

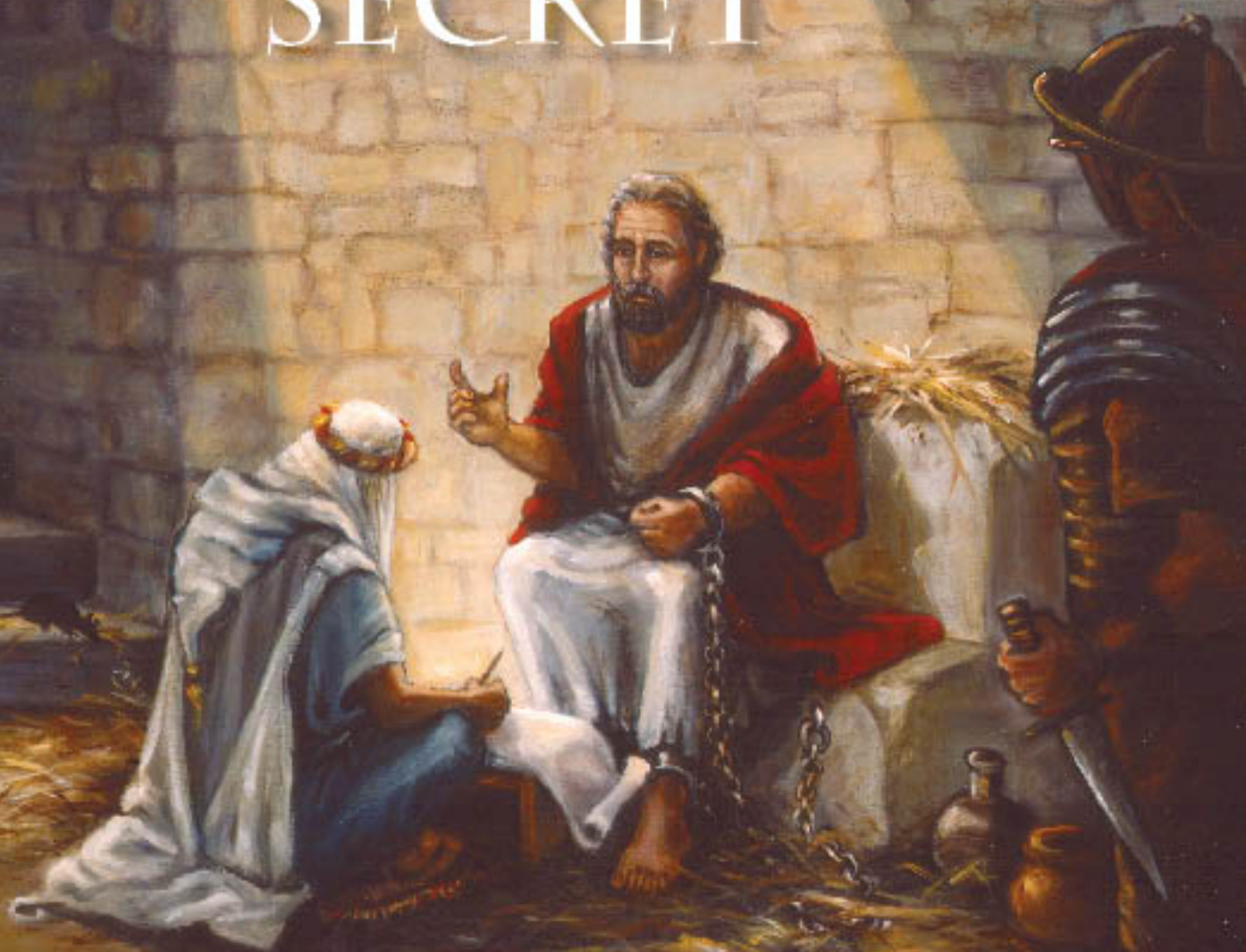
# THE SOWER

Volume 7, Issue 4

Jul/Aug 2005

The Sower is the bi-monthly magazine of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International, a non-profit organization, and is published in Indianapolis, Indiana.

## THE SACRED SECRET



"PAUL IN PRISON"

**Note:** This is a text-based version of our bimonthly magazine *The Sower*. It is primarily intended to be read by our third world folks whom can only access it online due to cost restrictions in being able to mail it to them. If you are in a non third world country and would like to receive a free copy of our magazine please fill out the request form at [www.CESonline.org](http://www.CESonline.org)

All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews, academic papers, and other non-commercial uses. For information, write Christian Educational Services, Inc., 2144 E. 52nd St. Indianapolis IN, 46205.

## FEATURE ARTICLES

4	<b>Opening Letter:</b> Mark Graeser is back from his sabbatical and is excited about the road ahead.
6	<b>“Mystery” or “Sacred Secret”:</b> How should the Greek word <i>musterion</i> be translated?
9	<b>The Vine:</b> The Fellowship Community Section - Honor One Another by Carolyn Pais.
12	<b>Fuel for the Fire:</b> The Teens & Twenties Section - “Christ in You” by Shawn Mercer.

## THE CONTENDER

15	<b>The Sacred Secret:</b> God has done something completely unique for the Body of Christ. We have been blessed by God with things that nobody ever predicted. If the Devil would have known about what God has done, he never would have crucified our Lord.
----	---

## MINISTRY NEWS

22	<b>Go Figure - Hypocatastasis</b>
24	<b>Partner Profile: Dallas Estes</b>
25	<b>Website Feedback</b>
28	<b>Meet Rachel Collum</b>

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Mark Graeser**

I am happy to report that I have returned from my sabbatical in one piece and at peace. I have lost weight and am in better shape than I have been in 15 years. Hopefully, and by the grace of God, I am prepared to re-enter the work of the ministry more rested, more balanced, with more faith, and even more excited about what God is doing in our midst.

I didn't quite know what to expect on my sabbatical, or what a sabbatical was supposed to look like. I thought it would be a largely peaceful, restful time where I would have lots of time to read, write, learn to play the flute, and the like. It was like that to some extent, but into the void created by the interruption of my work arose a lot of insecurities that I had never noticed before. This was understandable because I have derived so much of my identity and satisfaction in life from my work, and have never had the opportunity to see who I was as an adult without having to work. Because I have been a borderline workaholic for years, this proved to be a stretch.

I had days where I struggled with feelings of guilt that I was not working and contributing. That was how I learned how much I had come to depend upon my work for my sense of value. Working for God had become more important for me than being with God. That no doubt contributed to my feeling that I needed a sabbatical! I had other days where I feared that I would not be missed, or not missed very much. That showed me that I had too much of a need to be needed.

Actually, as time went on I became increasingly appreciative and grateful that our ministry is at the point that none of us is so significant to our success and wellbeing that we couldn't get on with out them. This ministry is not based on personalities, but upon the Lord. When one steps down for a time, others are there to step up. We do not build our lives and spirituality on the roles that we play and the ministries that we are allowed to operate in. The most important thing we are is children of God, and we cannot get more important than that to our Father.

One of the valuable things about leaders taking sabbaticals is that it also gives a church or an organization the opportunity to see growth areas that were not visible with the leader covering those bases. It also gives others a chance to share the experience of being in a pressure cooker, which sometimes spiritual leadership feels like.

I did get to read and reflect a lot in the three months I was on sabbatical, and wrote more than 100 pages in two papers for Independent Study projects toward my Masters of Divinity at the Earlham School of Religion. One paper outlined a 10 session pastoral care training for those in our community who feel called into pastoral ministry as we understand it. The second paper outlined a proposal for the governance of our church as it grows, looking at the way a variety of other Christian organizations have governed

themselves and the things they have learned along the way. I'm a big believer in learning from other people's experience and mistakes. I'd rather we make our own new mistakes than copy others' mistakes.

