

Leiter Side of Movies: IN THE GARDEN

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. (Genesis 2:8)

It all started with a garden. What a beautiful place it must have been too! Imagine a world full of wonder and discovery. Adam and Eve were the first people ever to experience all of God's marvelous creation. Each new thing they found would have been as if they were looking through childrens' eyes.

Genesis 1:31a God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

In the hectic, sin-filled world we now live in, it must sometimes seem that we couldn't be further from that original garden. When is there time for awe or wonder? As we grow older there are so many responsibilities. I wish sometimes I could travel in time to that brief little moment when man was right with God and all was well in the garden.

There is another garden in the classic childrens' book *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. This story has been a favorite of filmmakers over the years, and has been made into various film, TV, and animated adaptations. In 1993, the Polish female director Agnieszka Holland made her own film version of the story. It touches on loss and rejection and how all the characters are transformed

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A Newsletter for Cooperation in the Churches of God

May, 2007

Doing What's Important

One of the undeniable facts of life is that God created man to produce. In fact, nature itself is productive. From the time he told Adam and Eve to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" until Jesus cursed the fig tree without fruit, God's expectation is unmistakable. From God's perspective, he seems to have given us what we need and then left us free to become profitable servants. But freedom means we can choose to be unprofitable.

An infamous example of an unprofitable servant is the man who buried the money deposited with him by the future King. The Prince left money with several servants and upon returning as King demanded an accounting. What had each produced with what he had been given? Those who had invested well received rich compensation, while the one that had done nothing lost even the deposit.

While it's understandable that Jesus would be disappointed with the man that hid his gift, he isn't just disappointed. Jesus calls him wicked. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant." (Luk 19:22) Then he commanded the pound be taken from the unprofitable servant and given to the one with ten pounds. Now this is the stuff class envy is made of. The onlookers are flabbergasted: "And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds."

An evangelical Christian I was talking with recently was a little perplexed over such a strong judgment on a seemingly understandable shortcoming. After all, it seemed to him that the Prince had lost nothing. His property was returned to him.

"Have you invested in a retirement plan?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered.

So I asked him "When you retire, if your investment has made no profit and you receive no more than you paid in, would you call the investment manager wicked?" His eyebrows rose, "I would indeed" he said. So I continued, "Do you monitor your stock portfolio and move investments from unprofitable stocks to profitable ones?"

Jesus has invested something with every Christian. He is telling us what he expects when he returns. "For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him." (Luk 19:24-26)

It should be clear that God is producing a spiritual product in us, just as he produces fruit in every plant he created. If there is no fruit, the plant has a problem.

But no man is without obstacles in his quest to grow. The question every



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Christian must ask is, "What gets in the way and prevents me from becoming what God intends?" The season of Unleavened Bread is the time to face just such a question. If the Judge of all the earth considers a man wicked for not bearing fruit, then it is imperative for a Christian to examine himself.

A few years ago, the founder of a well-known dog food company was concerned about his company's lack of success. He had lots of customers, a good product, and a good organization. Why was the company stagnant? After examining the accounts he realized that he was spending most of his time on just a few customers. He latched on to the 80/20 principle. 80% of his time was spent with 20% of his customers. This 20% didn't pay their bills on time, complained about trivial matters, didn't appreciate his efforts and consumed time that he could have used in positive ways.

When he understood the problem, he made a radical decision. He called each problem customer and told him he couldn't do business with him anymore unless he changed. It was a courageous decision to cut off business at a financially critical time.

He said two things happened. Some of them became angry and took their

If God is a Loving God... Why Does the Bible Say to Fear God?

them? If you're like most people, your ideas came from several sources outside the Bible, among them:

- What your parents and grandparents told you.



business elsewhere. The others became good customers. Either way the owner was better off.

First rule of success—success is more likely achieved when dead weight is eliminated.

The successful person will periodically ask two questions. First, "Where do I spend most of my time?" Second, "Is this activity the most profitable use of my time?" Jesus said, "If your hand causes you to offend, cut it off." In other words, if there is something that keeps me from being a profitable servant, I need to get rid of it.

