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The Voice

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"AND BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER, TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, EVEN AS GOD IN CHRIST FORGAVE YOU" (EPHESIANS 4:32).

I was recently awestruck by the amazing merciful love of our Heavenly Father. It began with a "super-sized Monday." You know, those extra severe Monday's after an extended time off. Leaving a snugly cocoon of covers to face the frigid weather felt extra intense. We (barely) made it out the door at o-dark-thirty with all of our immobilizing wintery gear on, only to face overly hectic morning traffic. By the time I dropped my kiddos off, my anxiety was through the cloud-roof, if you will.

But then, as I headed to work and routinely sang along with some praise and worship, I unexpectedly felt the tangible and loving presence of God fill my glory-mobile. My heart certainly hadn't been "postured" toward God. Sadly, my attitude-of-gratitude faucet wasn't on full throttle either. Yet, merciful and gracious, He still wanted to come and be with me in my little car on a cold wintery morning. He's so quick to start afresh and believe the best. He is kindness personified.

I wish I could say the same for myself. If someone is a little snarky, even, say, my sleep-deprived, cold, cranky kids on a "super-sized Monday," I can often feel put off for a little bit. Sometimes I might even feel justified to grit my teeth and tune out the "noise." I might even make a snide comment about the "rude" drivers at times. Did I mention that I'm still walking this out most days?

But then there's the Lord. He's the type who doesn't care about ill manners, a modest education or bad breath. He loves on prostitutes. He heals lepers. Think of the most outcast person you can imagine with a goopy, gaggy, hard-to-look-at disease. That's just the sort Jesus would go hug and heal — inside and out. Whiny kids, you betcha. I imagine they were His specialty. He had such love, joy and kindness, my guess is no child ever stayed cranky in His company for long.

You see, love is energetic. Kindness is an action word. It doesn't walk into a room and go sit in a corner bored and unengaged. Rather, love embraces others, gives sloppy kisses, looks people in the eye and shows concern. Love tells jokes and crushes

crankiness with joy. It sees how it can serve. Kindness picks up the phone first. Love visits tired moms with over-extended schedules on "super-sized" Mondays. It helps an old woman carry her groceries and says hello to the person at church alone on any given Sunday. It also quickly forgives. You see, He is merciful, which is the deepest gesture of kindness. Love never treats "rude" people "in-kind."

In fact, the Lord has the whole "love chapter" attributes as His very nature; the "believing the best," and "keeping no record of wrongs" are in full force with Him. Always. I guess I knew it intellectually, but His illustrated sermon hit me like a gushing geyser that day as He showered me in His sweet, warm grace. He allowed my heart to see anew how wonderful it is to receive, and therefore show, grace.

So, this year, I've purposed to be a little more like my Papa so others feel His life-giving graciousness through me. I've decided to tear up that "record of wrongs" I can hold in my heart and love people where they are at. Yes, even "bad" drivers. Besides, we never know where people are coming from and what kind of day they've had to cause them to be a little cranky or aggressive. Believing the best of others means love in action, just like our Father, and treating others accordingly.

So, will you take up this love dare with me? Let's make it our personal promise to walk out 1 Corinthians 13. Oh, and when we fail (you KNOW we will), let's not forget to believe the best about ourselves too; Forget the "record of wrong," and keep on going. As we take every thought captive and determine that LOVE will live in and through us, our responses will become in line with His more and more each day.

I'm so excited to see what happens to a life sold-out to love... to see how relationships blossom and opportunities unfold... how old hurts wash away and relationship barriers crumble. Most of humanity longs to be loved. What would happen if first WE loved others because HE first loved us? I'm guessing our gratefulness meters would skyrocket and our lives would be a lot more full.

Be blessed!
Kelly Head, Managing Editor *The Voice*

**YES, DAILY I WILL CHOOSE
TO LOVE LIKE GOD LOVES!**



=THE LOVE DARE

Love is patient and kind. It thinks of others, and doesn't boast. Love isn't proud. Love honors others and is selfless. Love is not easily angered, and keeps no record of wrongs. Love doesn't delight in evil but rejoices when it hears the truth. Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

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Does the Creation Story Reveal a Key to Being Healed?

Receive your miracle today!

*"By faith we understand that
the universe was formed at God's command,
so that what is seen was not made out of
what was visible"*

(Hebrews 11:3).

By Dennis Lindsay

In Genesis 1:1-3, God reveals the pattern for a creative miracle and healing. In verse one, we learn that God spoke what He *wanted* into existence and not what He *saw*. God was envisioning what He wanted, even though in reality, He did not see it. In verse one we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In simple English, that means that God created both space and matter. But the creation at this point was barren; it had no life.

In verse two, we learn that creation was still not complete. It was unfinished, lifeless and barren. In verse three, God spoke the next step in His creation. In the miracle of creation, which was to create life, God spoke light into existence. Verse two says that God's spirit was "hovering." The Hebrew word for "hovering" is only found two other times in the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy 32:11, this word refers to the movement of an eagle's wings over its young. The only other time this word is mentioned is in Jeremiah 23:9. Here it refers to an individual shivering. Each time the word indicates a vibrating movement. When God spoke light into existence, He created waves of energy. Scientists call this the electromagnetic spectrum. It is like being shocked by the power of electricity. In other words, there was intense motion. God's spirit was vibrating, about to birth something.

Hebrews 11:1, 3 says, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see... By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." What was God about to birth? Life. This vibration motion is a movement we see in nature such as with a mother rocking her baby in love or how a mother hen broods over her chicks. God's spirit was calling forth life in the physical realm by hovering, by brooding and then speaking what He wanted. The Earth was barren, and He wanted Life.

"Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world" (Psalm 90:2). The writer of this Psalm is describing the Genesis creation as a birthing. It is the same Hebrew word used in Isaiah 66:8-9, referring to the birth of a nation (Israel). The same word is used again in Deuteronomy

32:10-18, when God tells Abraham and Sarah that they would have a child in their old age. The Hebrew text reveals God was in the process of birthing, producing life where there was no life.

Intercession is also like the process and pattern of birthing that we find in Genesis 1. Intercession involves speaking things into existence as though they were. We are to enter into the spirit, intercede in travail, and speak the Word of God. We must believe God for a creative miracle to be manifested as life is brought forth in a barren situation, such as sickness, loss of finances, challenges within a family and anything that the enemy has stolen.

In the New Testament, we find a Greek word that is the counterpart to the Old Testament word "hovering." The word is translated as "overshadowing" and "energizing." In Luke 1:35, the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary, and she became pregnant with the Son of God. We find the same Greek word in Matthew 17:5, when Jesus is transfigured. It is the same word used in Acts 15, when Peter's shadow fell on the sick as he passed by and they were healed. In other words, supernatural energy was released.

God instructs His disciples how to move mountains by speaking to them. There is power in the words of the believer who speaks forth the Word of God! In Matthew 8, Jesus was amazed

at the Roman centurion's understanding of the power of words. The Roman soldier said to Jesus, "Just speak the word and my servant will be healed."

If believers truly believed the Word of God and acted upon it according to the Word, we would be birthing life in barren situations, just as God did in Genesis and Jesus did while He walked the Earth. It was by faith that the world was created. Believers should be operating in the same faith of Creation demonstrated in Genesis. The pattern of the birthing process and moving mountains is simply to enter into the Spirit, intercede and travail, speak the Word of God and push, and then creative energy will be manifested. God's power will move mountains that Satan has placed in our way that keeps us from enjoying the abundant life of the believer (John 10:10). God's power is at our fingertips. 🍷

+

**There is power
in the mouth of
the believer who
speaks forth the
Word of God.**



LIVING FROM HIS PRESENCE

By Kelly Head

If you have the honor to meet Heidi Baker, you likely won't just meet her. She so abides in God's presence, you're pretty likely to have an encounter with the Holy Spirit, too.

Heidi Baker, along with her husband Rolland, founded IRIS Ministries in 1980 (now Iris Global).

In this day of big platform preachers with entourages and sometimes snippy-in-the-green-room reputations, Heidi Baker is the real deal; the true love of Christ exudes from inside her. She is the same onstage ministering as she is inside her guest apartment, a green room, in her tent in the "bush," or alone. She puts on no pretenses and walks as close to God as seems possible this side of Heaven. Hers is the life that has unlocked the key to an "abiding" life, and what being "Jesus with skin on" looks like.

History will no doubt remember Heidi along with the likes of the love and service of Mother Theresa, the power of Katherine Kuhlman and the reforming intelligence of William Wilberforce.