I did take flute lessons, but that turned out to be more like work than fun. I'm sticking with it though, and you might hear me bust out and play publicly one of these years.

Thanks for your prayers and many expressions of support for the idea of sabbatical in general, and for me personally. I hope that the fruits of us attempting to value our relationship with God and the Lord more than the work that we do for them will suffice to keep our church healthy and growing.

*Mark Graeser*

# “MYSTERY” OR “SACRED SECRET”

John Schoenheit

In the books, articles, and tapes of Spirit & Truth Fellowship we call the administration in which we live “the Administration of the Sacred Secret,” and we translate the Greek word *musterion* as “Sacred Secret.”<sup>1</sup> We believe that “Sacred Secret” is the best translation of the Greek word *musterion*, a Greek word that most Bible versions translate as “mystery.” For years we have translated *musterion* as “secret,” but noticed that in *Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible*, Joseph B. Rotherham, who was a biblical scholar of the first rank, translated *musterion* as “**sacred secret**.” We studied the subject and have come to agree with Rotherham, and our reasoning for using “sacred secret” as the translation of the Greek word *musterion* is presented below.

Although many Bible versions render the Greek word *musterion* as “mystery,” that is not a good translation. In fact, “mystery” is a transliteration of the word *musterion*, not a translation of it. “Transliteration” is when the letters of a word in one language are brought across into another language. The prefix “trans” means “across,” and the Latin *littera* means “letter.” Thus, transliteration is literally “bringing across the letters.” In contrast, “translation” is bringing the meaning of a word in one language across into another language. If we are going to have the meaning of the Greek brought into English, we must translate, not transliterate.

The English word “mystery” means something that is incomprehensible, beyond understanding, unknowable. Thus it is common in religious circles to speak of things such as the “Trinity” as “mysteries” because they cannot be understood. In contrast, a “secret” is something that is known by someone but unknown by others. A surprise birthday party is a “secret” to the person having the birthday, but known by those who will attend it. The Greek word *musterion* does not mean “mystery,” it means “sacred secret,” that is, a secret in the sacred or spiritual realm that must be made known by God. That *musterion* refers to a secret, and not to our standard meaning of “mystery,” is well documented by Greek scholars, and because this point is vital to the thesis of this article, we will cite a number of sources.

*Musterion*: In the NT it denotes, not the mysterious (as with the Eng. Word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God.<sup>2</sup>

But whereas “mystery” may mean, and in contemporary usage often does mean, a secret for which no answer can be found, this is not the connotation of the term *mysterion* in classical and biblical Gk. In the NT, *mysterion* signifies a secret which is being, or even has been, revealed, which is also divine in scope, and needs to be made known by God to men through his Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

But while the *musterion* thus implies something hidden, and inaccessible to the unaided reason, and usually also of weighty import, it by no means necessarily denotes anything strictly mysterious and incomprehensible. The fact or truth, though requiring to be *revealed*, may, when revealed, be of a very elementary character.<sup>4</sup>

Mystery in the NT does not deal with the unknowable, but with what is imparted by revelation.<sup>5</sup>

The mystery of the New Testament has been described as an ‘open secret’; matters previously kept secret in God’s eternal purposes have now been or are being revealed (Eph. 3:3-5; 1 Cor. 2:7-8).<sup>6</sup>

Numerous other sources give the same information, and the point is that the word *musterion* does not mean “mystery,” and should not be translated that way. Although God kept His Sacred Secret a secret for years, it has now been made known.<sup>7</sup> There are a number of verses showing that a *musterion* can be revealed by God and understood by mankind. Because it is important to understand this point, I will quote quite a few of them.

**Matthew 13:11b (KJV)**

...it is given unto you to know the mysteries [*musterion*] of the kingdom of heaven....<sup>8</sup>

**1 Corinthians 2:7, 8a and 10a, (KJV)**

(7) But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery [*musterion*], *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

(8a) Which none of the princes of this world knew....

(10a) But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit....

**Romans 16:25b and 26a (NIV)**

(25b) ...the mystery [*musterion*] hidden for long ages past,

(26a) but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God....

**Ephesians 1:9 (NIV)**

And he made known to us the mystery [*musterion*] of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,

**Colossians 1:26 (NIV)**

the mystery [*musterion*] that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.

Now that we have established that *musterion* does not mean “mystery,” and that a *musterion* can be revealed and understood, we will show why we translate it as “sacred secret” and not just “secret.” The Greek language uses *musterion* for secrets in the

religious sphere, but has another word, *kruptos*, for secrets that are in the secular realm.<sup>9</sup> The word *kruptos* appears in many places in the New Testament. For example, Jesus said to give alms in secret (Matt. 6:4-KJV); he taught that every secret thing will be brought to light (Mark 4:22-KJV); he went to Jerusalem in secret (John 7:10-KJV); God will judge men's secrets (Rom. 2:16); and, prophecy reveals the secrets of the heart (1 Cor. 14:24 and 25).

The verb *krupto* also appears many times in the New Testament. Examples include: a city on a hill cannot be hidden (Matt. 5:14); the wicked servant hid his talent in the ground (Matt. 25:25); a Christian's new life is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3); and, Moses' parents hid him after he was born (Heb. 11:23).

From the above information we see that translating *musterion* as "secret," which some versions do in some places, does not bring out the true meaning of the Greek text. Anyone reading the Greek New Testament immediately understands whether God is speaking of a secular secret (*kruptos*) or a sacred secret (*musterion*), and a good translation brings out that difference. When a version translates both words as "secret," the truth that God so clearly communicated in the Greek text is lost. When translators use "secret" for *kruptos* and "mystery" for *musterion*, the words are not confused, but the English Bible is made to say something that it just does not say—that the things of God are mysterious.<sup>10</sup>

Is there a way to translate *kruptos* and *musterion* such that the meaning of the Greek words is communicated clearly into English? Yes, there is. There is not one time in the New Testament where *musterion* cannot be fittingly translated as "sacred secret."<sup>11</sup> If we translate *kruptos* as "secret," and *musterion* as "sacred secret," the meaning of the Greek is communicated clearly, and we English-speaking people are in a better position to know and understand what God has said in His Word.

**(Footnotes)**

1. The information presented in this article is quite new to us (just over two years), and so we do have books and tapes available that do not have this information.
2. James Strong, *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words* (Thomas Nelson Publisher, Nashville, TN, 2001), p. 1247.
3. Howard Marshall, editor, *New Bible Dictionary* (Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1997), p. 795. Some sources use the English "Y" to translate the Greek letter epsilon. Thus some sources have *musterion*, while others have *mysterion*.
4. William Smith, *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, reprinted 1981), vol. 3, p. 2047.
5. Merrill Tenney, editor, *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Regency Reference Library, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976), vol. 4, p. 330.
6. Trent Butler, editor, *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1991), p. 998.
7. When *musterion* refers to "the Sacred Secret" of the Administration of Grace, we capitalize it.
8. Mark 4:11 and Luke 8:10 are similar. The NIV, ESV, RSV, NRSV, Young's Literal, and some other versions have "secret" or "secrets" instead of "mysteries" in these verses.
9. The feminine form of the word is found in Luke 11:33, where some translations have "cellar." It refers to a "hidden place" or crypt. The adjective is *krupton*, and the verb is *krupto*, "to hide."
10. Translating *musterion* as "mystery" has caused many problems in the Church. For one thing, people who are convinced that the things of God are mysterious quit trying to search the Scriptures, and do not bother to pray for answers to their questions—why should they if the subject is a "mystery" and no answers are available. Also, many false and illogical doctrines have been foisted upon Christians, who are told not to try to understand them because they are "mysteries." If you are one who has not found the Bible believable, or have considered it too mysterious to understand, you will want to read our booklet, *The Bible: You Can Believe It*. This booklet can be read online at [www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com) Topic: Recommended Reading or see page 5 of the enclosed price list.
11. That is exactly what Rotherham does in *Rotherham's Emphasized Bible*.

