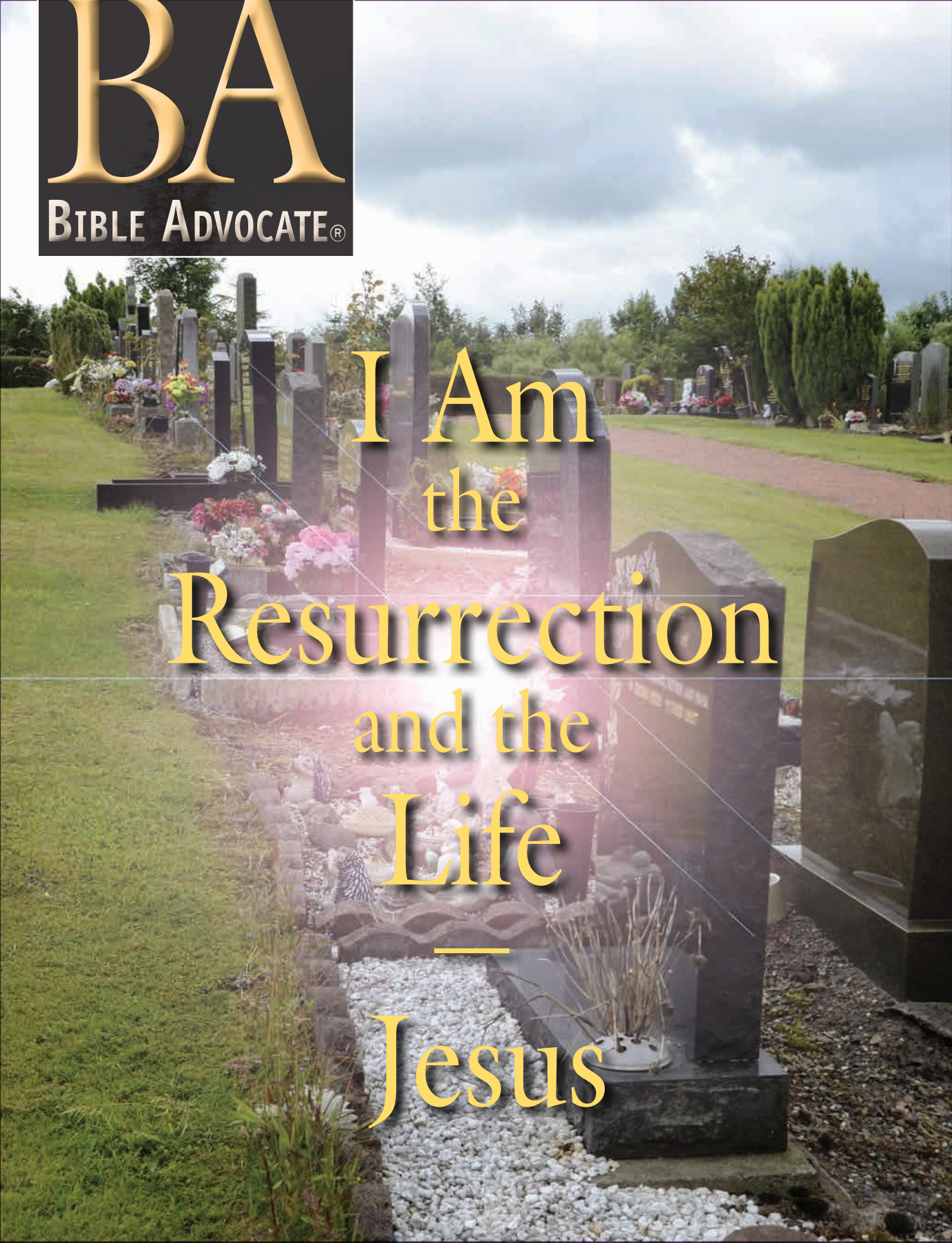


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I Am  
the  
Resurrection  
and the  
Life  
—  
Jesus



# Inside

## 2015: Crossroads

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This periodical's earliest name, *The Hope of Israel*, came from Paul's defense (Acts 25:6-8) of his belief in the resurrection — the theme of this issue 152 years later.

— BA

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## Die, Death, Die!

Right here at the top, let yourself be drawn to the topics of life, death, and life again – Resurrection 101. What is life? One crazy thing after another, I’ve heard said, just like love is two crazy things after each other. Human life means that we display the vital signs of heartbeat, breathing, and brainwaves. To be worth the living, though, life must be much more than that. There is such a thing as being dead while we live.

What is death? It’s the end of breath, heartbeat, and brainwaves, yes. But a lot of stuff can lower our lives to a grave with the ends kicked out, long before we flat-line physically. Spiritual death is life that’s been trumped with thoughts, actions, words, and habits that bring needless pain to others and us. All this junk is sin, trending down toward a pit of darkness and destruction: “The End.”

What is resurrection, then? It depends on which sorts of life and death we’re talking about. If it’s the great gettin’-up morning that Jesus and Paul promised for Christians, then resurrection is what lies at the end of that mysterious interval through which we pass from this life en route to a new and improved eternal life. It’s a new immortal body and soul that will last us forever, thanks to God’s grace and the lively Spirit within.

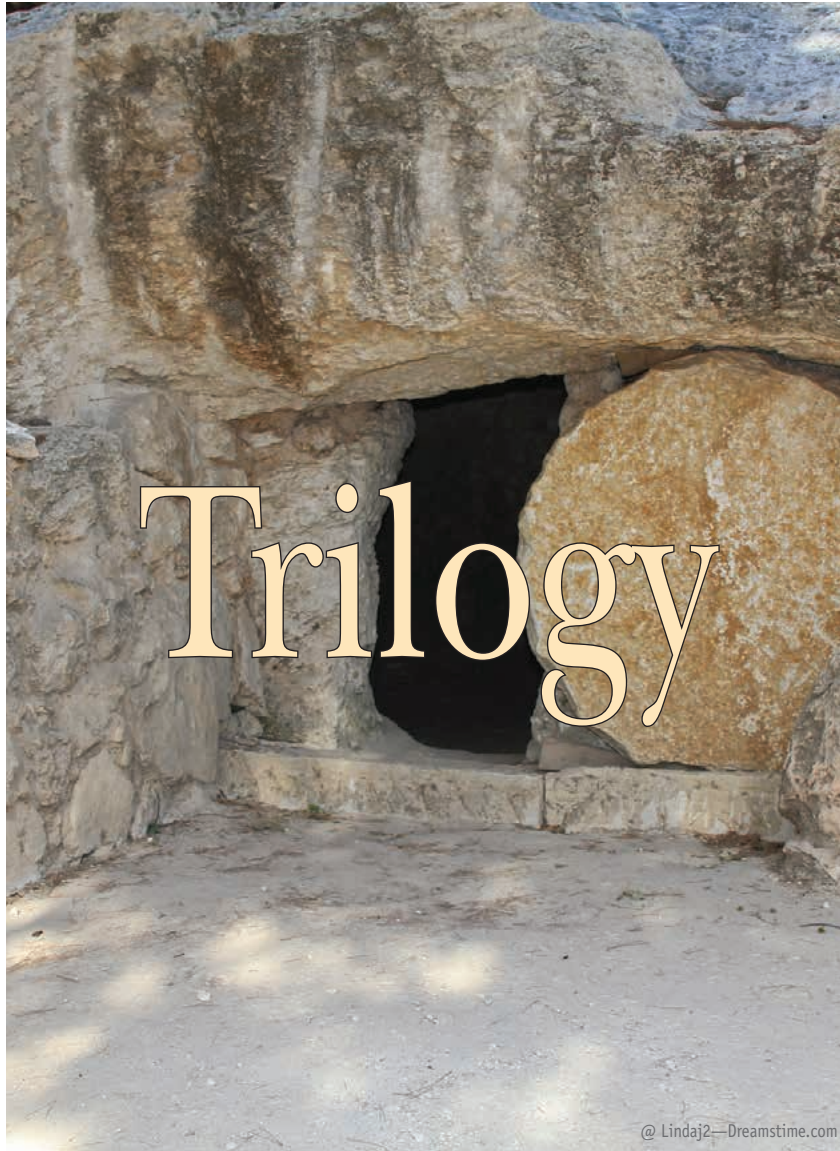
But if we’re talking about a life form that’s ruled by junk and pain, then resurrection is the “new life” that can happen on the inside when we look full into the face of Jesus, hear His voice, and live – *now!*

*Life* indeed means so much more than the presence of vital body signs. It embraces any or all of the attitudes, actions, practices, and lifestyles that fill people and others around them with light and love, joy and peace, hope and assurance. These precious particles provide an atmosphere and a culture in which persons, families, and communities can flourish and be abundantly blest!

Just as *life* and *death* have spiritual meanings that point beyond bare existence, so *resurrection* points toward the possibility of new and improved forms of life here and now – before the new body promised at Christ’s return. The hour in which the dead may hear the voice of the Son of God and live is *now* (John 5:21). With this resurrection of the Spirit on our résumé, we have the assurance of final resurrection to come.

– Calvin Burrell





## As It Was

As a kid, I developed interest in old things. My uncle, a carpenter, taught me to refinish, rebuild, and restore antique furniture. Later, I happened on some magazines the library was throwing away. They were full of stories of tractor and hit-and-miss engine restorations. Starting with “the find” in an old barn or back in the timber, the writers told how they brought their equipment back to new condition, piece by piece.

I was hooked. Over the next several years I accumulated quite a pile of old engines, pump jacks, a garden tractor, mini-bikes, chainsaws, and other miscellaneous junk that I crammed into my parents’ garage attic. I wanted to bring it all back to its former glory. My parents tolerated my obsession, but soon after I got married and moved from their home, they began making plans for an “attic cleaning.” I got the impression they expected my involvement.

I was excited to find in Scrip-

ture that I’m not the only one who cares about restoration. So does God. In the book of Jeremiah, He speaks to the broken and desolate land of Israel, a nation living under judgment for their sin, with siege ramps still standing as reminders of their disobedience: “For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were before,” says the LORD” (Jeremiah 33:11b, NIV throughout). In spite of all Israel’s sin, the desolation of the land, and how bad things had become, God continually offered Israel the hope of restoration.

