



BA  
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May - June 2019

# All Authority

Great Commission - Part 3



## 2019: Resurrection Commission



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## King Jesus Reigns!

We are halfway through the year and closer to Jesus' famous words "Go and make," covered in July-August. But one more fundamental statement sets the stage: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18).

These twelve words proclaim, *King Jesus reigns!* This BA delves into why this is so essential to our evangelism and discipleship. All we say and do as His witnesses flows from this foundational truth. Before you dive in, think about these words.

*All* is a big little word. The scope of Christ's reign is *everything!* Coupled with *in heaven and earth*, *all* speaks of Christ's cosmic dominion. No part of creation is beyond His rule. Notice, Jesus possesses what Psalms declares to be true only of God: "For the Lord Most High is . . . a great King over all the earth" (47:2).

*Authority* means that Jesus is King of Kings; there is no other or higher. But this causes us to ask, "What kind of King is ours, and how does He exercise authority?" Psalms speaks again, if in different directions: "The LORD has established His throne . . . His kingdom rules over all," yet another psalm asks, "Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth?" (103:19; 113:6).

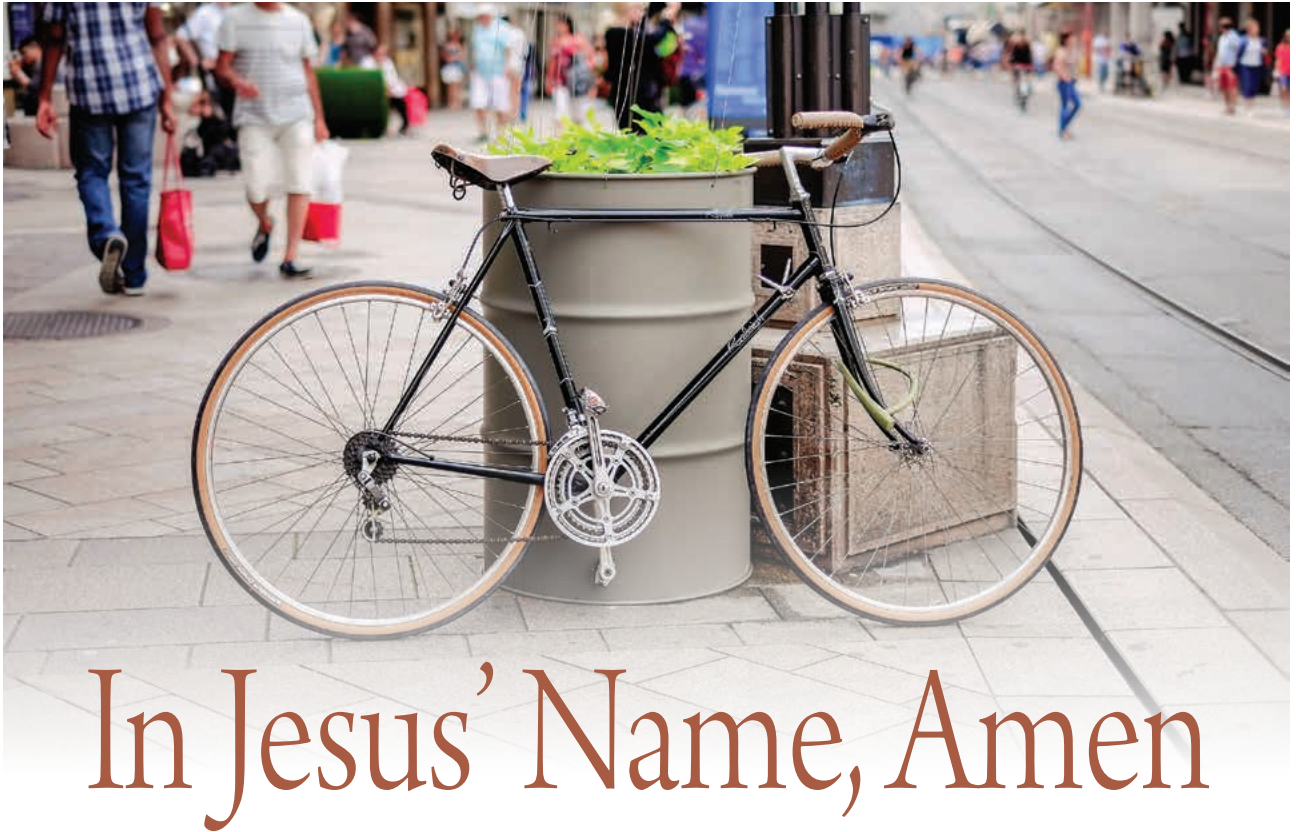
Jesus reigns supreme. However, He does not exercise authority with brute force but with humility. He could bend all to His will, but His kingdom doesn't come this way. The apostles understood this temporary disconnection. Though "All things [are] under His feet . . . we do not yet see all things put under him" (Ephesians 1:22; Hebrews 2:8). We live in between, and one day "All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him" (Psalm 72:11).

Lastly, we hear Jesus say all authority "has been given to Me." His divine reign comes from the Father, by virtue of His divine relationship as Son. He has given Him a name above every name. Psalm 148:13 declares, "The name of the LORD . . . alone is exalted."

With so much news of scandal and abuse of lesser authorities in politics, business, religion, and family life, it's cause for rejoicing to proclaim, *King Jesus reigns!* Let us bow down and cast our crowns before Him.

— Jason Overman





# In Jesus' Name, Amen

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Praying, living, and  
going in the authority  
of Christ.

by Israel Steinmetz

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**W**e say it at the end of every prayer, often with little reflection on its meaning — like saying “goodbye” at the end of a conversation. But what if these were the four most powerful words we speak? Would it change the way we pray? Would it change the way we live? *In Jesus' name, amen.*

## Can I get an *amen*?

It's a remarkable word and one of the most universally spoken words on earth. *Amen* originated millennia ago in the Hebrew language. Very similar

to the Hebrew word for *believe* or *faithful*, it carries two different, but related, meanings. When beginning a sentence (as Jesus often did), *amen* means something is true and faithful, trustworthy and believable. When used at the end (as is often the case in prayer), it is a response of trusting expectation. It means “I believe,” “so be it,” or “let it be done.”

Such a word was bound to follow God's people from the old to the new covenant. The Jews who penned the New Testament wrote almost entirely in Greek, but this word carried over from Hebrew. When the Bible was translated into Latin, *amen* was retained. In time, it appeared in English, Spanish, and dozens of other translations. When said after the reading of Scripture or the words of a preacher that ring true, *amen* is an act of agreeing

and taking ownership of those powerful words. When said at the end of prayer, *amen* is a confession of faith that God is listening and will answer.

## Praying in Jesus' name

So what does it mean to say “Amen” after saying “In Jesus' name”? An experience from high school comes to mind when I ponder this. One summer I had the opportunity to do a few projects for Dr. Albert Carlin at his home in the small town of Stanberry, Missouri. Doc Carlin was known as a faithful member of the General Conference. He was even better known as a faithful member of the Stanberry community, having delivered many of the children born there over several decades and having provided medical care to most of its inhabitants.

While working at his home, I needed to purchase supplies on several occasions. Doc Carlin's instructions were simple: "Go find whatever you need, and when you check out, tell them to put it on my account."

I was a bit anxious. A sixteen-year-old driving a borrowed car in a new town, walking into a variety of businesses, armed only with Dr. Carlin's name! But the scene played out just as he expected. I would gather the supplies I needed, go through the checkout process, and instead of paying would say, "Put it on Doc Carlin's account."

Every employee of each store I visited gladly did so without hesitation. His name was that powerful in that little town. I had only to speak it in accordance with his will, and I had all the authority I needed to fulfill his assignment.