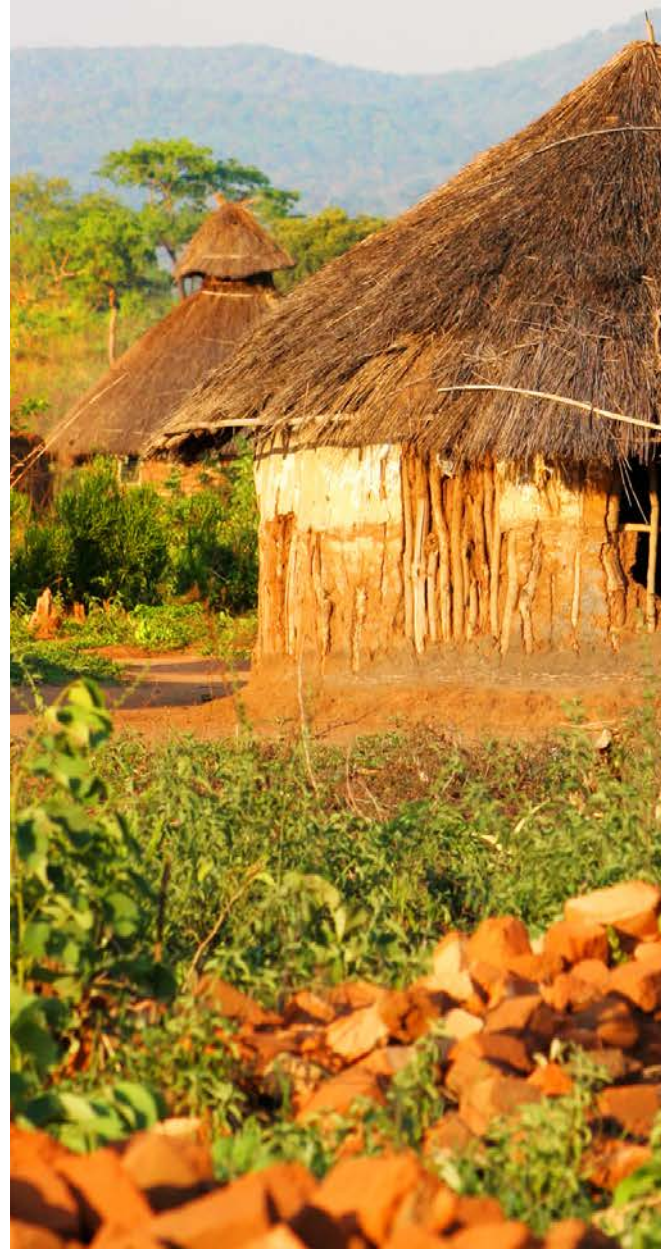
Heidi was the keynote speaker at the Voice of Healing conference in Dallas this year. It's clear that Iris Global is one ministry to watch, emulate and support.

Iris Global is a holistic ministry that began in 1980 with small, evangelistic, street-drama teams in Asia on short-term mission trips. Being so impacted by the condition of the poor, the Baker's ministry grew as their hearts began to prove the love of God by first addressing the physical needs of the broken and humble.

Today, they are doing phenomenal work in Mozambique, transforming the nation by reaching and discipling the war-torn nation's orphans into



► **Every Monday "Mama Heidi"** goes into the villages and asks children about their dreams. Often a child's dream is to become a doctor or a teacher. Because of these responses, Iris Global has begun primary schools, offering free education to many children in villages.



► **A Mozambique Home**

This is a house similar to what you would see if you visited the bush. Families cover their homes in a kind of make-shift-cement that is so weak a simple punch of the fist would crumble it.



► To help combat the country's high poverty rate, Iris Global offers several feeding programs that feed thousands of children, youth, widows and the elderly on a regular basis. After church, the entire community is invited to join Iris for a meal.



world leaders. This transformation isn't without a personal cost and sacrifice, but the spiritual dividends are already proving to be incredible. The Bakers moved to Mozambique in 1995 because it was literally the poorest nation on the Earth at that time. "I wanted to go to the poorest place on Earth, so Rolland began researching to find out where that was. He read me an article that they were blowing up Red Cross trucks in Mozambique," said Heidi. "So I said, nobody wants to go there. They're even blowing up Red Cross trucks. That's where we need to go!"

Though they began with nothing in Mozambique, within a matter of months Heidi and Rolland were given a dilapidated orphanage in Maputo with 80 children. From there, the ministry has expanded to include well-drilling, free health clinics that service the poor and sick, feeding programs, primary and secondary schools, and cottage industries. They now have over 5,000 churches in Mozambique and more than 10,000 churches in over 20 nations. There are now 10 bases, all run by

those who've been raised up through the Baker's ministry, with Bible schools, community outreaches and top-ranked public schools.

In September 2008, Iris Ministries started a well digging project in Northern Mozambique. Their ministry is known for reports of miracles, including many being raised from the dead. Notably, in September 2010, some Harvard University students conducted a study. Southern Medical Journal published an article from that study presenting evidence of "significant improvements" in hearing and sight among people who were deaf and blind before receiving prayer from the ministry.

The Bakers are now based full-time in Pemba, Mozambique, in an area where Heidi says was once called a "graveyard to missionaries." But recently the government announced publicly that it's no longer a Muslim providence; now it's a Christian providence. "We planted 2,700 churches in the last 10 years in that province," Heidi says.

► Harvest School

Iris Global provides a training program for those who desire to gain missionary experience. Students from around the world come with high expectations for what God will do in and through them during their time in Mozambique.





► **Iris Global often takes trips out to the Bush.**

The Bush is deep into the African lands where it is very rural. There is no electricity or running water, and most of the people living there are unreached and haven't heard of Jesus. When ministering in the Bush, students pitch tents like these to sleep at night.

**It's not about my talk,
I don't want to just go and talk,
I want to be in His presence.**

The Bakers also travel to various places around the world to share their story, and to teach about God's love and what love in action looks like. The core value and message of their ministry is God's love.

Here is some of what Heidi Baker had to say.

■ **The Voice:** You are so happy, joyful and peaceful, it seems, from abiding in His presence. Do you have a certain amount of time that you pray everyday?

■ **Heidi Baker:** I do pray, especially a lot of soaking prayer. I get in the presence and I just abide. I worship and abide, and that's my favorite time. Also, because I preach often, (I purpose) to engage in every opportunity I have for corporate worship. It's not about my talk, I don't want to just go and talk. I want to be in His presence. I want to give God all my worship and adoration. So, I get filled up as well corporately, not just privately. Also, I'm fully present. I'm not texting during worship. I'm not trying to arrange another meeting. If someone tries to talk to me, I go as close to the altar as I can. I won't be distracted, because I'm engaging God. I'm present with Him. I think really strongly on my heart is to draw people back to being present with the Lord. Don't think about the next thing or the last thing, just be with Him. He wants that time. He really wants that.

■ **The Voice:** Do you think people know how to be in His presence, as fully as possible?

■ **Heidi Baker:** No. At times I'll have to say, please stop even the music. I love music, but sometimes we just need silence, just to wait. To not even pray in tongues for awhile and just wait and see what God is going to do. Sometimes we'll be in a meeting, it could be thousands of people, tens of thousands, but if you just wait, the Holy Spirit will just come in the room. You'll feel Him, and a pocket will be undone, and another pocket undone, and God will start moving. But we don't like to wait. We get worried about the waiting.

■ **The Voice:** What do you say about knowing the Holy Spirit?

■ **Heidi Baker:** He's my friend, I love Him very much. For me, getting to know Holy Spirit is like getting to know or learn a language. I love languages. I've learned eight languages (in varying degrees). But when you learn a language, it's not just the voice. It's the action. If I give you something, I'll give it like this (makes gesture). See what I did, I held my wrist that I would receive it like that. Well if you were just listening to me you wouldn't see what I did, but languages have actions and gestures, and you can't fully learn them on the computer. It's by being with the people (to learn the nuances of a language). It's about being present and making mistakes.

► **In the Mozambique villages**

a woman is called a "Mama." Harvest School students are required to spend at least one night at a Mama's House. This experience provides genuine cross-cultural experience for the students, and blesses the village family, as well. When a student arrives, they deliver a box of food that can often feed all of the neighborhood children.



What I found is Holy Spirit has a personality, and He speaks His language, and I'm learning His language. Just like I'm fluent in Portuguese, but still I'm always learning more, whatever language I'm working in, I'm going deeper. Holy Spirit, you've learned about Him, and you can go deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper, where you learn His gestures. You watch what He's doing, you listen, you wait, and the more you listen, the more you learn, and you make mistakes, too, like a language learner. You miss it, you get it wrong, you goof up, but He's so loving, He just explains it to you again. If you're afraid to make mistakes, you'll never learn a language. If you really, really want to know Holy Spirit, you're going to have to hear, you're going to have to know you're not going to get it right every time. Your relationship won't be 100 percent all the time, but I'm on this journey to be fluent with everything. I just want to hear Him more and more and learn how He works.

■ **The Voice:** That's good.

■ **Heidi Baker:** So you can see I'm kind of on this journey, every time I preach it's like being in a dance where I'm listening, I'm waiting for this step, where are we going? What are we doing? And I wait. Sometimes, I'll pause for awhile just waiting. Like last night He said, "Okay, I want to fall on them now in the beginning," because there was such a little bit of time. And it's like let Him. I just felt like He said, "I just want to fall on them now, and then at the end, they'll get hungry for more, and I'll release My healing for them because they can't have a model

where they think it's one man, the power of one woman. They have to understand all of us are called to carry more, but there is something about hunger that provokes the heart of God." So as the hungry come, they're like catalysts, and it draws more of God's presence. Hunger draws the Lord's presence.

■ **The Voice:** How does one get more hunger for God?

■ **Heidi Baker:** Hunger is a gift.

■ **The Voice:** You just ask for it?

