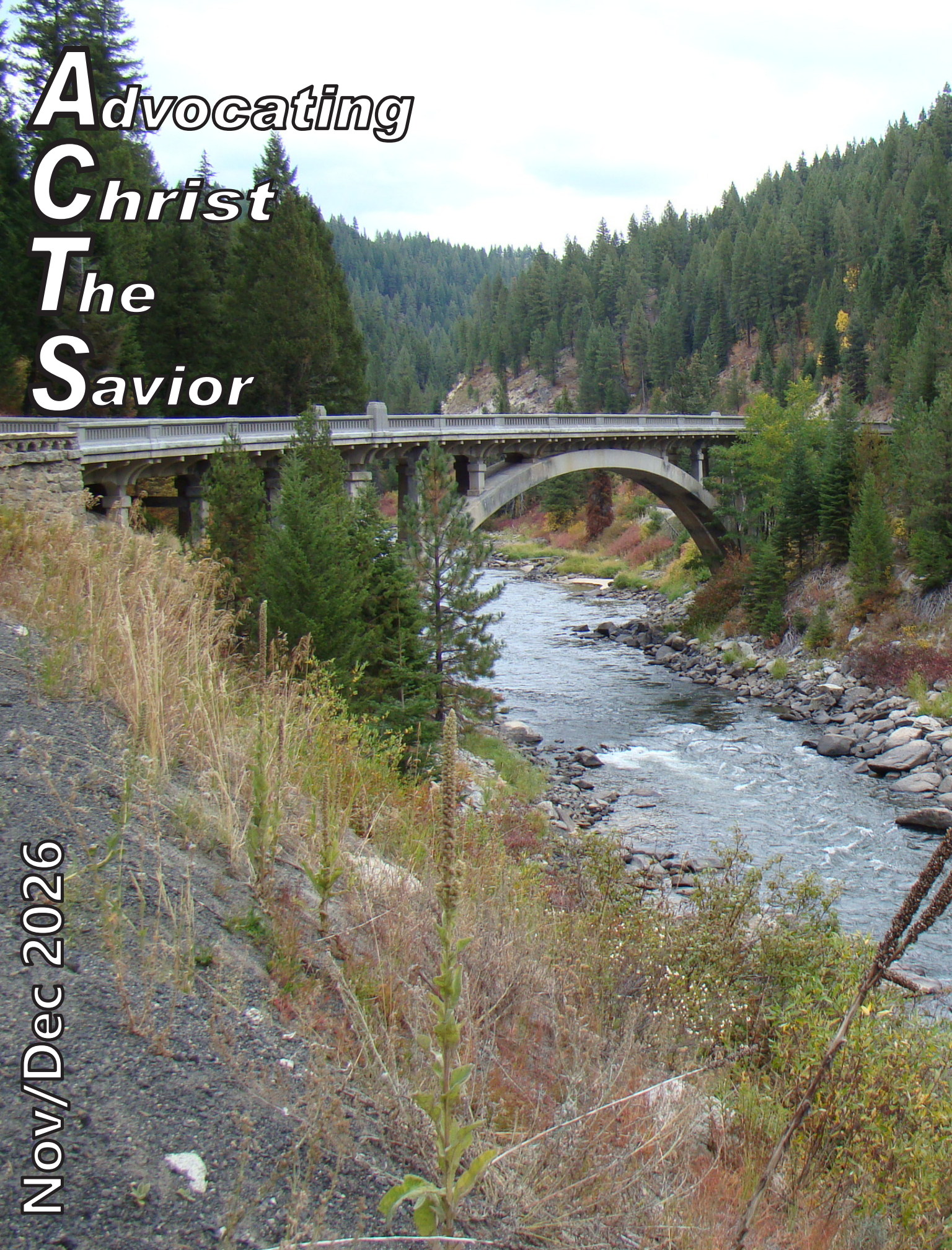

Advocating
Christ
The
Savior
Nov/Dec 2026

Volume 76R, Number 6

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Cover photo by Carl Stucker

Since the Church of God, (Seventh Day) is in a state of constant growth and we all have different backgrounds, it is possible that your views may differ somewhat from those of the authors. We pray these articles may be used as a point of entry for your own study.
***"Test all things; hold fast what is good"* (1 Thessalonians 5:21).**

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"Advocating Christ the Savior"

Ministerial Council Letter

November 2026

Welcome readers of the Acts. I want to talk to you about my wife and myself and our "trip into the past". We spent two weeks touring the south and east coast, driving through several Civil War sites, and visiting with relatives whose relatives were participants in that war. It was truly fascinating to see these sites and attempt to relive the battles and the strategies that played out in those battles. At the sites that we visited, it turned out that the South won 3, the North won 3, and the others were considered draws.

Historians have debated over the past 150 years about what the original issue was that started this war and have never come to a unanimous conclusion, but rather several possibilities. What they can't refute is that it was the bloodiest war as far as casualties, wounded and lost; families fighting one another over causes that have never been truly resolved.

War is always a poor method of resolving conflicts between nations, ideologies, families, economics or any other issue. It is man's answer throughout history, and it never really solves the issues and yet is continually used as the answer. As we toured these sites, we observed the destruction of property, the anger never resolved, and the bitterness that still exists today.

We, as Christians, should be able to resolve issues without conflict, bitterness and acts of violence. We are told in the Scriptures that we are to love our enemies, not hate them. And yet we frequently feel abused and we ask for revenge instead of forgiveness when we are hurt or embarrassed. Even when we choose forgiveness, we likely want that person to come to us first before we offer them forgiveness, even though Scripture clearly tells us otherwise.

We saw some beautiful countryside in visiting these sites, all of which were created and preserved for us by our Creator. We watched films about these battles and saw courage, faith, hope—and in the end peace. But we also saw revenge, bitterness, hate and bloodshed over issues that no one seems to be able to agree upon as the cause.

Let us, as Christians, learn from this that war and conflict are not how our Lord desires for us to respond to disagreements. Revenge and hate, and other byproducts of these conflicts, are not the answer. We need to resolve conflicts through love, patience and leaving the solutions in God's hand. He only has all the right answers and has shown us a better way. Love one another, forgive one another, and look forward to a better life with Him in paradise.

Tom Kendrick,
Ministerial Council President
General Council Churches of God,
(Seventh Day)

