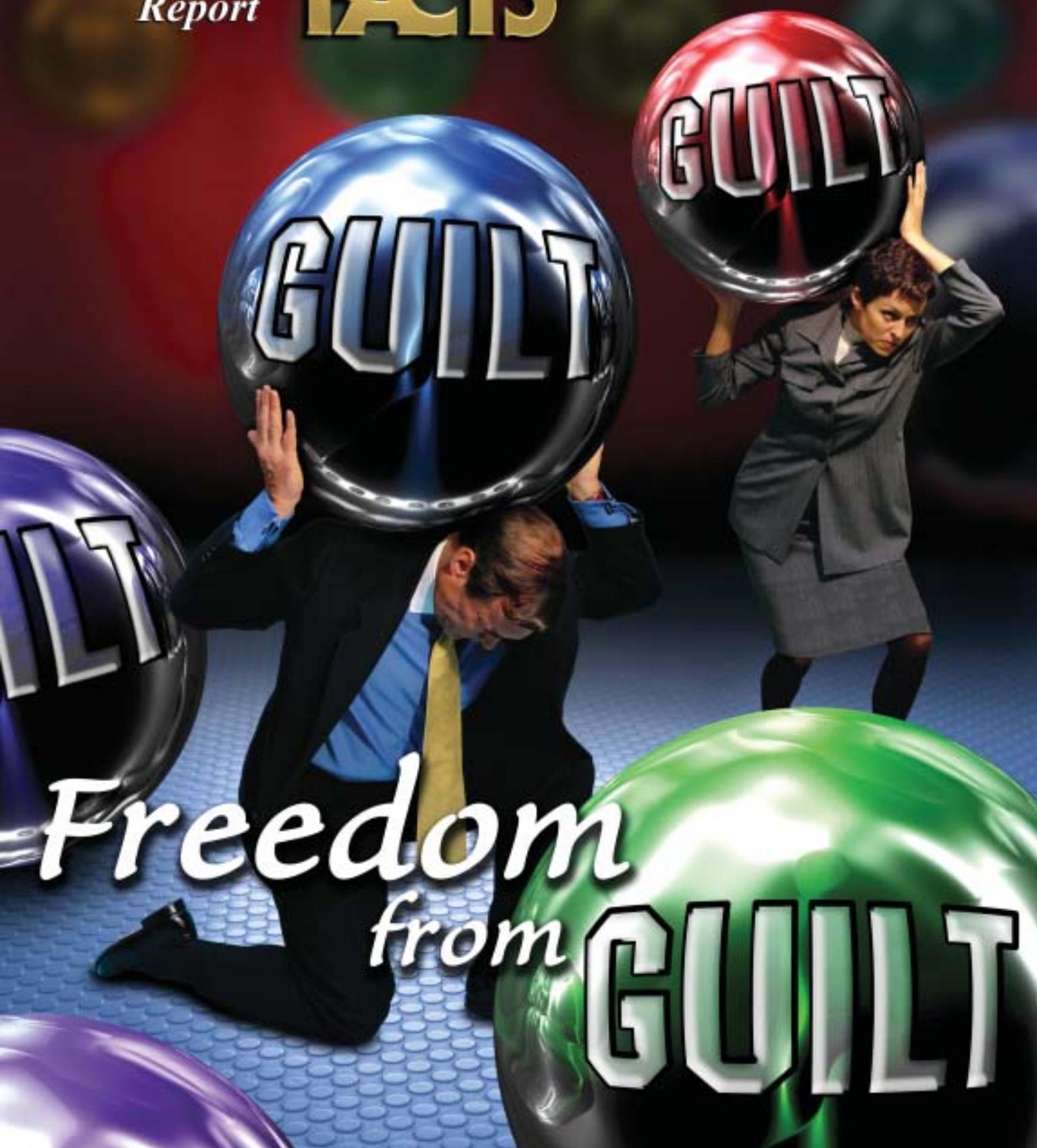


AMAZING FACTS

*Inside
Report*

September/October 2003



*Freedom
from* **GUILT**

Freedom IN CHAINS

by Anthony Lester

“Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also” (Hebrews 13:3).

Just about every day, I receive letters from inmates across the country expressing their deep gratitude for the work of Amazing Facts. Here's just one example of many:

“I am a 32-year-old mother in prison. I have been watching your videos and doing your studies for four months. I have learned so much! I've been trying to develop a relationship with God for many years, and through your teachings, I am beginning to know Him.”
K.D., Oklahoma

By God's perfect grace, ministry resources are reaching into the places often considered by society to be worthless and hopeless. It's clear that you don't think prisoners are beyond God's love, because this outreach would not be possible without your caring support. You have enabled Amazing Facts to print biblical materials for use by those reaching prisoners and others for Christ, offering hope and light even to the most destitute and lonely. Here's an Amazing Fact: *Of the 65,000 enrolled in our online and correspondence Bible School, nearly 15 percent are inmates!*

For me, it's natural to have compassion for the men and women serving time, justly or unjustly, for a crime. I've never stepped foot into a jail, but I have been locked up—caged in severe spiritual bondage.

In this way, I am really no different than our physically jailed friends in Christ, because I too was set free from darkness by willing gospel workers through Amazing Facts. We are indeed brethren of one heart, one mind—one body. Like Paul, you, our jailed brethren, and I have become instead “the prisoner[s] of Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:1). Amen!

Like the many prisoners who still see no need for a Savior, and are merely biding time until their release, I too once thought I was free after accepting a distorted gospel message that lacked a need for true commitment on my part. I would sin, serve a time of suffering on earth, and then felt pre-pardoned to sin again because the law had supposedly been “nailed to the cross.” I am thankful that this ministry realized that even the “free” without Christ are still terribly lost convicts,

and sent men like Amazing Facts' evangelist Brian McMahon as good news ministers. The Holy Spirit used him, as much as He used you, to reach me. “I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me” (Matthew 25:36 NKJV).

That's why we should not forget to pray for those men and women serving Jesus in prison outreach, as much as we shouldn't forget our evangelists, Bible School workers, volunteers, and correspondence team who continue to reach the jailed—and the free—with the gospel. We have all come face to face with our incredible bondage to sin, and this shared experience helps create that spiritual empathy we should have with every prisoner, saved or lost.

I would like for us to especially pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are now serving Him faithfully from their prison cells. It takes great courage and commitment to do what they are doing for Jesus where they are. I suspect more than most, they know the real power of clinging to Jesus when tempted with sin or attacked by the devil emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

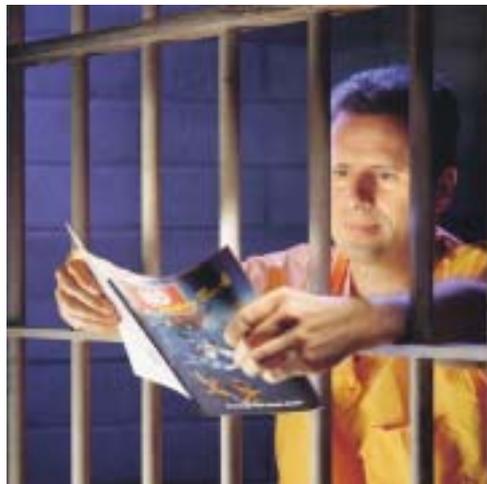
With incredible mercy, the Father has taken these prodigal children and changed them into evangelists who are sharing His message with thousands of other prisoners—often with Amazing Facts' resources—and giving them the freedom that only comes with Jesus' loving forgiveness.

Likewise, I hope you will keep helping the ministry reach our friends in prison by supporting us financially and in prayer. You are making a tremendous difference in the lives of so many. Though they may be behind prison walls now, one day soon we will all experience the freedom behind New Jerusalem's walls.

I know you will be challenged by Pastor Doug's stirring look at the role that forgiveness plays in our lives in “Freedom From Guilt.” It's an excellent companion piece to last issue's “12 Tips for Resisting Temptation” and a beautiful message for those living in spiritual, and physical, bondage.

Finally, whether we are confined to a prison cell, a sick bed, chronic depression, or perhaps able to do as we please, we are all free in the cherished confinement of Christ's loving arms.

No matter where you are, keep the faith. 



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INSIDE REPORT

VOL. 21, NO.5

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Inside Report is a bimonthly publication of Amazing Facts, Inc. It is provided free of charge to the friends and supporters of Amazing Facts on request. Contributors to the ministry will receive *Inside Report* for one year from the date of their most recent gift.

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Amazing Facts is a nonprofit Christian ministry that utilizes literature, radio, television, the Internet, and public evangelism to bring the saving truths of Jesus Christ to a lost world. For its operation, Amazing Facts depends on the gifts and prayers of concerned, likeminded Christians.

FREE FROM AMAZING FACTS

Amazing Facts offers a free 27-lesson Bible course. To enroll, log on to www.amazingfacts.org and click on "Bible School." Or to take the course free through the mail, just send us your name, address, and phone number and specify that you would like to begin the course. (Printed lessons are in English and are available only in Canada, the United States, and their territories.)

A free, color catalog of materials sold by Amazing Facts is available on request. It contains information and prices on all books, videotapes, CDs, audiotapes, and other soul-winning materials available through the ministry.

For more information, please call Amazing Facts Monday through Thursday 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. Pacific.

Inside Report is printed at Pacific Press in Nampa, Idaho.

Mail Bag

Shocked, But Overjoyed!

I have prayed for some time for God to just show me the truth. I never have agreed with the ways of the world. I discovered the Study Guide "The Mark of the Beast" on a table at a county fair. When I sat down that night to read it, I just couldn't believe it! I've never been so



amazed. These truly are amazing but true facts! I'm shocked but at the same time overjoyed and relieved!

I feel like I am truly walking with my Lord now. Jesus said, "The truth will set you free." It does; it changes everything! Could you please send me some more Study Guides—I already made a list of family and friends to give them to. I thank God for you and your wonderful Bible course—it's hard to put down. I know God will continue to deeply bless you as you truly serve him. *L.G.*

Baptismal Insight

I just read your March 2003 letter, and I agree with what you said 100 percent. It definitely makes it much harder to work with people that have been baptized before they are truly committed to Christ. I am looking forward to your Baptismal Preparation video. My funds are limited, but as long as God provides, I will share what I have. May God continue to bless you in your service for Him. *F.E.*

Genuine Gratitude

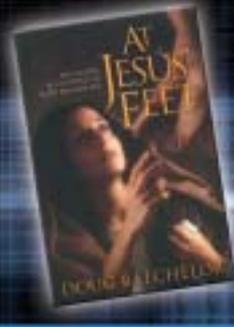
Thank you for what you have done for us. We are now in church and have got the Lord in our hearts and lives. You have helped us so much, just by seeing you on television and reading your letters and books. *D.W., Tennessee*

Reaching Across the Oceans

I once went to a Sunday-keeping church with so many questions they just could not answer. I went to the *Millennium of Prophecy* satellite meetings, and nearly every one of them was answered. I also want to say that Doug Batchelor is an awesome pastor. I am now a baptized Sabbath Christian! *R.W., New Zealand*

In Love With Jesus

I read *At Jesus' Feet*, and I fell in love with Jesus. You should make it a movie! I then watched your tapes and found the truth I have searched for my whole life. I have never been so in love, and I have never understood the Bible the way you have opened it up to me! It has made such a difference in my life. I'm sure the devil really hates you because you are reaching so many. *G.V., Texas*



Set Free

I am currently incarcerated in Florida. During my time here, one of your books crossed my path. I found it extremely interesting as well as convicting. I was once lost in briars of men's doctrines and traditions that have all but obscured the true path to God. Thank you for sharing new light. *W.E., Florida*

User-Friendly

Thank you for making the donations link on your website much easier to find. I didn't have to spend 10 to 15 minutes hunting for it. I pray this small change will bring a bountiful donation to your blessed website. May the Lord God bless you with continued success in spreading the gospel of truth! *J., e-mail*



And We Thank You Too

I want to express my love for this magazine. I truly enjoy it and find it an incredible blessing. *E.F., Mississippi*

The Truth and Nothing But ...

