

A GOOD MARRIAGE BEGINS WHEN THEY'RE LITTLE

NUMBER 169

FEBRUARY 2022

My husband, Wayne and I travel around and share our accumulated knowledge on marriage and parenting. It's not that we think we are experts, but we are willing to share what we've learned along the way. A lot of that "knowledge" comes from mistakes we've made, or the lessons others have shared with us and obviously through God's word. It actually makes me sad that most churches wait to have us come and share our marriage material after the marriages in that congregation are having trouble. We have designed our material to be encouraging and uplifting.

Continued on page 2

THE END OR BEGINNING?

I write this essay by no authority of my own, but by the prompting of the Holy Spirit who lives within me to guide and direct my life in humble service of my Savior, Jesus Christ. He reminds me that the Word of God is very, very clear, being made plain to even the simple. Therefore, to those whose sleeping eyes may be opened and ears awakened to hear the desperate cries of those calling for freedom amid raging chaos, I share what I know to be -- yesterday, today, and tomorrow -- concerning beginnings, endings and the unchanging, ever enduring Love of God.

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VISION 2012

Visions and goals are very important, as they are the guiding statements of a congregation. They set the tone for the congregation. Visions and goals promote some programs, and discourage others.

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plished your vision. Your vision for 2022 can be a lot of different things about what you will do in the future. Although sometimes your vision and goals are not stated, they functionally exist.

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A GOOD MARRIAGE BEGINS WHEN THEY'RE LITTLE, P. 2

After realizing that churches were waiting until there were problems, we decided to create material to share with teens or youth groups. Why not start sooner preparing people for marriage? But we can't seem to find anyone interested in talking about marriage with this age group. This surprised me until I stopped and thought about the fact that a large portion of churches don't have "marriage seminars" until there are already problems in marriage. Maybe it's time for us to change our mindset. We should be talking about the aspects of marriage at an early age. Our daughters learn how to be wives by watching their mothers. Our sons learn to be husbands by watching their dads. But not every home has a set of parents that are truly striving to be like Jesus. Parents that intentionally work to have a marriage that brings God glory.

We need to be talking to our children about what submission is and what it looks like. We live in a world that tells us that our "rights", our "happiness" should come first, when, as Christians, we are to lay those rights aside to put others first. (Philippians 2:1-8) If our children are to understand submission, they are going to need to see it in our homes and in our churches. They need to see that submission is something beautiful! It is God's people striving to be like Jesus. Go read Ephesians 5:21-30. We see that the husband and the wife are both asked to submit to the other. We see the description of Jesus and the church and how Jesus laid Himself aside to make sure the bride was holy. The husband is compared to Jesus in this part of

WE NEED TO TALK WITH OUR CHILDREN ABOUT WHAT SUBMISSION IS AND WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.

SUBMISSION IS A TRUE ACT OF LOVE!

the letter. Submission is a true act of love! But it doesn't come easy to most of us and that's probably because we've let the world convince us that it shows weakness. Submission is all about striving to be like Jesus

Materialism is destroying marriages left and right. The continual need to have more and "better" puts a crazy amount of pressure on a marriage. We need to be teaching contentment to our children. I understand a desire for our children to "have better things" than we did, I truly do. There is nothing wrong with that thinking UNLESS it is totally based in being materially focused. Our children are learning this from their parents. When parents

MATERIALISM IS DESTROYING MARRIAGES LEFT AND RIGHT!

aren't content with what they have, chances are their children won't be content. If Momma always needs "new and better", her children will probably latch on to that and carry that into adulthood. When Dad is continually trying to keep up with the material possessions of those around him, his children will grow up with that competitive spirit where material possessions are concerned. We can help save the future marriages of our children by teaching them contentment in material possessions. By teaching them that we are blessed with material possessions so that we can meet the needs of those around us. (2 Corinthians 9:7-11)

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A GOOD MARRIAGE BEGINS WHEN THEY'RE LITTLE , P. 3

Our children need to understand that this life is about servant living and not about just their “hopes, dreams, feelings, wants and desires” being fulfilled. Expectations carried into marriage can cause disaster. We live in a world that is constantly telling our children “this is all about you”. What you want, what you need, are your feelings being lifted up, are your needs being met. Those are worldly expectations.

