jesus condoning dishonesty and stealing?"

Definitely not. The steward wasn't commended for his sloppiness and dishonesty. After all, that's why he was being fired. Jesus said that the master commended him for being shrewd. This man had been calculating and clever, making plans for his future security at his master's expense. I believe the reason Jesus said this scoundrel behaved "wisely" is because he was utilizing his master's resources to secure his own future. That's exactly what Christians should be doing as we see the day of the Lord approaching. Jesus is telling us in this parable that we need to think ahead in order to be prepared for the future.

A Wise Investment

At the end of this passage, Jesus says, "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail [this phrase is sometimes more accurately translated "when it fails"], they may receive you into everlasting habitations" (verse 9).

This is probably the most difficult part of the entire parable for many people. Consequently, I'd like to share with you an important Bible-study principle. We must not read into any parable a meaning that goes contrary to the rest of the Word of God.

Some have thought that Jesus was talking about Christians trying to buy their way into heaven. However, it is clear throughout Scripture that it's impossible to use money to pay for our sins. The Bible says, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" (Psalm 116:12). Salvation is a gift (Romans 6:23). It is an insult to the Lord to think that we can buy everlasting life. Besides, God owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10). No matter how hard we try, we can't give Him anything He doesn't already own! We shouldn't try to compensate Him for purchasing our redemption. A contrite heart is what the Lord wants from you and me.

Jesus wasn't telling His disciples to follow the example of the dishonest servant by making friends with people who are scoundrels and crooks, either. For one thing, that wouldn't be an effective way to

build a secure future! I can say with assurance that crime does not pay, because I was a thief many years ago as a teenager in New York City. Most of my friends were thieves, too, and I would not have wanted to rely on them to take care of me when times got tough. As a matter of fact, we all wasted a lot of our time and energy stealing from each other! There is no honor among thieves.

I should also point out that when the Bible uses the term "unrighteous mammon," it isn't saying that money is evil. It is the *love of money* that Paul identifies in 1 Timothy 6:10 as the root of all evil. Jesus had earlier warned His disciples: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the



Edwin Reed teaches mathematics to middle-school students and has been a volunteer for the Bible Answers Live weekly radio program for five years.

An Amazing Fact:

Our family was blessed in a special way recently. I've worked part-time for a non-profit company for several years as the editor and translator for the Spanish editions of its two algebra and two geometry textbooks.

Several years ago I asked one of the directors if the company paid royalties for translation work. He told me that he didn't think so, since they considered translation to be technical work rather than creative work.

However, early this past summer, that same director came to me and said the company had offered to pay me back royalties at a rate of 50 percent that of authors. He never mentioned an amount, and I was happy to receive anything as I had already been well-paid for my work. I signed the papers and then was given two checks (one for the past year and one for the previous several years). Together the amount equaled about \$18,000, which was 10 times my wildest imagination. I am amazed at the way God moved on their hearts. My wife, Balvina, and I have been saddled with debt since I graduated from college—for over a dozen years—and those two checks wiped out that problem immediately.

God works in amazing and wonderful ways.



Esmie Branner heads the Department of Religion and Biblical Studies at Weimar College. Her husband, Arthur, is an associate pastor at the Sacramento Central Church.

An Amazing Fact:

For two and a half years I have been senior mental health counselor for Sacramento county, and since the beginning of this year I had been asking God to open up an opportunity for me to go into full-time ministry so I could freely share the gospel and offer biblical counseling.

In June I had a powerful experience in which the Lord revealed to me that my ministry had begun, though I didn't know yet exactly what that ministry was. I prayed, "Lord, I know You have called me to ministry. But Father, if I go into ministry, I need all of my bills paid. I've got a good job. They pay me well at the county."

I had \$2,000 worth of bills that needed immediate attention, so I told the Lord that if He could pay those off, I would know without a shred of a doubt that He had called me, and I would not return to work.

One morning the Lord placed upon my heart the name of a person who was so moved after reading my book, Beyond the Veil of Darkness, that she had purchased about 100 copies and given them to her friends and family around the country. Later that day, I was asked by her daughter to drop off another \$300 worth of books at their house.

While there, I pulled this lady aside and shared with her my dilemma. I believed God was calling me to full-time ministry, but I had bills that were pressing and didn't have the money to pay them.

She asked, "How much do you need at this point?"

I said, "Well, I need about \$2,000, but \$5,000 would take care of me for another few weeks ahead."

She started to cry. Then she said: "Look at this check. I wrote it out for \$5,000, and I was praying last night, 'Lord, send somebody who needs this money.'" We both wept.

That's not the end of the story. My husband had calculated all of our debts, including credit cards we had not paid off and old bills from back when we were in school. We needed \$20,000 to clear all of our debts. We prayed: "Lord, how do we get out of this? We want to turn over a new leaf."

A few days later, the same lady called me back and said, "Esmie, I feel strongly impressed to help you get on with your ministry. God has called you, and you need to get moving ahead." When I arrived at her home, she told me that she had sold some land and gave me a check for \$20,000.