■ **Heidi Baker:** I think you ask for it, and you eat when it's served. When He's serving Himself. You see, Jesus is the bread and the wine, and as He's pouring Himself out as the presence of God is in the room, and if you're distracted and you're texting, on your computer, you're on your phone, you're on your iPad, you're doing, doing, thinking about the next thing, what you're going to eat, where are you going to go, you're not engaged or present with God. You can miss the moment. It's the greatest joy, but it's also a discipline to focus your affections on Him, to not be distracted. If you got one word out of this interview, it should be to be present, to be present with the Lord and present with the one in front of you. It's so important because love looks like something, and you have to be, I feel like we need to be 100 percent engaged with God. 🌿



► **Teams traveling to the bush** ride in big trucks like this one. All of the team's equipment and supplies are also loaded into this truck.

Republic of Mozambique

Population: 23,405,670

Official language: Portuguese (understood by less than 30%)

Religion:

Christians: 57%

Traditional Ethnic Religion: 22%

Muslim: 18%



► **Hospitals and doctors** are scarce in Mozambique. Medical Bush Outreaches provide much needed care to those suffering from dehydration, Malaria, AIDS, and other sicknesses. Iris Ministries owns land in Mocimboa da Praia to build a clinic, however construction hasn't begun yet. In the meantime, teams that arrive pitch tents as make-shift clinics. People flood to these tents for a chance to be seen by a doctor or nurse.



Statistics taken from the Operation World website (www.OperationWorld.org) May 13, 2013
Copyright © 2010 by Jason Mandryk



► **The Pemba Iris schools** have been such a success that they desire to build a secondary school and university as soon as God provides the resources. In addition to primary schools in several villages, Iris Global has five Bible Schools that provide hundreds of natives the opportunity to serve in their community and minister God's powerful love.

► **When Harvest School** students spend a day with Bush families, they encounter everyday life like never before. Here, rice is laying on the ground to dry before dinner.



Stop For The One

Stop For The One is a movement of laid-down lovers, following Jesus with everything we are. Iris officially began the 'Stop for the One Movement' in January of 2009. The Movement is about connecting with and encouraging one another in this journey with Jesus. Out of a heart for Him, we band together and share the Gospel from our personal experiences. Their heart is that everyone around the world would first love God and then love the one person He puts in front of them each day. In this way, the Gospel becomes simple, yet so profound. People who visit the Stop For The One website can share their videos and stories of sharing the love of Christ with the one in front of them. Won't you stop? Visit www.StopForTheOne.org to begin your journey.

Pray Especially For:

- **Training for Church Leadership.** Indigenous Christian congregations have quickly grown all across the country, but this significant growth presents massive challenges like legalism, and ignorance of biblical teaching and standards. Pray that church leader's eagerness to learn is met with proper training for effectively reaching the country.
- **Poverty to be Eradicated.** Mozambique is still recovering from a 16-year civil war that destroyed lives, jobs and infrastructure. Pray for the continued reconstruction process within the country. Pray also for God's protection during natural disasters and literacy training/education to increase.
- **Physical and Spiritual Healing.** Due to poverty, a high incident of HIV/AIDS, and the lack of medical facilities, many natives are ill, diseased and often orphaned. Additionally, many are bound by witchcraft and demonic forces. Pray God's Kingdom would intervene spiritually and physically.

Be present. Be present with the Lord and present with the one in front of you.

► **After driving to the bush** in a bumpy truck ride, you're always greeted by smiling, eager faces. Many of these children have never seen an American before.



CHRIST FOR THE NATIONS PRESENTS:

Voice of Healing

CONFERENCE

Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—
who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.
Psalm 103:2-3

HEIDI BAKER



SANDRA KENNEDY



NATHAN MORRIS



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Yes, You Can Be Healed

By Belinda Elliott

Nothing does it but His Word.
It has nothing to do with me.

If you hold onto the power of God, I promise you, the Word will manifest itself in your life.

Sandra Kennedy has seen thousands of healings — everything from diseases such as cancer, stroke and diabetes to the regrowth of body parts. Her mission is to help Christians understand that healings such as these are something God desires for all believers.

Kennedy is the founder and president of Sandra Kennedy Ministries through which she established The Healing Center, in Augusta, Georgia. At this Christ-centered facility, participants learn what the Bible says about health, healing and wholeness, and discover how to experience the healing power of God. The Healing Center also features healing teams that travel to hospitalized or home-bound patients within a 100-mile radius. They have been welcomed into 16 hospitals in Georgia, and have received amazing testimonies from people who have been healed.

However, Kennedy is quick to point out there is nothing special about her; God can minister healing through anyone. “I am not a faith healer,” she explains. “I can’t heal anything; neither can you, but God in me can. Nothing does it but His Word. It has nothing to do with me.”

At the age of nine, Kennedy says the Lord spoke to her and told her He would use her in a healing ministry. At the time, she didn’t know what that meant. She had never seen anyone get healed, and it wasn’t a practice taught in her church.

“When I came to seminary for the first time, I still didn’t know anything about the laying on of hands,” she recalls. “I was taught there that signs and wonders had passed away and that they were not for today.”

She wants to let believers know this isn’t the case. Though life on earth will end eventually for all Christians, they can live an abundant, healthy life until that happens. “There is nowhere in the Bible that says I have to die sick,” Kennedy says. “It doesn’t teach that.” Through speaking engagements, books, television programs and conferences, she is helping people embrace the healing power of God’s Word.

Scripture mentions a few things required to receive healing, she says. First, you have to know what you want God to do and ask Him to do it. “People come up to me and say, ‘Pray for me.’ I say, ‘What for?’ They say, ‘I just need an overhaul.’ That doesn’t cut it. You need to be specific,” she explains.

Next—and for many believers this is the most difficult aspect—you must believe that you will receive what you have asked for. The reason people struggle with this isn’t necessarily a lack of faith, Kennedy says, but it is a lack of knowing God well. When we truly understand who God is, and comprehend

His character, we will know that we can trust Him.

“We need to know what the Bible says about Him, and once we know, we can just take from Him what He has already given,” she says. “The Bible makes it very clear that it is God’s will to heal. You have to quit getting hung up on the fact that it may not be God’s will to heal you because if you study the Bible, that is a proven point. God is in the healing business.”

Too often, she says, people become discouraged when they pray for healing and don’t see a physical manifestation right away. Just as we often don’t see an outward sign of salvation when we accept Christ, she explains, there may not be an immediate outward sign that healing has taken place, but God’s power is at work inside us.

“The same power that went in you to save you, to transform your life, is the same identical power that comes into your body when you accept Jesus as your healer just like when you accept Him as your Savior,” she says.

Until we see our healing completed outwardly, we need to trust God’s Word that it has taken place. “The Word has to be the final authority,” she explains. “He said He sent His Word and healed us. He said that by His stripes we were healed. He says it’s a done deal.”

We must also realize that our bodies may need some convincing to fall in line with God’s Word. She relates the story of being bitten by her dog. Her lip was so damaged that doctors told her she would need six to nine surgeries and would never smile again.

“When they told me, I went to the mirror and I put up pictures of me smiling everywhere,” Kennedy recalls. “I said, ‘Lip, you listen to me. You are my lip, and I command you in the name of Jesus to reshape yourself, reform yourself.’ I never had a surgery. You serve a powerful, mighty God who has made provisions for us to walk in power and might, but the creative power is released through your mouth. You have to speak to that body.”

For anyone seeking healing, Sandra encourages them to persevere. “If you hold onto the power of God, I promise you, the Word will manifest itself in your life. It will because God is not a man that He should lie,” she says. “God is an unchangeable God. He’s waiting for a people who will just take Him at face value.” 📌

Learn more about her ministry at www.sandrakennedy.org.

HE IS RISEN, RIGHT?

Yes, He is Risen!

This passover, learn how to engage your Jewish friends about the resurrection of Christ from a biblical perspective.

By Ron Cantor

In Israel, Easter Sunday is just another workday. If not for Facebook, I would not even know about it. Of course we still celebrate Passover here, and the first believers, even the Gentiles, used Passover to commemorate the Resurrection. In 325 AD, Constantine, the first "Christian" Roman emperor put an end to this practice.

"And truly, in the first place, it seems to everyone a most unworthy thing that we should follow the customs of the Jews in the celebration of this most



A Jewish Man Praying at the Western Wall, Kotel, Jerusalem Israel.

holy solemnity, who, polluted wretches! having stained their hands with a nefarious crime, are justly blinded in their minds. It is fit, therefore, that rejecting the practice of this people, we should perpetuate to all future ages the celebration of this rite, in a more legitimate order, which we have kept from the first day of our "Lord's" passion even to the present times. Let us then have nothing in common with the most hostile rabble of the Jews." (Constantine, the supposed Christian Emperor [Council of Nicea, pg. 52].)

However, without getting into an argument over the origins of Easter, I do love the idea of a special day each year to focus on one of the greatest miracles in history. Paul teaches that the Resurrection is a crucial tenet of our faith.

"If Messiah has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Messiah from the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:14-15).

Not only is our faith in vain, but also the original disciples were all charlatans. Either He appeared to them or He didn't. And if He didn't, what would be their motivation to leave everything and preach the Gospel? It is not like they were getting rich off the Gospel (like some today)—they all died a martyrs' death. (Except John who survived being

boiled in oil!) Remember, after Messiah's death, they were not devising schemes on how to keep this thing going—they were hopeless and dejected.