# THE VINE

## THE FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY SECTION

### Honor One Another by Carolyn Pais

Just yesterday morning I ran through our neighborhood in my pajamas and bedroom slippers—not my usual attire for running! You might ask why I would do such a thing. Well, I was chasing our little Jack Russell Terrier, Peanut. You see, she is very precious to me.

What would you do for someone or something that you consider precious? Protect? Nurture? Keep well maintained? We all invest a lot of time, thought, prayers, money etc. in caring for what we deem valuable to us.

Just recently I read Romans 12:10b (NIV) “...Honor one another above yourselves.” I had always thought this meant to give someone special recognition, respect, the best seating, compliments etc. In studying the word “honor” I found out it meant “to value.” In 1 Corinthians 7:23a (NIV) where it says, “You were bought at a price...” the word translated “price” is the same Greek word translated “honor.” Its root word is usually translated “precious,” of “greater worth” or “dear.” To honor one another is to treat each person as valuable, costly, precious.

Okay, that comes pretty easily with our immediate family members, our close friends, and (nice) managers or employers. But what about others? Romans 12:10 refers to the family of God, but in 1 Peter 2:17a (KJV) we are told to “Honour [Honor] all men,” and this is where it gets a lot more challenging. How are we to honor those people who really get on our nerves? Better yet, what about those people who are unfriendly, arrogant, and don’t like us? There is no distinction between honoring only those who bring value to your life and those who bring irritation.

One tip on how to value others (especially the “others” who really bother us) is first to realize that God demonstrated His love by having His Son, Jesus Christ, die for them, too (Rom. 5:8). We truly have to see people through God’s eyes, remembering that He “...wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4-NIV).

In Matthew 25:40a (NIV) Jesus said, “...whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” We can care for others for Jesus’ sake! People mean a lot to him. He gave his life for them. More than that, he says that caring for them equals caring for him! By the way, I used to think that the “...least of these brothers...” were only nice people (I have no idea why I came to that conclusion), but it doesn’t say that. In fact, some of them are in prison (vs. 36), and maybe they did something really bad. Still, I’m to see them as valuable and precious. These are people for whom Jesus gave his life, and he says that in caring for them I care for him. Honoring people comes

much easier when I realize just how costly they are. Back to my first question: What would you do for someone or something that you consider precious? Since “to honor,” biblically, means to treat as valuable, it’s much more than just compliments and fanfare. Let’s go back to me chasing my dog through my neighborhood in my pajamas. Because I consider my dog valuable (although she didn’t cost a cent, she was a stray. Hmmm...), I put aside my desires and plans and sought after her welfare. My major concern was to protect her and bring her back to a safe and caring environment. To honor others is to be concerned about their welfare and seek to do what’s needed in helping them grow in a knowledge of God’s will, which by the way, is “...good, pleasing and perfect...” (Rom.12:2-NIV)—much more than just safe and cared for! It’s also exhibiting their true value, living a life that is worthy (worthy implies a cost factor) of the Lord.

Now here’s the somewhat difficult part: each person is different and you’ll need to really seek wisdom in helping them. Of course, God does promise that He’ll give us wisdom generously if we ask (James 1:5). For example, if you know someone addicted to drugs, you would help them differently than you would a young child. Both are precious, but helping them grow in knowledge of God’s will would look different for either person. The key point is that “honoring each other” is seeing each other as precious (no matter how we may appear) and helping to bring out their true value. It might look like “running” after someone to protect them from harm, or it could look like not “running.” The idea is to seek God’s wisdom on how to care for each very precious person who crosses your path. In doing so you are honoring Christ Jesus. What a privilege, and what an honor!

## **“The Leader” vs. “Providing Leadership” by Mark Graeser**

One of the things that commonly prevents fellowships, home groups, and churches from forming is the issue of who is going to be the leader. Several scenarios are typical. A natural leader arises from a group and assumes responsibility for moving it along. Sometimes this works, if the leader is a kind and sensitive person who respects the opinions of others. Sometimes it doesn’t work because the leader thinks that his or her ideas are best and has a persuasive personality that overwhelms other voices. In these cases the group often fizzles as one by one people drop out because they don’t feel that the group reflects their opinions, values, and interests.

Another thing that happens is that the group never gets off the ground because no one is willing to assume the position of “leader” for any number of reasons. Some that we have seen are:

- They don’t feel competent
- They don’t want to be criticized
- They don’t like people in leadership positions because they have been abused
- They don’t want anyone holding them accountable or confronting them

One way we can get around this problem is to change the way we think of leadership. Instead of thinking of it as a position, we can think of it as providing a service or assisting a process. From this perspective, to provide leadership is to do what it takes to help the group get started, develop a personality, a purpose, and a plan of accomplishment. The goal of providing such leadership would be to help the group get established, create enough structure to be viable, and help the group answer the obvious questions: Why do we want to start a group?; Who should be invited?; When should we meet?; Where should we meet?; What should we do when we get together?

This kind of leadership is more like “facilitation,” a fancy word that basically means, “to make easier.” A facilitator makes it easier for a group to come to an agreement about the important issues by keeping the group focused, making sure all voices are heard, and helping to resolve disagreements. The decisions made are not the facilitator’s, but the group’s, and the group is more likely to own the decisions that are made in this way.

Are you in an area that has a group of people who need a little help coming together to make the decision to start a Christian growth group, a prayer group, a Bible study, or any other kind of fellowship? Instead of waiting on someone else to “be the leader,” consider stepping up and becoming the one who “provides leadership” to get your group going.

### **Further Study Material, 90 Minute Audio Teaching Tape: What is Christian Leadership? (Jul/Aug 98)**

You can see by this title that it addresses an issue of indescribable importance to every Christian. This teaching is for anyone aspiring to Christian leadership, as well as for any believers who have been abused by Christian leaders and who are now suspicious of or even negative toward the whole idea of leadership in the Church. We are enthused about what this teaching can do for your relationship with God, the Lord Jesus and your Christian brethren.

For more articles on this subject, visit [www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com) Topic:  
Servant Leadership.

Order from the online catalog under the TAPE OF THE MONTH link at  
[www.CESonline.org](http://www.CESonline.org), or call us toll free at 888-255-6189 M-F 8:30 to 5

# Fuel For The Fire

## “Christ in You” by Shawn Mercer

Lately I have been thinking about the concept of “Christ in you,” as per the following verse:

### **Colossians 1:27 (NIV)**

To them [the Body of Christ] God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery [sacred secret], which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

“Christ in you” refers to the fact that, via the gift of holy spirit, God has given us blessings and power without measure, the fullness of what was in Christ. It is not a literal statement, because we do not actually have “Christ” in us. Rather, because of the gift of holy spirit sealed inside us, we have all the ability that was resident in him. Once we recognize all that the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us, I think it is important to consider the question, “With ‘Christ in me,’ what should my life look like?”

As I thought more about it, I found some insight two verses earlier:

### **Colossians 1:25 (NIV)**

I have become its [the Body of Christ’s] servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—

Paul wrote that he had become a servant to the Body of Christ. When Paul received such a great commission, he made a decision to serve the Lord and not himself. Isn’t that exactly the way Jesus was toward us? The words, “Christ in you,” used to make me think about me and what I get, but I now realize that with Christ in me, it is so much more about what I can be for others. It is a call to become a servant to others out of the blessing I have been given.

We often look around at other people and think, “Now that person is really gifted.” Or maybe we say, “I wish God would give me the gifts to do something in the Body of Christ.” We can spend years thinking that we are less, while God is saying that we are more. The great news is that God has given each of us all the gifts we need in order to serve Him. What if we were to connect with the reality that our own life is the only one like it in the world? What if we connected with the fact that if we don’t give of ourselves to the people around us, maybe no one will?

