



THE SOWER

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Doing Our Part – Together

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Dear Royal Family Member,

May the realization that the Awesome Creator of the universe is your all-loving Father flood your heart today. All His infinite resources are focused upon you as if you were His only child.

This is John Lynn, and it is a great privilege for me to write this month's letter to you in *The Sower*. It is only by God's grace and mercy that I do so. How I praise Him for carrying me through a very hard time in my life, for forgiving me, and for restoring me to serve His precious people with a more compassionate heart. I love you very much, I thank you for your prayers for me last year, and I am enthused about standing with you this year as together we reach out with God's love to a dying world.

One of the metaphors employed in the Bible to describe the Christian life is warfare. Yes, it's another day in the War Zone called "life." And another day where we are a war zone. On the battlefield of

our minds, the internal conflict rages between what our old sin nature is telling us by subtle thoughts and what we are “firing back” from our renewed mind ammunition. The first key to victory is paying attention to what we are thinking so as to *recognize* an incoming enemy shell, that is, a thought that contradicts God’s written Word. Then we must choose to grab an appropriate weapon and blast away with it in response so as to take that renegade thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Our chief weapon is the Word of God, which must be stored in our hearts as ready ammunition. I love Hebrews 13:5b and 6: “...because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’” *Because God has said, so we say.* To whom do we say what God has said? First, to ourselves! And then to others.

Last month it was a joy to minister the Word in New York, Florida, and Ohio. I was vividly reminded that it is *people*, people like you and like me, that Christianity is all about. People who are “handicapped” by our inherent sin nature, but who also have limitless spiritual potential in our new nature to be like Jesus Christ, and who can knit our hearts together in a worldwide fellowship community and accomplish the mission set before us. What is that mission? I think several scriptures sum it up:

Luke 4:18b

...to preach good news to the poor. ...to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed.

Acts 26:18

...to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

1 Timothy 2:4

...[for] all men to be saved and come unto a knowledge of the truth.

1 Thessalonians 1:9b and 10a

...[that people] turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.

Colossians 1:28b

...so that we may present every one perfect in Christ.

Yes, these are lofty goals, but we have a “lofty” God and a “lofty” Lord, as in “far above all principalities and powers and every name that is named.” Personally, I think I have underestimated how big God and the Lord Jesus are and what I can do for people if I will really trust them. From now on, I want to live so as to see their magnificent power and goodness like I never have before. How about you?

What is your particular function in the Body of Christ? That is, what spiritual activity fulfills you at the core of your being? Don’t you love doing something you are good at and that helps someone else? Biblical analogies between the human body and the Body of Christ show us that in order to discover and activate one’s unique ministry (which each Christian has), he or she must be in sustained connection with other Body parts.

I am very excited about the steadily growing CES Fellowship Community. More and more believers are deciding that CES is their ministry, and refusing to live any longer without being part of something bigger than themselves. In more and more cities, people are getting together and committing to build a local *ekklesia*, a community in which the Lord Jesus can function via apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Might you have one of these giftings or callings? Someone does.

Mark Graeser, John Schoenheit, Dan Gallagher (the CES Fellowship Community Coordinator), and I are eager to come visit your area and do whatever we can to help you move forward together. The possibilities are wide open! During a discussion at one of the fellowships in New York last month, the

consensus was that the “product” CES has is unparalleled, and the need is how to “market” it. Well, the only way I see to do that is *together*, that is, with each of us **doing our own part** as we are led by the Lord Jesus.

CES is sponsoring quite a variety of events this year designed to enrich your life no matter what “category” you are in – male, female, married, single, adult, youth. I am looking forward to being at a number of those, as well as traveling around the USA to bless and be blessed by God’s wonderful people-like you.

The Graesers, Schoenheits, Theisens, the CES staff (Dottie, Jeff, Lydia, Matt, and Robin), and our brilliant webmaster Chris, join me in extending much love and thankfulness to you. As we work heartily unto the Lord, we hold you in our minds as the ones for whom we labor, and we thank you for standing for the truth and for being a believer.

Your brother in Christ,

John

March Tape of the Month



This tape contains some of the discussion and sharing at the Leadership Team Meeting in September 2001 concerning the issue of the expansion of the CES Board of Directors. The process of consensus that was employed to determine who the new Board members would be is also discussed. Then Gary and Karen Theisen share their hearts to all the CES community. This tape is a must for all who want to better understand the heart of CES and its vision for the future.

