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AMAZING *Inside Report* FACTS



A NEW WORLD ORDER?

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DIRECTOR/SPEAKER
DOUG BATCHELOR

MANAGING EDITOR
ANTHONY LESTER

ART DESIGN
HALEY TRIMMER

PROOFREADERS
ARLENE CLARK
LU ANN CREWS

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P.O. Box 1058
ROSEVILLE, CA 95678-8058
PHONE: (916) 434-3880
FAX: (916) 434-3889
E-MAIL: EDITOR@AMAZINGFACTS.ORG

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BY EDITOR
Anthony Lester

Growing Up



As a child, I frequently played board games with my older brothers. When I lost or didn't get things the way I wanted, I would stomp around, scream my head off, and even throw or hit things. This childish temper even followed me into my early twenties and was a major struggle to overcome in my Christian walk.

Watching the world, I see that same childish spirit being increasingly manifested in word and deed. I am always amazed at humanity's capacity to act like rebellious, egocentric adolescents despite all the knowledge it possesses.

Road rage—from whispering obscenities to purposely cutting off drivers—is evidence this is true! One might even say that the 9/11 terrorists were childishly lashing out in the most despicable manner. There is nothing more dangerous than the self-seeking emotions of a child in the strong body of an adult.

Through God's grace, I have achieved victory over that particularly awful vice. But we are all still children, aren't we? Every time we sin against God, we are behaving like children. Isn't sin really just us stomping our feet, screaming angrily, and lashing out because we don't like His way? And we don't always lash out with obvious physical harm. Emotional harm (such as deceiving, gossiping, and backstabbing) is just another juvenile response no matter how sophisticated it might seem over brute force.

Like a loving parent, God hears us out, corrects us, and continues to love us despite ourselves. But He also wants and needs us to grow up if we are going to be a part of His family. And one day, when I was reading my favorite chapter in the Bible, He told me it was time for me to grow up—and then showed me how.

It is no coincidence that a verse about growing up is in the middle of arguably the greatest treatise on love ever penned: 1 Corinthians 13.

We know that God is love (1 John 4:8). So Christianity is really the pursuit of that love through Jesus' example. Jesus was the epitome of true adulthood in body and mind. He acted like an adult, reasoned like an adult, and even greater, He loved like an adult—giving up His life for us. It was the ultimate act of a loving parent.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. This is part of Jesus' legacy to us. This is how we should be if we are going to be certified grownups in God's kingdom. In this world, we're considered adults when we are old enough to purchase our own beer. But in the Bible, we're adults only when we really learn how to love.

We have to put away our childish versions of love and put on the character of Christ. We must deny self, so that Jesus can "grow us up" into what He intends us

to be. We can no longer hold grudges, act boastful, or slander our brothers and sisters. And as Christ commands, we are to love our enemies in the exact same way (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27, 35).

I think we must also realize that we are no better than the next person, believer or unbeliever. Instead of feeling proud about our faith, we need to feel blessed and pass that love on. Jesus wasn't proud; He didn't boast. He did tell the truth, as we all should, but in every syllable He spoke, love was present. "We should no longer be children ... but, speaking the truth in love ... grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ" (Ephesians 4:14,15 NKJV).

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

— 1 Corinthians 13:11



Like Jesus, we must be ready to offer undying love. It means not shouting or wasting time getting revenge; it does mean offering forgiveness in the same way that God forgives us every single day. So how exactly do we grow? With the Word. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). You'll see evidence of growing up if you experience the fruit of the Spirit springing up in your life.

I want to have an open heart and connect with those who are lost, to meet them where they are, just as Jesus did. The only way that's possible is to really love. Just like Jesus.

For me, Christianity is synonymous with growing up—in terms of this world, but also maturing so that I can participate as an adult in heaven. Heaven will be about love. For an insightful look at heaven, see Cyndee Johnston's article on page 4.

Too many adults still fight like children, using playground politics while battling over property and possessions because they can't learn to share and love. Except today, they're not resorting to name-calling; they're using an onslaught of violence not seen since the Dark Ages. We won't be doing this in heaven, so why resort to it now?

When you love and treat well those who are persecuting you, you'll have been part of a great victory for the Lord.

God wants us to be reunited with His heavenly family, but we have to grow up first.

God bless you!

Mail BAG



Spiritual Food for the Hungry

Oh, praise the Lord! I am really enjoying your Bible study. For a very long time, I was hungry for the Word of God. Through your ministry, I am being spiritually fed. I thank God for you.

DD, South Carolina



I have only recently begun to watch your program, and I am so totally impressed. So many Amazing Facts and so little I know! I feel a great lack of knowledge; I am like a spiritual skeleton heading for heaven. I strongly believe you can help me to put on some "spiritual flesh" through your teachings.

PB, New Jersey

No More Doubts

I thank you for your ministry, especially your Study Guides. Their revealing messages have answered all of my questions completely, leaving no room for doubt. I feel that the Lord wants me to order more for my friends who are thirsting for the same light of truth.

AM, Trinidad

Web Connections

We saw you on TV and learned so much in just 30 minutes, but we never could find you on TV again. We were looking up some Bible info and found your Web site. We have been so blessed to find you!

RJ, e-mail

I turned on the TV, and to my pleasure I found the station with Mr. Batchelor answering questions. It was truly enjoyable. At the end of the session, I visited your Web site. I just wanted to say that I absolutely enjoyed reading the items on the Web site. I'm learning more and more each day.

BB, e-mail

Prophecy Enlightenment

I want to tell you that I have your set of Millennium of Prophecy tapes, and week after week I always gain more information and am always more lifted and determined to be ready to meet our Lord when He comes.

FD, Kentucky

The new Panorama of Prophecy CDs are truly wonderful. I'm so excited to have a witnessing tool that I feel very comfortable using. It's like having a whole evangelistic series in a neat little package! This was truly an inspired idea. Thank you!

TS, e-mail

Lightning Strikes

I received your "Saved by Lightning" letter. I was just about to toss it in the trash when lightning struck the telephone pole outside my house. The lights went out. The noise was strong and loud. Something told me to open your letter and read it. I wasn't in any danger, but what a coincidence! Enclosed is a donation for your pamphlet. It's a good idea.

SR, Georgia

Power in Prayer

I would like to say thank you to your prayer request staff. I have requested prayers for my friend, to whom I gave Amazing Facts materials. He called tonight to say thank you and boy, have they affected his thinking in a positive way! God DOES answer prayers! Thank you so much for having a prayer request e-mail address. There is power in prayer, which I have now witnessed for myself.