In my own life there have been many times when I have not been the servant I know I could be. I wonder how many times we show up only in the ways that are enjoyable to us. I remember last year at Teens and 20’s Camp when my group was selected to do the

dishes, and I was not enjoying it. Those who know me realize that working in the kitchen is the last thing on earth I like to do. To make matters worse, as I was in the kitchen the praise band started to play one of my favorite songs. The song sounded oh so good when mixed with the sound of water spraying against nasty, greasy pans. I remember thinking, “Seriously, could you make these pans any more greasy?” The singing ended just as our group finally completed our tasks in the kitchen, and I didn’t get to be involved in the worship. In that moment, I lost sight of what “Christ in you” really means. Praise and worship, which is supposed to be a blessing to God, was something I wanted to do all for me. I had the chance to serve in the kitchen with a grateful heart but I didn’t appreciate it because I was so invested in what I wanted. At the time, I think it was easy for me to justify my frustration by thinking that praise and worship is “spiritual” and it seemingly couldn’t be selfish.

I have since realized that we can show up in the Body of Christ with what looks like service, but really it’s all about us. Are we willing to serve God without all the conditions? Are we willing to truly put Him first? I suggest that there is great freedom in serving God regardless of whether it is our favorite thing to do.

So remember, “Christ in you” is a powerful reminder to serve others with all that the Lord has given you, and with the same heart that he manifested. Jesus has clearly shown us that serving others is the only way to go.

## **Dear Fuel for the Fire, by Whitney Ricciardi**

I want to share with you my four-month experience of living at Camp Vision in Bloomington, IN this last semester. Four months on your own will teach you plenty of things: how to survive off of tuna and black beans, where to go to get the lowest gas price, how to set good boundaries for your life, and of course, how to get along with roommates. But four months away from home studying with John Schoenheit will teach you a heck of a lot more.

In the mornings I read the Bible, mostly the Old Testament, and listened to tape seminars such as “New Life in Christ,” and “A Journey Through the Old Testament.” This was my personal study time, and it took a lot of self discipline and motivation to get it done, but tell me, is there anything more pleasant than waking up and realizing that the only obligation you have the entire day is to study God’s Word? Nothing could be sweeter. As the weather got warmer, I took great joy in being able to romp through the woods and find a tree stump to sit on while I read the Bible or different customs books, or I would hang out on the dock with my roommate, Bethany, and play my guitar singing praises to our God.

In the afternoons, Bethany and I spent about four hours in John’s office helping him with his translation work on the forthcoming (someday) Spirit & Truth Fellowship translation of the Bible. John is wholly devoted to putting a pure translation into the hands of the people, one that conveys both the power and the heart of God. Each of us

would have our laptop, and John would go down a list and correct verses we had found that either read awkwardly, had some grammatical error, or needed a word translated differently. I absolutely loved this part of the day because it immersed me in the Greek language, and I picked up many new words and learned to smoothly read through the texts (though not knowing the English equivalents).

Because John has been an avid scholar of the Word for more than 30 years, he has a storehouse of knowledge to impart. From him I learned about the backgrounds of different Bible commentators, the broad definitions of Greek words as they were used in the culture of the time, a lot about Eastern customs, and just so much more than I could ever have imagined. When I'd carpool with him up to the Home Office for Wednesday staff meetings, I got to hear him talk about everything from monocultures to the history of fertilizer to duck hunting to the education system. I was like a sponge, soaking up as much as I could.

John always encouraged us, and helped us pursue what we were most interested in, which for me were Bible manners and customs. It was a joy to study with him; he instilled within me a deeper passion for research, and an appreciation for the treasure that the Scriptures are.

On top of my studies, my life was enriched with all of the wonderful fellowship I had with the saints out there, as well as the quietude of the woods.

If you're looking to get away from the more trivial demands of life and focus on God (the One who really stirs your heart), to find peace of mind and heart, and to study the Scriptures as one intently searching for treasure, then by all means go and take hold of the unique opportunity and rewarding experience I was blessed to have. There are cabins available to rent at Camp Vision, and John Schoenheit has a calling on his life to teach us—the youth, so he is ready and willing at any time. Go for a semester or a week, but do go!

How can we, the next generation, think that one day we will just get up, walk outside, and start reforming this world? Jesus studied for 30 years before he began his power-packed ministry. If our Lord needed to train and grow in wisdom, then we also need to put in the time and work it will take to become rooted and grounded in God's wonderful Word to become effective witnesses for Him! And that is building for eternity!

# THE CONTENDER

John Schoenheit

## The Sacred Secret: God's Gift to Us

For ages God kept a Sacred Secret.<sup>1</sup> He did not tell anyone (or even give any hints) about His secret until after the death of His Son, Jesus (1 Cor. 2:9). Now, however, He has revealed it to mankind (1 Cor. 2:10; Eph. 3:5; etc.). Why did God keep His secret until after Jesus died? Because what God has given us today was so crucial to His overall plan for mankind that if Satan and his demons had known about it, **they would not have crucified Jesus.**

### 1 Corinthians 2:7 and 8 (KJV)

(7) But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery [*musterion*, Sacred Secret], *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

(8) Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.<sup>2</sup>

Where would we look in the Bible to learn about the details and specifics of that which God kept secret for so long? Not in the Old Testament, because it was written before Jesus was crucified. Not in the Gospels, because almost all the events of the Gospels occurred before Jesus was crucified. We find these wonderful vital truths in Acts through Jude, which are the writings to the Christian Church.<sup>3</sup>

It would be convenient if all the unique and wonderful things that God has done for us as Christians were written in a list so they could be easily seen, but that is not generally how God reveals information. He wants us to take the time to read, study, and pray in order to learn about the blessings He has given us. God desires us to spend time with Him via His Book. Then, as we read and compare Scripture with Scripture, the spiritual blessings He has given us become clearer and clearer. God loved us enough to do these things for us, and now it is our turn to love Him enough to read the Bible carefully and discover what He has done. "Okay," you ask, "what are we looking for?" We are looking for "secret" things, things that are unique to the Christian Church, things that were not revealed in the Old Testament or in the Gospels before Jesus died.

The Christian Church started on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and will end with the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:17). The time of the Christian Church, the Church Age, is known as the "...administration of God's grace..." (Eph. 3:2-NIV). It is also known as "...the administration of the **sacred secret**..." (Eph. 3:9-Rotherham. We capitalize it, and call it the Administration of the Sacred Secret). God's Sacred Secret so completely influences and defines the time period of the Christian Church that the entire Church Age is named after it.

During the ages (also known as “administrations” or “dispensations”) that came before the Church Age, God gave many blessings to mankind. However, we must accept and believe what God says about what we have today versus what He gave to people who lived in the administrations before us.<sup>4</sup> What does God say about the Administration of the Law, which came immediately before the Administration of the Sacred Secret? He says it was “glorious” (2 Cor. 3:7-KJV), but then He calls it “...the ministration [ministry] of death...” in the same verse. Furthermore, He calls it “...the ministration [ministry] of condemnation...” just two verses later. Then, in 2 Cor. 3:10 (KJV), Scripture tells us that the Law had “no glory” in comparison to the glory that we have today. Take a minute and read 2 Corinthians 3:6-10. Surely you can see that God has elevated the Administration of the Sacred Secret far above the Law Administration that was before us. He did that for His own purposes: both to show forth His wisdom (Eph. 3:10) and for our glory (1 Cor. 2:7).

There is hardly an area of a Christian’s life that is not influenced by the Sacred Secret. The various parts of the Sacred Secret fall into general categories that deal with salvation, the gift of holy spirit in us, our relation to others who are saved, and our hope. It is not the purpose of this article to expound on all these things. It would take a small book to set forth completely even the one truth that salvation in the Administration of the Sacred Secret is permanent. The purpose of this article is to give “the big picture” of the Sacred Secret so we can clearly see what God has done for our glory.