Paul also established the fact that Yeshua was seen by many people after His Resurrection.

"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to [Peter], and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born," (1 Corinthians 15:3-8).

Imagine that—while Paul was writing his letters, nearly 500 people who had witnessed the Resurrected Messiah were still alive! It is a historic fact that He was seen.

► The skeptic has several theories.

1. He wasn't really dead. Okay, let's consider this. He is nailed to a cross with spikes in His wrists and feet. He faints from pain. They assume He is dead and a soldier even

stabs Him with a spear, as blood and water flowed (by the way, proving He was dead). Being flogged earlier in the day, His back was raw flesh and the pain was just too much, so He passes out. People assume He is dead, but no one checks. He is then placed in a tomb for three days. The tomb is sealed and guarded. While He is in this tomb, instead of succumbing to His wounds, He wakes up. He is in unbelievable pain (having been flogged and crucified). But in just a couple days, without food, water or medicine, He recovers. Oh... and then He pushes the stone away and fights off the Roman guards. If that is true, then that is even more impressive than the resurrection!

2. His disciples stole the body. This one is so good that the chief priests immediately thought of this and offered large sums of cash to the guards to tell everyone that his followers stole His corpse. Here is the problem: let me say it again, the same disciples who stole His body all died

as martyrs—for something they knew was a lie. Peter was crucified upside down. John was boiled in oil. It is highly unlikely that these men would have suffered as they did for a lie.

3. Someone impersonated Yeshua. Do I really have to answer that? My wife and her sister look a lot alike. In fact, there have been times over the years when I walked into a room and briefly have mistaken her for Elana. However, that has never lasted for more than a few seconds. The disciples spent three years following Yeshua. And then some impersonator fools over 500 witnesses for 40 days that he is Yeshua. Come on, people! Oh, and according to these deceived disciples, this impersonator can appear and disappear at will (as he appeared to them in a locked room), has holes in his hands and a wound on his side and ascended into heaven. This guy was good! So good that Thomas cries out to him after seeing his wound, "My Lord and my God!"



No, my friends, Yeshua rose from the dead. Death could not keep Him. Compelled by compassion, He became our Passover Lamb. Through Him we have eternal life. His blood is on the doorpost of our hearts and the angel of death cannot touch us. Thanks be to God for sending His Son, Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel and the nations. 🕊

Messianic Jewish Communicator, Ron Cantor, embraced Yeshua as an 18-year-old, drug-using agnostic. He then attended Christ For The Nations in New York, and Messiah Biblical Institute. Ron travels throughout the U.S. and abroad sharing passionately on the Jewish Roots of the New Testament and God's broken heart for His ancient people, Israel. Ron heads the Isaiah 2 Initiative, an Israeli-based vision to see the good news go forth from Zion to other nations. Ron also serves with Maoz Israel. Visit <http://www.messiahsmandate.org/about-us>.

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Grace

in the Shape of Pain



**"There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing"
(Proverbs 12:18).**

▶ ▶ ▶ *Jesus literally spoke
the very worlds into existence.
We have that same ability
with those in our care.*

By Kelly Head

T

hat day, I heard myself talking. Dead, harsh words falling flat upon ears, with a tone that could easily pull chunks out of a vulnerable child's heart. "What's wrong with you? Why can't you just sit still," I spat out. Gasp. Her sad eyes gripped my heart.

A clean vessel can't drip ugly. I was immediately appalled at myself. I'd lived that before, long years, worse and cruel. I'd vowed never to do that to my child. In fact, I'd made a decision to speak uplifting, life-affirming words any chance I had.

Appalled, I hugged my child tight. Teary wet and sweat glued us together in that moment. I whispered *sorry* with my face in her hair, and, in the way it seems only children can so easily do, I was quickly forgiven.

But even still, for days afterward, I was undone. I contemplated. Words. How we adore using them to explain, specify and put an outline around things in our attempt to describe. We especially love to use words to define others, and too often, our children.

Hearing my own past regurgitating judgmental words on that high-stress day when my "epic parenting fail" occurred sent me on a tearful, terrified, prayerful search. I came across an article about parenting a "high-energy child." The words got to me.

A mom, raggedy-tired, shared about her decision to stop boxing-in her rambunctious child. She may not have said it, but she had a desire to change her definition of his behavior. She knew something was off in her squelching of him. But even as she let him have more physical freedom, she found herself sheepishly explaining away her son's energy to an on-looking gentleman while her son ran monkey-wild at the zoo, "He has a lot of energy," she said. "Why yes, it's great," he had replied. The response surprised the woman.

"Great," sank deep. I wept as I read, longing to unleash my own child's identity, to set her greatness free.

A few days later "it" happened; my active little one climbing to reach a church bathroom sink. "Wow, she sure has a lot of energy," said an older woman. The familiarity was like an electric shock. So, from the depths of mustered conviction I found myself saying, "Why yes, isn't it great!" Surprised, then enthusiastic, came the reply, "Yes, yes it is." Realization cemented deep. My response colored hers, then hers again my own. It is great, and it's up to me to protect and define my child's God-given beauty. In fact, it's my God-ordained duty!

Later, it clicked. I'd been looking in a broken mirror that had shattered when I was young. My definition was wrong. I'd tried to squelch my child because I still despised my own

"high-energy" a bit. I dreaded her having to be "like me." Singled out. Struggling. So out came a vice-grip tongue, my hideous, filthy effort to control her personality. But, gently, ever-amazing Jesus took me by the hand to show a more true definition of her (and inadvertently, me.) Turns out, we are great!

You see, often the words we (or others) use aren't His. Where the enemy seeks to stain our definition—to sling mud smack dab onto our glory, our renown, as image bearers—it's actually the very thing that He wants to polish off and shine through. We say "hyper." But He's saying clever investigator, strategic thinker or potential world-class athlete. We think "too quiet or shy." But Jesus says learner, thinker and educator of excellence. In God's terms, "too gabby" may become a future politician. Doesn't that make you smile?

Perhaps someone else defined something as "ugly" that cut you deep too? But can I please tell you some truth? That "ugly" is really a gift of beauty, a trait of lovely. I know firsthand because some of my beginning story rang harsh, but now I'm even thankful for my misty-eyed history. Those tears eventually washed the lie right off my eyes. I couldn't have recognized her beauty without my own bit-by-bit of overcoming truth that

allowed me to know the reverberation of that same pain chord vibrating from deep within my own memory. Ahh, redemption, I drink you in. True grace, even in the shape of pain.

Now, I'm not saying we don't all need to grow and refine a bit. But, let's not redefine. No, I'm not having that anymore. Don't you either. There is POWER in our words. Jesus literally spoke the very worlds into existence. Think about that! We have that same ability with those in our care. We get to set the definition. To proclaim it. Exclaim it and set the tone. When we do, it is a creative force that lifts our children to a higher standard, prophetically and literally impacts the way others see and treat them. It even affects how they view themselves. It's important that the definition we set is the one He sees. Not the one that listens to the icky of the enemy.

So, let's lift up the shield of faith and say "no" to fiery darts bringing lies over any more glory! Look under the covers more closely. Shine some light in. Could that really be greatness? Do you see now with His eyes? Now give power to it and shout—that thing, that trait? Why yes—isn't it GREAT! Fantastic Fabulous. Dyn-o-mite! That is a gift, glory manifested, so stand up and applaud it! Frame it. Give life to it and pull the great right on out! Come on, let's be lovin' to see beauty blossom. Let's view our own and others' uniqueness differently. Cheer it on, says He! 🍀

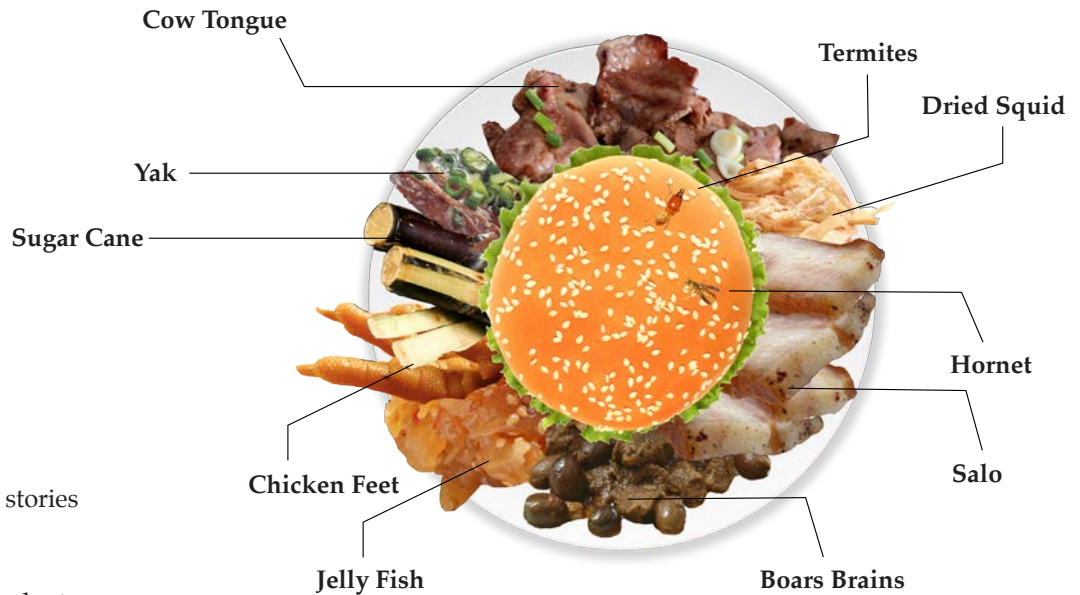


Why yes—isn't it GREAT!