The cost is only \$4.00 plus S&H.
Order online at www.christianeducational.org

April Tape of the Month

One year after John Schoenheit's bimonthly tape on ordination, CES held an ordination ceremony at the Leadership Team Meeting in September 2001. This tape captures the heart of Christian leadership, both doctrinally and practically, in the expounding of the Word of God by John Schoenheit, who officiated, and in the hearts of those ordained, who shared what ordination meant to them and then declared their commitment to the body of believers. Prophetic words were spoken over the individuals

being ordained in accordance with Scripture. This tape clearly demonstrates what was explained in the September/October 2000 bimonthly tape, that ordination involves public recognition and confirmation of those who are already fully functioning in their ministries.

Volunteers Still Needed!

The **Network of Affiliated Fellowships Committee**, chaired by Dan Gallagher, has pretty much done its work. Many of their ideas have been integrated into a master plan for the establishment of the CES Fellowship Community, which will include CES Fellowships, Affiliated Fellowships, and Associated Fellowships. Dan outlined this vision in the last issue of *The Sower*. The committee will continue to assist us in thinking through the structure of the Fellowship Community, and do troubleshooting as we grow.

The **Technology Committee** is still basically just Chris Duffy, our Webmaster. Surely some of you techno-believers out there could work with Chris to help get our ministry better utilizing modern technology to further the Gospel.

The **Children's Ministry Committee** needs volunteers to help produce children's literature based upon CES teachings, to help develop children's fellowship materials to support local fellowships, and to provide support for Children's fellowship at CES events.

Other Volunteers Still Needed!

Besides serving on a committee, there are many ways that you can help with the work of the ministry, if you are so inclined.

- We need a few more of you prayer warriors to step up and help with the **E-mail Prayer Chain**. All you have to be is mildly computer literate, and have a burning desire to share the burden to pray with the other members of the chain.
- We need people who are adept at getting the best **travel** deals on the internet, because that saves us a lot of time. You don't have to be a travel agent for what we need.
- We need someone who knows how to use **Microsoft NetMeeting** to help us facilitate communications from the Home Office.
- We need people to help **transcribe tapes**, and **editors** to edit these transcriptions into book and booklet form.

IRS Guidelines as to what is a “Church”

We know from the Bible that "the Church" is literally those who are "called out" to be a part of the Body of Christ. A church is a called out group of believers who can meet in buildings or homes, have elders, and are like a family. Healthy church families, like cells, are the building blocks of the Body of Christ.

What does the government think a church is? Well, the following list of characteristics comprises the definition of a church according to the IRS website. This list was first made public in 1978. As they say, the list is not exclusive - "any other facts and circumstances that may bear upon the organization's claim for church status must also be considered."

They also recognize that "an organization need not have all of the characteristics (few churches do, and newly-created churches cannot be expected to); thus, no single characteristic is controlling."

Some of the characteristics may be given more weight than others in a given case.

1. a distinct legal existence
2. a recognized creed and form of worship
3. a definite and distinct ecclesiastical government
4. a formal code of doctrine and discipline
5. a distinct religious history
6. a membership not associated with any other church or denomination
7. a complete organization of ordained ministers ministering to their congregations
8. ordained ministers selected after completing prescribed courses of study
9. a literature of its own
10. established places of worship
11. regular congregations
12. regular religious services
13. Sunday schools for religious instruction of the young
14. schools for the preparation of its ministers

Based upon this list, it is apparent that CES is becoming a church, although we are not yet doing all of the above. We are consulting with our attorney about how to make the transition in our Articles and By-laws to reflect this change. We will be keeping you informed as we understand more about the legal and financial implications of this change.

We argued in our out-of-print booklet *Speaking the Truth in Love: The Purposes of Christian Educational Services* that we were *not* a church because we had no "definite and distinct ecclesiastical government." As the CES Fellowship Community develops, we will be figuring out how we want to govern ourselves as a church in a way that honors each local church but unites us all in a common effort. Other denominations have solved these problems and we will be studying their organizational structures to see what fits for us.

Schoenheit Recommends...

New bookstore item - a four volume Interlinear Bible, Hebrew, Greek, and English, by J.P. Green, Sr. published by Sovereign Grace Publishers. Coded with Strong's Concordance Numbers.

John Schoenheit recommends this set for anyone attending the Teens & 20's Camp.

Available for only \$100.00 plus S&H. We save you \$60.00 off the retail price. See page 5 of the enclosed price list. To order online, go to the "Books by Others" link.