Arguably, the most important aspect of the Administration of the Sacred Secret is that salvation is permanent. Once a person becomes a Christian, he cannot lose his salvation no matter what he does. In contrast, before the Age of Grace started, and after the Rapture, a person’s salvation is not secure, he can lose it if he turns against God. But that is not the case in the Administration of the Sacred Secret, and there are many ways God shows us this truth. For one thing, God uses three different Greek words for “born” to show that a Christian is born into God’s family, and that his birth is permanent.<sup>5</sup> Once something is born, it cannot be unborn.

Besides using the word “born,” God uses the word “adoption” (Rom. 8:15, 23 and 9:4-KJV; Gal. 4:5-KJV; Eph. 1:5-KJV). Birth seems so much more desirable than adoption that it is fair to ask why God would even use “adoption.” The answer is that in the Roman world a naturally born baby could be disowned from the family, but an adopted child could not. Many early believers were Roman citizens, and using the word “adoption” was one of God’s ways to let the Church know that children brought into His family could not be taken from it.<sup>6</sup> There is no verse in the Old Testament that even hints that one day God would make salvation permanent.<sup>7</sup>

Another very important aspect of the Sacred Secret is how God’s love is shown to Christians. God is love, and always has loved. Nevertheless, part of true love is dealing with people according to the standards that have been set between the two parties. Before the Administration of the Sacred Secret, God dealt with mankind in the relationship of a Lord to those he rules. God gave the people commands to follow and made covenants with them. In a covenant, both parties agree to do something. Thus, the pattern we see in

the Old Testament is that when people, even His people, turned from Him, He turned from them. When Israel, God's chosen people, turned away from Him, He turned from them, finally so completely that in Hosea, He told them they were no longer His people (Hosea 1:9). Isaiah 50:1 and Jeremiah 3:8 speak the same truth, but in the analogy of a marriage—God gave Israel a bill of divorce and sent her away.

In contrast to the Lord-vassal relationship that God had with people in the Old Testament, in the Administration of the Sacred Secret the relationship God has with Christians is a family relationship. God never made a covenant with the Christian Church.<sup>8</sup> Instead, He gives birth to Christians, who then are His family, and family terminology is used liberally in the epistles to the Christian Church. God calls Himself “Father” more than 70 times in Acts—Jude; He calls individual Christians “children;” “sons;” “brothers” of Jesus; “heirs of God;” recipients of His “seed;” partakers of His divine nature; “born” and “adopted” into His family; able to call Him “Abba;” and the list goes on.<sup>9</sup>

The family relationship is totally different from the covenant relationship. In a covenant relationship, if a person breaks the covenant, the blessings of the covenant are forfeited. But in a family, no matter how horrible a child behaves, he or she is still a member of the family. No wonder Romans 8:35 (KJV) asks, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...” and then answers by saying that nothing will ever be able to separate Christians from the love of God (Hallelujah!). Was that the case in the Old Testament or the Gospels? No, it was not, and that point is made right in Romans 8 when verse 36 asks if it is today like it was in the Old Testament, and verse 37 says, “No.” In the Old Testament Lord-vassal relationships, God's righteousness required Him to turn from His people when they turned from Him. That will never happen to Christians. We are God's family in a literal and unique way, and we can never be separated from God's love.

The “birth” in the Christian's New Birth is not just a metaphor. It is a spiritual reality that involves spiritual “seed,” which is imperishable (1 Pet. 1:23). It makes God our Father and Jesus our brother (Heb. 2:10-12). As with any birth, the baby has the nature of the parent. Because our Father is God, who is spirit (John 4:24), our new nature is spiritual. We are “...partakers of the divine nature...” (2 Peter 1:4-KJV).

Because every Christian is born again of spiritual seed and has a new and divine nature, each is a new creation. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17-NIV, cp. also Gal. 6:15). There are some versions that say we become a “new creature” instead of a new creation, but the point is that we are new. Parents understand this. Each new baby is a new creation, and when an unsaved person becomes saved, that person is a new creation, freshly “born” into God's family.

At this point, we should stop and reflect about what we know about believers in the Old Testament and in the Gospels. They are never called new creations, they are never said to be born again (in fact, no Old Testament individual is ever called “born” of God at

all), and they are never said to have incorruptible seed from God. Nor are there prophecies that indicated that God would do these wonderful things. In fact, that is why some Bible students have a hard time believing them. Many people think that God always deals with people the same way, and therefore the way He treated Moses, Miriam, Ruth, or David will be the way that He will treat us, but this is not the case. God makes the rules, and what He decided to do for the Christian Church was not “business as usual.” God has done something for us Christians that was never done before the Church Age, and it was something He kept secret until after Jesus was crucified.

The spiritual “seed” that we Christians receive when we are born again is another aspect of the Administration of the Sacred Secret. Each and every Christian is filled with God’s gift of holy spirit.<sup>10</sup> Bible students know that God’s gift of holy spirit is not new, God gave it in the Old Testament. But (and this is a huge “but”) in the Old Testament God gave it differently than He does now. Back then a person could sin and lose his holy spirit. Saul lost it (1 Sam. 16:14), and Samson did too (but got it back just before he died). When David sinned, he prayed for God not to take it away (Ps. 51:11). This is not the case today, because today we are “sealed” with the holy spirit (Eph. 1:13-KJV), which is born inside us and thus part of our new and divine nature.<sup>11</sup>

You can look all you want to in the Old Testament and Gospels to find someone “sealed” with holy spirit, and you will not find anyone. Before the Administration of the Sacred Secret, God’s gift of holy spirit was only “upon” people (Judg. 6:34 and 11:29-KJV, are typical examples). No one before Acts 2 was sealed with holy spirit. Furthermore, God never told anyone there would be a time when that would happen. He kept that as part of His Sacred Secret until after Jesus was crucified.

To further make the point that Christians cannot lose the holy spirit, God calls it a guarantee of our future hope (2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5; Eph. 1:14-RSV).<sup>12</sup> If a person could lose holy spirit, it would not actually “guarantee” anything. It is important to notice that nowhere in the Old Testament or the Gospels is holy spirit called a “guarantee,” because those who had it back then could lose it, so it did not guarantee anyone’s future everlasting life. That is not the case today, however. The Christian cannot lose his salvation, his everlasting life is totally secure, and so the presence of the holy spirit can honestly be called a “guarantee” of his future hope.

There are a few other points of difference between the gift of holy spirit we have today and the way God gave it in the Old Testament. One of them is that in the Old Testament some people got more holy spirit than others. Elisha, for example, asked for a double portion of the spirit that was on Elijah (2 Kings 2:9). That is never the case in the Administration of the Sacred Secret, because God gives every Christian “all spiritual blessings” that He has in the heavenlies (Eph. 1:3). He is not holding anything back. Besides, the holy spirit is the spiritual seed inside us and is the divine nature that we already read about. Surely one Christian would not have more divine nature than another. No, we all have been filled with holy spirit and are all new, divine creations.

Another difference between the Old Testament and the Administration of the Sacred Secret when it comes to holy spirit is that today each Christian gets holy spirit when he believes and is saved (Eph. 1:13).<sup>13</sup> In the Old Testament, God gave His gift of holy spirit to only a relatively few people. For example, out of all the millions of Israelites who came out of Egypt, only 70 leaders were given holy spirit when Moses asked that God give him helpers (Num. 11:11-17). Today, each person who becomes a Christian gets holy spirit (Acts 2:38). In fact, it is the presence of the holy spirit inside a person, which is spiritual seed and the divine nature, that makes him a Christian. A person is not a Christian because he goes to a certain church or reads his Bible. A Christian is someone who is an actual child of God by divine birth, having the seed of God (holy spirit) sealed within him, thus giving him a divine nature and making him a new creation.