That's the essence of what it means to pray in Jesus' name. When we speak His name in accordance with His will, we have all the authority we need to fulfill His assignment. About ten years later, I had the privilege of being Doc Carlin's pastor when he passed from this life. As winter winds blew across the faces of his family and friends, I stood at his graveside and prayed for God to accept this man's spirit and resurrect his body in the last day. *In Jesus' name, amen.*

### Living in Jesus' name

Jesus' final earthly words were words of *authority*. Having just won the decisive victory over sin and death by rising from the dead, and ready to ascend to heaven, Jesus said:

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and

on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Jesus' Great Commission is grounded in His great authority. Jesus sends His disciples into the world to join God's mission of evangelism and discipleship with all the authority in heaven and earth. Jesus' promise to His followers is that He — having supreme authority — will accompany them to the end of this

instead to wait in Jerusalem, trusting that "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Matthew's account focuses on Jesus' authority (Greek: *exousia*), the fact that He is the ruler of all things — King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But Luke's account keys in on the power (Greek: *dunamis*) Jesus gives His followers so they will be His witnesses. This is miracle-working power that identifies Jesus' followers with the great Miracle Worker himself. His followers would do "greater

## “Jesus' Great Commission is grounded in His great authority.”

age and usher in the next. If they would go with Him on mission into the world, they would go with His full authority. His followers had only to speak His name in accordance with His will, and they had all the authority they needed to fulfill His assignment.

Jesus' final words were also packed with *power*. Luke records Jesus telling His disciples not to concern themselves with the timing of the establishment of His physical kingdom on earth, but

works" than He did because Jesus was returning to the Father and sending the Holy Spirit to reside within them (John 14:12).

The same power displayed in Jesus' life and resurrection would live within His disciples and empower them for witness on Christ's behalf in the world. Armed with the power of Jesus' Spirit and the authority of Jesus' name, nothing in God's will would be impossible for Jesus' followers. They were fully equipped to join God's mission.

## Witnessing in Jesus' name

We see this combination of authority and power throughout the book of Acts as Jesus' followers went out into the world relying on Jesus' authoritative name and miracle-working power. The goal was not to glorify themselves but to glorify God. The gifts and fruit of the Spirit were not given to puff up believers with pride but to point beyond them to the God at work within them.

Ultimately, the purpose of

Hebrews 2:5-18). Rather, He *inaugurated* His kingdom in the seemingly small and insignificant work of Jesus and His disciples. But this kingdom spread like yeast through dough, growing like a tiny seed into a great bush (Matthew 13:31-34).

A friend of mine has compared God's kingdom to a train entering a station. As the engine pulls in, the train has *already* arrived. But until all the train cars have passed and the caboose has stopped, the train has *not* yet fully arrived. So it is with the

“Every day we are called to pray and live and witness in Jesus' name.”

Jesus' followers being endued with authority and power from on high was not their personal advancement but the advancement of God's kingdom. And that's just what happened. God's kingdom grew everywhere His followers went in the power and authority of Jesus' name. That's what Jesus was consumed with as He devoted His earthly ministry to preaching and practicing the inbreaking of God's kingdom.

Of course, much to the surprise of Jesus' earthly contemporaries, God did not establish His kingdom in its fullness (1 Corinthians 15:20-28;

kingdom of God. The engine arrived with Christ's first coming, but the caboose will not arrive until His return. In the meantime, the cars are pulling into the station. And Christ's followers are called to pull the cars into the station, following His first coming and hastening the day of His second. This is why we're here — to proclaim and practice the kingdom of God in the authority and power of Jesus Christ.

## Amen!

To put it another way, we're called to live in accordance with the prayer Jesus taught us to pray:

“Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (Matthew 6:9-13).

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” This is the first request Jesus told us to make — more important than our daily bread or even the forgiveness of our sins. God's kingdom coming to earth in its fullness; God's will accomplished on earth as it is in heaven: This is God's mission and ours. Every day we are called to pray and live and witness in Jesus' name. We need only to speak His name in accordance with His will, and we have all the authority we need to fulfill His assignment.

May the authority of Jesus' name and the power of His Spirit be evident in all we do. *In Jesus' name, amen.* **BA**

**Israel Steinmetz** is dean of Academic Affairs for Artios Christian College and pastors New Hope United. He lives in San Antonio, TX, with his wife, Anna, and their eight children. Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*.





# On Mission ...

Hector Renderos (left)  
and John Klassek

## From El Salvador to Calgary

Join us in this space each issue of 2019 for CoG7 evangelism stories direct from the field from all around the globe.

In this issue, we feature an interview conducted by IMC Secretary John Klassek (in Perth, Australia) with Pastor Hector Renderos of Calgary, Canada, formerly a minister in El Salvador.

The following is an edited transcript of the video interview.

**John Klassek (JK):** If you go back some years, you were called to fight originally in El Salvador, where you were born. Can you tell me a little bit [about] how you were called to Christ and how you were called to serve the body of Christ?

**Hector Rederos (HR):** I was raised in the Church of God (Seventh Day) in El Salvador. My father was baptized when I was five years old. When I was a teenager, I went astray. I decided to go to the war, but in my mind, I was feeling the calling of the Lord. At the age of 23, I married my beautiful wife, Imelda. We've been married for 42 years.

**JK:** Congratulations.

**HR:** Thank you. I was about 27 when I decided to go back to the Lord. Then I continued visiting the Church of God (Seventh Day), and in 1983, I was baptized. A few months later, after quick training, they ordained me as what we call *obreros* in Spanish, which is a worker, and I started working in the local church as a secretary of the board.

**JK:** What was it that took you from El Salvador and then to Canada?

**HR:** When I decided to go to Canada, my first two children were teenagers, and in El Salvador gangs [dominated] the

*continued on page 28*



# Calling Janice

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How to exercise our senses to follow the Spirit's leading.  
by **Rose McCormick Brandon**

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The thought was there when I awoke. Even after school lunches were packed, breakfast served, and three kids kissed out the door, it lay in my mind like a stone. I sipped coffee, read a book, and tried to ignore it, but the weight of it increased.

*Call Janice*, the thought urged. I cleared the table and loaded the dishwasher instead. The thought persisted.

## Connecting

Several weeks earlier, Janice joined a Bible class I attended. Her fearful eyes, seldom making contact, told the world she felt worthless and wary. I introduced myself, praying silently for Jesus to show me how to reach out to

her. Janice's wooden responses gave the impression she wished I'd go away.

Each week after Bible study, I approached Janice. It was hard work finding something to talk about. I kept trying because I sensed God leading me to be her friend, but she didn't seem to warm up to me. I didn't know then that Janice was a victim of horrific sexual abuse, that she'd been raised by a mentally ill parent, and that her husband made her life miserable in many ways.

In my kitchen that morning, I resisted the urge to call Janice, because I wasn't looking forward to another one-sided conversation. Finally, I looked up her number and dialed.



When Janice answered, I said, "Hi. I was thinking about you today and wondered how you are." I'd never before called, but she didn't seem surprised to hear from me. The rest of the conversation was not memorable, lasting no more than five minutes. Her voice sounded warmer than when we'd talked at Bible study. Maybe the phone call was in her comfort zone.

A few days later, Janice surprised me by dropping by with a fresh batch of chocolate chip cookies. She stood at my door with the tray, her eyes meeting mine and a smile twitching nervously at the corners of her mouth. I found out she loved to read, and I sent her home with a stack of Christian books.

### Books and cookies

Janice read all the books and returned them in a couple of weeks. I gave her more. Books about salvation experiences were her favorites. To keep our exchange going, I had to visit my local Christian bookstore often. Our friendship blossomed. Janice kept bringing cookies, and I kept giving books. I waited for an opportunity to give her a Bible.

One day, Janice said, "There was a prayer in one of those books you gave me. I thought it couldn't do me any harm, so I prayed it."

"What kind of prayer was it?"

"Something about giving your life to Jesus."

That's all she wanted to say about the prayer. If there was more, she'd tell it to me in her own time. A few days later, I

gave her a paperback Bible and told her, "This is yours to keep. You don't have to return it." She stuffed it in the backpack she always carried. I wondered if she would read it.

### Saving a life

During our visits over the following year, Janice told me about her horrifying childhood. She expanded her baking to include the best bread my family had

"I'm so proud of you." It was all I could say. She welcomed a hug once in a while, so I gave her one.

Halfway out the door, Janice turned back and said, "The cookies and bread are the only way I know to say thank you."

"For what?"

"Do you remember the first time you called me?" I did.

"That day I had decided to kill myself. But for some reason,

“I prayed silently for Jesus to show me how to reach out to Janice.”

ever tasted. One day, she pulled the Bible out of her backpack to show me she'd been reading it. The Bible was so well used, a giant elastic band was needed to hold its creased cover and loose pages together.

