

July 2000

AMAZING

Inside Report **FACTS**

FREE

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SIN



LETTERS

Getting Up an Hour Earlier

Please send me your Amazing Facts *Inside Report* and Study Guides #9 and #10. I found your program on TV by mistake and now get up an hour earlier to watch and learn. Keep up the great job.

HH
Tennessee

I Would Not Change a Thing

I just got this Amazing Facts magazine today, and I love it! It's good reading. I would not change a thing, but maybe you could make it bigger.

BH
Alabama



Now I Must Teach

Thank you for allowing my wife and me to participate in your Bible Correspondence School. Now I would like to teach your course in the church I pastor. Many changes must be implemented regarding the Sabbath day and its power. I must teach them as you have taught us.

MF
Virginia

Changed My Life

I can't express how thankful I am for your *Millennium of Prophecy* seminar. Those tapes have really changed my life! Since hearing you teach, I have quit smoking, stopped using drugs, and have felt the urge to be baptized. I also have begun to read the Bible more and more. Your lessons have really opened my eyes and helped me to see and appreciate all that the Lord has done and is continuing to do for me.

JS
Michigan



One of the Best

In March we had the privilege of having John Quade do a seminar in Hemphill, Texas. He is an outstanding young man, and his presentation was one of the best we have attended. His method of presenting is sincere and powerful.

J&HS
Texas

Understanding God and the Bible

Please send me Study Guide #10 on the dead. Thank you *very* much for your program. It has given me much help in being able to understand God and the Bible in a very positive way. I actually know what the Scriptures mean now, where—as before I would read some things and go “Hmmm ... What does this mean?” Thank you again—and most of all, I thank God!

DH
Alabama



Part of the Family of God

Thank you, Pastor Batchelor, for shining the light and love of God into my life. The *Millennium of Prophecy* seminars enlightened my Christian walk with Jesus, making me feel like a part of the heavenly family with God.

LY
Alberta, Canada

Fascinating and Intriguing

Your article “Hath Hell No Fury?” [May 2000 issue] is incredible. The most controversial topic in the Christian world is made clear in simple and understandable words. I've found the analysis given on the rich man and Lazarus to be so fascinating and intriguing. Please keep on explaining such sensitive but important issues.

TM
Texas



Wonderful!

Today is the first time I have ever heard your program. I was driving home tonight and found your program on the radio. I listened all the way home and even when I came inside my home. I wrote down your Web address and have been on the Web site now for about two hours, reading and listening to everything. I love this program. It has answered so many questions and taught me so much. I will listen to you on the radio and TV and again on the Web.

DS
via e-mail

Again Active in the Church

I was “out of the fold” for awhile. Your ministry influenced my life for good, and I am again active in the church.

AP
California

Cover photos by Baron Williams

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BY EDITOR
DEBRA J. HICKS

Losing Your Mind?

At one time I thought that “losing your mind” was a rare condition triggered by something extraordinarily dreadful, like seeing someone murdered.

But today it no longer appears to be the exception to the rule; in fact, it’s practically the norm! I’m astounded by the lengths to which many people will go in order to deliberately “lose” their minds. Ask an alcoholic why he drinks, and most likely he’ll tell you that it’s the best way he has found to drown his troubles. Ask a drug user why she dishes out hundreds of dollars a month for crack cocaine, and she’ll admit that she wants to escape some overwhelming fear or pain. Ask a world champion snowboarder why he risks his life and limbs on formidable white-capped mountains, and he says it’s because snowboarding gives him a few precious minutes in which his mind is absolutely clear of everything except the task at hand.

In an attempt to escape some harsh reality, thousands are resorting to drugs, hypnosis, or even suicide. However, even those of us who have had sense enough to avoid those self-destructive pitfalls are probably guilty of another type of mental anarchy. My friend Robert calls it “going unconscious.” It’s what happens when a person lets his mind wander wherever it pleases.

You’ve experienced it if you’ve ever been on your knees and then suddenly realized that instead of talking to God, you were planning what to do once you get to the office. Or if your daughter was telling you about her trip to the lake and you “woke up” to the realization that she just asked you a question and you weren’t really listening. Or maybe, while the pastor was making an excellent point, you were busy trying to remember whether or not you let out the cat before leaving the house.

I had never spotted the potential danger of “zoning out” until last summer, when Robert challenged a group of his friends to try monitoring their thoughts for a complete day (or even a couple of hours). What we soon began to realize is that by giving our minds free reign, we are unwittingly giving Satan an unguarded avenue to our souls. The Bible warns us about this ever-present danger when it says, “Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him” (1 Peter 5:8-9, NKJV).

God will rescue His errant children out of the lion’s mouth; He knows all too well that we’re no match for Satan. But He also knows that it is possible to ward

the enemy off at the pass, and in this text He shares the secret for success. Being “sober” and “vigilant” means remaining completely conscious in order to exercise the power of positive choices.

Something that has really helped me is to make a conscious effort to fill my mind with good things such as of prayer, songs, Scripture, and sermon tapes.

This sounds obvious, but you’d be amazed how much time you can waste on activities that keep your mind from turning toward God. For some people, the biggest time trap is television or movies. For others, it’s reading the newspaper, listening to radio tunes, or

By giving our minds free reign, we are unwittingly giving Satan an unguarded avenue to our souls.

surfing the Internet. In my family, table games are really popular and it’s not unusual for us to keep one or two by the table and play for an hour or so after supper. These activities aren’t inherently bad, but they *are* destructive if we give them all of our free time and claim that we’re “too busy” for God.

