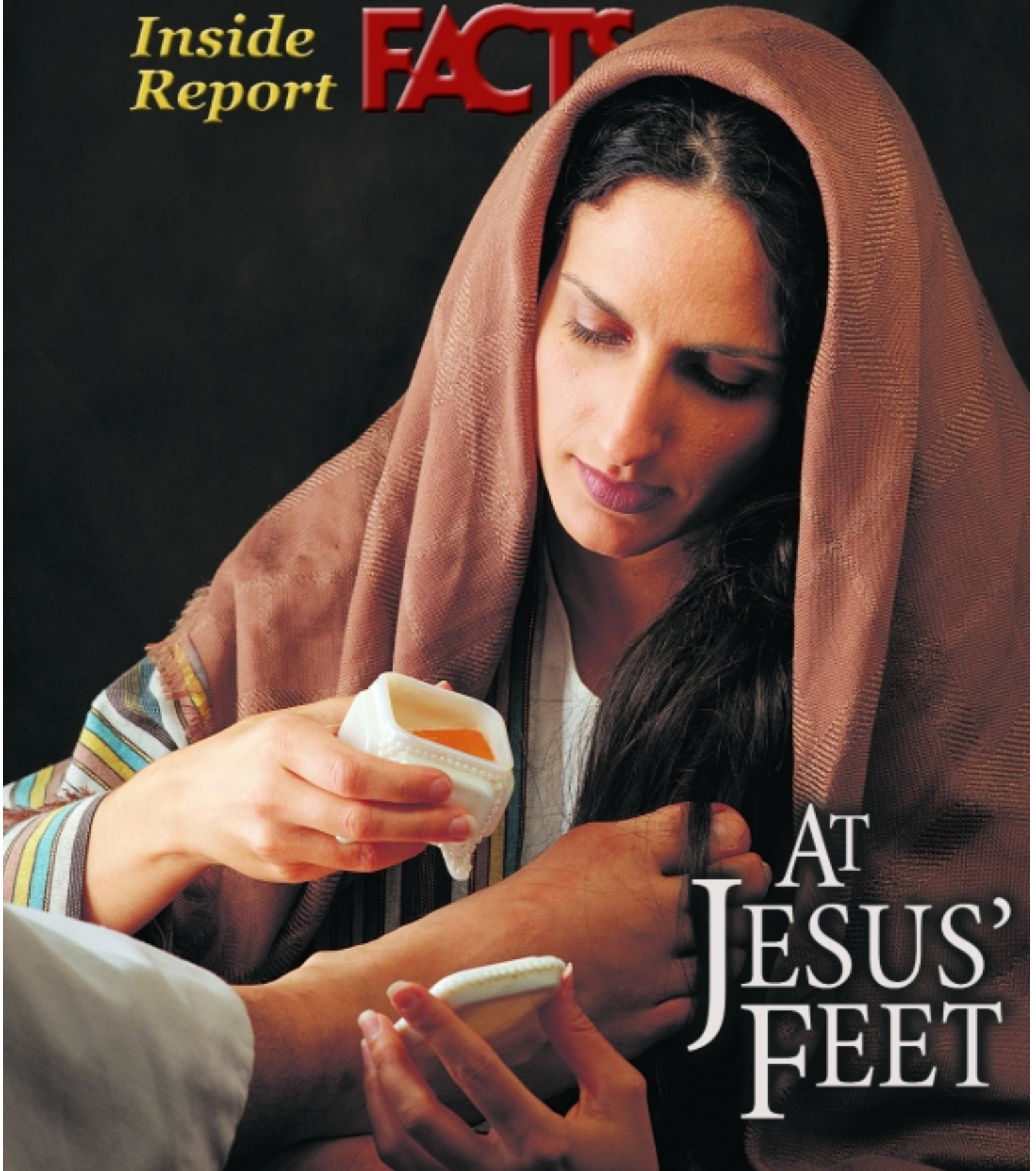


AMAZING

Inside Report **FACTS**

March 2001



AT
JESUS'
FEET

LETTERS

One Happy Family

I have been watching your NET New York '99 series recently, and I really related to your life story. I was baptized into the Tauranga Sabbathkeeping church two years ago after many years of fear, worry, and trials. My 16-year-old daughter and I were baptized together, then five months later my 18-year-old daughter was baptized, then eight months later my 17-year-old son was baptized, and my husband was baptized about two months ago. To add to these blessings, my parents are watching your series along with us. I am hoping to share these videos with other friends, as well. Thank you for allowing yourself to help so many people know Jesus.

ST
New Zealand



From a Lion to a Lamb

I came into the prison system as a lion. I'm doing 40 years, and it's my second time down. Since I found Jesus (or He found me), I am now a lamb. As a new Christian, I just can't seem to get enough. I thank Him and all of you who speak for Him.

VN
West Virginia

Completed All 14 Studies

I would like to say that the amazingfacts.org online Bible study is *excellent!* It has enlightened me on many subjects that I was not clear on or was not aware of. Of course, I will read the Scriptures from the Bible so that I will know it for myself.

I have completed all 14 studies and will be awaiting my printed diploma and other materials. It is awesome, and I thank you for an online-type of study. I will continue to review the site for other opportunities to draw closer to Christ.

AS
Florida



Good-Humored Inspiration

We are regularly receiving your weekly sermon tapes, and they are wonderful! We live 1.5 hours from

town, and those tapes fill in the long driving hours with good-humored inspiration.

ML
California

Puzzled for So Long

Praise God for you and for the Bible-based facts in your teachings! You have given me great peace many mornings after I've listened to your Amazing Facts television program. You have also helped me to understand many concepts concerning Christian life that had me puzzled for so long. I wish I had encountered these teachings many years ago.

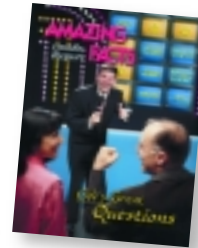
CF
Massachusetts

I Hunger for Insights

I am a prisoner, and we just had a change in our cable service at this institution. On two of the channels, we now get Amazing Facts programs. I was blessed in being exposed to your ministry for the first time. In my own Bible studies, I give a lot of attention to prophecy, and I believe from what I heard in your program that your *Inside Report* magazine and Study Guide #22 would assist me in my quest.

