



THE SOWER

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“Happiness” Is Having a Clear Vision

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Dear Fellow Believer,

Greetings, and blessings in the name of Jesus Christ. Recently I (John Schoenheit), have had several opportunities to be with people who had a strong vision for their life and ministry. It is exciting to be with such believers because their vision gives them the energy to press forward and the patience and forbearance to put up with all the “junk” life throws at them regularly.

And “life” regularly challenges all of us, doesn’t it? The first line in the first chapter of M. Scott Peck’s book, *The Road Less Traveled*, is: “Life is difficult.” No kidding! However, having a vision, a goal to focus on, makes a huge difference in our attitude toward life, and the energy we have day by day.

Proverbs 29:18 ties together having a vision and being happy. “Where *there is* no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he” (KJV). The word “perish” is not the best translation, and the 1901 *American Standard Version*, a revision of the *KJV* done by American scholars, reads: “Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

“Happy” is probably a better translation than the *NIV* “blessed,” because a person can be blessed without being happy. The meaning of the word goes beyond just spiritual blessing, and includes outward happiness. Of course a person can be happy without being blessed by God, and so “happy” is not the most appropriate translation either. How about “happily blessed?”

When a person does not have a vision for his life, he “casts off restraint,” that is, he is not guided by the chart and compass of God’s personal vision for him. Without a vision one has less desire and less ability to adhere to the dictates of the Word (because godly obedience is difficult), so there is less chance that he will be “happy.”

Without a vision, people become like those Ephesians 4:14 speaks of: “tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.”

On the other hand, people with a clear picture of who they are in Christ and what they want to accomplish for him, are able to stay on course and weather life’s storms. And they are better able to tell when men are using “cunning and craftiness” to deceive them.

Jesus Christ’s life was guided by his vision, which he got from the Word of God. He proclaimed it by quoting from Isaiah 61:1,2: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” He held on to that vision step by step all the way through to the Cross.

Scripture says that Jesus endured the Cross “for the joy [the vision] set before him” (Heb. 12:2). Part of that joy was knowing that through his sacrifice as *the* Passover Lamb, multitudes of captive, oppressed and blind people would be released from their bonds.

If we, as Christians, are going to be like Christ, then we must have a godly vision for our lives. Christ has given each and every one of us a ministry, a way to serve, just as he did. If we combine the giftings the Lord Jesus has placed in us with a vision of what we want to see ourselves accomplish for him, we will indeed be able to serve well and be a blessing to others, and be truly “happy.”

Think about the vision you have for your life. If you do not feel that you have a clear one, and you are being “tossed back and forth” in your life, why not seek the Lord’s vision. He wants you to clearly see where you are going with him.

We are on the path with you, so please share with us what ever you like, and let us know what we can do for you. You might want to go to our website to refresh your memory as to the mission and vision statements that guide us.

Let us close by saying thanks so much for all the prayers and support that you give to this ministry. Thanks to you we are growing and moving forward day by day.

In His Love,

John & Jenivee, Mark & Karen Anne 

Wanted: “Narrow Minded” People

Will and Ariel Durant wrote the following of the Apostle Paul: “He was powerful in action because he was narrow in thought.” That is very true in marketing and being “narrow minded” (i.e. “focused”) is how Jeff Blackburn has successfully been marketing our book, *One God & One Lord*.

His actions have been powerful because he has focused mainly on that one book. He has gotten on the Internet and sent information about it to organizations and people who he thought might be interested.

As a result, we now have copies circulating in new places like Israel, Scotland, Belgium, Wales, Australia, Canada, the Ukraine, Russia, and many places in the United States.

CES has many books and tapes that have really helped people, but our advertising budget is very limited. As a result, many people simply do not know about us and what we have to offer.

If the Lord is putting a specific subject on your heart and tugging at you to help get the word out about *Don’t Blame God!*, *The Death Penalty, Is There Death After Life?*, *Sex and Scripture* or any of our other materials, please let us know. Surely, there are many people who hunger for the truth set forth in these works. We will help you get started and support you in any way we can.


One way you can reach hungry people inexpensively is to donate a set of our printed materials to your local library. Most libraries are open to donations, and if the books are checked out with enough frequency they continue to be made available.

Another way is to donate our materials to local prisons. They have certain rules concerning what is allowable that you will need to find out.

Please contact us at the Home Office to receive a 20% discount on materials you donate to a prison or local library.