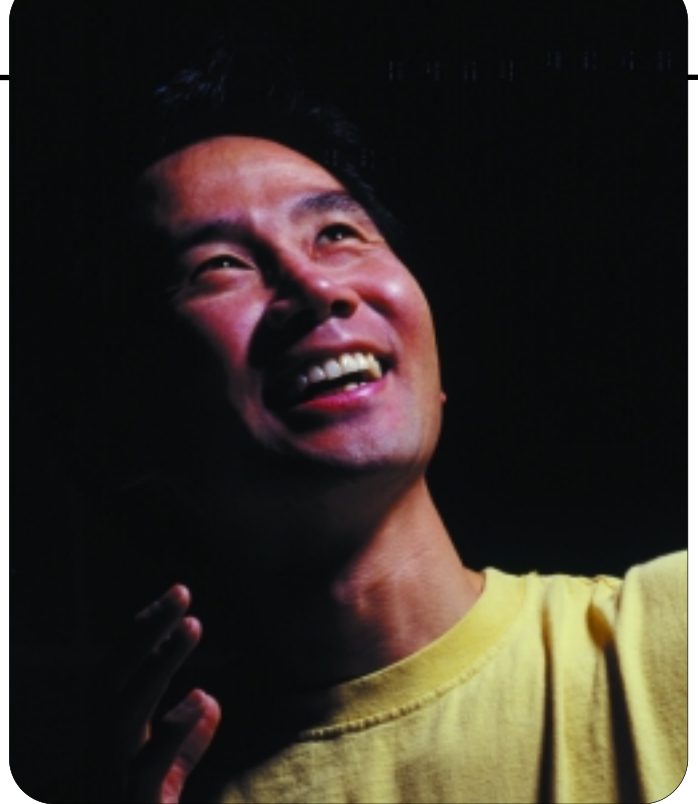
Once you make a commitment to focus your time and energy on things that are uplifting (Colossians 3:2), God starts to do amazing things in your life! Several years ago I decided to listen to Christian music every day of the week—not just on Sabbaths. In fact, I decided to take a break from secular music altogether. After two or three weeks, I realized that God was bringing certain Scripture songs to my mind all throughout the day, and especially when I needed it most. And my first thought in the morning after I’d awaken would be a song of praise to God. What an exciting way to begin each day!

The Bible says to “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21). If we don’t counteract our sinful natures by flooding our senses with good things, then we’re much more likely to become Satan’s prey. My favorite “prescription” for holiness is found in Philippians 4:8: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

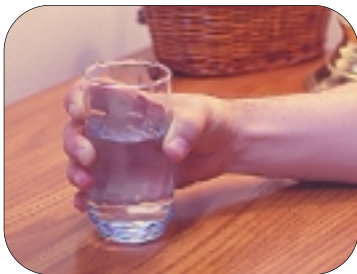


BY FOUNDER
JOE CREWS

FREE from SIN



Baron Williams



An Amazing Fact:

While under the influence of a light hypnotic trance, a man who submitted to a scientific hypnosis experiment was ordered to pick up a glass from the table. Although he was a strong, athletic type, the man could not budge the glass from its position. His most strenuous exertions could not lift the glass that was light enough for any child to remove.

Why could he not do it? Because the scientists, after placing him in the trance, had told him that it was impossible to pick up the glass. Because his mind was convinced that it could not be done, his body was unable to carry out the command to lift it. What a dramatic demonstration of the fact that no person can really obey commandments he believes are impossible to perform!

Does God Require the Impossible?

It is probably safe to say that the majority of Christians today are resigned to falling short of the moral law. In fact, they are quite satisfied that God doesn't expect them to fulfill that law completely, either in the flesh or in the spirit.

The effect of such a teaching is exactly what one would expect—multitudes of emotionally happy but disobedient church members who feel that any concern about keeping the Ten Commandments is nit-picking and legalistic.

What a delusive strategy of Satan! As the inventor of the doctrine, the evil one is simply supporting his ancient accusation that God was asking too much. He accused God of being unfair by requiring something that is impossible.

Think about it for a moment, and the entire scheme begins to make a lot of diabolical sense. Satan knows that sin is the only thing that will keep anyone out of heaven. Since sin is the "transgression

of the law" (1 John 3:4), he had to perfect a plan to make people look lightly upon breaking the law and also cause it to appear unobjectionable.

Unfortunately, it is possible to assemble Bible texts that seem to support the doctrine of spiritual imperfection. We are assured that all have sinned (Romans 3:23), that the carnal mind is enmity against God (Romans 8:7), and that all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). But all the verses about failure, sin, and defeat are in reference to the unregenerate experience of a person. There are literally scores of other texts that describe an opposite experience of total victory and sinless living. In every case they are referring to the Spirit-filled life of a converted, committed child of God.

This distinction must always be recognized in the reading of the Scripture. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation. His grace is stronger than all the concentrated forces of evil. Jesus came to save His people from their sins. In the sixth

chapter of Romans, Paul utterly devastates the doctrine that a believer should keep on falling into sin.

It is true that provision is made for cleansing in case sin is committed, but God's perfect plan made it possible for man to overcome every sin and to live a life of perfect obedience through Christ. No secret meaning or hidden reservation can be found in the myriad of texts that describe the victorious experience of the born-again child of God. And just because one may not have grown into that fullness of faith which brings constant victory, he should not, therefore, deny the power of God to give such deliverance.