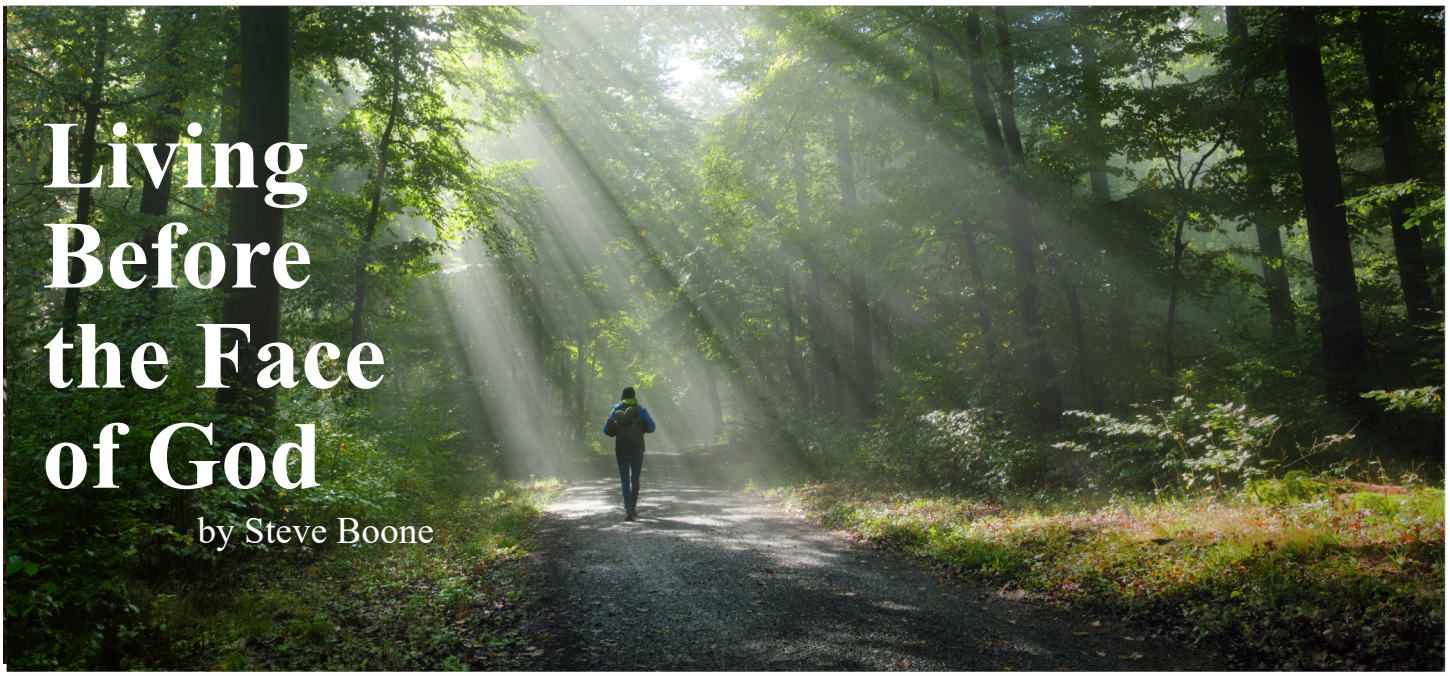
Ministerial License Applicants

The Licensing & Credentials Committee invites your input regarding the following applicants for a Ministerial License.

- **Howard, Blake of New York, USA**
- **Garang Marieu Tong of South Sudan, Africa**

In accordance with Article XII of our Constitution and Bylaws, this notice serves as the first of two postings in the ACTS magazine.

All feedback should be directed to the General Council office and must be received no later than February 23, 2027.



Living Before the Face of God

by Steve Boone

What does it mean to live a life before the face of God? Psalm 139 describes the presence of our LORD. In Verse 7, it says *"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?"* There is no place on earth or in the heavens where God's Spirit is not present.

Verse 8 says that even in hell or "Sheol" God is present. What is Sheol? It is the Old Testament word for the grave. Even in the grave, God is present. Verse 9 says that our LORD dwells in the uttermost parts of the sea. In verse 12, the darkness does not hide us from our LORD, for the *"night shines as the day"* and *"the darkness and the light are both alike to You."* God sees us even in the dark and it is like the lightness of day to Him.

Hebrews 4:13 says, "*And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*"

Verse 12 says that God is "*a discerner of the thoughts and intents of our heart."* We live constantly in God's presence. It is not just that He is present here while we might be reading this article, but also that He knows all our thoughts and actions and even the intents of our hearts. And He knows all the thoughts and actions and intents of the hearts of all 8.3 billion people living in the world today! Do you truly believe that? Our God is the Almighty All-knowing God!!

This year, the United States observed the 25th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. If you were alive on that date like I was, you may remember where you were and what you were doing when you first heard of the attacks. I was at work and about to leave the office to head out for a day's work in the field when I heard of the attacks. Our office had access to a television station and we were able to watch the news, which was on a constant broadcast showing the first tower that was hit by an airplane. At first, it was not known whether the plane hit the tower by accident or if it was on purpose. I left for my day's activities and kept the radio on in my vehicle to listen to between my stops. All day, people had only that attack on their minds! We talked and speculated and wondered who had done such an evil act.

I remember that day, but not like those who were in New York City. That day, 2,753 people died in the attack on the World Trade Center, including 343 firefighters. Another 13 to 15 thousand people in the two buildings escaped and survived the attacks.

God was present in those two towers as the planes struck them. He knew the thoughts and saw the actions of the victims. And God was present with them when the towers fell.

We live in God's presence; every minute of our lives, from conception to the grave. There is only one true God in the universe. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is the God of David who wrote these words in Psalm 139 *"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?"*

Our response to Psalm 139 should be to bow our heads and humbly recognize that we live before the face of God. He is present here today. He was present during our most private moments. God is present when we celebrate good times. God is present when we go

through sad times, when we are depressed. God is everywhere and we live constantly before His face.

To some, this may seem a burden, but it is the opposite. God never misunderstands us. He is not confused about our actions. He sees every danger we face, knows every opportunity and every consequence of our choices. Therefore, we place trust in Him completely. We can stop fighting for control of our lives and simply rest in His care.

You see, we can continue to hear these words and read about God. We can try to make our own plan to bring about the will of God in our lives. By our own strength, we will fail. But when we live each minute, each hour, and each day, trusting not ourselves but trusting the one true God, we then stop fighting to control and rest in His care. Living in His presence is to understand that whatever we are doing and whatever we are thinking, God is there and He understands us.

The Bible talks of the "fear of the LORD." In Proverbs 14:26-27, we read *"In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge. The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to turn one away from the snares of death"*

We live in God's presence; every minute of our lives, from conception to the grave.

We expend so much energy trying to control our circumstances; worrying about challenges we are facing. We become anxious because we think we are responsible for the outcome. Living before the face of God reminds us that we have a place of refuge and that we are in the hands of a God who has perfect control.

In these verses, Proverbs is saying to us that fearing God is not a panic situation or cause for anxiety. Fearing God is described as having a "strong confidence." It is recognizing that God is real. Living before the face of God is being aware of His authority. If God is God, then His authority is supreme. Living in God's presence is more than submission out of fear of His punishment. A child recognizes the strength and protection of a good Father, and we are His children.

There is no higher goal than offering ourselves, our time, talents, and treasures to Him. And, offering ourselves in a spirit of thankfulness and praise! Living before the face of God speaks of our stewardship of that time, talent and treasure that we have received from Him.

Our family is a blessing, but they are not God. Our spouse is a blessing, but our spouse is not our God. Our children are a blessing, but they are not the reason we exist. Our work matters, but it doesn't define us. Only when we place God in His rightful place in our lives can we love everything else rightly.

Living before the face of God means there is no separation between our secular and spiritual lives. We may think of our spiritual acts as those that take place when we read our Bibles, spend time in prayer and fasting, attend church and do church work. And we think of our secular acts as those involved with taking care of our home and possessions, providing a living through our work, spending time with family and enjoying leisure time.

Paul says this very well in Colossians 3:12-17.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Paul says, *"Whatever you do in word or deed…."* God is concerned with all areas of our life. Every minute of every day is a time to worship God in spirit and in truth, wherever we go and whatever we do. We are living as lights in a darkened world so that others might see our deeds and glorify our Father in heaven.

Psalm 139:23-24 says, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."* So, our challenge today is to seek God's face. Pray. Take time to inventory our hearts. And pray some more. Evaluate what our true motives are. And pray some more. Seek advice from someone you trust and someone that is spiritually mature to help you evaluate your heart. Ask: "Am I building on the right foundation? And pray some more. When we pray, pray for strength; knowing some of us have a lifetime of habits to overcome.

God is present. He desires what is good for us because He loves us. Will we trust and humble ourselves before Him? Will we seek His face?