\* \* \* \*

Humanity wasn’t always broken. At the beginning of time, God saw everything He had made and called it “good.” Before sin entered the world, before the first murder, before man worshipped creation and the works of his own hands, there was a time of perfection. Man walked and talked freely with his Creator, lived in harmony with animals and nature, and experienced no fear, shame, or guilt. The future was ripe with possibility. But sin ruined that perfect world. Hope was lost.

Working as a chaplain and rural church pastor, I’ve seen many situations where loss of a loved one, a broken marriage, or the daily pressures of life all but destroyed hope for the future. How do you face tomorrow after losing both your children in a car wreck? How do you find peace when your spouse walks out the door? Where is the justice for victims of abuse? Where is the excitement and wonder we viewed the world with when we were young?



But hope is not lost: A change is coming to humanity! The Bible speaks of a day when broken bodies will be clothed in immortality (1 Corinthians 15:50-57), when all the dead in Christ will come to life (vv. 20-23), and of a new world where only righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13). This doesn't sound like what I watch on the news!

\* \* \* \*

I recall hearing people say that the kingdom of God will be one long church service where we walk around in a city of gold, sing hymns, and never sleep. To be honest, I didn't feel very drawn to an eternity like that. I'm not even sure where these ideas came from.

Looking at Scripture, I find not an eternity of "going to church" but a new world without the scars created by man. I look forward to a reunion of families, a beautiful land of rivers and trees, and a city where the nations of the world bring their honor and best earthly achievements. I read of a day when the glory of God is all that is needed for perfect healing and wholeness, a day when He will wipe away every tear (Revelation 21:1-5, 22-27; 22:1-5).

For the believer, restoration becomes a natural part of who we are. We live and move with an expectation. This isn't the end. The pain won't last, and separation is only for a moment. This is what sustains us through loss and disappointment. This is what helps us believe that there can be a future beyond our past.

Sometimes we need to look back at history to a time when all things were new, to God's

continual promise to restore, and finally, to a day when God puts all things right — "As it was in the beginning. . . ." Let us comfort each other with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

— *Tim Steinhauer,  
Stanberry, MO*

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## Family Reunions

At the edge of Oregon's Pacific Coast Range, on the first small hill about six miles west of Junction City, is a beautiful evergreen-lined cemetery. It is not large — perhaps two hundred yards square — but it's a precious place to my wife, Sandra, and me. When the time comes, this is where I wish to rest, waiting for Jesus' return and the resurrection to eternal life.

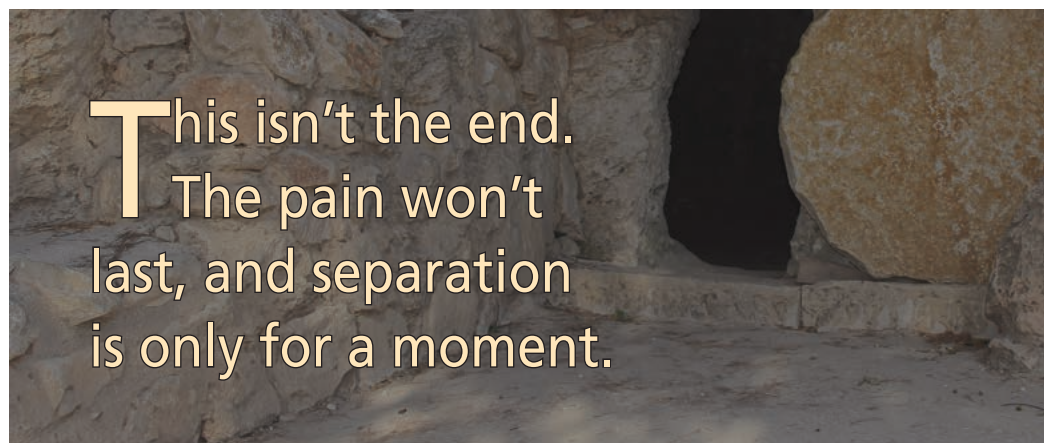
Why this cemetery? With our hope and faith in the promise of resurrection, wouldn't any piece of ground do as well? Of course! It's not where or how we're buried — in a casket and vault, ashes in an urn, or on an ocean bottom. The critical thing is faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

But this specific cemetery is special to me. Laid to rest there in Rest Lawn Memorial Park are my father and mom, a brother-in-law, and a nephew. There also are Sandra's dad, mom, and grandmother. Our families rest together, so this place holds precious people and precious memories for us. That's why I wouldn't mind resting there and waiting for the call of the Lord to the first resurrection, to a new body and a new life. Job's hope is ours:

I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes — I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:25-27, NIV throughout).

On resurrection day, what a joyful reunion will take place as family members and dear loved ones rise together, grinning and clicking their heels in an airborne dance of joy, hugging each other in ecstasy as they rise to meet Jesus.

From every continent and nation, the earth will open and release all the faithful in Christ. Each of you reading this has



your own list of precious family and friends you're thinking of now — people who were faithful and impacted your life. Enjoy the memory of them and anticipate the joyful reunion!

I look forward to a joyful reunion with a young man who died too soon, a victim of muscular dystrophy. Davey will get a brand new body, and his contagious grin will be part of the joyful celebration with his family and many more.

For Sandra and me, the same joyful reunion will take place with dear saints from churches we've served in San Antonio, Texas; Shawnee, Oklahoma; Lodi and Visalia, California; and Redmond, Oregon. All of these and more will rise to joyful reunion with their faithful loved ones, and together they will see the face of our living Redeemer!

In Jefferson, Oregon, there's another tree-lined cemetery, with rows of families who were faithful to their Lord Jesus and to their local church. They had the sure hope of the resurrection in their hearts. Dozens of gravesites in this place will burst open in one instant. So many will rise up that this cemetery may look like a bomb went off!

As you read this issue of the

*Bible Advocate*, you can know without a doubt that this hope of the first resurrection is a promise of God and Jesus Christ, who never fail on a promise: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25, 26).

If you believe this, get ready for a joyful reunion. And be faithful in the meantime!

— Ken Lawson  
Cottage Grove, MN

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## Future Assurance

In the present era, we experience hard times in all aspects of life. People are restless and rebellious. Humanity bleeds, with cut veins everywhere. Cries from innermost beings are heard daily for someone to intervene before the situation becomes unbearable.

Pain, sadness, and tears are heard and seen all around until softly, like a fantastic vision, hope for a better world emerges.

For Christians, this hope tran-

sends — from chaos to order, from mortal to immortal, from the provisional to the eternal. In Scripture, it is expressed in the coming of the Lord in the clouds with great glory, bringing change in which there will be no more tears or pain, but this exclamation: "Death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54).

Such has been the great desire of God's children through the centuries — the anchor that has held them in persecution, in adversity, and in challenge.

Brethren in Thessalonica had the same hope, but restlessness had returned. They worried for those who had died, not sure they would participate in the glory when God's Son returns. Paul encouraged the church, "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13, NIV throughout).

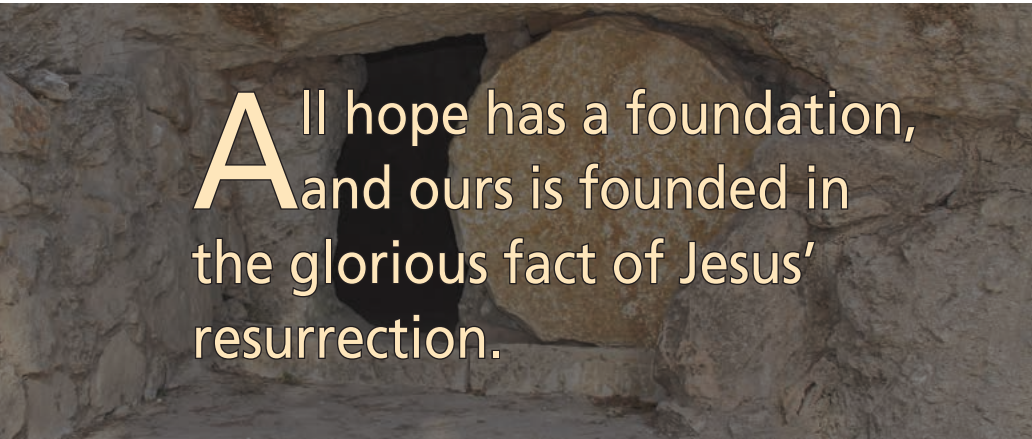
The passing of a loved one brings sadness and pain, but not everything ends there. Paul encourages believers to comfort others with the hope of resurrection when the Lord returns. This hope has two fundamental aspects:

- Our faith. "We believe that Jesus died and rose again . . ." (v. 14a).

In contrast to the hopelessness and confusion in Thessalonica and in the world today, Paul makes this simple, firm declaration, familiar to every believer: Christ died and resurrected!

All hope has a foundation, and ours is founded in the glorious fact of Jesus' resurrection. If to

*continued on page 15*



All hope has a foundation,  
and ours is founded in  
the glorious fact of Jesus'  
resurrection.

# Questions & Answers



**CoG7** understands that Jesus was raised before sunset Sabbath evening, after three full days and nights in the tomb. If Matthew 28:1ff and Mark 16:1ff record different visits to the tomb, as your theory holds, why did the same women go back to the same place for the same reason, only to be told the same thing they heard on their first visit more than twelve hours earlier? Does the truth of Christ's resurrection stand or fall with the seventy-two-hour entombment theory?

**Jesus** was asked by some unbelieving Jews to perform a miraculous sign. He replied that the only sign to be given was "the sign of the prophet Jonah," who spent "three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:38-40, NIV throughout). On another occasion when asked for a sign, Jesus said, "Destroy this temple [meaning His body], and I will raise it again in three days" (John 2:19).

All the Gospels report Jesus' resurrection. Matthew's narrative of it is closest to its occurrence. The Authorized Version of the Bible, along with many others, correctly states that the tomb was empty when Mary Magdalene and Mary visited it near the end of the Sabbath (Matt. 28:1, KJV).

When considering the women's visits to Jesus' tomb, it is important to note that Matthew says they came "to look at the tomb." Mark and Luke report their visit was at sunrise the first day of the week. This time, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James were accompanied by Salome and expected to anoint Jesus' body. They brought the spices they had prepared for that purpose (Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1).