How many companies have hired a new CEO to revitalize the company and his first act was selling off part of the company? Effective leaders know that cutting off the right hand is sometimes necessary.

The Passover Season provides man with time to refocus attention on the goal. Restore priorities. Do first things first.

Have you reached a plateau? Stuck on the middle rung of the ladder? The biggest harvest of your life may be just ahead. Passover is the pivotal point to rekindle the flame. **H**

...the Garden Continued from page 16

by a garden.

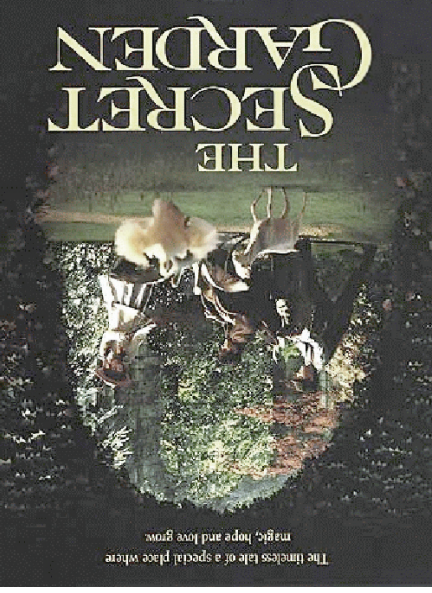
Pre-teen British girl, Mary Lennox, is spoiled and distant. Her wealthy parents were too caught up in their own socializing in Imperial India to spend time with Mary. Within the first few minutes of the movie the parents are killed in an earthquake, and Mary is sent back to England to live with Lord Craven, the uncle she never knew. The uncle is rarely at his large estate because he cannot bear to be reminded of his beloved wife, who also had died some years ago.

Though the teenage servant girl, Martha, is incredibly sweet and kind, she doesn't have time to keep Mary amused. The head housekeeper, Mrs. Medlock, warns Mary not to wander about. She must keep either to her own room or go outside. The gloomy outdoors doesn't seem to have much more to cheer one's spirits than the indoors did. But soon Mary discovers a locked garden that no one mentions or goes to. Using a key found in her dead aunt's jewelry box, Mary unlocks the garden door. What she finds beyond appears to be as neglected and lifeless as her own heart.

Martha's brother, Dickon, who has a way with animals and nature, helps Mary to see that the garden isn't dead but "alive as you and me." Mary and Dickon tend to the garden, planting seeds and taking away weeds—all the while telling no one, since Mary fears her uncle would not approve.

Later on Mary discovers that she has a cousin, Colin, a sickly, bedridden boy who is kept in his room like a tomb with no windows opened, nor sunlight shining in. In time, when Mary feels she can trust Colin, she shares about the secret garden—which had been a favorite place of Colin's mother.

As the garden comes in full bloom, it not only blesses Mary and Dickon, but eventually Colin, Lord Craven, and




the rest of the servants. "The spell was broken. My uncle learned to laugh, and I learned to cry. The secret garden is always open now. Open, and awake, and alive. If you look the right way, you can see that the whole world is a garden."

—Mary

With gorgeous cinematography and music, and a wonderful cast, this is a moving tale for all ages. I was very impressed by the acting of the three main young actors in this movie. They portray great hurt, disappointment, compassion, and joy on a level that grownups can truly identify with. I was struck by how Mary, a cold, bitter girl, ended up being the one who brought hope to those who needed it. But she too could not have done it without the loving support of the kind servants, Martha and Dickon. Maybe we can't travel in time to when the world was new. But God can help us each day to look at things afresh—through childlike eyes, to see the wonder in a butterfly, a newborn lamb or a flower in full bloom. And this can take us back to the garden.

bring peace and happiness to all the world.

So, if you like to sew and are interested in becoming involved, check the website for a chapter near you. If there is not a chapter in your community, call the

contact closest to you or contact Barbara Neher or myself for more information. Website: www.imvo.org "Championing the immediate needs of the displaced child." 