LTB, e-mail

Editor's Note: The Amazing Facts staff prays every morning for our readers, viewers, and supporters. If you have a prayer request you would like to share, please contact us at prayer@amazingfacts.org.

Facets of Faith

I was comforted by this article ["The Facets of Faith," September 2001]. I have been struggling with intercessory prayer for my son, and I was becoming weary (just what our adversary wants). But now it seems clear that our main focus should be faith and perseverance. I'll keep praying. Our Savior will take care of the rest in His time.

SB, Maine



Now Making Sense

Because of your fantastic way of teaching, the Bible is starting to make sense. My wife and I have been through an extremely tough two years, and your ministry is really helping. Please keep it up and know that you are truly appreciated.

AT, e-mail

I watch Amazing Facts every Sunday morning. I try not to miss Doug's messages. He is so clear and easy to understand. He is a real special person—a gift from God.

BS, Texas

A New Level

After doing the study "Has Holy Wedlock Become Unholy Deadlock?" it made me see my faults. Since then, my marriage has gone to another level in bringing my husband and me closer and more harmonious.

BG, e-mail

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A NEW WORLD ORDER?

By Cyndee Johnston

Throughout civilization, humanity has longed for a better world. Undeniably, nurturing visions of utopia appear to be a powerful, instinctive desire within us. We are all in search of a better place, a world where there is unity and harmony. Humans seek a completely new order of things; one might even call it an intrinsic yearning for a “new world order.”

You’ve probably sensed this desire in your own heart. Even during the best of times, we often find ourselves with a vague feeling of discontent. And in times of distress, these longings can become truly overwhelming.

Think about when all your best efforts to improve your life seem stymied by forces or events out of your control; or when an unwelcome tragedy comes and a precious loved one dies an untimely death. Or how about when you read the morning paper and the headlines shriek with fresh reports of violence, outbreaks of disease, and millions starving.

As you lock your door against the crime in the streets, do you ever wonder if life will always be like

this? Or as you stand by a graveside, do you ever long for a new dawn when that person so dear to you could be alive and happy again?

Crumbling Kingdoms

In the Bible, you soon find the varied accounts of the power-hungry trying to conquer the planet and establish a new world order. Genesis chapter 10 addresses the earth’s first monarch, the mighty Nimrod, who founded the city of Babel (later known as Babylon). He had visions of a new and powerful centralized government, and he built himself a lofty tower to consolidate that vain and dangerous vision. But Nimrod’s plans were permanently frustrated when his tower’s construction was halted by that well-known universal breakdown in communications.

Nebuchadnezzar, whose life is chronicled in the book of Daniel, came on the scene years later. He brought Babylon to the height of its glory and envisioned extending its influence and power throughout the known world. But you probably already know that Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams were interrupted by a seven-year bout of insanity.

Then came the Mede and Persian armies led by Cyrus, who also sought a new, glorious government not yet achieved by mankind. But a few centuries down the line, Alexander the Great ended these misbegotten aspirations of the Persians. After conquering them, he rapidly subjugated huge territories for Greece. It has been said that his utopian vision included the search for the fabled “Fountain of Youth,” where he hoped his achievements would be rewarded by immortality. But he died tragically young, having never found what did not exist. Alexander’s expansive empire was soon divided and conquered by the Romans. Their Caesars then began implementing their unique version of utopia called “Pax Romana”—or Roman Peace. But gradually, history tells that the Roman Empire also crumbled in strife and turmoil.

Whom Are We Trying to Kid Anyway?

The list of men searching for the elusive all-controlling, one-world government goes on: Charlemagne, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, and, of course, Stalin, Hitler, and Mao. All of these famous (and infamous) men watched coldly as their grand schemes failed. And even the League of Nations, United Nations, and European Economic Community have all done their part in attempting to establish their own modified versions of the new world order. But we see how even these peacetime organizations fail miserably at bringing people together!

So is this chaos of government building and toppling on earth some kind of cosmic joke? Will there never be peace, freedom, and equal opportunity for all?

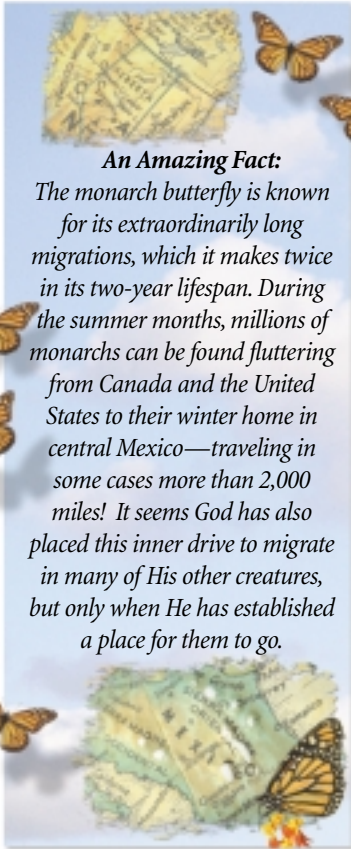
Or are we simply playing a bit role in an enormous planetary game going nowhere? Are all of mankind’s best efforts at peace doomed to abject failure? Should we stop looking for the bright dawn of a new morning—a golden age of love and harmony—and get on with real life?

A Divine Revelation

Fortunately, the answer is we shouldn’t stop searching. And we need not look far for the best resource to find this perfect place of peace—and see why humanity won’t get there on its own. Indeed, the Bible has the answers to these deep, heartfelt questions. And ironically, the Bible uses history’s greatest failure of a global power grab to make an unforgettable point.

Of all the world leaders mentioned previously, none came closer to realizing a golden, united world empire than Nebuchadnezzar. God came in a dream to this great Babylonian king, giving him an amazing vision of the future. You can read

An Amazing Fact:
The monarch butterfly is known for its extraordinarily long migrations, which it makes twice in its two-year lifespan. During the summer months, millions of monarchs can be found fluttering from Canada and the United States to their winter home in central Mexico—traveling in some cases more than 2,000 miles! It seems God has also placed this inner drive to migrate in many of His other creatures, but only when He has established a place for them to go.




all about this episode in Daniel 2. Briefly: While on his bed, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about a giant mineral statue with a head of gold, breast of silver, a midsection of brass, legs of iron, and feet of iron mixed with clay. God then provided Nebuchadnezzar the meaning of the unique dream through His exceptional prophet Daniel. The Lord revealed to Daniel, who prayed under the threat of death, the meaning of this imposing image that the king's own soothsayers couldn't unravel.

