

The Networker



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Bringing Life Back into the
Christian Church

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Divine Dialogue

Minister Profile

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
RESTORATION FELLOWSHIP
INTERNATIONAL



THE NETWORKER

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**RESTORATION FELLOWSHIP
 INTERNATIONAL**

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Purpose of RFI

RESTORATION: The renewed interest throughout the body of Christ to rediscover and restore its biblical heritage and especially its first century roots and foundations in Christ, the apostles, and the earliest believers for faith, fellowship and practice, has prompted RFI to establish a trans-denominational association of ministers, ministries and churches to assist in bringing people together for meaningful fellowship, dialogue and cooperation. We respect, value and appreciate the efforts of all churches and wish to network with them for Christ-honoring purposes.

FELLOWSHIP: In essence RFI provides an umbrella, or forum, for ministries and congregations to be networked together for mutual promotion, support and celebration. This allows for creativity, latitude and autonomy within ministries and congregations. We believe this to be the first century New Testament model.

INTERNATIONAL: It is our purpose to build and maintain an international network of ministers, ministries and congregations that have a common interest in working together to advance the gospel of Christ and His restoration work within the church in our generation.

Vision / Mission

VISION: Our Vision Statement is three-dimensional. We seek to assist the body of Christ in —

- Restoring the individual through Christ and to growth in Christ.
- Restoring and building godly homes and marriages through the biblical model.
- Restoring, practicing and celebrating the New Testament order of the Judeo-Christian faith of Christ, the apostles and the earliest believers, through praise, worship and service.

MISSION: Our Mission is —

- To proclaim the Gospel and Lordship of Jesus Christ to all mankind.
- To provide New Testament ministry and discipleship for all believers.
- To assist in networking the body of Christ together for authentic biblical fellowship and mutual cooperation.

Business Information:

Restoration Fellowship International and its offices are officially incorporated in the State of Tennessee. RFI is also a non-profit organization with a 501 (c) (3) IRS designation.

FROM PASSOVER TO PENTECOST "YOU SHALL COUNT THE DAYS"



Dr. John A. Looper



Dr. John A. Looper
Executive Director

by a central branch or shaft, perfectly reveals the Seven Feasts of Yahweh (within seven months), which all of Israel would fulfill annually by appearing three times in the year before the Lord God at the door of Tabernacle/Temple – spring, summer, and fall (See; Exodus 23; Leviticus 23 & Deuteronomy 16).

The first three festivals, occurring in the spring, celebrate Passover, Unleavened Bread, and the Day of

Firstfruits (*Hag Bikkurim*), some 40 years later, under the leadership of Joshua (*Yehoshua/Yeshua/Jesus*).

The barley harvest prophetically portended all the Jewish people who lived under the First Testament and was fulfilled in the resurrection of *Yeshua the Messiah* (Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 11:39, 40 & Hebrews 12:22, 23). The Day of Firstfruits fell on the first day of the week, after the weekly Sabbath. Christ fulfilled this in Matthew 28 when He resur-

rected from the dead on the first day of the week. Rabbinic tradition, within Modern Judaism, counts these days from the day after the Passover, on the first day of Unleav-

ened Bread, rather than from the morrow after the weekly Sabbath, as was done in the days of Moses.

Moses and Israel were commanded to count seven weeks of Sabbaths, until the day after the seventh Sabbath, a total of 50 days. The Feast of Weeks – called Shavuot in Hebrew Scriptures (*meaning weeks*) and is the longest of the feasts of Yahweh. It always fell fifty days after the Day of the Firstfruits of the

We often consider Passover to be an eight-day festival – Passover Day followed by Seven Days of Unleavened, and in the midst of the week, is the Day of First Fruits (*Bikkurim*). This being considered, **Passover is not complete until the Day of Pentecost**, seven weeks of Sabbaths, plus one day, counting from the Day of the Firstfruits of the Barley Harvest, or Resurrection Sunday.

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The seven-branched biblical menorah is a *timepiece* defining the Liturgical Calendar and the Agricultural Year of Israel. The seven-branched menorah, with three branches to the right and three branches to the left and supported

Firstfruits – the pattern for the *death, burial, and resurrection* of Jesus the Messiah. Passover Week was also the season of the firstfruits of the barley harvest – emblematic of the Lord's firstborn son Israel and his firstborn Son from heaven – Jesus the Messiah. Historically (*in the Book of Joshua*), it is interesting to note that the LORD God called Israel out of the wilderness and into the promised land on the day or Feast of

Barley Harvest. Pentecost (*Strong's Greek 4005 – pentekoste*) is the name used for this festival in the Greek Septuagint Version of the Hebrew Scriptures, meaning fiftieth. Pentecost always falls on the first day of the week and is a celebration of the *firstfruits* of the *wheat harvest* (See; Exodus 34:22). This is the reason that all of Messiah's agricultural parables in the New Testament Gospels were exclusively about wheat, which was prophetically symbolic of those who would come to faith (*both Jews and Gentiles*) under the *New Covenant* Christ was establishing.

Why was Passover unfinished until Pentecost? After the resurrection, and Messiah walking with them for 40 days instructing them in the things of the Kingdom of Heaven, commanded them to do as Moses did, to travel, not to Mount Sinai this time, but to Jerusalem (Mount Zion) the early representation of *Heavenly Jerusalem*, as described in Hebrews 12. In the days of Moses there was

fire on the mountain, over the people, when the Lord wrote the Torah (*Penteteuch*) the marriage *Ketuvah* if you please, when God the Father married Israel (Exodus 19 & 20).

In Romans 7:1-4, we learn that Jesus, our Passover Lamb, not only died for our sins but also to put to death the *first marriage covenant* so that Jews and Gentiles might be married to another husband, even to him who was raised from the dead. This time, the Ketubah would not be written on tables of stone; but upon the tables of the hearts of the believers in the *Upper Room*, as the *Church in the Wilderness was reborn* under a *new covenant* and marriage contract. The fire this time, would be upon them and within them, as an anointing of the Most High God, in the person of the Holy Spirit (*Ruach Ha Kodesh*). Just as the Redeemer was anointed at John's baptism as the Messiah of God, before he began his public ministry, the Church had to be anointed to commence its service

after the redemption of the Savior and Redeemer at Passover.

The last three festivals in the fall of the year point us to the prophetic future when Messiah will come the second time, not to *conquer sin for every man*, but to sound the alarm of the *Shofar* - the *Great Trumpet Blast*, to bring judgment upon the disobedient and to establish the Father's Kingdom on earth – *Chag Shofarim, Yom-Kippur* and *Chag Sukkot* (a.k.a. *Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles*). Exodus 12 signified the beginning of the *Liturgical New Year* at Passover. The Feast of Trumpets—also called *Rosh Hashanah, the Head of the Year*—announced the beginning of a *New Civil & Agricultural New Year*. The New Covenant signifies a new political and theocratic order to come on Earth – the Sabbatical Kingdom of Jesus, the Messiah.

The next time someone asks you, *what time is it?*, take a small menorah out of your pocket, and say, let me show you!

RFI
CONNECTIONS

A TIME OF PRAYER, DEVOTION AND FELLOWSHIP
ON THE LAST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH
BEGINNING AT 7:00PM EST.
MINISTERS AND FRIENDS OF RFI ARE WELCOME TO
PARTICIPATE AND CONNECT WITH OTHERS IN OUR GROWING,
DIVERSE AND BROAD NETWORK.