"WEIRDEST THING I EVER ATE"

FASCINATING FOODS FROM THE MISSION FIELD





By Rod Groomer

Missionaries have some of the most fascinating food stories of anyone on the planet, and they love to tell them.

A particular Christ For The Nations Mission Major graduate, who is a missionary in Thailand, even made a YouTube video of her “food story” for her supporters. She demonstrated how to eat roasted crickets at an open-air market that she shops at weekly, a common sight and food in the area she lives in. After eating the first one, for shock value, she said she will probably eat many more in the future. The video then focused on the locals eating handfuls at a time, much like we eat M&M’s.

In mission-bound culinary search, I asked CFNI Mission Major Director, Jesse Landis, what strange foods he had eaten. Without hesitation, he recalled eating pig-blood soup over rice in the Philippines. He further described it tasting like iron and experiencing a stinging in the back of his jaw. His Filipino host was pleased to watch him eat this special meal prepared just for him.

Each missionary has their own cuisine narrative to tell and I am no exception. I’ll never forget stopping at an isolated gas station in the middle of a rural area of Papua, New Guinea to fill up our vehicle with gas. Being hungry, I found the only fast food in the gas station was deep-fried sheep tongue with dangling throat. It tasted a bit like rubbery chicken. In this same island nation in the South Pacific, one delicacy consists of squares of pig fat, which is preferred over the pork meat. The squares are normally about the size of a fist and are given to the visiting guest while everyone watches for your delight in having this special part of the pig. Not to be outdone, in India my host gave me a delicacy that he loved—sheep brain. In Mozambique, goat intestine was the specialty of the day.

Depending on what part of the world you are in, the delicacies of the palette vary greatly. It takes an adventurous missionary who loves the Lord and people (and who has an iron stomach) to be willing to consume the foods of foreign lands. Receiving hospitality and the food provided says to your host that you appreciate the uniqueness of their culture. Therefore, they will better receive you when you share a meal with them. That’s why the cross-cultural minister that can eat anything, can go to any people group and impact them for Christ Jesus. That said, who’s up for fried tarantulas in Cambodia? 🦋

Here are some of the “Weirdest Thing I Ever Ate (for the Gospel)” comments from our missionary friends. Bon Appetite!

“Well, we were on a missions trip to an orphanage up in the mountains. The next morning we were served chicken feet, chips and hot chocolate for breakfast. Yum, yum. The chicken feet threw me off track a little.”

Cara, Mexico

“Anteater!!! They make great tacos! I ate them as a missionary kid growing up.”

Sasil, Yucatan Peninsula

“I was feeling sick, and a pastor walks up and puts a spoon in my mouth. ‘Oh... salty,’ I replied. ‘What was that?’ ‘Boars brains,’ he says. ‘Perfect,’ I thought.”

Chris, Haiti

“I ate a couple cooked termites. They kind of tasted like mushrooms, actually. The priests loved them. They are a delicacy!”

Lisa, Uganda

“Cow tongue and jelly fish noodles. The tongue... blahh! Jelly fish, excellent. It ranked up there with the shark fin soup and raw sea urchin!”

Jennifer, Japan

“I ate Yak Hot Pot in Shangri-la, which was yak and a bunch of other things that were unidentifiable. I also had Haggis (savory pudding containing sheep’s pluck, the heart, lungs and liver) in Scotland. Actually, it’s not that bad.”

Kay, China

“I ate real sugar cane... It was actually wood (you would have to suck the sugar out and then spit out the wood). Weirdest thing ever!”

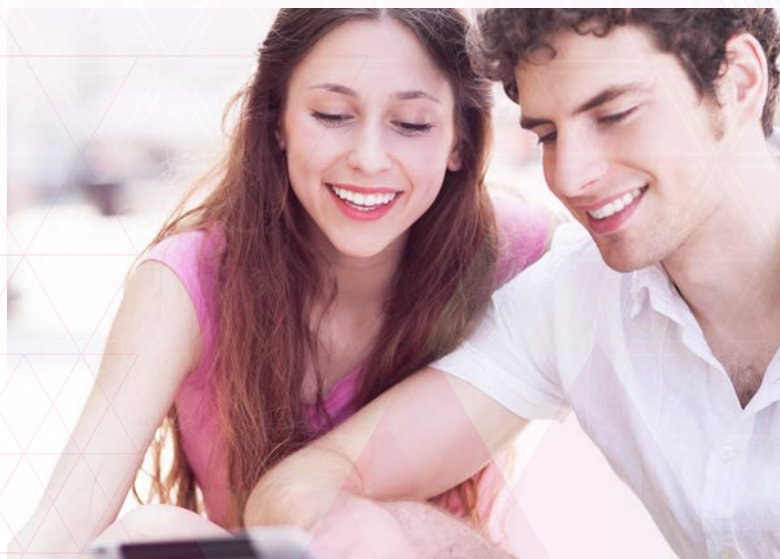
Jacob, Haiti

“There is a fat cubes dish called salo. It’s raw, but salted pork fat with threads of meat. It’s kind of like bacon, but more fat, raw and salted. Loved it growing up and also loved teasing American mission teams to see who would sacrifice for Jesus by eating it. Almost no one ever rose to the challenge. Food is really such a cultural thing!”

Helen, Ukrain

“I have eaten fried hornets and hornet larva. Another time I ate turtle shell tendon and bone marrow.”

Laura, China



The Truth About Money and Relationships

Myth: My spouse and I shouldn't talk about money because it only leads to fights.

Truth: You can't have a great relationship until you can communicate and agree about money.

By Dave Ramsey

Larry Burkett, noted financial author, says, "Money is either the best or the worst area of communication in our marriages." After years as a financial counselor and working with marriage counselors, I know that money and money fights are a major cause of divorce, not to mention the thing we fight about the most.

So if you are married and have money fights, you are normal. But if this is a real problem area for you, there is also an opportunity to improve your relationship and maybe even reach agreement with your spouse. I'm not talking about agreement brought on by surrender, but rather by each person getting a vote, understanding the other's view and finding common ground.

Let's face it—if we can agree on the checkbook, there would be nothing left to fight about except who gets the remote!

Men and Women are Different

When it comes to money, men tend to take more risks and don't save for emergencies. Men use money as a scorecard and can struggle with self-esteem when there are financial problems.

Women tend to see money more as a security issue, so they will gravitate toward the rainy-day fund. Because of their need for security, ladies can have a level of fear—my wife, Sharon, calls it terror—when there are money problems. Men and women are different in how they view money, and it is largely because they process problems and opportunities from different vantage points. On top of the fact that men and women are different, opposites attract. Chances are, if you're married, one of you is good at

working numbers (the nerd) and the other one isn't good at working numbers (the free spirit). That isn't the real problem. The problem is when the nerd neglects the input of the free spirit or when the free spirit avoids participating in the financial dealings.

Marriage is a Partnership

Marriage is a partnership. The preacher said, "And now you are one." Both parties need to be involved in the finances. Separating the money and splitting the bills is a bad idea.

Listen up, nerds. Don't keep the money all to yourself. Don't use your "power" to abuse the free spirit. Free spirits, don't just nod your head and say, "Yeah, that looks great, honey." You have a vote in the budget committee meetings, too. Give feedback, criticism and encouragement. Work on the budget together!

"But what if my spouse won't get on board with me?" many of you wonder. It is tough, but with patience and kindness, your spouse will eventually see the light (don't beat them over the head with the need for a budget, and please don't subject your spouse to a lecture of "Dave says...").

As you work on your money together, you will begin to change your family tree. One of your main goals in your marriage should be to pass a legacy down to your children and grandchildren. 📖

Learn how to work together regarding money in Dave's life-changing class, Financial Peace University found at DaveRamsey.com.



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Ari and Shira Sorko-Ram have been ministering in Israel since 1976, through evangelism, discipleship and mentoring, founding Messianic Jewish congregations, publishing books in Hebrew, humanitarian aid, leadership conferences and much more.

And now, Maoz Israel Ministries, headquartered in Tel Aviv, Israel, is reaching out to our nation through the Internet with the Good News of their Messiah. We are developing a Hebrew-language outreach website—www.viewthis.com—the best way to reach Israel's hi-tech savvy young generation. Israel is a nation that has more people per capita on their computers than any other nation—especially the young generation, ages 18 to 35. We will reach homes that have never before been possible with the Good News in the Hebrew language!

The biggest challenge in presenting the Gospel in Israel is that the entire population has been educated to not believe in Jesus. We believe what Jesus said: *"If they would believe Moses they would believe Me."* We will use the Internet to reteach the general public in Israel what is actually written in the Scriptures and what Moses really said.