Special Offer on 2001 Contender Subscriptions Extended

You can still get *The Contender* for the remainder of this year at a reduced subscription rate of \$10/year (normally \$15) because the next two issues contain important contributions to the process of transforming our ministry from merely a provider of quality Christian teaching materials to a full-service Christian organization. Specifically there will be an important correction of one of our most basic teachings: the Jan/Feb 1990 bimonthly tape titled “The Christian Family: A Laboratory of Love.”

First, we back away from the inference that the marriage relationship can be used as the basis to make conclusions about other relationships in the Body of Christ, especially those involving some kind of authority and submission. Secondly, we assert the husband’s accountability as “head” for godly, leadership of his wife and family, something that the original teaching did not emphasize enough. 

Believers' Directory Questionnaire Up On The Website

We are happy to announce that we have finally posted the application on our website that will enable us to start building a Believer’s Directory. This information base will include all relevant information about believers' personal lives, skills, interests, etc. Log on at www.christianeducational.org/signupBD2.htm. The purpose of this directory is to encourage the CES community of believers to connect with each other in a multi-dimensional way. This data base would be managed by the Home Office, and be made available in printed and electronic form to members of the CES Community who have chosen to be listed in the directory. Every effort will be made to protect the privacy of those who participate.

The Directory will make possible more personal connection between members of the CES community for the purpose of networking with each other more effectively for mutual benefit and blessing. For instance, you could hook up with other believers of like interests or those in your line of work. The Directory will also enable the CES Home Office to facilitate such communication and networking between believers. It will also better enable the CES Leadership Team to systematically harness the energies and talents of willing people and empower them for works of service in the Body of Christ

As we continue to grow, we will need more and more kinds of services performed: If we have a database that enables us to begin accumulating the necessary information, believers with skills and talents can let us know they are available, whether to donate their services or to hire them out. Believers with businesses will be able to buy ads in the printed directory if they want to

advertise their services. We will let you know about prices as we get closer to the actual printing date.

The directory will be updated annually in printed form, monthly in electronic form.

We strongly encourage you to visit our website soon, fill out the questionnaire and submit it as soon as possible.



At Last! A Retreat for Married Couples!

For several years now, many couples have requested an event specifically designed to enrich their marriages. So we are happy to announce the first ever *CES Couple's Retreat* to be held in February 2002. So start making plans to attend what we are praying will be a memorable and life-changing event. We hope to announce the exact date and location in the next *Sower*.

We are looking for couples to work with us in the planning and preparation stage who would later be able to coordinate such a weekend themselves. Let us know if the Lord is calling you to this.

However, for the role of teachers/facilitators, we prefer that the couples not recommend themselves, but we want to follow the biblical standard set forth in Acts 6 in the selection of the seven men to oversee the distribution to the widows ("full of wisdom and holy spirit, of honest report," etc.). Therefore, we request that you recommend couples of your acquaintance whose marriage has produced much spiritual fruit and whose marriage is an inspiration. These are some suggested guidelines or possible standards for your recommendations.

The couple should be married for at least 15 years. Research shows that many couples break up between 10 and 15 years of marriage, so we want to know that they have crossed this threshold.


Each individual in the marriage should demonstrate a mature Christian walk and commitment to God's Word.

Generally and consistently, their marriage should be an inspiration to others, a witness of Christian love, forgiveness, and genuinely sweet fellowship and joy.

It should be evident that their marriage has been a catalyst for their personal growth, and that they have demonstrated evident breakthroughs in the development of their individual characters as a direct result of their commitment to love one another.

Their relationship has been tested and tried, and they are comfortable talking candidly and specifically about the struggles in their relationship in order to benefit other couples.

They have been in a mentoring relationship with another couple within the past two years in which they have endeavored to encourage that couple and help them through some problem.

If you know of couples that fit this description, please let us know and we will contact them to see if they would like to participate in this marriage enrichment ministry. within the CES community. 

“Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.” 1 Peter 3:8 (NIV)

Special Leadership Team Meeting (LTM) September 21-24 in Indianapolis

Ratification of a Reforming Document or “Constitution” Planned

This is going to be a special fellowship, and one unique in the history of CES. It will start on a Thursday evening at 7:30 pm, 9/21 and end at noon on Sunday 9/24.

In 1998 and 1999 we held a Leadership Conference and made it open to anyone and everyone who was interested in the topic of Christian Leadership. These conferences addressed general leadership principles, especially in regard to the need for true Christian character, an issue we felt was foundational to true Christian servant-leadership.