We must give these anxious women the privilege of visiting the tomb more than once. They found it difficult to believe Jesus had risen. In disbelief, Mary Magdalene again went to the tomb, by herself, and saw Jesus, but she did not recognize Him. Thinking He was the gardener, she inquired, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him. . . ." It wasn't until Jesus called her name, "Mary," that she recognized Him and believed He had risen. She told the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" (John 20:15, 18).

Jesus' disciples were slow to believe the reports that He had risen, but upon seeing Him personally, "The disciples were overjoyed . . ." (v. 20). When He appeared to Thomas a week later, Thomas confessed, "My Lord and my God!" (v. 28). John writes that only after Jesus was risen, "His disciples recalled what he had said" about raising the temple again in three days. "Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken" (2:22).

The study of Jesus' entombment for three days and three nights simply proves Jesus fulfilled the miraculous sign He promised the Jews. After Pentecost, the apostles emphasized the importance of His resurrection more than its time element. They taught the gospel that saves is belief in Christ who died for our sins, was buried, and was raised again on the third day (1 Cor. 15:2-4). The reality of His resurrection is our only hope of a glorious resurrection when He returns to establish His eternal kingdom (vv. 20-23).

— Elder Robert Coulter

*A 30-page booklet on the time of Jesus' entombment is available for \$1.50 through Bible Advocate Press.*



# Women of Witness

How those who first saw the risen Lord affirm the truth of Resurrection. **by Jason Overman**



Jperagine—Dreamstime.com

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre (Matthew 28:1, KJV).

**A**t the heart of our faith is a story. This story is called the gospel, or good news, because it alters the course of history. We are all familiar with the four Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — and the grand narrative they tell of Jesus of Nazareth. But it is the climax of His life, at the end of these four, that focuses us on the heart of the gospel.

Writing to the church in Corinth, Paul recalls this gospel

story and summarizes it in three events:

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures . . . (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4).

The simple gospel message is this: Jesus died, Jesus was buried, and Jesus rose again.

Death we know; it is the way of all living. Burial too we are acquainted with; it is the common course of things. But resurrection! What is this? How can it be? Here is something no one saw coming — an unlikely twist in the story that made all the difference.

First Corinthians 15 is all about *resurrection*, and everything, it turns out, depends on its historic veracity. Paul speaks boldly: If Christ is not raised, he argues against those in Corinth who denied Jesus' bodily resurrection, then our preaching is vain, our faith is futile, our witness is false, the dead are perished, and we are still in our sins (vv. 12-19).

But Paul is not about to concede any of this. Why? Because the truth of the resurrected Lord rested largely upon, and spread throughout the world by, its witnesses. Paul was only one of over five hundred of them.

If Paul was the last eyewitness to see the risen Christ (vv. 5-11), who then were the first?



## Unlikely witnesses

And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" (Mark 16:3).

All four Gospels conclude with the story of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. All four also agree and give attention to a small group of Jesus' closest female disciples who came by night to visit the sepulcher of their fallen Rabbi and became the first witnesses of the empty tomb and risen Lord. Looking back, we realize how crucial and unlikely their witness was.

Matthew names the women who stumbled upon the most exciting moment of human history as Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" (28:1). Mark names three: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome (16:1). Luke names a larger group, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and "the other women with them" (24:10). John mentions only Mary Magdalene specifically, though Mary refers to others when she runs to Peter with news that Jesus' body was taken (20:1, 2).

We also learn from the four Gospels that these women were present with Jesus at the cross, observed His death, and were at His burial with Joseph of Arimathea. Upon learning He was risen, they were tasked to go and tell the good news to His disciples, which made them our first gospel evangelists.

## Unreliable witnesses

These special women were eyewitnesses to all three stages of the gospel story that Paul out-

lined to the Corinthians. It was their privileged calling, ironically, to be the foundational witnesses to the greatest story ever told. Ironic, because an event as impossible as resurrection depended on the reliability of its eyewitnesses, but at this time in human history, sadly, women were not considered reliable witnesses.

In a short section entitled "The Strange Presence of the Women in the Story" in his impressive book *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, N. T. Wright affirms that women in Jesus' time were not considered acceptable legal witnesses.<sup>1</sup>

Consider Josephus' commentary on the "law of witnesses" from Deuteronomy 19:15: "From women let no evidence be accepted, because of the levity and temerity of their sex."<sup>2</sup>

Don't you just love our God?

## Important women

But they found the stone rolled away . . . Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:2, 3).

Luke's Gospel presents the dilemma most starkly. In his introduction he tells Theophilus his purpose to write an ordered and certain account of what was re-

ceived from eyewitnesses (1:1-4). But in his conclusion Luke reveals that it is Jesus' female disciples who get the first and closest glimpse of His death, burial, and resurrection.

It is counter-intuitive. Luke, in order to tell the truth of things, must tell the story as it happened, even if it works against the cultural norms and his own apologetic aims. If his book is mere fiction, he would certainly not have had a group of Galilean women as the stars of the story.

If Luke is aware of the conundrum, he shows no sign of it. From the start of his Gospel he emphasizes the important role of women in the life of Jesus. From righteous Elizabeth to blessed Mary to Anna the prophetess: These three are featured prominently in just the first two chapters of his Gospel.

It is Luke who tells us that "many" woman followed Jesus early on (8:1-3). This very group of women, among whom are Mary Magdalene and Joanna, Luke identifies at the cross and sepulcher, having come with Jesus all the way from Galilee (23:49, 55).

If it is not incredible enough that all four Gospels elevate these women to the role of chief witnesses of the Resurrected, it

At this time in human history,  
sadly, women were not  
considered reliable witnesses.

is equally remarkable that this group of tenacious women had been following Jesus all over the countryside, going so far as Jerusalem with Him. Commenting on the social status of first century Jewish women, Christian historian Joachim Jeremias states that women took no part in public life and were encouraged to stay indoors in private seclusion.<sup>3</sup>

## Writing the truth

Certainly, and thankfully, our women of witness were not in seclusion during Jesus' life and ministry; they were right there with Him. But the conventions of the day ran deep. Consider this curious event: When Mary and her friends ran to tell the news of the Lord's resurrection, Luke notes that "their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them" (24:11). So was their witness rejected because resurrection was too much to hope for, or was it because they were *women*?

Luke owns this story because he is convinced it is true. If it were not true and his intent was to deceive or impress, no doubt he would have pandered to the culture. But he is not interested in making the story more palatable to his readers, to give them

a story they would like to hear rather than the one he is impelled to tell. The truth is critical, even if it is unbelievable.

Luke is not afraid of the consequences of this unlikely story, nor its first witnesses, because their calling at the climax of Jesus' life and ministry bears witness to His person and teaching. The world may scoff, but with our God it makes perfect sense that the first to see and worship the Risen would be this lowly group of faithful women who had followed Jesus for so long.

Despite legal norms, Luke does not dodge the challenge. He embraces it, as do all the Gospel writers. Had not the Lord rebuked the Twelve just days before His rising for arguing among themselves over who would be counted the greatest? Did He not say, "He who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. . . . I am among you as the One who serves" (22:26, 27)?

## Legacy

Reflecting on the gospel story, and perhaps on its first witnesses as well, Paul says much the same: "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put

to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:27).

This is the legacy of the women of witness. To the world they were weak and foolish, but to God they were chosen to shame the mighty and wise. The great become the least and the least become the great. These ladies were beloved of the Lord, and they followed Him even where others would not go: to His cross and His grave. They returned three days later to anoint Him and got the biggest surprise of their lives. And what they saw echoes and endures down to this day, as does our hope of resurrection life.

Against all human odds, the witness of this incredible band of women was told simply because it was true. And now, all these years later, the inclusion of their testimony, deemed unreliable by their world, makes the old, old story seem all the more believable to ours. **BA**

*Author's note: This article is dedicated to my dear sister in Christ, Kathy Lawson.*

## End notes

1. N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 607.
2. *Ibid.*, footnote 55.
3. Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, 359-360, 376.

**Then** the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping. . . . Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" . . . "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" . . . (John 20:10, 11, 15, 16).

**Jason Overman**  
pastors the Jasper,  
AR church and is  
general manager of  
the *Harrison Daily  
Times*.





# THE RESURRECTED ONE

by Calvin Burrell

**W**hy is Jesus of Nazareth the most memorable and remarkable person who ever lived? Because of

- the manner of His life;
- the meaning of His death;
- His amazing victory over death; and
- His incomparable impact in human history.

Any one of these is compelling cause to consider the claims of Christ.

The third, Jesus' resurrection, lends the most weight and conviction to the others. Without the millisecond miracle that changed His corpse to a new body-soul-spirit with endless glory, other arguments for our faith would soon crumble.

The resurrection of Jesus sets Christianity apart. No other world religion claims that its founder left an empty tomb. Not Hinduism. Not Buddhism. Not Islam. (Mohammed died on June 8, 632, and his tomb is visited by multitudes at Medina.) Not even Judaism, whose heroes are all dead and buried. Christ's victory over death has always been the distinguishing tenet of faith for the Christian church.

The bodily raising of Christ from death plays a vital role in the Bible's programs of atonement. If He is not risen, the penalty for our sins was not paid at

the cross, nor was it accepted in heaven. If He is not risen, death is not defeated, and we have no hope beyond the present. If He is not risen, then take your pick of the world's religious leaders, and walk on in darkness.

Jesus not only foretold His resurrection but also stressed that His return from the dead would be *the* sign to confirm Him as God's promised Messiah-Son. Christ predicted both His death and resurrection, like this: "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be

raised the third day" (Luke 9:22). He knew that His future would include the painful humiliation of the cross and the joyous exaltation set before Him three days and nights later.

May our hearts and minds be filled with this truth assembled from many texts: that the resurrection of the divine Son, Lord of heaven and earth, is God's guarantee that all created things will be renewed in like fashion, and that all foes of life and freedom will be forever banished to oblivion. Call this our "everything" guarantee — in Christ. **BA**

## Can We Know He's Alive?

- Yes — by Jesus' own words: "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen" (Revelation 1:18).
- Yes — by the testimony of five hundred-plus eyewitnesses (1 Corinthians 15:4-8). Many of these were dramatically changed by their encounter with the risen Christ. Eleven apostles, who had fled Christ's cross for fear, later died as martyrs for what they preached: the death and resurrection of Christ.
- Yes — by His post-resurrection appearances to Mary and the other women. Read these in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20. Jesus' resurrection is one of the best-documented facts of history.
- Yes — by His words to doubters like Thomas: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29).
- Yes — by who He was and is: the ever-living One destined to destroy death. As God's Son, the divine Christ couldn't possibly be confined by hell and the grave.
- Yes — because He lives within our hearts. We know that we know that we know . . . beyond pure reason.