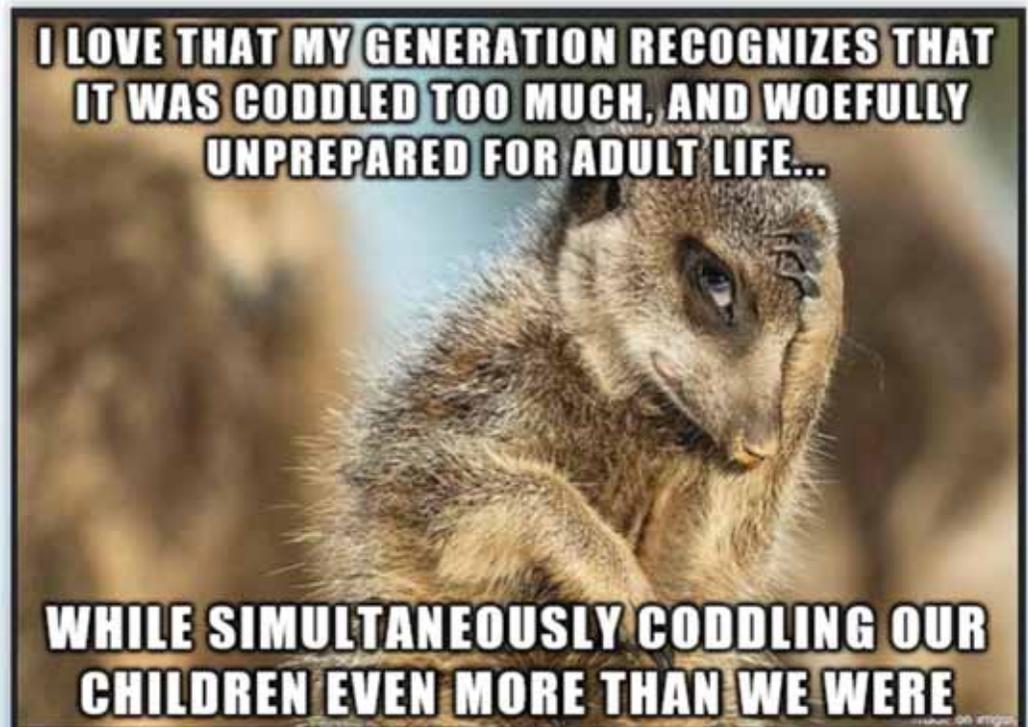
Our children need to be taught that true happiness is found by walking in the truth. Teaching them a love for the Lord and His word. We need to teach them to follow Jesus, not just be list keepers and box checkers. We want them to see our relationship with the Lord is more than just “church going”, it is Jesus following. Some of our children aren't being taught this at home. We have to quit assuming that they are. We have to quit thinking that it's none of our business. If we love them, we will teach them. If we want our children to genuinely love others, we are going to have to show them what that looks like. That requires us as the body of Christ to show them that love by being willing to teach them.

Marriage was designed by God to be beautiful. Go read Ephesians 5:22 through the rest of the chapter. We need to be talking about it in a beautiful way! We need to be encouraging our children now! We need to be intentional with teaching them what a beautiful marriage looks like. Does that mean a marriage is perfect? Nope. Does that mean

OUR CHILDREN NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS LIFE IS ABOUT SERVANT LIVING AND NOT ABOUT JUST THEIR “HOPES, DREAMS, FEELINGS, WANTS AND DESIRES” BEING FULFILLED.

we won't ever make mistakes? Of course not. But we are teaching our children that two people can come together in a marriage and it will bless their lives when they are truly striving to follow Jesus. He will fill in the gaps. He will take them through.