<p>April 12 <i>Western Regional Weekend</i> Santa Clara, CA</p>	<p>May 1-5 <i>Singles Conference</i> Washington, D.C.</p>	<p>May 15-24 Mark G. & John L. to the Philippines (pending finances)</p>	<p>June 29-July 5 <i>Teens & 20s Camp</i> Camp Hope Waynesville, NC</p>
<p>July 21-26 <i>The CES FAMILY Camp</i> Pokagon State Park, IN</p>	<p>August 20-25 Backpacking on the Appalachian Trail with Mark G. and John S.</p>	<p>September 19-22 <i>Leadership Team Meeting & Leadership Conference</i> Indianapolis, IN</p>	<p>October 11-13 <i>Men's Conference*</i></p>
<p>October 25-27 <i>Eastern Regional Weekend*</i></p>	<p>November 1-3 Women's Conference Santa Clara, CA</p>	<p>*Location to be announced</p>	

Calendar Corner 2002

Prison Outreach



God Bless you all,

We, Richard and Lynn Van Den Berghe, have accepted the responsibility of coordinating Prison Outreach for CES. It is a privilege for us to be able to serve in this way.

Prison Outreach has been an area of ministry that doesn't seem to have the greatest success rate. Lynn and I believe that "the fields are white for harvest" and are looking forward to making an impact for our Lord. We currently have 55 names on our mailing list of inmates from New York to California to Alaska. These are men and women who are interested in learning more about our God and our Lord.

We want to attempt to get to the root cause of what brought each individual offender to their current life and work on holding them accountable and help them overcome that root. An easy task? NO. A task that has merits and promise? YES! It is our belief that a vision with hope is the first place to start.

In our endeavor to accomplish this we hope to involve the families of the inmates and the victims, whether people or corporations. The cycle of accountability is huge and with CES and your help, we are ready to fight the good fight.

Here's what we have in mind.

We are looking for people to partner up with one or two inmates. Those with fellowships could make it a team project. We would ask that you write to a select number of inmates, via the CES office, and help build a teaching and communication dialogue with them. Eventually reaching out to their families and victims, when appropriate. Of course these are just ideas as to how far the outreach could go. The current need is for inmates themselves.

CES currently sends books and tapes to inmates, as funds are available. Our request is to have support sent to CES designated for prison outreach only. If you are a current partner with CES, we would ask that you don't change the way you currently give, but consider adding five or ten bucks to your current support, if it is available. Now please don't be limited by my meager suggestion.

If you are new to this and would like to give a one-time gift or if you prefer to give on a monthly bases, please forward a check designated for prison outreach. Also, CES takes all major credit cards.

We are hoping you will help us make a mark with this area of ministering.

In His grace,

Richard and Lynn

The following is an excerpt from a letter from a 27-year-old woman named Heather. I hope it will give you an idea of the need out there!

"Thank you for your letter. I am very interested in receiving more materials. I was very enthused with what I received. Unfortunately, a few of the books, *The Sower* and *The Contender* have disappeared. I believe that a few of the women took them home with them. One of them, *Don't Blame God!* was one I had not even read.

As I sat in my cell one day, reading my Bible, I had a daily devotional book. That particular day's Bible scripture to read was Psalm 103:6-18. I found it and laid the Bible down to get better situated. When I picked it back up I began to read Psalm 102:1. I just kept reading. I got to verse 20 and I read 'To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those appointed to death...'

I stopped cold! You see a lot of times when you are incarcerated, you feel like God cannot hear your prayers. I realized that verse was not speaking about inmates, but about sins that jail us. But it gave me hope. I began to read my Bible all the time.

The only question I have is how to have a meaningful Bible study? Lots of these women just do it to look good. Others are genuine. I feel frustrated because they have this way of viewing things. Example: Matthew 21:22 states, 'And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive.' I believe that it means that if I believe, I will receive something, no matter what it is, if I ask for it in prayer. One girl in particular said that it means that no matter what you ask for you'll get it only if

you deserve it. That we shouldn't take it word for word, literally. Of course I do! He wouldn't have written it that way if he didn't mean it. Who's right?"

If you would like to contact Richard & Lynn, please contact us and we will forward it on.

National Religious Broadcasters Convention

This year the NRB convention was held in Nashville, Tennessee, the hometown of Ralph and Deena Graham. We sent Ralph some CES material and gave him a mission: give our stuff away to anyone you think might be blessed. In the case of the NRB, the person so blessed might have a radio or television audience that would be blessed also by some healthy teaching!

Unfortunately Ralph came down with the Nashville Flu over the weekend, and was only able to be a part of the Expo on Monday. The Expo is the convention hall full of Christian vendors selling their wares to the Christian broadcasters. Among the interesting things that are sold there are companies that will put all our materials on CDROM with full search capability, so anything written about any verse can be viewed at a glance.