Another difference between the holy spirit that God has given us as part of the Sacred Secret and the holy spirit that God placed upon people in the Old Testament is that Christians have two new ways to outwardly manifest it, ways that did not exist in the Old Testament or Gospels. We have the manifestations of speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:10, 14:2-5). These manifestations were not practiced or foretold in the Bible until after the resurrection of Christ. Satan did not know about them.

We have already made the point that every Christian is filled with holy spirit, and that God has not withheld any blessing from us. In order to communicate the fullness of the presence of the holy spirit within us, and the immense power that it has, God calls it “Christ” in us (Col. 1:27). Although we do not literally have Christ inside us (Jesus is in heaven at the right hand of God), what we have is so powerful that it is called “Christ” in us, because it enables us to be like Jesus. Of the few Old Testament believers who had the spirit of God upon them, none were told they had “the Messiah” upon them. But God held nothing back when He gave holy spirit to each Christian, and it is so complete and powerful that each and every Christian is said to have “Christ” in him.

Another aspect of the Administration of the Sacred Secret deals with the reality that God has made all Christians together to be one body, the Body of Christ. There are many facets to this, and if we are going to appreciate all that God has given to us, we need to examine them. First, there is the fact that God did away with the Jew-Gentile distinction. He made every Christian equal in Christ. In a sense, every unbeliever is also equal in that each has the same Savior and the same way to get saved: Romans 10:9.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout the Old Testament God made the point that He considered the Jews “His people” and separate from the nations. It would take a lot of clear revelation to get people to believe that God had changed the way He was dealing with Jews and Gentiles and reverse all those years of separatist thinking, and Ephesians 2:11-22 and 3:6 are part of the revelation that does exactly that. There is no prophecy in the Old Testament or the Gospels that foretold that God would ever make Jews and Gentiles equal in Christ—their unity is part of the Sacred Secret. Jews and Gentiles were separate in the Old Testament and in the Gospels, and they will be once again after the Rapture, in the time period covered in the book of Revelation. But in this one administration, the Administration of

the Sacred Secret, they are no longer two peoples, but “one new man” in Christ (Eph. 2:15-KJV).

Another aspect of the Sacred Secret is that all Christians are part of one body, the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:4 and 5; 1 Cor. 10:17, 12:12-27; Eph. 2:16, 4:4; Col. 3:15). The phrase “one body” does not occur in the Old Testament, Gospels, or the book of Revelation. The “one body” is a spiritual body, and a spiritual truth that does not exist except in the Church Age. The idea of “one body” communicates some wonderful truths. First, there is a connectedness in the body that did not exist in the Old Testament. Just as the parts of a physical body are directly connected and communicate fluidly with the head, the gift of holy spirit sealed inside each believer allows him to have intimate communication with God and Christ.

Also, just as the parts of our fleshly bodies are inseparably connected, our spiritual body is too. We are inseparably connected both to one another and to the Head, Christ. We are not in danger of being amputated from the Body and losing our salvation or the love of God.

The fact that each Christian is a part of the Body of Christ elevates each one to a position of importance. Scripture testifies that today, in the Administration of the Sacred Secret, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28-NASB). The same point is made in different language in 1 Corinthians 12:11-27.

Another part of the Sacred Secret is our identification with Christ. Because each Christian is part of the Body of Christ, when Christ went through something, we Christians went through it also. For example, we all know that Jesus Christ died on the cross. But in the eyes of God, when a person becomes a Christian and part of the Body of Christ, he identifies with what Christ went through as if he went through it himself. Thus we were crucified with Christ (Rom. 6:6), we died with Christ (Rom. 6:8); we were buried with Christ (Rom. 6:4); we were raised from the dead with Christ (Eph. 2:6), we even ascended with him and are seated with him in heaven (Eph. 2:6), which is exactly where we will be after the Rapture.

Only by studying the language of the Old Testament, Gospels, and Epistles can one see how new and different the language of identification is from what had been before it. Jesus never told the apostles, “After I am crucified, because you believe in me you will be crucified with me.” But from God’s perspective, when a Christian gets born again, he or she was crucified, died, was buried, was resurrected, and was given a place in heaven with Christ. No wonder we cannot lose our salvation. How could someone be uncrucified, undead, unburied, unraised, and unseated? It just could not happen.

Another aspect of the Sacred Secret is the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18).<sup>15</sup> At the Rapture, Christians will be taken up to heaven to be with Christ, and we will stay with him there until we come back down to earth with him to fight and win the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21). Neither the Old Testament nor Gospels tell believers that

they will one day be in heaven. It says that they get up from the grave and live on the earth (Ezek. 37:12-14). Even after Christ died and was raised, the disciples, who did not yet know the Sacred Secret, asked if he were going to restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). They did not ask about going to heaven, because such an idea was not part of their theology or thinking.<sup>16</sup>

Because the Rapture of the Church is part of the Sacred Secret, no Old Testament prophet spoke of it, nor did Jesus mention it in his teachings. This has caused some theologians to doubt that it will occur, but that is exactly the point. No one knew about the Sacred Secret and all that it involves, including the Rapture, until after the crucifixion, so it makes perfect sense that the only place in the Bible where it appears is in the writings to the Christian Church, such as 1 Thessalonians 4.

The last aspect of the Sacred Secret that we will cover in this article is the new body that each Christian will receive at the Rapture. It was not a secret that in the First Resurrection, the Old Testament believers would be given healthy bodies (Isa. 29:18, 33:24, 35:5 and 6, etc.). Part of the revelation of the Administration of the Sacred Secret, however, is that at the Rapture, Christians will get bodies that will be like Christ's glorious body (Phil. 3:21). Now that is something to look forward to! It would be one thing for me to be raised in my "John Schoenheit body," healthy, but still having my fleshly limitations. But I can get seriously excited when I think that, though I will still be "John Schoenheit," having my memory and realizing that it is still "me," I will have a body like Christ's glorious body.

Christians live in bodies that are perishable, but we will receive bodies that are imperishable (1 Cor. 15:42). Our fleshly body may die in dishonor, but we will be raised in glory; it may die in weakness, but it will be raised in power (1 Cor. 15:43). We have a natural body, but we will have a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44). What a revelation! No wonder God commands us to be thankful (Col. 3:15). We should be **very** thankful for all He has done for us. No wonder He says that the Sacred Secret is for our glory (1 Cor. 2:7). No wonder God says that the Old Testament revelation, which was certainly glorious, has "no glory" in comparison with what we have today. Fellow Christians, I appeal to you, read and study the writings to the Christian Church (Acts—Jude) to see all the wonderful things God has done for us. You will not find the great truths of the Sacred Secret anywhere else but there, and as you find them, you will indeed be blessed.

1. See the main article in this issue for why *mysterion* should be translated "Sacred Secret." We do not have space here to expound on the fact that the Sacred Secret was in fact a secret hidden in God, but see Romans 16:25 and 26; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:5, 8 and 9; and Colossians 1:26.

2. *Rotherham's Emphasized Bible* brings out the Sacred Secret more fully. 1 Corinthians 2:7 and 8: "But we speak God's wisdom in a **sacred secret**, That hidden [wisdom], Which God marked out beforehand, before the ages, for our glory,—Which, none of the rulers of this age had come to know, For had they known, not, in that case, the Lord of the glory would they have crucified!"

3. The book of Revelation is about a period of time after the Rapture, and is not written to the Christian Church. For more on that, listen to our nine hour audio seminar, "The Book of Revelation." See page 4 of the enclosed price list or order online at [www.CESonline.org](http://www.CESonline.org).

4. The administrations before the Administration of the Sacred Secret are 1) Original Paradise (Garden of Eden). 2) Conscience (The Fall to the Flood). 3) Civil Government (Flood to the Mosaic Law), and 4) The Law. See the chart on page 14 and our booklet *Defending Dispensationalism*.