Total Victory Promised

The Spirit of God seemed to anticipate the struggle many would pass through in accepting the biblical assurances of total victory. Consequently the inspired writers were moved to use almost fanatical language in describing the possibilities for overcoming sin. Instead of saying we may be saved, the Bible says we can be saved "to the uttermost" (Hebrews 7:25). Instead of saying we may conquer, it assures that we can be "more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37). Instead of being told that we can triumph, we are told that we may "always ... triumph" (2 Corinthians 2:14). Instead of promising whatever we might ask to help us in our spiritual battles, the Bible says He will give us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). And the verse just prior to that one clearly guarantees that we may "be filled with all the fulness of God" (verse 19).

Admittedly, many of these promises are too vast for our human minds to comprehend fully, but surely they are intended to impress us with the magnitude of God's resources in our behalf. If the language sounds exaggerated, it is only because we are too feeble in faith and too weak in the flesh to believe that such purity and sanctification could ever be fulfilled in us. We tend to trust our feelings quicker than the Word of God.

Is it important to believe the promises exactly as they read? Yes, because it is only through those promises that deliverance can be accomplished. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

The sequence of victory is plainly marked out in this fantastic text. By faith in the promise, we become a partaker of the divine nature, and through the power of that new nature in us we are able to escape the corruption of sin. In other words, everything depends on the surrender and commitment of one's self to the indwelling Spirit of Christ. "Without me," Jesus said, "ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Equally important is the inspired comment of Paul: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). That little expression "all things" is the key to victory for every one of us. It includes power over drugs, immorality, appetite, pride, and every act of sin that would rob us of eternal life.

All Things Available

The big point here is that when you get the power of Christ in your life, you have everything else you could ever desire. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). There is that term again—"all things." You will find it also in 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness ..."

When you put those texts together, an incredible picture emerges. By claiming the presence of Christ in your life, you also receive everything that Christ possesses. Paul described it this way: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Here the "all things" are broken down into very particular, individualized experiences, and we begin to see that Peter was right in stating that God has given us *all things* that pertain to godliness.

Every child of Adam needs two things desperately—forgiveness for the past, and power for the future. Redemption includes both of them. The idea that this includes full deliverance from the guilt of sin, but only partial deliverance from the power of sin, is a perversion of the gospel. Jesus did not come to save us from the consequences of sin only, but to save us from the sin itself. Salvation is not a negative thing—not just the absence of something. He did not come just to take away something (our guilt), but to give us something (victory over sin).

After thoughtfully reading the entire sixth chapter of Romans, if you need more assurance that victory can be yours, read the following:

1 Corinthians 15:57—"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 John 5:4—"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

1 John 3:6—"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not:



Allen Hrenyk

4 Steps to Glorious Victory

1. Have faith in the power God has promised (1 Corinthians 15:57).
2. Ask Him for victory over any specific sin (Matthew 7:11).
3. Act with assurance that you have been given victory (Romans 6:11).
4. Make no provision to sin again (Romans 13:14).

whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”

Let us return for a moment to the analogy of the hypnotized man. He could not physically lift a small glass from the table because his mind was so fully convinced that it couldn't be done. Has Satan been able to immobilize the church through the power of his hypnotic, lying assertion that obedience is impossible? It certainly seems so.

The Overcomers

To deny the possibility of total victory over sin is to rob Jesus of the glory of His mission. He came, the Bible says, to destroy the works of the devil. Those works are the works of sin. If no one claimed His power to overcome sin completely, the devil's accusation would be confirmed. The requirements of God would be exposed as too difficult to obey.

The book of Revelation identifies the crowning characteristic of the redeemed as obedience. “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

How significant it is that man's condition for remaining in Eden is also the condition for being restored to Eden. Anyone who believes obedience is unimportant should read again the dramatic story of Adam and Eve. A tiny, physical act of sin led to all the stark tragedy of the past 6,000 years. Those who are restored to that lost paradise will have demonstrated that they can be trusted with eternal life. Through faithful obedience in the face of death, they will have proven Satan's charges to be utterly false. Their steadfast loyalty will be an eternal guarantee of the security of God's restored dominion.

Right here we need to pause and consider an objection that is always brought against those who believe in total victory.

It goes something like this: If you believe it is possible to live without sinning, are you able to say that your own life is free from sin?

Although the question deserves an answer, it should be pointed out that the objection is not relevant to the issue. If the Bible establishes a truth, it should be received on the grounds of its inspired authority and not on the basis of the messenger's experience. If victory over all sin is possible through Christ, it is true whether the preacher has claimed it or not claimed it. Furthermore, the work of sanctification is a progressive, lifelong experience and can



Baron Williams

never be considered as finished in any given point of time. Even if one could be unconscious of any known sin, he could never boast of being sinless.

The claim might also be made that the doctrine of victory over sin is highly idealistic and too theologically complicated to be practical. But nothing could be further from the truth. Even a child can understand the simple faith-transaction of appropriating the promises of the Bible. There is not a habit or sin known to man that cannot be conquered through faith.

In the next few minutes you will be able to appreciate the beauty of this divine victory plan. You will learn how to stop smoking, cursing, overeating, gossiping, or committing any other sin. Let nothing distract you as you proceed to the next few paragraphs. It could be the turning point of your life and mean more than all the money in the world.