Tami Roberts, Houston, TX



The End or the Beginning - Asleep or Awakening?, P. 2

I also urge every preacher, teacher, elder, and disciple how they might respond to the challenges of Charles Grandison Finney who held the American pulpit responsible for moral decay during the Second Great Awakening: "If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral discrimination, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in religion, the pulpit is responsible for it. If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it. Let us not ignore this fact, my dear brethren; but let us lay it to heart, and be thoroughly awake to our responsibility in respect to the morals of this nation."

[Credit: David Barton; Historian, wallbuilders.com]

Today, as in many times past, Satan is gleefully asserting control over mankind. For years, he has been lurking in the minds of weak men and women, kindling fires of greed, hate and doubt. He has warmed the cauldron slowly, stealthily, tempering man's tolerance for the fires of hell to make them suitable to carry out his most evil schemes. Now, therefore, Americans are challenged to "wake up" as we find our nation has "progressed" to unimagined levels of depravity, once again raising the specter of "end times" – as seem to already be the experience of many.

America's leaders seem to no longer be "guardian champions of freedom", but have become demented gatekeepers of hell demonizing all who claim to have faith in God. Many cities have become drug ridden death camps of the "throw-away" caste of humans forced to live in reeking squalor outside the walled and gated and guarded mansions of the architects of America's future. These self-appointed dictators are emptying our prisons, our schools, impris-

oning without trial and confiscating even meager wealth as they embrace a "counter-culture" of racial dehumanization, recruiting zombie-like imitations of themselves to carry out the methodical destruction of every sector of civilized society – in collaboration with the greatest enemies of America. The model for their final solution to opposition is methodical murder with powerful gain-of-function upgraded pathogens lethal to both animals and humans plus global distribution of custom designed addictive drugs for which no adequate antidote can be widely available or timely administered. These leaders have also recruited many "icons of industry" to their "cause" who willingly collaborate with enemy states to perfect technologies being used to monitor every citizen's behavior and track every means of personal support and health care. The "Orwellian model" has been updated and is being implemented.

However; DO WE NOT KNOW THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL? Do we not know that He alone has the power to cut off the rotting and the dead, to cleanse the earth with fire, cinder, ash, floods and waves of the sea that will extinguish the self-consuming desires of the wicked?

As in many times of the past, with only a "few good men" God rescued the righteous from evil. With only one Son of Man followed by twelve disciples God changed the world two thousand years ago. Do we not know that His victory has already been won according to His Will? It is He who will decide upon end times – not man or Satan. Who is on the LORD's side? Will America stand or fall? It is our call. Let us choose wisely, trust in God and preach the Truth of His WORD, Jesus Christ until He comes again. Amen

Larry S. Grubbs, Harrison, Ohio

BE THANKFUL FOR OUR HOLY GOD

“How great is God—beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out.” (Job 36:26 NIV) **Just for a moment** let’s focus on thanking God for who He is and all He does. Taking thoughts from the **Psalms**, praise Him for his holiness, awesome power and eternal presence.

“Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds! So great **is** your power that your enemies cringe before you. (66:3) Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens, you who have done great things. Who is like you, God? (71:19) The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. (116:5) As for God, his way is perfect: The Lord’s word

is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.” (18:30) (47:7) And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for he is a God of justice. (50:6)

Now, thank God for all he does for us! “Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me. (54:4) Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. (62:8) Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. (100:3) Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.” (25:5)

Elizabeth Brown, Texarkana, TX



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VISION 2012, P. 2

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what may have been your vision in 2012. We are also going to presume that you accomplished your vision. Your vision for 2022 can be a lot of different things about what you will do in the future. Although sometimes your vision and goals are not stated, they functionally exist.

What this article is going to do is to look at what happened to a particular congregation between 2012 and 2022. It will try to state the history in vision/goals form. We will largely look at 2012 - 2020 as Covid would not have been in anyone's planning discussions. We will use the name Luther Street Church of Christ for our example (no such congregation actually exists). This will be a generalization of Churches of Christ during that period.