She'd had no idea how much we needed. If that wasn't God's signature on my ministry, I don't know what is!

My official last day at the county was August 8, and on August 9, I received a phone call early in the morning from Mrs. Wilcox at Weimar College. She said, "Esmie, we need someone to head up the Department of Religion and Biblical Studies and to teach behavioral science and biblical counseling." I went up there immediately, saw the work to be done, and that's what I'm doing today. Now in my job I can pray with my clients and give them the right biblical tools that will bring about healing. It's a true joy! God is tremendous.



abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15).

In the parable of the shrewd steward, Jesus was emphasizing the importance of utilizing our resources while we are still in this world in order to win souls, do good, make friends, and ultimately be received into everlasting habitation. Too often we get so caught up in the affairs of this life that we lose this crucial focus. Jesus was referring to this fact when He said that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8). Many people in the world work very aggressively to acquire fame, friends, and fortune. By contrast, many Christians invest so little of their time and means in that which is eternal. If we would put the same enthusiasm, interest, and energy into winning souls and looking good in God's eyes as the world puts into earning money and looking good to those around them, we would have a mighty church.

Owner of the World

I've found that the parable of the shrewd servant contains several important lessons for us in regard to stewardship.

First of all, the rich man in the parable represents God. He is our Master and the rightful Owner of everything in the world (1 Chronicles 29:11; Job 41:11). The Bible declares, "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is" (Deuteronomy 10:14).

We humans often act as though we own the world, but in reality we are merely stewards of our heavenly Father's resources. When God created the Earth, He made man in His own image and gave dominion of every living creature to Adam (Genesis 1:27-28). Birds, beasts, fish, and even plants were placed under his care. God planted the garden of Eden, and man was to tend and to keep it (Genesis 2:15).

Sadly, though, mankind has been unfaithful to this weighty task. We are all guilty, in one way or another, of mismanaging this sacred trust. Our unceasing demands on the planet's natural resources have impacted earth, sky, and sea in ways that most of us never pause to consider. New roads, housing developments, and corporate or agricultural expansion sometimes transform the earth's natural landscape in ways that make it inhospitable to a variety of plants and animals. In addition, pollution caused by automobiles, buses, airplanes, industry, and construction reduces air quality and destroys the planet's ozone layer, which protects both people and food crops from harmful radiation. And despite advances in recycling and incineration, 80 percent of the nation's waste is still disposed of in landfills. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says that about 23 million tons of hazardous waste are land-disposed annually, which puts both soil and ground water at

risk for contamination. As the Bible says, “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans 8:22).

Held Accountable

A second key point we can learn by studying this parable is that the steward realized he was going to be audited. He was told by his master that there would be a day of reckoning. In the same way, we need to realize that there will be a day of judgment. The Bible says that “we shall *all* stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Romans 14:10, emphasis added). You cannot send somebody else in your place.

Some people don't like to talk about this because they feel it is a denial of salvation by grace to say that we are judged by our works. The Bible is very clear that we are saved completely and only by grace through faith, but it is equally evident that we are judged by our works (Revelation 20:12; 22:12). A person's actions bear witness of whether or not he is saved.

All of us will someday appear before God while He's on His white throne, and every deed we have ever done will be reviewed (Ecclesiastes 12:14). The good news is that our record of sins can be blotted out if we confess them and allow Jesus to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:7-9). If we invite Jesus to enter our lives and permit Him to remain in control, He will be right there beside us in the judgment day, serving as our Advocate (1 John 2:1).

Time and Money

All of us are stewards whether we want to be or not, so this parable speaks directly to each one of us. There are two primary things for which we will each be held accountable: what we do with our time and what we do with our means.

As we have already seen, the Bible tells us that 100 percent of our resources belong to God. Some of us tend to think that 90 percent of our money belongs to us and 10 percent to God. We may even struggle with returning that 10 percent, which the Bible calls “tithe.” The Lord in His infinite wisdom asks us to return to Him 10 percent of what He gives us as a constant reminder that He owns 100 percent and as a demonstration that we believe it.


Methodist minister John Wesley said that as stewards of God, Christians should “gain all you can, save all you can, and give all you can.” That might sound a bit vague at first, but it's actually a good principle. We shouldn't be ashamed of earning and investing. As a matter of fact, the Lord tells us that the servant who buries his talent without investing it is going to be judged as unfaithful (Matthew 25:14-30). Christians should be faithful in investing their means and in using the natural talents and spiritual gifts He has given them. As stewards of these things, we're responsible to God for developing and improving them.

All of our time is God's, as well. The Lord asks us to acknowledge the fact that 100 percent of our time belongs to Him by honoring Him with one day in seven as a holy day. Incidentally, He tells us which day it is. It's not just any day of the week; it's the seventh day (Exodus 20:10). He sets the amount as well as the day.

People periodically tell me, “You teach that Christians should worship God only one day a week”—as though they are more holy and do nothing except worship God seven days a week. I do believe that we should worship God seven days a week, but He doesn't tell us to rest all seven days a week. If you rest seven days a week, you're not holy; you're lazy. God set aside one day as a day of special rest—a day for spending quality time with the Lord.