You have been doing a great job in dispensing the truth to all who would have it. Thank you for staying true to Jesus and remaining pure and undefiled. *C.L., e-mail*

Sabbath School Archive

Thank you so very much for providing the archive of Doug Batchelor's Sabbath School lessons! I am a Sabbath School teacher, and listening to Pastor Batchelor teach the lesson helps me greatly in preparing to teach. I am not always able to listen when the lesson is broadcast. The archive is a great help to me. *M.F., e-mail*



Inside Report welcomes all correspondence regarding the magazine and other Amazing Facts ministries. Letters and other materials sent to Amazing Facts may be used—in whole or in part and edited for content, grammar, and readability—in future publications unless otherwise requested. We thank you for your thoughts, suggestions, and financial and prayer support in our endeavor to reach others for Jesus and equip them to do likewise.

VISIONS FOR LIFE:

행복한 미래를 찾아서

DISCOVER BIBLE KEYS FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

BY RICHARD CALDERON

Amazing Facts and Pastor Doug Batchelor are just months away from reaching the people of Korea with a powerful, dynamic satellite series about Jesus Christ and Bible prophecy called *Visions for Life*.

As the region grows increasingly unstable, Amazing Facts believes the Lord has called on this ministry to reach out with the life-transforming three angels' messages before time runs out. Pastor Doug says, "I'm deeply concerned by what is happening in the world today. Every where we turn, we hear of wars and rumors of wars, and I'm especially burdened for the people of Korea who have lived in a war zone for more than 50 years!" With your help, we can give hope to millions lost in spiritual darkness.

I returned to Korea in June to supervise the ongoing preparations for Pastor Doug's meetings, which will take place in Seoul, South Korea, from November 7 to 15, 2003.

It was an ideal time as the energized local church held its annual Pastoral Bible Conference for all its ministers throughout Korea. I was able to introduce the worldwide ministry of Amazing Facts and promote the series alongside Pastor Hark Bong Lee, the personal ministries director.

Pastors were given an exciting promotional video prepared by the Korean Church for use in their home churches. The video features the incredible plans and Christ-centered purpose for the soul-winning series.

At the end of the video, Pastor Doug made a powerful appeal to our Korean brethren to invite their friends, family, and neighbors to discover Jesus for themselves. "Jesus beckoned, 'Come, and see,'" says Batchelor. "Those who do not know the truth are blind, but if they come to Jesus, they will see. This worldwide event will give them that chance."

Pastor Doug will teach from his *Storacles of Prophecy* lessons with an interpreter on stage. For international broadcasts, languages other than English and Korean are also being accommodated.

Working with ATN and the Korean Church, Amazing Facts is incorporating the successful technologies from the 2002 *Visions for Life* in Africa and will beam the message of hope as far south as Australia and New Zealand to as far north as Russia. Nearly 415 church satellite dishes are already up and running, prepared to beam a message of hope to a vast audience of potential millions!

Amazing Facts, in partnership with ATN and the Korean people, is broadcasting the light of Jesus throughout the Pacific Rim. Some people will never see Jesus unless we reflect His light to them. This satellite event gives millions of laity the opportunity to do just that.

Each church also received promotional posters that invite members and unchurched truth-seekers to get involved in this Bible study spectacular. Other promotional efforts are being used to reach as vast an audience as possible, such as a condensed version of *The Richest Caveman*, Doug Batchelor's moving personal testimony about how God transformed him from a rebellious cave-dwelling teenager into an effective end-time evangelist. It's being produced for wide distribution throughout Korea.

(If you would like an unabridged copy of *Caveman* in Korean for yourself, or several copies to share with friends, call Amazing Facts at 800-538-7275 for details.)

You can also view the colorful, eye-catching handbills used to advertise the series by visiting www.visions4life.com. They are available in English and Korean. You'll also find the latest news updates and a place you can help support this epic event. Later, you can watch the series live online via a link at the Amazing Facts website.

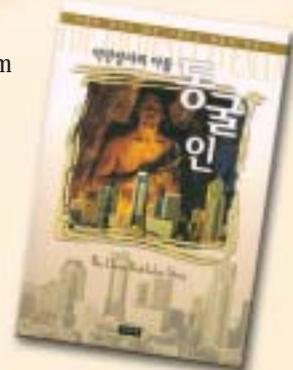
Be a Part of God's End-Time Message

Finally, Amazing Facts prays that untold thousands will have their lives transformed by the grace of the Holy Spirit. I praise the Lord for this special opportunity to go for Him to Korea. Will you join us by doing the following three things?

- Pray
- Ask God how you can help
- Move forward by faith with us

Pray that preparation will continue to move forward, and that God will send His angels to protect Pastor Doug, myself, and the hundreds involved in this exciting evangelistic opportunity. If you can do just one thing to help, please pray. By your prayers, the Lord of heaven will reap souls for His kingdom.

Amazingly, the cost to the ministry is relatively minimal, as an energized local church has already acquired sufficient funds for pre-work, local advertising, and a venue. However, we still need to raise \$250,000 to help cover the cost of satellite program production, travel, and other needs. If you feel the Lord touching your heart in such troubling times for the people of Korea and 21 other nations and multiple Pacific islands, please call us at 916-434-3880, ext. 3063, to see how you can help.



Freedom from

GUILT

By Pastor
Doug Batchelor



An **Amazing Fact:** Amputees often experience a sensation called “phantom pain.” For example, they might have lost their entire leg, but their toes hurt or their knee itches even though they no longer actually have them. They sense this phantom feeling coming from an absent member and their invisible toes will curl and their imaginary fingers will grasp. Even a nonexistent leg might feel sturdy enough to stand on. Doctors watch helplessly, unable to treat this part of the body that is screaming for attention even though it no longer exists. In the same

way, there are many Christians, new and old, who have confessed and forsaken their sins and applied the blood of Jesus for cleansing, yet still feel the phantom pain of guilt.



A kind farmer offered a ride in his wagon to an old man carrying a large sack of potatoes to market. After the weathered man had struggled into the back of the cart, the farmer noticed his new passenger was still hoisting the sack of potatoes on his shoulder. “Friend,” the farmer encouraged, “Set down your load and rest your back.” But the weary fellow responded, “Mister, you were kind enough to give me a ride; I wouldn’t dare ask you to also carry my sack of potatoes.” Of course, we know the worn traveler was silly not to put down his load and rest, yet there are millions of Christians who accept Jesus’ forgiving mercy yet feel they must continue to carry their burden of guilt and shame.

There are few things more important to a Christian’s peace and assurance than the understanding of guilt and forgiveness. Sadly, these are some of the most misunderstood subjects, and I am constantly asked about what guilt and forgiveness should mean to Christians. Too many of God’s children are dragging an unnecessary yoke through life.

Paul says in Hebrews 12:1, 2, “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and

finisher of our faith” (NKJV). To successfully run this race, we are commanded to lay aside not only the sin, but also the weight of guilt that impedes us.

The Bible also says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). That cleansing includes the sin and the phantom pain of guilt.

What Is Guilt?

To appreciate the kind of forgiveness mentioned in 1 John, we need to understand guilt and overcome the many misconceptions causing confusion and heartache.

Have you ever instinctively taken your foot off the gas pedal when you see a highway patrolman? You might hit the brakes even when you are already going the speed limit. Why? Might it be because you often break the speed limit and automatically fear you might be doing something wrong?

Do you ever feel guilty? There are times when you should, because it’s good for you. If you never feel guilt, something is probably wrong with your conscience. The Bible says, “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Of course, nobody enjoys guilt; yet everyone, if they have a normal conscience, will experience it. So it shouldn’t surprise us that popular philosophy, and even some theology, tells us that all guilt is bad. Feel-good preachers say we should try to prevent guilt from worrying our minds no matter what we’re doing or how evil it might be.

Yet no matter how stressful or uncomfortable guilt can be, it’s not always bad.

The Sense of the Soul

Obviously, it would be nice to live without pain. But the very nerves that give you the sensations of pain also help you to experience pleasure. Even more, nerves keep us alive. Leprosy attacks your nervous system and eventually kills the feeling in your extremities. When those with this disease touch a hot stove and burn their fingers, they don’t know it. Amazingly, leprosy even makes your eyes forget to blink! It’s a very slight impression on our nerves that tells us to lubricate our eyes. Without nerves, you

wouldn't blink and you would be subject to dry eyes, becoming more susceptible to infections or blindness. Little sensations of pain are actually a blessing.

Likewise, while guilt doesn't feel good spiritually, it keeps your conscience alive. Jesus called the Holy Spirit a Comforter, but He also convicts the world of its sin (John 16:8). We can know the Holy Spirit is working in our lives when we feel the sensation of guilt that follows bad behavior. The sensation of remorse for sin is often literally a sign from God of new spiritual life!

How to Respond to Guilt

Have you ever been gossiping to another person when the very subject you're discussing walks into the room? You suddenly get very quiet and talk as if you were just commenting on the weather. Why that reaction? Guilt. Is that a good or bad reaction? Good. You should be ashamed if you're gossiping!

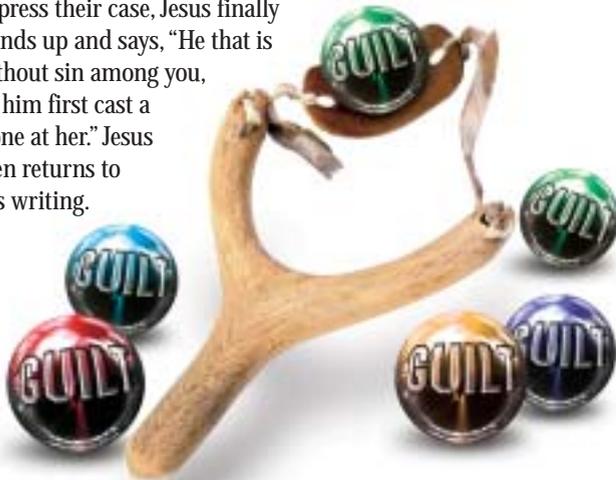
When Peter preached that spirit-filled sermon at Pentecost, one of the signs that it was effective is found in how his listeners responded. "They were pricked in their heart" (Acts 2:37). They were convicted, and they pleaded, "What shall we do?"

That was a good response. Peter could then talk to them about repentance and forgiveness, but only after they sensed their guilt. After Isaiah saw God, he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips!" (Isaiah 6:5). When Isaiah saw God's holiness and goodness, he became aware of his badness, and then God cleansed him of sin.

The closer you draw to Christ, the more you will experience impulses of guilt. That might sound like a paradox, but it's true. The nearer you come to the Light, the more clearly you will see the wrong things in your lifestyle that you may never have noticed before—and you will probably feel guilt and shame. But when you ask for forgiveness, you will experience grace and peace. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:10).

Who's Really Guilty

In John 8, we read the well-known story of a woman caught in adultery. Her accusers condemn her, saying to Jesus, "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" But Jesus ignores their accusations, and stoops down to write in the dust on the temple floor. As they continue to press their case, Jesus finally stands up and says, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Jesus then returns to His writing.



The Bible next records, "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." They felt guilt, and they walked away.