Ralph set his sights on the vendors representing Messianic Jewish ministries, and gave them copies of *One God & One Lord*. He found them very open and willing to entertain another viewpoint. We will see what results from Ralph's sowing efforts, and we sure appreciate his willingness to stick his neck out on behalf of the truth of God's Word.

The convention will be held in Nashville again next year (Feb. 8-11), so we will try again and bring in some reinforcements to help Ralph. (Any volunteers?)

It is our goal to eventually have regular television and radio programming that we will attempt to market to stations all over the country, and this convention will be a key to making contacts.

We are also interested in having someone represent us at the Christian Booksellers Convention in Anaheim, CA July 13-18, 2002.

Houston Report

Over the weekend of January 25-27, Mark Graeser met with the saints of Houston and Austin in sunny Texas. Joining him there were Dan Gallagher and Adam and Nancy Berwid from California. On the agenda was to help the saints there build vision for a local fellowship or unified effort that would better meet the spiritual needs of the saints. Mark shared on various topics relating to building community, Dan Gallagher laid out the vision of the CES Fellowship Community, and Nancy Berwid shared about the need for loving and authentic communication between the saints, and having respect for each others boundaries.



“Who Let the Lambs Out?”

by
John Schoenheit

The 2002 CES Adult Bible Study Seminar, which studied the subject, “Who Let the Lambs Out?” was a wonderful success. From February 27 through March 2, twenty-six people from around the USA came to Charlotte, NC, where they were hosted by the CES-affiliated church, Word Alive Ministries. “Southern hospitality” abounded as believers from Word Alive Ministries graciously housed and fed the out-of-town guests. Many seminar participants spoke openly about how well they were treated and how they had been blessed by the local believers.

The focus of the seminar was the Tabernacle of Moses, the temples of Solomon and Ezekiel, and the freedom we enjoy in Christ. Galatians says people (in some biblical parlance, “sheep”), were “prisoners” of the Law, but in Christ we have been set free, “turned loose,” if you will.

Participants used English concordances, Greek and Hebrew concordances, Greek and Hebrew lexicons, Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, and Bible atlases. Some people came with almost no experience using these tools, and started the seminar somewhat intimidated by these massive volumes (the Hebrew concordance, for example, is 1,689 pages). However, by the end of the seminar, the “loose lambs” were romping through these lexical aids, seeing things in the Word of God with their own eyes instead of accepting the word of others that “this is what the Bible says.”

An interesting development in this year’s seminar was the presence of laptop computers, which about 25% of the participants brought. There is no question that a good Bible study software program can make Bible study a lot faster, and even make the study of the Greek and Hebrew text more exacting. We will help anyone interested in Bible study software to find the program right for them.

We of CES firmly believe that the Bible is the Word and will of God, and that being able to see for yourself what it says is very important in each Christian’s life. We were blessed to be able to provide this seminar, and look forward to many others in the future.

CES Launches a Ministry to Couples

Eleven couples took part in a pilot marriage seminar called *One Flesh: A Deeper Experience of Marital Unity and Intimacy* over the weekend of February 14-17 in Hickory Corners, Michigan.

The weekend was a profound experience for all, including the four presenting couples, as we encountered the Lord in the context of encountering each other more intimately. Through a variety of means--exercises, dialogue topics, small groups and poignant music and worship--the couples were brought together to a new level of mutual understanding and appreciation. By Sunday morning, there was a healthy romantic glow around every couple that was nothing short of miraculous.

The weekend began with an exploration of the various temperament and personality types that made each couple unique. Then the following day we examined the personal issues that determine how we relate to anyone, culminating in a “leaving and cleaving” ceremony that engaged each individual in what they needed to leave behind in order to cleave to their spouse.

On Saturday we began to enter into the “couple issues,” and facilitated dialogue between spouses with a variety of handouts and dialogue topics. In particular, many couples found comfort in the

knowledge that disillusionment in marriage is very normal, and every couple must go through a transformation of some sort in order to again experience the joy that they felt in the romance stage of their relationship. Because we serve a God of new life and resurrection, this transformation is readily available to Christian couples who are willing to take an honest look into their hearts and communicate their feelings to one another with love and humility. The weekend provided a safe opportunity to do that, in company with other couples who were equally committed to “speaking the truth in love” to one another.

We plan to offer *One Flesh* to the entire CES community in the coming years, and are excited to see the same kind of deliverance in those weekends that we were allowed to see at this one.

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 us and we may publish it. To contact any one of these folks, contact us and we will forward it on.

(We reserve the right to edit for readability and length, and unless you tell us otherwise, we will print your name, city, and state.)

Dear Sower,

Hi. This is Jessica, Jennifer Mason's daughter. I am ten years old and home schooled. My brother and I have been watching your "Free Indeed" tapes, we love them! Drew (age 8) and I have been doing Bible studies before we home school in the morning.