In addition, it is very important that we make time for worship and ministry every single day of the week—not just on Sabbath. It is a mistake for us to think that we can keep so busy during the week with work or studies that we have little or no time for God, family, or our fellow man. Every love relationship depends on people spending quality time together.

How to Take It With You

The most important point Jesus was trying to make in the parable of the shrewd steward is that from an eternal perspective, money is worthless *unless* it is used to enlarge the kingdom of God. The only way we can take our money with us into heaven is to invest it in winning souls while we are still living here on earth. Using our God-given resources to help bring the lost around us into a saving relationship with God is the way to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Matthew 6:20). 

Books and Tapes on This Subject Are Available From Amazing Facts

The Love of Money

Sermon on audio tape by Doug Batchelor.

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\$14.95 each video; \$5.00 each audio

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BY EDITOR
DEBRA J. HICKS

A Bible Boot Camp

*44 Graduate from First Session
of the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism*

The Amazing Facts College of Evangelism. “The best way I’ve found to describe it,” says 23-year-old Tyler Long, “is that it’s kind of like a Bible boot camp. They take you from being just a Christian to being a warrior for Christ.”

Tyler, who finished a four-year term in the U.S. Navy just two weeks before he arrived at the College, says the class has become such a tight-knit family that he dreads having to say goodbye after graduation on Dec. 3, 2000. “We’ve made some of our best friends here in this class,” he says.

Debra J. Hicks



Before leaving campus to distribute gift books to prophecy seminar guests, Eric Flickinger and Tyler Long review their assigned territory on a Sacramento map. Visiting and studying with people in the community gives the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism students a chance to physically put into practice what they have learned in the classroom. “Once you get over the initial fear,” says Eric, “it’s easy.”

In the past four months, the 44 College of Evangelism students have flourished in a very demanding, fast-paced educational program designed to make them more effective in Christian ministry.

“I can see a night-and-day difference between what the students were like when they first got here and what they are like now,” says Annie Kjaer, assistant director of the College. “They’re developing tremendous people skills and a better perception about evangelism and how to help people grow spiritually.

They are becoming the types of gospel workers I feel comfortable sending to visit my neighbor or a family member.”

Cyndi Keiser had worked as a Bible worker for her church in Greenville, N.C., for one year before her daughter was born. She says that although she’s naturally a “people person” and already knew how to give a Bible study, before she came to the College she didn’t really understand how to effectively bring people to a point of decision. “Annie’s classes are wonderful,” she says, “because she has helped us see how to recognize when someone is under conviction. I look back now and realize that at times the people I was working with were under conviction, but I misinterpreted their reactions and backed off when I really shouldn’t have.”

Tobin Kunz says the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism classes helped him realize that he always had a tendency to give an intellectual Bible study—one that focuses primarily on convincing a person of the truth. But now Tobin sees that some people are directed more by their feelings, which means he must bring the knowledge of salvation and what Christ has done for them directly to their hearts.

Staying With the Program

By the time students graduate from the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism, they have taken more than 60 different courses dealing with various aspects of soul-winning. Some last only a few days, while other courses run for the entire four months. The curriculum includes classes on preaching, prophetic interpretation, spiritual gifts, church planting, and discipleship—to name just a few.

In the Bible doctrines class, the students spend hours memorizing Scripture and doing an in-depth study of each doctrine. “We’re helping the students get into the Bible and let the Bible unlock itself,” explains instructor Jason Morgan. “They’re learning that they don’t have to be a pastor in order to share the Word of God with others. It is simple, and God would have each of us be able to explain it.”

Near the beginning of the course, Jason recalls, some of the students went to their instructors literal-



Graduation day is Dec. 3 for the 44 students who completed the first session of the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism. Standing in front of the group are instructors Jason Morgan (left of sign) and Doug Batchelor (right of sign). Standing behind them, from left to right: (first row) Christy Allen, Nerida McKibben, Sandy McTieman, April Frieson, Bill Aulet, Cindy White, Netty Rumagit, Steven Cadena, Jim Hillman, Marcia Waugh, Gary Potter; (second row) Robert Hogg,

Iris Bowery, Reba Walker, Rafael Rosa, Steve Duncan, Jason Struthers, Neil Schenk, Cindy Keiser, Tobin Kunz; (third row) Julie Pickard, Ron Lutman, Daniel Gugiere, Tyler Long, Adam Brown, Jeff Donaldson, John Rengifro, David White, Marty Wessman, LeRoy Jackson; (fourth row) Rozenia Jennings, Jim Martin, Eric Flickinger, Tom Michalski, Todd Anderson, Jerrold Martin, Daniel McKibben, Peter Lopez, Troy Haagenson, Jeremiah Smith, Roy Adams

ly in tears. "I can't do this," they'd say. "I can't memorize; I've never had a good memory." The faculty prayed with and encouraged them, and by God's grace, they took courage and stayed with the program. "Now those very students are the ones who are acing the tests," says Jason. "It's been a joy to witness."