VIA ZOOM
HOSTED BY RABBI JUSTIN ELWELL, FOR A MEETING LINK, EMAIL:
DRJELWELL@GMAIL.COM



¿ENTIENDEN LO QUE HE HECHO CON USTEDES?

YOHANAN SALAMANCA, PH.D.

“Y habiendo amado a los suyos que estaban en el mundo, los amo hasta el fin” Juan 13:1.

Este capítulo nos habla que se acercaba la fiesta de la Pascua. Jesús sabía que le había llegado la hora de abandonar este mundo para volver al Padre. Entonces se recluye para estar con su propia familia: Los discípulos. ¿Qué sentía en esa hora hacia los discípulos? El texto dice: *los amó hasta el fin.*

• **Jesús era una persona que amaba.**

En su corazón encontró un lugar para su gente. Su mayor preocupación era seguir preparándolos para sus deberes y pruebas futuras. No fue egoísta. No se quedó pensando en sus penas o la perspectiva del gozo posterior. Se resalta la constancia de Jesús. Jesús nos muestra un amor hasta el fin, aunque no todos lo amaron así.

El Padre había puesto todas las cosas bajo su dominio. *Tenía el dominio completo, autoridad y poder.* ¿Que hizo Jesús con este poder? Jesús realizó un acto sen-

cillo y profundo: *“así que se levantó de la mesa, se quitó el manto, y se ató una toalla a la cintura. Luego echó agua en un recipiente y comenzó a lavarles los pies a los discípulos y a secárselos con la toalla que llevaba a la cintura”* (Jn. 13: 4-5).

Jesús hace una exposición dramatizada de la grandeza de su amor: *ofreció su servicio a gente que no lo merecía, que lo abandonarían y también ofreció su servicio a una*

¿Entienden lo que he hecho con ustedes? Juan 13:1-38

persona que se oponía. Demostró que el amor divino llega hasta las últimas consecuencias. Jesús era una persona que amaba. Los amó hasta el fin.

• **Jesús era alguien que conocía su identidad.**

Como acto de aseo personal la gente se lavaba los pies. Esto no es un problema a no ser que tengas que lavarles los pies a otros. Por lo general era una tarea que hacían los esclavos o quizás

las mujeres y niños.

Lo más probable es que este lavamiento de pies fue provocado por alguna mala conducta de los discípulos. Quizás estaban discutiendo en qué orden se debían sentar a la mesa o quien en esa ocasión debía ser el siervo y lavar los pies de todos. Lucas en su evangelio nos relata que tuvieron un altercado sobre quien sería el más importante. *Los discípulos estaban dispuestos a pelearse por un trono, pero no por una toalla.* No era probable que alguno tome la toalla para lavar los pies de su compañero. Ellos preferían sentarse a comer sucios antes que estar limpios.

Jesús realizó algo impresionante. No apareció ningún esclavo, el que apareció fue Jesús. Se humilló. Lavó los pies de todos. Usó todo su poder para servir. Jesús sabía bien quien era y no necesitaba el poder para completar su identidad. No mal usó el poder y no lo manejó para sentirse importante o llenar un vacío en su vida. Podemos mal usar y abusar del poder cuando no sabemos realmente quienes somos, cual es nuestra identidad y a

quien tenemos que ser semejante.

• **Jesús era una persona que estaba dando vuelta el orden social.**

El amor de Cristo trascendió las barreras de la clase social. Esta actitud de Jesús produjo una reacción fuerte en Pedro. “¡No!, protestó Pedro jamás me lavarás los pies” (v 8). No podía soportar la idea de que Jesús se humillara de esa manera. Jesús estaba rompiendo con el paradigma de los honores y prestigio que solemos tener en nuestro medio. Pedro seguramente no se sentía digno. Tenía razón: no era digno de recibir esto, ninguno lo somos, pero no era una cuestión de mérito sino de *Gracia*.

Lo que nos cuesta entender es el mensaje central: Jesucristo sirve y da su vida por los pecadores. Su humillación lo engrandece una vez más y de aquí nace el modelo del Siervo, el modelo para ser discípulo. La reverencia del sistema actual o del mundo es diferente. Encuentra difícil hacer lo que el Señor hizo.

• **Jesús lavo los pies de Judas**

Jesús sabía quién era Judas (Jn. 2:25, 6:64,70). ¿Qué haríamos si alguno de nosotros tuviese en su grupo a una persona como Judas? Quizás por mucho menos que una traición no tendríamos a personas que no estén de acuerdo con nosotros.

Judas había oído el mensaje de Jesús, pero eso no lo transformó. Es muy interesante cuando Pablo les habla a los Corintios sobre la locura de la cruz (1 Co. 1:23, 25). Exponerse y quedar vulnerable ante el enemigo es realmente una locura. Sin embargo, Jesús lavó los pies de Judas. Responder cabalmente al ejemplo de Jesús en lavar los pies de todos implica abandonar el derecho de elegir a quien quiero servir.

“¿Entienden lo que he hecho con ustedes?” “Ustedes me llaman

Maestro y Señor, y dicen bien porque lo soy”. Maestro cuya doctrina tenemos que aprender y Señor cuya voluntad debemos obedecer. Deja claro que su humildad no ignora quien y que es El. Su humildad es la de un Rey, la de un ser Divino. No solemos ver esto en nuestras mentes y rendirnos en adoración. Los modelos aprendidos muchas veces son otros y distorsionan nuestra comprensión-comportamiento.

Jesús muestra el modelo de mansedumbre, humildad, servicio y amabilidad fraternal. Es el modelo que recomienda para sus seguidores. Nos exige que prestemos atención a su comportamiento y nos esforcemos en imitarlo. “*Les he puesto ejemplo para que hagan lo mismo que yo he hecho con ustedes... ¿Entienden esto? Dichosos serán si lo ponen en práctica”.* San Juan 13: 12-17

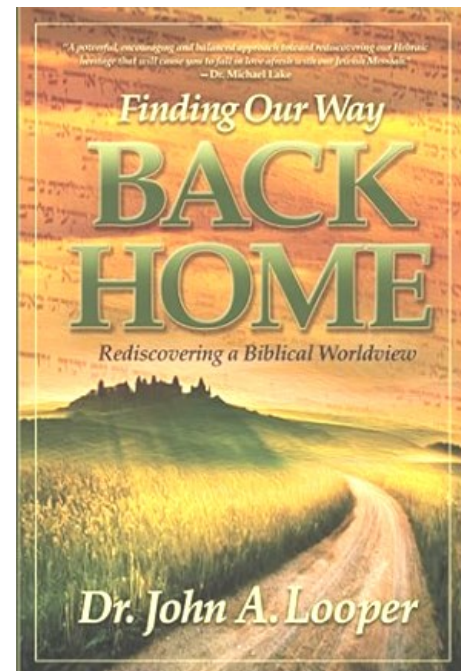
Preguntas para la reflexión

- * *¿Para qué existe la posición? ¿La responsabilidad? ¿El liderazgo? ¿La autoridad y el poder? ¿Cómo lo solemos usar? ¿Cómo estamos sirviendo a los demás?*
- * *¿Somos personas que experimentamos la gracia de Dios y la compartimos con los demás? ¿Nos mostramos legalistas y desarrollamos una relación en base al mérito? ¿Cómo debe ser el modelo del siervo? ¿Estamos abiertos a servir a los demás en amor, aceptación y perdón? ¿Como es mi actitud con la gente que piensa diferente a mí?*

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of Family Restoration in the same city, a Christian congregation that celebrates its Hebrew heritage.