It was shown to Nebuchadnezzar, and to all of us who long to know what the future holds, that the image represented a succession of major kingdoms ruled by man that would ultimately fail—and then culminate with the peaceful kingdom of God. Nebuchadnezzar witnessed that his mighty golden kingdom of Babylon would fall, only to be followed by three successive empires doomed to failure. The last would disintegrate into many separate nations. Daniel foretold that these smaller, separate nations would vainly attempt to reunite through intermarriage, military conquests, and negotiations. They would never succeed.

And that's exactly what happened. Babylon, the head of gold, fell as predicted. And it was followed, exactly as foretold, by the kingdoms of Medo-Persia (silver), Greece (brass), and Rome (iron). These were the major empires that ruled the territory inhabited by God's people. Subsequent to the fall of the Roman Empire, the entire region split into many nations (clay), whose borders and governments are still in a state of flux today.



A Once and Future Hope

But all this doom and gloom has a purpose. At the end of the vision, God reveals “the rest of the story.” Humanity’s state of existence doesn’t end in a state of confusion, always to be frustrated in futile attempts for utopia. In fact, it “ends” with a grand, glorious, and revolutionary transformation—a rebirth if you will.

In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, a gigantic heavenly stone breaks into the scene, striking the image on its feet. Then suddenly, the statue completely and violently dissolves into dust. The entire human system of government and religion on earth is brought to a quick and cataclysmic end. Then God Himself takes the stage.

But these sometimes frightening words are really a harbinger of hope to those of us searching today. “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Daniel 2:44).

This great event, when Jesus comes to establish His kingdom on earth, is known as “the blessed hope.” Titus 2:11–13 says, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

A Home of Harmony

Just before His death, Jesus comforted His disciples with these words of promise: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1–3).

The apostle Paul elaborated on Christ’s promise with this beautiful description: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). He goes on to say, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (v. 18).

And isn’t it true? Don’t these words bring real comfort to your heart—a thrill to your soul to think that Jesus is, at this very moment, preparing a beautiful home for you in a place where peace, love, harmony, and unity really exist? History shows that mankind cannot manufacture this kind of place. All of its best efforts have always ended in defeat and disappointment. It’s a proven point that all the greatest political, military, economic, and spiritual leaders have not and never will be successful in forging utopia.

But God will be successful. “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). With Jesus as your Savior, you will see the dawning of a new day, an entirely new order of things!

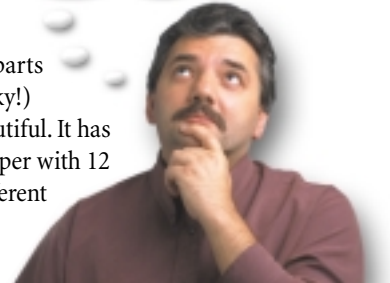
Snapshots of Heaven

So now that we know it’s just a matter of time, what exactly will this heavenly home be like? Many people picture heaven as a somewhat eerie place where ethereal spirits sit around on clouds, wearing halos, and strumming golden harps. I don’t know about you, but frankly, this depiction sounds pretty boring to me! Fortunately, the Bible gives us quite a different picture. Several passages in Scripture provide some fascinating insights into the heaven that’s to come. You see, God wants us to know that heaven is a real place; and better, it’s more real and more fulfilling than anything we’ve ever known.

The Bible speaks of a beautiful city called the New Jerusalem, which will be God’s headquarters.

It is described in Revelation 21 and 22. The picture these chapters paint is mind-boggling! First, the city is huge. It stands 375 miles on each side! (If placed on this earth, New Jerusalem would cover most of North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland, and parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky!)

Second, the city is incredibly beautiful. It has magnificent walls made of solid jasper with 12 foundations, each made from a different type of precious stone, including



sapphire, emerald, topaz, and amethyst. And the city's 12 gates are each made of a single pearl!

The streets of the city are made of a gold so pure that it appears as transparent glass. But we also learn that the streets are not made to simply look at and admire. Zechariah 8:5 says that "the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing." Not only will New Jerusalem be a breathtaking, shimmering sight, it will also be a place to have fun and rejoice.

But most awesome, God Himself will dwell among the redeemed within the midst of the city, and a glorious rainbow surrounds His majestic throne (Revelation 4:3). From beneath His throne, the river of life springs, and on both sides of this river, the tree of life produces a fresh crop of different fruit every month.

Even Better Homes and Gardens

If the walls, foundation, and streets are this beautiful and spectacular, just imagine what your home will be like—the one that Jesus custom-made for you! What an awe-inspiring privilege and reward to have the Chief Architect of the Universe, who knows your heart's desires even better than you do, designing and building your own unique home in this city!

But don't you do-it-yourselfers get discouraged. It's clear that you won't just be sitting around in the New Jerusalem, twiddling your thumbs without something to do. You'll have the opportunity to build a country home in the new earth as well. "And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isaiah 65:21, 22).

An important aspect of this utopian new world order will be the biosphere of heaven: its lifecycle will be eternal, not one cursed with the decay and death of this sin-infected world. The Creation story makes it clear that all of those negative biological processes entered our world as a result of catastrophic sin (Genesis 3:17–19).

Thorns will not be around in heaven to pierce your hands, nor will thistles scratch at your feet. Bugs will not bite, and leaves will not die. Sure, it's a little daunting to comprehend how all this will work scientifically—but our minds are limited by what they're familiar with. Heaven will change all that too.

Ever Learning

Indeed, our brains will certainly never get bored in heaven; you won't miss your TV, and your kids won't remember what a video game means. There will be more to see and do than we ever imagined here on earth, enough to stimulate our minds for eternity.

We'll be able to trace our family tree right back to Noah and Adam. We will be able to personally visit with many of the people we've only read about before (Matthew 8:11). I look forward to

talking with Moses and understanding more fully how he played a role in God's great plan!

Furthermore, God and His angels will be there to answer many of the questions that have perplexed us here for 6,000 years; we'll probably have questions we didn't even know there were to ask! We will also have an endless list of fascinating things to study. Perhaps Shakespeare said it best when he wrote: "There are more things in heaven and earth ... than are dreamt of in your philosophy?"

Animals in Heaven

One of the great benefits of this utopian ecosystem will be that animals will not prey upon one another for food. We are told that "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox" (Isaiah 11:6, 7). And further, "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 65:25).

Obviously, this means quite literally that there'll be pets in heaven. In fact, every animal could potentially be a pet because none of them will be wild; they will not be afraid of us, nor us of them.