I opened the Bible and saw large portions of Scripture underlined. Whole sections were highlighted in yellow and some underscored in red. Hundreds of tiny notations crept around the margins. Some pages had little white space left.

I decided to give God one more chance. I told Him if you phoned me, I'd know I shouldn't do it."

I learned much from my experience with Janice. Sometimes guidance from the Spirit lays in the mind like a stone until we obey. Then it rolls away and reveals resurrection life. **BA**

**Rose McCormick  
Brandon** writes from  
Caledonia, Ontario.





# He Is Lord!

by Daniel Flores

The Gospels tell us that Jesus chose twelve disciples and sent them out to preach (Mark 3:14). This was not a temporary calling. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus confirmed it: “You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

At Pentecost, Peter testified that God had made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ (2:36). As a result of Peter’s testimony and exhortation, about three thousand people were baptized. The growing church persevered in the doctrine of the apostles, in communion with one another, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers (vv. 40-42). Luke emphasized that the Lord added to the church (v. 47). The church bears witness, but the Lord adds.

In contrast to this story is the one following it. Peter and John went to the temple to pray but were intercepted at the gate by a man who asked them for money (3:1-5). We do not know his name, but we know his condition: He could not walk. He depended on others to live. Every day someone laid him at the gate. He did not enter but sat by the door asking for alms. In the first story, the Lord added to the church miraculously. In this one, a lame man sat at the door of the temple in need of a miracle. Through him, the

Lord would continue to add to His church.

This man lay at the gate called Beautiful, but people didn’t see him. They knew of him and his condition, for he had been there many years. Even Peter and John were going straight past him into the temple. But the man begged them to give him something. He was not taken to the temple to receive something from God. His trust was not in the Lord but in the alms of men. The lame man was so close to the temple but so far from the Lord. But that day everything was going to change, not only for him but for all present.

Once the lame man spoke, Peter saw the opportunity to testify about Jesus. The man expected money, but Peter and John had none. They had something better: the Holy Spirit. And in the name of Jesus Christ, they commanded him to walk. His feet and ankles strengthened, the man stood and entered the temple for the first time, leaping and praising God, to the wonder of the onlookers (vv. 6-10).

Peter took advantage of that wonderful moment to testify to all who had witnessed the miracle: “Repent . . . and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord” (v. 19, NIV). That day the Lord continued to add to the church.

*continued on page 13*

# Questions & Answers



I'm feeling convicted that I should be reconciled with a brother in church, but I'm not sure how to do it. Will you advise me?

Your situation sounds like it's about two Christ-followers who have become distant due to personal offense, conflicts, or misunderstandings as spoken of in Matthew 5:22-26; Ephesians 4:31, 32; and Colossians 3:12-14. It does not sound like what's addressed in Matthew 18:15-17 or in Galatians 6:1, where a brother is overcome by failure and needs the intervention of other mature believers to humbly confront him about his sin.

If this is correct, then the right thing to do in your case is already half done. If you weren't convicted about loving and being loved — forgiving and being forgiven — by your brother, we wouldn't have much hope for a successful second half. But you are in the church and have written here for counsel, so I'm believing that your conviction is from God via the Holy Spirit. The only thing left now is to "pull the trigger" — that is, yield to the Spirit's conviction and fully follow His guidance through the written Word in the first three texts above.

My advice, then, is that you determine in your heart to contact your brother soon, before another week passes. Do it in person or by phone, not by email or postal mail. Don't open up the whole problem or try to resolve it in this first contact. Simply say to the brother that God is convicting you about the broken or strained relationship between you, and that you are ready to make it right. Wait for his response. Then, without more details, ask your brother

to meet you soon at a time and neutral place where the two of you can talk.

From then until you meet, you should humble yourself and pray, pray, pray. Your attitude during the meeting will be the most important factor in deciding its outcome. You must not accuse your brother or remind him of his failures. Rather, listen attentively to him and take full responsibility for your own words, thoughts, actions, and/or omissions that either caused or contributed to the problem. Don't make excuses for your own behavior. And don't say, "If I said or did anything that hurt you, I'm sorry." Rather, admit your sins against your brother, honestly ask him to forgive you, and seek an agreement that each of you freely forgives the other just as Christ forgave both of you.

If you both forgive each other and agree to put the problem in the past, you have won your brother and delivered your own soul. Thank God and settle it in your mind to always love, accept, and forgive him in the future, regardless of the circumstances.

If your brother does not forgive you, you should reexamine your own motives and attitudes before concluding that your soul has been delivered. What about your spirit and your words made it difficult or impossible for him to respond as you'd hoped? Back to your knees before you try again. Then you can ask for a second meeting to further discuss issues and work toward total and final resolution. It may be helpful to take a wise third person with you — someone agreeable to you both — to assist in the process of reconciliation.

— Elder Calvin Burrell



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The gospel message of the King and His reign.

by John Klassek

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Throughout the Gospels we read some ninety references to the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God. It seems everything Jesus said and did was related to this singular mission and purpose.

But not everyone respected it. Pilate's tone when he asked Jesus, "So you are a king?" (John 18:33, 37) was along the satirical lines of what F. B. Meyer wrote: "Thou poor, worn, tear-stained outcast, forsaken by every friend in this Thy hour of need . . . art

Thou a king?" Yet throughout His ministry, Jesus was committed to this kingdom reality.

### Gospel message

For example, Jesus urged everyone to seek first the kingdom (Matthew 6:33). His numerous parables all likened the kingdom to some easily understood agricultural or domestic story (Matthew 13). He spoke of how difficult entrance to the kingdom would be for the worldly rich, and He praised kingdom faith (Luke 18:24-30, 35-43). Jesus knew how to communicate the truths of the kingdom in terms people could understand.

Shortly after Jesus was resurrected, He commissioned His disciples into the work of

evangelism and discipleship on the basis of "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18). Who could say that but the King of heaven and earth!

### Heaven and earth

In teaching His disciples to pray, Jesus modeled the famous words "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The kingdom of God has always existed, but for us in this age, its fullness is yet to arrive.

Throughout the Scriptures, we are given glimpses of this kingdom glory. For example, the relationship between heaven and earth was apparent to Jacob when he dreamed of a flight of

stairs connecting heaven and earth (Genesis 28:10-17). He sensed the profundity of what he saw: Heavenly angels were ministering assignments for those on earth!

Do we, today, sense the relationship between the two realities — heaven and earth? We gain further insight from Paul's letter to the Romans, where he states that "The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (8:19). John tells us that we are God's children now (1 John 3:1). In John 17, Jesus prayed for His disciples who were in the world but not of the world.

Another prime example was Abraham, living as a sojourner, "looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). So the question for us is, Do we live according to the principles of Jesus' kingdom, as opposed to those in this world?

Paul reminded the faithful in Philippi that "our citizenship is in heaven . . ." (Philippians 3:20). Jesus was more specific: "In my Father's house are many rooms. . . . If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:2, 3). Just as Jacob saw in vision, there's a coming and going between heaven and earth. But one day, as Scripture foretells, God's kingdom will exist universally "forever and ever" (Daniel 7:18).

## Our identity

These scriptures speak deeply into our hearts today. They

should define our identity, anchor our soul, and point us in the only direction toward the kingdom of God. The author of Hebrews noted this journey and highlighted the way there: "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith . . ." (Hebrews 12:1, 2).

Along with those who have preceded us, we are pioneers in this age of a coming reality. We are born from above, equipped by the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name into work of evangelism and discipleship. We are witnesses to the imminent awaiting kingdom glory, while still living in a world so foreign from this reality. No wonder John concluded Revelation with his plea, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

Jesus is coming. The kingdom of God is near. Jesus said, "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done" (Revelation 22:12). When that occurs, at that moment, heaven and earth will forever intersect and meld, and Edenic paradise lost will be kingdom glory regained. **BA**

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**John Klassek** and his wife, Rebecca, have six children and five grandchildren. Living in rural Western Australia, he works bi-vocationally in IT support and ministry and pastors a CoG7 congregation near the capital city of Perth. Scripture quotations are from the *English Standard Version*.