†‡†



The New Birth & Christian Initiation

by Donald Gibson

Repentance and Faith

Salvation is based upon faith, trust, and belief in Jesus Christ as Savior (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9). The New Testament contains over 160 verses that state that when individuals “Come to Faith in Christ,” they are then “fully saved.” While water baptism and being filled with the Holy Spirit are commanded, these cannot be regarded as prerequisites to salvation; rather, they follow after salvation (Acts 2:38; Ephesians 2:8-10).

Faith in Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection is the moment the repentant believer obtains new life. In that event a person is made a new creation and born again (John 3:3-5; 2 Corinthians 5:17). When one is born again, they are candidates for baptism of water and Spirit (Acts 2:4, 38; 10:43-47).

Faith alone is what identifies one with Christ. The new birth experience is a birth of faith—not of works, but by God’s grace is received through faith in Christ alone (John 1:12-13). It is the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary that saves us (John 19:30).

The Holy Spirit is present in the conviction of sin (John 16:8; Acts 11:18), leading us to repentance and faith (Acts 14:27). No one can come to Jesus unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). The result of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is the forgiveness of sins and is fully dependent upon the Holy Spirit’s active presence in the salvific event of each individual (1 Corinthians 15:1-3). This is when new life from the Holy Spirit enters the believer (John 20:22), and the believer receives the indwelling of the Spirit within them (Romans 8:9, 16). The Greek word "dechomai" means to receive, have offered, welcome—The Inflowing. The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) is evidence of the **new birth** and is to receive the Holy Spirit initially (John 20:22; Acts 2:41; 8:14).

The Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles Peter and Paul all taught that God has commanded people everywhere to repent or perish (Luke 13:5; 2 Peter 3:9; Acts 17:30). Even the angels rejoice when one sinner comes to repentance. Jesus said, *"Repent, and believe in the gospel"* (Mark 1:15; Luke 15:10). Repentance and Believing are two sides of the same coin because together they represent a single, unified turning from sin to God. Repentance is the turning away from sin, and believing is the turning toward Christ. You can’t have one without the other. They occur simultaneously when one is born again.

Water and Spirit Baptism

Water baptism is the signal and symbol that one has become a believer in Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:47; 19:5) and has been identified with His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4) and has also received the circumcision of the heart and spirit steadfastly in the Apostles’ teaching (Acts 2:41).

Water baptism does not confer or effect salvation and is not salvific in itself. It is for (because of) the remission of sin, not the obtaining of forgiveness; not causative, but representative (Mark 16:16; Acts

22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). We see in the book of Acts that repentance and baptism were regarded as the inside and outside of the one and the same new birth experience (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12-17; 19:2-6). Baptism was commanded by Jesus Christ and the Apostle Peter (Matthew 28:19; Acts 10:48).

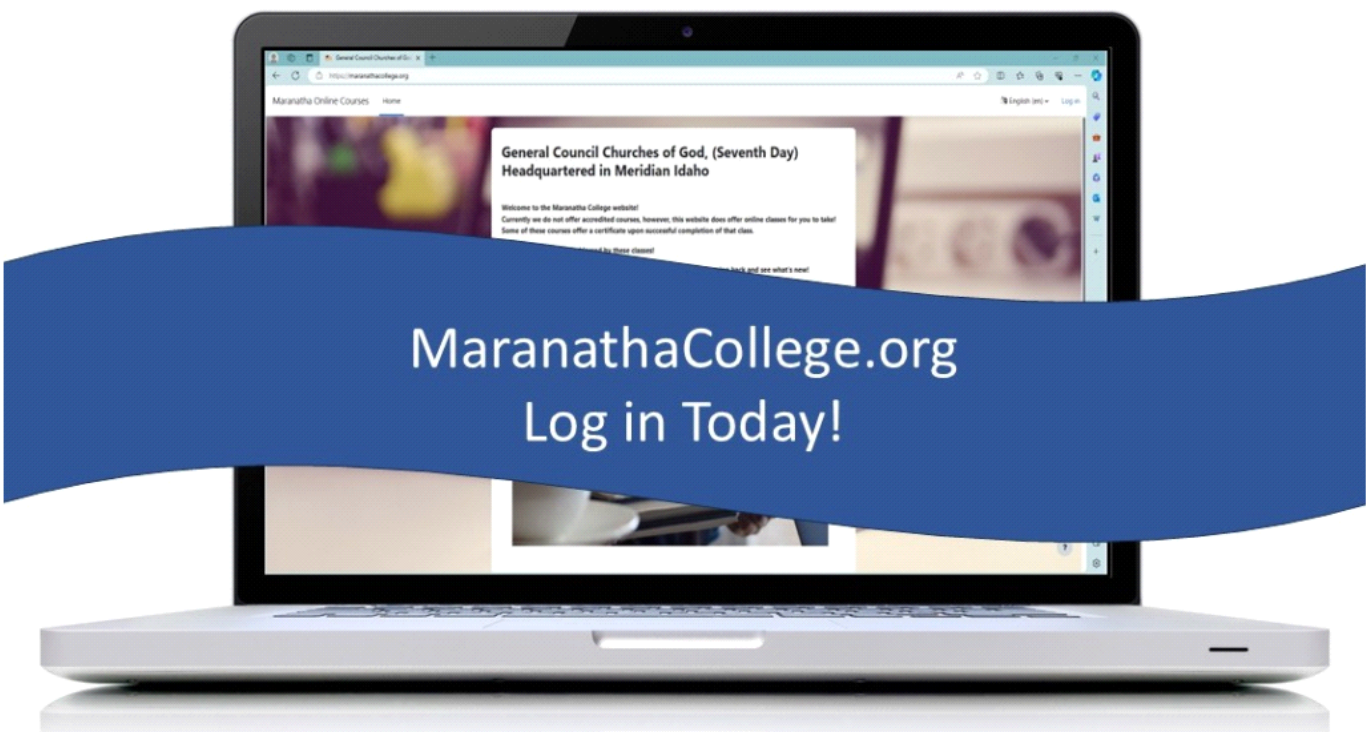
The baptism/filling of the Holy Spirit is the falling upon (Acts 1:8;10:44) and coming upon (Acts 1:5; 11:16;19:6) of the Spirit for sanctification and evangelism (Romans 15:19). The Greek word "lambano" means to receive, to take, and to bring into visible manifestation—The Out Flowing. The Gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8-10) along with the Fruit of the Spirit is the evidence of the filling/ fullness of the Spirit. Ask the Lord Jesus to fill you with the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:11-13).

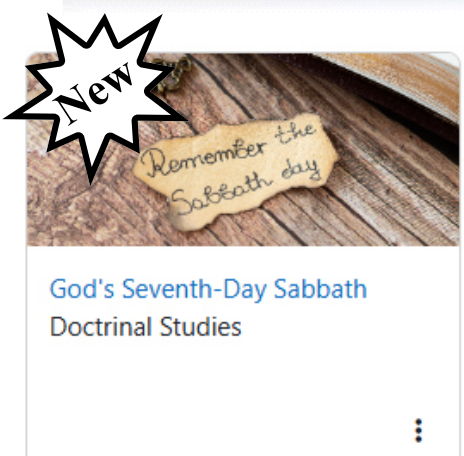
The baptism/filling of the Holy Spirit does not confer or effect salvation, not salvific in itself (Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 2:22), but is the seal of the Holy Spirit that came on Pentecost to give the believers power for sanctification and to be witnesses (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 38-39). All believers are commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Luke 11:13; John 7:37; Ephesians 5:18).

He who is in you is greater than He who is in the world: Christ in us, the Hope of Glory (1 John 4:4; Colossians 1:27).