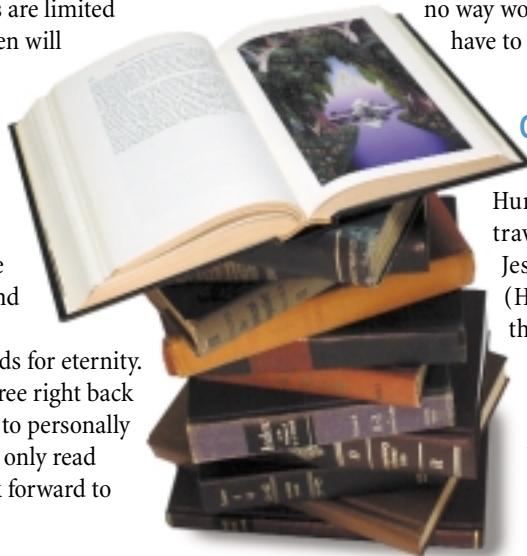
God does everything perfectly, and in heaven, everyone will find complete love and happiness—including companionship with God's other creatures.

People often wonder whether their pets and furry friends from earth will be with them in heaven. Some say this is impossible because animals don't have immortal souls, much less souls. However, this isn't a hindrance at all. Humans don't have immortal souls either; only God has unconditional immortality (1 Timothy 6:13–16). He will bless His people with immortality as a gift of His grace at the end of the age (2 Timothy 1:10).

So if the all-powerful God of the universe wants to surprise and delight us with the gift of resurrected kittens, puppies, horses, fish, rabbits, birds, snakes, turtles, or whatever other critters we love on this earth, He is certainly able to do so! By granting this, in no way would He violate His moral absolutes. We'll just have to wait and see.

Celebrating With New Friends and Old Faces

Human exploration of the cosmos and space travel will know no limits. The Bible declares that Jesus created all the worlds seen and unseen (Hebrews 1:2). And the last time I checked, more than 200 billion suns have been photographed by California's 200-inch telescope. So it would seem plausible that we will find other inhabited worlds, visiting with other created beings! Isaiah 45:18 also says of our world,



“He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.” Those other solar systems must be “created not in vain.” They light a multitude of worlds.

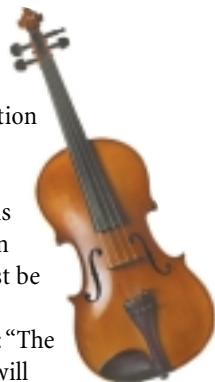
Another scriptural clue is found in Job 1:6. “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.” In Luke 3:38, Adam is called “the son of God.” It’s quite possible that the “sons of God” in that heavenly council meeting are the first created beings from other planets. Adam should have represented earth, but Satan usurped his birthright. Fortunately, the first Adam’s, and subsequently all of humanity’s, rights were bought back by the second Adam, Jesus (1 Corinthians 15). We cannot be positively sure that this is what the passage in Job refers to, but many in the Christian world agree this scenario is possible.

The Bible also assures us that the righteous loved ones we lost here on earth will be raised to join the living in God’s kingdom (Isaiah 26:19; 1 Corinthians 15:51–55; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18). Being reunited with the redeemed we loved here is undoubtedly one of the things we will enjoy the most. Imagine just how deeply moved you will be when a baby or child you lost will be brought to you and placed in your arms! And think about looking into the eyes of a parent, spouse, or close friend who passed away before you, and then embracing their vibrant, glorified bodies and knowing you will never need to part again!

Heavenly Music

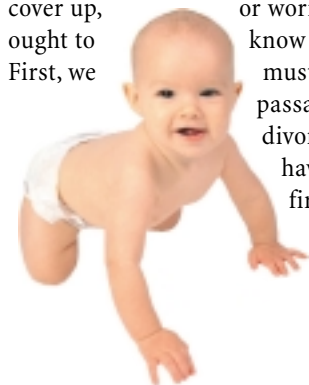
Thrilling music is often mentioned in connection with heaven, so you can be sure that playing instruments and singing God’s praises will be a big part of our eternal experience. Our Creator is one of immense diversity. I’m sure we’ll enjoy an endless variety of delightful music; we won’t just be limited to playing harps!

The Bible even says that God Himself will sing: “The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zephaniah 3:17). He also gives many instructions to sing, such as we see in Psalm 100:2. “Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.” It would make sense then that the angels who also worship Him would come before Him with singing too.



Marriage and Children in Heaven

Some find it disconcerting when Jesus says there will be no new marriages in heaven (Matthew 22:30). We shouldn’t deny, cover up, or worry over this important concept; He ought to know since heaven is His hometown. First, we must be careful not to assume this passage means that God will hand divorce papers to the redeemed who have harmonious marriages as they first enter the pearly gates. Knowing who God is, that He is the very essence of love, whatever type of relationships we have now will be



even more intimate and fulfilling than anything we have experienced here. I think we can trust in Him to plan something wonderful that will not disappoint us.

There also might not be any new births, but we know from the Bible that there will be children in heaven. Isaiah 11:6–9 describes heaven and mentions children several times. Malachi 4:2 says that we shall “grow up as calves of the stall.” This seems to indicate that the children of heaven will experience a physical maturing process going on as well as a spiritual one. Of course, we shouldn’t forget that no matter how “old” we get in heaven, we will be eternally young. We will never suffer the terrible effects of aging that we must endure on this corrupted earth!

Face to Face with God

Of course, the ultimate and culminating experience of heaven will be meeting our Creator God face to face. “Then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12). The book of Revelation comments: “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away’” (Revelation 21:3, 4). This is the God who created our world, and who created us in His image. He mourned when Satan tempted mankind to fall, and He’s also the one who rescued us through Jesus. His unsurpassed love moved Him to implement a perfect plan: to enter into our world, suffer the results of our sin as we do, and then to die for us. And now, as He makes preparations for us to go home, He longs to shine the way and fulfill all of our hopes.

God’s chosen people waited 4,000 years for the Savior to come the first time. That seemed like a terribly long time, and many lost hope.

But He did come. It’s a historical fact.

And if He came the first time, according to His promise, we have no reason to doubt that He will come again just as He says He will. He isn’t like a conqueror of empires who promises glory only to become a tyrannical despot. And He isn’t like a politician of today, making countless promises He cannot keep.

He is true to His Word. He will do what He says. Always has.

You can count on it.

Heaven Begins Now

Until then, rejoice knowing that we don’t have to wait to experience all the benefits we’ll have in heaven. “Peace on earth, good will toward men” is not just a “pie in the sky” that the angels sang about. Knowing what lies ahead, that our future is secure in God’s hands, we can have a powerful sense of joy and peace right here and now. Even though we won’t see peace among the nations on this earth, we can still have peace in our hearts amidst the chaos.

For those who make contact with God in a personal way today, heaven begins now. God becomes the Friend who never

Continued on page 11.