I hunger for insights that are biblically sound. From what I heard, you always use the Bible as the foundation for your teachings. I do the same as I endeavor to live my life before other inmates. I am thrilled to have you coming my way and will be tuning in each Sunday morning.

BW
Pennsylvania



Needed Now

Thank you for standing for the true Word of God and not compromising the truth. It looks as if the time of testing has begun. If we ever needed the solid Word of God, it is now.

KC
Montana

Preached So Clearly

A visitor came to our church one Sabbath, and we invited him over to our house for a Bible study. We watched an Amazing Facts seminar video on a subject that he was having problems on. After watching the video, he was so excited and willing to get baptized and become a member of God's end-time church. I'm thankful to God for the Word being preached so clearly through Amazing Facts.

MW
New Mexico



INSIDE REPORT
VOL. 19, NO. 3

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BY EDITOR
DEBRA J. HICKS

Who's Really in Control?

Several years ago I heard author and pastor G. Edward Reid describe how he made a complete surrender to God as a young man. He simply prayed, “Lord, no matter what You have to do or where you must take me, I give you permission to do what it takes to save me.”

My husband and I talked about it later, and we realized that neither of us had ever had the courage to pray such a bold, self-renouncing prayer.

To be perfectly honest, giving God free rein to do whatever He wanted sounded scary. What if He were to take away something that is really precious to me—like my husband or my health? Or what if He decided not to give me something I’ve always wanted—like children or a particular job?

As I contemplated that simple prayer of submission, I was forced to decide to what extent I would be willing to trust God. He promises in His Word that He is faithful and that He will not allow me to be tempted beyond what I can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). Did I truly believe this? I wasn’t immediately sure. After all, I reasoned, He *has* been known to allow some radical things to happen to His servants!

Think of the Bible hero Joseph, for example. This favorite son of the patriarch Jacob was a happy-go-lucky teenager when he began having dreams that God would lead him to greatness (Genesis 37:1-11). Those divine promises were eventually fulfilled, but not until after Joseph had endured a cruel separation from his family, the humility of slavery, false accusations by his master’s wife, and then years of isolation and servitude in a top-security Egyptian prison.

The prophets Ezekiel and Hosea come to mind, as well. In order to fulfill the work God had for them, Hosea was told to marry a rebellious prostitute, and Ezekiel had to do a myriad of bizarre things, including lying on his left side for 390 days (Ezekiel 4:4-5); shaving all of his hair and then dividing it into three portions—one to burn with fire, another to chop with a sword, and a third to scatter in the wind (Ezekiel 5:1-2); and obeying God’s command not to mourn when his wife died (Ezekiel 24:16-18).

There’s no doubt that being a Christian is sometimes difficult or distressing. However, I’ve observed that living life apart from God’s will is sure to make a person much more miserable.

After carefully considering my options, it didn’t take long to decide to put my confidence in the God who is my Advocate (1 John 2:1) and the Giver of every good and perfect thing (James 1:17), rather than to serve the one who is my adversary (1 Peter 5:8) and the father of lies (John 8:44).

I made my decision, but at times it remains a struggle to let God do what He thinks is best—especially when His plans run contrary to my own expectations. Have you ever noticed that no matter how rotten a job we do at managing our lives, we often prefer to remain in control ourselves rather than turn everything over to God?

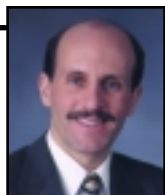
For inspiration, I often go to Scripture to study the lives of people who mastered the “Let go and let God” concept. Pastor Doug Batchelor describes one such lady in his article that begins on page 4. In addition, there are other Bible heroes whose example of surrender to the Lord I find remarkable.

Have you ever noticed that no matter how rotten a job we do at managing our lives, we often prefer to remain in control ourselves rather than turn everything over to God?

The first is Hannah, who was so distressed over being childless that she often wept bitterly and sometimes couldn’t eat. When she took the matter to God, she didn’t make a selfish “bargain” with Him, as we sometimes do in our prayer requests. Instead, she prayed that if God would grant her the desire of her heart, she would in turn give that child back to Him for a lifetime of service (1 Samuel 1:11). Wow!

The next person who amazes me is young David, who was an unknown shepherd when God sent the prophet Samuel to anoint him as Israel’s next king. How natural it would have been for him to try to manipulate subsequent events to hasten Saul’s demise. Instead, David served Saul faithfully and protected him from harm on many occasions, first as his armorbearer (1 Samuel 16:21), and later as a mistrusted enemy (1 Samuel 24:9-10). Refusing to act ahead of God, David waited many years to see the fulfillment of God’s promise that he would ascend to the throne.

Faith in God’s methods and timing was the key to David’s success, he declares in Psalm 27:12-13, NKJV: “False witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence. I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.”



BY DIRECTOR-SPEAKER
DOUG BATCHELOR

AT JESUS' FEET

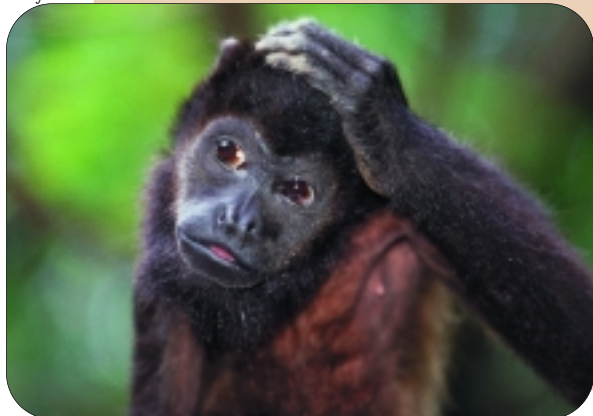


Don Satterlee

An Amazing Fact:

Monkey trappers in North Africa have a clever method of catching their prey. They fill a number of gourds with nuts and chain them firmly to a tree. Each has a hole just large enough to allow an unsuspecting monkey to stick his hand inside the hollowed-out gourd. When the hungry animal discovers this hole and the treasure waiting inside, he quickly grabs a handful of nuts. However, the hole is too small for him to withdraw his bulging, clenched fist. And he doesn't have enough sense to open up his hand and release the deceptive booty in order to escape, so he is easily taken captive.