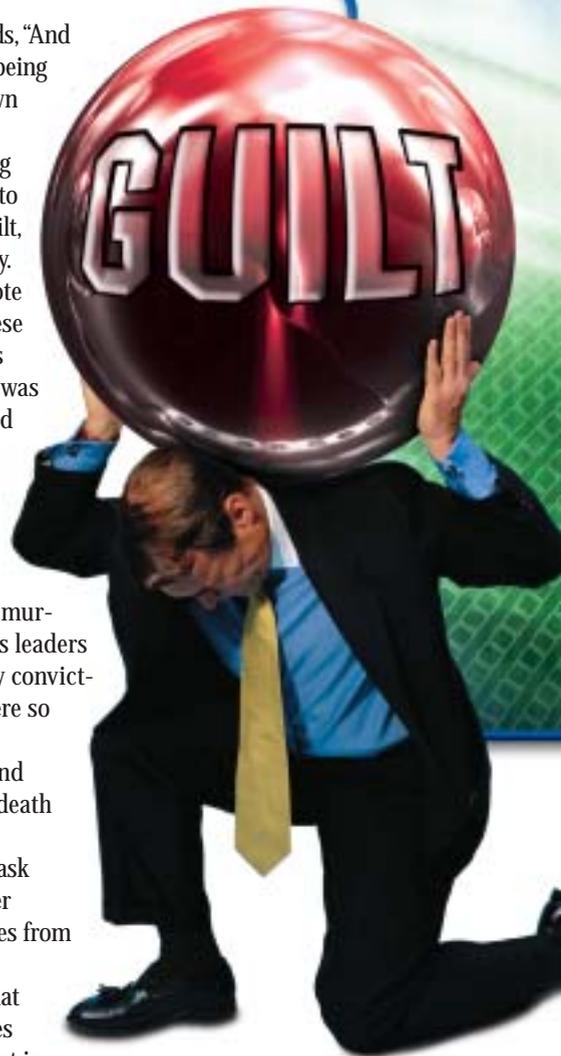
I believe Jesus wrote out the laws that these men had themselves broken, as each one was specifically convicted about their own guilt. By contrast, some of the guilty react in anger when they are convicted. Stephen was murdered when religious leaders heard his powerfully convicting sermon; they were so troubled that they plugged their ears and then stoned him to death (Acts 7:57, 58).

We might need to ask ourselves if our anger toward another comes from their wrongdoing or because we resent that their goodness makes our badness stand out in contrast. Are they simply reminding us of our guilt? In fact, some people stay away from church because they want to avoid places that will stir the unpleasant sensations of shame.

The Heart of Guilt

One of the best possible goals is to go through life feeling peace and innocence before God. Job declares, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live" (Job 27:6). The Bible says Job was a perfect and upright man who feared God and hated evil, but I don't think Job claimed to be sinless. But then why could he say that his heart was not condemning him? Because whenever Job became aware of any failure, he dealt with his sin, keeping his account right with God. He sacrificed for himself and his family every day, so his heart was always clear before the Lord.

Have you ever felt condemned by your own heart? Sometimes it hits you like a bolt of lightning. Other times it might build slowly, as if you know you are doing something wrong but are trying to ignore it—until it begins to boil over and, all of a sudden, you have an awful revelation. It's here we suddenly see ourselves through God's eyes. We feel guilty and condemned, and like



David, we cry, "I have sinned!" The weeds of sin must be pulled from the gardens of our hearts as soon as they sprout.

Yet what a wonderful thing when, like Job, our hearts don't condemn us. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God" (1 John 3:21).

False Guilt

Have you ever known somebody who felt guilty when they really shouldn't—maybe even yourself? The devil is probably urging you to feel shame about sins that have been forgiven. I once read a story in which the devil appeared to Martin Luther with a list of Luther's sins listed on a scroll. The devil said, "Do you really think that God can forgive all this? You're a doomed man." Luther saw the list and thought, "Oh, there's no hope for me." But then he noticed that the devil's hand was covering some words at the top of the scroll, so he asked, "What is your hand covering?" The devil answered, "Nothing. Just notice these sins here." Luther demands, "Remove your hand in the name of Jesus." And finally the devil took his hand away, revealing the words, "All under the blood."

Those sins were covered by Jesus' blood, but the devil still tried to make Luther feel guilty for his past. Likewise, most Christians are attacked by the devil at some point in their lives so they will feel this same false guilt.

Maybe you've asked God to forgive something you did years before—and you've asked a hundred times after.

But every time it comes to your mind, you say, "Oh, Lord, forgive me. I'm so sorry I did that." Yet each time, you still feel some guilt and continue to punish yourself.

But really think about this—is that feeling from God or the devil? You need to remember 1 John 3:21 and remind yourself that if God has forgiven you, you need to forgive yourself. Otherwise, aren't you somehow confessing that your judgment is better than God's?

Without faith, it's impossible to please God. That includes the faith that "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." We must embrace forgiveness, just as we should forgive others.

The Un-forgiven Are Unforgiving

The town gossip invited a friend over for tea. Glancing out her window, she watched her neighbor hang laundry on a clothesline. The gossip shook her head and said, "That lady's house must be filthy because her laundry always looks dirty." Her guest peered out the window and answered, "I don't think it's her laundry that's dirty but your windows."

I believe those who struggle with guilt are the most critical of others. People in the church who constantly criticize their fellow Christians are most likely the ones who haven't learned to embrace God's forgiveness. They still feel guilty, so they're trying to alleviate their shame by pointing to the deficiencies of everybody else. If you can't forgive yourself even after God has forgiven you, can you really forgive others?

The opposite is also true: The ones who have fully embraced God's grace, who are forgiven much, return that forgiveness to others more abundantly. They have experienced God's mercy, and they are more Christ-like. Proverbs 28:1 emphasizes this truth: "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion."

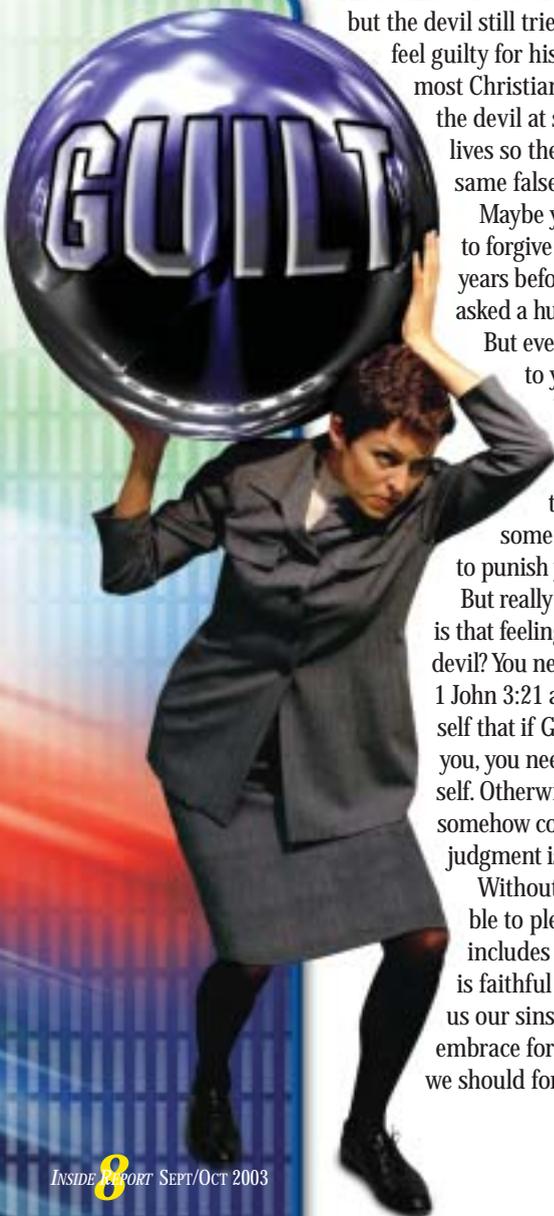
The guilty run from self-condemnation even though they aren't being chased—like a paroled thief who thinks the sheriff is still stalking him. They're plagued by a guilty conscience, while the righteous, those who like Job are clean by the blood of the Lamb, stand fast and offer grace to those in need.

Guilt From God or Man?

The first book of Peter counsels, "Having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed" (3:16 NKJV). Peter is writing to all those who are doing good and yet are suffering for their moral behavior. A day is coming when the whole world will try to make you feel bad about doing God's will, as if you are a traitor for not going along with their sinful ways. They will use guilt as a weapon against God's people—blaming them for the calamities that befall the earth in the final days.

Peter says that if you are being persecuted for doing right, don't be ashamed. Instead, let your false accusers be ashamed, because it's not your problem. We too often allow the world to heap undeserved shame on us because we are more concerned about what it thinks than what God knows. We would rather have acceptance before man than a clear conscience before God. But as someone said, "Guilt suggested by the judgment of men is a false guilt if it does not receive inner support by a judgment of God."

This dynamic can be seen during the church offering. As the collection plate goes by, some are not able to give, but they know people around them might be watching. So they reluctantly toss



A Clear Conscience—A Healthy Body

Jesus dedicated much of His ministry to healing people's bodies from sickness brought on by guilt. Indeed, His physical healing was often a symbol of forgiving their sin as much as it was a cure for their actual ailment. People often unconsciously make themselves ill because of their guilt. Science has clearly substantiated what the Bible has long taught about the connection between shame, guilt, and sickness. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Proverbs 17:22).

When Jesus healed somebody, He said, "Go and sin no more." He's saying there is a connection between their sin and sickness, so when He healed their disease, He also took away their guilt.

A good attitude is a natural remedy—those most positive about their lives tend to have an improved immune system and better odds of surviving a major sickness. "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken" (Proverbs 15:13). A good, healing attitude is composed of trusting divine power and mercy in your forgiveness, which positively influences your health.



something into the plate. The many empty envelopes treasurers find in the offering speaks to this. But don't confuse the guilt that the world wants to place on you with the guilt that comes from disobeying God. They are two different things, and only one leads to true redemption.

Steer Clear of Guilt

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Of course, the ideal would be to never feel shame because you're not doing anything to feel guilty about. Philip Brooks writes, "Keep clear of the need of concealment. It's an awful hour when the first necessity of hiding anything comes. The whole life is different thenceforth. When there are questions to be feared and eyes to be avoided and subjects which must not be touched then the bloom of life is gone."

Christians ought to live lives that are crystal clear. It is possible to live without feeling fear or shame because our sins are forgiven and we are walking in the light with nothing to hide. No one can be caught in a place he does not visit. If you live in the light, you're not worried if somebody gets a hold of your computer

hard drive or file cabinet. Anytime you feel the need to hide something, you should ask, "Should I be doing this?"

One great way to avoid guilt is by surrounding yourself with spiritually honest people and activities. Reading the Bible with a sincere heart and fellowshiping with other good Christians is a proven way to practice living rightly and learning how to behave according to the Word. You probably tend to be more cautious about your actions at church than anywhere else because you're conscious of God's presence, so it's good practice to remain in that environment and attitude.

Often, my simply being a minister makes people feel guilty. A mechanic working on my car might not use "angelic language." They'll use profanity—until I mention that I'm a minister. Instantly the language changes! Their sense of guilt is a natural, healthy response. Likewise, when we walk conscious of the presence of God, it keeps us on the path of life.

Good News for the Guilty

Mary was the disciple from whom Jesus drove out seven evil spirits. Someone at a feast complains, "If Jesus was a prophet, He wouldn't let this woman touch Him because of who she is!" That's how dirty Mary's reputation was, yet who is the one who first saw Jesus after the resurrection? Not His mother or John or James or even Peter—it was Mary Magdalene.

Furthermore, He picked her to go share His message. Why? Quite possibly, He was trying to say something about guilt and shame.

The Lord uses people who have these reputations.

Doesn't that speak to your heart something about feeling shame when the Lamb has forgiven you? Doesn't it show how you might treat others whom the Lord has forgiven?

When Jesus went to the cross, He endured our sins—but He also took our guilt and shame. Some Christians think that Jesus took our sins, but we still must feel the shame. Yet even though Jesus loves peace, He was stripped and felt our shame so that we might

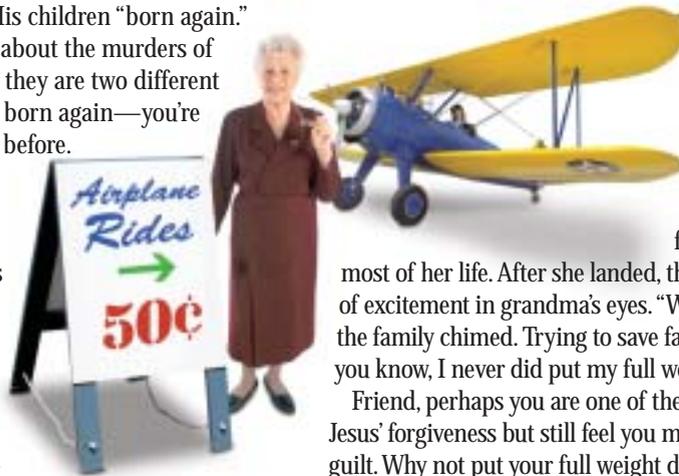


have that peace. He felt what every transgression ever committed has brought the world, and it tortured His spirit so that He took our guilt on the cross.