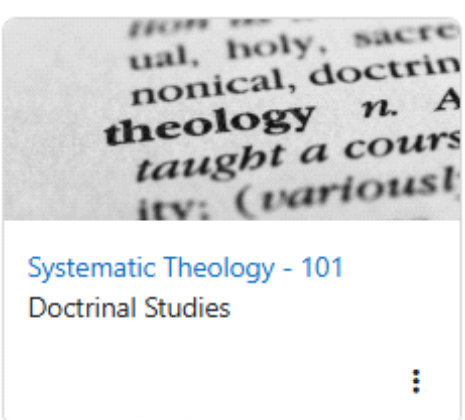
Donald Gibson, Jr. is the Senior Pastor of Fairmount Christian Fellowship (Seventh Day) in Independence, Missouri.

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God's Recipe for a Revival

by Harold D. Carlson

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

2 Chronicles 7:14

It seems that nearly every Bible-believing religious leader today is saying that what we need now in America more than anything else is a revival of the old-time religion. Our pastors say it. They think of the many who have attended services for years, yet remain unfaithful. They think of those who live for the world only and of some who are living in sin. Some are saying "the only thing that will save America is a revival, a turning back to God." They are simply saying that we need a revival of the old-time religion.

Now what is a revival? I'll give you my definition. A revival is an awakening of God's people, which causes them to become active for God. That meaning is wrapped up in the word itself. "**Vive**" means "life" and "**Re**" means "again." So the implication here is that the life is already there, the life of Christ in the individual Christian. But that life is still and dormant and needs to be stirred up, that it might engage in an activity for Christ for which the Christian was formed. But someone will say, "I thought we had revivals so that men and women and boys and girls around us might be saved." That is true, for that is the end result of revival. But if the other takes place, if Christians wake up and live and serve and witness as they should, we would not have to worry about people being saved. They would see such a difference in the lives of Christians that they would say, "I need that which you have. Tell me how I can get it."

God has a recipe for revival, and it's found in an old book of the Bible. He says *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"* (2 Chronicles 7:14). Let us look at this great text.

Directed to God's People

"If my people, which are called by my name." That's where revival must start—in the hearts of His people. I would like to ask you if you are one of His people. Are you a real Christian, or do you just bear the name? Are you a child of God or just a church member? Have you been redeemed or were you just baptized by some preacher? Jesus said you must be "born again" (John 3:3) Have you had that tremendous experience?

John 1:12 says, *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God"* Have you received Him into your heart and life? Acts 20:21 says it must be *"repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."* Have you genuinely repented of your sin and put your faith in Him? Ephesians 2:8-9 says, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* Are you trusting fully in Him, or are you depending upon your own works, your life, your character, your gifts? Are you really a child of God?

We are all saved by faith in Christ, although under different circumstances. When Paul was saved, he was thrown to the ground, a bright light shone down upon him, and he was blinded for several days. Others have been saved at a prayer meeting and have been born again as quietly as a new born day. Have you had this experience? Then this text is for you. If you haven't been born again, you can have that experience today.

Our Prayer Life

The text tells us to humble ourselves and pray and seek God's face. This simply means that we are to go down on our knees before God. We are to acknowledge our sins, confess our shortcomings, and put aside everything that stands between us and God. But how much does the average Christian pray? He prays only when trouble arises. When his health is good, when his family is well, when the money is coming in, he forgets God and tries to squeeze all the happiness he can out of life. Then

Continued on page 9

possessions. The challenge with our possessions is to view them as belonging to God and coming from Him. They are to be seen as gifts that are to be freely shared with others, just as God has freely shared the gift of His Son with us. It is better to give than to receive and infinitely better to give than to covet that which is another's.

Lesson Questions:

1. What are the heart attitudes that lead to covetousness? Luke 12:15-21; Psalm 62:10; Hebrew 13:5.
   Note: Covetousness can be defined as a strong desire for that which belongs to another.

2. Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard. How did his covetousness lead to other sins? 1 Kings 21:1-16

3. How did covetousness lead to other sins in David's situation? 2 Samuel 11:2-5, 15

4. What does Paul declare covetousness to be? Colossians 3:5, 6; Ephesians 5:3, 5 Why?

5. What warning did Jesus give about covetousness? Mark 7:20-23

6. Is the *"love of money"* the same as covetousness? 1 Timothy 6:9-10

7. What is the danger of trusting in riches and what is the solution? Mark 10:23-27

8. Who gives man the ability to gain wealth? Deuteronomy 8:18. Where does wealth ultimately come from? 1 Samuel 2:7; 1 Chronicles 29:12

9. Discuss what someone might covet other than material things.

The Complete Study Guide can be found on the www.ACTSforGod.org website by clicking on the Digital Studies tab. To purchase a complete printed copy, contact the office.

Lesson 9: The Seventh Commandment

"You shall not commit adultery." Exodus 20:14

Scripture Reading: John 8:1-11

Memory Verse: *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."* Matthew 5:8

Introduction:

The Bible teaches a high view of marriage, including the physical enjoyment from the union. It comes to us as a creation ordinance. Marriage is the LORD's design for the continuance of the human race. Marriage is not to be entered into lightly. A man leaves his mother and father and is joined to his wife and the two become one flesh in a covenant relationship under God.

After the sin of Adam, man began to turn what God gave as a beautiful gift into lust and fornication. The focus turned to the sexual relationship. To warn against this, we see the commandment telling man, *"You shall not commit adultery"* (Exodus 20:14). In today's world, instead of joining in a marital relationship under God, a couple will go out and become one flesh and later seek to legitimize the sexual relationship with marriage. All ages have easy access to pornography through smart devices. Colossians 3:5 challenges us to put to death those things. Ask yourself the question of whether there is anything that I am doing in private that would be embarrassing if it were flashed up on social media for the world to see.

The impact of adultery is a chain reaction. It is a sin against God, against the partner, against a spouse, and against the partner's spouse. If you are not married, it is a sin against a future spouse and partner's spouse. Abstaining from sexual relationships before entering the marriage covenant and living in fidelity after marriage will mark us as being distinct from our culture.

In Ephesians 5, we find marriage represented as a type of our union with Christ. Christ is represented as the groom and the church as the bride. Our marriage to the Lamb calls for a love relationship in this present life with Him. We can't have that relationship with Jesus and be promiscuous in our sexual relations with the opposite sex or in marriage. Therefore, it is written, *"You shall not commit adultery"* (Exodus 20:14).

Lesson Questions:

1. In Matthew 5:27-28 Jesus describes how the command to not commit adultery can be broken in our hearts. What is the difference between adultery of the heart and actual adultery?

2. What is Jesus' point in proposing such drastic solutions to avoid adultery of the heart in Matthew 5:29-30?

3. What was God's plan for marriage and the establishment of a home? Genesis 2:18, 24

4. How did Jesus confirm God's plan for marriage? Matthew 19:4-6

5. For how long was the marriage to be binding? Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39

6. What lessons do you see from the account of the scribes and Pharisees bringing the adulteress to Jesus? John 8:1-11. Did Jesus condone the woman's adultery?

7. Describe the marriage relationship as Paul outlines it in Ephesians 5:22-33. How can husbands love their wives as Christ loves the church? Ephesians 5:25. How can wives submit to and respect their husbands *"as to the Lord"*? Ephesians 5:22, 33

8. Colossians 3:5 challenges us to put to death our earthly members, saying that it leads to idolatry. How do we do that while living in the world? Colossians 3:8-11

9. Describe some of the admonitions Proverbs 5 gives for the young man. How do these apply to the challenges in our world today?

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Lesson 12: The Tenth Commandment

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's" Exodus 20:17

Scripture Reading: Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-30

Memory Verse: *Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness.* Psalm 119:36

Introduction:

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's" (Exodus 20:17). These are instructions from God.