Eyewire



The tendency to cling tenaciously to tempting treasure plagues unsuspecting humans and monkeys alike. The devil traps many Christians by appealing to their natural greed and carnal appetites, which lead to their spiritual downfall. As long as people hold onto the worldly bait, they cannot escape from Satan's trap.

Let Go and Let God

We've all heard the tempter's alluring voice urging, "Don't let go!" And the Bible is filled with examples of men and women who fell into one of Satan's cleverly laid traps.

One of my favorite examples is Mary Magdalene. Her fame doesn't come from the coveted traits the world typically associates with greatness. Mary occupied a special place among the followers of Jesus because she demonstrated three traits worthy of merit: a great love, a tenacious loyalty, and a perfect devotion.

Before she met the Savior, however, Mary was living a life that was dirty, broken, and helpless. Like the senseless monkey caught in a trap, her choices held her firmly in bondage to the evil one. The Bible says Jesus delivered Mary from seven demons (Luke 8:2), and I believe the devil waged a long and fierce strug-

gle to maintain control of her soul. Mary was rescued from bondage because she made a conscious choice to “Let go and let God.”

Of course, it is impossible to “let God” do anything until we first “let go” of everything and everyone else! That’s right. Even people mustn’t take priority over our relationship with God! The first and greatest commandment is to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength” (Mark 12:30). Then, secondarily, we are commanded to “love thy neighbour as thyself” (verse 31). Jesus also told His followers, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matthew 10:37, NKJV).

The good news is that whoever has the faith to trust God and surrender all for Christ’s sake will be abundantly compensated, in this life and in the next (Mark 10:29-30).

It Costs How Much?

Kneeling at Jesus’ feet in sacrifice and service was, in many respects, Mary’s finest hour. Jesus immortalized her deed at Simon’s feast by declaring that “wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her” (Mark 14:9, NKJV).

Similarly, Jesus commended the widow who cast her last two coins into the offering box because she gave everything she had to God (Luke 21:1-4). It may sound radical or even scary, but to be saved requires a total surrender—a total sacrifice.

Mary gave her all to Jesus. She provided for Him not only during His public ministry (Luke 8:2-3), but she also gave lavishly when she bought the alabaster box of perfume for His anointing.

Overwhelmed by a fresh appreciation for Jesus and all He had done for her, Mary redirected her attention to finding a worthy gift for the Master. If necessary, she would empty her purse to do so. The money she had saved from her former life and from selling her place in Magdala was a substantial sum, yet it was a constant reminder to her of the wages of sin. Mary determined to spend all of her savings, if necessary, to purchase a noble present as an offering to the Lord.*

Many never experience the fullness of God’s peace and power because they make only a partial surrender to Him. The Lord can fill our vessels only to the extent that we empty them.

Is the Lord asking all of us to liquidate 100 percent of our assets and give them as an offering? Not necessarily, but He is asking us to put everything on the altar and then be willing to do whatever He directs. He is asking for a no-strings-attached commitment.

An Amazing Fact:

When I was first learning to fly, my flight instructor spent a day teaching me to do stalls. To stall an airplane means to bring it to the slowest speed you possibly can while still maintaining flight, then to build up air speed and regain control after the plane begins to drop. Mastery of this technique can help a pilot survive a possible emergency.

At one point while I was practicing these stalls, something happened that was a little out of the ordinary. The flight instructor had given me complete control of the plane. I pulled the power back and aimed the plane up until it was going slower and slower. Eventually the warning buzzer went off, but instead of the plane just nosing down and regaining speed, it nosed off onto the side and went into a spin.

To get a better picture of what was happening, just imagine yourself sitting behind the wheel of your car after you have been dropped from an airplane. It would be like driving toward the ground at 120 miles per hour while you’re spinning in circles!

Well, my first reaction was to pull back. I had been taught to pull back on the yoke, or steering column, to make the plane go up. However, there wasn’t enough air speed to get any reaction from the steering controls. With all of my strength I was pulling back—until I almost pulled the yoke out of the panel. We were only 3,000 feet in the air, and the ground was coming up fast. I didn’t see my life flash before me, but I almost had a glimpse of my lunch!

Suddenly I heard my flight instructor calmly say: “Let go, Doug. Let go. I’ve got it!”

I didn’t want to let go. What if he didn’t know what he was doing? What if he killed us both? In those few seconds, I went through a tremendous struggle. Could I trust my flight instructor? Did he know how to get us out of this dilemma?

I realized that I had no great alternative, because I certainly didn’t know what I was doing. So I released my grip. The flight instructor took the yoke, pushed it completely forward, and gave the throttle full power. Now the plane was going toward the ground even faster. But as the wind began to pass over the wings, the steering column regained some response, and he pulled it up with a great powerful arc that left my stomach down somewhere near my left ankle.

One of the biggest battles (if not *the* biggest battle) Christians face is coming to the place of making a complete surrender where we can say, “Not my will, but Thy will be done.” This was the battle Jesus fought on our behalf when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, sweating drops of blood in agony. “O my Father,” He pleaded, “if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).



Pilot Doug Batchelor

An Amazing Fact:

Saving tears shed for a good cause was an ancient Eastern custom mentioned by David in Psalm 56:8.

At Simon's feast, Mary washed the Savior's feet with her tears (Luke 7:37-38). Like others in her era, Mary had probably purchased a blue glass flask as her tear bottle.



Don Satterlee

Humble Service

A hospital visitor once saw a nurse tending to the ugly sores of a leprosy patient and said, "I'd never do that for a million dollars!"

The nurse answered: "Neither would I. But I do it for Jesus for nothing." Genuine love is willing to serve without any remuneration or even recognition.

The world defines success by what kind of car a man drives, what kind of clothes a woman wears, or what kind of house a family owns. With the Lord, it's not what kind of car a man drives; it's what kind of man drives the car. With God, the issue is what kind of woman wears the dress and what kind of family lives in the house. Man looks on the outward appearances, while God looks on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

The Bible teaches that a woman's hair is her glory (1 Corinthians 11:15.) The visual message inherent in Mary's act of wiping Jesus' feet with her hair was one of humble service, submission, worship, and surrender.