This book is for you! Written for both Christian and Jew alike, this compilation provides a modern perspective on rediscovering the Hebraic roots of a Biblically-based faith.

Dr John A Looper's anthology lays out an overview of the Bible, rightly divided, as God's worldview. Taken from a lifetime love of the Scripture, this framework study can offer several unsung implements of instruction you just think you are familiar with, but you will know by the time you



finish just how relevant they are in today's challenging society.

Dr. Looper has served the body of Messiah since the days of his youth.

He was fortunate to have become a part of an international movement, which has defined his career. His partnership, with a vision for the restoration of all things, has been with men and women of god who are searching for better ways to communicate the redemptive, prophetic, restorative, and eschatological truths so pertinent to this generation. A major part of this vision is the determination to restore the Church's Hebraic roots and heritage back to the Christian faith. One might say that we are committed to finding the way back to the faith once and for all delivered to the saints, by **Finding Our way Back Home!**

REDISCOVER A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW!

BRINGING LIFE BACK INTO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Jeffery Hamm, Ph.D.



The Bible reading for this article comes from the prophecy of Ezekiel 37. It is a fascinating prophecy that speaks of the dead coming back to life. If taken at face value, you would think it was something right out of a horror movie. But when understood in its proper context, it is a beautiful revelation of how God would bring redemptive life back to Israel following the diaspora of judgment. Also, it reveals a part of the eternal Divine character of God who desires to save and restore what has been lost, not only in the context of ancient Israel, but now as well.

Ezekiel uses the illustration of an open valley, being strewn with dry bones, to signify the hopeless state of the Jewish people following God's judgment—being removed from the homeland and dispersed throughout the provinces of the Chaldean empire. But God, contrary to human probability, would symbolically bring *life back* to these dead bones—a dead relationship, to a relationship previously experienced by Israel through true worship, praise, and service. The vision is a prefiguring of the restoration of the Jewish people from captivity and their resettlement in the Land of Promise and into a proper righteous relationship with

their God.

Without going into a lot of detail, the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah were given to express God's concern about the idolatry of His people. These prophecies projected a dismal future for the people if they refused to repent and return to the God of the Fathers and their *Biblical* fundamentalist way of thinking.

Because of their continued rebellion, God allowed ruthless kings to come into power and execute judgment on both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. God's resolve through this judgment was never intended to be a terminate position, but a corrective measure for life and salvation of these rebellious people.

Ezekiel 37 prophecy does not focus on God's discipline to Israel and Judah but on the projected resurrection of a nation and a movement that would usher in the Messiah. Spiritually speaking, within the context of this prophecy, we see a principle of the favor of God in bringing life back into the body of Christ. There have been times in the rich history of the Christian Church, both in spiritual and theological matters, that the

church has been disciplined through suffering, only to be followed with the *mercy* of God bringing life back to the body of Christ.

Some of you reading this may think that I have lost my marbles. The church cannot die, and I argue it will not. However, John, in his writings to the seven Churches in Asia, speaks of a dead local congregation. This is a tragic and sad letter written about a tragic situation—the Church in Sardis is dead. God says to them, "*I know what you have done. You are known for being alive, but you are dead*" (Rev. 3:1, GW). This has to be the ultimate disgrace for any congregation when God says, "You are dead." The church is the congregation of God, a place of His presence. The church is allegedly a fellowship of eternal life.

Those tragic words identified the nature of the church at Sardis. As Marcus Lone suggests, "*The congregation in Sardis was the very reverse of the church in Smyrna. Smyrna was put to death and yet lived; Sardis appeared to be alive and yet was dead.*"

While this was an actual church, in

a real town and a specific period, it symbolizes churches throughout Christian history. It speaks of churches that have drifted away from God, much like ancient Judah drifted away from God and became spiritually dead to God. So, as we consider this, we are not only looking at church history, but we are also dealing with relevance for the church today.

A.W. Tozer put it this way: “*One hundred religious persons knit into a unity by careful organization do not constitute a church any more than eleven dead men make a football team. The first requisite is life, always.*”

I believe that the church is suffering as we speak, perhaps for different reasons than in seasons gone by. However, I am confident that God again is desirous of *breathing life* back into the body of Christ.

I hope to dispel the gloom of many people who now look at the church with despair and pessimism. Recently, I have had so many say, “*Is there any hope for the church in America?*” I suggest the church’s future is not in the hands of the faithless but in the *hands* of the *Father*. I would further suggest that throughout the Bible, we can see that in desperate times, in moments of crisis, the miraculous power of God — His determined purposes, will accomplish what appears to be an impossible task for men. In the Ezekiel 37 prophecy, nothing could be more emphatic than the agency of God’s Spirit in the effective working of God’s will in the resurrection of a nation. The same is true today, it is only through the agency of the Holy Spirit that can effectively resurrect the dying church according to the will of God.

Notice the vision of Ezekiel. The vision aptly represents the ruined and desperate state of both Judah and Israel. It also signifies their restoration to God and their *promised land* following their captivity. Their success is established through the vision of their return to a proper relationship with the God of the Fathers along with the teachings of the Scriptures the Fathers received

from God.

Ezekiel acknowledges, “*I felt the powerful presence of the LORD, and his spirit took me and set me down in a valley where the ground was covered with bones. He led me all around the valley, and I could see that there were very many bones and that they were very dry. He said to me, ‘Mortal man, can these bones come back to life?’ I replied, ‘Sovereign LORD, only you can answer that!’ He said, ‘Prophecy to the bones. Tell these dry bones to listen to the word of the LORD’*” (Eze. 37:1-4 GNB).

I find it very interesting that before any sovereign move of God, He speaks through the mouth of prophets. Furthermore, I believe God still speaks into the life of the church, He is and will always be a willing participant in the glorious moves throughout each age. Amos affirms this truth, “*Certainly, the Almighty LORD doesn’t do anything unless he first reveals his secret to his servants the prophets*” (Amos 3:7 GW). I believe that once again God is speaking through the prophecies of His WORD and by the anointing of His Spirit into this time in history.

I am a pastor, I never felt as though I have the gift of a prophet, however, I do ask God to give me inspired words from His presence. I take my job very seriously and pray weekly for inspirational—seasonal sermons. This is what I believe I have heard from God and is a word for the church. It’s a season of renewal in Spirit and Truth.

The prophetic vision in our key text pictures Israel, the church in the Hebrew Scriptures, as dead. The very fact that the Scriptures say the bones were very dry gives evidence that there had not been life present for a long time. It was not that the people of Israel were physically dead—but had turned from God and were dead to Him. The death recorded in Ezekiel 37, in my opinion, is the worst kind of death, “*spiritual death*”—the death that leaves the soul dry and lifeless.

The Apostle Paul speaks of this type of spiritual death when addressing the church at Ephesus, “*In the past*

you were spiritually dead because of your disobedience and sins” (Eph. 2:1 GNB). It is obvious that in both Testaments, sin was likened to death. Paul, like the prophecy in Ezekiel, uses death as an analogy to describe the sad condition of the people who allow their sinful nature to dominate their lives, and I might add the spiritual condition we often experience in the Christian Church.