— CAB



# Our Blessed Hope: Resu

## Old Testament Previews

**Isaac** – early type of resurrection (Genesis 22:1-18; Hebrews 11:17-19)  
At God’s word, Abraham went, built an altar, bound his son, and took the knife to slay him. As good as dead, Isaac was received back from death *figuratively* when God stayed Abraham’s hand.

**Job** – early belief in resurrection (Job 19:25-27)  
“I know that my Redeemer lives . . . And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God . . . How my heart yearns within me!”

**David** – shared Job’s belief (Psalm 16:9b, 10a)  
“My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol. . . .”

**Psalmist** (49:15): “God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.”

**Isaiah** (26:19): “Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust . . . the earth shall cast out the dead.”

**Daniel** (12:2): “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

**Hosea** (6:2) and **Jonah** (1:17b) foreshadow Christ’s resurrection.

**Ezekiel** (37:1-14) paints a vivid scene of Israel – all God’s people – restored to life.

References to resurrection are rare before Job and Psalms. By the time of the prophets, we see a developing mosaic of God’s plan for life after death.

## Pinnacle of Gospels

**Matthew.** After Jonah’s resurrection sign, this Gospel records the angel’s words to the two Marys who first visited the tomb where Jesus’ body had been laid: “He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay” (12:38-40; 28:6). This first visit may have been late on Sabbath, as a new week drew on.

**Mark.** This second Gospel describes a young man in white telling the alarmed women, “But go, tell His disciples – and Peter – that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him . . .” (16:7). Was this a second visit by the women?

**Luke.** “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” (24:5b). This Gospel explains the women’s likely coming more than once to look for Jesus’ body. Even to the apostles, their words seemed like idle tales; they did not believe them (v. 11).

**John.** This fourth Gospel tells us Jesus came again eight days later, stood in their midst, and said, “Peace to you!” And to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands . . . put it into My side. . . . Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (20:26-29).

## Powerbase of Acts

**Acts.** Christ’s resurrection is the linchpin of the gospel message in this book of early church history. That Jesus died for our sins is essential; that He rose again is the compelling climax that sent the apostles far and wide with news of the Messiah-Savior (2:22-36; 3:15; 4:2; 10:39-41; 13:26-39; 17:31; 23:6; 24:15).



# Resurrection from the Dead

## Romans to Revelation

- Romans: In this greatest gospel epistle, resurrection is . . .
  - a powerful declaration (1:4)
  - new life to the dead (4:17, 24)
  - vital work in salvation (4:25; 5:10)
  - a close link with baptism (6:4-11; Colossians 2:12)
  - seen by the new life in us (8:11)
  - linked with adoption-redemption of the body (8:23)
  - an essential, core belief (10:9)
- Suffering and dying with Christ means living and reigning with Him (Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 4:8-16; Philippians 3:10, 11; 2 Timothy 2:11b, 12a).
- Ephesians contains rich passages on the implicit power of Christ's resurrection, the power that now works in all His people (1:15-23; 2:5-7; 4:7-12).
- Believers' resurrection is defined and described: Christ shall "transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body . . . when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2b).

- Christ's resurrection and ascension are described in union or tandem: He has been raised from the dead, highly exalted, crowned with glory and honor, and given the name above every name so that your faith and hope are in God (Acts 2:32, 33; 3:13; Philippians 2:9; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Peter 1:3, 21).
- Our blessed hope is that we may appear with Christ in glory as He returns to raise the righteous dead (Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13).

### Resurrection Chapter – 1 Corinthians 15:

- Gospel truth that saves (vv. 1-4)
- 515 or more eyewitnesses (vv. 5-11)
- Without it, faith and witness fall (vv. 12-19; also 2 Timothy 2:8)
- Jesus: firstfruits and final victor (vv. 20-28; also Colossians 1:18)
- Life-logic based on experience (vv. 29-34)
- Kind of body to be raised (vv. 35-49; also Philippians 3:21)
  - When the last trumpet sounds, death dies! (vv. 50-58)

- Peter gives his take on Christ's resurrection (1 Peter 3:18-22).

- Revelation begins with a vision of the resurrected Christ (1:12-18) and reaches the consummation of this age in two human resurrections, 1,000 years apart (20:4-6). **BA**

– Calvin Burrell

The whole argument establishes, with rock-solid theology and considerable rhetorical power, the point that the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah is the starting-point and means whereby the creator, in completing the work of rescuing and renewing the original creation, will raise all the Messiah's people to new bodily life. (N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, p. 337)





# Jesus' Resurrection and Israel's Feasts

@ Pavelgr—Dreamstime.com

A little-known holy day in ancient Israel anticipates the Christian's highest hopes. **by Jason Overman**

**T**he God and Father of Jesus is also the God and Father of Israel. This simple truth is beautifully illustrated in how the three central gospel events of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection coincided and fulfilled Israel's early spring festivals — Passover, Unleavened Bread, and the wave sheaf offering — outlined in the Torah (Leviticus 23:4-12).

The Gospels report Jesus'

death and burial on Nisan 14 and 15, the dates of Passover and Unleavened Bread (Mark 14:1) — the first two annual feasts. But it is less appreciated among us how Jesus' resurrection correlated with the presentation of the first sheaf of barley harvest.

“When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it” (Leviticus 23:10, 11).

It was from this day, described as “the day after the Sabbath” during the week of Unleavened Bread, that the fifty-day count began to Israel's next feast, Pentecost — another day with significance for Christians, when the Spirit was poured out on the church (Acts 2:1).

All four Gospels draw attention to the fact that the first witnesses to the Resurrection occurred on the “first day of the week” (Greek: “first day from Sabbath,” Mark 16:1). For those familiar with the waving of the sheaf during Unleavened Bread, the symbolic link between law and gospel is unmistakable.



While the women and disciples were making their visits to the tomb at Sabbath's end and early the next morning, not far away the temple priests were following the ancient ritual of wave sheaf. In his book *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*, Christian historian Alfred Edersheim describes this public festivity.

Just as the Sabbath sun was going down,\* three men with sickles and baskets set to work to reap the first sheaf, but only after asking the bystanders five questions three times each:

"Has the sun gone down?"

"With this sickle?"

"Into this basket?"

"On this Sabbath?"

"Shall I reap?"

Upon hearing each question answered in the affirmative, the men cut one ephah of barley. The ears were placed in the baskets and brought into the court of the temple to be thrashed, parched, and ground into flour. Then they were stored until the morrow when the priest mixed one *omer* of the flour with oil and frankincense and waved it publicly before the Lord to be accepted on behalf of Israel.

While the reapers and priests followed their ritual Sabbath evening and Sunday morning, a mere stone's throw away Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, and Joanna were discovering an empty tomb and seeing their risen Messiah "waved" in presentation and accepted of the Lord *for us*.

Paul writes that the "good news" of Jesus' death and resurrection was "according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). But which scriptures? These passages in the Torah concerning the Passover Lamb and the wave

sheaf would surely have come to Paul's mind as witnesses to the Messiah's work. It is good news indeed that Jesus died for our sins, but the news gets even better when Paul, drawing on this festival imagery, later explains that Jesus has "become the *firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep [died]" (v. 20).

Jesus' resurrection is just the beginning, the first step. Christ's rising is a microcosm of God's ultimate plan. What the Father has done *in His Son* is a promise of what He will do *through His Son* for all creation. Where death and darkness reigned, the light of life bursts forth like the first corn of spring, heralding the full harvest to come: "Christ the *firstfruits*, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (v. 23).

Long before there was Easter with its pagan associations, there was the biblical wave sheaf, that first handful of the barley harvest presented to the Lord in gratitude and anticipation of the full life-sustaining harvest still to come. Jesus is our wave sheaf, presented to God *for us* in resurrection as a promise of renewed life — eternal life — for all who believe. Amen. **BA**

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\* There was intense disagreement between the Pharisees and the Sadducees over whether this was the weekly Sabbath or the festival Sabbath of Nisan 15, the first day of Unleavened Bread. Edersheim agrees with the Pharisees on the point, but I believe the Sadducees had the better argument, in viewing "the day after the Sabbath" in Leviticus 23:11 as the first day of the week (*The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*, pp. 203-205).

## Trilogy

*continued from page 6*

believe and accept the death of Christ for sins erases our past, to believe and accept Jesus' resurrection from the dead illuminates our future. That is the second aspect:

- Assurance springing from our faith. "And so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him" (v. 14b).

Having established that Jesus died and was resurrected, now Paul declares that God will raise those who died with belief in Him. Therefore, brethren, don't be sad like those without hope. God will not forget His children. He will snatch them from the power of the tomb and bring them with Jesus, who bought them with His blood. These words are true and faithful.

There is a mystical bond between Christ and Christians. The destiny of the One is the destiny of the others. The head has been raised, and the body will be also: "Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him" (1 Corinthians 15:23). The firstfruits give assurance that there will be a final harvest at the Son's return.

All Paul said about the resurrection served to encourage the brethren of that time. Let us strengthen our hope with the assurance God gives us through His beloved Son, and share this great blessing with our troubled society. **BA**

— Gustavo Guerrero  
Irving, TX

# Remembering LeRoy Dais 1935-2014



LeRoy Dais was born in Eureka, South Dakota, on May 16, 1935, to George and Mary Dais. He grew up on the farm, with five brothers and two sisters: Aaron, Walter, Calvin, Milbert, Alice (Meier), Marvin, and Mabel (Cory). The Dais family, including uncles, aunts, and cousins, were Christians and lovers of Scripture, fully devoted to the Church of God (Seventh Day) in their small town. LeRoy was baptized into Jesus Christ at age 17.

After high school graduation, he attended Midwest Bible College in Stanberry, Missouri. There he met Hope Caswell from Canton, New York, also a Bible college student, and they married on June 7, 1955. Together, they produced four children: Bryan,

Susan (Dan Payne), Craig (Barbie), and Linda (Steve Stricker); eleven grandchildren (Brandon, Kristen, Bryana, Jessica, Caleb, and Tikvah Dais; Courtney and Carli Dais; Kaylee, Mandy, and McKenzie Stricker); and three great-grandchildren (Jacie, Josiah, and Isaiah).