Because all eyes were transfixed on Jesus as He spoke, no one noticed when Mary softly slipped into the room and knelt quietly by the Master's feet. She had been breathless with fear, but now kneeling at His feet, a familiar peace settled over her. She sensed that she was safe under the everlasting wings of the Almighty. Mary silently prayed that Jesus would approve of her deed of love. What the others thought was of no consequence to her.

With loving tenderness, she broke the seal on the alabaster flask and poured some of the contents of precious oil liberally over Jesus' feet. Jesus did not even flinch. He simply paused in His discourse, smiled to acknowledge to Mary that He was aware of her act of service and sacrifice, then continued His conversation.

As the fragrant oil ran down Jesus' feet, a drop spilled onto the tile floor. Realizing that in her haste she had forgotten to bring a cloth or towel to evenly spread the ointment, Mary removed the shawl covering her head and, without a second thought, released

her long, luxuriously rich brown hair from the ties that contained it. Then she began wiping His feet, spreading the oil with her hair.

F.B. Meyer once said: "I used to think that God's gifts were on shelves one above the other and that the taller we grew in Christian character, the more easily we should reach them. I find now that God's gifts are on shelves one beneath the other. It is not a question of growing taller but of stooping lower; that we have to go down, always down, to get His best gifts."

The Anointed

In ancient times, Israel's priests and kings were ceremonially anointed with oil as a sign of official appointment to office and as a symbol of God's Spirit and power upon them. Moses anointed Aaron with oil to consecrate him as Israel's first high priest (Leviticus 8:12-13), and the prophet Elisha commanded his servant to anoint Captain Jehu with oil to seal him as king (2 Kings 9:3).

Consequently, when Mary anointed the Lord in Simon's house, it was a gesture of tremendous significance. Just before the cross, Jesus was being sealed as our King, Priest, and Sacrifice!

Mary was so absorbed in the joy of serving Jesus that she was oblivious to the stunned reactions of the guests seated around the table. Soon after she broke open the alabaster flask, the room quickly filled with the profusion of a costly, exotic essence. The conversation in the room quieted to a tense murmur. Even the servants froze, not certain as to what they should do about the situation.

Mary now felt the piercing stares of all present. Fearing someone might try to prohibit her from completing her mission, she resolutely stood and poured the remaining oil on Jesus' head amid gasps of astonishment and shock. Mary's unmistakable act was the traditional symbol among the Jews for the sealing and anointing of a new king or priest.

The Hebrew word "mashiyach," which is translated Messiah, and the Greek word "Christos," which is translated Christ, both mean "anointed." Some people have thought that Christ was Jesus' surname, but the word "Christ" was actually a title that means "the anointed one."

Selfishness of Judas

Scripture tells us that two people kissed Jesus. Judas kissed His face and then betrayed Him (Luke 22:48). In contrast, Mary kissed Jesus' feet (Luke 7:38) then served Him.

The genuine sacrifice and service of Mary was a stinging rebuke to the selfishness of Judas (John 12:3-6). It was immediately after his pious statement

of concern for the poor that Judas went out and agreed to betray the Savior for the price of a slave.

Judas, pretending to be indignant, protested under his breath—just loud enough for those seated nearby to hear.

“What a tragic waste of resources!” he exclaimed. “Why, this oil could have been sold for more than three hundred denari.” Then, as an afterthought to cloak his own greedy designs, Judas added: “Of course, the proceeds could have been donated to the poor!”

Some of the other disciples nodded in agreement. What Judas’ peers didn’t know was that his selfish heart had felt keenly rebuked by Mary’s liberal generosity.

It is often true that those who look down their noses at “sinners” are, like Judas, doing this as a diversionary tactic lest someone should discover their own sin. The most critical and judgmental people in the church are usually the ones who are struggling with hidden guilt.

A Public Display

Mary was not ashamed to make a spectacle of herself in showing her love for Jesus. Too often we are afraid to show our love for Jesus publicly in the workplace or the neighborhood for fear of being ridiculed for our faith.

I have observed people in a public restaurant who wait until they think no one is looking and then quickly bow their heads for three seconds to silently thank God for their food. Jesus warned, “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:26, NKJV).

Because Mary was not afraid to openly demonstrate her loyalty and submission to Jesus, the Lord was likewise willing to defend her in public.

Jesus heard His faithful disciples echo Judas’ murmurings. With a sad compassion, He said to them: “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me, you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.”

This clear statement of Jesus’ approval brought ecstatic joy to Mary’s heart. Knowing that the Lord was pleased with her was all she ever wanted. The weeping woman fell again to her knees and resumed kissing His feet.

Jesus was very protective of Mary because He understood her heart. Throughout Scripture a woman is a symbol of the church, and flawed and defective though she may appear, Jesus is grieved and angered by those who, like Judas, stand by and accuse the bride of Christ.

Love Gives Lavishly

I know a fairly prosperous businessman whose son was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison. The loving father, convinced that his son was innocent, mortgaged his home and sold all of the family’s assets in order to pay the legal fees to get his son another trial.

Even though the conviction stood, the father never regretted the sacrifice. Why did he do it? Love gives sacrificially. The ultimate illustration of such love is described in John 3:16. God the Father gave His all when He sent His only beloved Son.


When Naaman the Syrian was healed of leprosy, his first desire was to give something to Elisha the prophet (2 Kings chapter 5). His lavish offering was in proportion to his great gratitude. Likewise, after Zacchaeus was forgiven by Christ, his next response was to give abundantly to others (Luke 19:1-10).

Mary too felt compelled to give to Jesus because she appreciated how much she had been forgiven.

Jesus looked at the woman, then back at Simon. “Do you see this woman?” He asked. “I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head.

“You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.

“Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.”

When we begin to see how much Jesus suffered and paid for our sins, when we are genuinely converted from our selfish striving for recognition and grasping for earthly gain, then and only then will we be content to humbly serve and to give all to the One who gave all for us. 