Having laid this foundation, in 2000 we took a different tack, inviting people to participate who had an interest in being an integral part of the growth of Christian Educational Services. Over 100 people (including a gaggle of teens) showed up and participated in brainstorming sessions and were given insight into the original identity of CES as only a provider of materials. We then compared our experience to the experience of the early Church as recorded in Acts, which had growing pains that first evidenced themselves as neglect of people’s needs. Committees were established to begin the process of decentralizing the work of the ministry and involving more and more people.

This year we will continue further on this tack, encouraging attendance for those who have participated in the interim committees or those who are involved in the leadership of an existing fellowship or church that desires to affiliate with CES. We would love for every fellowship that is connected with us in any way to be represented at the LTM so that we can get the best possible input.

We are requesting that those who are neither serving on a committee nor involved in the leadership of an existing fellowship write us and explain why they want to participate in the 2001 Leadership Team Meeting. We want everyone who feels called to be a part of the CES Leadership Team to participate in the LTM, but this year we will only allow those who have pre-registered to attend, and no registrations will be allowed after September 2.

The agenda for this gathering is to review and ratify a reforming document, or “constitution,” that establishes a new order for CES and hopefully structures it for coming generations. This will include the empowerment of committees to take charge of various aspects of the work of the ministry.

This document will be drafted by the CES Corporate Structure Committee in cooperation with other interested parties, including the present CES Board of Directors. This document will incorporate all input from all the interim committees, and will be sent out to all those who have registered as LTM participants by September 2. On that date, the document will be sent out to all participants, who have 3 weeks to review it and prepare to discuss it together at the LTM.

In the interest of facilitating discussion and eliminating down time, we are going to ask that participants eat together in the hotel during the meetings. The cost will be included in the registration fee. We are not planning to have any children's activities or special activities for teens at this event.

TEENS: You are welcome and encouraged to come to the LTM, but you will be expected to participate in the adult discussions much of the time. You will have some time for your own activities, but how much we don't know at this point.

Arts & Music Committee Update

Debora Paules, Chairperson

At the Leadership Conference last September, the Arts & Music Committee met to discuss what the top priorities for the coming year should be. The two projects that seemed to be most important were:

- 1). An original praise & worship CD and tape, (with accompanying songbook) that could be used in home fellowships and churches. The songs then could also be sung at the larger conferences, allowing for more familiarity with the praise & worship and therefore encouraging greater involvement and deeper worship.
- 2). The availability for artists, musicians, and writers to sell their work through the CES bookstore.

The praise & worship CD is in the works, but it is the second project that I am highlighting in this article. We would like to begin making available to the Body original and inspiring music, artwork, and literature through the bookstore. There are four main criteria for inclusion in the bookstore. The work must be:

- Of an inspirational nature
- Original
- Of a professional quality
- Reasonably priced
- Complementary to the beliefs and interests of CES

If you would like to explore the possibility of your work being included in this new venture, please contact **Debora Paules** at (704) 814-9594 or psalm40@webkorner.com.

We also want to encourage other giftings and talents as well, and so we are opening "The Bloom Room" at the San Jose, CA Women's Conference November 9-11, 2001. To explain, the theme for the first Women's Conference was *Bloom Where You're Planted*. Many women (and men) have wonderful talents (or "blooms") that would be a blessing to share with the Body. "The Bloom Room" will have tables where you can display and sell your arts, crafts or anything else as long as it's original, which is the only criterion. It can be anything from delicious cookies to beautiful stitchery, handpainted pottery, or whatever it is that you "bloom" in. Please contact **Debora Paules** if this is something you would like to participate in and remember, this is not just for women! We would like to make a "Bloom Room" available at all CES conferences, if there is real interest.

As a final note to all you musicians out there, we are actively seeking original praise and worship songs for our first CD. Please contact either **Debora Paules** or **Eddie DeBruhl**. Eddie may be contacted at (828) 658-3333 or songmeister@mindspring.com.

Women's Conference Report and a Word About Counseling

Laura Stone, Chairperson, Counseling Committee

God bless you all. It was a great privilege to take part in the Women's Conference in Charlotte, a terrific event that powerfully demonstrated Galatians 3:28— "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Karen Anne Graeser and **Sue Carlson** both did an outstanding job of showing how the scriptures had been watered down or altered to satisfy the cultural bias of men translating the Word – a trick of the Adversary to discredit half of the available workforce for the Lord!