The Secret of Victory

At the very heart of victory are four simple scriptural steps that any believer may take in claiming God's power. Apply the formula to your own problem, and then take the four steps to glorious victory.

First: “But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57). Allow your mind to savor the fantastic message of these words. Victory is a gift! We do not earn it by our efforts or deserve it because of any supposed goodness. The victory will be given to us freely by Christ. He is the only one who has ever gained the victory over Satan, and if we ever possess the victory, it must come as a gift from Him.

Mighty power is stored within the promise to be fulfilled for all who claim it in faith. So few are willing to believe that the promised blessing becomes theirs the very moment they believe it!

God is waiting to honor your faith and to “supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). These assurances are so open-ended and unlimited that our minds are staggered by them. Why have we been so reluctant to apply for the provisions of grace? Why is it so hard to believe that God means exactly what He says? He will keep every promise.

Our *second* text says, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Matthew 7:11).

Is it a good thing to ask for victory over tobacco, or any other fleshly or moral evil? Of course it is! So you don't even have to ask if it is God's will! He has already told us in the Bible that it is His will to destroy the works of sin and the devil.

Here is the next question. How do we know we have the victory after we ask Him? Simply because He said we would have it. We know God does not lie. We can believe His promises.

Faith Makes It So

This brings us to the *third* text, found in Romans 6:11: “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The word “reckon” means to believe or to consider it done. The very moment we ask, we should accept the fact of fulfillment, thank Him for the gift, and act with assurance that it has been done. No kind of “proof” feeling or sign should be demanded or expected. The self-fulfilling power in the promise is released in response to faith alone.

Do you remember how Peter walked on the water? He asked Jesus if he could step out of the boat onto the raging sea, and Jesus told Peter to come. But how long did Peter do the impossible by walking on the water? The Bible says, “When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me” (Matthew 14:30).

In spite of Christ's assurance that he could safely walk on the water, Peter began to doubt the word of the Master. That is when he began to sink. As long as he believed the promise of Jesus and acted in faith, he was safe. When he doubted, he sank.

Like Peter, our faith could weaken. We might need to be reminded of our total dependence upon His strength, but this does not diminish the beautiful plan of God to impart power and victory through “exceeding great and precious promises” of the Bible. Without faith by the receiver, not even God's promises can be appropriated. The limits are clearly defined in the words of Jesus, “According to your faith be it unto you” (Matthew 9:29).

Now, what is the impossible thing as far as you are concerned? Whatever it is, Christ says, “Come to me. I will give you the victory.” As long as you believe that

you have been delivered, you will have the victory. It is as simple as that.

For some people the deliverance is so dramatic that they lose even the appetite for the sin. Tobacco addicts have sometimes been delivered from the craving, but *this is not the usual way* God does it. Usually the desire remains, but in the moment of temptation, the power to walk past the temptation springs forth from within. Faith accepts the fact of deliverance and constantly claims the victory, which is in the secure possession of the believer.

The final step to victory is described in our *fourth* text, Romans 13:14. “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” So strong is the confidence in the appropriated power of God that no consideration is given to falling under the power of that sin again. Under the old “trying” plan, provision was made to fail in most cases. Cigarettes were placed on a shelf, and the smoker said to himself, “I'm going to try never to smoke again, but if I don't make it, I know where they are.” However, under the “trusting” plan, we have no reason to fear failure on the grounds of human weakness. Victory does not depend on our strength, but on God's power. We might fail, but He cannot fail. Cigarettes are thrown away. All plans that might involve any degree of compromise are abandoned.

There it is, friend, in all of its simplicity. It works! If you are willing to be delivered, it works. Nothing will help the one who is not willing to give up the sin. But if you want it, it is there. Victory, power, deliverance—just reach out in faith and it is yours. Believe it and claim it this very moment. God wants you to be free.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article has been condensed from the book Is It Possible to Live Without Sinning? written by Amazing Facts founder Joe Crews.

Amazing Facts Sells Books and Tapes on This Subject

The Surrender of Self

Book by Joe Crews. **75 cents each**

Is It Possible to Live Without Sinning?

Book by Joe Crews. **75 cents each**

Conquering Inner Space—The Last Frontier

On video or audio tape by Doug Batchelor.
\$3.00 each audio; \$14.95 each video

The Overcomers

On video or audio tape by Doug Batchelor.
\$3.00 each audio; \$14.95 each video

*Add \$3.00 per order for shipping and handling.
California residents must add 7.25 percent sales tax.*



From the Inside

Annie Kjaer Is Assistant Director for Amazing Facts College of Evangelism

Annie Kjaer begins her new position as assistant director of the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism on July 1. Already she has been working closely with Gary Gibbs, the director of the college, to schedule teachers and to develop the curriculum.



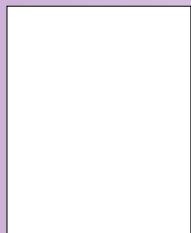
Once the College of Evangelism begins its first session on August 6, Annie will teach a vast array of courses, work closely with students, and coordinate the evangelism classes and outreach ministries.

For the past 10 months, she has been in New York City to nurture newly baptized members and to coordinate the follow-up programs for NET New York '99. In Manhattan she organized two follow-up evangelistic seminars, coordinated the work of four Bible workers, and helped plant a new congregation.