**Throughout this article, paragraphs in italic type indicate selections from the “Story” section in chapter 4 of the book At Jesus’ Feet: The Gospel According to Mary Magdalene.*

At Jesus’ Feet: The Gospel According to Mary Magdalene

This article was condensed from chapter 4 of this beautiful new book by Doug Batchelor.

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From the Inside

Eric Knipple Joins Amazing Facts as Computer Network Administrator

Eric Knipple has been the network administrator for Amazing Facts since November 2000. His chief responsibilities are to maintain the ministry's computer systems and to implement new technologies.



While attending the University of Advancing Computer Technology in Tempe, Ariz., Eric worked for a year and a half as a computer consultant for BitWits, a company that specializes in supporting the computer needs of small businesses. In August 2000 he completed a BS degree in Software Engineering.

Eric first came in contact with Amazing Facts when the NET New York '99 seminar was held via satellite in his home church in Phoenix.

Doug Batchelor to Begin Seminar in the Philippines on April 22, 2001

Please begin praying for the two-week evangelistic series to be held at the Cuneta Astrodome in Manila April 22-May 5. Look for more details next month.

Gary and Sherilyn Gibbs Announce the Arrival of Their First Baby

Carissa Nicole Gibbs was born on Dec. 5, 2000, to Senior Vice President Gary Gibbs and his wife, Sherilyn. Her first name is based on the Greek word used in Scripture for God's grace, and her middle name means "a victorious person." Together, her names mean "a victorious person by God's grace."

Her daddy explains, "We wanted to choose a name that would help Carissa focus on her privilege of being a Christian in the last days."



Jason Morgan and Eric Flickinger Working as Evangelists in Training

Eric Flickinger, a graduate of the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism (AFCOE), began working as a trainee evangelist in January. His first assignment was to assist Evangelist John Bradshaw in a series of meetings in Richardson, Texas, and he is now working with Evangelist Lowell Hargreaves in Fort Collins, Colo.

"Being used to spread the Word and to help teach others about Christ is the answer to my prayers," says Eric. He and his wife, Hildelisa, are from Gainesville, Fla., where Hildelisa works as a registered dietitian.

Jason Morgan and his family will also begin traveling full-time beginning in March. Jason has been teaching in the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism since it opened last August, but he and his wife, Misty, had a desire to go back on the road and conduct evangelistic meetings full-time.

"Jason is an excellent speaker and a very promising evangelist," says Gary Gibbs, who coordinates the evangelism program for Amazing Facts and serves as AFCOE director. "He and Misty make a tremendous team and are passionate about winning souls and hastening the return of Jesus. Churches that hold meetings with this dedicated couple are going to be very blessed."

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Bible Answers

With Pastor Doug Batchelor



My husband read in 1 Thessalonians that Christ's second coming will take place when He takes to heaven those who are dead, along with His children who are still alive. However, Christ told the robber on the cross that He would see him "today" in heaven. To what is the writer of 1 Thessalonians referring?

What your husband found in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 is correct. Many have been confused about what Jesus was saying to the thief on the cross, as recorded in Luke 23:43. The way the comma was placed by translators, the sentence reads, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (NKJV). However, Jesus couldn't have meant that He would actually see the thief that day because He did not go to heaven that day. We know this because when we read the story in the Gospel of John, Mary goes to the tomb two days after Jesus died. When Jesus appears to Mary, she joyfully reaches out to Him, but He stops her. "Touch me not," He tells her, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17).

By misplacing a comma, the translator accidentally obscured what Jesus was telling the thief. What Jesus said was: "Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise."

Do you think that the shroud of Turin is real?

I personally don't believe that the shroud of Turin is the actual burial cloth of Jesus. The Bible says that His body was bound in strips of linen with spices (John 19:40) and that a separate napkin was wrapped around His head (John 20:5-7). The shroud of Turin, on the other hand, is a single cloth that was folded up the back and around the face of the body.

A few years ago when scientists began to do tests on the relic, evidence suggested that it did date back to the time of Christ and that it originated in Palestine. For example, they found pollen particles on it that were native only to Palestine. Later, researchers announced that the cloth dated back only to about A.D. 1300.

The shroud of Turin may have been the result of a separate crucifixion. For example, Muslims punished some of the Crusaders by crucifying them just as the Romans crucified Jesus. As shocking as it may seem, there were also people during the Dark Ages who asked to be crucified in hopes that they would gain merit by experiencing the same torture and suffering that Jesus did. The shroud of Turin could have been the grave cloth of someone in the Dark Ages who wanted to duplicate the sufferings of Christ. That would explain why it is stained with real blood and why there are so many similarities between the wounds imprinted on the cloth and those connected with a crucifixion.

If a person wants to be baptized, must he first overcome his bad habits, or will the Holy Spirit help him with these problems after baptism? We repent of sin on a daily basis, don't we?

I believe that certain tangible life changes should be evident before baptism. This is why John the Baptist stated, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8). Since baptism reflects new birth, new life, and liberation from a life of sin, being baptized while still enslaved to sinful habits such as drinking or smoking would be a paradox.

Baptism is similar to marriage. For a man to marry a woman while still dating another would be hypocrisy. Similarly, a person shouldn't enter into a union with Christ through baptism while willingly still "dating the devil" in certain areas of life.

I am not suggesting that an individual needs to know everything or to be perfect before baptism. However, no one should enter into this special relationship unrepentant. Evidence of Christ's victory will be apparent in a life that is consecrated to the Lord.

Of course, baptism does not bring perfection, and new believers will certainly feel a need for repentance after baptism. Thankfully, we have the promise that "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). As we go to Him daily, asking for forgiveness and the power to do His will, we will grow to be more and more like our Savior.

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



BY
CINDY BUCKNER

Working Together for Good

New Member in Clarksville, Tenn., Shares Her Story

I have always been open to the things of God, and last year many events that have been working together for good in my life finally came together, with the Lord's blessing.

An Early Encounter With God

My parents weren't very interested in religion; nonetheless, they had me baptized into the Episcopal Church as an infant. Of course, my early baptism meant nothing to me or to the Lord, but I think it made my parents feel that they were doing the right thing.