5. For an exposition of this truth, see our book *The Christian's Hope: The Anchor of the Soul* Appendix C, "The Permanence of Christian Salvation." The three words are *anagennao* (Strong's # 313), *apokueo* (Strong's # 616), and *paliggenesia* (Strong's # 3824). Also, Bible students need to be aware that although many versions use the phrase "born again" in John 3, the proper translation is

“born from above” and it does not refer to the Christian’s New Birth at all. See *The Christian’s Hope*, Appendix H, “You Must Be Born Again.”

6. For a more complete treatment of adoption in the Roman world, see Charles Welch, *Just and the Justifier* (The Berean Publishing Trust, London), pp. 208-213.

7. Some people believe that a Christian can make the freewill decision to repent of his Christian faith and become unsaved, but this is not the case. There are some decisions a person makes that change him in a permanent way, and choosing salvation is one of them. When a person becomes a Christian, his very nature is changed permanently, and he cannot reverse that by another freewill decision. We accept this thinking when it comes to our flesh: if a person makes the freewill decision to blind himself, he cannot then make the freewill decision to regain his sight. The change is permanent. The New Birth permanently changes us, and cannot be undone by a simple freewill decision. Read our booklet *24 Reasons Why Salvation is Permanent for Christians* at [www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com) Topic: Recommended Reading.

8. Although Christians will be ministers of the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:6), that covenant was foretold to, and made with, Israel (Heb. 8:8-10; Jer. 31:31-34). Jesus ratified it in his blood before the Sacred Secret was ever revealed. The covenant blessings that were promised in the OT, such as perfect health, deserts blooming, no war, lions eating grass like oxen, are not yet realized, but will be in the Millennial Kingdom. No specific covenant was ever made between God and the Church.

9. Jesus instructed his apostles to pray using “Father” in the Gospels, but in the Eastern culture, “Father” was a term that was used in a variety of ways. Among other uses, “father” showed endearment or respect, or to refer to one who could give help and advice. Joseph was made a “father” to Pharaoh (Gen. 45:8); Micah asked the wandering Levite to be a “father” to him, but the Danites wanted him to be a father to them (Judg. 17:10 and 18:19); Elisha called Elijah “father” (2 Kings 2:12), Naaman’s servants called him “father” (2 Kings 5:13); the king of Israel called Elisha “father” (2 Kings 6:21); etc. The point is that the term “father” in the Eastern culture did not necessarily refer to birth. In the Old Testament God was a God to be feared and obeyed as a God of Judgment. Jesus changed people’s perception of God from that distant relationship to the more intimate relationship of “Father.” However, Jesus never taught that one day God would literally be a Father who would give birth in people and impart His very nature to them, making them part of His family, that was part of the Sacred Secret.

10. For the differences between Holy Spirit and holy spirit, see our book *The Gift of Holy Spirit: Every Christian’s Divine Deposit* (page 4 of the enclosed price list).

11. For further study, see our 90 minute audio teaching “Saved, Sealed, and Secure in Christ” (Nov/Dec 95) on page 2 of the enclosed price list.

12. The word “guarantee” (RSV), “guaranteeing” (NIV), “pledge” (NASB), or “earnest” (KJV), are the translations of the Greek word *arrabon*, which originally was a Phoenician word used in their trading. It was a down payment or pledge of the full amount that was to follow. In our case, the holy spirit that we have now is the down payment of all we will get in the future: new bodies, everlasting life, etc.

13. Although each Christian receives the gift of holy spirit the moment he is born again, he may not manifest it outwardly (such as by speaking in tongues). Just because a person does not manifest holy spirit does not mean he does not have it. See [www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com) Topic: Manifestations “Must one speak in Tongues to be Saved?”

14. “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9-NIV).

15. For much more detail on the Rapture, see our book *The Christian’s Hope*, pp. 21-34 and our booklet *23 Reasons to Believe in a Rapture Before the Great Tribulation* which can be read online at [www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com) Topic: Recommended Reading.

16. To see that the believer’s hope is going to be on earth, not heaven, see our book *The Christian’s Hope*. For the fact that before the Rapture (for Christians) or the restoration of the Kingdom (for Old Testament and Gospel believers), the dead are dead and not alive in heaven, see our book *Is There Death After Life?* Key chapters/sections of both books can be read online at [www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com) Topic: Recommended Reading.

## Go Figure

### Hypocatastasis—a comparison by implication

In this issue of *The Sower* we will examine the figure of speech, *Hypocatastasis* (pronounced; hi-poe-ca-tas-ta-sis), which is an important figure when studying the subject of the Sacred Secret.<sup>1</sup> There are three figures of comparison that are commonly used in the Bible (and by people today), although only two are generally known by name. The first is simile, which is a comparison by **resemblance**, usually using “like” or “as.” If a person is a sloppy and noisy eater, someone might say, “You eat **like** a pig.” Psalm 1:3 says a righteous person is **like** a tree planted by the water.

More intense than a simile is the figure metaphor, a comparison by **representation**. In a metaphor, one noun represents another. In the pig example above, a metaphor is

stronger than a simile, and would be, “You **are** a pig.” Genesis 49:9 says Judah **is** a lion’s whelp. Jesus said to his disciples, “I **am** the vine; you **are** the branches” (John 15:5a NIV).

Even more intense than metaphor is the figure *hypocatastasis*, which is a comparison by **implication**. In the pig example, instead of comparing the messy eater with a pig by saying he is **like** a pig, or even that he **is** a pig, in *hypocatastasis* the comparison is just implied. One person says to the other, “Pig!” and the person spoken to gets the idea. Although the comparison is implied, the meaning is effectively communicated.

*Hypocatastasis* is used very effectively in our everyday language. If a person helps you when you need it, you might look at him or her and say, “You angel!” If someone lies to you, you might say, “Snake!” When someone is being overly hesitant, he gets called, “Chicken.” As long as the comparison is well known in the culture, the implied meaning is not confused.

When we are studying *hypocatastasis* in the Bible, we must be careful because we are less familiar with the Hebrew language than the English language, and there is a chance we could confuse the implied meaning. Nevertheless, most meanings are clear. Some biblical examples of *hypocatastasis* are: the “serpent” in Genesis 3:1 is the Devil, just as he is in Revelation 20:2. Samson’s “heifer” that the Philistines plowed with was actually Samson’s wife (Judg. 14:18). The lover’s “dove” was not a bird, but his beloved woman (Song of Sol. 2:14). Other examples are “lion” (Jer. 4:7), “dogs” (Phil. 3:2), “fox” (Luke 13:2), “plant” (Matt. 15:13), “leaven” (Matt. 16:6).

Figures of comparison are helpful in communication because they quickly bring both meaning and emotional impact to a situation that would otherwise take a lengthy description. Imagine how long it would take to describe the way a person was eating and how it was affecting you emotionally, when all you have to say is “You eat like a pig,” and the meaning is clear.

*Hypocatastasis* is important in the study of the Sacred Secret. When a person gets born again, he is filled and sealed with holy spirit, the very nature of God. God could go into a lengthy discussion of the holy spirit in us, but in Colossians 1:27 He uses the figure *hypocatastasis* and simply says that we have “Christ” in us. Now we all know that Jesus is in heaven at the right hand of God, so “Christ” is not literally in us, the holy spirit is. Nevertheless, that holy spirit is so powerful, and so enables us to be like Jesus Christ, that God uses *hypocatastasis* and says that “Christ” is in us.

God is the Author of language, and employs it with perfect precision. It is up to us to study His Word, knowing the grammar, vocabulary, and other linguistic keys so that we can understand His originally intended meanings. Then we can properly apply His truth and see its benefit in our lives.