Women being delivered of difficult pasts, pragmatic application of the Word to daily life, and the birthing of ministries were just some of the dynamic benefits of the weekend, which was filled with sweet fellowship, true healing, much laughter and great joy in service. Many women courageously stepped up to the plate, or out of the boat, as it were, to serve each other.

I encourage you, my fellow laborers to seek counseling for difficult issues you face. But remember, that not all counselors are equally gifted or sensitive, and there are people who have had bad experiences with counseling and given up. Our family tried several counselors before we found one compatible with our needs.

I think it is very important to seek out a Christian counselor. Ask a friend or call Focus On The Family ministries in Colorado Springs. They maintain a list of affiliated counselors all over the country. Another option would be to call The American Association of Christian Counselors. Be a wise consumer and don't give up if you don't find a suitable person on the first try.

God bless you, and thanks to all the dear women who came to Charlotte and made it such a wonderful conference!

The tapes for the Women's Conference are still available and moving fast, so order your copy today for only \$25 plus s & h.

More Women's Conference Feedback:

INSPIRATION TO WRITE

Ellen Crean Larchmont, NY

Without much enthusiasm, I made arrangements to attend the Women's Conference in Charlotte, NC. It was simply a case of knowing I was "supposed" to be there, so I just went.

The work that was done in me there is not outwardly dramatic at all, but it is of great importance. It was not one particular word or teaching that made the difference, but the entire package of music, sharing, and, most of all, the respect that CES shows to our individuality.

I write all the time. I edit and produce for a living. I am an advocate for keeping a journal and for working things out with the written word, whether it is a letter to God or just scribbling down some scattered thoughts to help in reaching a cohesive conclusion.

But the sheer pleasure of story-telling and creative writing stopped for me about 25 years ago when my father died. Only in the last few weeks since the Women's Conference have I picked up

an old manuscript that I wrote long ago and, seeing possibilities in it, began to pick at it and dip a toe back into writing a story again.

It all came together during the weekend when Karen Anne told us about Jenivee's cookie business and then showed us her own beautiful painting. She spoke about our creativity and how very important it is for us to act on our inspirations. And she said that next year, at the Women's Conference, she would love to have a room in which we could display these things, to show what God had worked in us to produce.

I want my book in that room. Even more, I want three or four of my books in that room. Oh, but there is even more than that. I want to be so successful with these loving books, directed to women, that I have enough money to buy a house next to the water here in my community. And I want that house to be a haven for God's people, for those who are brokenhearted and those who ache with need.

I want to have a couple of bedrooms that are full of sun and the scent of the sea, and where those weary lovely souls can drift off to peaceful sleep with the sound of the waves in their ears.

I want the kitchen to be cozy, with a sturdy round wooden table where people can sit for hours, pour out their hearts, laugh and cry, and know that they are not alone.

I want a den with puffy chairs and couches and a fireplace where people can flop down and put their feet all over everything and feel so much at home that they never want to leave.

I want more than a house of healing. I want to write my heart out to the point where money is *no object* when it comes to bringing Jesus to places where there is despair, where there are dirt floors and believers with empty stomachs. I cannot imagine a more joyful way to live.

I have resolved to do this, and I have asked God to prepare my heart with humility. It is helpful that I have never been someone whose head is turned by material wealth, because I plan to have it only long enough to give it as He directs.



Another “Bloomin” Women’s Conference for 2001!

Due to the overwhelmingly positive response we had to the first women's conference in March, we have scheduled a second one for the weekend of November 9-11 in San Jose, California. We will begin this conference at 10:00 Friday morning due to requests for additional time. As an added attraction, we will have a “Bloom Room” where individuals can rent a table and display and/or sell their own creative and original work. Questions concerning the “Bloom Room” should be directed to **Debora Paules** at (704) 814-9594. We are pleased to be able to provide this special opportunity for women to network and fellowship. Additional details on the conference will be available in the next *Sower*

The First Ever Men's Conference!

Men (and boys 16 and up)! Want to participate in an awesome time of fellowship with just guys? Well, we will have that opportunity October 26-28 at the South Mountain Christian Camp in Bostic NC.

What a great fellowship this will be as we grow in God's Word, do some team-building exercises on a ropes course, and explore what true biblical manhood is all about.