A Bible worker for six years, Annie has energized 25 churches with her enthusiasm for soul-winning. She worked extensively in South Dakota, Illinois, California, Kansas, and New York and helped on short-term projects in about 10 other states. For three years she assisted with 20 evangelistic meetings while traveling with her parents, Kim and Judy Kjaer, who have been part of the Amazing Facts evangelistic team since 1993.

Rob Long to Coordinate Outreach for the College of Evangelism

Rob Long is joining Amazing Facts on July 16 as outreach coordinator for the College of Evangelism.



He will teach several courses and plans to be involved in all phases of the students' learning experience.

Rob has a wealth of experience in evangelism. He has been a literature evangelist, pastor, and conference evangelist. Most recently he pastored a two-church district in southeastern Pennsylvania and led a team that started a new church group in Doylestown in the spring of 1999. Nearly a decade ago he assisted Gary Gibbs, who is now the ministry's assistant director, with a special project in Montgomery, Ala., and he also worked with former Amazing Facts Evangelist Robert Wagley.

Rob's wife, Christine, is a full-time homemaker and mom to their two daughters, 2-year-old Abby and 1-year-old Sara. She also enjoys giving cooking and nutrition seminars.

Amazing Facts College of Evangelism Recruits Jason Morgan as Instructor

As an instructor and outreach assistant for the new Amazing Facts College of Evangelism, Jason Morgan will teach several courses and will work personally



with students as they put the soul-winning principles learned in class into practice in real-world evangelism.

Since completing his training, Jason has traveled to Texas, California, New York, and Virginia, helping Amazing Facts evangelists during their crusades.

While doing Bible work in Sacramento last spring, he met Misty Parks, who was attending the Amazing Facts Field School of Evangelism. They were married in August of 1999 and are expecting their first child.

Although he was raised in the church, Jason says he was not converted until three years ago. He had tried to fill the void in his life with achievements in the Texas State Bodybuilding Championships, but nothing clicked until he saw videotapes of a crusade conducted by Joe Crews, the founder of Amazing Facts. Soon afterward he found his passion and true calling in public evangelism.

This Fall Doug Batchelor Will Hold First Sacramento Seminar in Six Years

On October 6, Pastor Doug Batchelor will launch an area-wide evangelistic seminar—his first live series in six years for the Sacramento area. The meetings are being sponsored by the Sacramento Central Church, where he is senior pastor.

Students attending the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism, a four-month program that begins in August, will be involved in the series from beginning to end. The meetings will give them a unique opportunity to see how advertising and media programming can work hand-in-hand to promote a series.

Churches in cities where Amazing Facts television and/or radio programs are broadcast often report that a number of their guests during an evangelistic series responded favorably to advertising because they were already familiar with the Amazing Facts name.

Bible Answers

With Pastor Doug Batchelor



Is there anything wrong with jumping and clapping in church?

The Bible tells us that all things should be done “decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). You have to ask yourself, “What would Jesus do? What would the angels do?” If you can’t picture Jesus jumping up and down in church, then I would question whether it was God’s Spirit prompting someone to do it.

I can picture Christians rejoicing. I think the Jews rejoiced as Jesus rode down the hill on the donkey, and they shouted “hosanna.” There is a time and place for rejoicing and clapping, but I don’t think it is in the sanctuary during formal worship. If the music is taking control of us, then it may not be the appropriate music.

There is sometimes a very thin line between the music of rejoicing and the music of the world. We have to be very careful. I’ve seen a lot of churches in which that line is crossed, in my opinion. If you’d like more information on this topic, I would recommend reading the book *Notes on Music* by Louis Torres, which is sold by Amazing Facts.

When in doubt, do the safe thing. If you’re questioning whether or not a certain activity is appropriate for glorifying God, then don’t do it.

What does the Bible say about women as elders or preachers?

God made men and women as equal creatures. I do not believe there is any distinction between men and women in their value to God and their accessibility to salvation. They’re both perfectly equal.

Furthermore, God ministers through both men and women. You read in the Bible both about men and women teaching and preaching, in the capacity of prophets and evangelists, or giving Bible studies as did Priscilla with her husband, Aquila (Acts 18:26).

However, there is no example in the Bible of a woman serving in the capacity of priest, pastor, or elder.

When Jesus chose the twelve apostles, I do not believe He was accommodating the traditions of the day when He selected only men. Several offices have a uniquely male symbolism. For example, the men were to be the priests of their families. That means

servant-leaders, not dictators or despots. Consider Moses’ family. Amram and Jochebed had three children: Miriam, Aaron, and Moses. All three were prophets. Their sons both served as priests, but Miriam did not. She was a prophetess, but not a priest. She led the women in prophetic songs and in teaching.

You read about Anna in the temple (Luke 2:36-37) and Deborah as a prophetess and a judge in Israel (Judges 4:4), but you never read of women offering a sacrifice. In the Bible, a priest is a male role because it symbolizes Jesus, our High Priest. A similar distinction was made for the Passover sacrifice. The Israelites were instructed to take a male lamb because it was a symbol for Christ.

God has distinctions in the family *and* in roles within the family. I don’t think these sexual identities evaporate when people walk through the doors of the church. It is an extension of the individual family unit.

There’s a lot of Scripture to support this: Ephesians 5:23-25; 1 Timothy 2:12; Titus 1:6; and 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, for example. I could indiscriminately give you piles of Scripture on this, but instead I encourage you to send for my article “Unisex in Jesus,” in which I’ve given a longer, more thorough explanation.