The Bible does not promise that we will be healthy, wealthy, or wise because we have faith in God. Often, the ideas about the Gospel have become mixed up with the American dream, so that we expect that if we behave in a righteous manner God will protect us with good health and give us freely of His good possessions. When this is our attitude, faith is nothing but a path to materialism. Instead, we are to have contentment and peace that comes from our Heavenly Father through our relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ. The tenth commandment challenges us to not put our focus on material things of the world but on our Heavenly Father.

The command, *"You shall not covet"* (Exodus 20:17) is unique among the commandments in that it relates to the desires in our hearts. This is interesting because Jesus taught the same messages about the heart when He said not to hate our brother, or we would commit murder and not to look at a woman with lust lest we commit adultery. It is important that we understand that we sin not only by our actions but by our desires. The heart attitude is key to understanding our faith.

As we think of coveting, we begin to realize that many disagreements and ruined relationships come from not following this commandment. It is impossible to love your neighbor if we covet what they have.

Even though we are told to not covet our neighbor's possessions, it is not forbidden to own possessions or to possess them. Think of Abraham and Job, for example. Both were righteous men and had many

there are seven that are an abomination. We see, however, that the LORD hated lies so badly that it is repeated. A false witness is a lying witness. Bearing false witness was one of the greatest of all the things God hates. How do we measure up in this area?

Lesson Questions:

1. How do we know that God does not lie? Numbers 23:19; Malachi 3:6; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18; James 1:17. How does God's truthfulness encourage you to be more truthful?
2. Why is Satan called the "father of lies"? John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3
3. Look at the following examples of liars in the Bible. What were their motivations for their deceit?
   - Cain - when God asked him, "Where is Abel, your brother?" Genesis 4:9
   - Abraham - when he lied to Abimelech that Sarah was his sister. Genesis 20:2-4, 10-12
   - Rahab - when she hid the spies and lied about it. Joshua 2:2-4, 8-12
   - Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, - when he asked for payment from Naaman for God healing him through Elisha. 2 Kings 5:20-27
   - Ananias and Sapphira - when they lied about giving all the proceeds from the sale of a property to the apostles. Acts 5:1-10
1. Explain how the ninth commandment fits in with the commandment, *"Love your neighbor as yourself."* Romans 13:8-10
2. Why do we tolerate white lies, such as exaggeration or even by staying silent, more than outright mistruths? Does the commandment intend to distinguish between the two? Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9
3. How can slander or gossip bear a false witness? Proverbs 11:13; Proverbs 17:9; Proverbs 26:20
4. Discuss what is said about false witnesses in Proverbs 12:17 and 14:5.
5. What are the seven things that the Lord sees as an abomination? Proverbs 6:16-19

The Complete Study Guide can be found on the www.ACTSforGod.org website by clicking on the Digital Studies tab. To purchase a complete printed copy, contact the office.

Lesson 10: The Eighth Commandment

"You shall not steal." Exodus 20:15

Scripture Reading: Joshua 7:10-22

Memory Verse: *A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold.* Proverbs 22:1

Introduction:

The eighth commandment indirectly establishes private ownership. God's forbidding one man to take something from another establishes the right of man to "have and to hold." This is one of the principles of economics.

The God-given right to possess things for our very own has been recognized from the beginning. At creation, God gave the world and its resources to mankind. The man and the woman were commanded to subdue the world and have dominion over it. The right of property ownership is demonstrated in Abraham's purchase of a plot of land to bury his wife Sarah in Genesis 23. By this, we see the right of private ownership was recognized even then.

From the concept of private ownership of possessions comes the command that we should not take something from another because it is his to have and to hold. As men and women find Jesus and come into a relationship with God, they become aware that the right of private ownership is more of a privilege. We begin to see that *"the cattle on a thousand hills"* (Psalm 50:10) are our Heavenly Father's and that we are tenants that have been granted use of those resources for a brief lifespan. In Deuteronomy 10:14, we see *"Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it."* God is the owner of the earth and all that is in it, and He desires individuals to be His stewards of His creation.

Like some of the other commandments, stealing is deeply engrained within us as being wrong. Romans 2:14-15 describes how the Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature, do what the law requires. By this, they show that the work of the law is written on their hearts.

Instead of stealing, God wants us to give and share. He wants us to be generous and considerate of our fellow man and to give out of consideration for the blessings we have received from Him.

Lesson Questions:

1. What was to be done with the spoils taken in the battle of Jericho? Joshua 6:17, 19

2. What was the sin of Israel and Achan and what was Achan's confession? Joshua 7:1, 11, 20-21

3. How was the eighth commandment described in other parts of the law given by Moses? Exodus 22:7; Leviticus 6:1-7; 19:11, 35-36; Deuteronomy 25:13-15

4. How does the Lord regard dishonest scales? Proverbs 11:1; 20:23; Micah 6:11. Discuss modern-day examples of this.

5. What might cause someone to do something like use short weights, cheat, defraud, and other similar dishonest practices? Why will men risk their eternal life by doing this? 1 Timothy 6:9-10

6. What advice does Paul give to the thief that is now a Christian? Ephesians 4:28

7. What are some other ways that we can break the eighth commandment today? Can you steal something that isn't a physical object?

8. Is stealing always wrong? How is stealing sometimes justified in our culture today?

9. How does James 1:17 encourage us to be content with the good gifts we have been given?

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Lesson 11: The Ninth Commandment

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Exodus 20:16

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 6:12-19

Memory Verse: *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.* Ephesians 4:29

Introduction:

A witness is one who is supposed to have first-hand knowledge and who can testify concerning an event. To be of any value in helping arrive at proper conclusions, witnesses must tell the truth. In court today witnesses are asked to promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. This is no more than God requires of us.

This emphasis on truth is why in the law of Moses it took at least two witnesses to condemn someone of a capital offense (Deuteronomy 17:6-7). A person could not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. A second safeguard against a false witness was that the hands of the witnesses were to be the ones to cast the first stone. If they were false witnesses and it was found out that an innocent person was killed, then the law would consider them murderers. Also, once the false witness is found to be a liar, the same punishment of death would be upon them (Deuteronomy 19:18-19). This demonstrates how important truthfulness was to the Israelite community.

What are the motivations for being a false witness? Think about Satan and the lies he told to Eve. What was his motivation? People have a variety of motives for being deceitful. It might be because of selfishness, because of embarrassment, for money, to not offend people, or to save face. Our motivation to lie might even be out of fear. But the Bible says that God will honor those who honor Him. Sin is a reproach against God. *"Righteousness exalts a nation"* (Proverbs 14:34).

What are some ways we bear false witness? We can commit perjury in a courtroom. We can lie by exaggeration. We can lie by flattery. We can lie by creating false impressions or by not correcting false statements. We can allow lies to stand by carelessness or by careless talk. We can lie by spreading rumors that we know are untrue or haven't been verified.

Notice which of the things mentioned in Proverbs 6:16-19 God hates the most. First, it reads that there are six things the LORD hates, then it says

Continued from page 8

when he gets into a hole, when hard times come, he calls upon God.

But there are three kinds of prayer that ought to arise daily from our hearts. First, there is the prayer of gratitude, thanking God for all His blessings. Second, there is the prayer of forgiveness, asking God to forgive us for our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Third, there is the prayer about service, asking God to fit us for service and to fill us with the Holy Spirit.

Yes, prayer changes things and prayer changes people. We are to humble ourselves, pray and seek God's face.

The text then tells us to turn from our wicked ways. Now, here's where the rub comes in, here is the reason we are not the Christians we ought to be. There is wickedness in us, there is sin in us, there are certain things standing between us and God.