After three years of Bible College, LeRoy began work at the Church's Publishing House in Stanberry, a ministry now known as Bible Advocate Press in Broomfield, Colorado. There he quickly worked through the ranks until, at age 25, he was named manager of the ten-person staff. LeRoy served more than thirty years as director of Publications, then became Bible curriculum editor, a job from which he never retired. Throughout his recent illness, he made his way to his desk at the office as often as possible.

To all who knew him, LeRoy was gentle and compassionate with a servant's heart, a love for people, and a selfless devotion to God and family. In addition to his fifty-eight-plus years of service through the Church, LeRoy and Hope led small groups to teach the principles of financial freedom through Crown Financial Ministries. LeRoy's heart for gospel missions motivated him

to both support with funds and spend countless hours corresponding with missionary workers and Church leaders abroad.

— BA

## Personal Friend

LeRoy Dais was a Christian of tremendous faith and conviction, a family man who cherished his wife and children. He was a friend and brother who showed hospitality to the many who visited their home. He was a churchman who devoted his life to proclaiming the gospel of Christ by producing the finest literature possible for the Church of God (Seventh Day).

I became acquainted with LeRoy when he served as manager of the Church's publishing house and I served as director of the youth department (mid-1950s). Through our joint assignment on the G. C. Administrative Committee, we formed a lifelong friendship.

LeRoy was responsible for the modernization of the Bible Advocate Press. When he was made Publications manager, its literature was produced on a large hand-fed cylinder press. The printed stock was folded, col-

lated, stitched, and trimmed — all by hand. LeRoy had a vision for making this antiquated publishing house into a first-class printing operation.

To realize his vision, LeRoy standardized the size of the Church's tracts for mailing in a letter-sized envelope, changed the shop name to Bible Advocate Press (after the *Bible Advocate* magazine), and initiated the Church's free literature distribution program and publication of literature in Spanish. LeRoy also realized his dream of writing and producing Sabbath school materials for children and youth through adults.

When the Bible Advocate Press moved from Stanberry to Denver, Colorado, in 1972, LeRoy acquired a new offset printing press, capable of publishing the Church's literature in color, and bindery equipment that put the magazines together in one operation.

LeRoy's plan to distribute the Church's literature free of charge more than tripled the distribution of the *Bible Advocate* and made it available for global readership. Through this ministry LeRoy became known and loved by readers of the literature he produced.

It was painful to observe LeRoy's failing health over the past year. When I asked him how he was doing, he never complained. I feel blessed to have known and worked with LeRoy Dais!

— Elder Robert Coulter

## Writing a Book

Someone should write a book about LeRoy Dais. It would include chapters on faith, family, in-

tegrity, humility, selfless and tireless dedication, a long journey in the same direction, and finding purpose. "The greatest tragedy in life," someone wrote, "is not death, but life without purpose." LeRoy Dais found his purpose at an early age and dedicated himself to that one thing for the rest of his life. What a wonderful testimony!

His full-time service in various capacities for more than fifty-eight years has endeared him to many throughout the Church, at home and abroad. Around the world, no name is more closely linked to the Church's Publications ministry and *Bible Advocate* magazine than that of LeRoy Dais. Press operator in Stanberry, Publications director, foreign missions correspondent, Bible curriculum editor, promoter of financial stewardship and planned giving are just some ministries to which LeRoy tirelessly gave himself over these many years.

I was privileged to observe LeRoy from a unique vantage point: through the heart of his devoted wife, Hope, who has been my personal assistant for more than seventeen years. Hope's beautiful heart reflects who LeRoy was. The tenderness and love showered upon him by their children and grandchildren during his final hours is testimony to the priority LeRoy gave to home and family and to the godly heritage he and Hope cultivated.

Marjolene and I will always cherish the memory of what turned out to be LeRoy's last really good day in this life — November 22. We spent



time together over a meal, and LeRoy had a spark we hadn't seen for a while. We will not soon forget those final hours with him and his family at the hospital on December 1. It was bitter and sweet, painful and precious.

It's been said that a tree is best measured when it is down. We're now getting an even better perspective on the impact of this one life. Our church's Sabbath heritage began with a search for the most honest man in Battle Creek, Michigan. LeRoy could easily have been that man.

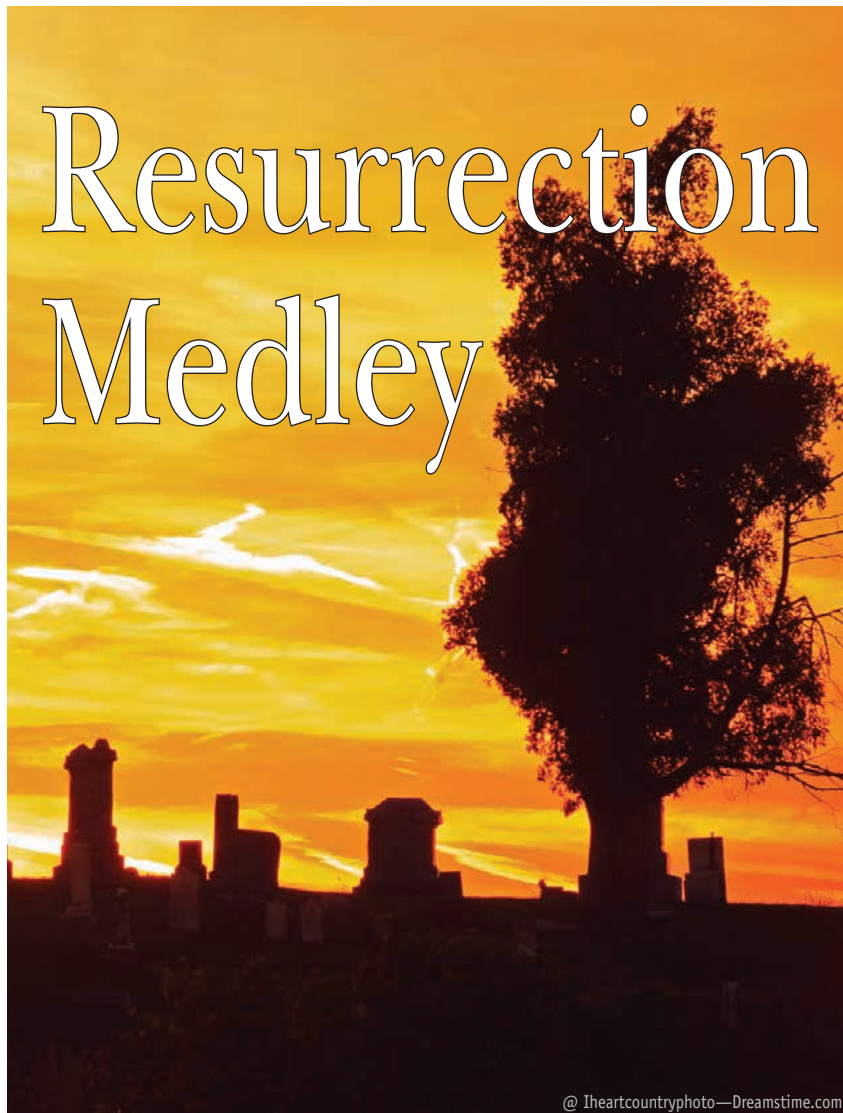
The book that should have been written about LeRoy? I would title it *LeRoy Dais: Quiet Strength*. **BA**

— Whaid Rose

[baonline.org](http://baonline.org) Read expanded versions of these tributes at [baonline.org](http://baonline.org).







## Foundation of Faith

**D**arkness, fear, and sorrow clutched the disciples for seventy-two hours; their world had been shaken, destroyed. This was not how it was supposed to end. Their King had been deposed, giving Himself up to cruel torture and death on a cross between criminals. The hope of victory seemed lost — until their Lord's voice cut unexpectedly through the despair: "Peace be with you!" (John 20:19).

Jesus — back from the grave? It shouldn't have been so surprising. He had predicted this several times (e.g. Matthew 12:40; 16:21; 17:9; 17:23; 20:19). The fact of that resurrection would become the cornerstone of Christian faith and prove the legitimacy of Jesus' claims.

No one explains these implications better than Paul.

In 1 Corinthians 15, he declares that the gospel he taught the Corinthians would save them if they believed and held it fast. He then encapsulates that gospel, preached by all the apostles:

Jesus died, was buried, and was raised on the third day (vv. 3, 4). Many saw Him (vv. 5-8).

The Resurrection and these witnesses mean much more to our faith than we often preach or teach. The curse of sin and the sting of death have been taken away (v. 55). Without the Resurrection, in fact, our faith is useless; we are still in our sins (vv. 14, 17). From this one point, we see how crucial Christ's resurrection is to our faith. It proved He is the Son of God.

How many other historical figures who claimed to be God's Son overcame death? While death was the end for them, it was only the beginning of Jesus' kingdom. Matthew and John would write Gospels recording it. Brother James and persecutor Saul would be transformed, becoming church leaders and contributing to our New Testament. Peter would be used to lay the church's foundation through his epistles and speeches recorded in Acts. The Resurrection is such a keystone event that Luke both ends his Gospel and begins Acts with it.

The resurrection of Christ gives us a living hope. At the proper time, we will follow Jesus in resurrection into eternal life. We who believe in Christ labor not in vain for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58), because we will be resurrected to perfect eternity with our gracious heavenly Father and our brother, Jesus Messiah.

— Brian Franks  
Walla Walla, WA

## Perfect Fulfillment

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to salvation and Christian faith. Jesus was not only raised from the grave as evidence of a life-giving Savior but also raised at the precise time, fulfilling scriptural prophecies. Everything came to perfect fulfillment as evidence that He is Messiah.

Christ is the author of time, for He was with God from the beginning (Colossians 1:16, 17). He assigned a fish to swallow Jonah (1:17) for three days and three nights to foreshadow His own time in the grave: “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40, NIV).

Jesus authors accuracy. Where men will give estimates, He numbers all with precision. When the great fish swallowed Jonah, the death-to-life itinerary of the Messiah was being drawn.