## He Is Lord!

*continued from page 10*

The lordship of Christ is central to witnessing the Word of God. In his two books, Luke uses the word *Lord* (Greek: *kyrios*) often — over two hundred times. *Kyrios* is the title used for God in the Old Testament, and it means "sovereign master." In Acts we see its importance. The disciples recognized Jesus as Lord (1:6, 21). Whoever "calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (2:21, NIV). Stephen invoked the name of the Lord at his stoning (7:59). The Lord sent Ananias to recover Paul's sight (9:27). And those who believed were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (8:16; 10:48; 19:5).

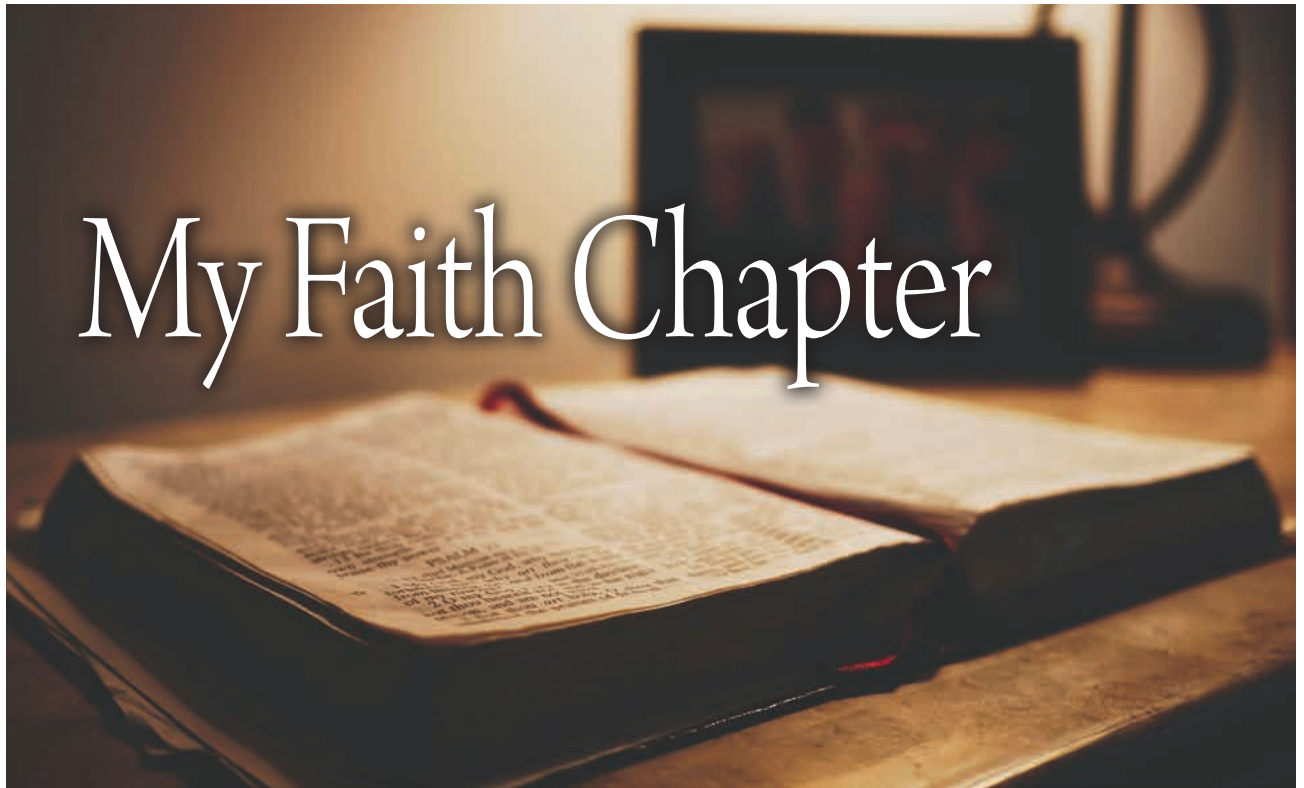
Like Peter and John, we are called to be witnesses to Jesus and His lordship. God has also shown us His power. How many prayers has He answered, and how many miracles have we witnessed? Let that motivate us to preach the name of the Lord Jesus. Many people today are near temples but far from the Lord. Let our testimony give them the opportunity to believe and be healed.

May the Lord continue to add to the church those who must be saved for His glory and honor. **BA**

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**Daniel Flores** pastors the McAllen, TX congregation and holds ministry positions on the district and national levels. He lives in Mission, TX, with his wife, Kerenha, and their four children.





# My Faith Chapter

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The sweet taste of hope in  
Jesus' power over death.

by **Ken Lawson**

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Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart (Hebrews 12:1-3).

**H**ave you ever tasted hot homemade chocolate gravy poured over hot homemade biscuits? There is simply nothing like it and nothing sweeter, especially when it is made lovingly by your mom. As I grew up, mornings with that delicious breakfast became some of my best memories.

The only sweeter memories of that home life are of my dad and mom's love and teaching us the Word of God. These include regular and ample doses of Bible reading about Jesus' joyful resurrection and His promise of the resurrection. Now at age 75, I consider the sweetness of the resurrection promise the most valuable, exceeding even those precious memories of chocolate gravy and biscuits. Ours through faith in Jesus Christ, that promise is by far one of the best gifts ever!

## Old Testament sweetness

Job knew the sweet promise of his Redeemer and His resurrection power. That knowledge gave Job courage to strongly hold on to faith through every trial and trouble the enemy tossed his way. This was perhaps two thousand years before Jesus' death on the cross and glorious resurrection. How then could Job have possibly known and tucked into his faith system this confidence-building truth? Through God's Holy Spirit, Job said:

I know that my redeemer lives,  
and that in the end he will stand on 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).

Chapter 14 speaks of this promised truth in greater detail. Job asks, "If someone dies, will they live again?" He then concludes, "You will call and I will answer you" (vv. 14, 15).

### New Testament sweetness

In the New Testament, Hebrews provides a detailed faith theology that builds on the resurrection truth revealed to Job.

We speak of Hebrews 11 as the Faith Chapter, but this presentation of faith actually begins in Hebrews 10:19 with the word *Therefore*. The appeal begins there for us to build our life of faith, holding strongly to our hope of the resurrection that gave Job his courage. This teaching on faith doesn't end until we read another *Therefore* in Hebrews 12:1: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses. . . ." All that falls between these two *therefores* is about courageous perseverance of faith: ours and those who have come before us.

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. . . . By faith Abel . . . By faith Enoch . . . By faith Noah . . . By faith Abraham . . . By faith even Sarah . . . All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance . . . (11:1-13).

We presently live in this marvelous faith. Without it, we have no hope to sustain us. How do

we personally build our lives on that faith and hope? The Faith Chapter gives us the answer. It provides reminders that strengthen us to hold on to our relationship with Jesus and His joyful resurrection promise.

### Personal sweetness

Hebrews 11 in my Bible has many more names in it than yours has. About forty years ago I began adding in the margins the names of those faithful

to meet Jesus together in resurrection life. This hope is a super, solid, promised, eternal life gift from God.

I now have nine family members, twelve church members, and five ministers named in my faith chapter. The personal commitment of each one impacted my life and gave me deeper courage and strength to hold on to the promised power of Jesus' resurrection. My faithful mom and dad, their three faith-

“The Faith Chapter provides reminders that strengthen us to hold on to our relationship with Jesus and His joyful resurrection promise.”

people who impacted my life. The first one I wrote was Davy Crowson from Monroe, Oregon. This young man had muscular dystrophy and was confined to a wheelchair. I do not think I ever saw him without a beautiful smile.

Davy and I were baptized together in 1962 when I was eighteen. I carried him out to the river, where about thirty of us were baptized that day. God used that very moment to call me to be a pastor. After Davy passed away some time later, I wrote his name in Hebrews 11 as a reminder of his hope and mine. I look forward to the day we will rise

ful daughters, and their five sons (who all became pastors) will be in that resurrection. Mom may just set us all down at the table and make us chocolate gravy and biscuits.

I feel as Job did: "How my heart yearns within me!" **BA**

**Ken Lawson** is the Central District superintendent and serves with his wife, Sandra, at the St. Paul, MN congregation.



Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version*.



# Transmission

(Matthew 28:18)

by Jody McCoy

In the previous two articles, we reflected on mountaintop experiences. We started with the transformative experience of giving our lives to Jesus. We saw next that we often need a second mountaintop experience before we realize that we can't overcome our old nature in our own strength. But God provides victory through surrender.