“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19 NKJV). This is good news! God is not holding our sins over our heads. As we learned earlier, sin and guilt go together, so Jesus died for your shame as much as He died to cover your sins with His blood.

Jesus does not want you to feel guilty; rather, He has given you a new heart. It's why He calls His children “born again.” Should a newborn baby feel guilty about the murders of Ted Bundy? Of course not, because they are two different people. It's the same way if you are born again—you're not the same person that you were before.

This is so important to me as a pastor, because the only way I can stand before my church and dare speak about Jesus and His gospel is if I believe I'm not the same Doug Batchelor who did despicable things in the past. That's why Jesus came to set us free. It's the new birth concept—how can a new person feel guilty about some-



thing a dead person did? When you're born again, you are made new. Hebrews 4:16 gives you and me wonderful hope: “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” We can now come before the throne of God with boldness, because Jesus took away our shame and guilt.

Grandpa took the whole family to the county fair where a pilot was offering short rides in his two-seat biplane for 50 cents. After much pleading and urging from the family, Grandma very reluctantly agreed to take a ride in the “flying contraption.” For 15 thrilling minutes, the pilot gave grandma a beautiful and scenic ride. For the first time, she saw from the air the town and farms where she had spent most of her life. After she landed, the family detected a sparkle of excitement in grandma's eyes. “We knew you would love it!” the family chimed. Trying to save face, Grandma said, “I'll have you know, I never did put my full weight down!”

Friend, perhaps you are one of the millions who have accepted Jesus' forgiveness but still feel you must carry the shame and guilt. Why not put your full weight down now? —

Witnessing Corner



Have you seen BibleUniverse.com's new look? It has all the wonderful Bible resources you love, but now with a new eye-catching design sure to draw more seekers to the bountiful Bible truth within its pages. Go to www.BibleUniverse.com to check it out.

It's a great Internet resource featuring a no-pressure environment for believers and non-believers who want the best tools to study and learn more about Jesus. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will use our new site to help many come to Christ and accept the three angels' messages.



Want to help the Holy Spirit by advertising our new site in a unique, easy, and fun way? Here are two great ideas:

1) A quick, inexpensive approach to direct family, co-workers, friends, neighbors—just about anybody—is getting a pack of our BibleUniverse witnessing cards to pass out. You can also drop them into envelopes, pass them out at county fairs or flea markets—the possibilities are endless. They're just \$3.95 for a pack of 100—an efficient way to help others expand their universe!

2) We also offer our attention-grabbing BibleUniverse T-shirts—where you can go anywhere and make an invitation without opening your mouth. The editor of *Inside Report* has worn his T-shirt while shopping, and two retail workers at different locations took notice and were very excited about visiting the site! So we know it works!

Call our order department at 800-538-7275 for more information and get your hands on these powerful witnessing tools—and don't forget to ask for a free BibleUniverse window sticker too!

MAXIMIZE YOUR GIFTS

Gift  Annuities



Television

Bible School



Radio

Evangelism



AMAZING FACTS

Publishing



Internet



Training



Bringing Good Things to You and Others!

Through the prayers, encouragement, and support of people like you, God has blessed Amazing Facts ministry with an ever-increasing circle of influence. We have endeavored to be singular and true to our mission: sharing the three angels' messages in a clear, convicting, and appealing manner.

Your gifts have allowed us to be on hundreds of radio and TV stations worldwide and utilize evangelistic teams to minister nationwide to share the gospel with millions. Your generosity has also allowed more than 65,000 to be enrolled in our Bible Correspondence School and has enabled 150 pastors and laity to train at our College of Evangelism this past year. Your sacrifice has allowed us to produce hundreds of effective sharing books, pamphlets, and audio- and videotapes for soul-winning and nurturing.

Because your commitment means so much to us, we want to be faithful in our mission to others and give something back to you. An Amazing Facts Gift Annuity allows us to do just that, offering donors an assured fixed rate of income for life, an excellent rate of return, and large tax benefits in exchange for a gift of cash, stocks, or bonds.

Each gift annuity established with Amazing Facts helps ensure your financial security and our ability to continue sharing God's last message of mercy in these end-times.

If you would like to know more about Amazing Facts Gift Annuities, please contact John Bridges, Director of Planned Giving at 800-436-2695, ext. 3005, or Judy Schachten, Secretary, at ext. 3029.

SINGLE LIFE					
GIFT ANNUITY PAYMENT RATES					
AGE	RATE	AGE	RATE	AGE	RATE
60	5.7%	71	6.6	82	8.5
61	5.8	72	6.7	83	8.8
62	5.9	73	6.8	84	9.2
63	5.9	74	6.9	85	9.5
64	6.0	75	7.1	86	9.9
65	6.0	76	7.2	87	10.2
66	6.1	77	7.4	88	10.6
67	6.2	78	7.6	89	11.0
68	6.3	79	7.8	90+	11.3
69	6.4	80	8.0		
70	6.5	81	8.3		

Minimum for one-life annuity: \$5,000

Minimum for two-life annuity: \$10,000

Recommended by the American Council on Gift Annuities. Effective July 1, 2003.

Amazing Facts EVANGELISM TEAM



You are invited to meet the members of Amazing Facts evangelism 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



Byron Corbett



Eric Flickinger



Lowell Hargreaves



Brian McMahon



David Morgan



Jason Morgan



Rawel Moringlane



Jack Pefley



Dennis Priebe



Mike Troxell

Doug Batchelor

November 7 – November 15
Visions for Life: Korea
Seoul, Korea

October 4 at 4 p.m. Pacific
Positive Life Radio Interview

John Bradshaw

October 17 – November 22
Clarksville Church
Clarksville, Tennessee
Call 931-648-3314 for details.

Byron Corbett

October 10 – November 8
Holiday Inn
9175 West Stockton Boulevard
Elk Grove, California

Eric Flickinger

September 5 – October 11
Middletown Middle School
100 High Street
Middletown, Maryland

October 24 – November 28
Clarion Inn
1209 North Walton Boulevard
Bentonville, Arkansas

Lowell Hargreaves

September 5 – October 11
County Fairgrounds
801 South 10th Avenue
Hanford, California

October 24 – November 29
Courtyard by Merriot
136 Marsh Hill Road
Orange, Connecticut

Tyler Long

September 12 – October 11
Skyline High School
600 East Mountain View Avenue
Longmont, Colorado

October 24 – November 22
Lakeport Church
1111 Park Way
Lakeport, California

Brian McMahon

September 5 – October 11
Beaverton Church
14645 Southwest Davis Road
Beaverton, Oregon

October 24 – November 29
Lincoln Northside Church
1800 North 73rd Street
Lincoln, Nebraska

David Morgan

September 5 – October 4
Washington Shrine Club/Old VFW Hall
600 Memorial Drive
Bogalusa, Louisiana

October 17 – November 15
Community Bank
1325 Harrison Street
Batesville, Arkansas

Jason Morgan

September 5 – October 11
Ameri Suites
6021 Southwest 6th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas

October 17 – November 21
Henderson, Kentucky
Call 270-826-7720 for details.

Rawel Moringlane

September 5 – October 11
Tehachapi, California
Call 805-822-1174 for details.

Jack Pefley

September 3 – 6:
Ramada Inn, 2727 6th Avenue SE
Aberdeen, South Dakota

September 9 – 13:
Community Building, 299 N. Main
Parker, South Dakota

September 16 – 20:
Visitors Center, 650 E. Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota

September 23 – 27:
Civic Center, 444 Mt. Rushmore Rd.
Rapid City, South Dakota

September 30 – October 4:
Civic Center, 601 E. Sweet Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota

October 7 – 11:
City Hall, 101 1st Street SW
Bowman, North Dakota

Dennis Priebe

September 5, 6:
Uniondale Church, New York

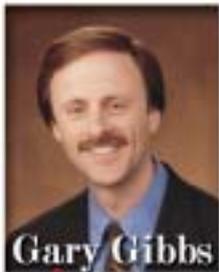
September 13:
Pilgrim's Tabernacle Church
Hempstead, New York

October 17–19:
Hartland Institute Convocation
Rapidan, Virginia

Mike Troxell

September 5 – October 11
Pine Bluff Convention Center
2 Convention Center Plaza
Pine Bluff, Arkansas

PLEASE NOTE: If you would like to schedule an Amazing Facts evangelistic series or a weekend of revival meetings in your church, please contact the evangelism department at Amazing Facts by phone at 916-434-3880 or by mail.



A NEW CALL

AMAZING FACTS

for One of Amazing Facts' Finest

by Scott Stewart

Gibbs and his wife Sherilyn have two children, Carrisa, age 2, and Christina, born May 23 of this year. Gibbs became a member of God's end-time church as a teenager after attending a public evangelistic meeting. God revolutionized his life and gave him a passion for ministry. Gibbs has worked as a literature

Amazing Facts is saddened, yet pleased, to announce that Gary Gibbs, formerly the evangelism coordinator of Amazing Facts, joined Adventist Television Network (ATN) in July to serve as their associate director. Gibbs will be responsible for marketing and development with ATN as well as sharing in many other areas of planning and leadership.

Gibbs takes with him a wealth of experience in international evangelism, administration, and strategic planning for international broadcasting. During the last 10 years, Gibbs has played a significant role in the growth of Amazing Facts as a major television and radio ministry.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my 10 years at Amazing Facts. It has been an immeasurable blessing to work with three extremely intelligent, gifted, and spiritual leaders: Joe Crews, Bill May, and Doug Batchelor. I have personally grown through the relationships with each of these men and count them as close friends. The past eight years with Doug has been an especially fulfilling time in ministry. Doug has done a great job, and we look forward to working together in the future in my new capacity," says Gibbs.

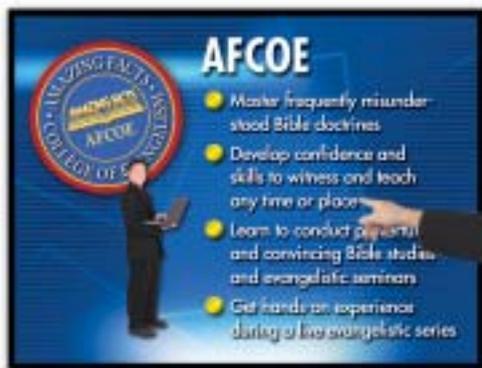
evangelist, Bible instructor, public evangelist, and pastor. Gibbs has twice worked for Amazing Facts; once as an evangelist and, for the last 10 years, as evangelism coordinator and assistant director. He also served as the director of the Amazing Facts College of Evangelism, which trains a number of evangelists and Bible workers each year. "Amazing Facts is truly doing a wonderful work for God unlike any other ministry," adds Gibbs. "So it is with mixed emotions that I say 'goodbye' . . . sad to leave a ministry that I love, but glad to know that God has made it clear what I am to do."

ATN will soon begin broadcasting globally around the clock. Gibbs will be a member of the programming committee and will develop ATN's distribution throughout North America. He will draw heavily from his experience in organizing and managing large international evangelistic efforts such as Visions for Life 2002: Africa, 2001 Grace Odyssey in the Philippines, Reach India '97, NET '99 in New York, The Next Millennium SatelLIGHT Seminar in 1997, and others.

"Starting a worldwide television network holds tremendous potential. We will have a platform to speak to the world about God's last-day message. ATN's mission is to evangelize and disciple, and is in total harmony with the mission I believe God has called me to do," says Gibbs.