1. The best work on the more than 200 literary figures of speech used in the Bible is *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, written in 1898 by E. W. Bullinger. It has been published by several different publishing houses, and is currently being published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI.

# PARTNER PROFILE: DALLAS ESTES

When I was young, I sought after a “higher power.” I couldn’t accept that all there was to life was to make money and die with the most toys. With all the miracles and intricacies of life, our existence could not be meaningless, and, to me, that idea was bogus. I moved to Northwest Arkansas and quickly made friends with Josh Anderson, whose father, James, held a weekly fellowship. James is very well versed in Scripture, a workman approved before the Lord. The simplicity of God’s Word amazed me. However, things in my life had to hit rock bottom before I really understood how much I needed the Word. Shortly after turning 19, I truly made Jesus Christ my Lord. I had believed in him my entire life, but was never so convinced of the power and peace of God’s love until then.

Josh and I coordinated our local ministry and began to do research on another ministry when we found you. It wasn’t long before our fellowship was in contact with you and holding classes using some of your materials. The *One God & One Lord* book became like a textbook for some of us. We just couldn’t get enough of the knowledge within its pages.

In the summer of 2003, five of us decided to test the waters and headed to the Teens & Twenties Camp. We had a very awesome experience, by far one of the best weeks of my life. I really felt I had grown connected to the Spirit & Truth community, and understanding that it takes money to run a ministry, it was in my heart to give back.

I took advantage of the Partnership Plan, an opportunity to support this unique ministry. I thought to myself, “So much of my money goes to waste. I spend it on necessities, sure, but I spend so much more on worldly objects I really don’t need. How many more people could hear the wonderful Word of God like I heard if I gave a portion of my earnings back to this community?” I am pleased to turn my earnings into a tool for Christ. I don’t want to stand before the Lord and only then realize what I could have done for him.

I want my testimony to encourage young and old alike to get involved in and support the Body of Christ “while it is still day.” We as individuals are not capable of doing what we as a community are. Let us work as a community to better serve our Lord, Christ Jesus. Let us fight the good fight in every way we can.

Speaking the truth in love,

Dallas Estes  
Fayetteville, AR

# WEBSITE FEEDBACK

Dear Sower,

My name is LaDasha Reeder. I just united with a new church (Praise God) and I am taking a new beginner class. I always like to try to complete my lesson before that subject is taught in class, so tonight I studied the Holy Spirit. I read many scriptures about speaking in tongues, however, my previous church believed (so I believed) that speaking in tongues was a gift given to certain people.

However, after completing my lesson I prayed to God for understanding because I had these old thoughts in my head but a yearning in my heart to know the truth. God told me to look it up. So that is what I did. I went to yahoo.com and searched speaking in tongues. Your site was the 1st one on the list, so I began to read it [This is because we have keyword advertising on this phrase – a ten cent click that changed a life]. As I was reading I noticed similarities of what my Pastor is teaching on Faith and the promises that God already promised us.

It then became my time to try speaking in tongues for myself. I'll admit I was hesitant. So I prayed again. Then I did as you said in the article and opened my mouth and spoke words that made no sense to me. So as I am speaking in tongues I notice that I didn't want to stop. As I finished I began to cry and thank God for knowledge and understanding.

Now, I was raised in the church but did not know God. Now that I am in my new church I am amazed everyday at the things that God reveals to me. I thank my new Pastor for teaching me that I have access to all God's promises and I'd like to thank you for helping me open a new chapter with God. This is truly my 1st of many.

Thank you,  
LaDasha Reeder  
Lima, Ohio

[If you would like to speak in tongues or know someone that would, go to [www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com) Topic: Manifestations "What is Speaking in Tongues and Why Does God say to do it?"]

---

Dear Sower,

WOW!

What great teachings you have on your website [[www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com)]. It is such a blessing to hear somebody else teaching that prayer is not meant to primarily be used to petition God but to rather commune with him.

Religion has really sent a lot of Christians for a loop but your teaching is the type we need to hear today!

You are blessed!

Sincerely,  
Tom Tompkins Jr.  
Winlight Ministries

[To read some empowering articles on prayer, go to [www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com) Topic: Prayer.]

---

Dear Sower,

I enjoyed the article on your TruthOrTradition website about Tithing vs. Giving very much and it confirmed what I had kind of knew. It amazes me how many Christians are deceived in the area of tithing and in bondage. I believe a lot is due to pastors who teach unscriptural messages and have people in guilt and condemnation and they often quote Malachi 3. If I express my feelings or thoughts I am considered as either a troublemaker, not submitting to their authority or such. Thank you for your teaching and I will endeavor to share it with those in leadership and my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Malcolm M.

---

Dear Sower,

I was an atheist who has set out to disprove God. (laughing) Well I found him. However I never believed that when we die we go to heaven or the Trinity (something about it didn't settle right with me). But I didn't believe in other aspects of other religions that teach no heaven for us. It has been a hard time for me. As I read, I have cried, I feel so excited to have found people who believe as I. Thanks.

Melinda  
Brampton Ontario, Canada

[To learn more about what happens if you die, visit [www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com) Topic: Death After Life]

---

Dear Sower,

I just want to tell you that the article on the "absent Christ" was excellent!!  
[[www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com) Topic: FAQ2 "Does the Word take the place of the absent

Christ?"] The way in which you express the truth is very logical and I am continually thankful for all your labor in successfully communicating in these articles and your other materials the love, heart and tenderness of our Lord. Once again GREAT JOB!! God bless.

Lee K.

---

Dear Sower,

I was brought to the site ([www.TruthOrTradition.com](http://www.TruthOrTradition.com)) through Ramona Feldman who is associated with you guys. I work with her and she witnessed to me about 2 1/2 years ago, I'm sooo blessed to know the TRUTH about God's Word and His Son Jesus Christ! I love the site, and between fellowship with her and references on the site, I am growing stronger in the Word constantly!!

I can't say enough how the website has blessed me! The articles and information is a constant base of knowledge to rely on and certainly keep me fed with God's Word!

God Bless all of you that work on the website and at the Home Office, I love you guys!!

Thankssss!!!

Nicholas J. Martino  
West Caldwell, NJ

## **Meet the newest Spirit & Truth Fellowship International Staff Member - Rachel Collum!**



Hello and God bless you abundantly! My name is Rachel Candace Collum, and I am the newest member of the Home Office staff. I graduated from the University of Northern Iowa in May with a Bachelor of Arts in Family Services, and moved to Indianapolis from my hometown in Cedar Falls, Iowa. I grew up surrounded by the love of my parents, brothers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Leaving my family behind and starting this new chapter in my life has proved to be a very challenging move for me, however I had to make the choice to follow the lead God instilled in my heart. I feel this is my time to spread my wings, grow, and develop into the woman God has created me to be. It is my desire to wholeheartedly serve the family of God, and to spread the truth of God's Word. Just after his resurrection in Matthew 28:19, Jesus told his disciples, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..." I am ready, and excited, to do just that!

I also have a great drive in my heart to reach out to the younger girls of this ministry. The world tries to pull us in many harmful directions, especially when one is young and impressionable. I have experienced some of those things firsthand, and I know how much of a struggle it can be to live an upright life amidst the spiritual battle raging in this world. I want to reach out to the younger girls who will be facing the realities of this world soon, and help them find resources to utilize in their battle to live an upright life before God.

My vision for this ministry grows day by day. My first weeks here at the Home Office have opened my eyes to the abundance of love within the family of God. I am daily amazed at the overwhelming peace and joy I feel, as well as the complete acceptance and unconditional love I am constantly given. It is my vision that the family of God, and in particular this ministry, will reach out with the love of our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ to extend a welcome to all we come into contact with. My vision is that by the time I am old and gray, this ministry will be many times the size it is now. I am very excited about this great opportunity to serve you! Please feel free to let me know if I can help you in any way.

Much love in Christ,  
Rachel Candace Collum