Now we turn to how God can use our lives for greater good. Queen Esther was given the opportunity to trust God. At first, she saw her terrifying circumstances only as a problem to escape. However, her cousin, Mordecai, recognized Esther's problem as an opportunity to embrace. He was confident that God would deliver the Jews. The only question in his mind was whether God would transmit deliverance through Esther or through another means. The choice was hers. Through her faith in action, God's power flowed to deliver the Jews.

We often look at Esther's story, and those of many other men and women of faith, and wonder if God's mighty power could flow through us too. Would we have the faith to make the choices they made? Jesus answered that question for us: "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much . . ." (Luke 16:10, ESV). Our faith grows by exercising it. God gives us opportunities for this every day.

Like Esther, we've been given a purpose of eternal consequence. Jesus said that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him (Matthew 28:18). He could perform His mission without us, but He's chosen to work through us, just as the Father chose to work through Him. Jesus has entrusted us with His Great

Commission. He doesn't want to do the work without us, and we can't do the work without Him (2 Corinthians 4:7). To understand this better, we need another mountaintop.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus described the work: "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you . . ." (Matthew 5:44). He said that anyone can love those who love them; that's just conditional love. But unconditional love requires the nature of God. We can't do that without the power of His Spirit in us. The good news is, in Christ we can do all things (Philippians 4:13).

Jesus said that rivers of living water will flow from those who believe in Him (John 7:38). We are the channels through which His love flows to others. However, when we've been treated unfairly, our old nature can cut off that flow if we haven't surrendered our need for justice. The power to overcome our old nature belongs to God, but the surrender comes from us.

Like Mordecai, let's remind each other of the magnitude of the opportunity before us. Like Esther, let's act in faith so that the power of God's unconditional love can flow through us to rescue those around us. Through the power of Jesus' love in us, everyone will know that we are His disciples (John 13:34, 35). **BA**

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**Jody McCoy** is executive director of the General Conference and lives in Austin, TX.





# Be Still

(Psalm 46:10)

“Be still and know that I am God.”

God, Creator, Sustainer, Lover.

Be still and know that I am —  
am, was, and always will be.

Be still and know that I —  
I, and no other, am He.

Be still and know that —  
that I care for you more than any other.

Be still and know —  
know without question or quavering doubt.

Be still and —  
and wait in sure hope.

Be still —  
still and trust.

Be —  
be what He who said “I AM”  
WAS, IS, and WILL BE,  
made you to be.

Henry Bergen

# The Humble

by Israel Steinmetz

For leadership to be Christian, it must follow the teaching and example of Christ. In other words, leadership must be Christ centered in order to be Christian. Three passages stand out to me when I think about Christian leadership.

## Service and sacrifice

The first is Mark 10:35-45, where James and John are faster than the other ten disciples in asking for the most powerful and privileged positions in Christ's kingdom. Jesus' response re-frames their entire concept of leadership. Unlike the Gentile leaders who demonstrate their authority through power plays and dominance, the followers of Jesus are called to a form of leadership that emulates that of Jesus himself. It is focused on service and sacrifice that work in the best interest of the followers. In the kingdom of God, service is greatness.

Jesus' disciple, Peter, would later write a letter to Jesus' followers scattered throughout the world, describing them as "those who reside as aliens" in various places (1 Peter 1:1). They were aliens, not chiefly because they

lived outside their home country but because they represented the kingdom of God in the kingdom of darkness. The contrast is evident in 1 Peter 5:1-4, the second passage. Here Peter calls upon the elders to embrace the sufferings and glory of Christ by shepherding in step with the Chief Shepherd. This leadership consists of voluntary oversight, based on eagerness to serve rather than on greed. It is an authority that trades in influence by example, rather than coercion through power. This leadership carries with it an eternal reward from the Chief Shepherd, who led in the same way.

The third passage is in Paul's letter to Ephesus, where he calls husbands and wives to mutual submission within marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33). The emphasis falls on the husband's imitating the headship of Christ over the church. The husband is called to sacrifice, loving and caring for his wife as he would for his own body. The security and beauty of the wife is his goal as he nourishes and cherishes her to her full potential, affording her full and abundant life. This is what Christ has done for His church. This is what the husband should do for his wife.

# Leadership of Christ

## In His steps

These three passages exemplify Christian leadership. It is to be Christ centered, following in the footsteps of Christ. It is leadership in the right-side-up kingdom of God in which first is last, greatest is least, and master is servant. It is leadership aimed at maximizing the beauty and benefit of the followers, rather than the status and power of the leaders.

Sadly, as followers of Christ, we often struggle to follow His leadership example. Like James and John, we find ourselves jockeying for power, arguing over greatness, and thinking of ourselves above those we serve. Leadership in the kingdom of God, the church, and the family are all too often defined and exercised in worldly terms. Leaders gain prominence through position, force, manipulation, and insistence on being obeyed by their followers. Followers end up serving leaders, rather than the other way around. People serve as a means to an end of greatness, rather than recognizing that in the kingdom of God, service is greatness.

The teaching and example of Christ and the apostles call us to a different style of leadership, which is characterized by humility, service, and sacrifice.

Christ exemplified this approach by humbling Himself, taking on the role of a servant and sacrificing Himself for the sake of the world. When Paul describes this example in Philippians 2:1-11, he calls upon all of Jesus' followers to imitate Christ in this way, having the same attitude that Jesus had. This is a reminder that we are all leaders, because we all influence others. As Christians, we are called to Christ-centered leadership, regardless of our title or position.

## Way of Christ

Those who lead like Christ are promised the power and authority to expand the kingdom of God now and enjoy the reward of the Great Leader himself for all eternity. No wonder, then, that those who exercise the most godly influence are oftentimes those without titles or positions of power. I'm often struck by the positive influence of godly women and men serving in the background, sacrificing themselves and humbling themselves before God and one another. And I'm often saddened by the negative influence of ungodly men and women expecting others to serve and sacrifice for them, puffed up with pride in their power and position.

The problem is not in granting authority or titles. Christ himself placed leaders within the body (Ephesians 4:11), and the New Testament is consistent in expressing the need for people to be entrusted with authority in the church. The problem is in the way we often approach this authority and these titles. When we approach them through the perspective of worldly leadership, we use them for our own power, status, and benefit. However, when we approach them through the perspective of Christ-centered leadership, we can use authority and titles to empower others, lift up those who are crushed, and benefit those we serve.

This is the way of Christ. May it be the way of Christian leaders. May our leadership be marked by humility, service, and sacrifice. And may we recognize those godly leaders around us who serve in such Christ-centered ways, particularly when they do so without any official authority or title. **BA**

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Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*.



# Day of Reckoning



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Reliving a well-known scene in John 8:1-11.

by **Bob Blundell**

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The ancient steps I stood on were cracked with veins of age, each splintered line a reflection of times and events in history I prayed would never be forgotten. This holy place overlooked the foothills surrounding the historic City of David and Jerusalem beyond. The view presented an oxymoronic blend of ancient alabaster structures, built centuries before Christ, and modern buildings standing straight and tall along the horizon. It was a testament, I thought, to the harmony between old and new and of how much the world had changed — yet in many ways, remained the same.

Wind swept across the great temple, kicking up chalk-colored dust. I pulled my jacket around my neck in defense of the wind's bite and closed my eyes, taking myself back in time. After a few moments, the modern sounds around me became muffled voices that eventually faded into silence. I imagined how it might have been over two thousand years ago, on these same steps on the Mount of Olives where Jesus taught.

The images began to form, and I smiled as I saw the people gathered around Him. I could see their looks of joy and wonder at the message He carried and of the miracles He had performed. And then I felt myself there among them.

He was clad in an ash-colored robe with a simple gold sash tied at His waist, and a brown woven shawl hung over His broad, sturdy shoulders. His shoulder-length hair was the color of cinnamon. As He turned His face to speak to the people crowded around Him, the fading sunlight glistened on His long mane like shiny strands of gold.

There were men, a dozen or more of many ages who stood around Him in a circle. Others sat on the steps near His feet, quietly watching, nodding in silent agreement and peering at Him with amazement. A gentle warmth in His mahogany eyes seemed to speak to me, and I watched Him, mesmerized by His presence.