"While I leave Amazing Facts with sincere sorrow, I look to the future with hopeful anticipation. I feel God has used me at Amazing Facts during a very exciting time and that my work is now to move and assist His work in another arena," he adds.

Gibbs has been published in a number of church periodicals and is the author of a number of books, available from Amazing Facts, such as, *Winsome Witnessing*, *Winsome Studies in Prophecy*, *Coming One World Church*, *Return To Sodom*, *The Beast: Who Will Worship It?*, and *Abomination of Desolation*.





AFCOE

Reaches Into Mexico

By Nicole Parker

Conviction was oppressing Rosía and Salvador. For years they had been living together, though they knew it was wrong.

They wanted to set a good example for their two little daughters, and they knew they needed to come back to God.

Then a nearby church announced upcoming Bible study meetings with some visiting Americans! Rosía and Salvador chose the second row from the front as theirs, and faithfully attended. When Dawn Fullerton, an AFCOE graduate, gave an appeal for those who wanted to re-consecrate their lives to God, two of the first hands to be raised—first separately, then tightly clasped together—belonged to Rosía and Salvador. For their family, this would be a new start.

Rosía and Salvador joined several other couples journeying about three hours away to obtain official birth certificates in order to get married. With the help of the church, they were able to marry in time for the baptism on Sabbath. Tears filled many eyes as, faces glowing, they leaped from the waters of baptism into each other's arms!

An AFCOE team of 20 students, former students, and other mission team members (including translators) had only nine days in which to share the gospel with many hungry souls in Mexico. Bible study lessons had been sent in advance for church members to share with their contacts in preparation for the meetings. The group was divided into teams between eight small churches across Ensenada and San Vicente to reap bountiful blessings from these studies, the church members' pre-work, and the work of the Spirit of God.

Kevin Sears and David Johnson's tiny church had only one visitor on opening night. However, soon young people poured in

from the surrounding impoverished area. One young man of about 17 had been dealing drugs, though his family members had recently joined this church. He

brought friends, and all insisted they needed

El Camino A Cristo (Steps to Christ). In the end, he

was one of the most decisive baptismal candidates. He wanted a new life, and

was ready to count the cost. In fact, he warned his friends of the requirements so zealously that the listening translator feared he might drive them away! But several of his friends joined him in his determination to follow the Jesus they had met in *Steps to Christ* and the nightly meetings.

In all, 25 were baptized at the end of our short meetings, and about 25 more were preparing for baptism when we left. Not all of those waiting for baptism had been

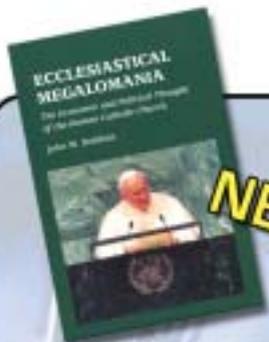
able to get their legal marriage certificates yet, but all were excited about their new start in life. More than 60 students graduated from the Amazing Facts Bible study course and hundreds more are currently studying the lessons!

On the final Sabbath, a church rally gathered people from the entire city for an all-day spiritual high, including the graduation of Bible study contacts and the afternoon baptism. One man who was baptized testified before the audience afterward, saying that he had read the Bible many times, trying to understand God. But hearing these messages had transformed his understanding of God's love. He expressed tremendous gratitude for the AFCOE team's willingness to sacrifice to come and share the gospel with him. Most of the mission team members could not understand his Spanish, but all could understand the tears of another, a woman who could hardly choke out words. She wept with joy as she told that she had seen Jesus in these people who had come to speak, and her life had been changed.

The meetings in Mexico were unforgettable, and we know that our AFCOE graduates will carry their enthusiasm to other fields in the Master's vineyard. —

Please pray for all our students as they seek to transform lives in the name of Jesus. And please continue to support the ministry of AFCOE with your prayers and gifts.





Ecclesiastical Megalomania

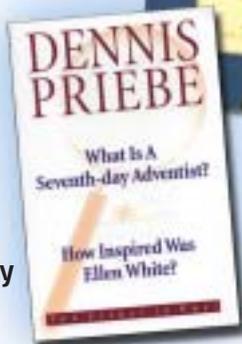
John W. Robbins. Human freedom is intrinsically tied to religion. Learn how the church of Rome, through official pronouncements, is subtly destroying the values necessary to preserve a world free to worship by its own conscience. Highly recommended for anyone interested in preserving human liberty!

BK-EMEG ... \$19.95

Heaven

E.G. White. Find hope and purpose like never before in this amazing volume about heaven from one of the faith's most inspired writers. Learn what the saved will do in heaven, what it will look like, and how that experience can begin right here on earth. A wonderful collection that will make you homesick for a place you've never seen!

BK-HEAV ... \$14.99



What Is a Seventh-day Adventist?

Dennis Priebe.

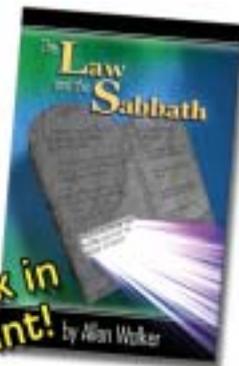
What is the truth behind the claims of one of Christianity's most controversial denominations? In a clear, concise way, learn about Ellen White and the purpose of Adventism in the last days. Great for sharing!

BK-WISDA ... \$5.95

The Law and the Sabbath

Allen Walker. If Christians are under grace and not the law, how can the Sabbath be relevant today? Do the Ten Commandments have any place in the new covenant experience? Get solid, scriptural answers about this sacred truth swirling under fierce controversy in today's church. Foreword by Joe Crews.

BK-LAS ... \$9.95



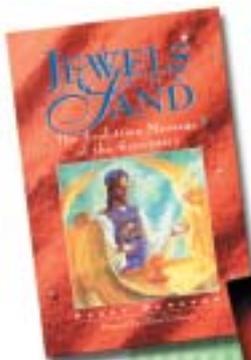
Back in Print!
by Allen Walker

Jewels in the Sand

Peggy Dameron.

Christians, and Jews, need to understand the meanings behind the sanctuary and its services. An easy-to-understand, beautiful presentation of its significance in these end-times.

BK-JISA ... \$9.99



NEW!

Capturing the Pagan Mind

Peter Jones. The church is under attack from user-friendly paganism that's overwhelming the nation. Learn how the apostle Paul dealt with this same crisis in the early church. He never panicked or changed his message, but he acted quickly as we must. You'll find out how the gospel can transform even the most occult-filled minds.

Hardcover BK-CTPM ... \$24.99

Pagan Traditions

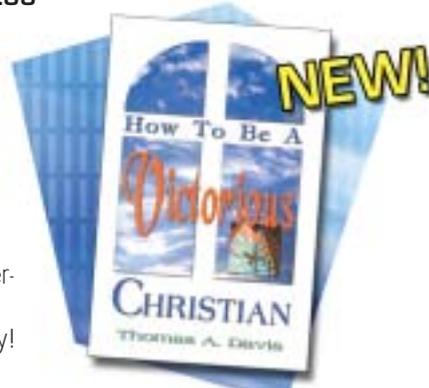
David Ingham. Learn the chilling and stunning origins of Christianity's most popular traditions and holidays. Years of research will help you discern idolatry and even occult practices pervading the church. But more important, it will give you the keys to avoid them and stay near to God.

BK-PTR ... \$6.95

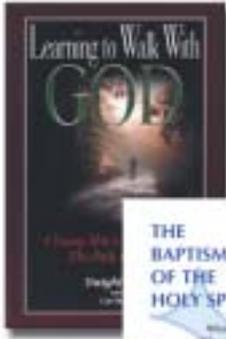
How to Be a Victorious Christian

Thomas A. Davis. Jesus wants His people to have real victory over sin. Learn how in this simple but convicting step-by-step guide that will show last-day believers how to be true overcomers. Jesus will live again in your heart in this practical, inviting journey!

BK-HBVC ... \$12.95



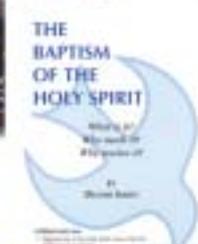
Sneak-Peek



Learning to Walk With God

Dwight Hall. Dwight wanted a practical, heart-changing walk with God like Enoch, Moses, and Elijah had. He was living the American dream, but he lacked real peace, meaning, and purpose. A rousing story of God's power and grace, and a life-changing guide to a more fulfilling and abundant life.

BK-LWWG ... \$13.99

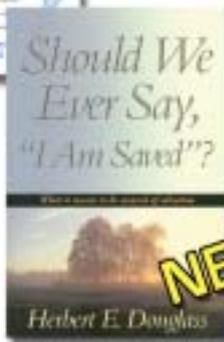


The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Dennis Smith. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and is it something Christians can still experience today?

Learn how one family sought out this special anointing and discovered a new fortified spiritual life that would prepare them for every battle against the enemy. "A must-read book for every Christian who wants to be ready for Christ's second coming!"

BK-BOHS ... \$7.99



NEW!

Should We Ever Say "I Am Saved"?

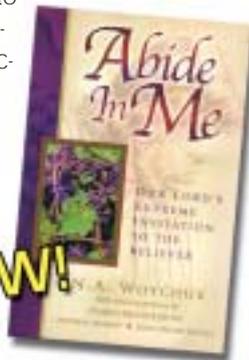
Herbert Douglass. Pick up this compelling journey into the very nature of every Christian's salvation, and your relationship with God will never be the same. Powerful study based on years of personal discovery of what it means to be truly assured of salvation. If you long to be a happy child of God, delivered from doubt and filled with faith, get this book! Excellent for sharing with anyone unsure about God's saving grace in their lives.

BK-SWES ... \$12.99

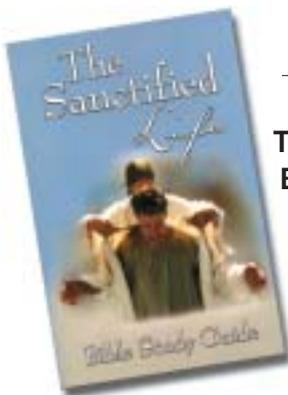
Abide in Me

N.A. Woychuk. Understanding Christ's supreme invitation to His followers enables us to have a sublime relationship with the Father full of supernatural power. Learn how to experience this special spiritual connection in this thought-provoking journey that will draw you closer to Him.

BK-AIME ... \$9.95



NEW!



The Sanctified Life Bible Study Guide

Merlin Beerman. Are you tired of spiritual games? Are you ready to surrender all to Jesus? Through the lives of Daniel, John, and Jesus, you'll find a deep-

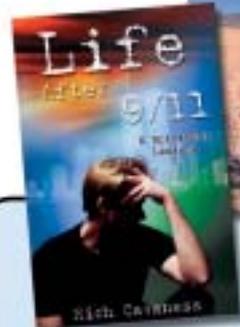
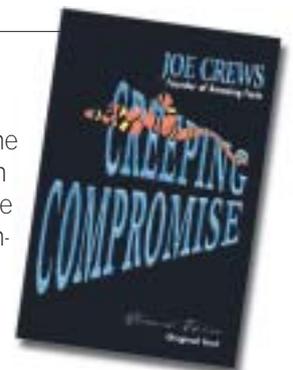
er relationship with God. Great for group or individual study!

BK-SLSG ... \$2.49

Creeping Compromise

Joe Crews. With his unique, straightforward style, Crews addresses some of the most sensitive and controversial issues in a bold, uncompromising approach. Sure to challenge and inspire you to the highest standards of Christian living. New memorial edition.

BK-CCME ... \$10.95



Life After 9/11

Rich Cavaness. In one tragic day, millions across the nation felt the same cosmic shockwave that changed everything. Come to grips with this powerful force in your life by exploring five key spiritual lessons learned from 9/11. You will find lasting peace in this age of chaos. A great book for sharing with new seekers!