Although people around us are living their lives, working their jobs, enjoying their pastimes, and raising their families; while they may be intellectual, reasonable, and physically fit, if they do not know Jesus Christ, they are “*spiritually dead.*” The Apostle Paul instructs us that until the Holy Spirit quickens men and women to spiritual life, they are dead. This can be true of your husband, your wife, your parents, your children, your friends, your neighbors, and your church. While they may be full of physical life, they may be dead spiritually.

If we are going to sense the true needs of the church community around us; we must have a clear understanding of the condition in which the church and the world find themselves. The vision Ezekiel saw was of a valley full of dry, scattered bones. It depicted the desolation, destitution, and devastation of Israel. I suppose a large portion of the church in our world is in the same spiritual condition. Until we have a similar spiritual vision and awakening, to see the world in which we live, and its spiritual condition, we will not be stirred to prayer and action. We need to see something like what Ezekiel saw when he looked out over the valley of dry bones. It is the same vision we need today, as we look out over a lost dying world.

SCATTERED DRY BONES

The prophetic vision was a warning of the ruined and desperate state of Judah in the First Testament; however, we can also see and learn from that event where the church can go should it continue a path away from God. The scattered bones speak of the disorder and disunity of God’s people. When people turn from God, disorder will replace the beauty of those who once followed God.

Isaiah speaking out against the sins and idolatry of Israel declared *“If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land. But if you refuse and rebel, you will be destroyed by swords.” The LORD has spoken. How the faithful town has become a prostitute! She was full of justice, and righteousness lived in her. But now murderers live there! Your silver is not pure. Your wine is watered down. Your rulers are rebels, friends with thieves. They all love bribes and run after gifts. They never defend orphans. They don’t notice the widows’ pleas”* (Isa. 1:19-23GW)

This may sound a little like politicians in America, but unfortunately, it speaks of the churches that are drifting away from the morals of God’s WORD. I think that we are living in a time when the churches in America are more scattered theologically than ever before. The church disagrees on many important Biblical issues. The issue of life before birth, same-sex marriage, and salvation by faith through Jesus Christ; are big issues that in many cases have left the Church dead and scattered. The unfortunate result is the bones of theological correctness lay waste upon the soil of secularism and political correctness. The moral issues taught by Scripture that once coupled with the church have become tools of religious division and devastation.

Before someone calls me a heretic, I trust God will not allow the church to completely waste away. But something is going on. According to the Hartford Institute of Religion Research, more than 40 percent of people say they go to church every week, but statistics show that fewer than 20 percent attend. More than 4,000 churches close their doors every year. Between 2010 and 2012, half of all churches in the U.S. did not add any new members. Each year 2.7 million church members fall into inactivity.

According to a new book titled *Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore*, hard numbers don’t tell the whole story. Hundreds of interviews and extensive hands-on research from a variety of sources reveal some of the basic reasons people don’t want to go to church anymore. Some

say they don’t want to be lectured and they view the church as judgmental, hypocritical, and irrelevant.

Think about it. The valley of dried bones is a picture of the dead with no grave. It is as though their grave was an open shame that exposed the sins of Israel for time to see. For Israel, it was their time of captivity, the place of sorrow, scattered around the Babylonian Empire, because they would not hear the voice of the prophets.

After viewing the above stats from the Hartford Institute of Religion Research, the grave of lost churchgoers has become an open grave of embarrassment and shame for most assemblies around the country. I hear the voice of pastors defensively barking back and shifting the blame to all those heathens and backsliders who’ve abandoned the church.

Now, following thousands of years, like in the days of the First Covenant Prophets, I believe God is making a call once again, *“turn from the wickedness of the world and look to me.”* The church and its leaders have been slow to hear God. *“Americans have been leaving the Christian church in droves for decades. We’ve watched church leaders try a variety of methods to bring them back and nearly all of their efforts are missing the mark,”* say authors Thom and Joani Schultz. I recognize that our doctrine/worship systems have on many fronts been scattered into the wind with prayer being taken out of schools, teen promiscuity, churches participating in same-sex marriage, and of course worldliness, which is when morality is a matter of relativity rather than a matter of Scripture. These things have exposed our shame as the church and a one-time Christian Nation.

CAN WE LIVE AGAIN

“He said to me, ‘Mortal man, can these bones come back to life?’ I replied, ‘Sovereign LORD, only you can answer that!’” (Eze. 37:3 GNB). Is the church as we know it lost forever? Is there hope for the church in the present world? It appears like we, and those things we hold dear, are crumbling right before our eyes. Political correctness has become the

enemy of God and His Word. Many God-fearing people have been forced out of business, some imprisoned, others threatened, and run out of town for living according to their beliefs.

“The LORD also said to me, ‘Son of man, all the people of Israel are like these bones. The people say, ‘Our bones are dry, and our hope has vanished. We are completely destroyed’” (Eze. 37: 11 GNB). The question *“IS THERE HOPE?”* deserves a biblical answer. While this prophecy was directed to Israel, who by Divine intervention would come out of captivity and regain the Holy City, the principles of God’s WORD are eternal and universal. In other words, if God did it for Israel, He will do it for the Church. I suggest that it is time for God-called men and women to speak out to the scattered bones of the Christian Church. In the same spirit that moved Ezekiel to speak—we need to *prophecy*—to *speak the Word of the Lord* to the Christian Church.

“God said, ‘Prophecy to the bones. Tell these dry bones to listen to the word of the LORD.’” (Eze. 37: 4 GNB). I say in the Name of the Lord that it is time we lend our ears to God. So many have been heeding the world’s advice, allowing the devil to confuse — Biblical morality with cultural morality — this is his deceptive nature, many have observed the voices of our common enemy and shut the door to the WORD of God.

Jesus gives us good advice about knowing the voice of God and following its instruction. *“And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers”* (John 10: 4-5 NKJV).

“Do you want Life? Listen to the voice of God. Tell them that I, the Sovereign LORD, am saying to them: I am going to put breath into you and bring you back to life. I will give you sinews and muscles and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you and bring you back to life. Then you will know that I am the

LORD.” (Eze. 37: 5-6 GNB).

Anyone who sees the true condition of a lost church can understand Ezekiel’s uncertainty. What could be more difficult than to confront a world of lifeless, and hopeless men and women with the word of the gospel? Yet this is the clear obligation of the ministers of the Gospel. God has not promised to bless our theological systems, our superficial interpretations, or our philosophical theorizing, but He has committed Himself to bless the preaching of the unadulterated Word of God. He says, *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it,”* (Isa. 55:11 KJV).

I am confident there is hope. When we consider the Word of God, it points forward to a victorious church. The Apostle John speaking of the end of the ages says: *“For the time has come for the wedding of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself for it”* (Rev. 19: 7, GNB). Jesus speaking to Peter said, *“You are a rock, and on this rock foundation I will build my church, and not even death will ever be able to overcome it”* (Matt. 16: 18, GNB).