But then, the sound of frantic voices erupted near the east entrance. I looked down at the boisterous crowd of a dozen

or more coming up the steps. Stumbling ahead of them was a tall woman with raven hair, clad in an ivory tunic that was ripped and tattered. Two men shoved her through the entrance of the temple, and many others behind them were shouting and crying out, pumping their fists in the air. I could see a thin line of blood on her cheek as she stumbled forward. Two men, tall and muscular, gripped her frail arms, lifting her up when she fell.

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I watched as they dragged the woman, limp and bleeding, up the uneven steps. When they reached the top, they dropped her near His feet. He leaned down and gently stroked her head, as a mother would soothe a frightened child. "Why have you seized this poor woman?" He asked, standing before the angry crowd.

As His words seemed to hang motionless in the crisp air, a wind swept across the temple steps, hurling dust that hovered like a dense fog around the feet of the angry men. Then thunder rumbled ominously as slate-colored clouds moved across the horizon, blocking the fading sunlight.

The mob was cast in a blanket of darkness as if day had suddenly changed to night. Gasps and frightened whispers were heard among them. But the Man stood alone, bathed in a wedge of light that peeked through an opening in the sky. A radiant hue hovered around Him, making His eyes shine like burning embers in a fire.

Many of the men withdrew in fear. But an elder, clad in splendid colors and with a beard as

white as the sandstone steps he stood upon, stepped forward to face Him. "Teacher!" he said in an authoritative voice. "This woman has been caught in adultery. The law of Moses says she must be punished!" The elder knelt and picked up a round gray stone, the size of a lemon, and held it up in the air. "The laws of our fathers say she must be stoned to death!"

As he finished speaking these words, the men behind him began to scream and shake their fists in anger.

"Kill the adulteress!" one shouted.

"Stone her!" cried another.

I watched as the angry cries

toward the crowd, pointing at the woman who lay curled at His feet. "Let anyone among you who is without sin be first to throw a stone at her."

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There was silence at first, then a melody of confused voices. But the cries ceased when He dropped to His knees again and wrote in the dust once more. Several of the older men in the mob pressed forward to see what manner of words this Man wrote.

The elder who had spoken of stoning the woman was the first to see the writing. As he read



grew louder and louder. Then the Teacher calmly knelt to the ground and began making signs in the dust with His finger. The voices calmed to murmurs, the men intrigued by His actions.

"What is He doing?" one cried out.

"What is He writing?" asked another.

Then He stood and stepped

the words scripted in the dirt, his face turned ashen. The gray rock in his fist fell to the ground and clattered down the steep steps of the temple. He slowly turned and walked away. Then the sounds of other stones falling to the ground, one after another, cracked the silence. And one by one, the other men followed the elder.

As the crowd dispersed, the Teacher lifted the woman to her feet. He brushed twisted strands of hair from her face and used His thumb to gently wipe blood from a cut below her eye. An intensity gleamed in His eyes. His smile shone a warmth like that of a loving father. Then He and the woman spoke to one another. And after a moment, she fell to her knees weeping and kissed His sandaled feet.

The people who had gathered around watched Him move toward the entrance below them. Minutes later, though He could no longer be seen, the power of His simple words still floated among them. And all who had been there to witness knew they would never be the same.



I opened my eyes to see the amber haze of the sun as it began its melt into surrounding hills. The sounds and voices of the modern day filled the air again. Yet part of me still clung to the vision of that scene two thousand years ago. I didn't want to leave that incredible moment in time. It served as a reminder that though we are all desperately flawed and in need of forgiveness, He will always be there to lift us to our feet, wipe the blood from our faces, and grant us His mercy.

And Jesus said, "Go now and do not sin anymore." **BA**

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**Bob Blundell** writes from Friendswood, TX.



Only two months before we gather in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for our Biennial Convention. Have you registered yet? Hopefully you've checked out the convention website ([www.cog7.org/convention](http://www.cog7.org/convention)), the gateway to the registration process that provides helpful information. If you do not have Internet access, call Linda K at the Denver office for assistance (303-452-7973).

Here are some compelling activities we will enjoy in Albuquerque.

❖ **Business sessions.** Members can be actively involved in the future of our church by participating in the business of the General Conference. What a privilege to be informed about God's work on earth.

❖ **Heartfelt worship and dynamic preaching.** A great praise team is praying and planning to lead us in worship. Evening speakers will cover various aspects of Christ's Great Commission:

Tuesday: **Focus on Jesus and Follow His Plan**  
- Jody McCoy, Executive Director

Wednesday: **God's in the Going**  
- Jason Overman, BA Editor

Thursday: **Welcome! We Got You**  
- Elder Kirk Grant

Friday: **A Generous Disciple**  
- Daniel Flores, Ministerial Council President

Sabbath morning: **Joining God's Mission**  
- Israel Steinmetz, Dean of Academic Affairs, Artios Christian College

Sabbath evening: **Disciple!**  
- Loren Stacy, General Conference President

# Compelled by Love

## 2019 GC Convention

### July 1-6

❖ **Instructive workshops.** A number of subjects will be covered:

**Evangelism and Discipleship** (English and Spanish) - Larry Zaragoza/Mike Vlad, and Daniel Flores/Ramón Ruiz

**Family Life Ministry** - Kurt Lang

**Leadership** (English and Spanish) - Artios Christian College staff

**Social Media** (English and Spanish) - Jamin Teran

**Help for Church Treasurers** (English and Spanish) - Dawn Wayman

**Supporting Youth** - Youth Worker/Parent Partnership

**What's the Latest in Church Ministry?**  
(Bible Advocate Press, GC Missions, Artios)

**Local Church Ministries**

**The Welcoming Church** - Troy Gedack

❖ **Special programs.** Activities are being planned for children, youth, and young adults. Each family member will have a great opportunity to create lasting memories.

❖ **Local attractions.** Join other attendees on tours of the Albuquerque area. Come early and see the sites on Monday, July 1. Friday afternoon is a free time to explore. See tour descriptions and follow the information on the convention website to schedule your outings.

Pray for those who are organizing and planning for convention week. Send a donation to help with convention expenses. (Visit [cog7.org](http://cog7.org) and click on "Donate.")

Most important, register today! Early registration deadline is **April 30**.

— *Convention Planning Committee*



**Join us in Albuquerque,  
New Mexico, in early July.  
Hope to see you there!**



# A Life Well Lived

A personal interview with Martha Keim.

*Martha Keim, longtime CoG7 member and Bible Advocate reader, supporter, and distributor (in her local community), was baptized 90 years ago and turned 105 in February. She was interviewed by her grandson, Robert Grabinsky, in Acme, Alberta, Canada, shortly after her birthday.*

**Robert Grabinsky (RG):**

When and where were you born?

**Martha Keim (MK):** I was born the third of nine children on February 10, 1914, on the farm near Schuler, Alberta. While I was being born in the house, my dad had a mare foaling in the barn attached to the house. It was cold, and the foal would have frozen to death outside.

**RG:** What were some of your first memories?

**MK:** I remember collecting dried cow pies with a wagon to burn in the winter if we needed it. Coal was expensive and hard to come by, and there weren't many trees. We were poor and didn't have much to play with, so my dad made a ball on a rope from the worn-out collar of a horse harness, and we jumped rope with it. A treat for us was a baked potato with salt in the evening. My first memories of church were at Friedensfeld Baptist Church, where my Uncle Karl Hermann was pastor. The church sat on land my dad had donated, and Dad made sure we were there on time!

**RG:** When were you baptized?

**MK:** I accepted the Lord and was baptized at age 15 while in Medicine Hat taking care of my grandmother. I was baptized along with my cousin Fred Reich and his girlfriend, Elsie, by Pastor Adler. None of my family was able to attend my baptism. I sang alto in choir. I've always enjoyed singing, and I still do now.

**RG:** What brought you to the Acme area?



**MK:** My Aunt Lydia Hermann married Albert Keim of Acme, Alberta. Times were hard during the dry years of the late twenties, but things were better up north at Acme. And so, at 17, I went there to work on their farm to help my family make ends meet. But I was so lonely – one hundred fifty miles away from home. I fed the cows, did field work, [shocked] wheat, and drove a twelve-horse team on the harvester. I worked hard and managed to send \$200 home to my family the first year.