Luther Street Church of Christ had 400 in attendance in 2012. Churches of Christ on average declined 0.5% per year from 2012 until 2017. Then the decline increased to 1.71% per year, until Covid hit. For simplicity, we are going to presume the decline rates continued to be 1.71% per year through Covid. It will take several years to get a better estimate, but that doesn't matter for this discussion. This statistical percent-

age would mean that Luther Street Church of Christ declined from 400 members in 2012 to 351 members in 2022, which is slightly more than 12%, or on average 1% per year.

THE LEADERSHIP WANTED TO DO EVERYTHING THE SAME AS BEFORE, BUT GET A DIFFERENT RESULT

Data is hard to come by in autonomous Churches of Christ, but general observations say that we are

graying or getting older as a group. In the past 10 years the average age of an attendee has not become 10 years older, but has likely become at least 4 years older.

Our tenured Elders have likewise tended to become older. Those in place in 2012 and still in office now are 10 years older. The elder average age is, again likely to be at least 4 years older.

LITTLE ACTUAL PERSONAL EVANGELISM WAS GOING ON 10 YEAR AGO, AND LITTLE IS GOING ON NOW.

Organizationally, more authority has typically been given to / taken by the Elders. This has resulted in a greater feeling of disenfranchisement of the other members.

Little actual personal evangelism was going on 10 years ago, and little is going on now, so that has not changed much.

DATA IS HARD TO COME BY IN LOCALLY AUTONOMOUS CHURCHES OF CHRIST!

Given that this is what happened at Luther Street Church of Christ, we will state these

results as the vision of the congregation in 2012 on the following page.

Continued on page 7

VISION 2012, P. 3

VISION 2012 – LUTHER STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST

TO DECLINE IN ATTENDANCE 1% PER YEAR

TO SERVICE OUR EXISTING MEMBERS

TO BECOME MORE OUT OF TOUCH WITH OUR SERVICE AREA

TO INCREASE CONTROL OF THE CONGREGATION IN THE ELDERSHIP

The results of any congregation's VISION 2012 are in the history book; there is nothing to be done about it now. However, you do not have to wonder in 2032 what your vision was in 2022. Your congregation can meet together now and make a plan for how to move forward with your part of the Great Commission. You can decide what is most effective for your resources in your area with God's help. You can commit to making it happen together.

Your church's greatest chance for success is when a high percentage of your members get together and make a vision, and a high percentage of your members commit to making the plan work. It is that simple: if you do not have a buy-in of a high percentage of your members, your **congregation will not move forward with its part of the Great Commission.**

You will be amazed at how much you and your church can do, with God's help, when everyone works together on this jointly-formed plan for evangelism. With the Covid stress on everyone, there will probably never be a better time to get in better touch with your neighbors and invite them to fellowship with you.

Benton F. Baugh





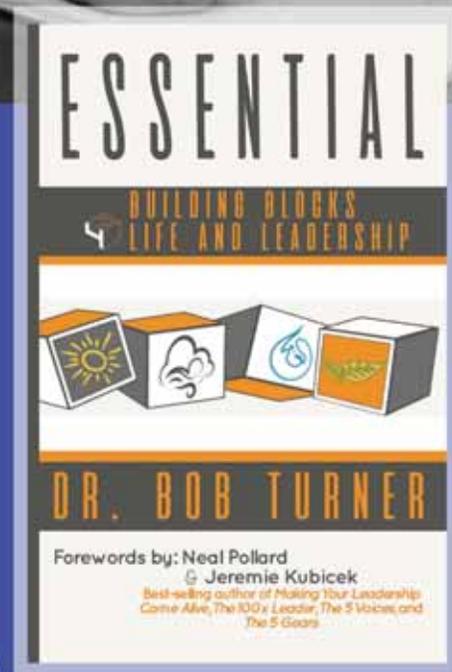
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Dr. Bob Turner is the current director of SALT (Sunset Academy for Leadership Training). He holds multiple Bible degrees and a Doctorate of Intercultural Studies, emphasizing Adult Leadership Development.