I propose that through a return of anointed preaching, life will return to the bride, the Body of Christ. Then there will be *“... a noise... a shaking... bones coming together, bone to his bone,”* (Eze. 37:7). It is only the Word of God that can produce such miracles, for *“God’s word is living and active. It is sharper than any two-edged sword and cuts as deep as the place where soul and spirit meet, the place where joints and marrow meet. God’s word judges a person’s thoughts and intentions”* (Heb 4:12 GW).

We must see that we not only preach with divine urgency but pray with divine fervency. We must be satisfied with nothing less than the outpouring of the Spirit of God. The world of lifeless, and hopeless people will never be changed unless the Holy Spirit breathes upon the preaching as well as upon the people.

Ezekiel’s prophecy speaks of God’s eternal goodwill in wanting to bring life back into the body of His people. After all, the church without God is nothing more than a social institution. When the Church becomes anointed by the Holy Spirit, it becomes a vibrant movement, living for her God, and making the world a better place.

“So I prophesied as I had been told. While I was speaking, I heard a rattling noise, and the bones began to join together. While I watched, the bones were covered with sinews and muscles, and then with skin. But there was no breath in the bodies. God said to me, ‘Mortal man, prophesy to the wind. Tell the wind that the Sovereign LORD commands it to come from every direction, to breathe into these dead bodies, and to bring them back to life.’ So I prophesied as I had been told. Breath entered the bodies, and they came to life and stood up. There were enough of them to form an army. God said to me, ‘Mortal man, the people of Israel are like these bones. They say that they are dried up, without any hope and with no future. So prophesy to my people Israel and tell them that I, the Sovereign LORD, am going to open their graves. I am going to take them out and bring them back to the land of Israel. When I open the graves where my people are buried and bring them out, they will know that I am the LORD. I will put my breath in them, bring them back to life, and let them live in their own land. Then they will know that I am the LORD. I have promised that I would do this---and I will. I, the LORD, have spoken” (Eze. 37: 7-14 GNB).

Dear God, may You once again bless the church of our day with the revival fire of the Holy Spirit. *“Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly; Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and nursing babes; Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, And the bride from her dressing room. Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, Weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say, ‘Spare Your people, O LORD, And do not give Your heritage to reproach, That the nations should rule*

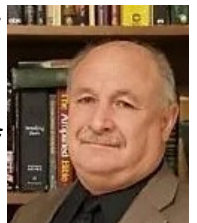
over them. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’” ...“And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days” (Joel 2 :15-17, 28-29, NKJV)

CONCLUSION

When you take an honest look at the church, what do you see? I must confess that I sometimes become uneasy when I look at what is happening in the Christian community. I see the things people do; I hear the things people say; I notice the way they live their lives; and I see the seeming animosity many have for the WORD of GOD. Those things bother me. Then I remember, if it were not for the grace of God, there am I. But somebody cared enough to pray for me. The Lord reached out to me in grace and mercy and saved my soul. The least I can do is ask the Lord to give me the same compassion toward others that was shown to me.

Secondly, I see a bride preparing for a groom, with the greatest of anticipation of His return. Even so come, Lord Jesus come!

Jeffery D. Hamm, Ph.D., and his wife Trella live in Pocahontas, Arkansas, where he pastors Great Harvest Church in Pocahontas, Arkansas. He is also Vice-President of Restoration Fellowship International. He has authored several books which are available through various book retailers.



**Little Leaps of Faith
Pocahontas, Arkansas**



DIVINE DIALOGUE

PASTOR KAREN JOHNSON

Understanding the mouth, or more accurately, understanding OUR mouths is a matter of life and death. Our physical mouth is an organ primarily associated with the digestive system of our body. When we eat, our body uses this system to digest food that our cells use to make energy. By observing the natural process of digestion, we can understand a parallel process in the spirit realm (1 Corinthians 15:46). As the type and the quality of the food we choose to eat affects every part of our physical body, every word we chose to speak affects every part of our life and the lives of those we touch. The greatest benefit of God's Word comes after "digesting" it, much the same way digesting natural food benefits the body. Just as our physical mouth must chew our food carefully and completely for proper and healthy digestion, likewise, we must ruminate spiritual food for it to benefit us Solomon wrote "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it shall eat the fruit of it" (Proverbs 18:21). Yeshua tells us that every idle word we speak will have to be accounted for (Matthew 12:36).

The word "idle" in the Greek language means to be "unemployed/inactive." This concept indicates that we are employers of our words. Likewise, our words become the employees. We have authority to speak words that go to work for us. When we speak words of life (The Word), God's perfect plans benefit us. When we speak words of death, either doubting or critical, God's great plans for us can be delayed and too often, lost to us forever. His plans for us can be thwarted by our negative words, while divinely chosen words may otherwise improve our lives and better secure our destiny in Him. Ultimately, we are judged as either a good or a bad employer (of words). We will be justified or condemned by what comes out of our own mouths (Matthew 12:37).

The Word of God is filled with hundreds of Scriptures about our mouths. James teaches us that "We bless God, even the Father with our mouth, and we curse men who have come into being according to the image of God" (James 3:9). Our of the same mouth pro-

ceed blessing and cursing, My brothers, these things ought not to be so" (James 3:10). If we are not trained by the Holy Spirit, we ignorantly talk out of both sides of our mouths. "Keep crooked speech out of your mouth, banish deceit from your lips" (Proverbs 4:24).

James also teaches us that "...no man can tame the tongue, it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8). A carelessly placed word can wreck ministries, marriages, and relationships and even cause wars. Many wars can be traced back to (wrong) words. To understand the importance and the proper use of divine communication and dialogue, we must be trained. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to initiate this process. Our responsibility is to yield to His teachings. He brings revelation knowledge to us and correctly interprets the Word of God. Once we yield our mouths (what is in our hearts) to the Holy Spirit, our words become powerful and life-changing, pointing us to the Father.

MOSES AND THE MOUTH

To further understand the importance of our mouths, we look to Moses. Moses was appointed by God to be His mouthpiece. He was a prophet who foreshadowed Yeshua, THE PROPHET (Deuteronomy 18:15). God told Moses to "Go! I will be/exist with YOUR mouth (Exodus 4:12). Not only would He be with Moses' mouth, He would teach him what words to say. If God teaches us what to say, He is as a skilled archer shooting His words into us. It takes much discipline and wisdom on our part to wait for His Words and act on them prudently.

Walking with God is an educational process requiring us to become His students. We know from Scripture that Moses became a student as he walked in the wilderness for 40 years. Wilderness (in Hebrew, midbar) means "the place where God speaks." Before he was trained by God, Moses killed a single Egyptian enemy (Exodus 2:12). After he was trained, he could "speak" God's Words (Exodus 14:15); stretch out his arm (Exodus 14:21) and the whole Egyptian army was destroyed (Exodus 14:27). God invited Moses to walk with Him and told him, He would be/exist according to his mouth (his words). His life and the lives of the Israelites would literally be determined by what he spoke. If God is given authority and control of OUR mouth, we are no longer speaking our words. Like Moses, we will never have to originate anything. Yeshua said He did nothing of Himself, but as His Father taught Him, He only spoke THOSE things (John 8:28). Yeshua was the student of the Father. As He was to Yeshua, God was alive to Moses and to the people through the mouth of Moses. God not only

taught Moses was to say, He showed him where and when to go and taught him how to build the Tabernacle/house.