**RG:** How did you become a Sabbathkeeper? What brought you to CoG7?

**MK:** All the Keims and Fischers kept the Sabbath, which I'd never seen. So I decided I was going to prove to them – especially Phillip Keim, who later became my father-in-law – that Sabbath was wrong. It was mostly Phillip who showed me in the Bible so many places where Sabbath was to be kept that I began to have doubts about Sunday. I told my mother that the CoG7 are the children of God who keep Sabbath . . . but she wasn't convinced. I once asked my mother, "How come you keep Sunday?" I remember her answer, because it wasn't good enough for me. She said, "Because my parents did, and my whole family does!"

So my sister Barbara, who had also come up north to work for [the] Fischers (who were another Sabbathkeeping family at Acme) and I became convinced that we had to keep the Sabbath, and we got involved with the Acme

CoG7, which was meeting only on a monthly basis at that time.

Barbara and I were promised that if we attended every week and helped clean the church, we could have church every Sabbath. And so with help from the Fischer and Keim families, we had services at Acme every week from then on. Barbara and I both became members.

In 1934, I married Reuben (Phillip Keim's son), and Barbara married Emil (Karl Fischer's son), who were Sabbathkeepers



at Acme. Our farm was less than a mile from the church, and Barbara's was even closer. Barbara and I were very close in every way.

**RG:** Who was the first CoG7 minister you met?

**MK:** I first met Elder Straub in California, but the Kieszes were the first to serve in Acme. I think they were related to the Keims. I also remember the Bentz, Stiede,

and Moldenhauer families being here. Back then, E. A. Straub lived in Jacob Keim's garage.

**RG:** What is your favorite Bible verse?

**MK:** Psalm 23.

**RG:** Do you have a favorite hymn?

**MK:** "I Know Whom I Have Believed, "Cleanse Me, and "Oh, To Be Like Thee."

**RG:** What are some church publications you enjoy?

**MK:** I used to read more, but my eyes get tired and I forget quicker than I used to, I guess. I have always liked reading our tracts and the *Bible Advocate*. When the *Bible Advocate* arrives, I start at the beginning and go as long as my eyes will allow. It sometimes takes me a week to get through it, and sometimes I need to reread the piece because I forget where I was! When I'm done with the BA, I want others to read it in my lodge, so I pass it around to a few others, who also read it. I like to get it back eventually if I can.

But maybe someone else needs it more.

I have quite a few tracts from years ago that I like to have ready or just leave at places where others may read. I have extras, and so, why not? Maybe some good will come.

**RG:** What are you reading right now?

**MK:** I don't watch TV these days, so I read as much as

possible and as my eyes allow. A favorite is the “Questions and Answers” section of the BA. I like it when the Sabbath is defended. Those men are so much smarter than me! I’ve met Calvin Burrell and Robert Coulter over the years; I’m sure I’m older than they are, but maybe not by much?! Sometimes Dorothy Nimchuk’s writings are in there too. It is nice to see people I know still writing and serving God in our church. I’ve also got *This We Believe* and *The Story of the Church of God (Seventh Day)*, and have read them both. I read other magazines and books too, but I think the BA is the best! Jason Overman does a good job. I’ve met him too.

**RG:** What piece of advice does a 105-year-old have for the rest of us?

**MK:** Always be truthful, kind, loving, helpful; and obey God. He is your leader in everything.

**RG:** Is there anything else you’d like to share with the BA readers?

**MK:** Do right and fear no one; don’t fear, or you won’t speak what you should. **BA**



*Editor’s note: Sister Martha Keim passed away March 5, 2019, shortly after this interview was conducted. In her last moments, surrounded by her family,*

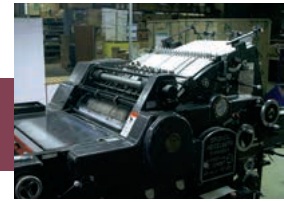
*she spoke of seeing them in the kingdom. She passed peacefully and is now asleep in Jesus. We join her family in grieving her loss and thanking God for her life.*



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# From the BAP

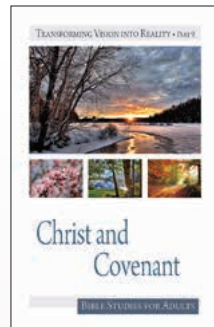


## Support for studies

I want to find out if an adult Sabbath school study on Hebrews was ever considered. I am reading through that book now, and it is so rich. I know — we are currently in Transforming Vision into Reality. I am not sure what future vision is for the Bible studies.

I would love to learn where our church as a whole may be headed with our studies. They are, by the way, very interesting. Our teacher does an excellent job of opening up discussion, and our brethren don't hesitate to get involved, which I think is a great blessing.

H. B.  
Boston, MA

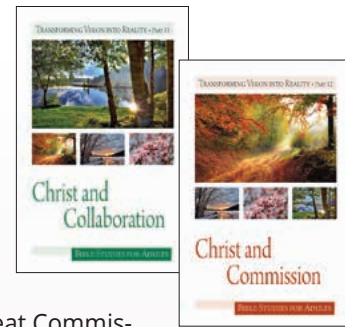


## Coming up . . .

Our third quarterly in 2019, *Christ and Collaboration*, examines our call to work with Christ in making disciples. This is divine cooperation with Jesus for the ultimate purpose of fulfilling

His mission — the Great Commission — to proclaim and build the kingdom of God on earth. This study will prepare the disciple for work in the field, to be successful in ministry, and to fulfill the call to be a light to the world.

In the fourth quarter, *Christ and Commission* reaffirms our mission as disciples of Christ. We must be willing vessels, useful to our Lord in proclaiming the gospel and expanding His kingdom. Collaborating with members of our own church and the greater Christian community is a key theme in this quarter, as well as the need for our conduct to match our message. Among other things, this study will equip Sabbath school students to evangelize their communities and edify the church.



*Editor's note: I'm happy to hear that you and your congregation are profiting from the quarterly lessons. We'll continue our Great Commission theme and TVR through 2019. In 2020 we begin a new series on the Ministry of Reconciliation from 2 Corinthians 5. Beyond that, I'm not sure yet, but I'm open for suggestions.*

*We do have a quarterly on Hebrews from 2007. If you'd like to order a copy of it, or another quarterly in our extensive archive, contact the General Conference office in Denver, or order from our online bookstore at cog7.org.*

I wish to extend my gratitude to all those who have and are still contributing to the preparations of these Bible study quarterlies. Thanks especially to the author and editors. Every word in each book has been a blessing to my soul over the past few years. I also speak on behalf of my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, who have shared countless times of how inspiring and well written the content has been quarter after quarter.

May God continue to fill you all with the divine inspiration, strength, and drive to continue playing your part in His work here on earth!

H. H.  
Jamaica



*In keeping with our Great Commission theme this year, all our BA covers feature cities from around the world. Tokyo, Japan, was first (January-February), then Cinque Terre, Italy (March-April). Can you identify the other cities on our covers in the coming months?*



## El Salvador at a Glance

- Population: over 6.9 million
- Capital: San Salvador
- Land area: 8,124 square miles
- Official CoG7 congregations: 107
- CoG7 membership: 3,206 (*baptized*)
- President: Jesús Amilcar Salmerón López



## Canada at a Glance

- Population: over 37 million
- Capital: Ottawa
- Land area: 3,854,085 square miles
- Official CoG7 congregations: 6
- CoG7 membership: 291
- GC President: Loren Stacy

## El Salvador, Calgary

*continued from page 7*

schools. My son was threatened a couple of times. I said, no, I don't want this for my children, and we decided to emigrate to Canada. Taking my children out of the dangers of El Salvador was a great choice.

**JK:** Were you able to settle into church life fairly easily in Canada, or did it take some time?

**HR:** Four weeks [after] I emigrated to Canada, I met Brother Andres Menjivar, one of the ministers of the Church of God (Seventh Day). We [were] really good friends in El Salvador, and he was so happy to see me. He said, "Why don't you come and join us in the church?" He knew my work in El Salvador. I used to work in several churches. I pastored a couple of big churches [there]. And then, the first year, I was elected as the pastor of a Spanish church. Later on, I decided to join the English church, where I served for about seven years. But then I saw the need of people who were members of the Church of God (Seventh Day) in El Salvador and couldn't speak English.