2007 Events Overview—Mark Your Calendar!

Date	Event	Sponsor
5/25-28	Pentecost/Memorial Day Weekend	CEM
6/24-7/1	CEM Summer Camp	CEM
7/3-8	Camp Outreach, IN	Common Ground C.M.

See ads in this issue and future issues of Faith Networks for more details.



Faith Networks is a voluntary effort by a group of individuals interested in promoting cooperation among the Churches of God and encouraging healthy relationships both within congregations and between them. Resources have been made available for the initial stages of Faith Networks by members of the Church of God Cincinnati.

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- What you heard a minister or teacher say in church or on TV.
- What you heard in a Christian song or hymn.
- What you read on bumper stickers.
- What you read on posters or plaques in people's homes.

One of the common statements that shows up in all these places is "God is Love." And one of the songs almost everyone knows says, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." But how many plaques and bumper stickers have you seen that say, "Fear God"? And how many inspirational songs on Christian radio have you heard that have the message, "I should fear God, this I know, for the Bible tells me so"? Yet if you start reading through the Bible, it won't be long before that is just what you will read. Here are a few passages with this theme:

Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him. (Psa 33:8)

Does this really mean everyone should fear God? Have you thought only evil people need to fear Him? Then consider this passage:

Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. (Psa 34:9)

This says saints should fear Him too! But perhaps you think this is just what the Old Testament says. Many people are sure the New Testament says you don't have to fear God any longer. But look at this passage from the New Testament, written by the Apostle Peter to a Christian Church:

Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king. (1 Pet 2:17)

In fact, at the very beginning of the development of the Christian Church, right after Jesus died and was resurrected, here's what

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened, and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord. (Acts 9:31)

So what does all this mean? How could

God be loving and yet want us to fear Him? The real problem here is that most people don't understand what true love is, and they don't understand what it means to fear God.

The Fear of God

If I am walking down the street and see a police car pass by, I don't feel any particular emotion: I am not afraid of that policeman. But if I am driving down the expressway and have not looked at my speedometer lately—and I spot a police car in my rearview mirror, I immediately feel a little funny until I can glance down at my speedometer and reassure myself that I am not speeding. I am not afraid of that policeman either, in the sense that I would be afraid of a snarling dog. But I do fear the consequences if I am speeding, and in that sense, I fear the authority that policeman has to give me a ticket. The policeman hasn't changed at all. What has changed is my conscious recognition of the authority he has over me.

If you are a parent of a small child, you may find that the child does not understand that running out into the street may harm her. What would you do if she continued to run out into the street after you warned her not to? Many parents would decide that it is necessary to spank the child. This decision would not be because they want to hurt her. And it wouldn't be because they want to make her afraid of them as her parents all the time. They want her to fear a spanking so she will

make a wise decision when tempted to run out in the street again. They don't want her mindlessly afraid of them, but they do want her to recognize they have the power to spank her when she seriously disobeys, so that her fear will keep her from harm until she is old enough to understand the danger in traffic.

That is what the fear of the Lord is for a believer. It is not the kind of mindless fear you would have of a snarling dog. You don't fear God because you think He might just "zap" you at any time because of a whim He has.

The fear of the Lord is:

1. A deep feeling of respect and reverence for Him because of who He is.
2. A conscious acknowledgement of His power and authority over you.
3. A conscious acknowledgement of your utter dependence on Him.

This kind of fear doesn't leave you paralyzed. It is a healthy fear that leads you to make wise decisions:

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. (Pro 1:7)

He who fears the LORD has a secure fortress and for his children it will be a refuge. (Pro 14:26)

The fear of the LORD leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble. (Pro 19:23)

Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil. (Pro 16:6)

Do you begin to see how God can be loving, and yet still want us to fear Him?