Tyler Long, who was baptized during NET New York '99, says these classes helped him become more grounded in his faith and in the truths of the Bible. He adds: "If I tell people that I believe in the Sabbath and they say, 'Show me in the Bible,' I can now open my Bible and show them. If you go to this school, you can just sit down with anybody and give them a Bible study on anything!"

"The most important thing I've learned," said Troy Haagenson, "is that we can't just focus on sharing truth, because how we share it and in what order we share it determines how effective we will be. On my own, it would take me a lifetime to discover what I'm learning here in just four months."

A Whole Different Ball Game

In addition to classroom work, students also spend 16 or more hours a week doing community outreach. In August the class was divided into groups of two, and each team "adopted" a small section of the city of Sacramento, where Pastor Doug Batchelor held a prophecy seminar that ran from the first week of October through the second week of November. In each area, the teams visited residents to invite them to begin Bible studies and also to attend one of three different seminars held at Pastor Batchelor's church before his prophecy series began.

Doing community outreach was a completely new

experience for many of the students, including Eric Flickinger. "The first time I went out and knocked on a door, I was very nervous," he admits. "But then I realized that by not doing anything, I had already failed. If I offer someone the chance to study the Bible and he declines, that person is no further from the truth than he was before I knocked on his door. If the person accepts, he might someday be a great teacher and a leader in Christianity. So it's really a no-lose situation. Once you get over the initial fear, it's easy."

In less than two months, the College of Evangelism students contacted several hundred homes and started more than 100 Bible studies. Many teams were giving studies at five different homes!

Tom Michalski, 47, had the joy of seeing three families he studied with attend Pastor Batchelor's seminar. One of the couples was the very first to accept him into their home. After two months of studying together, the man told Tom, "I haven't done weed for nine days. I don't even want it; I don't know what's going on." This man had been smoking marijuana since he was a kid, and suddenly he stopped cold. "He doesn't fully understand what is going on," Tom says, "but he was excited to tell me. The Holy Spirit is really working on him."

In addition, the man's wife has been amazed by what she's learning from the Bible. "What really got me," she told Tom, "is when we went through the metal man of Daniel 2 and I saw how God had everything planned through time." Tom says he remembers that study vividly; the woman was right on the edge of her chair.

"Working with people and seeing the changes in their lives produces a satisfaction you can't get in



"They're teaching us so much in so little time! The staff is marvelous—so kind and loving and patient with us."

-Rozenia Jennings



"I told my wife that I'm the happiest I've ever been in my life—out sharing my faith with people."

-Tom Michalski



"One of the heaviest burdens I have is for my family, and now I see ways those doors can open up. God knew I needed a framework for how to share my faith."

-April Frieson



"To be in a class of 44 people who are on fire for the Lord is an exciting experience, a dream come true."

-Cyndi Keiser

anything else," Tom adds. "I've had successful businesses, but this is a whole different ball game because in soul-winning the success has eternal consequences. I told my wife that I'm the happiest I've ever been in my life—out sharing my faith with people."

Deep Commitments

A rich diversity characterizes almost every contemporary college campus, and the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism is no different. The students range in age from 19 to 72, and their educational and occupational backgrounds vary widely. The group includes physicians, auto mechanics, professional models, full-time mothers, a fisherman, an accountant, an attorney, a multimedia producer, a freelance magazine writer, a biochemist, a Bible worker, a message therapist, a nurse anesthetist, and a truck driver. Some are new converts, while others have been active Christians for 30 or more years.

More than half of the students are married, and 13 have spouses back home who remain their strongest supporters in spite of the fact that they miss them terribly. Eric Flickinger exchanges daily e-mail messages with his wife, Hildelisa, but in order to live within their budget they talk by phone just once every two weeks and have lived on separate coasts for nearly four months.

Almost everyone made major sacrifices in order to attend. Some were able to arrange a leave of absence from their jobs, but others dropped everything in order to enroll. Jim and Melissa Martin sold their home in Nebraska and brought their 11-month-old baby to California with them. Steve Keiser put his family's home on the market, sold almost everything nonessential, and then quit his job as a medical practice administrator so he could care for 3-year-old Hannah while his wife, Cyndi, went to school full-time.

In each case, God made it remarkably clear that the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism was where they needed to be. Rozenia Jennings saw an ad for the College on the back page of an *Inside Report* magazine, which she had never before received. Sensing God's call, she prayed, "Lord, You know I love You and want to obey You no matter what, but I don't have any money. If You want me to go, You make a way." The Lord soon sent Rozenia three different checks in the mail—exactly enough to cover her tuition. Next she asked God to bless her with transportation from Birmingham to Sacramento, and one day after sharing her testimony, a lady put an envelope into her hand that contained \$500—just 50 cents short of the lowest fare on a plane ticket! The, the week before



Debra J. Hicks

Instructor Robb Long's favorite class to teach deals with church planting, and students who enroll in the next session of the College of Evangelism will actually plant a brand-new church congregation near the campus.

she was to leave, Rozenia learned that she would need another \$300 for textbooks. "Lord, I don't even have the \$300," she prayed. "You're going to have to send me the money." The very next day, a check arrived in the mail for \$1,300—\$300 for her books and \$1,000 to live on while away from home.