**JK:** So you're saying that there were other people who emigrated to Canada as well?

**HR:** Yes, yes, they emigrated to Canada, probably before me. And there were some elderly people, even my parents. They are members of the Church, but they do not speak English. Then I decided to work in the Spanish area to help those people.

**JK:** Can you tell me, what's



it like being part of a Christ-centered church?

**HR:** Being part of the Church, it's a great experience. Something that you cannot buy with money. Something that you cannot experience in the world. Being part of the Church of God is something that makes you feel good about yourself. Now that I'm here in Australia, I feel that I have family all over the world.

**JK:** What does it mean, then, to be Christ centered?

**HR:** It means to me that Christ is the center of my life. If we go to Galatians 2:20, Paul said that he is crucified with Christ. And I don't live, myself, but Christ lives in me. What he meant by that is that the center of his life is Jesus Christ in his heart. That's what *Christ centered* means to me.

**JK:** What are the risks of churches being more law centered as opposed to Christ centered?

**HR:** When you do not center in Jesus Christ, you think you are obtaining salvation by your own deeds. According to the Holy Scripture, salvation is a gift from God. I remember, a few years ago, I went to Nicaragua, and this brother was a deacon in the Church. I asked him, "Why do you observe the Ten Commandments?" He said, "Because I want to be saved." "Well, you're doing it the wrong way. . . . You are telling Jesus Christ, 'Your sacrifice isn't enough for me.'" It's not the way. And he asked me, "Do you obey the commandments?" I said, "Yes, but I don't do them to be saved. I do them because I'm already saved." Because I'm already saved, it's easy for me to

do the commandments. And I said to him, see, Ephesians 2:10 says that we have been created to do good deeds. That's what happens. He said, "Oh, I never heard of this."

**JK:** How do you mentor a younger generation to begin to form that [kind of] relationship with Christ?

**HR:** Well, that is the way I teach them. You do not obey the law to be saved. You obey the law because you are saved. You don't do anything to be saved, because Jesus did it for you. You obey Jesus Christ because you are already part of the family of God. Your inner spirit [does] it.

**JK:** It's very exciting. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

**HR:** "Keep My commandments," yeah. And we do it out of love for Jesus Christ.

**JK:** So, looking toward the future, how do you see the Church of God (Seventh Day) stepping out counter-culturally to represent Christ to the world?

**HR:** I see some, not only spiritual growth in the church, but I see a growth in number. I see the Church of God (Seventh Day) in the future as more than amateurs.

View the video of this interview at  
[https://www.message7.org:7777/2019/hector\\_yt.htm](https://www.message7.org:7777/2019/hector_yt.htm).

**JK:** Given your experience in both El Salvador and now in Canada, what are the ways in the different countries where evangelism works most effectively? Is there any difference, or is it much the same?

**HR:** I'm really glad you asked this question. When you see evangelism, you see it in two ways. El Salvador is a poor, poor country. And when people have poverty, they're more open-hearted to the gospel. Then it's easier to go and evangelize in El Salvador where there are lots of poor people, and they believe that their only hope is Jesus Christ. In Canada, if they don't have a job, they go to the Social Service. If they don't have a job, they go to unemployment. If they don't have food, they go to the food bank. We have so many blessings in Canada that people, they are like, "I don't really need Jesus Christ, because I have here everything I need."

**JK:** Well, Brother Hector, it has been a privilege and an honor to have you as a guest here in Australia. I hope the remainder of your stay here is a blessing and that you take back some wonderful memories from Australia.

**HR:** Thank you very much, Brother John.



*IMC News*, produced by IMC Secretary John Klassek, is devoted to sharing news of the International Ministerial Congress. Visit [imc.cog7.org/newsletters.html](http://imc.cog7.org/newsletters.html) to download English and Spanish versions.



## “Brand” New Look!

The General Conference board of directors recently approved a vibrant new look for the General Conference to represent our Vibrant 21st Century Church. Our name is not changing. But we are intentionally adopting a visual and verbal brand so that anyone who sees our logo and reads our publications will immediately know that they represent the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day), which is the Church of God (Seventh Day) in the United States and Canada.

The three parts and three colors in our logo represent so many elements of our church. For example, we are organized into local, district, and Conference roles and responsibilities, and we often speak of ourselves as being Christ centered, grace oriented, and Sabbath celebrating. Our logo points upward, reminding us that we are Christ centered. Tilting our heads to the left, we see the wings of a dove, a reminder that we are Spirit formed. Tilting them to the right, our logo looks like the pages of an open Bible – a visual that we are Bible based. The three parts united form a circle, communicating that we are “One Church” and that “We are better together.”

You will see the new look more and more in our communications, publications, and websites. During the 2019 convention, we will celebrate our new look together.

We are the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day)! We are the Church of God (Seventh Day) United States and Canada! We are a vibrant 21st century church!

– Loren Stacy

## Payments from Foreign Readers

We want to notify you about a change affecting our ability to accept payments in US dollar (USD) and Euro (EUR) currency checks drawn on banks in the United Kingdom (UK).

Effective immediately, the Bible Advocate Press can no longer accept payments made by checks in USD and EUR currency drawn on banks in the UK that are **less than** \$250 USD. You can still submit USD and EUR checks drawn on banks in the UK that are **more than** the \$250 USD equivalent for individual check collection, rather than through a deposit. Please note these items are subject to fees from Wells Fargo and could take four to ten weeks, or more, to process.

For items you purchase from the BAP that cost less than the \$250 USD equivalent, we recommend that you use alternative methods for payment, such as wire transfer, our website ([cog7.org](http://cog7.org)), or credit card by phone (303-452-7973).

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and for the short notice.

– Bible Advocate Press staff



## Correction

There is an error on page 23 of the March-April Spanish *Bible Advocate*. In the second paragraph, the 2019 GC Convention theme is incorrectly identified as “Obligado por el Amor.” It should be “Motivado por Su Amor,” as indicated in the page heading.

We apologize for any confusion this error has caused.



## All Authority

As a preamble to His Great Commission, Jesus proclaimed, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18b, ESV throughout). Long before, however, and throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus had demonstrated His divine authority. On one occasion, Jesus exhibited not one, but three prerogatives of God, one after the other.

Mark 2:1, 2 sets the scene: “And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them.”

The context provides reason to think that this encounter may have taken place in the home of Simon Peter and his brother, Andrew. Earlier, Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law and many others there. Mark 1:33 says that “the whole city was gathered together at the door.” As Mark 2 opens, Jesus has returned and, once again, a huge crowd has gathered. That home is filled with so many people that entrance to it is completely blocked.

The drama begins when four men carrying a paralytic to Jesus take drastic action for his healing: “And when they could not get near him [Jesus] because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay” (v. 4). What an amazing display of commitment to their friend and of faith that Jesus could and would heal him!

Jesus now acts as only God can. He tells the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (v. 5). This is the first sign of authority given on this occasion. Jesus forgives sins — something only God can do.

Christ’s authority to forgive sin immediately is questioned by His opponents. “Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ‘Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?’ And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, ‘Why do you question these things in your hearts?’” (vv. 6-8). Jesus reads their minds! He knows exactly what they are thinking without their saying a word. This is the second sign of Christ’s authority revealed on this occasion.

Finally, and as proof of His divine authority, Jesus heals the paralytic. Continuing His remarks to the scribes, He asks:

“Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . . I say to you [the paralytic], rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all . . .” (vv. 9-12).

This third sign of Christ’s authority proves the first.

In this one exchange, Jesus exhibits His divine authority to forgive people’s sins, to know their thoughts, and to restore their bodies. All authority has been given to Him.

Therefore, let’s go and make disciples! Let’s join Him in His great work of reconciliation and restoration!

— Loren Stacy





## Convention 2019

Time is running  
out... register  
now!

Did you know that the deadline for making your hotel reservations at the convention rate is just weeks away — June 14? After then, regular rates will apply. The room block may sell out before June 14.

You don't want to miss out on dynamic worship, inspiring speakers, informative workshops, and warm fellowship. So reserve your room and register for convention. See you in Albuquerque!

Read all the details at [cog7.org/convention](http://cog7.org/convention).