This event will begin on Thursday night, and end before lunch on Sunday. Make plans now to come! More details will follow in the next issue of *The Sower*. Bostic is located 90 minutes northwest of Charlotte, which would be the easiest destination to fly into. We will help coordinate travel to and from the camp, but we will not be able to guarantee transportation

Calendar Corner

<p>June 15-17 Regional Conference Indianapolis, IN</p>	<p>October 26-28 First Ever CES Men's Conference Bostic, NC</p>
<p>June 30-July 6 Youth Camp (aka Teen Camp) Camp Hope, NC</p>	<p>November 9-11 Women's Conference San Jose, CA</p>
<p>July 24-July 28 Family Camp Rome City, IN</p>	<p>—2002—</p>
<p>September 22-24 Leadership Team Meeting Indianapolis, IN</p>	<p>June 8-22, 2002 Bible Lands Tour (Political situation permitting)</p>
	<p>July 21-26, 2002 Family Camp Pokagon State Park Northern IN</p>



Together We Can!
A Word to All

Jeff Blackburn, Home Office

Greetings, my brothers & sisters in Christ. Please bear with me as I share with you what is on my heart.

For some time now I have been thinking and praying about the CES Partnership Program. You see, I handle every check that comes in, and it is awesome to see your names and the notes you send. I pray for each of you, and I find myself feeling very humbled and very thankful for your hearts to give. You are not just a "donation," you are my brothers and my sisters in Christ, working hard for your money and sharing it with us so we can share God's Word with those around the globe who want to know it. Thank you!

As I have been praying for God to show everyone on our mailing list the importance of the Partnership Program, it has continued to come up for me that I need to be the one to tell you this, but I kept saying to myself, "I am not a writer, let Mark, John or John, do it." Yet, I am the one who manages the Partnership Program, so it makes sense that God would keep bugging me to share the heart and need of the program with you.

As you may know, I am the new "kid" on the block here at the Home Office. Having just come out of a career in the United States Air Force, I never knew how spoiled I was! We had the best of everything. If we needed something to get the mission done, we got it! No praying, no waiting on the Lord, we got it, right then and there.

I had no idea when I came to work for CES that only 10% of our mailing list are Partners and 5% are contributors, which means we operate month to month, week to week, and sometimes even day to day. Somehow I thought there was a huge inflow of money, and that we were taking key truths all over the world without thinking about how to pay the next bill, or if there would be enough left over to pay salaries.

I was wrong. At present, our Partnership income covers only about 40% of our regular operating expenses. With amazing regularity, our Heavenly Father inspires other saints to give when we need it to make up the difference. When we say that He is our sufficiency, we mean it and believe it. But the truth is, right now, we have little or nothing left to finance the many new materials, activities, and ideas we have in mind to reach more people with God's Word. We are just waiting on the Lord in thanksgiving for His timely provision.

Nevertheless, by the grace of God, we are seeing our materials travel all over the globe and set people free. God has been so faithful and so have many people like you, who hear Him tug at your heart to join or partner with us. You may not know that your phone call to pledge an amount by credit card, or your check, came in at just the right time.


I wanted to take a little space here to say *Thank you* so much to those of you who give, for your heart to give and the love that motivates you. Even now, tears well up in me as I thank

God for you. There is so much work to be done for the Lord, so many need to hear the truths we have to share.

If you are not a partner or contributor, I encourage you to pray about becoming one, and stand with us in the work of the Lord. I love the heart of God's Word in I Corinthians 9:7: "Each man [or woman] should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." No matter how small a monthly gift you can give, it means a lot to us and to the work we are doing for the Lord.

I can tell you firsthand that we are working hard and honestly before the Lord to steward every penny that we receive! Please prayerfully consider becoming a partner with us. I know God and our Lord Jesus will bless you back in their very personal way, both now and for all eternity.

Just the other day we made a contact that will get our material into China. We hear from people daily from India, Africa, the Philippines, Europe and right here in the USA who want to learn more—folks who are tired of tradition and want truth! There is a lot of work to be done, and your giving is making that possible.

I love you; thanks for listening. I am sure looking forward to seeing you face to face this year at a CES camp or conference. 

Fellowship Forum

News and views from fellowships near and far. Do you have something to share about your fellowship and what's helping it grow and be a blessing? Pass it on so all can learn and be blessed!

PRAYER CHANGES LIVES

Charlotte Dugan
Crossroads Fellowship
Mobile, AL

Greetings from the deep south, Mobile, Alabama!