Godly Love

Many have a misguided idea of what true love is. They think love is a warm,



are not allowed to take anything with

asked me to be the volunteer leader in my county. Shortly after that, I organized a monthly sewing project day, involving several personal acquaintances and a

few members of the local quilt guild, to produce the handmade comforter quilts and tote bags. Some volunteers work on sewing construction of these items throughout the month and bring them to me when completed. It is amazing

to see the sacrifices people make to be at these sewing days, and the connections that have developed as a result of participating in a monthly project day.

In addition, a special sewing day event was organized specifically for involving the local cooperative of home-schooled students. Eight girls and boys, ranging in age 7 to 17 participated and had fun developing their sewing skills. The students now want to have these events three or four times a year as a community service activity.

I wish that we lived in a world that didn't need the services of this program or a state agency for child protection, but unfortunately we do. The intent of "It's My Very Own" is to let children know that they are loved and that someone cared about them. And it is our plan that this service will continue until Jesus Christ returns to restore all things and

I can sew. I have constructed clothing and home décor for many years. With my experience, I figured that I could sew quilts to help this program. So after hearing her presentation that Sabbath, I asked Barbara if she needed help to sew quilts for my county. Barbara invited me to her home to meet her family, and we spent an afternoon working on quilts while she talked about how the organization got started and its missions and goals. I took a couple of quilt kits home to sew. Soon after that, Barbara asked me to become more involved. She

Have You Found Your Niche?

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In December 2005, my husband and I, being without a home church to attend, decided to visit the local Seventh Day Adventist church. We thought we would at least visit with others who are worshiping on the Sabbath, and it seems that God directed this action, for it was that morning that I heard Barbara Neher speak. She, like me, had been searching for, and asking God for, a way that she could be of service to others on an ongoing basis. She became discouraged after holding a women's Bible study in her home, and having people come for about a year, without much result. Then this new idea presented itself, and with the help of her husband, daughter, granddaughter, and two other women in the community, what began in her living room has expanded into a nation-wide and international organization, county by county, state by state, country by country.

"It's My Very Own: Bags of Love" (www.imvo.org) began as Barbara's response to hearing a late evening news report on the local TV station regarding a drug raid where the parents were arrested for methamphetamine production (meth lab) in their home. Their children were removed by the state child protective services agency to be placed in foster care. The cries of the children, taken from their home and parents, was heart-wrenching. It was this news report, and Barbara's response to it, that gave birth to "It's

My Very Own: Bags of Love." Through Child Protective Services, "It's My Very Own" provides a hand-sewn duffel bag full of special gifts to each displaced child. The bag contains a handmade comforter quilt, teddy bear or similar large plush animal, several age-related toys, and toiletries (soap, shampoo, lotion, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, and hairbrush or comb).

The objectives are to provide these displaced children with 1) something tangible, hand-made with love and care, that they can call their own to keep with them, to comfort them, 2) toys to help fill the time, and keep their minds occupied, and 3) toiletries to replace their immediate loss and to aid them through the adjustment of their changing home environment. Child Protective Services agents report that the "bags of love" assist them in the transfer process of moving the children from their natural home and parents to that of their foster parents. For the children it is a frightening and emotionally-charged experience. In the cases of drug production, children



fuzzy feeling. A mother can love her little baby, and sometimes that love does lead to a warm, fuzzy feeling. But at 3:00 AM when the baby is crying and waking the mother up, those warm, fuzzy feelings are usually nowhere to be found! Did the mother quit loving the baby? Of course not! The real love the mother has is not a pleasant emotional feeling of the moment. True love is:

1. A commitment to another individual.
2. A conscious desire to want the best for that individual.
3. A willingness to sacrifice personal desires and personal convenience to serve that individual's needs.

The Bible says of God: *Let those who fear the LORD say: "His love endures forever."* (Psa 118:4) And God proves that love by His actions: *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.* (Joh 3:16)

God was:

1. Committed to all mankind.
2. Had a conscious desire to want the best for all mankind.
3. Therefore He was willing to sacrifice His only Son to save mankind.

That is Godly love. And it is the kind of love He wants us to have for Him and for others.