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IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION #125 – ATTACUS ATLAS

Attacus atlas, the Atlas moth, is endemic to the forests of Asia and was first described by Carl Linnaeus to the western world in 1758.

The Atlas moth has a wing span of 9.4" (24 cm) and is the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd largest moth in the world, depending on the source of information. Some butterflies are slightly larger.

They do not eat once they have emerged from the cocoon, relying on fat storage for energy. Every flight takes valuable energy, and can take days off their already short life-span of only one to two weeks. They conserve energy by flying as little as possible. A female will wait for a male to come along, be fertilized, lay eggs and die.

Dusty-green caterpillars hatch after approximately two weeks. They feed voraciously on the foliage of citrus, cinnamon, guava, and evergreen trees. The caterpillars can grow to 11.5 cm (4.5 in) in length and 2.5 cm (0.98 in) in thickness.

Adult Atlas moths are weak, unsteady fliers. To conserve energy, the moths rest during the day and fly at night. As they lack fully formed mouthparts, the adults cannot eat. They survive entirely on fat reserves accumulated during the larval stage. As a result, during their few days of life, their sole objective is seeking out a mate.

While all that is interesting, it is just big rather than being impossible. To have a moth which must find a mate and reproduce within a couple of weeks or it becomes extinct would not be a logical evolutionary step. But again is not impossible.

Having the image of a snake on the ends of their wings would certainly be impossible to be an accident of evolution. Consider the DNA programming it takes to put a design of any kind on their wings. Beyond that, it is literally the design of one of the most feared creatures

on earth - a snake head.

There is no way this can be an accident of evolution or the design choice of a moth. Could

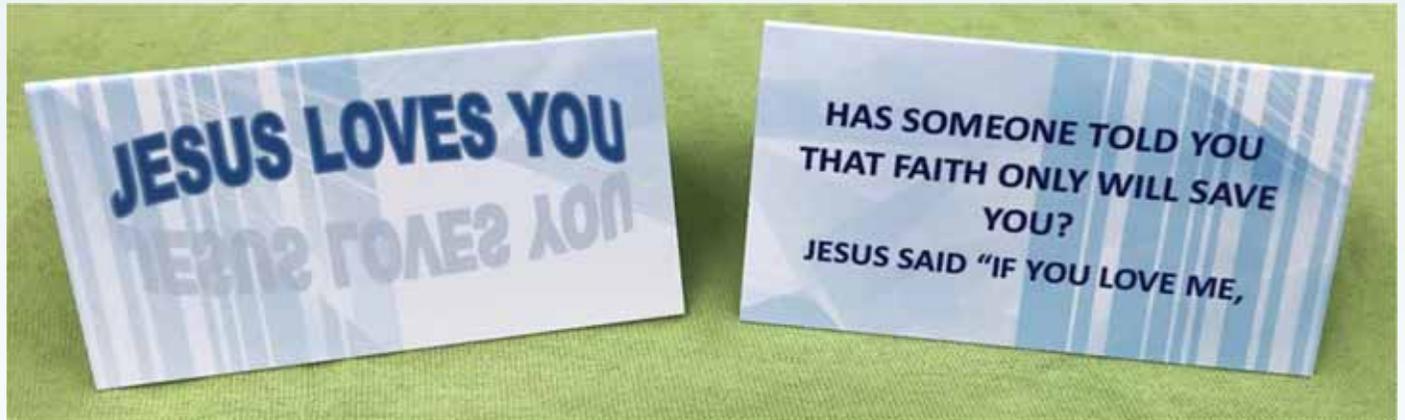


any reasonable person see this as anything but the design of a highly intelligent designer? Is this not one more message to you from God that He exists?