Who was Melchizedek?

Melchizedek is a king/priest who appears briefly in Genesis 14:18-20. Abraham was on his way back from a war with the kings of the north when he stopped to give tithe to the king of Salem. Although the Bible doesn’t tell us much about him, we know that Melchizedek was a servant of the true God. The city of Salem later was known as Jerusalem.

In the New Testament, Paul tells us that Melchizedek is a symbol for Christ, because he suddenly appears on the scene and then he disappears. There’s no lineage to tell us where he came from; this is like Christ, who is without beginning or end and who is our High Priest and King of the New Jerusalem.

Amazing Facts Sells a Book on This Subject

Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry

Mercedes H. Dyer, PhD. \$14.95 each

An in-depth look at the debate over women’s ordination as currently being studied in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Research and testimonies from 15 different authors provide answers to questions posed by advocates of the ordination of women as pastors and elders.



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BY SUE
DELONG

Never the Same Again!

Native Americans in New Mexico Embrace the Gospel

A series of Amazing Facts evangelistic meetings had been scheduled for the fall of 1999 in Gallup, N.M. However, no pastor was available to help the church prepare for this major event.

So in January 1999, the Texico Conference asked Gladstone Simmons and his wife, Hondina, to take on part-time pastoral duties at the Gallup All Nations Church. For Pastor Simmons, this would be in addition to his regular duties as the conference education superintendent. Believe it or not, he was willing!

Several things needed to be done in preparation for the crusade. First, the church needed to make arrangements for a meeting hall, since a meeting that begins in a neutral hall rather than in a church typically attracts three to four times as many visitors. Next, members needed to sell the old church property, install a parking lot on the new property, and construct a temporary baptistry in Hogan Center (the building where they meet for church). Last but not least, they had to carry out their part of the preparation work, organize for the actual crusade, and prepare mentally for the fact that the church would never be the same again!

During the two to three years prior to the crusade, this congregation's average Sabbath attendance was 10-25 individuals, including about six Native Americans. Gallup is the national headquarters for

the Navajo Indians and home to a large population of Apache, Zuni, and Hopi Indians.

Since several of the church members live up to 60 miles away, only a limited number were able to help out nightly in the crusade. One member, brother Ben Saiz, brought his RV and camped at the church on the nights of the crusade so that he could help out. He was a valuable team member in many ways. He and Sam Hubbard constructed the baptistry as directed by Pastor Simmons. A special thanks goes to them and to each member of the Gallup All Nations Church whose commitment and dedication helped to make the crusade a success!

On October 24, 1999, the Amazing Facts Prophecy Seminar began at the Best Western Inn and Suites in West Gallup with a little more than 200 visitors. The majority of those in attendance were Native Americans. They came night after night with a thirst for Bible truth.

Evangelist Steve DeLong emphasized the Bible and the Bible only as our authority, and the people responded to the clear and dynamic preaching of God's Word. Steve's wife, Sue, handled the registration and nearly everything behind the scenes. Their son, Trent, gave a beautiful concert on the second night of the meetings that was greatly appreciated and helped to significantly swell the crowd.

Photos courtesy of
Pastor Gladstone Simmons



So many people were baptized during the Amazing Facts Prophecy Seminar in Gallup, N.M., that it was impossible to fit them all into a single photograph! By the end of Evangelist Steve DeLong's seminar, 77 individuals had been baptized into the family of God. Five others were baptized this year, and several people are currently taking Bible studies.

When the meetings moved from the Best Western to Hogan Center, chairs were set up in every available space. More than 100 people crowded into an area designed for 70 at best (if you squeezed them in tight)! The Lord blessed, and people kept coming.

On November 20, the first eight persons were baptized. By November 27, there had been 72 precious souls baptized, with one rebaptism and one profession of faith. Included in that number were medical professionals, university professors, college teachers, construction workers, bankers, housewives, university and college students, a Pentecostal minister, a retired police officer, a social worker, and the wife of the Navajo Indian chief. Praise the Lord for what He has done in the community of Gallup and the surrounding area!

People drove to the meetings from up to 100 miles away. Literature was in high demand, and the church had to place additional orders because the supplies that were on hand ran out. On December 4, Pastor Simmons began a follow-up seminar to help ground the new members and to bring in others.

At a special meeting on Wednesday, November 24, it was thrilling to hear the newly baptized members (there are 83 to date—with many more to follow) tell how the Lord had brought joy and peace to their hearts for the first time in their lives.

Jewelry is very dear to most Native Americans, as many of them make a living by making and selling it. Yet when they heard and saw what the Bible said, the jewelry totally disappeared.

Jesus changed many lives during this seminar. Several couples, after learning from the Bible that just living together is not acceptable to God, now plan to marry and then be baptized.

One of the new members and his wife, Donald and Gloria Ray, work for a propane company and have already begun to help the church get the best discounts possible on propane gas. Several have made special commitments regarding Sabbath, and the Lord honored their faith. Although willing to put their jobs on the line, they did not lose their jobs. Praise the Lord!


The congregation's plans for the future include putting up a new building that will accommodate Sabbath-morning attendance, which multiplied six times in just five weeks. The church will also continue providing the numerous Bible studies that have been requested and baptize those who are still preparing for that important step in their lives, as soon as they are ready.