Godly Fear in the New Testament

There is a word in Greek that is usually translated "fear" in the King James Version of the New Testament. But the NIV translators understood that modern readers might mistake the kind of fear that is meant when it refers to God, so they often used the word *reverence* to translate this word. The word *reverence* in the passages below is speaking of the same kind of fear that the book of Proverbs talked so much about: *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.* (Eph 5:21) *Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.* (I Pet 1:17) *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.* (II Cor 7:1)

If you have the proper fear of God, and you are convinced of His love, you will take the Bible seriously. When you read about something God commands, you will know He commands it in love. But you will also know that command is backed up with His authority. You will make wise decisions on obeying God, because you will be convinced He has given His commandments for your good.

Yes, God is a loving God who wants you to fear Him **and** love Him at the same time!

Let those who fear the LORD say: His love endures forever. (Psa 118:4) **FN**



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Several weeks ago in this column I wrote about a number of instances in our national history where duly elected officials called the nation to a day of fasting and prayer. Upon further research I found a striking pattern that often followed. In 1746, the French fleet threatened New England settlements, and the people of New England called for a day of prayer and fasting. It is true that a storm destroyed the fleet. But it is also true that within a few years the colonies were engaged in the French and Indian War, which lasted nine years.

On June 1, 1774, the Virginia House of Burgesses called for a day of prayer and fasting in support of the people of Boston, and again in 1775 the Continental Congress called for a day of prayer and fasting. The long, hard ten year War for Independence followed.

On March 30, 1863, the Senate and President called for a day of prayer and fasting. The Battle of Gettysburg and Sherman's March were not far behind. Congress called for another day national day of prayer and fasting in March of a different year. The resolution asserts that "through prayer, fasting and self-reflection, we may better recognize our own faults and shortcomings and submit to the wisdom and love of God in order that we may have guidance and strength in those daily actions and decisions we must take." But there was a bit of wisdom in this resolution that separated it from many of the predecessor proclamations. It listed three purposes for the fast:

2. Learn how we can do better in our everyday activities;
3. Gain resolve in how to confront those challenges which we must confront.



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Surprisingly, these three purposes are exactly the reasons that we should fast. Too many think of fasting as a tool to get God to conform to our own will. In fact it is exactly the opposite, for fasting is a way for us to seek God's will. The people of Isaiah's day fasted, but when frustrated by silence from heaven, they cried, "Why have we fasted and you have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls and you take no notice?" (Isaiah 58:3)

God answers them in the verses that follow, and the answer reflects that they lacked what Congress understood, namely, they failed to "achieve greater understanding of our own failings" and "learn how to do better in our everyday activities." The people were certainly fasting, but they weren't bringing themselves into God's will. They exploited their workers. They fasted for strife and debate. They physically assaulted each other. Yet like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, they paraded their piety before their countrymen, wearing long faces and bowing down in sackcloth. They would not change their ways, but they expected God to change "Is this not the fast I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,

We don't want him to be stupid when this is all over." "Start dropping what you can drop. This is going to be intense." His advice also came with his personal cell phone number, prayer when we see him, and a willingness to be our shoulder to cry on and a brain to pick. His wife would likely like to discuss with him that cell phone thing, but we are forever grateful.

Cousin/Dr. John gave excellent advice. In addition to researching stateside options he also said, "Once you decide, let go and let the doctors do their jobs." His is likely the hardest for me personally. Given a sailboat, I like the rudder position. Responding to the advice is also less than easy. I have nodded, cried, simply sat and listened. I have cried, discussed, and asked questions. And, I have inwardly wept while outwardly smiling, wondering and raging why my child has to be the one.