Benton F. Baugh

Photo and information collected from Wikipedia

PERSONAL EVANGELISM TENT CARDS



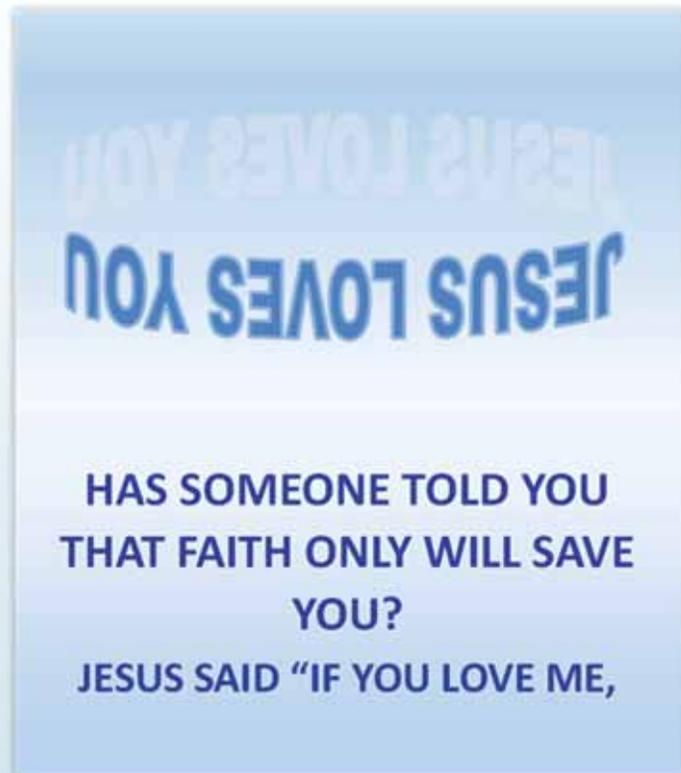
Tent cards are business card size and are folded into a small tent. You can hand them to someone or when you go to lunch, you can simply leave it on the table. The purpose is to try to start a discussion, or at least to give an invitation.

They can provide a message like these samples or can say anything you like.

Imagine you equip your members with 1000 of these and consider the impact it can have on your congregation.

You can get products like these at your local printer or online by searching for tent cards.

If you like contact us at info@occg.institute and we will assist you.



OUTSIDE OF CARD



INSIDE OF CARD

PERSONAL EVANGELISM TRI-FOLDS

Personalized personal evangelism tri-folds are a tool which has proven to be an effective way to begin conversations similarly to the Tent Cards discussed last month.

These cards not only tell the basics about Churches of Christ, but also can give location details and service times about your specific congregation. They can be edited to give whatever information you think to be beneficial for you're area and circumstance.