Practical Ways of Reform

The psalmist told God to try him and see if there was any wicked way in him. Oh, we need to look deep down into our own hearts and lives and acknowledge the sin that is there. Not one of us is what we ought to be. We are guilty before God. We need to turn away from our wicked ways. Let us think of some practical ways in which we can do this.

1. We need to turn away from our neglect of God's Word. David says, *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee"* (Psalm 119:11). Is the word of God hidden in your heart or merely between the covers of an old black book which you seldom read?

2. We need to turn away from a Christless home life. America was founded upon Christian homes. Our forefathers had time to pray with their families, to read the Bible and talk about the things of God. But there are few homes like that today.

3. We need to turn away from a wrong attitude toward others. Is there anything in your heart between you and someone else? Is there someone to whom you do not speak? Do you have hatred and envy and malice toward anyone? If you do, there is sin in your heart, a sin that displeases God and that will bring you unhappiness and eat away your spiritual joy and power.

   I do not know, but it may be that your wrong attitude toward someone else may keep back a revival from your church. I do know that your wrong attitude will hold back the blessings from your own heart and life. A real Christian can never be happy with an unchristian spirit in his heart.

4. We need to turn away from our indifference to lost souls. There are lost souls all around us. They may be in the place where we work. They may be part of our social circle. They may be even in our own home. Do you care that they are lost? Do you have any concern for them?

5. We need to turn away from all sin and worldliness. "Oh", you say "I am alright. I am a member of the church. I have a good name in the community. There's nothing wrong with me."

   But God says, *"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). And again, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"* (1 John 1:8).

6. The trouble with us today is that we have the wrong concept of sin. We live in an age when "anything goes." We think if we haven't stolen anything or murdered anyone or if we haven't been drunk or committed adultery, that we have not sinned. We may have changed our ideas about sin, but God has not changed. He says *"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23). Surely, if we had the right concept of sin we would have more old-time, genuine conviction for sin. Men would cry out, "God be merciful to me, a sinner. What must I do to be saved?"

Yes, this is God's recipe for a revival. If all of God's people will get right with God, if they will go out to live rightly before Him, if they will witness faithfully for Him, God will keep His promise. **He will send a revival.**

All scriptures in this article are taken from the King James Version, public domain.

This article was previously published in the February 1979 issue of the ACTS.

†‡†

Children's Corner

MR. SNOWMAN

The early sun came through Carol's window. It crept across the room. Finally, it touched Carol's face where she lay sleeping.

She rubbed her eyes and pulled the covers over her head. But not for long. In another minute she pushed the covers back and jumped out of bed. As she did every morning, Carol ran to the window to say good morning to the new day.

But this morning, she opened her eyes wide. There was a fairyland in white. Snow was everywhere. The trees were outlined in white. The hedge wore a soft white cover. Snow lay in fluffy swirls over the ground like icing on a cake.

"Mother! Look at the snow. Where did it all come from? I thought the snow season was still a ways off? Isn't it too early for snow?" All these questions tumbled out as Carol ran into the kitchen.

Mother laughed as she set the table for breakfast. "Yes, it does feel early."

"May I play outside?" asked Carol.

"It doesn't seem to be very cold out. I think this will be a good 'play' snow. It may not last too long with this bright sun shining down."

Carol hurried through breakfast and her chores. She saw her friends, Donna and Janie, out making trails in the snow. After putting on her warm coat and cap, Carol tugged until her boots were on. "I'm going to need new boots soon," she thought. "I'm not sure these boots will fit over my shoes much longer."

"The girls are waiting for me, Mother." Carol stepped out into a snowdrift. She crunched over to the girls—turning to see the tracks she left behind as she walked..

"Hi, Carol," shouted Donna and Janie. "Want to help us make a snowman?"

"Yes, let's make a big one this time."

The girls started with a little ball of snow, rolling and pushing. With each roll the little ball picked up snow and grew and grew. Then they started another ball and it grew and grew.

"Hey, wait a minute," said Janie. "How are we going to get this part on top of the other part?"

The three girls tried to lift it. It was much too big. They took off some of the snow. It was still too heavy. They ate a little snow while they were thinking what to do.

"I know, maybe Danny will help us," said Carol. But Danny had gone to visit a friend.

"Good morning, girls!" called Mr. Barnett. "How are you?" Mr. Barnett was taking a walk.

"We're okay, but look at our poor snowman. We have all his parts but we can't put him together."

"I wonder if I could help?" asked Mr. Barnett. The girls watched as he put the snowman together.

When he finished, Donna said, "Thank you. After we get his eyes and nose and mouth in and put his hat on, we can name him Mr. Barnett, just for you."

Later, the girls were getting a little cold when Carol's mother called, "Who would help me drink some hot chocolate?"

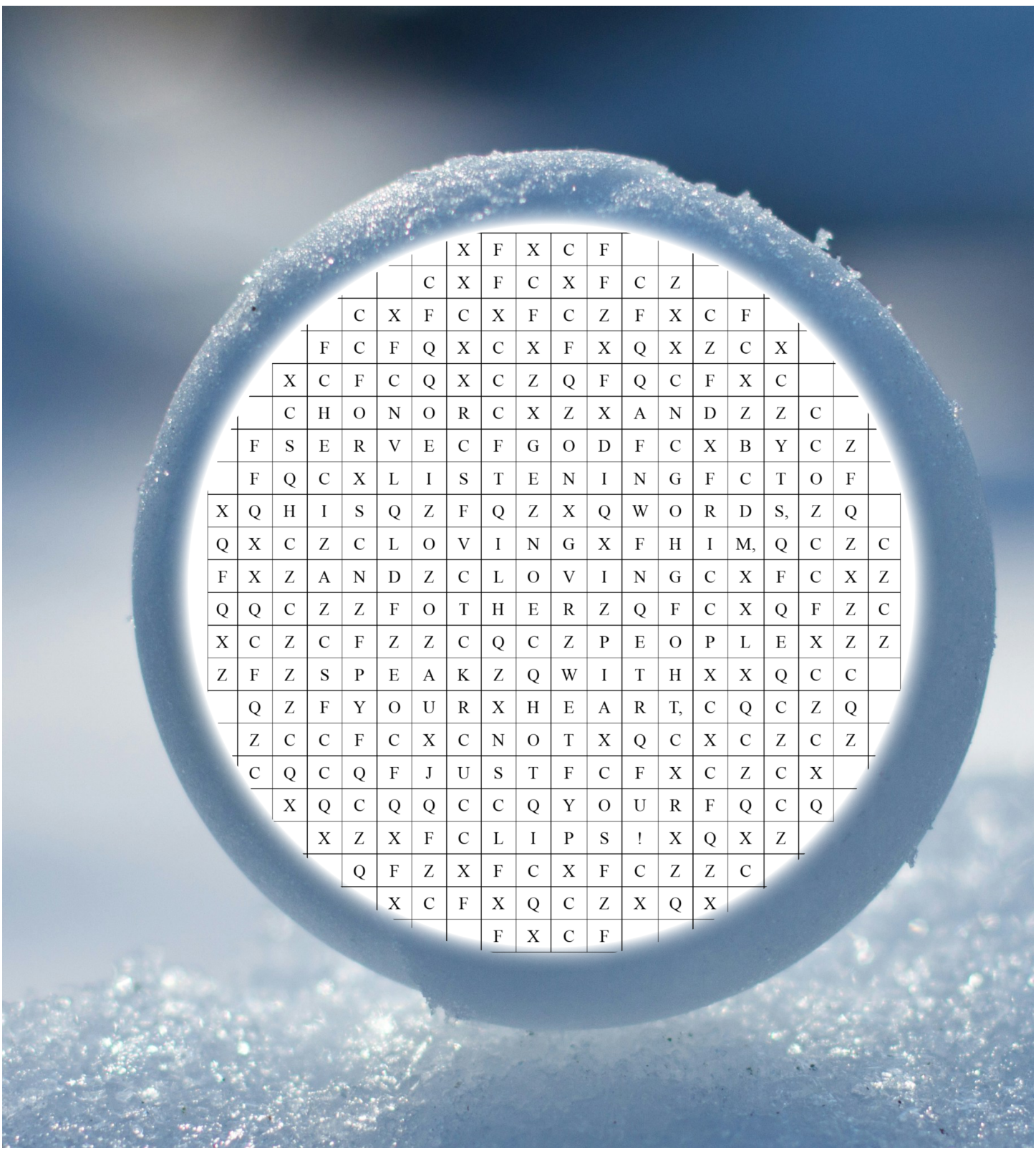
All three were quite ready. The hot cup felt very good to their cold, red hands. They talked of the snow, and giving toast for the birds, and their friend, Mr. Barnett.