Knowing beyond a shadow of a doubt that God had brought them to the College helped many students decide to stick it out despite major setbacks such as illness, costly auto repairs, and family tragedy. "The first thing that comes to my mind when I think about these students is the word 'commitment,'" says College of Evangelism instructor Robb Long. "They have been willing to forsake everything in order to give themselves to gospel work."

Unlimited Possibilities

What will happen to this special group of individuals after graduation on Dec. 3? "The possibilities are endless," says April Frieson, who has a vision for returning to Las Vegas and doing ministry there with her husband, Dean. Since one of the Amazing Facts evangelists is scheduled to conduct an evangelistic series there in 2001, she would like to start some small groups and get involved in preparation for the meetings. "Now that I have all of these tools, I want to get back there and get to work because it will take several months. We specifically studied how to prepare for an evangelistic series, and it takes six to eight months."

Eight graduates will be Bible workers, two will serve as task-force evangelism workers with six-month church assignments, two will be trainee evangelists, two or more want to plant new church congregations, and 25 plan to hold their own meetings when they go back to their home churches.

Iris Bowery has a passion for reaching people back home in the mountains of eastern Tennessee, and she also has a desire to do inner-city work with people on Monument Street in Baltimore.

Writer Marcia Waugh has started a mission magazine for kids and wants to work for the children of inmates.

Daniel and Nerida McKibben were among those who caught a vision for church planting while at the College of Evangelism. Daniel is a certified massage therapist and frequent health lecturer, and his wife is a physician specializing in obstetrics and gynecology. Before they enrolled in the College, they had a passion for medical-missionary work and evangelism but didn't see how Nerida could remain certified if they were to go on the road full-time. In the church-planting course taught by Robb Long, they learned that raising up new churches in areas where none now exist is a form of evangelism that allows gospel workers to stay in one area for a year or more. "That would be enough time for me to affiliate with a hospital and practice obstetrics," explains Nerida. "Church planting uses all of our skills—medical missionary work, Bible work, pastoring, and doing evangelism. It's as though the Lord brought us here so we could find out what our ministry could be."

Gary Potter, a retired pipefitter and welder, has been presented with scores of ministry opportunities and is waiting to see where the Lord places him. For now, he will return home to Texas and continue leading out in his home church and in prison ministry. "I'm glad the Lord brought me here to the College; I really am," he says. "In fact, if I were financially able I wouldn't mind coming to it again. I know the next session is going to be even better."


Amazing Facts is still accepting applications for the next Amazing Facts College of Evangelism ses-



Debra J. Hicks

Daniel and Nerida McKibben feel the Lord brought them to the College so they could learn about a form of evangelism that uses all of their skills and at the same time will allow Nerida to continue her medical practice.

sion, which runs Feb. 4 to June 9, 2001. Online applications are available on the Amazing Facts website (www.amazingfacts.org) under Special Projects and then College of Evangelism. Potential students can also view its admissions policy, course titles, and financial information.

Tyler Long says he prays that the College of Evangelism can eventually grow to train 1,000 students each year. "For anybody who's thinking about going to this school, do it," he says. "Besides giving yourself to the Lord, it will be the best decision you ever make." 

Jason Struthers (left) and his outreach partner Jeremiah Smith met Sacramento resident Janet Henry (right) while going from door-to-door in her neighborhood. Janet accepted their invitation to begin a Bible study and also to attend the four-week prophecy seminar conducted by Pastor Doug Batchelor. "I don't usually invite strangers into my home," she said, "but I could see the love of Jesus in these two young men. It showed in their faces."



Debra J. Hicks



BY EVANGELIST
RAY HOUSE

Land of Love and Adventure

Salvation stories from the Big Island of Hawaii

Kelly and Shelly Marote were “hanging loose” in good Hawaiian tradition when Shelly’s father invited them to an Amazing Facts prophecy seminar in Hilo.

Shelly had been raised in a conservative, loving Christian home, yet she wanted to know what the world offered. One night she confronted her father. “Dad, I’m 18,” she said. “Don’t you think I’m old enough to make my own choices now?”

Choices. That’s what it boiled down to. What choices were going to be for her best? She went away from home and lived in hope that she could make the best choices without her parents’ God and guidance. After several years of prodigal living, her life was a shambles and the future was dim.

Choices. Her choices had made life more complicated. Independence had ended in more pain and discouragement. But after she met Kelly, a broad-shouldered man with a broad heart for her, things would never be the same.

One night Kelly woke up in a sweat, breathing heavily. He went to his wife, who was preparing for the day, and said, “Shelly, I’ve got to tell you what I dreamed!”

Shelly was afraid it was about something she didn’t want to know, so she avoided him. However, the look of determination and urgency was written all over his face. “Shelly, sit down,” he said. “I have to share with you what I saw in a dream.”