Since no pastor was found to take over for Pastor Simmons as the crusade was coming to a close, he and his wife were asked to consider staying on as the pastoral team of the Gallup district. It was a struggle, but they decided to stay.



Pastor Gladstone Simmons rejoices with new member Clinton Begay just after his baptism. The joy of seeing so many people accept God's glorious gift of salvation is what prompted Pastor Simmons to accept part-time pastoral duties at the Gallup All Nations Church in addition to his regular duties as the Texico Conference education superintendent.

Special thanks goes to the General Conference and the North American Division for allocating a portion of the mission offering to benefit the North American Division directly for Native American work. The cost of the evangelistic meetings was covered by those special appropriated funds. Gratitude also goes to Jim Stevens, president of the Texico Conference, for his vision of what God would do in Gallup if His people would do their part and get involved.

Last but not least, says Pastor Simmons, a special thanks goes to Amazing Facts for providing our world church with such quality evangelism. 



Dedicated church members gave Hogan Center a facelift before the meetings began by installing a new parking lot, landscaping the property, and making a myriad of improvements. Now Pastor Simmons says the building is too small to comfortably hold everyone who comes to worship there on Sabbath mornings.



Man in the Mirror

A Young DeeJay Is Transformed After Watching Videos

BY MICHAEL
HALFHILL

A young man took off his slacks and pulled on his swimming trunks. For a moment he paused, then a crooked smile flashed across his face as he glanced around at his surroundings. Pictures of Jesus hung on the walls. Voices were singing while the organ played in the next room. Shaking his head slightly in disbelief, he slipped the long blue robe over his head.

A young pastor named Jean Ross, who had been humming along with the music, helped the young man up the steps. A broad smile appeared on Jean's lips and was reflected in his eyes.

"Well, Michael, are you ready?" asked the pastor.

Michael lifted his head and looked at Jean. He returned the smile and said, "Yeah, I'm ready." Then both men stepped down into the warm water of the baptismal tank.



Michael's father, Lowell Halfhill, worked as a banker and insurance agent in the small town of Mingo, Iowa. Years earlier he had purchased a satellite dish for his family. One afternoon Lowell eased back into his favorite chair and flipped through hundreds of TV channels.

He had been actively involved in the Mingo Methodist church for many years, so when he came across a channel with a preacher giving a sermon, he stopped to listen. This preacher, whose name is Doug Batchelor, was conducting a series called *A New Revelation*. Lowell listened as Pastor Doug talked about the visions of Revelation.

After watching a few more programs in the series, Lowell showed them to his son, Michael. Skeptically, Michael watched a few of the shows. He was amazed. Never before had he heard these teachings. For the first time in his life, Michael began to have an interest in studying the Bible.



When Michael's father, Lowell Halfhill, showed him Doug Batchelor's programs, he responded first with skepticism, then with amazement. For the first time in his life, the young man became interested in reading the Bible for himself.



Six years ago, Michael Halfhill was a rock 'n' roll deejay who thought the best way to have a "good time" was by drinking and partying with his friends. Then one day, after watching an Amazing Facts videotape, he knelt in this basement apartment and poured out his heart to Jesus.



Some time later, a young man walked into his basement room, dropping his backpack on the floor and shaking snow from his long hair. Not in the mood to study, he got up and walked over to his CD collection. He fingered through CDs of the Rolling Stones, AC/DC, Van Halen, and others. But instead of grabbing some music, he picked up a videotape called *A New Revelation*.

"It's been awhile, but I guess I'll watch Dad's tape," Michael said aloud. He listened as Doug Batchelor talked about Jesus from the book of Revelation. When the tape ended, the young man got down on his knees, and for the first time, Michael cried as he prayed.

Later that evening, he heard people start to arrive upstairs. Amid the laughter and shouts he heard someone yell downstairs, "Hey Michael! We're startin' to party. Ya ready?"



Michael's shoes crunched in the snow as he walked closer to the Sabbathkeeping church in Fort Dodge. He entered the front door and took off his sunglasses. Sitting alone in a pew near the back of the church, he pulled off his leather coat and listened intently to the sermon.

Smiles, handshakes, and questions welcomed him after the service. He explained to the church members that for a couple of years he had been watching some videos on Revelation by a guy named Doug

Batchelor. They smiled knowingly. He said he had just looked up the address of the church and wanted to check it out.

An energetic lady asked for his name again. "I work at the radio station here in town," he told her, "and there my name is Michael Young. But my real name is Michael Halfhill."

She said, "Well, our pastor isn't here this week, but you'll have to come back and hear him. His name is Jean Ross, and he's a great speaker."

"Okay. You'll be seeing more of me," he promised.



A young couple sat close together on a couch. They stared out the window at the lush green grass. Clouds drifted by in the blue sky. Long moments passed without either expressing a word.

Finally, the young girl spoke. "I just don't know about this," she told her fiancé.

"I don't know either," Michael answered.

"Everything's upside-down. I don't know how long I'll have this job or even if I want to keep being a deejay. Going back to college seems crazy, and I never thought I'd want to do this. I just feel that we should look into it. And maybe, if we're meant to, then He'll help us do it. I'm not afraid of trying. Will you come with me to Lincoln, so we can take a look at Union College?"

Jeanette looked at Michael. She remembered his recent proposal at the beach and his baptism just two months earlier. She remembered how proud she had been of him and thought about all the changes she'd witnessed in him and in herself. Again her eyes met his, and she nodded ever so slightly. "Okay. Let's go to Lincoln and see what happens."