Let It Shine

2001 AFCOE Students Graduate

by Anthony Lester



Walking into the Orangeville church where Brian McMahon is presenting an Amazing Facts seminar, it's impossible not to feel the warm spirit permeating the atmosphere. And this warmth hits suddenly because of the sad, cold news I just heard on the car radio—another plane crash and more deadly fighting in Afghanistan. They are just two more signs that the world is buckling under the weight of darkness. It's depressing. "Lord," I pray, "this world needs your light so much." I'm not even that sure I want to be here anymore.

But that feeling changes almost instantly. They greet me with warm smiles; firmly shake my hand and welcome me to the meeting. Their eyes are eager, even full of hope despite months of constant bad news in the world. It's clear they are happy to be here. They don't want to be anywhere else; what's more, they want me to be there too. They don't even know who I am, but it doesn't matter. They've greeted me like I'm their friend.

And many other seekers of truth, believer and non-believer, are drawn here by that same warmth. Repeat visitors are pleasantly surprised when they are called by their first names, and they are touched by the genuine concern and love expressed to them by these strangers. Indeed, it is evidence enough that God has heard my prayer.

This was my first look at Amazing Facts College of Evangelism (AFCOE) students—the class of Fall 2001. They are an odd assortment of people from very different backgrounds. It's easy to believe that if not for AFCOE, these students would have never met one another. But they do have something in common here, a powerful attraction that pulled them from all across America: a desire to learn more about the Bible and then go shine that light to the world.

The Graduates

The gospel is the greatest uniter of peoples, and these AFCOE graduates exemplify that truth. Each of the Fall 2001 students has a story to tell. Some closed down their own businesses in an effort to serve God full time through missionary or Bible work, while others have simply come to know more about the Bible and perhaps share that knowledge better with close friends and family. Most important, each one has established a deeper relationship with God as their faith has been strengthened through rigorous Scripture study.

Most of these students were not Bible experts before arriving, much less Bible teachers. But now, many of them are prepared to go and serve churches in need of qualified Bible teachers. These students have recognized that the world is beginning to shudder under the constant strain of 6,000 years of sinful human nature. They asked themselves, "If not now, when? If not me, who?" Here

are only a few stories of how they answered this question, where they came from, and where they will take their light.

Finding New Direction Through Bible Knowledge

Ben Vanfossen traveled to AFCOE in Roseville, California, from Colorado. He first heard of the program after attending an Amazing Facts seminar in 2000. Ben was so impressed with the knowledge presented at the meetings that he went to the ministry's Web site, where he found information on AFCOE.

Though raised a Christian, Ben fell away from the church through a worldly lifestyle. With a well-paying job as an electronics salesman, a steady girlfriend, and many friends, his heart's yearning for truth was repeatedly quelled. But after a powerful dream about Christ's return, the Holy Spirit finally convicted him, and he began to ask himself what he'd done with a life without solid goals; he couldn't think of one righteous thing he had done in five years.

AFCOE has helped him find that direction: a life serving his faith. He insists that God's perfect timing got him away from the depths of a strained life and into AFCOE. After his turnaround, many friends abandoned him. But undeterred, he searched for the means and a path to go to AFCOE. He applied and was accepted, but a 13-month lease kept him from moving forward.

But praise God! Someone agreed to take the apartment from Ben, which freed him to pursue his new dream. Though he had to let many things go to follow it fully, Ben knew that God would always provide a way for him. He was motivated and ready for the big change.

Ben expected an abundance of knowledge and work when he arrived at AFCOE, and that's exactly what he got. "The special guests have been awesome," he says. "They have so much knowledge; you aren't going to get anything like this anywhere else." But he found even a greater gift waiting for him: personal outreach. The school's "outreach has been a great blessing. It's the best part of AFCOE."

Ben and other students witnessed and answered questions at Brian McMahon's series. They visited homes and had Bible



studies with those who requested personal visits. Ben is pleased with the tools that the school has provided for him to reach others with his newfound knowledge. "They cover every aspect of evangelism; it's wonderful!"

He also feels that the unity between him and other students has helped him spiritually and with his class work. "Every Christian should go through this course. The knowledge is superior. It has helped my personal relationship with Jesus." Ben is now preparing for full-time work as a Bible worker and church planter.

A Marriage Sharing a Passion

Many married individuals attend the school while their spouses work to support the family. Even this requires a great amount of sacrifice. Furthermore, the intensive course doesn't really allow time for students to work; they are immersed in Bible learning and sharing from the start.

That's why Delbert and Ruth Douglass' decision to attend AFCOE together is so exceptional. Their faith has been tested from the beginning—financially and personally. But through the hardships, it is easy to see that the sacrifice has been worth it.

After an injury that kept Delbert from regular work, an event they believe was divine providence, the couple heard about AFCOE through Amazing Facts promotional material. Since being married, the couple has always wanted to do evangelistic work, and AFCOE was an important step in reaching that goal. However, struggle with debt and other life issues made the prospect of attending doubtful. But with constant prayer and faith, God provided a way for them. They soon found themselves at the AFCOE doorstep ready to learn more about the Bible's most treasured doctrines.

For them, special instruction in personal evangelism by humble and faithful teachers has been the greatest benefit. "Annie has such a wonderful closeness to God. She shows how to relate to people and reach their hearts." They have also enjoyed the unifying spirit associated with AFCOE. "We do a lot of praying together and sharing together," says Delbert. Such closeness is hard to find elsewhere.

The impact on other facets of their lives has been invaluable. Ruth believes that the program has strengthened their marriage. "Because we often study together, our bond is definitely stronger." The Lord has blessed this couple throughout their experience, providing for them at every turn. Now they step out in faith to become Bible workers for Jesus. "Our purpose is now to form a team to fight for souls." They ask for your prayers and continued support in their new mission.

They feel that anyone who wants to pursue a similar dream should contact Amazing Facts. Delbert believes that one of the greatest mission fields is America, next door or at work. "Churches are realizing we need a great change in our country." Delbert knows AFCOE can help meet this need.

"We wouldn't trade this for anything. We couldn't get this anywhere else."



The AFCOE Mission

In response to supporters' and friends' earnest longing to be used by God to share the gospel in mighty or even small ways, Amazing Facts staff prayed for direction in meeting this growing need.

Ministry leaders felt called to place the best resources into the minds and hands of those desperately wanting wide-ranging Bible knowledge. They wanted the best teachers and methods for effective and permanent results. So they designed a comprehensive curriculum to not only transmit a wealth of knowledge into a four-month program, but also show how to share that truth with others. The answer: The ministry established its College of Evangelism in 2000.