The good news to all may sound like disturbing news to some (Acts 4:2). Christ suffered, died, and was resurrected right on time to triumph over the Devil’s guile and to fulfill all the prophets, including the sign of Jonah. This not only redeemed His life but also abolished the power of death and the grave for all who believe the gospel of His resurrection. One day they will exclaim, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:55, KJV).

— Tshidzanani T. Malaba  
Zimbabwe, Africa

## Resurrected Body?

Millions have asked about the resurrection — questions like how the dead are raised up and “With what body do they come?” In 1 Corinthians 15:35-50, Paul runs with these questions and writes analogies that help clarify a mystery that still puzzles us today.

Paul opens his argument by drawing attention to how seeds germinate and grow. A person has to die and be planted before being resurrected. As the seed gives up life and is subsumed by the new plant, so our body dies and returns to dust. Just as God gives the seed a new plant body, He gives us a new body (vv. 36-38). Paul points out here that just as each type of seed will produce a new and unique plant, so our new body will resemble our old one and still be perfectly new.

Paul continues this idea of how our new body will be similar to the former and yet distinct from every person in the resurrection. We will be ourselves and look something like we did before, but new. Our individuality will be intact, recognizable. Just as there has been an earthly body, there will be a celestial body (vv. 39-41). Every star looks much the same, but each one is distinct from every other star — if we could look closely. So every

“celestial body” (our newly resurrected body) will have its own distinctive and identifiable characteristics. We will know each other!

The new body will have glory lacking in the former: “It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power” (v. 43). The resurrected body of Jesus Christ, the model of this truth, retained its corporal aspects: He was seen and touched, and He ate! So there is continuity between our present bodies and the glorious ones to come. But there is also much change: “There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (v. 44).

The word *spiritual* indicates that the new body will have its tangible aspects, yet be more uniquely spiritual than ever before. This suggests a body that can do whatever the Spirit decides: walk on water, pass through locked doors, navigate in air, etc. Its life source is not dependent on food, drink, breath, or even blood in our veins, but only on the Spirit direct from God. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (v. 49, KJV).

— Elder Steve Kyner  
Jamestown, ND

When the great fish swallowed Jonah, the death-to-life itinerary of the Messiah was being drawn.



## Disappearance of Corpse Shocks City

**J**ERUSALEM: Eyewitness reports of an amazing disappearance have surfaced. On Wednesday last, a grim crucifixion of a Man took place on Golgotha. Prophet? Teacher? Self-proclaimed King of the Jews? For three-and-a-half years the condemned Man walked among the crowds. He stole the hearts of the people, healing illnesses and feeding thousands in His free lunch line. Yet He earned hatred and disrespect from religious leaders.

This morning, a group of women took spices to anoint the body of the slain leader. As they approached, they questioned who would roll the stone away. To their great surprise, the stone was no longer in place. With much trepidation, they entered the tomb and found a young man dressed in white, sitting to one side. They attempted to leave the scene.

Raising his hand in a detaining motion, the young man told the women not to be afraid. He said the Man they were looking for was risen, and showed them the place where His body had lain. More fearful than ever, the

women fled the scene, agreeing to say nothing to anyone of what they had witnessed.

Rumor has it that the slain Man said He would come back to life after three days. That time ended late yesterday, and the tomb is still empty and the stone rolled away. An exclusive interview with the soldiers who guarded the tomb has revealed that the Man's disciples stole the body overnight. Their official report is currently on file at the office of the magistrate.

Jewish leaders, along with the Roman government, consider the case closed. Still, these questions linger: With a guard posted, how could the body have been stolen? Could this Man really be who He claimed to be: the Son of God? What about the presence of the young man at the tomb? Was he an angel? Could it be true that the Man was risen, as He said?

If so, what will you do with this Man, Jesus?

— *Dorothy Nimchuk, reporter  
Jerusalem Son Times  
Medicine Hat, Alberta*



## Adam 2

**F**or the Christian, many Bible promises encompass this life and the life to come. One of the greatest promises is the resurrection of our body and soul when Jesus comes the second time.

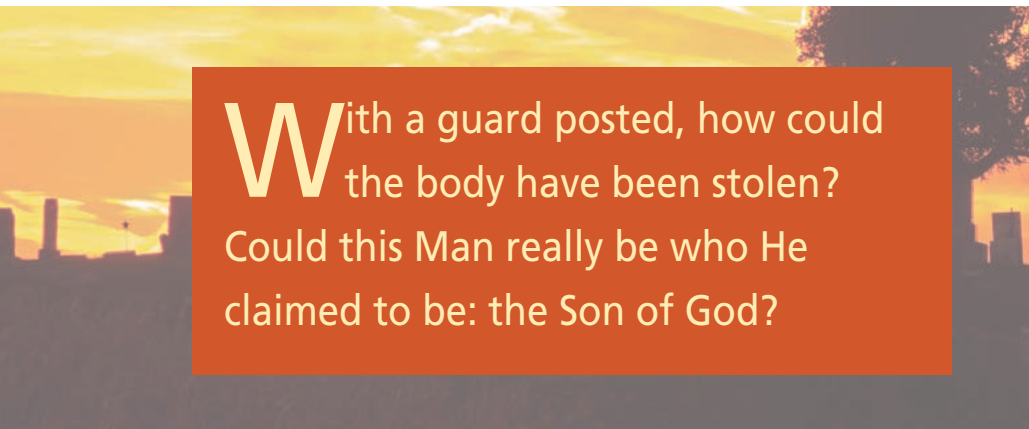
The world's first man, Adam, was made to live a long time — perhaps forever. But Eve and he disobeyed the Lord, ate of the forbidden tree, and began a slow death that passed to all their descendants. No exceptions.

The first Adam became a living being. Another Adam, of higher character, “was made a quickening spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45). This means Jesus has power to make others alive as He will (compare John 5:21). He raised Lazarus and Jairus' daughter in the past, and He will resurrect many more in the future.

Adam 1 was a mere natural man, destined to sin, die, and return to the earth from which he came. Adam 2, on the other hand, came to earth as a spiritual man, fully under the Holy Spirit's control. As the God-man, He (Jesus) came to carry out the God plan by becoming the sacrifice for sins, bringing salvation and all its promises.

Paul sums up the two Adams: “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven” (1 Corinthians 15:47). Adam 1 was of the earth: He was made of the dust of the ground — a wonderful engineering feat done by Jesus on the sixth day of creation.

Adam 2, however, was not of this world's natural beginnings but a product of the heavenly Father, who overshadowed Mary through the Spirit. Jesus had no



**W**ith a guard posted, how could the body have been stolen? Could this Man really be who He claimed to be: the Son of God?

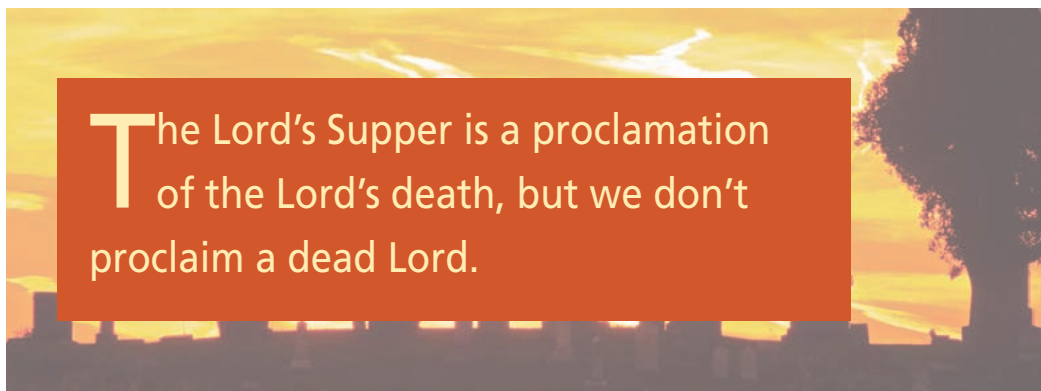
taint or corruption in any physical or spiritual part but perfectly represented His Father in all.

In verse 48, Paul sees two categories: earthly and heavenly. In our present state, we are flesh and blood, the image of the earthly Adam, imperfect in many respects. We need sleep and food; our bodies are subject to sickness and breakdown. This is the current human physical condition with its years, corruptible flesh and blood, limitations, disease, and death.

Concerning the heavenly, Paul refers to the nature of Jesus. After His resurrection, He regained immortal glory and can die no more. This state of immortality will one day be ours as followers of Christ (v. 49).

We now bear the image of the earthly, and we will bear the image of the heavenly! Those who faithfully follow their Lord, He will resurrect at His return. Our physical resurrection is our pass into another realm. We'll have a new body no longer subject to the ravages of time and physical corruption! "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (v. 53). This is the blessedness of our resurrection — a new spiritual body (and mind and soul), permanently quickened by the Spirit. We'll feel great all the time — sick no more! We'll all share then what Jesus has now!

— David Gartner  
Joplin, MO



The Lord's Supper is a proclamation of the Lord's death, but we don't proclaim a dead Lord.

## Reason to Celebrate!

In celebration, we publicly acknowledge and rejoice, giving honor and praise, either for sacred or common occasions. We do this on anniversaries of birth or marriage, for Thanksgiving and the Lord's Supper. Celebration is a powerful and beautiful part of life, something God commanded His old covenant people to do throughout the year (Leviticus 23).

In the Church we've been more focused on what we *don't* celebrate than on what we *do*. Sadly, the mixing of important events in Scripture with pagan tradition in Christian history has often caused us to disregard the significance of these events and their invitation to celebrate.

Consider Christ's resurrection, an event so weighty that Paul says, "If Christ has not been raised . . . your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:14, 17, NASB). But because Christ *is* risen, we have the promise of resurrection and eternal life! Christ has conquered sin and death, and those who are in Christ are victorious with Him. What could be a more glorious and greater cause for celebration

than this truth?

To celebrate is to acknowledge something honorable and praiseworthy *publicly*, by joyful assembly. The Lord's Supper is a proclamation of the Lord's death, but we don't proclaim a dead Lord. Rather, we proclaim a risen and returning Lord. This is cause for celebration.

Because the Lord's Supper is a sober event, reflecting on the solemn sacrifice of Christ, I understand those who may not want this event to immediately give way to celebration. Better to wait a few days, as the first disciples did. Better to reflect on the death of Christ and His time in the tomb.