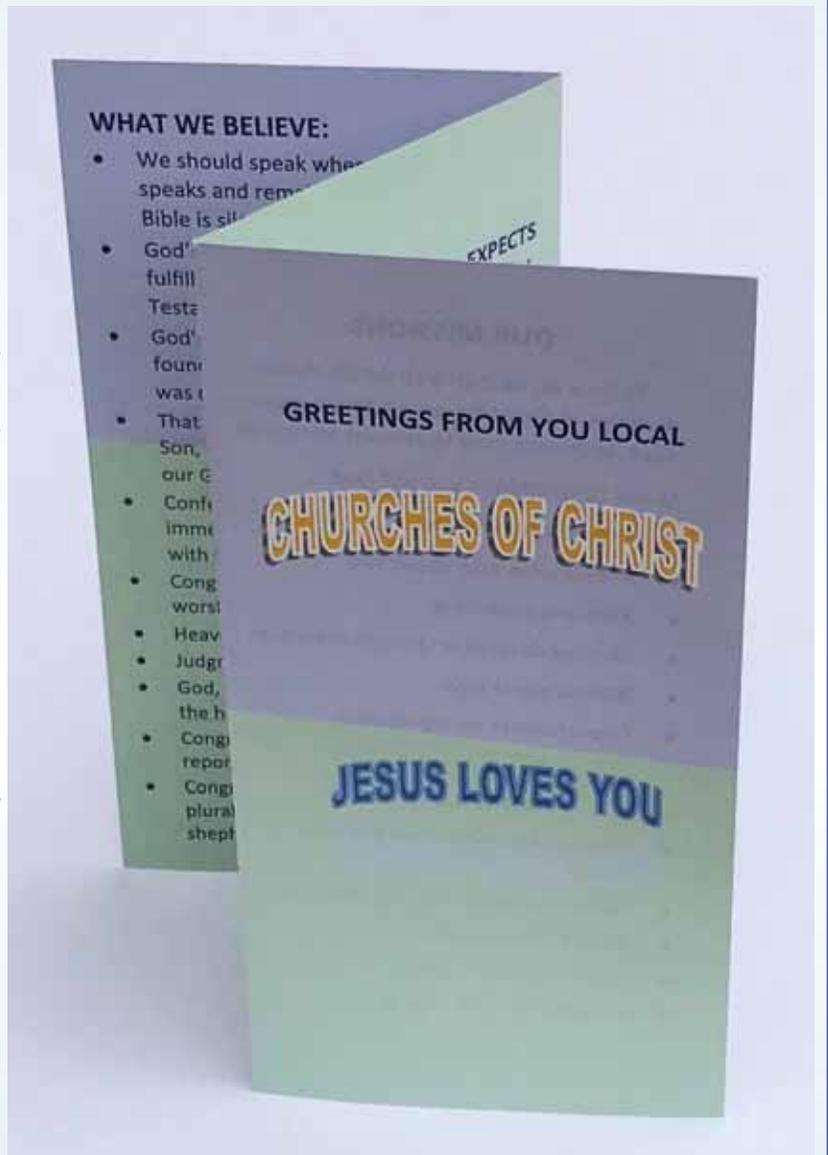
Cards similar to this can be obtained from a number of printers, with Uprint.com being the one we have used. In the example shown we used a 5.5" x 8.5" Z-Fold printed on the outside and inside in full color. It is found under brochures.

The following will give the base costs for the tri-folds, with shipping being extra.

100	\$37.19	\$0.38 ea.
250	\$106.31	\$0.43 ea.
1000	\$238.49	\$0.24 ea.
10000	\$1,074.46	\$0.11 ea.

You can go online and design any style tri-fold or other brochure you prefer. As an alternative, if you like the wording and style on the example shown, we will have them printed for you.

The following page shows the wording which was used for Memorial in Houston. If you want us to coordinate them for you, print the next page, mark it up as you like, and email it to bbaugh@occg.institute. Our part of the process will be a free service. You will pay only for Uprint's printing costs.



If you deal with them directly, they will send a free sample of your printing. As we have dealt with them before, they will not send us a free sample for you. We will send you a free sample which looks like the following page before anything is printed.

Hopefully this will be a method which will be of assistance to some congregations. If you have another idea we can publish in a future issue,

PERSONAL EVANGELISM TRI-FOLDS

WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- We should speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent
- God's word in the Old Testament was fulfilled; and we now live by New Testament teachings
- God's complete plan for us today is found in the New Testament, which was completed in the first century
- That Jehovah the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit together are our God
- Confession of sins and baptism by immersion brings us into relationship with God as His adopted children
- Congregational singing is part of the worship of God
- Heaven and hell are real
- Judgment day will come for everyone
- God, the Intelligent Designer, created the heavens and the earth
- Congregations are autonomous, reporting only to Jesus
- Congregations are overseen by a plurality of scripturally qualified shepherds

WHAT WE DO NOT BELIEVE:

- Salvation by faith only
- The inability to fall from grace
- Substitution for the scriptural baptism by immersion (sprinkling, pouring, infant baptism)
- Purification in purgatory
- Divorce and remarriage of Christians other than for adultery
- Approval of extra-marital or homosexual conduct
- Judgment on the eternal destiny of others
- Updating the New Testament to match contemporary teachings

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OUR MISSIONS:

To be a servant church which makes disciples of Christ by connecting people to God, to friends, and to servant ministries.