Through this hands-on and intensive approach, AFCOE has helped students become effective Bible workers, bringing many to the knowledge of soul-saving news of Jesus. Some even plan to continue their educations at Bible-based universities.

From the beginning, the evangelistic school has provided direction, renewed vigor, and even changed lives for those in pursuit of Bible truth. Interim Director Annie Kjaer says, "AFCOE is a place for students to rediscover the Bible message and then go share that with others." The school provides students the chance to make a difference in the lives of family, friends, and neighbors—here and abroad—where once they were unsure how to share their faith without alienating loved ones or strangers.

The school benefits from seasoned teachers, such as Robb Long and Brian McMahon, an Amazing Facts Evangelist. Special guests are also a mainstay of learning, including preeminent Bible teachers from around the country. These include Mark Finley, president of It Is Written ministries; Herbert E. Douglass; and Doug Bachelor, director/speaker of Amazing Facts.



Graduation: Passing the Torch

Graduation ceremonies were held on December 8, a day for memories that evoked laughter and tears. Though these new warriors for Christ will miss each other and the family-belonging inherent at AFCOE, a greater work waits for them. Whether back at home, planting a new church in another state, or doing missionary work in Africa, this family of students now prepares to go their separate ways and put their newfound knowledge and spirit into the Lord's work.

In future issues of *Inside Report*, you'll be able to read more exceptional stories behind this graduating class. You'll see their struggles and triumphs in getting here, and most important, you'll see how AFCOE changed their lives. Of course, all this would be impossible without your support. Though students pay a small tuition, your support has enabled Amazing Facts to craft AFCOE into an incredible tool for reaching souls all around the country and the world.

And there is always a place for you at AFCOE. If you feel that God is leading you to take a step, please call Amazing Facts for more information.



AMAZING FACTS GOES CANADIAN



On October 1, 2001, Amazing Facts announced the formation of Amazing Facts Canada. This unique organization is incorporated in Canada at the federal level, which enables donors in all Canadian provinces to make charitable donations to Amazing Facts and receive a tax deduction for their income tax. All Canadian donors will receive a charitable deduction receipt for this purpose.

This is just the first step to growing the ministry's presence in Canada. Amazing Facts already conducts several outreach meetings each year in Canada, most recently in British Columbia, and hopes to begin broadcasting on Canadian airwaves in the future. The ministry believes this step shows our great appreciation for the significant number of supporters from Canada helping Amazing Facts reach the world with the gospel.

Brad Thorpe is the president and chairman for Amazing Facts Canada, with Allen Hrenyk as acting secretary treasurer.

For more information about Amazing Facts Canada and/or to make charitable donations, please write to: Amazing Facts Canada • Box 344 • 125A-1030 Denman Street • Vancouver, BC V6G 2M6.

BIBLEUNIVERSE.COM WITNESS



If you've already explored BibleUniverse.com, then you know what a great Internet resource it is. It is a no-pressure environment designed to give any user, believer or non-believer, the tools to study and learn more about the Bible.

But what about those who haven't discovered the site? Do you want a quick and easy way to direct them to BibleUniverse without scrambling for pen and paper?

Amazing Facts introduces our new BibleUniverse witnessing cards. This simple yet effective tool will remind friends, family members, co-workers—just about anybody—to expand their universe when logging on to the Net.

These colorful, eye-catching cards are a great but inexpensive way to help spread the gospel message to those around you. You'll get a set of 100 for just \$6.00. Call our order department at 800.538.7275 for more information and get your hands on these powerful little witnessing cards.



Though we realize that tax deductions are not a primary consideration when you give, we want to remind you that all gifts to Amazing Facts are tax-deductible for federal income-tax purposes. All donations for 2001 tax returns must be postmarked by December 31, 2001. Thank you for supporting Amazing Facts in 2001!



Amazing Facts' Gary Gibbs, senior vice-president, and Charles Lawson, media editor, visited three countries in Central and West Africa from October 26 to November 11, 2001. The purpose was to finalize plans for the major satellite evangelism effort called Hope for a Hemisphere, scheduled for March and November of 2002.

Planning meetings were held with church leaders in the East African Indian Ocean Division, and in Abidjan and the Ivory Coast. They also met with mission leaders in Accra, Ghana, and Younde, Cameroon.

The local church there is very supportive and excited about Amazing Facts working in Africa next year. And they should be—after all, the ministry will be contributing 422,000 Bible study sets (20,000 arrived in Accra, Ghana, during the visit), conducting 26 simultaneous evangelistic meetings in Ghana in March, and holding a massive satellite evangelistic effort in Cameroon in November.

This entire effort is entirely beyond the local church's means to accomplish on its own with its very limited budget. Most pastors make only \$100 a month, and the average worker makes just \$1.00 a day. But with our resources and God's blessing, the local church hopes to baptize 100,000 souls.

Satellite evangelism really works in Africa. The local church receives the broadcast signal in their language and projects the image on a big screen or the side of the church. It is not uncommon for a church of 400 members to have 1,200 visitors during satellite meetings. Word spreads fast in rural communities! The villagers will hear the music well before the sermon starts and will be drawn to the downlink site out of curiosity.

We're helping put on a program of unprecedented scale! Amazing Facts will be picking up the majority of the cost for this effort. The local churches will purchase the satellite and projectors. We're now looking for people to help these churches fund the necessary equipment for each site. Cameroon has only eight downlink sites in the country, and we've challenged them to plan for 200 more.

We are moving ahead by faith, believing that the funds will be there when they are needed. Help us put the financial foundation under this dream. We ask that the Amazing Facts family pray about the part each one can play in making Hope for a Hemisphere a reality.



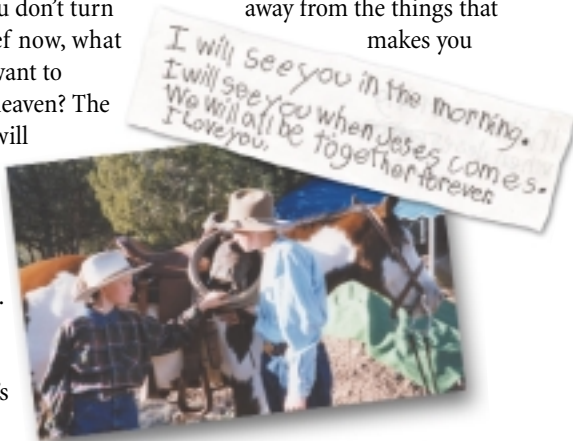
Continued from page 7.

forsakes us; the Counselor with all the answers to our questions, and the Partner in all our endeavors. He cleanses us from all sin, and when we ask, He also imparts the power we need to transform our sin-filled lives. That's the kind of heaven we can live in right now.