Prayer is what's hot here lately. We are rediscovering the joy and the *results* of handing our lives, our fears, our desires, our needs, and our praise over to God. He is answering prayer so specifically that it is intensely increasing our faith in His ability.

From the healing of bodies to the healing of hearts to the purchase of a pair of desired boots, God is actively involved with us when we *ask* Him to be. It's been a tough year in some respects, but our God is faithful to us, and has delivered us in *every* instance.

One example of answered prayer: On a Monday, one woman with breast cancer was told her white blood count was critically low, a 1.3. In order to continue with treatment, it would need to be at least a 3.0 (which was her *best*, usually during chemo) out of a possible 10.

That Saturday we held 24 hours of prayer. The Monday after that she went in to see if her count was good enough. She was told she had a whopping 9.3!! It had never been that high, especially in a mere week's time.

We encourage you to institute or *reinstitute* prayer in your lives. Maybe a 24-hour period or regular 'prayer hours' daily. Then you can join us in our weekly fellowship

CHOOSE LIFE

Kathy Lunardini
Richland, MI

Someone recently asked me, "Are you a sinner wrestling to love God, or do you love God and wrestle with sin?"

I have loved God since I was a child, but I still wrestle with certain sins in my life. I thought that by now I would have a handle on it! There are some sins I have overcome and they do not even tempt me any longer, but there are a few that keep me seeking the Lord's help and forgiveness.

How many of us have thought: "If I were Jesus, I would be perfect and therefore could make the right choices!?" Or if there were no sin in the world, I wouldn't sin either.

At our most recent youth group meeting, I shared that there must be more to life than just the mundane daily routine. According to Genesis 2:9, "The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (NIV).

God gave Adam and Eve the tree of life. They were perfect and yet they still chose to seek after the forbidden tree. They had everything they needed in the Garden of Eden, including a great relationship with God. Yet it wasn't enough. They wanted more. They had to try the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God set up the garden as a haven, a win/win situation for mankind, yet the first two folks chose to wander. I personally don't think I would have fared much better than Adam and Eve. God has given us today the tree of life, so to speak. We can still choose to partake, eat of growth, fruit, life, and beauty, but how often do we settle for less? Perhaps a good question would be: What would bring life into this situation? What would foster hope in others? That is choosing life!

We can choose life by sowing seeds of faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 13:13.) We can also do as Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, think on such things."

Sow truth, joy, hope, and love and watch the fruit come forth. I think you will experience a new found-hope, joy, peace, and excitement for living life to the fullest!

As a part of choosing life, our youth group has decided to collect donated flowers and plant them in low income neighborhoods as a way of sowing hope and love to others. We'll keep you posted!



SPIRITUAL QUAKE ON THE WEST COAST

Dan Gallagher
Sacramento, CA

The saints of Northern California send greetings and blessings to you all in the name above all names, Jesus Christ our risen Lord and Savior.

It was less than one year ago that my wife and I had a life-changing experience when we went on the CES Bible Lands Tour with John and Jenivee Schoenheit and 37 other saints.

During the previous four to five years my wife had been searching our town for the right church. I reluctantly followed behind, but it seemed that I could easily find doctrinal errors in the churches we attended. Unlike those in mainstream Christianity, we did not believe that Jesus was God, and thus found it difficult and unsettling to participate in a church that did not hold the core beliefs we believe to be essential.

When we returned home from Israel, we decided to start our own home church. Our fellowship of four, my wife, my two daughters and I did not have a real glorious start, but we had a lot of heart and we believed we had a unique message and function to fill in the Body of Christ.

Shortly after we began, God opened doors to connect us with a few saints who were also trying to do the same thing in other cities. Even though we were spread out for about a hundred miles, we knew there would be great benefits for us to get together as a larger group. Our first gathering was an afternoon of teaching and prayer followed by a barbeque. The excitement was like electricity in the air as about twenty likeminded believers fellowshiped around God's Word.

Since then we have become knit together with a bond of love, and we continue to meet about once a month as a larger body. Each of us continues to run our own home church, and the larger gathering charges everyone as we see the growth in each other and our churches.

It has been a wonderful opportunity for each individual to utilize his gift in the context of a larger body, and our pulling together has enabled us to combine resources in order to bring in guest speakers or meet special needs. I've listed below some keys that have contributed to the success of our home churches.

Be committed. Decide to do whatever it takes to make it happen. Determine to see it through no matter what, or otherwise the Adversary will come and steal it away.