I'm glad God plans for snow. It is fun, and it helps people, too. This snow had really been fun. What a good way to say hello to winter!



Color in each block in the snowball below that has a letter that is used 13 or more times.

The remaining letters will have a message.



Headquarters Happenings
Nov-Dec 2026

By Sophia Fleming
G.C. Administrator/General Manager

Cash Flow Analysis as of Sep—2026	Beginning Balance	Ending Balance
Designated Funds	Jul 31st	Sep 30th
Building Fund	0.00	0.00
Campmeeting Fund	2,297.26	1,335.88
Memorial Fund	450.00	450.00
Missions	17,095.57	19,914.90
Park Fund	3,960.00	3,960.00
Funds for Operating Expenses		
General Fund	13,086.79	24,727.27
Repairs Fund (5% of Rent)	226.28	923.78
Average Monthly General Operating Expenses for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 = $10,332.17		

End of year greetings to you all!

We pray as we come to the end of this year that we can all look back with great amounts of gratitude on what the Lord has done thus far.

I often say at the end of my day that I have been busy all day long, and yet almost nothing on my to do list has been checked off. I recently attended the Treasure Valley Women's Retreat and the topic was, "Through the Wilderness: Hope and Peace for the Unexpected Places in Your Life." I went to the retreat burdened by these lists and the many things I felt I had left undone, and left with a word from the Lord that: as long as I do that which He puts in front of me, I am doing what I ought. What peace we have when we seek His way through the wildernesses of our lives. Cindy McCrea, the speaker, taught that we all have different "wildernesses" that He is bringing us through and that He uses those wildernesses to help us grow. There was much taught at the retreat, I wish I could share it all, but suffice it to say: we were all very blessed.

This year I have again been challenged by some books that the Lord has brought to my attention. After I read *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself* by Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett, I was led to read *Becoming Whole: Why the Opposite of Poverty Isn't the American Dream* by Brian Fikkert and Kelly M. Kapic. Both books challenged not only our philosophy of helping those in need, but for me, as I dug deeper into how to apply these principles, I found myself hearing Jesus ask, *"Where is your faith?"* (Luke 8:25). You see, in the book *Becoming Whole*, I learned of a program called the Truth Centered Transformation Program (TCT) and read stories of entire villages stepping out of poverty by applying God's principles to their lives. I read of churches in areas of the world with no access to clean drinking water digging wells or building hospitals when they used to have no doctor – all with zero help from foreign donors. Why? Because God has already equipped His people; He has given them resources, and we of little faith—through our desire to help, have fueled the lies of the enemy by teaching those in the majority of the world, who are living in poverty, can do all things - through **our** help. Our go-to is often to write a check long before we invest in becoming their prayer partner.

Truth Centered Transformation is a program of the ministry Reconciled World and they base all of their programs on seven core biblical principles as shown in the overview on the next page. Over 1,000 entire communities have come out of poverty when churches have used the biblical teachings of the TCT program. The program shows that through acts of love, we can love our neighbor – regardless of our worldly worth. Those acts of love are the outpouring of God's love. Through exposure to His love and truth, the conditions in those communities changed; that change happened as the members of the community began to reflect who they are as His children. This is not prosperity gospel, it is truth-centered transformation, breaking the lies of the enemy that we are less and deserve less.

I strongly recommend that you read these books and also visit the FrameworkForTransformation.org website and read through the core principles. My husband and I did, and when we realized that we could actually be stealing blessings from those we love, it set us on our heels and sent us into repentance and prayer. The General Council Board of Directors are also reviewing these principles and looking at how we can implement them into our work here.

As I close, I'd like to ask you to read, or reread, Steve Boone's article, *Living Before the Face of God,* in this issue of the ACTS. Read it through the eyes of the empowering truth that the same Father who knows the thoughts and intents of hearts of those in countries that are not materially poor, also knows the thoughts and intents of the hearts of those in vulnerable countries. *"All fall short of the glory of God"* – but remember – ALL are *"created in His image"* too (Romans 3:23; Genesis 1:27). God has a plan for His people; He loves them and has equipped them all. He may even be using a wilderness journey for their growth.

Perhaps if we as His *"people who are called by* [His] *name will humble* [ourselves]*, and pray and seek* [His] *face, and turn from* [our] *wicked ways, then* [He] *will hear from heaven, and will forgive* [our] *sin and heal* ***their*** *land"* and ours! (Emphasis added - 2 Chronicles 7:14) (Read more about true revival in the article by Harold Carson on page 8).

Blessings, sf

Reconciled World is a ministry that has built their programs on a Framework for Transformation. They have based this framework on seven core biblical principles that they feel can help strengthen any work with vulnerable people. Below is a summary of these seven principles; to read more visit: https://frameworkfortransformation.org/

	**Depending on God** It's God who transforms. We need to look to Him for wisdom, provision, and supernatural intervention. Our human efforts and resources are just not enough.
	**Nurturing Truth and Confronting Lies** Physical poverty and injustice are symptoms of a deeper problem—wrong beliefs. If we are to see lives transformed, we must begin by identifying individual and societal lies that create brokenness and then bring biblical truths that lead to flourishing.
	**Integrating Physical and Spiritual** We often categorize our world into boxes, such as sacred and secular, spiritual and physical. But the Bible teaches that all of life is meant to be lived for God's glory. This biblical, integrated view of life changes how we understand poverty and the way we seek to address it.
	**Partnering with the Church** Jesus describes the Church as His body and bride. Local churches are His chosen instrument for His involvement in the world. When the local church acts, God receives the glory, rather than the praise going to an individual or organization. That's why the church is key to addressing brokenness.
	**Focusing on the Vulnerable** Vulnerable people have needs much deeper than the physical lack we easily identify. To see lives transformed, we must help vulnerable people to regain hope, dignity, and a right understanding of their identity as image-bearers of their Creator and stewards of the earth.
	**Mobilizing Local Resources** God has not abandoned local churches and communities. He has gifted even the poorest with resources. We encourage people to discover and use those resources for God's glory.
	**Pursuing God's Ways** God's ways are higher than our ways, and we need to constantly seek God through prayer, scripture, and wise Christian advisors. God's ways include building His kingdom rather than our own, stewarding well, and being generous with all He gives us.

(https://frameworkfortransformation.org/the-core-principles/)

Daughters of the King

My prayer each day is, "Lord, let me be your messenger, your hands, your feet, and your voice as I walk in the world today."

Greetings sisters,

I pray this letter finds you resting in God's love and care.

I want to follow Joyce's example and introduce myself to all of you. I have been blessed to serve as an officer of the National Daughters of the King; currently as president.