Battling her fears, she sat down intent on not sharing his concern about the dream. Undaunted, Kelly started to describe what he had seen. He said, “We were outside, and the sky was clear. All at once the sky churned black and wild. The earth began to roll up into the form of four-footed beasts, snorting and pushing whatever was in their path. People were screaming; death was all around.”

The beasts came charging directly at Kelly and Shelly and their children, but miraculously they stopped before striking the destroying blow. The couple fled to a church building. It was safe inside. Kelly kept his family there and tried to help others come in from the pillaging of the beasts.

Within the next day or so, Shelly’s dad and mom were over for a social visit. They were playing a table game when Shelly’s dad, Dan, glibly remarked, “I had the strangest dream the other night.”

Shelly and Kelly immediately looked at each other with alarm, wondering what the odds would be that two family members would want to share strange dreams at the same time. Dan’s dream was very similar to Kelly’s and helped them to see God’s providence.

The effect of the two dreams made a deep impression on Kelly and Shelly—so much so, that when the Amazing Facts prophecy seminar was held, they were the first ones through the door. Each night they absorbed Bible truth that gave them peace and direction in the face of an uncertain future. They were baptized the last night of the seminar along with Shelly’s sister, Natalie Waltjen, who also had a dramatic experience coming back to Jesus.

Amazing Comeback

Natalie had stopped going to church for the most part. Child-rearing and hectic living had absorbed all of her time and energy. Dad and Mom were ever so gentle to remind her of God’s will, but she never really had time. Because of their kind invitations, she decided to placate them by attending the prophecy seminar. She came faithfully but remained unmoved and skeptical. Not until the night when the mark of the beast topic was presented did things begin to change.

As Natalie saw end-time events from the perspective of Jesus’ devoted love to her, the Sabbath truth became clear in her mind. While rushing home, the tears began to flow. She had been so blind to Jesus all these years. She wanted to be right with her husband,

Photos courtesy of Ray House



The Amazing Facts prophecy seminar in Hilo, Hawaii, brought joy and peace to this special family. Pictured above are Woody and Natalie Waltjen with their two sons; Mr. and Mrs. Dan Taka, the patriarch and matriarch of the clan; and Shelly and Kelly Marote with their son and daughter.



Pastor Charles Disney (center) welcomes newly baptized members Larry Davis and Roy Oness into his church family. Larry was invited to the Amazing Facts prophecy seminar by a friend, and he devoured the Bible-based messages as fast as he could. By the second week of the meetings, he had discovered the Amazing Facts website and completed all 14 lessons in the online Bible School. At the conclusion of the series, Larry was the first person to be baptized. Roy was another eager Bible student. He came to the seminar with years of accumulated Bible questions and experienced tremendous peace as Evangelist Ray House and Pastor Disney guided him to the answers.

Several times during the next few days he mentioned how wonderfully at peace he felt inside. Once again we realized the Bible promise “The truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

Front-Row Student


Leilani Algosaibi was a front-row attendee. She didn't want to miss a word of the message, and she never missed a night of the meetings. Having come from a Muslim family and having been raised in Saudi Arabia, Christianity was the furthest thing from her mind. The youngest sister of seven, she spread her wings to experience life.

After spending 10 years in Alaska running a dog-sled team with her husband, she moved to Hawaii for a new venture. In 1999 one of her first friends invited her to accept Jesus Christ as her Savior. Her heart was tender toward God, and she wanted to know Him in every detail of His Word. One day Leilani asked her friend, “If you say you are Christian, why do you cuss?”

The reply she got was, “Oh, we're saved by faith, we live in grace.” This attitude didn't match her new faith, so when another displaced Alaskan named Sasha Sutton invited her to a Tuesday night study with Irma Cautiverio, she began drinking in deeper truths from God's Word.

One day Irma invited Leilani to some public meetings at a local church. When this young woman drove into the parking lot and saw the church's name on its sign, her heart nearly stopped. Leilani's pastor had told her that this church group was a cult. She felt that she would be taking a big risk to go inside, but a verse came to her mind. “Test the spirits, whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1, NKJV). She did, and God's Spirit was confirmed in His Word.

At the end of the Amazing Facts prophecy seminar, Leilani and her friend Sasha were both baptized. God had truly worked another miracle.

Hawaii is full of beauty and adventure, but we have found that the greatest adventure has been to find earnest seekers who want to know Jesus in all of His Word. 

so she asked forgiveness for differences. The tears continued for nearly an hour—tears of joy, new hope, and love for Jesus. Natalie was beaming with a new experience the next night at the meeting. Today she expresses her joy in Jesus' long-suffering and His gentle way of prodding her back to Him.

Will You Have Me?

Roy Oness is a self-made man: a farmer by trade, a gentleman of the soil. His early years were spent looking for meaning in the Roman Catholic Church. Having found no compelling reason to continue, he drifted through school, then the Navy, and finally he got married. Roy's search for God took him to the readings of Christian Science and Mary Baker Eddy. After accumulating stacks of books and research on this movement, he felt that God was surely not in it and abandoned his hope of finding truth there. For the last several years, Roy found meaning in a fast-growing non-denominational church in Hilo, Hawaii, but never felt strongly about being baptized.