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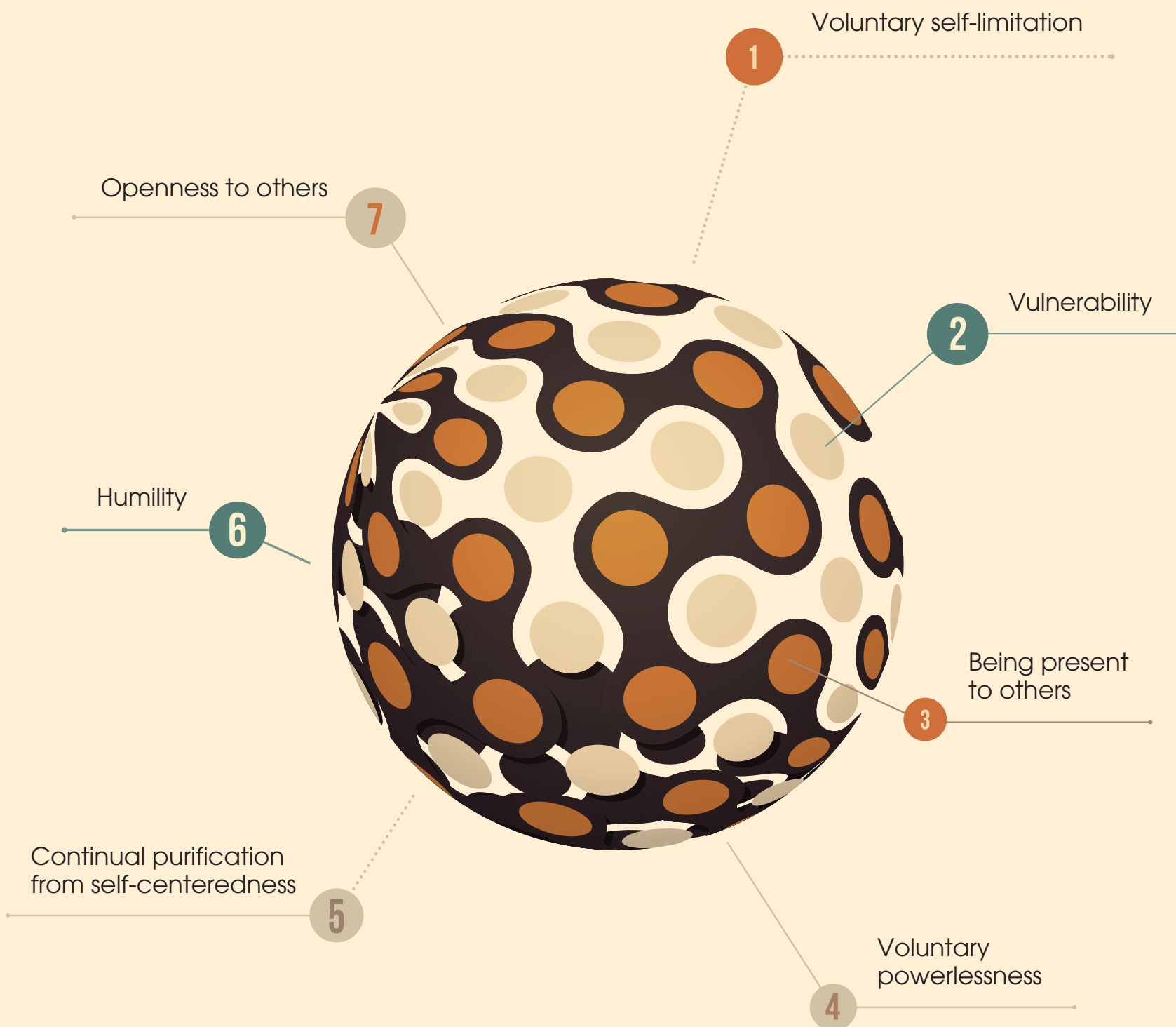
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Self-Sacrificial LEADERSHIP



Here are some tools to help you learn more about Level 5 leadership and becoming a “great” leader, particularly in an organizational setting: www.jimcollins.com/tools.html.

NOTE: CUT THIS PAGE OUT AND PLACE IT SOMEWHERE TO REMIND YOURSELF



“Leadership is not about titles, positions or flowcharts.
It is about one life influencing another.”

—John C. Maxwell

by Melissa H. McDermott, PhD

Leaders, such as Mother Teresa, William Wilberforce, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King are remembered around the world because they laid down their own lives for a vision greater than themselves. They transformed society in the midst of a moral crisis and transformed their community because of their self-sacrifice. They often put aside their own desires, stepped out of their personal comfort zone and became empowered with an overwhelming sense of responsibility and conviction. Self-sacrificial leaders take big risks; they are not tempted by personal gain.

Self-sacrifice is one of the most important characteristics of leadership today and is one that is characteristic of leaders who transcend cultures.

Jim Collins, author of *Good To Great* and leadership theorist, describes Level 5 leadership, which posits that great leaders combine personal humility and professional will or fierce resolve. These leaders focus their energy away from themselves toward other people. They are interested in serving people and have a vision greater than themselves.

Jesus was the ultimate example of a self-sacrificial leader. Philippians 2:5-11 is known as the kenotic Scripture. Kenosis comes from the Greek word *kenao*, meaning “to make empty.” It is a Greek word that describes one becoming entirely receptive to God’s Divine will. As Jesus poured Himself out completely and fully surrendered to the will of His Father, He did not remain in that place of death, but was resurrected and exalted to life. Self-sacrificial leaders lay down their lives, but in the midst of that actually experience great gain. This gain isn’t just for themselves, but for an entire community of people.

Self-sacrificial leaders yield their own status, privileges and power for other people. And above all, they serve the greater good, doing what is morally and ethically right, regardless of their own personal sacrifice or reputation.

The Characteristics Of a Self-Sacrificial Leader:

1. Voluntary self-limitation
2. Vulnerability
3. Being present to others
4. Voluntary powerlessness
5. Continual purification from self-centeredness
6. Humility
7. Openness to others

It is a focus on a covenantal relationship that paves the way for the formation of relationships that go beyond the confines of traditional leader/follower relationships. Self-sacrificial leaders unite people together to work for a common good, and they usually arise in the midst of crisis.

The world today is in a moral, ethical, physical and spiritual crisis. Wars are waging across the globe as many injustices are taking place. The weak, poor and innocent are being exploited. Innocent babies are killed, young children are trafficked, and the poor are enslaved.

People are looking for leaders who will lead the charge and pave the way through a ferocious Red Sea of moral muck. When we follow Jesus’ example of self-sacrificial leadership, He will raise us up and give full life and new hope. It is similar to the Greek mythological metaphor of the Phoenix bird that rises from the ashes. When we humble ourselves and die to all presuppositions and expectations, people can be changed, lives are saved, communities are transformed, and hope is restored and renewed. 🕊



Melissa McDermott finds great joy in writing and helping and encouraging people to reach their full potential. She attended Christ For The Nations in Dallas and did Youth With A Mission in Sweden and South Africa where her heart grew for people from different cultures. She has a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership and an MBA in Non-Profit Management from Regent University and a BA in English from Dallas Baptist University. She has been married to her husband, Paul, for 13 years. They have 2 young children who are a dream come true.

LOOSEN UP AND REACH OUT

By Scott Hinkle

Recently I was asked to speak at a conference and address the topic of "being relevant" to the needs of this generation. The more I thought about it, the more distracted I became. Relevant has become a buzzword, and buzzwords can be a nuisance because they draw our attention from the crux of an issue to the "buzz" surrounding it.

Being able to relate to people calls for more than having trendy clothes, hair and language. Whereas change, even on the surface, sometimes might be helpful, to be effective in our witness we must go deeper.

The apostle Paul's words about this are classic. "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak," he writes. "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I might share its blessings" (1 Corinthians 9:22-23, NIV).

Keep this passage in mind while we take a look at what I call flashpoints—or what Webster calls "points at which someone bursts suddenly into action." The following igniters will spark you "into action"—they'll connect you with people outside your own social, cultural, ethnic, generational or religious sphere.

- Pray for a desire. In reading through Paul's letters, it appears quite clear that he was interested in reaching anyone and everyone with the gospel. Whether or not the people he reached were like him made no difference to him. Without a desire propelling us to reach others, we may as well stop now. I have found that the Holy Spirit will cultivate a desire in us if we ask Him.

- Refuse to fear. Do not be intimidated by the buzz of buzzwords—such as postmodern; Gen-X, -Y, -Z or -G (for Geriatric); Muslim, Jew, drug addict, culture; and so on. Remember, all of us have similar basic needs because we all were made the same—in the image of God.

- Never forget the Gospel is the power of God to all people (see Romans 1:16) and that the power of the Holy Spirit can supersede our polished apologetics if necessary. Always refuse to allow fear to restrain you from reaching out to people you know nothing about.

- Value what God values. This one's simple. It's all about people. More than ideals, philosophy or style, God values people. He wants none to perish. After all, God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son for the world (see John 3:16).

- Loosen up. Ever heard, "Blessed are the flexible, for they won't get bent out of shape"? Paul was willing to stretch and be stretched—for the weak, for his fellow Jews, for religious people who strictly obeyed Moses' law—so that he might win some for Christ. He left us a good example.

Tommy Barnett, the great soul-winner who pastors Phoenix (Arizona) First Assembly of God, always says: "It's the message that's sacred, not the method." If we value what God values then we should be willing to give of ourselves and to stretch and be stretched. I had to learn this truth after growing up in a New Jersey neighborhood where everyone was Jewish, Catholic or religiously weird. When I moved to the Bible

Belt I had to learn to connect with people who grew up in church.