Michael stood looking at his reflection in a mirror. Today he was to preach his first sermon. He stared at the short hair, glasses, clean-shaven face, and dark blue suit. He actually *looked* like a pastor.

The image in his mind faded and was replaced by a different, yet familiar picture. It was the figure of a young man wearing rose-tinted sunglasses, torn blue jean shorts, and a faded black rock 'n' roll T-shirt. Long hair fell down past his shoulders. The pride in the eyes, the cynical smile, and the ambitious face looked all-too-familiar.

Again the image in the mirror changed and was replaced with another scene. It was a house filled with college students. The students were laughing and dancing. Some smoked marijuana and most drank. Then he saw the longhaired man with tears streaking down his cheeks in a downstairs room. The man in the mirror held on to some pipes hanging from the ceiling in the room to keep from falling. He was too drunk and stoned to stand. Friends of the

man in the mirror asked what was wrong, but he just shook his head, unable to explain.

The vision in the mirror ended in a flash. Once again Michael saw the reflection of a young man in a suit. A young woman walked into the room, straightening her skirt. She smiled at her husband and said, "Well, Michael, are you ready to give your sermon?"

He remembered all he had been through. He thought about the years he spent on this long and hard road: the parties of college, the life as a rock 'n' roll deejay, and falling in love. He realized that through it all, Jesus loved him and had always been there to help him. Looking up at Jeanette, his crooked smile instantly appeared.

"Yeah, I'm ready."


Photos courtesy of Michael Halfhill



A young nurse named Jeanette watched with amazement as dramatic changes took place in her fiancé. Just weeks after his baptism, Michael asked her to be his wife *and* to accompany him to Nebraska so he could go back to school and become a pastor. They were married in October of 1999, and two months later Jeanette responded to the Lord's hand in her own life by getting baptized.

EPILOGUE:

Today Michael Halfhill is studying theology at Union College so he can be a Sabbathkeeping pastor.

"I am not telling this story to glorify any of the things I have done in the past," he says. "Rather, I tell it in hopes that others will learn from what I did and see how Jesus worked in my life. God can speak to us in many ways. He reached me through a videotape, a caring pastor, and many other people. Had my dad not ordered those videotapes by Doug Batchelor, I do not know where I would be today. If God can do all this for someone like me, then He can save anyone who asks Him. All you have to say is, 'Yeah, I'm ready.'" 

Meet Amazing Facts

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



Doug Batchelor



John Bradshaw

Doug Batchelor

June 25 - July 8
General Conference Session
Amazing Facts booth #513, level 800
Metro Toronto Convention Centre, South Building
255 Front Street W.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Ray House

July 22 - August 26
Hilo Church
162 Kapiolani Street
Big Island, Hawaii



Rich Cavaness



Byron Corbett

John Bradshaw

July 22 - August 6
Scranton Church
1407 Wyoming Avenue
Scranton, Pennsylvania

Jaime Jorge

July 1 at 6:30 p.m. in the Sky Dome
General Conference Session
1 Blue Jays W.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Steve DeLong



Gary Gibbs

Rich Cavaness

July 28 - August 26
Coudersport Church
1004 S. Main Street
Coudersport, Pennsylvania

Jack Pefley

July 28 - August 25
Cedar City Church
1840 W. Harding Avenue
Cedar City, Utah



Lowell Hargreaves



Ray House

Steve DeLong

July 29-August 28
Hereford Church
711 W. Park Avenue
Hereford, Texas

Dennis Priebe

July 7-8
Bristol Church
571 Highway 26
Bristol, Tennessee



Jaime Jorge



Kim Kjaer



Brian McMahon



Jack Pefley

Lowell Hargreaves

July 12-16
Cowboy Camp Meeting
Rocky Mountain Conference
in Uncompahgre Forest below Silver Jack Reservoir
Cimarron, Colorado

July 15-29
South Brooklyn Church
1313-17 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, New York



Dennis Priebe



John Quade

July 29
Linthicum Heights & Brooklyn Churches
901 Andover Road
Baltimore, Maryland



Paul Saint-Villers



Verne Snow

July 29 - August 27
Clarksville Church
782 N. 2nd Street
Clarksville, Tennessee

Paul Saint-Villers

July 3 at 12:35 p.m. in John Bassette Theatre
July 8 at 2:30 p.m. in the Sky Dome
General Conference Session
1 Blue Jays W.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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Roy Bowes by Kent & Dee Dickinson
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John Christian by Patricia Reynolds
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Joe Crews by Gwendolyn M. Knight
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Ida May Davis by Hugh & Margaret Campbell
Richard Burton Davis by Reba Hargrove
Marjorie E. Dickinson by Kent & Dee Dickinson
C.O. Dockery by Mildred Dockery, his wife
Barbara Ann Drury by June Schmidt, her mother; by Gail, her sister; by Michael Schmidt, her brother
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McVernon Fullbright by Maryetta J. Fullbright, his wife
Catherine Gab by Esther R. Henderson, her sister
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Virginia Gerne by Justine M. Slack
Marjorie C. Gilbert by Virginia Gladden
John N. Grosboll by Ann M. Borris, his sister
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Pastor Heinz Kowash by Corinne King
Robert Laue by Frances Brashears
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Alan Dean Long by Pauline B. Long, his mother
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