When the Amazing Facts flier came in the mail, he was intrigued with the prophecy theme and 666. He visited the second night and was pleasantly surprised at what he learned, but then he missed the next two nights. Just before the fifth presentation, Roy reasoned: “What am I doing that is so important as to miss these meetings? I'll go.”

From that point on, he didn't miss another night. Each subject seemed to answer more and more of the pressing questions he had nurtured through several years of searching for God's will. By the end of the meeting, he realized that although his church was teaching truth, it was mixing in error as well. On the last weekend of the seminar he told Pastor Charles Disney, “Pastor, I'm going to join your church; will you have me?” Roy was baptized the next Sabbath.



Two displaced Alaskans named Leilani Algosaibi (left) and Sasha Rita Sutton learned about the Amazing Facts prophecy seminar at a midweek Bible study. Although Leilani had been raised a Muslim, she embraced Christianity wholeheartedly and was eager to follow the Lord in every detail of His Word. Both friends were baptized together by Pastor Charles Disney at the end of the meetings.

Special Recognition

In Loving Memory

Dave Alexander by Elden Alexander, his son
Lucille Allen by Andrew Kirsell, her son
Virginia Almond by Mary Uselton, her daughter
H.E. Ashton by Kitty Ashton, his wife
Marlin Bakke by Martena Bakke, his mother
Stape Banner by Irene Brownlow, her sister
Robert Barber by Stanley H. Reesman
Randy Bauer by Helen Haase, his grandmother
Barbara Beasley by Matthew Beasley; by Thomas & Bernadette Clark; by Mary Corbin; by Anna & Johnie Evans; by Austin Evans; by Carolyn Hallissey; by the Hood family; by John Marty Hood; by Anita & Carol Ledbetter; by Paul & Linda Miller; by Dreaam & Patrick O'Dell; by Carole Phelps; by Marjorie Towsley; by other friends & family
Reuben Beck by John & Anita Silvestri
Pastor Horace Beckner by Gwendolyn M. Knight
Cecil Beltz by Joy Beltz, his wife
Pastor R.D. Benham by Elden Alexander, his great-great-nephew
Hartley Berlin by Kent & Dee Dickinson
Bertha Bieber by Olga Binder
Albert Binder by Olga Binder, his wife
Emma Binder by Olga Binder
Baby Christopher Bixler by Mr. & Mrs. Howard Bixler
Dr. Bill Brayshaw by Violet Brayshaw, his wife
Marvin Brentan, Sr. by Wilma K. Gill
Myrtle Bristow by Floyd Bristow, her husband
Pastor Howard Burbank by Tom & Helen Ipes
Bruce Bush by William & Agnes Garrison
Barbara Butler by Aaron & Ellen Harder; by Dr. & Mrs. Kent Taylor
John & Pearl Campbell by William & Agnes Garrison
Derwood Chappell by Jean Chappell, his wife
Chet Chase by Elayne Chase, his wife
Pastor Bj Christensen by Mr. & Mrs. William L. Fisher; by Curtis Perkins
Garnie Gunderson Claussen by Lois Claussen, her daughter
Sarah Cooney by Sarah Wolff, her daughter
Donnell & Willa Dee Corvin by William & Agnes Garrison
Walter Cox by Nancy Phillips, his grandniece
Hal Crays by Laurinda Crays, his wife
Joe Crews by Lu Ann Crews, his wife; by Mr. & Mrs. Maxwell Moffett; by Matthew Kabson
Irene Curtis by Romona I. Mortenson, her daughter
Nita Daffern by Donna Rutt
Pastor Tor Dahlberg by Don Kirkwood
Wilmer Davis by Dr. & Mrs. Harley Anderson
Lucilla Diaz by Tom & Helen Ipes
Leonard Dickerson by Nevins & Evelyn Harlan
Harold Dickinson by Kent & Dee Dickinson
Marjorie Dickinson by Kent & Dee Dickinson
Mark Dickinson by Kent & Dee Dickinson
Rieta Diderickson by William Opincar; by George & Betty Nordling
Walter Diede by Art & Isabelle Reile
Kathleen Dobbins by Maryetta Fullbright, her sister-in-law
C.O. Dockery by Mildred Dockery, his wife
Marie Dole by Bettye White
Barry Doles by Don & Joyce Doles, his parents
Ray Doyle by Lu Ann Crews
Russell Drake by Pauline Becker, his sister; by Neal Becker; by Reed W. Thomas; by Ken & Peggy Thomas; by Gerald & Elaine Snyder
Maurice Dunn by William & Agnes Garrison
Frank Earl by Evelyn Earl
Gladys Eaves by Corinne King
Harriet Echols by Mamie Bean, her sister; by Lu Ann Crews
Richard & Margaret Ekroth by Ann Ekroth, their daughter
Patty Elliott by Mary Randall
Adolph & Margaret Engel by James Engel, their son