Stretching includes rethinking our way of communicating. I absolutely believe it is possible to be uncompromising yet relevant.

Get around people on their turf. Jesus said for us to "go into all the world" (see Mark 16:15). To do this, we have to connect with people where they live—in their environment—and break out of the Christian bubble. Serving people and helping to meet evident needs they have can often build a bridge between you and them and will help you relate to someone who seems different from you.

Yes, some folks have gone to extremes in their stated attempt to "win some" to Christ—to the point of losing credibility as His witness. But my question is, *Are you winning some? Any? Are you getting close to winning some?*

If not, you should take some time to rethink the Great Commission.

Surely Jesus would never have given us that commandment if He knew we could not fulfill it.

So, come on, let's go tell someone—anyone—about Jesus. 🗣️

Scott Hinkle is founder of Scott Hinkle Outreach Ministries in Dallas and a graduate of Christ For The Nations. A veteran evangelist, he regularly leads street ministry teams during Mardi Gras and other major events. He also sponsors evangelism training conferences. For more information, visit his website at www.scotthinkle.org.

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LIFE'S DRAMATIC

◀ ▶ I PAUSES ■ ▶▶

By Nathalie Jeter

Sometimes the greatest chapters in life are preceded by dramatic pauses. Times when God is silent. Times when the world around us seems meaningless, empty, void. Times when we find ourselves waiting and waiting and waiting. Waiting for what? We don't really know, but we can't deny the feeling of being in a holding pattern.

"Waiting. Waiting for a train to go, waiting around for a yes or a no." These lines from *Oh, the Places You'll Go*, my favorite Dr. Seuss book, allude to those precarious, maddening times in life when we have no control.

Sometimes waiting leads to good things. Waiting through engagement for marriage; waiting through nine months of pregnancy for a precious bundle of joy; waiting for our birthday to come—at least before age 25!—and for Christmas Day; waiting, only to find out we got the promotion at work.

But there are also waiting periods filled with pain and fear. Waiting only to find out we lost out on the adoption. Waiting for a diagnosis in the doctor's office, or holding a loved one's hand as they lie in a hospital bed, life slowly ebbing away.

God knows that we cannot handle lives of constant action and that we often need waiting times to slow us down and help us refocus.

The greatest symphonies incorporate breaks and pauses. Sometimes the pauses are necessary for musicians to catch their breath; sometimes the pauses are dramatic and cause the audience members' hearts to pound as they anticipate the next movement. Where would storytellers and comedians be without the necessary pause before a well-delivered punch line?

Do you feel like someone hit the pause button on your life? Do you feel at times like you're the punch line in some great cosmic joke? Yet, without pauses, when would we have time to reflect and anticipate, to remember the past, to consider the future or to be thankful for the present?

If we will let Him, God often grows close to us in those quiet times of waiting. He waits to reveal Himself in the quiet, still aloneness that follows disappointment, loss, fear and suffering. Learn to appreciate the dramatic pauses in your life: they are special gifts, though so often wrapped in trials. 🕯

Nathalie Jeter was born and raised in Paris, France where her parents were missionaries. She is a freelance journalist and author who blogs about travel, food and prayer at www.prayerwalkguides.com.



SHOW ME THE *Ring*

"God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, NIV).

By Zach Neese

If worship is "ascribing worth to God," then the price of our worship shows God, and the world, how much we value Him.

Women typically understand this better than men. Take an engagement ring for example. How does a woman announce to her friends that she's engaged? Does she write them a letter, email them or call them? Not usually. In fact, she usually doesn't say anything at all. She walks into the room with a sideways smile, her hand preceding her, and her ring preceding her hand by a good inch and a half. Her friends, instinctively recognizing her posture, respond to this universal cue by gasping, ooing and aahing with hand-covered mouths. They gather about with outstretched hands, to touch and admire the ring. The ring!

Do any of them ask about the man? *What's he like? Does he have a job? Does he live with his mother? Does he have a hunchback and a third eye?* No! None of that matters. He could be Quasimodo for all they care! It matters not. The world has come down to this—the ring!

Why? Because the ring tells them all they need to know. They don't care about the groom until they see how much he values their friend—the newly-engaged woman. They come to that newly-engaged woman with one question in all of their hearts, "How much is she worth to him? How much does he value her?"

So she shows them the ring. In their economy, the price of the ring shows the world how much he values her.

Now, switch gears. Here we are, the Bride of Christ—unlovable, unfaithful, adulterous and fickle. How could anyone love such a woman? Heaven and hell stand stupefied, and the lost are incredulous! How could the perfect Prince of Peace—glorious, holy, faithful, powerful, righteous, full of beauty and light—choose such an unlovely, wayward woman? The angels are mystified. Hell cannot comprehend it. The lost cannot believe it. Who could love a people like the Church? Only one thing will silence their doubt.

Show them the ring.

The only way for God to silence the skeptics was to demonstrate His love. To prove how much we are worth to Him. Romans 5:8 (NIV) says that "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." What is the cross? It's the engagement ring of Christ. It is a bloodstone, bought with the price of God's own Son, to woo the heart of the Bride away from her other suitors and prove once and for all that He loves her more than life.

The gospel is our engagement ring, and it tells the world everything they need to know about the Groom who is pursuing us.

If the cross proves how much we're worth to God, our worship proves how much God is worth to us. The lost are watching. They're wondering: "Do they really believe what they say they believe? Does their God really exist? Is He really lovable?

Does He have the power to save and transform? Is He worth following? Is He worth living for?"

What are they really asking? Show me the ring! Worshippers, listen to me—our worship communicates more to the world than you know! Our worship shows the world how valuable our God is.

Worship demonstrates that we have a Savior worth loving, worth living for and, if need be, worth dying for.

When you worship, it's like turning up the volume on your testimony so that it's broadcast to the world. Remember today that your worship—the daily expression of how much you value God—may be the loudest, most visible and clearest testimony of God's lovability that the world ever sees. 🎧

For Further Study

Psalm 66; Psalm 96; Romans 5:6–10; Romans 12:1–2; 1 John 4:9

Someone has noted that when we pray, we are preoccupied with our needs. When we praise and give thanks, we are preoccupied with our blessings. But when we worship, we are preoccupied only with Him.

—Eddie Hyatt

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"Go Anywhere, Do Anything, Pay Any Price."

By Bob Long



Recently I was hunting the clearance section of one of my favorite bookstores, searching in the religion section, when an employee began placing books into the various categories all around “my” section.

As I began to zero in, the young man began to comment that philosophy and religion had never worked for him, but he remained, nevertheless, a seeker of knowledge. I muttered a generic answer without ever taking my eyes from their assigned task, but the young man seemed determined to engage me. Of course, by now the Spirit of God inside of me was stirring my heart to listen, look and ready myself, in spite of how unexpected this occasion was. Immediately and deeply we were sharing our hearts, with him literally pulling my testimony out of me. He was on the verge of deciding that truth and any reason to live simply didn’t exist. I was graced supernaturally to pour into him the truth about who Jesus is, all He has done and how to be saved. It was one of the most powerful times of sharing the gospel I’ve ever had!

Out of that powerful experience, the Lord began to clearly speak to me about three heart issues we must submit to the Lord to be postured for real victory in our daily lives, and in the shaking that is obviously coming.

The Issue of the Unexpected -1 Samuel 17

Just as my incredible encounter with that young man was unexpected, David’s confrontation with Goliath was totally unexpected. God wants us willing to “run to the battle line,” even when the unexpected takes place. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the next phase of David’s destiny was before him. Something on the inside of him rose up, and he stepped up. And so will you, if you determine in advance that no matter how sudden and unexpected the situation is, you will obey God. I felt off balance because this whole conversation was so unexpected.

I didn’t let my feelings sway me, because it has already been settled in my life that when those moments come, by His grace, I will not step back. Grace and supernatural anointing will come. You will take what you have in your hand and deliver a nation if you refuse to let emotion or man’s knowledge lead you in the hour of the unexpected!

The Issue of Being Unprepared -Judges 6

The questions and opinions that young man expressed in the bookstore were not anything I had recently prepared for. The temptation was strong to not actually engage in meaningful conversation. I felt unprepared, but I did not let that stop me. You don’t have to let it stop you either. Gideon sought for a fleece (uncertainty) and was filled with fear, but he answered the call of God in spite of how fearful and how unprepared he felt mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Miracles come when we obey in spite of ourselves! Gideon tore down the false altars, rebuilt the altars of God, confronted the enemy army and saw the supernatural deliverance of a nation. Determine now that when the day of God’s call comes to you, you will do what Gideon did in spite of the circumstances or how unprepared you may feel in that moment.

The Issue of Being Unwilling -Acts 10

God’s love for the Gentiles caused Him to visit Peter. Peter fell into a trance where God showed him all sorts of unclean animals, commanding Peter to rise, kill and eat them. Peter refused! Peter was unwilling. The Bible says that three times God showed him the unclean and instructed him to kill and eat, but Peter declared to the Lord that he was unwilling to do so, even though he knew it was indeed God speaking to him. Peter’s motives were pure, but the issue of his unwillingness was about to cause him to miss out on being used of God to make history. As the miracle continued to unfold, Peter overcame his emotions, his lack

of ability to understand the word of the Lord logically and his own unwillingness. Peter experienced God in a way that changed the Church and the world forever, but just like you, he had to overcome his own unwilling heart in the moment of the call. He was then used of God to see salvation and the outpouring of the Spirit come to the Gentiles!