The Great Depression and World War II led to my father's career as an officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. After he was reported missing in action following the Battle of the Bulge in Europe, my mom became a churchgoing Christian.

My first recollection of an encounter with God happened during the years when we lived in Asheville, N.C., and attended the large Presbyterian Church downtown. My grandmother, who lived with us, said that we were Presbyterians, so that's where we went to church.

I remember sitting on the pew one Sunday between my warm, plump granny and my sweet but troubled mother. We were all worried about my dad. While staring at the beautiful vaulted ceiling, I began to feel the presence of the Lord. The preacher's sermon faded from my thoughts as I listened to the sweet voice of the Lord reassuring me that He loved

me and that my dad was safe. When we got official word that my dad was alive and well, I was the only one who wasn't surprised to hear from him!

My dad came home after the war, and we began moving about like the typical Army family. At Fort Meade, Md., the chaplain's wife invited me to flannel-board story time and her Sunday School class at the post chapel. My mom went to chapel too from time to time, and even Dad came when I sang the solo part in "Fairest Lord Jesus" with the children's choir.

Christians Placed in My Path

The Lord has always had a way of putting special people in my path. During my high school years in Columbus, Ohio, I attended a Methodist church with my friend Mary Jo. We had a wonderful time talking, looking up Bible passages, and sharing real Christian fellowship during the morning worship services.

In 1952 my family moved to Japan, where I completed my last two years of high school. Somehow I fell into my parents' pattern, and church attendance was reserved for special events. However, when I returned to the States to attend Duke University, I had a strong desire to be part of a church. Since I had been baptized an Episcopalian, I made my way to the nearby Episcopal Church Sunday Night Youth Group. I met up with another special person, Padre, here. He kept me out of trouble in the uproar of college life by giving me lots of jobs and making me feel important to the group.

At Duke, every student is required to take one semester of Old Testament and one semester of New Testament in the freshman year. Thus began my lifetime search of the Scriptures and my abiding interest in prophecy.

After two years of college, I married an airborne officer from Fort Campbell. He got out of the service and we lived in Knoxville, Tenn., during his college stint on the GI Bill. We drifted back to the Methodist Church, but reality didn't set in until our children were born. I cried out for Jesus to help me because I felt that my life was a big mess.

My friend Barbara Davis saw my need. She kept my precious little girl and sent me to one of her friends, a chaplain at Fort Campbell Hospital. He shared some Scriptures and showed me God's plan of salvation *for me*. I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, and my life hasn't been the same since.

I prayed for a Christian friend who could teach me more about the Bible, and the Lord took me to a

Photos courtesy of Lowell Hargreaves



Amazing Facts Evangelist Lowell Hargreaves and his family spent a month with this growing church family in Clarksville, Tenn. "Your visit to our little part of the world has certainly changed our lives," new member Cindy Buckner told them after the meetings concluded. Ten individuals were baptized during the seminar, and others have been taking Bible studies in preparation for future baptism.

Bible study at the home of Lena Pickering, where I met Barbara Thompson. Barbara made the Old Testament come alive for me, and I got excited about prophecy again. Many things weren't clear to me, but I was enjoying the hunt.

A Long, Dry Spell

After Barbara moved away, a long, dry spell set in. I was a member of the Methodist Church, and even though a lot was happening in my life, not much was happening spiritually.

When both of my children started school, I returned to college and completed my BS degree in Business Administration and my MA in Business Education. I tried my talents at teaching high school but quickly made the transition into a career more suited to my talents and personality. I started working in real estate. My marriage suffered as a result, and in 1973 I got divorced. Because God is good and He knew that my heart belonged to Him, He carried me through the mistakes I made that had messed up my life.

I married Eldon Buckner in June of 1973. His three children, Mark, Jimmy, and Patsy, and my two children, T.K. and Bobby, created a veritable "Brady Bunch" picture, and to this we added Cynthia Ruth Buckner. My family became the heartbeat of my life, and I talked to the Lord as much as I did to anyone else. We joined the Baptist Church, where we became faithful benchwarmers for the next 27 years.

Over the years, our real estate business and our family and friends kept us busy enjoying feelings of success and well-being. Special people came in and out of our lives, but sometimes we were too busy to notice their presence. Our Bible study was superficial, and our commitment to the Lord was primarily a commitment to regular church attendance.

First Love Reawakened

Between 1936 and 2000, I can remember only a few exposures to Sabbathkeeping Christian churches. There was one in Asheville, and both my mother and grandmother told me, "Those are the people who go to church on Saturday." That was all I needed to know to satisfy my curiosity.

My sister in California, who died of lung cancer in December 1999, had been cared for at Loma Linda Cancer Center, and because of her experience there I knew that Sabbathkeeping Christians had an edge on the rest of the world with a health message that I was already beginning to embrace.

In 1994 my husband suffered a heart attack, and after that our lives changed dramatically. Each day I grew to treasure my husband more, realizing that it might be our last day on earth together. As I began to see the price I had paid for financial success, I started phasing out of the real estate business. I made

time for the Christian Women's Club and the Friendship Bible Coffees. Soon my husband and I began to understand that our diet and lifestyle had put us where we were, and we saw the problems that came from certain drugs, a meat-based diet, and lack of exercise. The heart attack was truly a gift from God that sounded the call to reform our lives.




Pastor Jerrett Brown introduces Eldon and Cindy Buckner to their new church family on the day of their baptism. "We have found the brothers and sisters of this church to be a sweet fellowship of like-minded believers who have graciously extended the right hand of fellowship to us," says Cindy. "We could ask for nothing more!"

Suddenly Crystal-Clear

In July 2000 we got a colorful brochure promoting a seminar on the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation by Amazing Facts Evangelist Lowell Hargreaves. It attracted my attention. A few days later I found the time to read it, and I told Eldon that I wanted to attend. I really didn't think that he would want to go, so I was delighted when he said that he would like to go with me.