THE PE/MOUTH

The 17th letter of the Hebrew alphabet is called the "Pe". It represents the "mouth" and has an Hebraic numerical value of 80. Interestingly, Moses was 80 years old when he was released to go forward as the mouthpiece of God. The letter Pe has one form when used in the beginning or middle of a word, and another form when used as the final letter of a word. Focusing on the first form, we can see something intriguing in the letter Pe.



Hidden within the interior of the spelling of Pe is the second letter in the Alphabet called the "beth" (representing "house"). I have heard that if we can observe the Beth and the Pe at the same time, then we can learn to strengthen our focus and think twice before we speak.

"Therefore, thus saith the LORD, If you return, then will I bring you again, and you shall stand before me: and if you take forth the precious from the vile, you shall be as MY MOUTH: let them return unto me, but return not you unto them" (Jer. 15:19). God wants us to use words accurately and in truth. We are to be influencers for God, and not influenced by the world. We can never change the Word to suit a situation or another

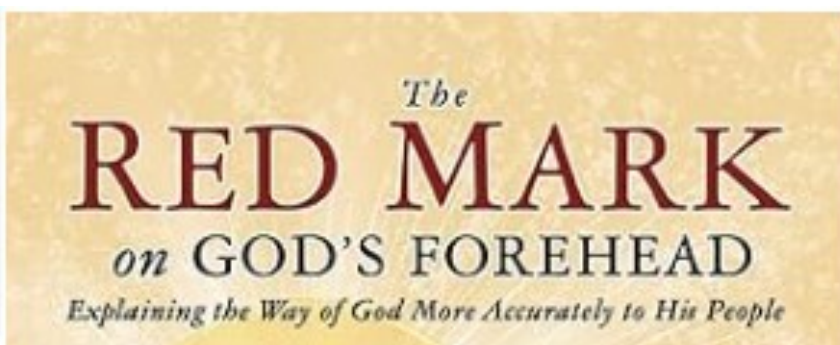
person's preferences. "Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come? (Lam. 3:37-38).

Our mouths are the revealer of our hearts/mindsets (Matt. 12:34). Fresh fire is available from the throne to purge and cleanse our mouths. Isaiah wrote of a live coal on his tongue (Isa. 6:6-7) and became the author of the greatest Messianic prophecies in the Bible. I sincerely pray that all damage in our lives caused by wrong words be reversed by the mercy of the living God, as we focus on receiving, believing and speaking right words. Blessings.

Karen H. Johnson is the founder, President and Pastor/Teacher of the Hebraic/Prophetic ministry and fellowship, Olive Tree Connections. Karen and her family first came to Nashville in 1997 from North



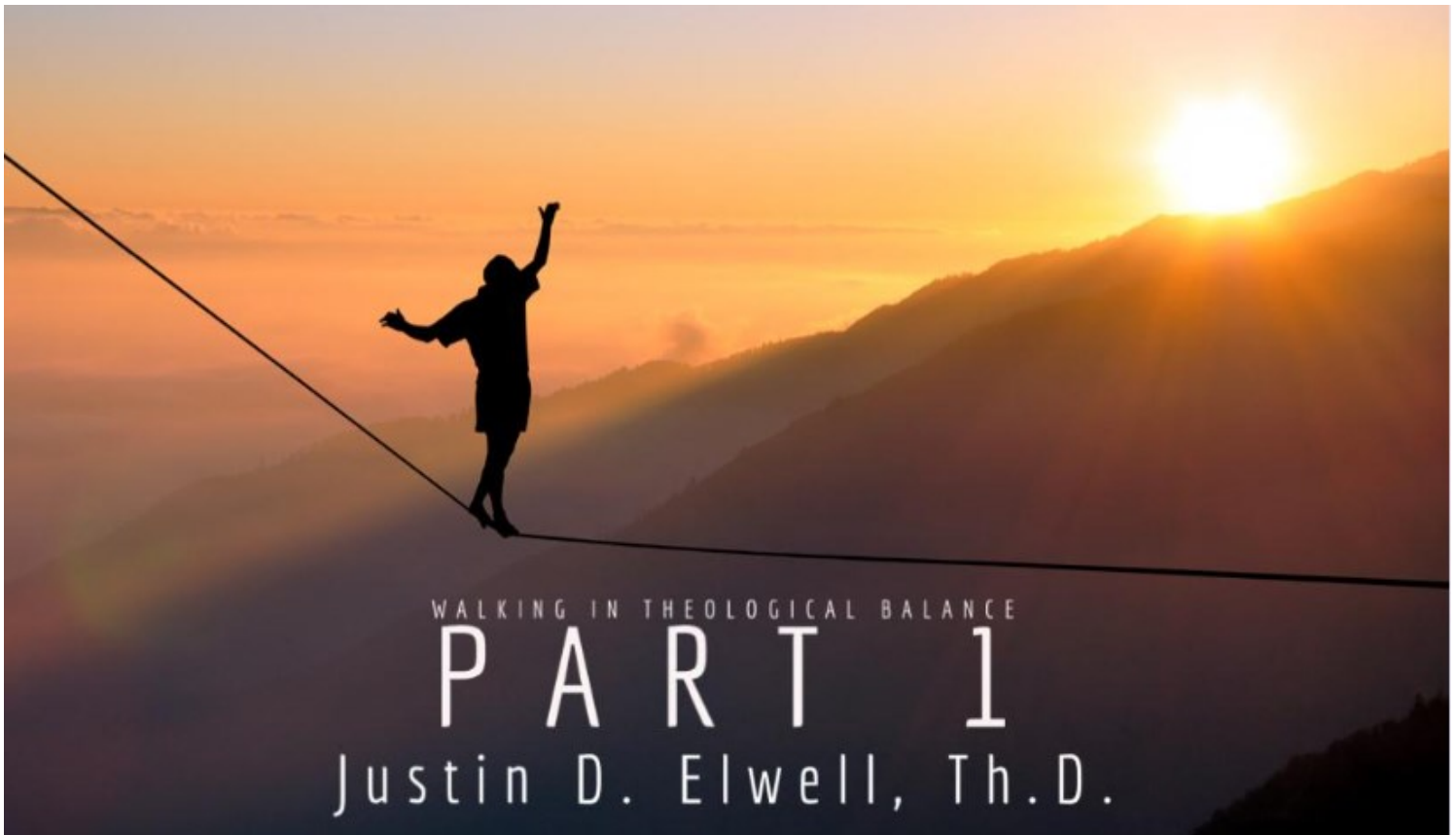
Carolina. Shortly thereafter Karen was invited to join the ministry staff of Trinity Music City Church, part of the TBN family located in Hendersonville, TN. For several years, Karen conducted a Hebraic/Prophetic teaching ministry in the conference center on the grounds of TBN. Karen Johnson is a frequent guest minister on the Suzanne Hinn National Prayer Call. Karen is the mother of three grown children and five grandchildren. Karen resides with her husband in the greater Nashville area. Karen is the mother of three grown children and five grandchildren. Karen resides with her husband in the greater Nashville, TN, area.



By Rabbi Darryl Weinberg

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In 2 Timothy 2:15 Paul writes, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” When considering theological balance, we must first keep in mind the meaning of theology, θεολογία, as a disciplined approach to the study of Scripture, the study of the knowledge of God, His relation to mankind and His creation. What do the Scriptures, the θεόπνευστος, God-breathed Word, teach us about any given subject? The breathed-out Word that is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (II Tim. 3:16-17).