BK-LA911 ... \$6.95

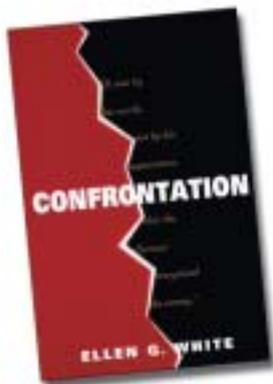
Patience in the Midst of Trials & Afflictions

Samuel Koranteng-Pipim. Even the most faithful Christians will experience hurt, sorrow, and loss. Explore this insightful look into the nature of patience and why God permits tribulation. Learn how to trust in God—no matter what happens here on earth. An inspirational source of encouragement for you and your loved ones.

BK-PITM ... \$10.99



NEW!



Confrontation

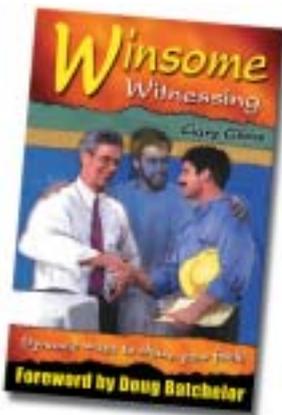
E.G. White. Christ faced the devil's most enticing temptations in the wilderness. Now learn the secret of Jesus' victory—and how it can be yours today. Get spiritual strength and courage in your struggles with sin from one of Christianity's most influential writers.

BK-CONFR ... \$6.99

Winsome Witnessing

Gary Gibbs. The former director of AFSCOE teaches you the simple skills to lead others to Christ, gives insights to revitalize your church, and much more. Be an effective, confident, and inspired soul-winner with these proven, life-changing strategies.

BK-WW ... \$10.95



The Homosexual Agenda

Alan Sears & Craig Osten. A fascinating exposé into the homosexual movement and its rising activism. A timely book for Christians concerned about losing their religious freedoms.

BK-HAGE ... \$14.99

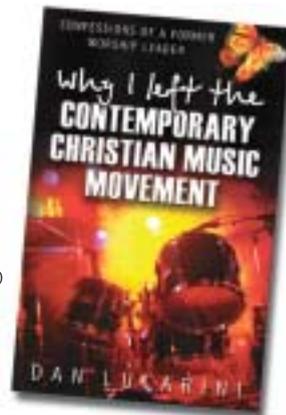


Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement

Dan Lucarini.

Contemporary Christian music has become a powerful force in worship and youth outreach—but at what price? An honest, uncompromising spiritual journey into one of today's most deceptive problems in the church from the wise counsel of a one-time rock musician now determined to honor the Lord and seek reformation.

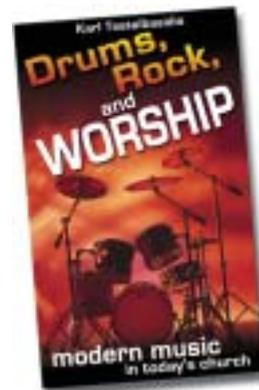
BK-WILC ... \$14.95



Drums, Rock, and Worship

Karl Tsatalbasidis. Explores the complex relationship of today's church and modern music in worship, especially the drum set. Is rock music justifiable praise, or is it a dangerous compromise? A call to reform that will change attitudes and win hearts!

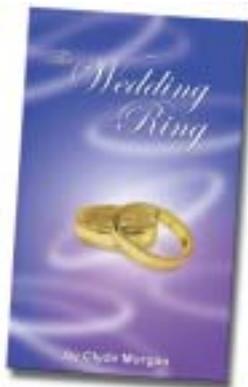
BK-DRW ... \$5.95



The Wedding Ring

Clyde Morgan. The issue of the wedding ring has plagued the church's unity since its beginning. Get an inside look into how one church is handling the growing controversy of jewelry in Christianity—and receive a call for faithful purity in all aspects of life.

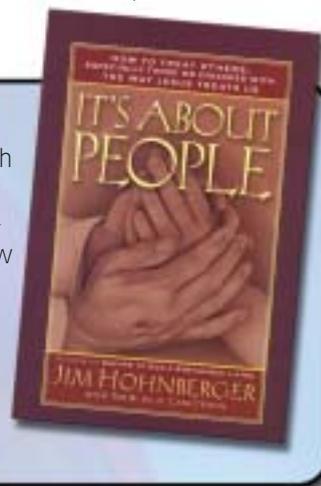
BK-WR ... \$4.95



It's About People

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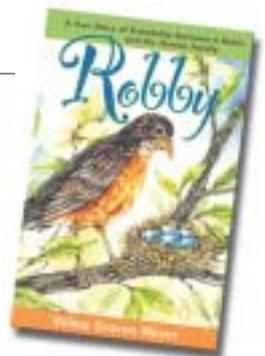
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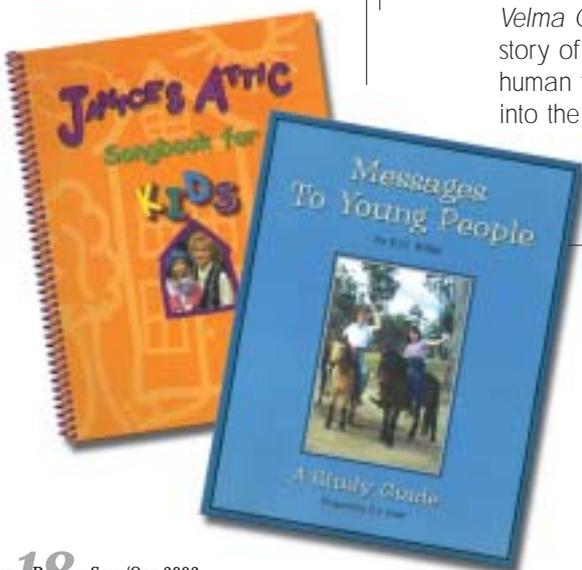
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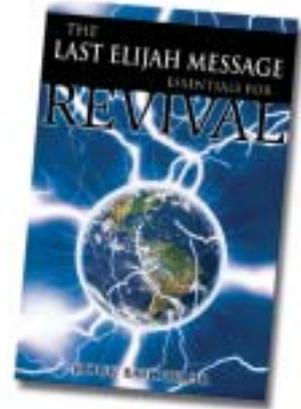


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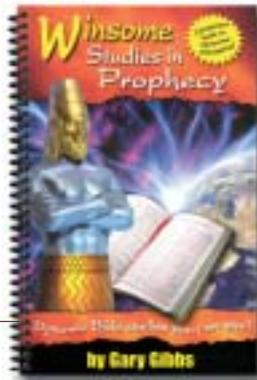
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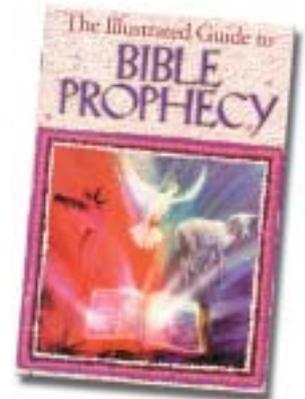
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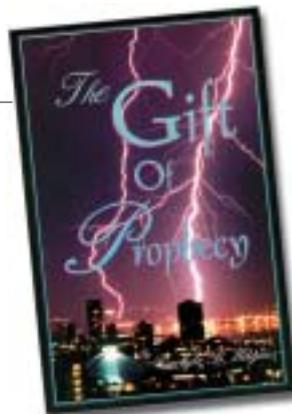
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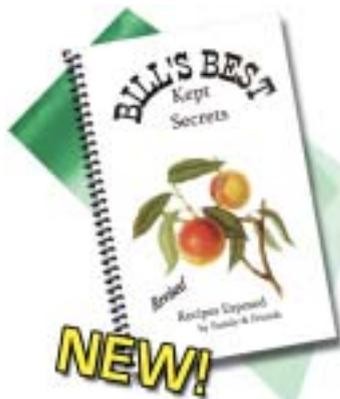
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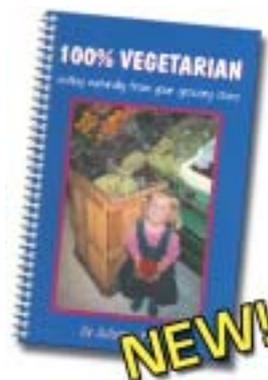
Lorrie Knutsen. Get ready for some tasty meals without all the hassle. These healthy, natural recipes for every occasion use only a handful of ingredients and take just minutes to prepare. Includes delicious delights such as cobbler biscuits, hearty vegetable stew, picnic fruit bars, carob ice cream, and much more!

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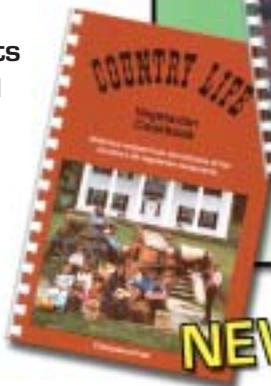
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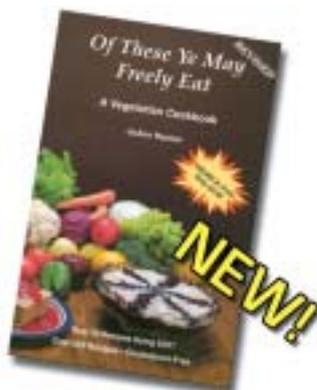
Now you can enjoy in your own home the delicious and nutritious recipes from the international kitchens of Country Life vegetarian restaurants. Cholesterol-free, heart-healthy meals will have you looking forward to every mealtime. Includes such treats as vegetable pot pies, strawberry shortcake, enchiladas, and more!

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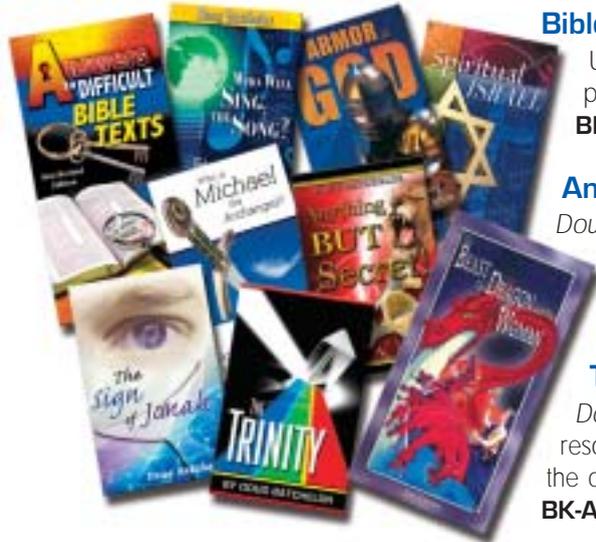
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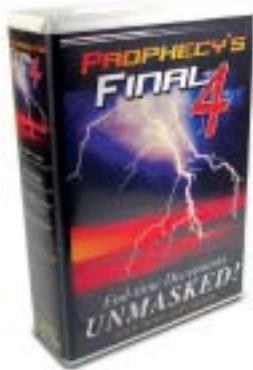
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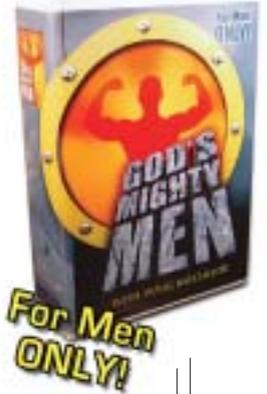
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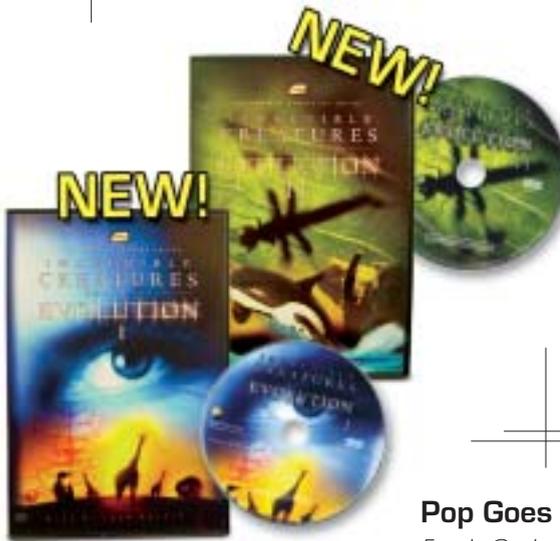
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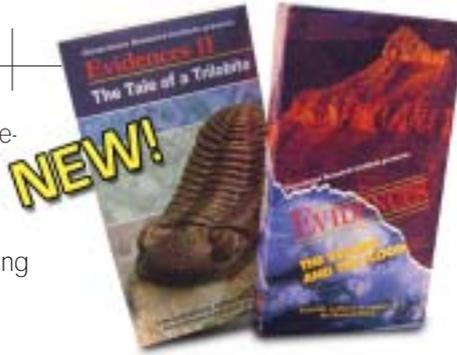
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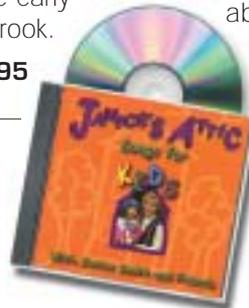
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Touching the Heart of GOD

BY PASTOR WALT GROFF

Walt Groff is the senior pastor of Sunset Oaks church in Rocklin, California. Recently, his church hosted an Amazing Facts' evangelistic seminar with speaker John Bradshaw, alongside students and faculty of Amazing Facts' College of Evangelism.