The best advice, of all it seems, came during today's sermon. We hadn't been in church together as a family since finding out Anthony has cancer. Rick made it to the Christmas Eve program with an angel, a star, and a reader while I stayed home with chemo boy, but that is it. Sunday mornings we greeted wearily and warily, wondering what next bomb was going to drop. The gauntlet of well-intentioned parishioners seemed to be just too much, and while we missed church, we still didn't motivate up and out. Father Joe came over last night, blessed the food, and ate Barilla pasta with Neapolitan meatballs rolled in deep red Chianti and laughed, nibbling on strawberries and Asian pears before moving onto the homemade fudge and Ghirardelli chocolates he brought. Anthony did the dishes and the younger three popped in and out of

So, as I struggle with the pain of anger at Him for this cancer, and awe at my son whose grace is a glowing light around him, and exhaustion from restless dream-rolling sleep, and thankfulness for the generosity of those who seem to love me—for reasons I just don't see clearly, and the option of a possible Compassionate Transfer to Germany and the Landstuhl Medical Center—come simply sit in the sun and give up the rud-der. Maybe it is time to lift my face to the warmth and let go, letting God. Maybe it is time I whispered, "If you say so." EN

Introductory note from Faith Networks writer Horst Obermeit

My cousin Rick and his wife Mary Obermite (spelled differently from my last name) are in South Korea, along with their four children. She currently teaches for DoDDS, the Department of Defense Dependents Schools. Mary, who is Catholic, periodically writes article-length accounts of their travels and experiences and sends those to family and friends. Anthony (15) is her oldest son and was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease in December, 2006. We pray for God's intervention and healing. She has written us several times to update us on Anthony's condition and treatment as well as her emotional and spiritual wrestlings with such a trial. Her latest report touched my heart and my spirit as she conveyed her struggles, her faith, and her relationship with God while hoping and praying for Anthony's healing. I think her eloquence conveys her spiritual gifts in a way all of us can understand no matter what our religious affiliation. I thought her article should be shared with FN readers, so I asked her permission to submit it for publishing here. I hope it touches you as it did me.

Just Whisper

Advice is an easy thing to give and not so easy to take, so I have learned. Lately the cost of the lesson has been somewhat more extreme than usual, and for a cheapskate, not so easy to bear. After all, I am the one whose children haven't had a paid haircut in years, not because I am in any way a beautician, but because if you assume a haircut a month times 4 kiddos, times 12 months, times \$8.00 a pop, well, it gets expensive even for this non-mathematical mind. That's a lot of cappuccinos, not that I pay for those either. Rick does a lovely job with Italian coffee and hopefully we will be back in Europe before we run out of coffee bricks.

In any case, one thing a parent of a child with cancer does NOT run short of is advice. Some of it is quite good, while other tidbits are admittedly tedious. Single people without children are without a doubt the worst, even though they are frequently well-intentioned. How they can be anything but sure of the decades of research I have done—crammed into the last 7 weeks or so, and the fear that lies behind every decision, I do not know. Whatever fear they feel, from the

outside looking in, is mere shadow at noontime compared to mine. Cancer triggers every over-protective and paranoid bone in my body. No one's fear is equal to mine and no one's responsibility is equal to what powers every decision I have made in the last few months. Believe me, I am aware, and I second guess my second guesses that are second guesses in themselves. Okay, they are usually well-thought out conclusions, but evaluation is a continuing process, not completed.

Other parents of cancer kids are the best at illuminating possible options, realizing that advice is best served in very tiny demitasse cups, with the best of filtered water and only a small amount of sugar. Doctors are very useful, but I usually need about 12 hours of internet research to precede or to follow the 10 minutes of advice they give.

Dr. Henderson gave us good advice, along with the medical stuff. "Stay as close to the normal schedule as possible." "Don't pull him out of Honors classes.




Mary Obermite
Korea

and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out, when you see the naked that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?" (Verses 6–7). Or, as Congress said, "Learn how to do better in our everyday activities."

Now here is the surprising thing. That Congressional resolution that got it right is probably one you never knew about, and because you never knew about it, you probably didn't do anything about it. That resolution set aside as a national day of prayer and fasting March 17, 2003! Looking back over the last four years, we can see that the day failed its intended purpose, and that's a shame because the resolution had it right. "The fault," as Shakespeare once put in the mouth of Cassius, "is not in our stars, but in ourselves."