As Paul writes, we are to be diligent in our study, laboring in a manner that does not bring shame, but rather demonstrates a right handling, a making straight, by rightly dividing the Word of truth. As Luke records, Berean Jews demonstrated this as they, “received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so” (Acts 17:11). Yet, the fruit of the search, the theology learned and

developed, must be rightly applied, or acted upon. How do we apply the instruction, the Torah, of God to human life and the broad scope of human society?

Personally, I use this ethical construction: the Word of God, applied to a situation, by a renewed actor in faithing action. This is the normative standard of God directly applied to life while I/we walk along the way. Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks writes of the way, “Halachah is Judaism’s unique ‘way’ to God, turning abstract ideas into concrete acts and relationships, and making daily life a home for the Divine Presence.” As one fulfills a mitzvah, it is said the divine presence rests among us, as a mitzvah, or command, is said to connect us to the Lord. /הַצְּוָה mitzvah/command, is related to the Aramaic word /צוּתָא tzavta, meaning to attach or join, even companionship.

Consider the words of Yeshua, “If you love me, keep My commandments ... My /צוּתָא mitzvot” (Jn. 14:15). This is a conditional statement, “if,” followed by the appropriate response: the keeping, or doing of His commandment that demon-

strates our attachment, and companionship with Him. He has called us to follow Him, and walk along the Way with Him, which is a call to relationship in discipleship.

What is /הַלְכָה halachah? /הַלְכָה halachah/walk is a word simply meaning “to go” or “to walk.” While this word is used universally in Judaism, it does not appear in the Torah, the five books of Moses. Yet, there are many instances in the Torah where obedience to the Lord, and fulfilling His commandments, are described in terms of walking: “And you shall warn/teach them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk, and what they must do” (Ex. 18:20). “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Behold I will rain bread from heaven; and the people shall go out and gather their daily portions, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law or not’ (Ex. 16:4). “If you walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments and do them...” (Lev. 26:3).

In Judaism, /הַלְכָה halachah/walk is the way to behave or conduct oneself in covenant life, speaking to all

“washing” of the Word, this cleansing of heart and soul produces in the renewed actor a proper perspective of oneself. Not burdened by guilt and shame, as a result of sin, man is now able to produce a godly love/care/concern for oneself, seeing to daily needs, as a child of God made in his image and likeness.

The double-love command of Christ concludes with, “and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Often, “as yourself” is overlooked or denied beneath an assumed humility. However, both Leviticus 19:18, and 19:34 demand a love of neighbor and stranger that rests upon the love that the renewed actor is to have for himself. To love God the Father, claiming an inner devotion to him, without demonstrative outer action is hypocritical. Our behavior, motivated by our renewed existential condition, should be a demonstration of who the Lord has renewed us to be. Messiah warns and admonishes: Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisees, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like white-washed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Matt. 23:25-28).

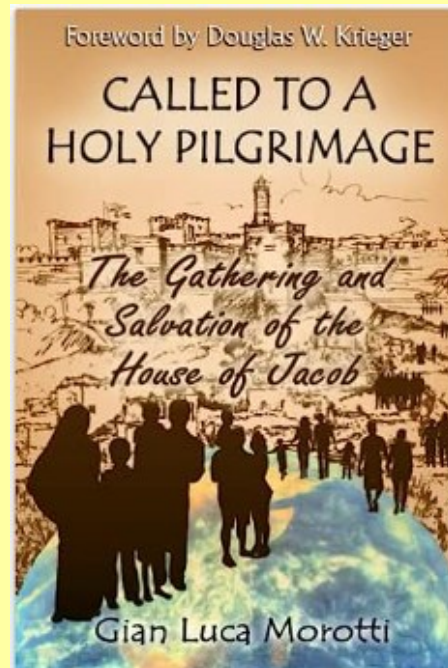
The Pharisees, who maintained a meticulous appearance of righteousness and holiness, were actually ἀνομία/anomia, without law, without Torah. With the 613 traditional mitzvot/commands of the Torah, and thousands of traditions from the elders, were not the Pharisees ἐννομος/ennomos, with law? The outer appearance was not properly mirroring the inner reality. Not every Pharisee walked in this manner, some were very familiar with the grace of God, as grace and

Torah are not oppositional. Remember, the traditions of the fathers were a way of life, the halakah of a Jewish life. Jesus corrects the yet unregenerate heart.

To announce what He requires of His covenant people, the Lord from Mt. Sinai first makes known His action of grace: deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 20:2). Grace establishes the relationship. Grace, in the giving of the Torah from Sinai, then defines the relationship by instruction (Torah/law). While every command of God found in the Bible is normative, it is important to note that not all remain literally normative, this is where “rightly dividing” becomes very important. Torah, then, as given by God, is not legalistic as some have defined this term. Legalism is an outgrowth of man’s heart. It is not the number of commands kept, or a record of things done that is of importance: it is the condition of the disciple’s heart before the covenant Lord that is the issue. As an example, one might never keep the law regarding the birds nest (Deut. 22:6; cf. Matt. 5:19; 23:23), but one is always obligated to believe on and love the Lord (Gen. 15:6; Deut. 6:5; cf. Ex. 20:2; Matt. 22:34-40; Jn. 14:1). Legalism is a spiritual cardiac condition, not a numeric condition. To avoid this cardiac condition, a hardness of heart, we must rightly divide and apply the Word. And we do so by following the One who calls and sends us, Yeshua/Jesus, and the example set for us by the apostles of our faith in our going out to nations, tribes, tongues and peoples.

We will conclude our study in the June 2024 issue of *The Networker*.

Rabbi Justin D. Elwell, Th.D.,
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CALLED TO A HOLY PILGRIMAGE: THE GATHERING AND SALVATION OF THE HOUSE OF JACOB is a searing vision of the gathering of Jacob’s Household in accordance with the promises of the Hebrew prophets of the Bible who saw and proclaimed as certain the regathering of the children of Israel to the Land of promise in the end times.

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The author, Gian Luca Morotti, lives in Italy. He holds a degree in Security Management and a Bachelor in Biblical Studies in Hebraic Heritage. He currently serves as member of the International Board of Ebenezer Emergency Fund International (EEFI), a ministry helping Jewish people making Aliyah (returning to the Land of Israel) and as chairman of Ebenezer Operation Exodus Israel. Where invited he speaks about the purposes of God for the end-times in relation with the plan of God for Israel.

Available through Amazon in paperback for \$12.99 (311 pages).

Happenings Around the RFI Network

Some of our network congregations offer the opportunity for teens to participate in Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremonies. Both Messiah Congregation in Washington Mills, New York and Restauracion Familiar Puebla in Puebla, Mexico hosted Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies recently.

In Puebla, the Rojas family celebrated the Bar Mitzvah's of David and Emerson Rojas.



In Washington Mills, the Marrero family celebrated the Bat Mitzvah of their daughter Harlow.



PASTORS CORBY & KELLY SHUEY

Corby and Kelly Shuey live in Lebanon, PA with their two daughters. They have been married for twenty-two years. The Shuey family enjoys spending time together, hiking and admiring God's creation, and playing board games.