But within a week, we all gather again for Sabbath fellowship. What an opportunity to proclaim He is risen and to celebrate all that means! Doing so is not a compromise with paganism but a full embrace of the truth and importance of resurrection. It is a reminder that we serve a risen Savior who is coming again. It is a challenge to live resurrected lives as we await His return. He is risen! That is reason enough to celebrate, especially on the Sabbath after Lord's Supper and every other day of the year. **BA**

— Israel Steinmetz  
San Antonio, TX





## This I Believe

by Loren Stacy

Transitions from the familiar to the uncertain are unsettling. You and I could list countless examples of people who have chosen a self-destructive status quo rather than risking an uncertain improvement. When we face church changes beyond our control (such as a possible revision of our church's bylaws), focusing on our beliefs can provide stability and courage. Here are three of mine.

### I believe we are one church

One's self-identity is a powerful force. We act it out as we choose our attitudes and behaviors. This is true of us as individuals but also of us as a church. If we think ourselves accountable only to Christ, for example, we will feel free to resist the biblical authority and leadership of our pastors and other elders to whom Christ has given responsibility for us. If we think ourselves accountable only to Christ and our local leaders, we will feel free to resist the organizational (and biblical) authority of our district superintendents and board members. And so it goes.

However, if we consider the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day) to be one church — a part of *the* body of Christ and conducting itself as a body of Christ — we may more readily see ourselves and conduct ourselves as members of the body of Christ should. Each member (individual, congregation, district, etc.) will fulfill his, her, or its Christ-ordained role. Each member will honor the responsibilities and the authorities given every other member by Christ.

Unfortunately, our history and our culture are marked by a streak of resistance to submitting to others in spiritual matters. If we are being asked to “obey men rather than God,” this resistance can be a good characteristic. When it extends to resisting

the legitimate leadership of those whom Christ has placed as leaders within His body, however, such resistance is sin. There is evidence of this sin among us. There are individual members within our congregations who feel free to contradict elders who are called and trained to rightly divide and teach the Word of Truth. There are individual ministers who feel free to teach doctrines that contradict the official teachings of our church as properly decided by the North American Ministerial Council. Local congregations sometimes resist their district superintendents and boards, and all of the aforementioned feel free to resist the General Conference president and/or board of directors. We too regularly have situations throughout our church where someone or some group is protesting, “You’re not the boss of me!”

What do you believe regarding the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day)? Do you believe that we are only an affiliation of autonomous individuals or congregations or districts? There is no such thing as a Church of God (Seventh Day) — Denver, Colorado — member, congregation, or district apart from the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day). I believe that we are one church. I believe that we will become more effective for Christ when we embrace that self-identity.

### I believe we need a delegate system

Because we are one church, I believe that each member's voice should be heard in the governance of our church. Though each adult member of the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day) has the right to participate in our biennial business sessions, currently he or she must be physically present in the meeting in order to do so. This results

in a small minority of our members, guided only by their personal preferences, making key decisions that impact thousands of our members who, for various reasons, are not present. Under our current bylaws, the vast majority of our members effectively are not heard.

If we had a delegate system of representative governance, each adult member of our church would be heard through his or her congregation's or district's delegates. Board of directors nominees and proposed bylaw amendments could be thoroughly discussed in advance within our local congregations so that every General Conference member could be aware of the issues and arguments. If we wish to inform and empower our membership as a whole, a delegate system is needed.

But here's the rub. In order for a delegate system to be adopted, our bylaws must be changed. And the only members who can change our bylaws are the members who are present at our biennial business sessions. So far, those members present have said "no" to the delegate system that would give their brothers and sisters back home a voice. Are these members afraid that they themselves will not be chosen as delegates by their brothers and sisters back home? Perhaps they think that those who are not in attendance don't deserve a voice. Whatever their reasons, our members who have been able to vote have voted against adopting a delegate system. I believe that our current system is unfair to the majority of our members and curtails our church's ability to think and act as a body. I believe that we need a delegate system.

## I believe our chosen leaders deserve our trust

During our 2013 convention in Omaha, our vot-

ing members called for the creation of a Bylaws Revision Committee. Feedback regarding its work has included the accusation that the "General Conference" is trying to take the properties of our local congregations. That accusation is not only untrue, it is absurd. At best, it is a false rumor. At worst, it is an intentional lie. Please allow me to remind you of several undeniable truths.

First, remember that the General Conference is not "them"; it is "us." When our own members speak of the "General Conference" in disparaging or fearful ways, they most often appear to have in mind our General Conference president and/or board of directors. But we are all together the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day). We are not "us" and "them"; we are only "us."

Second, remember that our bylaws are established by our membership and that only our membership in session may change them. Remember that our bylaws set boundaries within which our president and board of directors must serve and make decisions. Our president serves at the will of the board of directors, and the members of the board of directors are elected to limited terms by our membership. Does it not seem strange that we choose leaders we respect and trust from among "us," then label them "them" and accuse them of wanting to steal from "us"?

Third, please remember that our current president has already resigned effective July 4. Neither he nor any member of the board of directors legally or morally may benefit from the assets of the General Conference beyond the president's modest salary package and the reimbursement to board members of their out-of-pocket expenses when they attend meetings once or twice a year. Why, then, would the "General Conference" want to own all of the properties of our local congregations? What would the "General Conference" do with them if

**What you read here is a "Viewpoint" — one member's opinion. In the next issue, BA will publish respectful comments on this "Viewpoint" or on Israel Steinmetz's opinions in the previous issue. Please submit your perspectives and comments by March 20, the latest date material can be received for the May-June BA.**

— *Editor*



# Mail Bag



## Cheers and challenges

Received my BA today, read every page, and appreciated reading Jason Overman again ["Wings," January-February '15, p. 4]. I loved the grace topics and understand that "all living things grow." Do I read that CoG7 may change to an episcopal form? I gathered that in two articles. I am not in favor of a top-heavy church government. Appreciate all y'all do and love CoG7.

G. H.  
Gainesville, FL

*My perspective is that the proposed changes are motivated by the desire for a CoG7 that is more responsive and accountable to leadership at all levels. If adopted, this would mean more responsibility in district offices, for example, but not so far in that direction to classify us as "episcopalian." — Editor*

I was in one accord with your short article "Been Thinkin'" [p. 19]. Also, your "50 Years of Change" [p. 20]. Seems we are in for more changes — some are good, and some scare me a little. Thanks again for your service to the Church and the cause of Christ.

J. T.  
Linden, CA

## Faithful reader

This is my heartfelt thanks that I read the BA regularly in every issue. I get a lot of deep ideas from the reports of CoG7 all over the world. May the Lord bless you all and multiply His members through the BA ministry — in Christ.

C. L.  
Mizoram, India

it did? Who would mow the lawns and pay the utilities bills? Who would even remain a part of a church that had taken his or her property? The accusation is absurd.

Finally, the behavior of the General Conference is exactly the opposite of the accusation. Whenever a congregation requests that the General Conference remove itself from a joint deed to that congregation's property, the board of directors acts quickly to do as requested. The rare and only times that the board has intervened regarding the properties of congregations have been at the request of members of those congregations, and to protect those congregations' ownership of their properties from departing members of those congregations who actually did attempt to take them.

I recently read testimony given by Nazi leader Hermann Goering during his post-WWII war crimes trial. He said, "The people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked. . . ." If you are told that you are being attacked by the General Conference, please consider who is telling you that and ask yourself, "Why are they telling me?" Please ask yourself, "Is it true?" And please take time to investigate before believing it and repeating it to others. I believe that, unless it is actually proven that they have acted inappropriately, our chosen leaders deserve our trust.

## Core beliefs

Times of change or even potential change are a bit unsettling. However, core beliefs can help us evaluate proposals and decide positions. Are we one church? Are the voices of all members valuable? Are leaders we have chosen deserving of our support? I believe the correct answer to each of these questions is "Yes!"

What do you believe?

**Loren Stacy** pastors the CoG7 congregation in Lodi, CA, and serves as chairman of the board of directors for the General Conference.



# Questions & Answers



**What** does the Bible say about the practice of cremation for disposal of the dead? In view of Paul's analogy of death as sowing seed (1 Cor. 15:37-44), isn't a common burial in the ground more consistent with our belief in resurrection?

**The** Bible gives no clear endorsement to burning for the disposal of deceased humans, nor does it clearly prohibit that practice. Several texts from the older Scriptures refer to disposal of the dead by fire (Josh. 7:15-25; 1 Sam. 31:11-13; Amos 2:1). The newer Scriptures offer the common example of burial of the dead and no reference to burning except for the final destruction of the wicked. Although the Bible gives no command in this matter, its examples and the Judeo-Christian tradition point to burial, not burning, as the more preferable practice under most circumstances.

With the challenges before those who face responsibility for disposal of their dead, it is best to show respect and compassion to those who must make these choices and allow God to judge and act. No condition of a dead body can stop Him from raising that person at the return of Christ. Whether burned or buried, a body is disposed, and God will raise up the redeemed person with a glorified body. Praises be to God!

Therefore, answers to this question will depend more on individual conscience and motive, on human tradition, and perhaps on personal necessity more than on biblical mandate.

— *Elder Clyde "Chip" Hinds*

Fishermen have their bodies washed overboard and eaten by sharks. Can God separate the human cells from the cells of fish? Or does He need to do so?

In my prearranged funeral plan, I have opted to be cremated. I can't find any scripture that says the body has to be sown in good condition in order to spring forth at the seventh trumpet. If God can gather His elect from the four winds, He can find my spiritual DNA wherever it may be.

— *Elder Richard G. Cress*

Burial practices vary from culture to culture. Jacob requested his bones be taken from Egypt back to the burial cave of Abraham in Canaan. Genesis 2:7 says God formed man from the dust of the earth, and He told Adam "dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (3:19; see also Eccl. 12:7). What remains is dust (the seed) awaiting resurrection at Jesus' return. The big difference between cremation and burial is that the remains return to ashes more quickly. The main point from 1 Corinthians 15 is not how to dispose of the dead but that this perishable seed (body) will be replaced with an imperishable one at the resurrection!

— *Elder Ken Knoll*

The beauty of the resurrection doctrine is not disturbed by either a burial rest or a cremation rest. The burial of a body allows for complete decomposition. Disposal of the dead by cremation is a shorter process, but the result is the same.