Mr. & Mrs. Essex by Stanley H. Reesman
Scotty Farwell by Corinne King
Ann Ferguson by John & Anita Silvestri
Richard S. Fertig by Margaret K. Fertig, his wife
Edward H. Flower by M. Florence Flower
Elmore Fullbright by Maryetta J. Fullbright, his sister-in-law
Lester Fullbright by Maryetta J. Fullbright, his daughter-in-law
Olga Gaede by Olga Binder, her daughter
Dr. Alan R. Gair by Jackie Gair, his wife
Robert C. Gates by Esther & Albert Lorenz
Virginia Gerne by Aaron & Ellen Harder
Violet Gibbs by Gladys Lincoln, her sister; by the faculty at Charity School of Nursing, Delgado Community College
Daina Griffin by Earl & Hazel Griffin, her grandparents
Edwin C. Gussiaas by Alvin & Ella Mae Neumiller
Juanita Guinn by Douglas & June Ackermann
Ernest Haas by Art & Isabelle Reile
Edna Hagele by Olga Binder
David E. Haines by Ollie Haines, his wife
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Harold Hall by Ron & Purla Swanson
John Henry Clay Hamby by the Astoria Postal Employees; by Julius & Helen Beesley; by Mr. & Mrs. Earl Black; by Dennis & Brigitte Davis; by Howard & Sylvia Hallock; by Lorraine Peterson; by Dale Wagner
D. Chester Hamren by Aaron & Ellen Harder
Arderly Hardt by Ellen Hardt
Dalton A. Hargrove by Robert & Rebecca Hargrove, his son & daughter-in-law
Judy Harr by Art & Isabelle Reile
Fred Hase by Olga Binder, his daughter
Roma R. Hays by Ruth Hays, his wife
Dorothy Henriques by Olga Binder
William M. Henry by Patricia Henry, his wife
Joseph Herzberg by Thelma Herzberg, his wife; Kathy Woodhall, his daughter; by Debra E. Fechik, his daughter
Roger Hinger by Art & Isabelle Reile
Frances Ho by Nina & Brent Shakespeare
Naomi Hodde by Joan De Witt
Marge & Ted Hoffman by Steve, Donna, Stephenie & Matt Dickie
Marian Hohensee by Dorothy Hughes
Everett Hopper by Jasper, Tamra, Tonya & Julie Hice
Michael Howard by Elden & Judy Alexander, his uncle & aunt
D.W. Hunter by Olga Binder
Vernon Hurst by Helen Hurst, his wife
Les Iles by Stanley H. Reesman
Ruth Ipes by Tom & Helen Ipes
John Janzen by Agatha Janzen, his wife; by Robert & Eileen Janzen, his son & daughter-in-law; by Sharon Janzen, his granddaughter
Ben Johnson by Steve, Donna, Stephenie & Matt Dickie
Luben H. Johnston by Maryetta J. Fullbright, his sister
Vera Johnston by Maryetta Fullbright, her sister-in-law
Jack Jorsted by James V. Curtis
Elizabeth Kabson by Matthew Kabson, her husband
Pastor Robert Kachenmeister by Dr. & Mrs. Harley Anderson
Margaret Britton Keightley by Paul Genstler
Flay Ketchum by J.D. Davis
Glenn Kingery by Nellie Kingery, his wife; by Cynthia Kingery, his daughter; by Sandra Fulton, his daughter
Anna & Walter Knecht by Art & Isabelle Reile
Dan Kohler by Clarence & Dorothy Kohler, his parents
Arianna Kontes by Cheryl Scoville-Hayton; by Randy Hayton
Alan Korgan by Wilma K. Gill
Bonnie Kramer by Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Pickeral
Clarence H. Kuhnke by Mr. & Mrs. Harold Fiegenschuh
Gus & Katherine Lazarakis by Gertrude Lazarakis, their daughter; by Aurele Maurice

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.

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Edward A. Wilson by Lola Mae Wilson, his wife
Thelma E. Wood by Judy Alexander, her granddaughter
John Woodhall by Kathy Woodhall, his wife
Donald E. Woodruff by Velma Woodruff, his wife; by Mark & Barb Johnson; by Ruth Johnson; by Donald & Clara Baker; by Maida Johnson; by Ken & Judy Johnson; by Charlotte Hurt; by Shirley Fiala; by Kirk & Angele Johnson; by Doc & Marilyn Page; by Gordon & Adeline Riffel; by Ray & Gloria Lacey; by Kent & Sara Thompson
Howard & Evelyn Wordell by Elayne Chase, their daughter
Joyce Wuttke by Richard Wuttke, her husband

For Answered Prayer in Her Behalf

Linda Carsley by Howard & Joyce Marks, her aunt & uncle

For Wedding

Duane & Lorry Burns by Carol Paulson, her sister

Happy Anniversary

Clarence & Anita Pillsbury (50th) by Lola Genton

Charles & Marissa McConnell (8th)

Alvin & Helen Ford (50th) by Mr. & Mrs. G.F. Wilson

Happy Birthday

Ed Ensminger (90th) by Edward & Bonnie Ensminger, his son & daughter-in-law

Suzanne Hegamyer

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