Be consistent. Set times for your fellowship and keep them even if you're the only one who shows up. There were plenty of times when it was just my wife and I. You never know when that new person will come, so be consistent in your schedule.

Witness much. I'm not talking about just quoting Scripture to people. I'm talking about making friends and showing them the love of God. You have to show them something they want, and what they really want is love. The world is craving to know the grace of God. Once they see your love, then invite them to your home. Remember you can't expect growth if you're not opening your mouth to sow some seeds.

Pray often. My wife and I pray every morning for God to open a door that day where we can speak into someone's life. We also pray for the Lord to enlarge our territory. Opportunity abounds, but is only noticed by those looking for it.

Connect with other saints even if that means driving to other cities to meet. You may not be hot all the time, but by seeing other saints, their heat will warm you when you're cool.

Don't get discouraged if you don't see results. Always remember that you are only responsible to do your part. You may be sowing or watering while another reaps.

Stay flexible. I've found that the only rule is that there are no rules. Let the Lord do his part. Many times I've planned a teaching only to change at the last minute and have a healing service, evening of prayer or something spontaneous as God leads.

The West Coast is standing on top of a spiritual faultline that is ready to quake. The field of mankind is fertile and ready to yield her crops. Truly, the harvest is plenteous. We fervently pray that the Lord will send us more laborers for the harvest.

May God bless you as you diligently pursue the work of the Lord.

You can e-mail Dan and Lori at liltrout@rcsis.com 

Family News

Do you have something to share with the CES family of believers that would edify, encourage and inspire? If so, send it to the Home Office and we will publish it on these pages. Unless you tell us otherwise, we will print your name, city and state. Readers, if you want to contact anyone of these folks, you can do so by going through the Home Office. We reserve the right to edit for readability and length.

Israel Family Reports On Their Many Blessings Since the Fire

Dear beloved Saints:

We have been through quite a bittersweet experience the past few months since a fire destroyed all that we had worked for, known and loved, weaved together by many treasured memories.

In the midst of this loss, we have been grateful for many blessings. God protected us from the trauma of running out of a burning house and being forced to watch our things burn or even yet having to go through things that were just ruined. There was nothing left but ashes and smoke when we got there. My children will have no emotional scars or terrifying memories of this experience. We thank God.

We are so humbled and grateful for all of you who have been praying for us. We feel a sense of protection and grace and it is because of your prayers that we are able to move on. We want to say thank you to all of you who blessed our family with your letters and cards, clothes, furniture, books, special things for the children, household goods, financial donations and all your concern and love.

Truly, we have seen our God's protection, provision, compassion and love through the Body of Christ in your service to Him.

We are getting settled in the house we are living in. God is restoring the way we live and function together. We are allowing Him to restore and strengthen our family, our resources, and our abilities so we can grow in wisdom and service.

Nothing is the same, but the most important realities endure. The truth of God, the values we live by, our love for each other, our service to Him, and God's perfect Love that never fails.

Romans 8:35-39

May the Lord bless you in meaningful ways for all you have done on our behalf.

With thanksgiving and love,

The Israel Family

Steve, Beth, Jessica, Aaron, Victoria, Daniel, and the new baby forthcoming.

“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’” Matthew 25:40 (NIV)

Lydia Banton
Columbus, MO

Dear Sower,

WOW! I just started in on the Jan/Feb 2001 tape on Transformation by Mark Graeser and it basically documents what happened in my life starting with God removing me from the fellowship of The Way International (I did not want to go, so God did for me what I could not do for myself!).

My life was such a disaster!! I then met people who were able to get me out of stage one (“unconsciousness”) by showing me what my problems were and helping me to see the root of those problems, then practical ways to CHANGE MY BEHAVIOR!!!! It was hard for me to do at first because I had so much fear of listening to anyone "outside." But I had that beautiful gift of desperation, which helped me to reach out for help. One of the first things I saw that was taking the PFAL class did not change those destructive behavior patterns--I needed specific help of others who had been where I was and knew how God could help me out. Yes, it was painful (even had some suicidal thoughts sometimes). But I am so much happier now! I have also been freed from a horrible physical addiction to food that was killing me!

Now I am so glad to see all the literature you all put out and am excited about getting back into studying the Word!