During the month of August, the Lord did a miraculous job of clearing our calendar. Of the seminar's 31 sessions, we missed just three. Our only textbook was the Bible, and our teacher was the Holy Spirit. The prophecies of Daniel became crystal-clear in their message and meaning. The book of Revelation opened up to us as never before, and we understood the meaning of Scriptures that had only confused us in the past. At the end of the third session, Eldon told me we needed to make a change. I knew he was right. The truth of John 14:15 cemented itself into our hearts: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

On Sept. 2, 2000, Pastor Jerrett Brown of the Sabbathkeeping Christian church in Clarksville, Tenn., baptized us. We have found the brothers and sisters of this church to be a sweet fellowship of like-minded believers who have graciously extended the right hand of fellowship to us. We could ask for nothing more! 



BY EVANGELIST
JACK PEFLY

“That’s All I Need”

Jesus Changes Many Lives in St. George, Utah

Richard and Peggy have an exciting story to tell about how Jesus has changed their lives. It all started when Peggy received a brochure about the Amazing Facts meetings in St. George, Utah. Thinking the brochure was an advertisement for videos, she mentioned to her husband Richard and their friend Phil that she would like to see the programs.

Phil, who had also received the brochure, explained, “Those aren’t videos; they’re meetings.”

“Well, I want to go,” Peggy declared. Both Richard and Phil soon agreed that they would like to attend the series as well.

The seminar’s focus on the Bible was new for Richard and Peggy. Raised in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Richard was taught many things from sources other than the Bible, and although Peggy knew and loved the Lord Jesus, she had little Bible knowledge. The couple eagerly absorbed the truths they learned each evening.

When they realized that they would have to miss about four presentations due to Richard’s health problems, Peggy and Richard were disappointed. Fortunately, they were able to borrow audio tapes of the presentations, which made it possible for them to hear every meeting’s message.

Both Peggy and Richard made an unwavering decision for Christ on the twelfth night of the series, and when the day of their baptism arrived, they were the first in line!

Richard told me that he was taking medication that affected his memory and his ability to pay attention for long periods of time. How thankful he was that I repeated the Bible texts several times each evening and helped the congregation find the verses in their Bibles! As the meetings progressed, he was able to not only pay attention but also to remember what he had heard.

Richard and Peggy rejoice that they have found God’s truths. “I know that many in my former faith will disown me,” Richard said, “but that’s all right. I have Jesus and Peggy, and that’s all I need.”

“Now we can be together forever,” Peggy added happily.

Please pray for Richard’s health and for his friend Phil. Phil loves the Lord, and already he has begun serving Christ in many ways. He has decided to keep the Sabbath and desires to teach others the truths he has learned. Both Richard and Phil helped Pastor Dean Lifshay teach the Wednesday night prophecy class that began immediately following our month-long seminar in St. George.

Unbelievably Better

Hans and Jennifer are a real pleasure to know. Hans, who was raised in the Mormon faith, has really struggled to learn the truth. When he met Jennifer, who was a Baptist, she introduced him to many things that he had never learned. Hans was baptized into the Baptist church, but he was still a Latter-Day Saint at heart.

After receiving a brochure in the mail describing the Amazing Facts meetings, Hans wanted to go. He and Jennifer attended the first night together and immediately decided they didn’t want to miss any of the series. They faithfully attended every meeting, eagerly looked up the Bible texts, and asked questions.

One night Jennifer put a note into the question box that thrilled my heart. She said that she would like to be rebaptized into the new truths that she had been learning.

Penny and Bill, who were recently married, also came nightly. They invited my wife, Sally, and me to dinner at their house along with Hans and Jennifer, their new friends and front-row study partners. After enjoying an excellent meal and getting better acquainted with both couples, I passed out the Amazing Facts “What Do We Believe?” cards, since they all desired to join the remnant church. I read the

Photos courtesy of Jack Pefley



The Amazing Facts prophecy seminar in St. George, Utah, has forever changed the lives of these two special couples. Pictured above on the day of their baptism are Jennifer and Hans Christensen and Peggy and Richard Owen with Pastor Dean Lifshay (center).

statements of faith and waited for a “yes” or a question from each of them. One by one they answered “yes” to each question, and each time I heard their responses, my heart was thrilled.

After I finished, Penny, Bill, and Jennifer put their commitments in writing by signing their cards. Hans, however, was holding back. He had already sent a letter to his church asking to have his name removed from membership, but he was hesitant nevertheless. “Maybe I should wait until I have a written statement that I’m no longer a member of the Latter-Day Saints,” he said. “Also, my parents are not going to be happy if I do this.”

“Hans, turn to John 3:5 and let’s read,” I suggested. I started reading aloud: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Then I continued on as if I were still reading the verse and said, “But before you do this, be sure that your name is off the books of your former church. After that, do what I ask you to do.”

Hans looked up at me with a huge smile on his face and said, “Jesus wants it now, doesn’t He?”

“Yes,” I responded. So he signed his card too.

However, Satan wasn’t through with Hans yet. He got very sick and wasn’t able to attend the last meeting of the series. Jennifer said that Hans would be there the next morning. True to her word, when Sabbath morning arrived, Hans was there, and that afternoon, even though he was as sick as could be, Hans came to be baptized with his wife. When he came up out of the water, he felt unbelievably better!

Pass It On

Sandie is another living example of Jesus’ saving power. Doctors had determined that she was terminally ill many times; only the Lord and medication kept her going. God wasn’t finished with her yet, though. Sandie was so impressed with the meetings that she wanted all of her friends to know what she was learning. She started an online chat group that has been very successful and also added to her Bible



Sandie Divan was so thrilled with what she learned at the Amazing Facts seminar that she shared the information with as many people as she could—both at home and through an online ministry. Because of her witness, Pastor Dean Lifshay baptized not only Sandie and her husband, Chuck, but also their daughter and son-in-law!



Shari Chambless (in center, holding flower) represents a number of individuals in St. George who now have the joy of seeing their family members beginning to study God’s Word. The happiness of these newly baptized Christians was so evident at their baptismal service that others want to experience that same joy!

website a link to the Amazing Facts website.

After sharing everything she was learning with her husband, Chuck, they did the seminar lessons together. Next Sandie’s daughter began coming to the meetings, and she in turn went home and shared everything with her husband. In the end they all were baptized together.