Blessed Reality

You see, a perfect world would be pure misery for anyone whose heart was not converted—who didn't learn on earth to love what God loves. If you don't turn away from the things that cause Him grief now, what makes you think you will want to please Him in heaven? The Judgment Day will not be a time when God confers a sentence on hapless victims. Ultimately, God always honors our choices; He's not a tyrant. Never has been.

When my boys were 9 and 13, their father was laid to rest in a tiny graveyard in a remote area of New Mexico. Since he'd been a cowboy, a friend led a horse to the graveside the day we buried him.



The empty saddle symbolized the emptiness our hearts felt. Yet even in the grief of that day, my youngest found a scrap of paper and wrote a message to his dad. I still treasure that little piece of paper—on it he wrote, "I will see you in the morning. I will see you when Jesus comes. We will all be together forever. I love you."

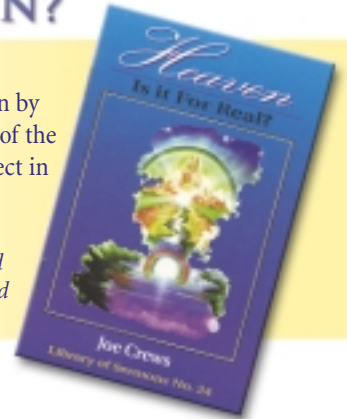
I'm incredibly grateful for the blessing of the truly utopian new world order to come. Don't you want to be there? Let's press on together, looking forward to that morning when our blessed hope becomes a blessed reality. 

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT HEAVEN?

Heaven: Is it For Real?

This informational booklet written by Joe Crews gives a further glimpse of the wonderful things that we can expect in our future home. Only 85¢ each*

*Add \$4.00 minimum for shipping and handling. California residents must add 7 percent sales tax.



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or shop online at
www.amazingfacts.org

CHANGED IN A DAY

By Bonnie Ensminger

With the tragic events of September 11 still weighing heavily on the minds and spiritual lives of Americans, Amazing Facts partnered with other ministries to make New York City a focal point of prayer and effort. The ministry joined hands with It Is Written ministries and Three Angels Broadcasting Network on November 18 to present an uplifting outreach called "Changed in a Day."

Two weeks prior to this inspirational program, Pastor Louis Torres commissioned scores of young volunteers to scour New York City to invite its citizens to this special event at the Manhattan Center, which was also the site of the successful NET'99 series.

The Three Angels network broadcast the program live around the world via satellite. Church leaders and speakers welcomed an audience of about 2,500 people with special words of hope and comfort. And Mark Finley of It Is

Written presented a powerful message from the life of Moses. It was an awesome gathering of the church for a people in need. The highlight of the evening came when Pastor Doug recognized some of the heroes of the terrorist attack, including rescue workers, firefighters, and paramedics.


Two of these heroes, Brian Gordon and Brian Smith, were injured when the first

tower collapsed, and their truck was smashed by one of the turbine engines from the airplane. But Brian was able to crawl to the truck's radio, which was miraculously still operating, and radio for help. They then carried out an injured man and evacuated more than 200 people from an adjacent building.

The evening included songs of salvation and patriotism by Kelly Smith Mowrer, Jaime Jorge, and others. Jennifer LaMountain performed "Together We Will Stand," as a dedication to the rescue workers in attendance.

The event concluded with hundreds of souls responding to the altar call, and more than 400 seekers requested further Bible studies! As Pastor Doug Batchelor said, "Just as the 9/11 tragedy changed the political, economic, and social complexion of the world, the power of the gospel can also change lives in one day."

"Changed in a Day" will be followed by ongoing seminars such as grief recovery, financial success, and stress reduction. These simple but practical programs will help in all areas of life—and best of all, they are free!

Amazing Facts thanks you for your part in this successful effort of reaching souls for Jesus. 



MEET THE TEAM OF *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



Gary Gibbs



John Bradshaw



Richard Calderon



Rich Cavaness



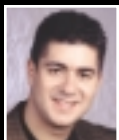
Byron Corbett



Eric Flickinger



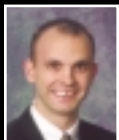
Lowell Hargreaves



Jaime Jorge



Brian McMahon



Jason Morgan



Jack Pefley



Dennis Priebe



Verne Snow

Doug Batchelor

January 11
Pacific Union College
PUC Church
Angwin, California

John Bradshaw

January 11 – February 9
Tacoma Southside Church
2030 South 94th Street
Tacoma, Washington

Rich Cavaness

January 11 – February 9
Alameda Church
1515 Verdi Street
Alameda, California

Eric Flickinger

January 11 – February 16
Guntersville Town Hall
325 Gunter Avenue
Guntersville, Alabama

Lowell Hargreaves

January 11 – February 16
Days Inn Conference Center
1900 I-70 Drive SW
Columbia, Missouri

Brian McMahon

January 11 – February 9
Best Western
2620 Buck Owen's Blvd.
Bakersfield, California

Jason Morgan

January 12 – February 9
Dent Elementary School
1998 Yosemite Ave
Escalon, California

Jack Pefley

January 7 – January 11
Ponotah Civic Center
Ponotah, Nevada

January 12 – 17
The Oasis
Pahrump, Nevada

January 18 – February 15
St. George University
Cedar City, Utah

Dennis Priebe

January 5
Campion Park Church
San Jose, California

Vern Snow

January 11 – February 16
Palmer Church
Inner Springer Loop
Palmer, Alaska

PLEASE NOTE: If you would like to schedule an Amazing Facts evangelistic series or a weekend of revival meetings at your church, please contact the evangelism department at Amazing Facts by phone or mail.

BIBLE Answers

with Pastor Doug Batchelor

Answers Bible Ans
s Bible Answer
Answers



Will we recognize our loved ones in heaven?

I'd like to address this question with asking another question. When the saved get to heaven, will their perceptions and observations be better or worse, dull or enhanced? Obviously, it's going to be better.

The Lord says that "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Corinthians 13:12). So our loved ones will know us, and we will know our loved ones. We won't have to walk around and take fingerprints in heaven to identify them, for we will have an enhanced knowledge.

When a baby sins, is it because of his or her own sin or Adam's inherited sin?

A baby is not born with a sinful record, but every human is born with a sinful nature. We all have sinful tendencies. This question really might be addressing the concept of original sin.

This is kind of a loaded question, because a baby is obviously not born with a sinful record. If a baby in a Christian family should die, those parents will see that baby in the resurrection. But if the baby lives on, we know what happens. The Bible says, "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23). Now this means committed sin. That baby, eventually, will understand the difference between right and wrong and choose wrong because that's what our sinful nature leads us to do.