I am a mother of 4, grandmother of 12, and great-grandmother of 17. I was blessed to be married for 53 wonderful years. After the passing of my beloved husband, I had to reevaluate what God's purpose for me was, and I have found Psalm 37:3 has been a good guide. Trusting the Lord for each day never fails. My prayer each day is, "Lord, let me be your messenger, your hands, your feet, and your voice as I walk in the world today."

I have been blessed to travel to some other countries (Kenya and Jamaica) and have met many beautiful sisters. However, in the 60 years I have attended the Church of God, I have mostly stayed in the Meridian, Idaho, USA area.

Our church has a small group of ladies that meet once a month in the fall and winter months to play games and complete small projects, and we also have a monthly potluck meal. We reach out to the community each November for a mission project and support the work in Jamaica and Africa. We also work with a local agency to fight abortion and support moms in need.

I love to spend time in our lovely back country and mountains. I love to garden, preserve all the produce I grow, and dabble in quilting. I also keep busy with family and am blessed that most live in the same area as I do and they let me prepare meals and feed them. I love cooking. I think feeding people may be part of my love language.

I want to encourage each of you to introduce yourself and send in an article of encouragement to sisters who might want to connect with others. My prayer is, "Lord help us to speak to others in a way that will help them see you and feel your presence."

Let us pray for each other and look for a way to support a sister in need of a hug.

May God bless and keep you in His care.

Linda Palmer, DOK President

***Trust** in the **LORD**, and do **good**; dwell in the land, and feed on **His faithfulness**.*

Psalms 37:3 (emphasis added)

Summary of Our Statement of Belief

THE BIBLE
God has revealed Himself through the Bible. Divine guidance of the writing, preservation, and translation of the Bible makes it the most accurate, complete, reliable, and divinely inspired revelation of God.

GOD
God, called I Am (YHWH) in the Old Testament and called Heavenly Father by Jesus in the New Testament, has always and will always exist. God created earth with all of nature and controls it for His purposes. God created people with free choice to live on earth in relationship with Him and gave people capabilities designed for living according to His purpose.

JESUS
Jesus is the divinely born Son of God, and is the Son of Man, who is the divinely anointed Messiah. He was sent to fully reveal the Heavenly Father to mankind and to die an atoning sacrifice. He created the path to reconcile individuals into God's family. Today Jesus is the head of God's Kingdom on earth and the intercessor to God for each of God's children.

HOLY SPIRIT
The Holy Spirit is the power of God recorded working at creation and throughout the Old Testament. God worked by His Spirit through God's chosen leaders, His children, and governments on the earth to accomplish His plan and purposes. In the New Testament God's Spirit worked the divine birth of Jesus and empowered Jesus for ministry. God's Spirit guided the development of the early church and the spreading of the Gospel to known lands. Today the work of God's Spirit includes convincing people of sin, righteousness, judgement, and enabling people to accomplish God's will beyond human limitations.

CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST
Jesus prophesied that He would be buried in the grave for three days and three nights to provide a sign that He is the begotten Son of God. From prophecy and the many timing references about activities around Jesus, we believe that He was buried on Wednesday evening and resurrected Saturday evening.

STATE OF THE DEAD
Death of this mortal life is a condition of "unconscious" waiting until the return of Jesus Christ at His second coming. During the end time, mortal bodies will be resurrected. Members of God's family will become immortal and those who have rejected God will be destroyed at their appointed time.

MAN'S CONDITION
Since creation people have naturally chosen rejection of God's sovereignty and pursue self-interest as their guide for living in God's creation. This has resulted in death for all. The result is that earth is a place of difficult labor and lives of hardship for the duration of separation from God. People cannot on their own reverse this separation.

MAN'S SALVATION
God shows his extreme love for people, His creation, and His design for life on earth by His provision to reconcile people into His family. God sent Jesus, who in love, became the reconciling sacrifice for everyone who believes in the reality of God and accepts inclusion to live in God's family. God's family will live eternally.

A HOLY LIFE AND SANCTIFICATION
God created people to live as members of His family, which includes pursuing His design for living on earth. God is holy and desires His family to live lives differentiated from those who pursue serving self and natural earthly desires. Focus on Godly living becomes the primary purpose of life. This purpose not only leads to pursuing the reality of God but also His desire that people love each other more than desire for self. The ability to achieve this purpose starts with reconciliation into a relationship with God when the Spirit of God becomes part of the inner person. Experiencing the reality of God's continual presence and activity enhances one's day to day living.

THE CHURCH
God designed creation for people to live in connected communities. This increases people sharing their love for God and experiencing Him. It also increases their love for other people. The church is the primary community designed by God outside of family units. The name "The Church of God" is commonly used in the Bible to identify communities of Jesus's followers. The church is not only the local believer communities but also a collective community of all individuals that follow Jesus. The Spirit of God enables the church to accomplish God's work. Individual church communities are human organizations that need Godly leaders. God's Spirit directs the local group and enables it to do God's work. Such local churches are each responsible for their own teachings and activities. Degrees of fellowship, unity, and pursuit of common objectives establishes connection between individual churches.

ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH
Jesus initiated practices of the church to strengthen the relationship of individuals to God:
Baptism by immersion is a declaration by a child of God expressing their acceptance of God's reconciliation into His family. This celebration by believers receives them into the church community.
The Lord's Supper/Christian Passover commemorates the sacrifice of Jesus to bring reconciliation to the children of God. Jesus instructed His followers to eat unleavened bread and to drink the fruit of the vine to remember His body and blood that was sacrificed. And to do this as they had commemorated the Jewish Passover.
The washing of feet ceremony at the Lord's Supper/Christian Passover is for the church, as a community, and for individuals to recognize and remember Jesus's instruction to serve each other.

THE TEN COMMANDMENT LAW AND THE SABBATH DAY
The Ten Commandments, given by God, are to teach righteous words and actions to all mankind. This standard of acceptable behavior reflects the necessary personal inward experience that leads people to know God and accept reconciliation into his family.

God established the sunset to sunset Seventh Day Sabbath as a gift to mankind to break from work, responsibilities, and burdens for one day a week. This gift not only rejuvenates but calls for remembrance of God who set it apart and of His love for creation.

When God established Israel as His personal people, Moses handed down civil laws to govern the lives of Israelites. When the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah instituted the New Covenant, God's nation became internalized by all believers located in all nations.

PRAYER AND DIVINE HEALING
Prayer is the opportunity to connect to God in spiritual communication, to worship and praise Him for His love and work on earth. It is the way to approach Him with needs and to express concerns for the needs of others. Prayer is to God, recognizing Jesus as mediator, and seeking to know and accept God's will in life. We believe in the "laying on of hands" of the elders and the prayer of faith for divine healing.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD
We believe that Jesus the Messiah will return to earth to set up the physical Kingdom of God, to rule in place of earthly nations that withstand God and His righteousness. His return will initiate the resurrection of the dead, the reward of the righteous, the earth made new and become the eternal home of the children of God. Afterwards the earth will be free from sin and the curse of death.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES
We believe that Bible prophecy has indicated the seasons of events that will occur near the return of Jesus. Those times will include increasing rejection of God and increasing calamities facing mankind. The current challenges that nations are facing are likely the work of God moving towards the soon return of Jesus. As such, more diligence is required to reach out to those around and to stand on the truth of God's existence and His offer of reconciliation to all.

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Why Baptism?

Then peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit."
Acts 2:38

Join us for the next Ministerial Council Quarterly Forum

November 15, 2026,
9:00am MDT
Via Zoom

This time of fellowship and learning is brought to you by the Ministerial Council of the General Council Churches of God, (Seventh Day).

Biblical Resources

Take advantage of the many free study helps on the ACTSforGod.org page!

We pray you will be a blessed by the resources below!

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