History does not tell us if our forefathers kept the fasts that their leaders had

called, but it is evident that the events that followed more often than not were less than desirable. I would submit that it is not too late to fast in conformity with the call of the Congress of four years ago, but more important than that, to get our lives and hearts to conform with the call of Isaiah, to care more about the healing of others and their release from bondage than our own ability to practice religious ritual.

Nevertheless, fasting is surely scriptural when practiced for scriptural reasons, and for that cause a number of people in our church have committed to a day of fasting on May 5, 2007, for the reasons outlined in the Congressional resolution of March 2003. We would hope that others will join us. If you wish to do so, please let us hear from you. You can email me at 1_cacchio@yahoo.com. 



CEM Memorial Day Family Weekend

Date: May 25-28, 2007 (Pentecost Weekend)

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The Simple Faith Through Song

Her weight shifting from one leg to the other and her arms slightly outstretched and lifted, twenty-two month old Sophia and lifted, twenty-two month old Sophia

sings, "Alive, alive forevermore. My Jesus is alive." She learned it by watching a DVD of children singing hymns. Another of her favorites is "Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world."

Does she know who Jesus is? Not

yet, but when she does, she will have imprinted on her mind the foundation upon which her faith will be built—the love of God and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The young singer-actors on the DVD are preaching the gospel to Sophia and she is responding by imitation. Someday, we hope, she will mature beyond imitation of others into a genuine trusting obedience to Jesus. A seed of faith has been planted through song.

Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. (Psalm 96:2)

Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. (Psalm 98:2)

What an amazing gift music is for the children of God, old and young alike! Music is one of the ways the word of Christ becomes part of our inner thoughts, emotions, and motives:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

Music is our gift back to God:



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...be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:18-20)

As we sing hymns together in our assemblies, we experience a unity we usually fail to achieve in other ways.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:5-6)

Celebrations and assemblies are not the only appropriate occasions for singing and making music. Paul and Silas were arrested, severely flogged, and thrown into a prison cell with their feet fastened in the stocks, but instead of complaining, they sang.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. (Acts 16)

What did God do in response? He sent an earthquake that shook the prison; he caused all the prison doors to fly open, and everybody's chains came loose. The jailor and his whole family became believers and were baptized.

The true alliance of Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir were invading Judah. The king of Judah, Jehoshaphat, sent a

choir singing praises to God ahead of his army as they marched toward the battlefield. By the time the army from Judah arrived, God had already defeated their enemies by turning the alliance against each other. All Jehoshaphat's army had to do was carry off the plunder. You can read the whole story in II Chronicles Chapter 20. Are you facing a formidable foe? Sing praises to God. Those enemies of doubt, discouragement, and sadness will flee. Sometimes we forget that God fights our battles; we don't have to fight his. True, we must resist; we must march out to the battlefield; but, by the time our singing of praises is done, we may find the enemy has already been defeated. All we have to do is carry off the prizes of victory.

Those who are gifted with an amazing vocal and instrumental talent have the power to inspire and encourage us and to carry God's message right to the heart. Those of us who are not so talented are still able to delight God our Father because he hears the music in our heart. Music isn't just entertainment or a pleasant way to pass the time. Music has the power to carry God's message into a human heart. Songs have the power to teach us to trust and obey God. Singing gives us a joyful means to praise and give thanks to our God. Musicians are a division in the army of the Lord. So...as anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. (James 5:13) **FM**



If you're a young adult or teen and would enjoy spending time with others who share your beliefs while serving people in need, you'd be a perfect candidate for Camp Outreach 2007.

Plainfield, Indiana: July 3-8, 2007

The Plainfield Camp has been scheduled over the July 4th holiday. You'll gather Tuesday evening, July 3 for three days of hard work and real satisfaction of a job well done. Stay for a stimulating Sabbath Service and Potluck with the widows you've helped. Daily discussions and Bible studies will focus on what God expects of us as Christians. In free time, there will be fireworks, fellowship and food.

Lincoln, California: July 22-29, 2007

The Lincoln Camp offers a similar schedule in a week-long format, for those with more time available.

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