Some have also wondered what the age of accountability is, and some churches have attempted to set an age. But the Bible is not specific on this subject. However, in the wilderness experience, those who did not believe perished in the wilderness—and this

included anybody that was 20 years or older. I don't believe you could fight in the army until you were 20 years of age.

And in the Jewish culture, a boy is considered a man when he turns 12. He can go to the temple and participate in the services. So I would conclude that accountability is somewhere between 10 and 20, the age in which a young man or woman becomes accountable for sin. Incidentally, this would also be an appropriate age for baptism, because the Lord wants us to know what we're committing to. The Bible says that to be baptized, a person needs to repent, confess, accept, believe, be taught; and a baby can't do that. But a young child, somewhere between 10 and 15, begins to comprehend those things.

People often wonder about Jesus' state as a baby as well, so it's important that I address that too. He was born with a clean record—and every baby on entrance into this world is sparkling clean as far as the record of sin. We're born selfish creatures.

Jesus was born with the same potential to sin that you and I wrestle with. That's why the Bible says He was "tempted in all points, even as we are." The only difference is: He didn't sin. That's why He can be our High Priest and our Advocate. He, through trusting the Father and by the grace of God, never did sin even though He was tempted just as we're tempted.

But He was not born some kind of superman—immune to any kind of contamination. He knew what it was like to wrestle with temptation, but He never gave in, giving us an example that if He could overcome by trusting the Father, we can overcome by trusting Him.

In essence, the Bible does not teach the concept of original sin. We are all responsible for our own actions.

Some people say that when we're in heaven, we'll be wearing robes of light. Is this biblical?

The Bible does talk about angels that appear to be clothed with light, but nowhere in the Bible will you find the words "robes of light." Let's go back to Eden to get a clear picture of what it may be like for us in heaven.

There is a major misconception that Adam and Eve were streaking around the Garden of Eden—naked like a new-born baby! But in reality, Adam and Eve had garments of light that clothed them—an aura of light if you will—because they were righteous and they dwelled in the presence of God.

Here's another example: When Moses spent 40 days and 40 nights on the mountain talking to the Lord, he came down and was glowing. Exodus 34 says he was shining so brilliantly that the people said, "Veil your face. We can't even look on you." So those who dwell in the presence of the holy God, those who are righteous, are surrounded by an aura of light.

Jesus said to the church, "You are the light of the world." I don't believe the Lord is going to have cotton robes, or linen robes, or wool or camel for robes in the kingdom. When Adam and Eve sinned, the light went out and then they were aware of their nakedness. They had no artificial clothing in the garden; that's why it says they were naked. But they weren't streaking around and suddenly realized it after eating the fruit. That would make it sound as though the fruit actually made them smarter.

In the kingdom, when it talks about the saints who have these robes, we believe that these are "living" robes of light. It's similar to what the angels wear—the angels of light. I don't think there are weaving looms spinning in heaven.

Tune in Sunday nights to *Bible Answers Live*, Pastor Doug's live, nationwide call-in radio program. You'll hear biblical, straightforward answers to difficult Bible questions. To request a free program guide detailing times and stations, write or phone Amazing Facts. You can also visit our Web site at www.amazingfacts.org.

Pastor Doug uses **QuickVerse**® Bible-search software during *Bible Answers Live*. This dynamic resource enables you to simplify your biblical research with powerful searching capabilities, an easy-to-use interface, and innovative options for expansion and personalization—all at an extremely affordable price. Find it at www.quickverse.com.



ONE NIGHT OF YOUR LIFE: Helping Believers Help Their Friends

by Bonnie Ensminger

Friendship evangelism took on new meaning for those attending the Amazing Facts "One Night of Your Life" seminar. Held at the beautiful Spokane Opera House in Washington, this one-night-only gathering—filled with music, testimony, and preaching—equipped believers to bring close friends and family to a saving relationship with Jesus.

The local church prepared for six months, helping willing members to be successful ministers of the gospel.

Advanced promotion also enabled attendees to bring a close friend in need of good news. Believers were able to give their friends a copy of *The Richest Caveman* and introduce them to Doug Bachelor and Amazing Facts.

The free event drew a tremendous response! Nearly 3,400 people attended, with 800 requesting special prayer. And 175 seekers requested follow up with Bible studies! In addition, scores of new friendships were initiated as many caught the vision to reach out to those dearest to them. Only eternity will tell the harvest of this planted seed!


Acclaimed vocal artist Wintley Phipps, who's performed for presidents and on national television, brought his beautiful music to

the night's event. Many were also inspired by his powerful testimony. Eight-year-old Lorelei Sinco, a member of the Children of the World Choir, also lent her incredible talents.

Pastor Doug presented his testimony with slide illustrations of how the Lord got his attention long ago in that lonely cave. He concluded with a powerful and moving invitation for those attending to take the next step to build a deeper commitment to the Lord.

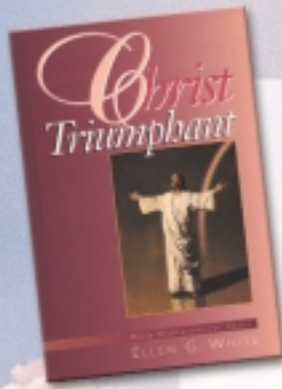
Continued support of new believers and further equipping of the friends who led them to Jesus are planned as important follow-ups to the program. Pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to touch the lives of seekers and encourage new members of the faith. With the Spirit's power, this outreach could touch the lives of hundreds of lost souls in Spokane and beyond.

One attendee enthusiastically summed up her enjoyment of the program: "Tell Pastor Doug that if he ever wonders if he is accomplishing anything, he is making a difference in my life. And I tell all my friends, 'Just listen to what the man is preaching. Just listen!'"

Without your help, we could have not reached out to Spokane, nor could we reach anywhere else. Thank you so much for helping Amazing Facts spread the good news to Washington and abroad. Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we move forward in faith! 



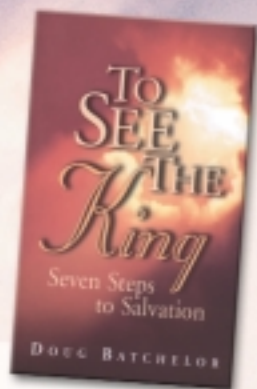
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Grace Baker from Penny Miller

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Darrell and Dee Corvin from William and Agnes Garrison

Newton Craig, MD from Roberta Craig

Joe Crews from Mary Darnell; from Windell and Hilda Smith

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