Corby serves as the senior pastor of Mount Zion Road Church in Lebanon. Before his call to ministry, Corby was a public-school teacher for seventeen years. Pastor Shuey has authored several books, available through most book sellers, and publishes articles on his personal website: corbyshuey.com. Corby's latest book *For Valor: Defending the Faith for Those of Worth* was published by Defender Publishing. He has appeared on SkywatchTV and several podcasts. He has done graduate work at Biblical Life College and Seminary, earning a Master of Divinity degree, and is currently a doctoral candidate. Corby describes his call to ministry:

"We were content and secure. Yet, I always felt as if something was slightly askew, in the sense that I was missing something. At the time, I could not discern what was missing. Looking back, I now liken it to an experience similar to Samuel (1 Samuel 3). Like Samuel, I heard a voice, not audibly, calling my name. For a time, I even tried

to ignore the call, not recognizing who was calling. The more I ignored the call, the louder and more persistent the call became. Finally, rather than running, I said "Speak Lord, your servant is listening (1 Samuel 3:9)." Since that moment, God has taken the reigns of my life leading my family down a path that He has forged. We have been through trials that seemed insurmountable, but God. But God and only God can be credited with the

strength to see us through. He has made the words of the prophet Isaiah alive in my life and I give Him all praise and honor for the privilege of being called a child of the King!"

Pastor Kelly serves alongside her husband at Mount Zion Road Church. Kelly states that her, "biggest aspiration was to be a wife and mother and I am blessed beyond measure because the Lord has given me the desire of my heart. I have enjoyed serving beside my husband in ministry and homeschooling my girls." Along with homeschooling her own daughters, Kelly teaches at Maranatha Homeschool Cooperative, "I enjoy teaching at Maranatha Homeschool Cooperative where I am passionate about teaching high school student's different worldviews. Understanding these things will help them to be grounded in their faith and to recognize deception and guard themselves against it." Kelly also writes and teaches Bible studies in their home church.

Corby and Kelly have become cherished friends to many at Restoration Fellowship International. You will always find the Shuey family at RFI conferences, sitting and learning together. The Shuey's are a gifted ministry team, and we are blessed to serve alongside them for the cause of Christ.



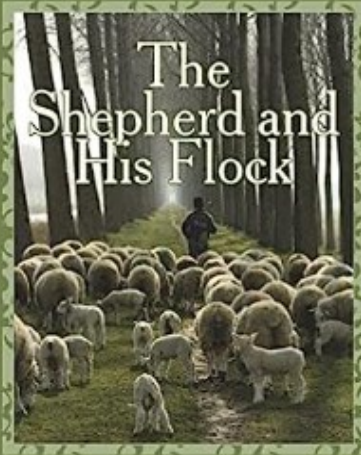
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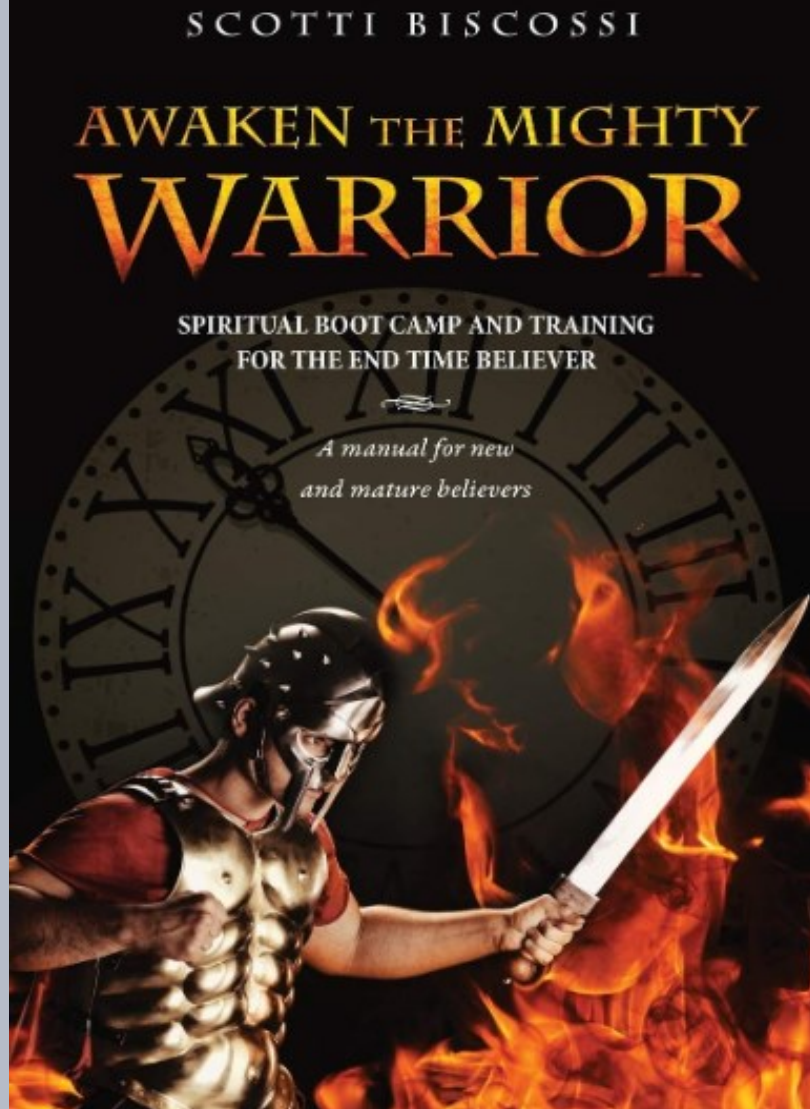
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Awaken The Mighty Warrior is a soldier's manual for the new and mature believer.

Many are falling away from the faith, some for reasons that could have been averted. I found many of them just don't know how to wear their armor or they are wearing it incorrectly.

This manual is for some a refresher but for most it will be an eye opening experience on how unprepared so many of the saints are and how to be better prepared. This book will show you how to be bold in the face of the enemy and never retreat. It is a source of encouragement and training that will follow you all the days of your life and cause you to live a life of victory and not victimization.

Scotti Biscossi Hickman, AAS, BS, RDH — Born, raised, and saved in the Assemblies of God, over the years she has been involved in volunteering in groups of evangelism, in performing and creating plays and musicals for the Glory of God, and now an author. She was in the military (USMC) and has been a dental hygienist for 19 years. Scotti and her husband, Donnivan Hickman, are ministers with RFI, and they reside in Chesnee, SC.

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Grief Share

Mondays @ 6:30 pm
Cost: \$20 (covers book fee)
Contact: Joyce Sorrell Amann

Little Leaps of Faith

Wednesday @ 6:00 pm

Student & Adult Classes

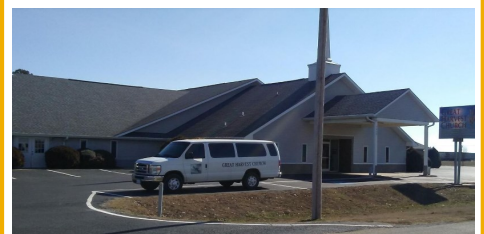
Wednesdays @ 7:00 pm

Women's Virtual Bible Study

Last Saturday of every month
via ZOOM or live in person in Fellowship Hall

Love Stories of the Bible
By Shannon Bream

Contact: Amy Morrison for ZOOM help



“Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfolding crown of glory.”

1 Peter 5:2-4