“It’s a great day for the Lord and me,” Sandie remarked joyfully on the day of her baptism. “I don’t know how long the Lord’s going to keep me around, but as long as He does, I’m going to be a witness for Him and His saving power.”

Finding the Answers

Kara, who had been addicted to drugs, found the answers she was looking for in Jesus. He cleaned her up and gave her a new life. When she moved to St. George from Redding, Calif., she started looking for a church. At one point she thought that she had found one, but then she began to feel uneasy about some of the teachings and practices of its pastor.

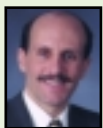
When she learned about the Amazing Facts meetings, Kara decided to attend. As she began studying the Bible every night, many things she had been wondering about became clear. Kara soon decided that she wanted to be baptized into these new truths. Her mom came to the baptism and is also currently studying the Bible.

Pray for Kara as she uses her talents to reach people who are dependent on drugs, as she once was. Kara is a very talented and educated lady who wants to help others find real healing.

The people at the R.V. camping ground hot tub, where the baptisms were held, were surprised to see people giving their lives to Jesus! As the people came up out of the water, it was obvious that they were “on fire” for Jesus. Many family members and friends were so impressed that they expressed a desire to begin studying so that they too could find the same Friend, Savior, and Lord. 

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



Rich Cavaness



Steve DeLong



Lowell Hargreaves



Brian McMahon



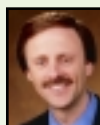
Dennis Priebe



John Bradshaw



Byron Corbett



Gary Gibbs



Jaime Jorge



Jack Pefley



John Silvestri



Verne Snow

John Bradshaw

March 2-April 7
State Theater
1489 Myers Street
Oroville, California

Rich Cavaness

February 23-March 24
Grub Box Conference Room
201 North 8th Street
St. Maries, Idaho

Byron Corbett

March 2-April 7
Hayden Meadows School
900 East Hayden Avenue
Hayden Lake, Idaho

Steve DeLong

February 17 - March 19
El Paso Northeast Church
4825 Junction Drive
El Paso, Texas

Lowell Hargreaves

February 24-March 31
Boltz Junior High School
720 Boltz Drive
Fort Collins, Colorado

Brian McMahon

March 2-April 7
San Jose Scottish Rite Center
2455 Masonic Drive
San Jose, California

Jack Pefley

March 2-April 7
Park View Plaza
107 E. 2nd Street
Ottumwa, Iowa

Dennis Priebe

March 9-10
Santa Clarita Church
24436 Valley Street
Newhall, California

March 17
Delzura Church
17880 Highway 94
Delzura, California

March 23-24
Loma Linda Romanian Church
Loma Linda, California

March 30-31
Needles Church
1405 Lily Hill Road
Needles, California

April 6-7
Kingman Church
3108 White Cliffs Road
Kingman, Arizona

John Silvestri

March 17-24
Hockinson Heights Church
21109 NE 150th Street
Brush Prairie, Washington

Verne Snow

March 2-April 7
Holiday Inn St. Louis South
4234 Butler Hill Road (at I-55 and Butler Hill Road)
St. Louis, Missouri

Amazing Facts Faith Summit Weekend

Finding Peace, Power & Purpose



M

More than 2,000 people attended the Amazing Facts Faith Summit weekend in Orlando, Fla., where Pastor Doug Batchelor presented a powerful series of messages entitled "Finding Peace, Power and Purpose for Your Life."

In his opening remarks, Pastor Batchelor told his guests that he wanted them to have a "mountaintop experience" that weekend, and the attendees later confirmed that his prayer had come true.

"It was absolutely wonderful and very faith-building," said Rita Lukhard, who discovered the Amazing Facts television broadcast one morning and really enjoyed Pastor Doug's easy-to-follow style.

After calling the toll-free number and requesting some free materials, Rita contacted her neighbors, who were Sabbathkeeping Christians. "They looked

Photos courtesy of Bonnie Ensminger



Lu Ann Crews accepts a plaque from the General Conference Ministerial Association saluting the soul-winning ministry of her late husband, Amazing Facts founder Joe Crews. Part of the Sabbath afternoon program featured the ministry's beginnings and growth under his leadership.



Pastor Doug Batchelor got to meet hundreds of Amazing Facts supporters in Orlando, including Harold and Faye Duncan and Barbara Soyars from Richmond, Va. Nine people from their church traveled 850 miles to attend Faith Summit Weekend.

at me kind of funny when I asked if they'd ever heard of Doug Batchelor, and now I know why," said Rita with a laugh. "People don't usually come up and ask to be given Bible studies!"

Rita, who was baptized two years ago, traveled to Florida for Faith Summit Weekend with eight friends from the Patterson Church in Richmond, Va. She exclaimed, "The music alone would have been great and the messages alone would have been great, but everything together was beyond fantastic!"

Highlighting the musical program throughout the weekend was violinist Jaime Jorge and vocalist John Lomacang, whose inspiring talents were a tremendous blessing. Joining them for the Sabbath afternoon musical program was Paul Saint-Villiers from Amazing Facts plus the Forest Lake Academy String quartet and the New Generation choir, under the direction of Gale Murphy. The audience was also inspired as Doug and Karen Batchelor's 7-year-old son Stephen sang "Come Meet Jesus."

"It was a blessing for us at Amazing Facts to meet so many of our supporters and so many people who have been won to Christ through this ministry," said Paula Saint-Villiers, Faith Summit Weekend coordinator.

If you were unable to attend Faith Summit Weekend in Orlando but would like to order audio cassette tapes of the messages, call 1-800-538-7275 or shop online at www.amazingfacts.org.



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Director-Speaker of Amazing Facts ministries. Pastor, author, evangelist, teacher.



Annie Kjaer

AFCOE Assistant Director. Teacher, Bible worker, church planter, evangelism assistant.



Pastor Gary Gibbs

AFCOE Director. Senior vice president of Amazing Facts ministries. Pastor, teacher, evangelist, author.



Pastor Robb Long

AFCOE Outreach Coordinator. Pastor, evangelist, church planter, teacher.

Guest faculty includes: Herbert Douglass and various Amazing Facts evangelists



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