Here I am 4 years later finally able to look at my 15 years involvement and have anger without harboring deep resentments (rethinking all my anger and taking actions to get even--those really do me in!). I am responsible for my behavior and telling others how they can find that for themselves, and resentments only block God from working in my life!

From Virgil and Carolyn Ramey
Pickney, MI

Dear Sower,

Just a note to say we love you. We are pleased and proud you are adjusting and adapting to move forward. We think having more direction from you will be beneficial. We have always respected you for your humility and knowledge and openness on the Word.

Sacramento Conference Feedback

Don Hoercher
Colorado Springs, CO

Dear Sower,

God's richest blessings abound in your lives through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I had the privilege and blessing to go to the CES fellowship weekend in Sacramento, CA. That weekend has had the most impact in my life of any type of fellowship in the last 25 years. From arrival Friday through departure Sunday, I allowed myself to sink to an ungodly low, BUT also rise to a godly high.

Although there were powerful teachings and sharings Friday evening and Saturday day, I allowed myself to sink to an "I'm not worthy" low. I was feeling sorry for myself, feeling so distant from everyone, as I ate my lonely dinner in my room. "I am so alone in life" "I'm not worthy" I thought. I even wrote in my diary a few pages to that affect. When personal prophecy was made available for Saturday afternoon, I talked myself out of it, for a few years ago, with my wife, I had it done. What could have changed? Besides, I'm not worthy.

Fortunately, I had brought the Jan-Feb 2001 issue of *The Sower* and before the Saturday night activities I started reading the article "Newness of Life." My heart and mind started becoming alive to who I am as God's son. I was starting to change my brain cells around. When Mark asked, on Saturday PM, who didn't have the opportunity and would like to get personal prophecy, I still didn't raise my hand. (Boy, was the old bird out trying to cheat me out of getting God's blessings.) Yet, by the time the Saturday activities ended, I was determined to be there Sunday morning and get a personal prophecy. I was "blown away" by God's working in John S., Dottie, and Dan. I was very close to tears (and this from the guy who doesn't shed tears). So much correction, encouragement and strengthening was given to me, and so personal (well, duh!!). I flew through Sunday morning's fellowship. And I am still flying.

I have transcribed my prophecy so I can cross check it with the Word and to have it in front of me at all times. My wife and I have listened to the tape so she can help keep me honest on God's Word for my life. I am working, in my life, those areas where correction was noted and am walking stronger on His Words of encouragement.

I am blessed and privileged to stand with you (CES) in the Body of Christ as we go and "inject truth into the Body of Christ in love."

First Adult Bible Study Camp: A Big Hit With A Small Group!

Matt Johnson, Home Office

May 15 – 20 marked the first ever CES Adult Bible Study Camp, held at South Mountain Christian Camp in Bostic, NC. Although the crowd was small they all came

with more books than a college grad student and a spirit of eagerness. So much so, that we studied until 10:30 on the first night!

The camp was led by none other than John Schoenheit who did a wonderful job of opening up the Word and showing everyone how to truly become “workmen of the Word”. John was even quoted by one of the campers as being a “real joy and inspiration.” Most of the people who came were novice concordance users, and a lot of price tags and dust had to be removed before we started. By the end of the conference, John had done a great job of explaining the tools to us and had begun to fashion us into a group of lean, mean, lexicon reading machines. (Ok maybe not quite to that extreme, but we all came away pretty enlightened).

Michael Keene acted as our liaison for the camp and did an excellent job ensuring that everyone’s needs were met and that all the extracurricular activities went smoothly.

Thanks to everyone who came and made it such a wonderful time of fellowship and learning, I will certainly be at the next Adult Bible Study Camp and hope to see many new faces as well as some old ones. Plus my research tools will show some wear and tear from all the use I will get out of them this year!

Help Others Get Ahead

Agree with each other, love each other,
be deep-spirited friends. Don’t push your way to the front;
don’t sweet-talk your way to the top.
Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead.
Don’t be obsessed with getting your own advantage.
Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

(Philippians 2:2-4
The Message)

International News

Liberato Demol, Sr.
Philippines

Dear Sower,

On the month of February 2001 I cancelled our ministry in Kicharao. I leave the fourteen souls there because I have not enough money to spend for the jeepney fare.

In this present, I continued ministering in Cabadbaran because it is only one mile near our house and it is a walking distance. There were four families I was preaching here. I teach and care them through I am very thankful to God for them.

Please help me to pray that our true God will provide my needs so that I can facilitate in teaching the truth about God while still day.