Thank you so much for what you're doing.

Jessica Mason (10)
Spotsylvania, VA
Dear Sower,

There is a song by a band called Petra, entitled 'The Longing', and while it is not a band I routinely listen to, one particular verse held my attention long after the song on the radio was over; '...and we search with so few finding the difference between truth and lies...'.
Sadly, many people in mainstream churches fall into that verse, and it wore heavy on my heart. It was so good to read 'CES and the Body of Christ: A Dialogue'. So much of what has been in my heart was right there in front of me!

Ellen Pace,
Cortland, NY

'CES and the Body of Christ'

To read this and other articles in their entirety, please visit our website at:
www.christianeducational.org and click on the link "Other Current Articles."

The Mission of Christian Educational Services

To glorify the One True God and the Lord Jesus Christ by providing sound biblical teaching and a spiritually-empowered fellowship community so that all people may be saved, come to a knowledge of the truth, and become established in faithful and fruitful Christian living

Frequently Asked Questions ...

Q. The Nov/Dec 2001 *Sower* reported that Mark made the following comments at the Leadership Team Meeting: “Authentic relationship with Christ is the center of all healthy spiritual life, whether in an individual or a body of believers. Healthy Christianity is not just a matter of getting the right elements involved (teaching, evangelism, prophecy, healing, etc.), it is a matter of getting the right relationship among the elements.”

Are you saying that you are willing to set aside accurate truth for relationships? I believe that the Written Word needs to be what CES is promoting, because it is through the Written Word that we know how to develop our personal relationship with the living Christ. I don't want to see CES swing from one extreme to another. On one side only the Word and on the other side relationships without the Word.

D.H., Colorado

A. Thanks for giving me (Mark) the opportunity to clarify my comments. The issue is not whether the Written Word is indispensable, or the only objective standard for Christian faith and practice. These are givens. The question is whether we are holding the Written Word in the right relationship to the other necessary elements of the faith, most especially a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Have we placed “the Written Word” in a place that Christ himself should be, at the center of the Christian faith?

Several things got me thinking about this, but I will share one here. On our trip to Tanzania and Kenya in 1999, we taught seminars attended by many Christian ministers, only a few of whom had a Bible. The first order of business became sending someone out to find as many Bibles as we could before the seminar began. Then, before we could teach them from Ephesians we had to show them where Ephesians was. These men and women were gamely serving as Christian ministers when they didn't even own a Bible!

From where did they get their knowledge? They got it from their brothers who did have Bibles, who taught them what the Bible said via the preached Word. I realized that in that context if we placed too much emphasis on their responsibility to know and master the Written Word we would be burdening them inappropriately. We had to encourage them (in many cases) to begin to learn to read, and then to read their Bible. Were we supposed to tell them they were not qualified to be ministers because they did not know the Word? That would have been legalistic and hurtful. We taught them that they had the spirit of God, through which they had direct access to God and Jesus Christ, the Head of the Body. They were called to be able ministers of the new testament and could do the job by faith and love.

We don't want to give people around the world the impression that they are not qualified to serve and minister until they know the Bible like John Schoenheit does. If that is what we promote we will

have a toxic and corrosive effect on all those who are not called to be teachers and intense researchers of God's Word (a noble calling to be sure, but not for everyone).

To properly lead people to Christ and make disciples for him around the world, we have to recognize that there are a number of ways that Christ reveals himself—and not just via the Written Word (preaching, phenomena, the loving acts of his disciples, etc.). Therefore, “the Written Word” cannot be “the be all and end all” of the Christian life. Only Christ himself is that. We can have no Bible and little knowledge of Scripture and still know him, and lead others to him. Or, conversely, we can have a great knowledge of Scripture, as some scholars do, and no relationship with Christ at all, and no desire to help others know him.

We can become pious about Scripture in the same way that other Christians have allowed their piety to elevate Christ beyond Messiahship to God-hood. In effect we make knowing the Bible the ultimate virtue, an end in itself, instead of a means to the end of godliness and right relationship with the Lord and his people. This is the kind of relationship to which I am referring—healthy relationship with God and Christ, not compromising truth for the sake of relationships with others.

We must not think that a knowledge of Scripture is equivalent or even preferable to knowing him to whom the scriptures point. Paul said that he wanted to know him (Phil. 3:10). Was he to know him from “the Written Word” only? What we recognize today as an important part of “the Written Word,” Paul's epistles, flowed from his relationship with Jesus Christ, not the other way around (Gal 1:11,12).

Mark

Look for more on this topic in an upcoming Tape of the Month.