A very good friend of mine has two grandsons who keep their grandpa spellbound. One day, the two beloved little ones were over for a visit, and he was enjoying watching them and thinking about how things were like when he was a boy—playing outside and running all over the neighborhood. All these childhood memories brought an urge in him to play with the boys. “Hey guys, do you want to play tag with grandpa?” He asked.

“No” they answered, and instead ran off to get the Monopoly game. They dragged it from a storage shelf and brought it into the living room with a suggestion of their own. “Grandpa,” they said, “Let’s play charity! We’ll have the money, and you be the person who needs something.”

And so, they went around the house finding reasons to give him money. “You need food, grandpa,” they would say, or “You need some help with the house” and then give him play cash to help out.

As you can imagine, the scene just warmed my friend’s heart. He wrote what a wonderful world it might be if more of us played charity.

The Heart of God

What touches the heart of our heavenly Father? Do you understand the feeling I’m describing? You’ve probably experienced it yourself. When a child comes to you and throws their arms around your neck or a friend drops by with a gift ... just because ... a feeling of warmth washes over you. You are touched, you feel loved, and you experience something that reverberates in your heart.

In Scripture, an event in the life of Jesus reveals what touches God. Before we explore that, remember this simple premise: When we see Jesus, we see God. Hebrews says Jesus is “the brightness of [God’s] glory and the express image of His person” (1:3 NKJV). Jesus is an *exact representation* of God, so He provides a window into the heart of God.

In Mark 12:41–44, the Bible records that Jesus sits down opposite the place in which offerings were collected to watch the crowd—the God of the universe settling in for a little people watching.

Try to picture His surroundings as people crowd into the temple precincts: hundreds of sandals slapping the limestone floor, dust rising in small puffs with each footfall. Jesus seems to be expecting something to happen. By contrast, the disciples who are milling about nearby seem too busy with their own thoughts to notice anything.

Two Pennies

Across from the Beautiful Gate, coins tumble over one another in the collection of temple offerings. All manner of men come to place their offerings, and indeed, all visitors to the temple may come this far to give, but only Jewish men may proceed through the Beautiful Gate. Yet it is here that God has come to be close to His people.

The Bible says, “Many who were rich put in much.” But Jesus is not impressed by these gifts. For so many, the act of giving is about the drama of tinkling coins and the art of being recognized as a generous giver. So Jesus continues to wait and watch.

Then finally, He sees her! Slipping up to the offering, her clothes and her face show the weary, wearing life of poverty. She has struggled against her own culture, relying on the gifts of others for her survival; yet she comes anyway. She makes her way silently through the crowd, trying to get close enough to the collection to drop her coins, which are gripped tightly within her hand. Finally she reaches out and drops in her last two cents—they are worth only a fraction of a penny. Amid the masses being collected, her offering barely makes any noise at all.

As the coins settle in the offering box, Jesus calls to His disciples. “Come quickly,” He says. “You need to see this. Something wonderful has happened.” They rush over to Jesus to learn what has brought such excitement to His voice and the smile to His face.

“What happened?” They ask excitedly. Scanning the area looking for a king, a prince ... but what is it?

“See that woman over there?” He prompts them. “The one in that tattered dress and bare feet—the one watching the ground and moving away from the gate.”

“Oh yes, we see her.”

Jesus says, “She just placed two pennies in the offering!”

“And?”

“She just put *her last two pennies* in the offering!” Jesus explains. “She has given more than any other here today. Some of the richest have brought bags of money, but she has given all she has.”

There in the Beautiful Gate, the heart of God is warmed and the glory of the Lord fills the temple—not just behind the veil, but where even women and Gentiles could see.

Here in the book of Mark, we have glimpsed one of the things that touch the heart of our heavenly Father: living generously by faith. God was touched by her gift, and we now know a tiny bit more about His heart.

The Wealth of God's Heart

Why does this touch the heart of our Lord? It was a gift given to Him, born of personal sacrifice.

Hundred of years before, King David understood this when he said, “I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing” (2 Samuel 24:24). The mighty king didn't want to give to the Lord something that was free to him; he wanted his heart to go with that gift.

Here's a hard question. When was the last time a gift you gave to God cost you a meal? As a pastor, I don't like bringing up money, but I do it now because Jesus is touched by this sacrificial gift, and it was something He talked about all the time. So when was the last time giving really cost you something you wanted, because you gave an offering or tithed?

Friend, like Jesus I am struck with this woman. She didn't know where her next meal was coming from, yet she gave her last two cents. She gave a gift that touched God's heart because it was a sacrifice of monumental proportions—it was extravagant giving!

It's hard to think of two cents as extravagant, but when it's your last two cents . . . it is! I don't think God was expecting this gift from her either. He wasn't ordering her, “Give me your last two cents!” God doesn't demand that His followers bankrupt themselves to support His work.

In fact, all God asks for is a tithe, offerings, and, in all giving, faith and joy. God invites us to give of our means, to share what we can, to give something that touches you but never until there is no more.

Giving to the Last

Jesus witnessed this woman giving more than God would have ever asked! I have found only one other moment of such extravagant giving in the New Testament, when a woman entered a Pharisee's home to find Jesus. She opens an alabaster box worth a year's wages and pours the plethora of perfume on Jesus' feet.

Yet even this woman had family; she knew where she would take her next meal. Yet the woman at the offering plate, captured by the eyes of Jesus, had absolutely nothing. She gave her very last!

How could she do such a thing? There is only one answer: faith. As those tiny, thin coins fall from her hand, she is really proclaiming, “Lord, whether or not I eat tomorrow is up to you. Here are my last two coins; you handle it from here.”

Sure, she was not going to get a lot for those two coins. She was better off investing them in the Lord. Yet I wish there was more to this story, perhaps a record of how Jesus instructed Peter to empty Judas' moneybag into her pocket, but the Bible doesn't tell us. Still I believe with all my heart that her gift of faith was not forgotten the next day, because “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6 NKJV).

Her extreme act of faith and sacrifice touched the heart of God, because it was in harmony with His heart.

True Extravagant Giving

Millennia ago, someone crept into the heavenly throne room and said, “You can't trust Him.” Satan stood before the angels and claimed God was not reliable, and a third of the angels believed him! (Revelation 12:3, 7) That same devil tempted Eve in the garden, saying, “Can you really trust God?”

And she and her husband, both who knew God personally, were taken in by those cunning lies.

So I believe that faith touches the heart of God because He desires to be trusted again! He continually reaches out to us and says, “Trust me! Trust me with your daily life. Trust me with your future. Trust me with your eternity. Trust me with your salvation. Just trust me!”

Jesus, God Himself, was so impressed by this woman because God longs for His children to once again trust Him. And when she dropped in her last two cents, she said, “I trust you, Lord.”

God desires that you trust Him today. I'm not writing about giving; I'm writing about faith. Giving is just an avenue that will help you and I grow our faith. My friend, I invite you to trust God again. It is a risk, an act of faith, but it will bring a smile to the face of God and warm

His heart as He watches over you. *For more about touching the heart of God, visit www.higherthoughts.com.* —



BIBLE Answers

with Pastor Doug Batchelor



What does it mean to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit? How do we know we haven't committed this "unpardonable sin"?

Jesus speaks in Matthew 12:31, 32 about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. He says, "All manner of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven man, except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." Now this blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does not mean you lose your temper, shake your fist at God, and call Him names. That is certainly an outrageous sin, but that is not the "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" of which Jesus is speaking.

The Jewish leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy when He claimed equality with God and the right to forgive sin. Of course, they would have been correct to do so if Jesus were not God.

However, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a perpetual, constant resisting of the drawing love of God's Spirit, so much so that you lose the capacity to hear the Holy Spirit's voice. The conscience becomes seared (1 Timothy 4:2). This deadly blasphemy is also called "grieving away" the Holy Spirit. Paul refers to "Grieve not the Holy Spirit, wherewith you are sealed," meaning we can permanently grieve away the Spirit.

Eventually, a person loses the capacity to repent, and therefore cannot be saved. It is for this sin that a person cannot be forgiven, because they have rejected the Spirit that convicts of sin (John 16:8). So if we still feel convicted of sin and have the desire to repent, then we have probably not committed the unpardonable sin.

Exodus 16:29 seems to suggest that God wants us to stay home and rest on the Sabbath. If so, is it even necessary to go to church?

Let's first start by looking at Exodus 16:29: "Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day" (NKJV).

God tells the Israelites to remain in their places because they were out looking for bread on a day when God said there would be none (Exodus 16:27,28). "See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days." God was not suggesting that they sit in their tents for 24 hours. Furthermore, "in his place" really means in the camp. God did not want them out gathering sticks or bread as that was work (Numbers 15:32). Of course, they did water, feed, and milk their flocks (Luke 13:15).

So yes, God very much wants us to gather for worship on the Sabbath, which is why the Sabbath is called a "holy convocation" in Leviticus 23:3—"Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation" (NKJV). Convocation means: "To convene, come together usually for an official or public purpose; assemble formally. A community who are assembled for a ceremony."

This was the example of Jesus, as we see in Luke 4:16. "So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read" (NKJV). Even the word synagogue means to come together—Latin *synagoga*, from Greek *sunag*, assembly, synagogue, from *sunagein*, to bring together.

Acts 13:44 shows that the disciples gathered in the synagogue for study on the Sabbath, and they also came together for prayer by the river. And on the next Sabbath, almost the entire city came together to hear the Word of God. "And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there" (Acts 16:13 NKJV).

One of the most important features of the Sabbath is when God's people come together for corporate worship. When we neglect to do this, we rob God of the collective worship He deserves and ourselves of the fellowship blessings we need. "Seven days without church makes one weak."

How did God get there if there was nothing there to create Him?

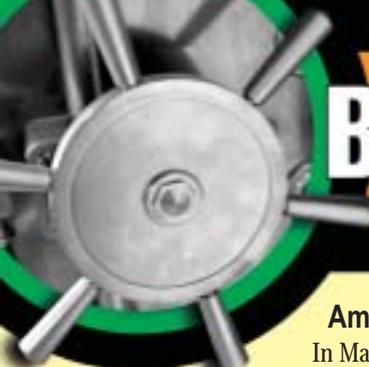
This is a good question, and if I could answer it, I'd probably be God. I can't honestly answer it, but the Bible does say a few words about God's eternal nature. In Psalms 93:2, we are told, "Thy Throne is established of old; thou art from everlasting." That means God has always been, and that's difficult for us to understand.

But it remains true—God has always existed. Before time even began, God was there. That's why Jesus refers to Himself as "I Am," meaning He's the self-existing one. He's always been, He always is, and He always will be.