For many years the ministry I lead in Austin, Texas (Rally Call Ministries) has had a motto we challenge ourselves with. Our motto is “Go Anywhere, Do Anything, Pay Any Price.” Will you join me in posturing your heart before the Lord with that declaration? As you read this, set your heart with me right now in prayer:

1. Renounce your own weaknesses; by faith take off every limitation that’s been put upon you.
2. Release your faith to God for a new generation of overcomers to be raised up in the Church in this hour.
3. Ask God to reveal to you more of His plan for the Church—the building of a Church that is going to prevail over His enemies.

Will you join me in posturing your heart before the Lord with that declaration?

Let us posture ourselves before the Lord for more victory than ever before. In the days to come, we will storm the gates, defeat the armies and take down the giants as God’s victorious Church arises and brings down the very hierarchy of hell in the earth! 🙌

Bob Long is the Christ For The Nations Director of the New Testament Church Leadership program. He is also the Founder & Apostolic Team Leader of Rally Call Ministries in Austin, TX. Find out more at RallyCall.net.

(This article was first published with the Cindy Jacobs RPN Network.)

POWERFUL CONNECTIONS TO THE PAST



By Belinda Elliott

God wants to bring increased signs and wonders among His people, says Dutch Sheets, but Christians have a role to play. Sheets, an internationally recognized author and speaker, serves as Executive Director of Christ For The Nations Institute. He believes God is calling His people to remember and build on the works and prayers of generations who have come before them. This “synergy of the ages,” he says, will allow a multiplication of God’s power to be released into the world.

He relates a prophetic dream from Julie Meyer, intercessor and prophetic worship leader at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Missouri. She saw ambulances that contained patients who weren’t breathing and angels working to revive them. The angel told her that the patients in the ambulances were the intercessors who had grown weary from their labors in prayer — some praying for 25 years asking God to bring revival to the world. Suddenly, one angel discovered a faint heartbeat. When asked how this occurred, the angel replied, “When I began to tell the old stories of revival, they began to revive.” Meyers said the angel looked at her and said, “Put yourself in the storyline” because Christians today are a continuation of the work started by other believers years ago.

“God does things generationally,” Sheets explains. “What He did then, He wants to add to now. In every generation, He wants to multiply and take it a little farther. So the word of the angel was, ‘Put yourself in the storyline because this is your story.’” It’s an important message for the Church today, he says, because God wants to release His Spirit into the world in powerful ways. “God says, ‘I’m about to do something that’s synergistic, taking what I have done down through the ages and bringing that together so that something multiplies,’” Sheets explains.

He points to a time when he was praying for revival at CFNI and the Lord instructed him to agree in prayer with CFNI founder Gordon Lindsay. Lindsay had died 30

years before, but the Lord instructed Sheets that, “his prayers are not dead.” The Lord told him, “Until this generation comes into agreement with what he asked me to do and what I promised him I would do, I can’t do what I told him I would do. This generation needs to come into agreement. I need the synergy of the ages.”

“The ages sometimes don’t connect well because there is a breach,” Sheets says. “Somebody comes along and sheds innocent blood. The shedding of innocent blood brings a curse in the earth, on the land, or to a nation. Now, until somebody repents and deals with that breach, blessings can’t flow through that place in history. Pain is going to flow through.”

At a recent conference, Sheets was approached by a woman who related a story from a prayer meeting she attended years ago. It was prophesied that if believers looked back 18 years they would find an offense that caused the signs and wonders movement to die. When they recounted the history for that time period, they discovered it was 1973 — the year abortion became legal in America. “You can’t prove something like this, but the evidence is overwhelming to me,” Sheets says. “That’s when God said, ‘Okay, now there’s a curse,’ and the miracles stopped.”

That was 40 years ago — a period that Sheets believed was a time of God’s judgment in America. “I believe the Lord is saying to us the 40 years of judgment are over, and if you will reach back, honor what I did with them and connect, there will be a synergy of the ages. I’ll bring a fresh double portion anointing now for a new signs and wonders movement in the earth.”

It is crucial if believers want to win the war for souls of the nations, he explains. “We are going to need signs and wonders for this harvest.” Sheets says. “We are calling on the God of yesterday to give us our future. We’re saying, ‘Lord we want to honor what they did, and now it’s our turn.’” 📌

To hear Dutch Sheets speak on this powerful topic at The Voice of Healing Conference, visit www.CFNthevoice.com/appealtoheaven

11TH HOUR

By Rod Groomer



The Russians are coming! Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, has led Russia, a regional power, back from the breakup of the old Soviet Union to once again become a global power. This global power is now on the move, building a coalition of nations in the Middle East that will eventually attack Israel. The forming of this modern-day confederacy has great prophetic significance as one of the many signs before Christ's Second Coming.

The co-founder of Christ For The Nations, Gordon Lindsay, wrote extensively about this confederacy and their eventual march to Israel; "Russia's place in prophecy has long been recognized by Bible students. There is no prophetic subject on which there is closer agreement. Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39 foretell Rosh as a great power, which with her allies will change the land of Israel in the last days. Prophetic writers more than a century ago wrote of this great Northern Confederacy, which would include Russia. Russia is identified as the Rosh of the prophecy. The word Rosh means chief, or bear, the symbol of this nation. It is said to be "The chief prince of Meshech and Tubal" and to come out of the "north parts" (Ezekiel 38:2, 3, 15). One of the greatest signs marking the end of the age involves Rosh (Russia) in its plans to march south to Israel. This event was clearly prophesied in Ezekiel 38:15, 16.

A recent BBC news article titled *Russia in the Middle East: Return of the Bear* written by Frank Gardner, a BBC security correspondent, tells of the confederacy that is being built by Russia. Frank writes the following, "Something strange is happening in the Middle East. The Russians, once vilified in some Arab countries as godless communists, their crumbling economy mocked, their dated weaponry shunned by the rich Gulf states, are now sweeping back into favour as US influence wanes...Thursday's [14 Nov. 2013] visit to Egypt by a high-level Russian delegation, with the prospect of a \$2 billion arms deal, is only the latest sign of a trend that has been gathering pace since the Arab Spring unrest kicked off in early 2011...The fact that Moscow is supporting a regime — Syria's — ostracised by most of the Arab League is being quietly overlooked as Russian delegations and arms salesmen beat a path to Arab doors. Twenty-two years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian clout in

the Middle East is the highest it has been in a generation. The upheavals of the Arab Spring have helped bring about a revival in Russian fortunes. After years of looking to the West for their defense contracts, the really big Arab spenders, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, are now keen to diversify."

So here then, is a brief roundup of Russian defence interests in the region:

SYRIA: Russia maintains a naval logistics base at Syria's Mediterranean port of Tartus.

EGYPT: Washington has withheld some major arms deliveries, prompting Egypt to welcome a top-level Russian delegation this week [Nov. 2013].

IRAQ: During 2012-13 Baghdad signed major deals for Russian air defence systems and combat helicopters.

SAUDI ARABIA: Since 2008 a Saudi-Russian contract has been on hold for 150 T-90 tanks, BMP3 armoured fighting vehicles and 100 Mi-17 and Mi-35 attack helicopters. On November 17th, 2013, Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah took a phone call from President Putin amid a warming of relations.

UAE: Like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates are keen to diversify their defence contracts and, according to SIPRI, over 7% of Russian arms sales in 2008-2012 went to the UAE.

NORTHERN AFRICA: Libya and Algeria were long-time defence buyers from Moscow with nearly 60% of Russian arms exports going to Algeria during 2008-12. ¹

It's easy to discern with investigative journalism that the new Russian military confederacy is being established that will eventually attack Israel. We're living in the last days before Jesus return to earth. Now, like never before, we must take the Gospel to all the Middle Eastern nations while those who will believe can be saved. 🕊

¹ Gardner, Frank (14 Nov. 2013) *Russia in the Middle East: Return of the bear*, BBC News in the Middle East, Resource taken from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24944325>

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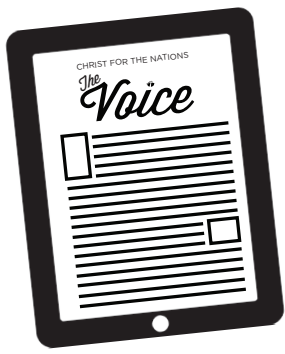
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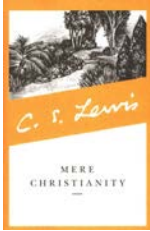




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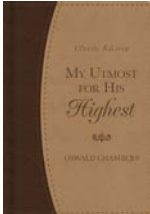
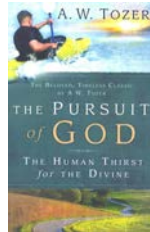


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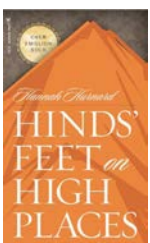
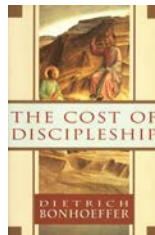


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