Many Christians died in circumstances where there was neither burial nor cremation: some lost to the elements, some destroyed by animals, others drowned and never recovered, and still others burned at the stake or in accidental fire. Our all-powerful God will bring us back from whatever decomposition occurs. Hallelujah!

— *Elder Dale Lawson*





## *Communion*

*I hold in my hand  
A cracker of wheat  
So simple I see as  
I lift it to eat.*

*I ponder the wheat  
It is finished. Done!  
Threshed, broken, beaten  
This Jesus, God's Son.*

*I hold in my hand  
A small, crystal cup;  
Thinking of Jesus  
I pray, looking up.*

*I ponder the grape  
Plucked from the vine, crushed.  
I sit with the crowd;  
We're all sipping, hushed.*

*I ponder His death  
A mystery they say  
Reminding us all  
To watch and to pray.*

*Dell Klein*





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## How Can I Help Bible Advocate Live On?

by LeRoy Dais (May 16, 1935 - December 1, 2014)

Several options exist to help assure the BA's future. You can give on-line, mail your contribution, join Editor's Circle, make a major one-time gift, or give a bequest.

Offerings to the magazine can be given anytime. A mass mailing every springtime invites reader support; a follow-up goes to those who didn't respond to the first. Donations are tax-deductible and available for immediate use to produce the magazine.

Large assets like stocks, bonds, excess investments, or property can be given as a tax-deductible contribution. Donating an asset is a strategy to avoid paying capital gains taxes on the profits.

Major gifts can be given to the BAP Operating Fund, to CoG7's Pooled Endowment Fund (BAP account), or be divided between the two. Donations to the Pooled Endowment Fund will be invested permanently, with earnings on investments used for operations.

**Bequests.** A bequest in behalf of the BA may be worded like this:

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Please notify BAP when you include this ministry in your will. The information will be kept in a confidential file.

**Editor's Circle.** If BA has blessed you and if you can give \$60 or more per year so it can bless others, then we invite you to join Editor's Circle. Your support will help reach new BA readers around the world with Christ's grace and truth. Circle members are invited to renew their membership each year, and donations can be made quarterly, annually, or even monthly via electronic fund transfer. To join Editor's Circle, return this coupon (left column) or contact [bap.orders@cog7.org](mailto:bap.orders@cog7.org); 303-452-7973.






Pioneer Missionary Training Level 1 took place December 21-31, 2014, at the Boturini CoG7 in the heart of Mexico City, under the leadership of its pastors Isaias Molina and Manuel Ulaje. Members of the team, composed of 22 young adults from Colorado, Idaho, Maryland, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and Mexico, were amazed with this congregation's jam-packed programs, starting with RSKT – *rescate*, or “rescue” in English. This youth-led program uses drama and street evangelism (including a “flash mob” done by the RSKT-kids ministry) to set the stage for the church's access to the public's spiritual needs. Just one day put the

Boturini church in contact with 70 people seeking spiritual direction from the Lord.

A full schedule of equally intense activities continued, like using the congregation's TV studio to prepare a short *Today Show*-style interview, a superbly acted drama in a rented theater, a hospital visit, an entertaining children's fair with an art gallery, plus tours of the city's natural history and monuments district. Inspiring messages and training showed us just how much one congregation, guided by its leaders and manned by its members, can do in the name of the Lord. Thank you, Boturini Church, for giving us that vivid example!



**“Serving Him in Nations Everywhere” is the passion of SHINE Medical and Dental Missions. Your support of this worthy cause will reap heaven's blessings (Matthew 10:42). Donate to SHINE at cog7.org (select “Giving” at top left; follow instructions.)**



*Ordinary SWD Winter Youth/YA retreat, Midlothian, TX, January 1-4, 2015. Presenters were Aurora Banda, Jeff Kendrick, and Mickey Banda. Leaders Jason and Rose Rodriguez wrote, “After all we witnessed at winter retreat, God is faithful!”*

## Calendar

- March 14** - Pacific NW Super Sabbath, Jefferson, OR
- April 2** - Annual Lord's Supper Service in every congregation
- April 12-18** - SHINE Medical-Dental mission to Aguascalientes, Mexico
- May 23-24** - National Women's Ministry Conference, All Saints Academy, Blaisdon Way, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL51 OWH, England, UK; [marvet-simpsonsaved@hotmail.com](mailto:marvet-simpsonsaved@hotmail.com)
- May 29-31** - SW SWORD retreat, Hawkins, TX ([sword@cog7.org](mailto:sword@cog7.org))
- June 14-21** - Dover Family Camp, near Kingfisher, OK; ([jared.ullrich@yahoo.com](mailto:jared.ullrich@yahoo.com))
- June 30 - July 4** - General Conference Convention, Milwaukee, WI ([cog7.org](http://cog7.org))

## CoG7 baptisms . . .

. . . in Ethiopia



. . . in Tanzania



. . . and in St. Martin.



## Crusade in Nicaragua



## Training in Philippines



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This is the number of students who received partial scholarships during the Winter 2014 term because of your financial donations! Did you know that every penny you donate to LifeSpring goes directly toward scholarships for members of the General Conference? **All donations made in April-June will help provide scholarships for students enrolled in Spring 2015 courses.**





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# International Congress

## Onward in Three Regions



Sierra Leone

### West Africa

- Sierra Leone: In this stricken nation last year, our CoG7 brethren fought the Ebola epidemic (with the help of \$60,000+ from the G. C. Disaster Relief Fund), planted and harvested their second annual rice crop (helping sustain the Church's outreach), and maintained a thriving Orphans and Widows ministry.
- Other West African nations in which the Church is established or has done mission work: Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, and Nigeria

### Southern Africa

- Angola: CoG7 efforts began here in December, with Daniel



Zambia

- Santos as leader.
- Botswana: Robert Crawford and brothers from Zimbabwe conducted evangelistic efforts in Francistown in mid-2014.
  - Zambia: Robert Crawford and Tom Benzen visited here mid-year; Orphans and Widows ministry sponsored seven young adult trainees to operate heavy equipment and various agricultural projects to help the church sustain itself.
  - CoG7 is also active in Malawi, Zimbabwe, and South Africa

### East Africa

- Ethiopia: Makuety Gai and Kun Bijany partner on a church plant in Gambella, where John Njogu of Kenya visits and baptizes seven (Fall 2014).

- Rwanda: John Njogu and Alexandre Masumbuko of Burundi travel here to resolve church leadership issues.
- South Sudan: Disaster Relief support was sent and government registration for the church was secured in 2014.
- Tanzania: Fruitful evangelistic crusades were held last year in Nyalugusu and Bunda towns by Abrahams Odongo and Paul Kimani of Kenya.
- Other countries where CoG7 is planted and growing: Burundi, D. R. Congo, Kenya, and Uganda.



Tanzania



## Our Autonomy

Should church organization be hierarchical, top down, and centralized? Or should it be horizontal, flat, and given to local and individual autonomy? This centuries-old debate continues to divide the body of Christ and is at the heart of our church's current tension.

Some defenders of the latter seem to have little or no basis besides the fact that it is the polity chosen by our pioneers. Others argue that the New Testament shows no organization above the local level. Most point to the abuse of power to which the hierarchical model lends itself, fearing loss of personal liberty and congregational freedom in matters of faith and practice.

These objections raise important questions. Which convictions of our pioneers should we hold sacred, and which should we cast off? How ironic that many guardians of our pioneers' polity are also critics of their Christology. What about the Jerusalem council in Acts 15? Does that count for organization beyond the local level? And don't we embrace things with potential for abuse, knowing that abuse in the wrong hands need not mean abuse in every hand? And most important, which carries more weight in the New Testament economy: personal liberty, independence, and being self-governed or mutual accountability, inter-dependence, and submission?

Furthermore, the New Testament teaches more than mutual "submit to one another." It also teaches chain of command, submission to authority — wives to husbands, children to parents, servants to masters (Ephesians 4-6), everyone to ruling authorities (Romans 13:1-7), etc. Oddly, opponents of the hierarchal model are all for moral order and respect for authority in the home and society; they simply resist it at church.

This is driven by an ingrained aversion to authority with respect to spiritual things. But such dichotomy is unbiblical, for God is the

foundation for all authority. The reason "the Bible alone" has the authority to bind one's conscience is because it alone carries the weight of God's intrinsic authority. But commitment to the Bible as sole authority should not be divorced from the corresponding principle taught in the Bible: God has delegated authority to those made in His image, to be exercised in love and the fear of God. One can no more claim submission to Scripture while resisting what Scripture teaches about submission to authority than one can claim to love God while resisting Scripture's command to love his brother. The Reformers therefore stood staunchly against Rome's abuse of authority, but maintained their commitment to God-ordained church authority.

This is where authority and gospel connect. Adam and Eve sinned by rebelling against authority, grasping for autonomy, seeking to become a law unto themselves. The gospel calls us to something different: to love and embrace accountability authority, to obey those who rule over us (Hebrews 13:17), thereby undoing the "You're not the boss of me" mindset.

Attempting to help us think outside our traditional box made it difficult to not come across as promoting one model over another. My purpose, however, is to move us beyond making either model sacred. The danger in both is people's hearts and motives. Given our history, the dream of transforming our church into some super-structure is unrealistic. But I'm still dreaming of one that facilitates greater cohesion, collaboration, and accountability. Let's remove the barriers hindering the dream, even if it requires trading our sacred cow for one that increases our impact on today's individualistic world.

— *Whaid Guscott Rose*





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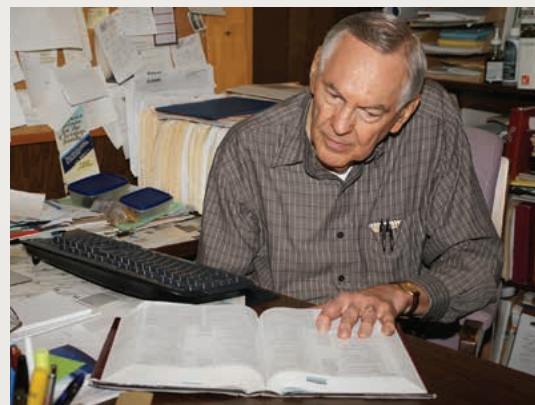
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LeRoy Dais, father of free BAs, now awaits resurrection day. His works do follow him, around the corner and around the world. On his behalf, we thank all who "freely give" so that the ministry for which he gave his life will continue.



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