Furthermore, the Bible says, "God is love." You can't love when you're the only person around—at least not the kind of sacrificing love that God is. So God the Father, Son, and Spirit must have always been, showing love for one another even before the first creature was made.

It's very difficult for humans to imagine because we live in a realm where everything has a beginning and an end. But not so for God—God inhabits eternity (Isaiah 57:15). He can dwell in any and all parts of time at the same time. He lives outside this physical realm, and He created the dimension of time for His creatures. He doesn't have a beginning, and He won't have an end. That is a mystery for all ages.

Tune in Sunday nights to *Bible Answers Live*, Amazing Facts' live, nationwide call-in radio program. Pastor Doug gives biblical, straightforward answers to difficult Bible questions. To get times and stations in your area, visit www.amazingfacts.org, or request a free program guide by phone or mail.



Behind the Scenes

What's new at Amazing Facts...

Amazing Facts Welcomes Dottie

In March, the ministry gratefully welcomed Dorothy Messer to the data processing staff, where her duties include gift entry, assisting the operator, processing orders, and much more.



She and her pastor-husband served in Michigan for 11 years prior to his retirement from full-time ministry. They have a happy family of six children, nine grandchildren, and a great grandchild.

While not working, Dottie enjoys experimenting with new recipes, reading, gardening, and sharing God's Word with others. A quote from one of her favorite writers describes her joyful gratitude at being part of Amazing Facts during these last days: "Each has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Each is to work in cooperation with Christ for the salvation of souls. Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God."

The Purpose and Power of Publishing

One of the goals of Amazing Facts publishing department is to follow the purpose God has for literature ministry; we believe God's purpose includes:

1. Revealing the beauty of Christ's character
2. Demonstrating Christian principles
3. Being a witness for truth
4. Exalting God's law
5. Proclaiming the three angels' messages in Revelation
6. Making plain the issues in the great controversy

We wish to harness the power of the press for the cause of Christ, before the world seizes total control and continually pours spiritually poisonous literature into the world. We believe God has mandated that we make available the highest-quality, truth-filled literature at the most affordable prices. One way we have tried to do this is by offering our weekly e-mail specials that promote discounts of up to 80 percent. (Go to our website to sign up today.) By doing this, we present you with an extraordinary opportunity to win souls for Christ and help fund our other evangelistic projects.

The ministry consistently receives calls from first-time listeners to our programs who are so thrilled at the wonderful resources we offer new and mature Christians in the *Inside Report* and on the Internet. Please pray for our publishing ministry and support us by visiting our catalog online at www.amazingfacts.org. And this fall, look for our new 64-page catalog featuring favorite Christian resources and brand-new products that will bring you and your friends closer to Jesus!

New AFCOE Session Begins

Amazing Facts College of Evangelism's current four-month program began in July and has 45 students ranging in age from 18 to 56, from countries as diverse as Portugal, England, and Kenya. They will get hands-on experience in a live evangelistic series in Elk Grove, California, later this fall with Amazing Facts evangelist Byron Corbett. Please pray for our newest students—that the Lord will bless their efforts and use them to bring many to Christ.

Do You Have the Clarion Call?

Have you signed up yet for the *Clarion*, Amazing Facts online newsletter? If not, you're missing out on the latest news updates that might not appear in the *Inside Report*. It's especially important during the winter months when the catalog edition of the magazine comes out. And don't forget, you'll also get great discounts on products that you won't find anywhere else. So go to www.amazingfacts.org/clarion/subscribe.asp and sign up today!



New Stations!

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Bible Answers Live

Tennessee: WSGM, 104.7 FM, Tracy City

Tennessee: WBLC, 1360 AM, Lenoir City

A New Revelation

Alabama: WWGC, 1090 AM, Albertville

Georgia: WAQA, 94.5 FM, Morganton

Georgia: WCRU, 97.1 FM, Thomaston

Illinois: WLMM, 103.9 FM, Channahon

Illinois: WQIN, 102.9 FM, Quincy

Kansas: KTHA, 100.5 FM, Thayer

Michigan: WAWB, 107.3 FM, West Branch

Minnesota: WMLA, 99.7 FM, Moose Lake

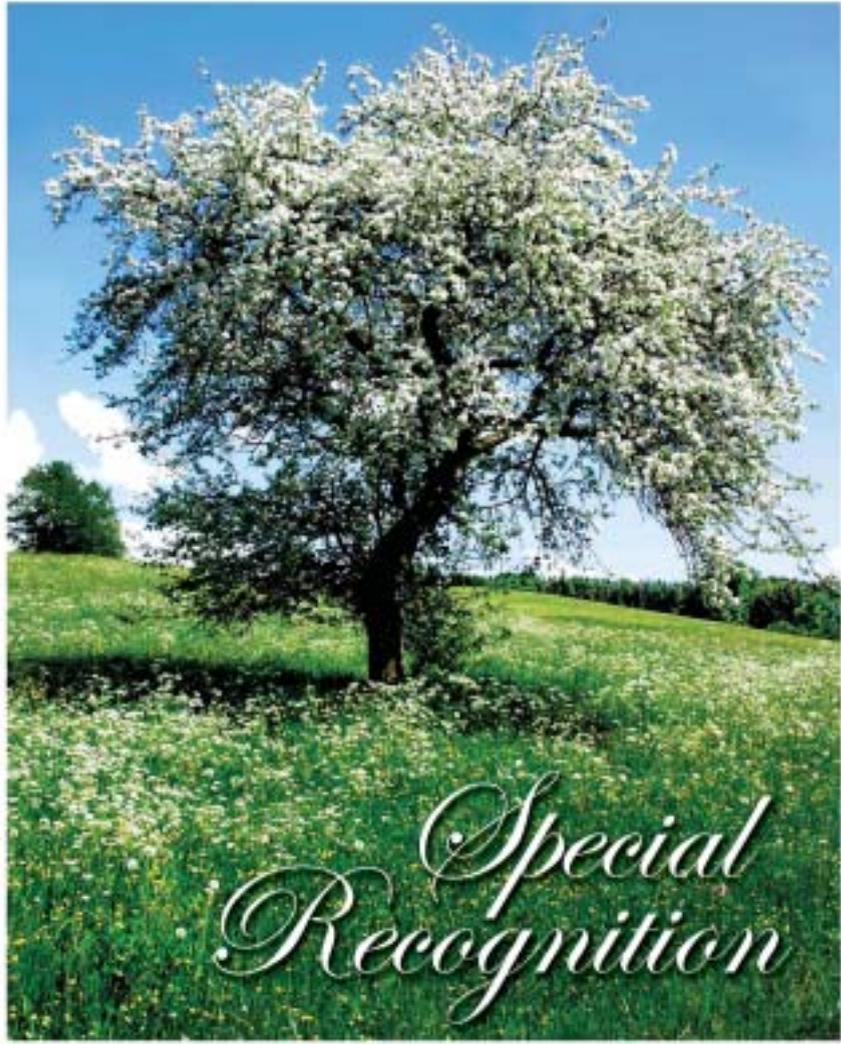
Oregon: KLLF 106.7 FM, Roseburg

Tennessee: WBLC 1360 AM, Lenoir City

TELEVISION

Millennium of Prophecy

Washington: FVTV, Ch. 11, Vancouver



Special Recognition

In Loving Memory of

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Melba Anderson from Fred and Bette Cooksley,
 her cousins
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Micah Batchelor from Danny and Carol Jeter
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 Gerald and Barbara Lammerding, his daughter and son-
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Jewel B. Bouch from Frank and Gayle Tyroff
Bernice Bradbury from Lucille Hutchins, her niece
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 from Paul Niemi
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 from David and Eileen Mauzano
James and Ellen Howell from Frank and Gayle Tyroff

Herluf Jensen from Kent and Dee Dickinson
Scott Jeter from Danny and Carol Jeter, his parents

Amazing Facts recognizes contributions made as a tribute to the deceased or as an honorarium celebrating significant milestones in the lives of loved ones. Please type or print legibly to ensure correct spelling; we are unable to verify confusing spellings due to volume. Due to space limitations, a maximum of five names will be printed per donation per issue.

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Frank R. Pollack from Mary T. Pollack, his sister

Pauline H. Pollack from Anne Cameron, her sister; from Mary T. Pollack, her sister
Grace Pottorf from Joyce Ayres; from Alberta Ballard; from Eugene and Jean Hildebrand; from Lillian Johnson; from Dorothy McIntyre; from Evelyn Poly; from Ruth Wolf
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Herb Powell from Bonnie Lorenz

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Robert R. Wilson III from Richard Brinley; from Shirley A. Fisher; from Charlotte Widner

Z

Bill Zima Jr. from Patricia Zima, his mother
Bill Zima Sr. from Patricia Zima, his wife

In Honor of

Jay Mortenson from Ramona Mortenson, his wife
Jerry Mortenson from Ramona Mortenson, his mother

Happy Anniversary

Vicki Taylor from Andrew Taylor, her husband

Happy Birthday

Della Cummings (96th) from Eugene and Grace Jordan
Ed Motsenbocker from Robert Dirksen
Mable Vance (98th) from Eugene and Grace Jordan



An Amazing Fact

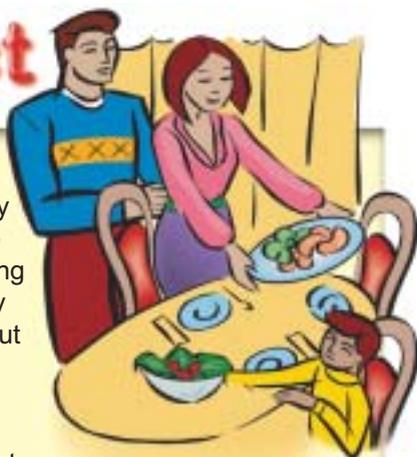
A recent survey indicates that nearly 75 percent of those polled say that eating together as a family is very important, but only 43 percent actually do. That's terrible considering that families who eat together experience the following benefits:

Children do better in school, have fewer behavior problems, understand their family's values more deeply, are less apt to try alcohol or drugs, communicate more, and are healthier.

God has truly blessed His creation with mealtime, and more than just the good food; it's easy to see why His original plan for the family is so important. So encourage your children to eat at the dinner table *every night*, and don't let a bad experience dishearten you. Today's families are so busy, but leaving behind the cares of the world for a few hours of peace will make the quality of your life much better—especially if that time is Christ-centered. You won't even mind leaving behind worldly pursuits and leisure, as your family grows closer to each other and the Lord.

Why not try the tasty Mexican dish on this page from Scott Steward, our advertising and public relations coordinator, and his wife Ann. It helps feed a hungry family of four to six.

Don't miss our newest cookbooks that feature tasty, healthier vegan dishes. See page 20 to find some great deals today!



BLACK BEAN CASSEROLE

What you need:

- 16 ounces salsa
- 7 corn tortillas (yellow or white), more if necessary
- 1 can (7 oz.) diced green chili peppers (optional)
- 2 cans (15 oz.) black beans (can also use 2 whole, canned pinto beans or mix), drained and rinsed
- 2 cups grated veggie-cheese



What you do:

1. Preheat oven to 350° F
2. In a lightly sprayed or oiled 7-12 inch pan, cover the bottom with a thin layer of salsa
3. Cut all the tortillas in half
4. Place half of the cut tortillas on top of the salsa, completely covering the salsa
5. If using green chilies, mix with beans. Layer half of the bean mixture on top of the tortillas
6. Cover beans with half of the grated cheese
7. Layer tortillas, salsa and beans, finishing with veggie-cheese
8. Bake for 35 minutes

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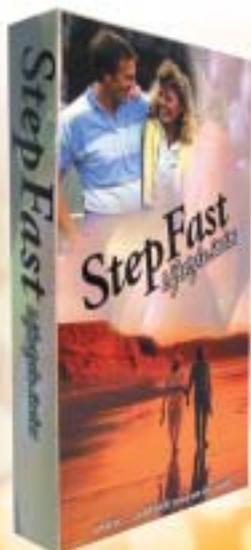
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