At our congregation you will find:

- People who love Jesus
- People who care about you
- Relevant preaching
- Exciting children and youth ministries
- Biblical world view
- Opportunities for significance

YOU WILL FIND:

- A spiritual home for you and your family
- Fellow members who care about you
- Support for yourself
- Support for your family
- An opportunity to belong

WE BELIEVE THAT GOD EXPECTS US TO LIVE A GOOD CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE, ON SUNDAYS AND EVERYDAY:

We honor Christ's sacrifice by:

- Attending weekly worship services regularly.
- Learning His word and making friends in Bible classes
- Spending time daily with God, reading His word and praying
- Finding ministries where we can serve Him by serving our fellow man
- Sharing our faith.
- Financially supporting the work of the church.
- Growing in faith and love for God and each other

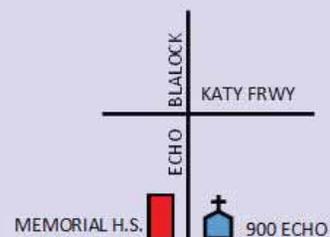
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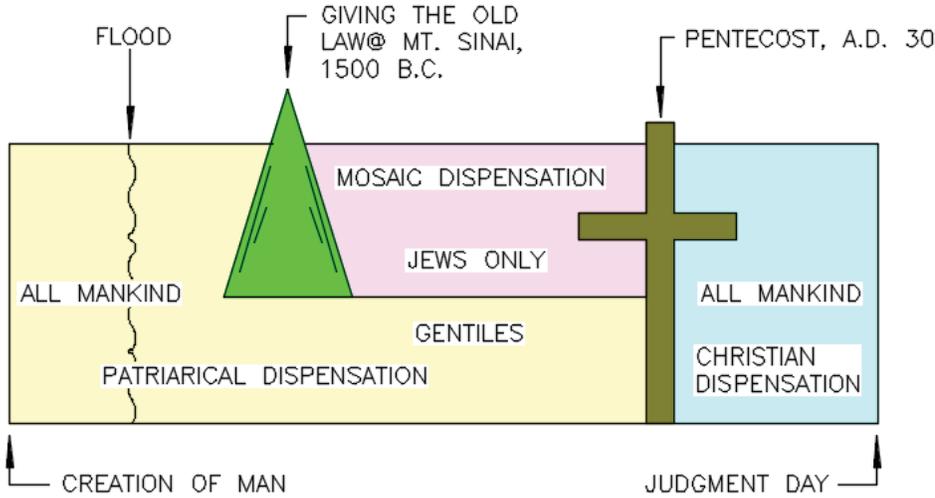
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THE BIBLE

DISPENSATIONS OR AGES OF MAN



	PATRIARCHAL AGE: PATRIARCHAL	MOSIACAL AGE: JEWISH	CHRISTIAN AGE: CHRISTIAN
Time	2500 years for Jews, 4000 years for Gentiles	1500 years for Jews	From Pentecost to the end of time
Written About in:	Genesis and Exodus 1-19	Exodus 20 to Acts 2	Acts 2 to Revelation
When Written:	~1500 B.C.	1500-500 B.C. & 33-68 A.D.	33-96 A.D.
Communication from God to man:	Thru Patriarch	Moses, Prophets, & Old Law	Jesus, Apostles, and inspired writers in 1 st century, Bible today
Type of law:	No written law	Law of works	Based on faith, with laws
Type of sacrifice	Blood of animals	Blood of animals	Jesus (Blood of faith)
Priest:	Father	Tribe of Levi (Heb. 7:11)	All Christians (I Pet 2:5-9)
Day of worship:	No set day	Sabbath, 7 th day (Exo.31:13)	Sunday, 1 st day (Acts 20:7)
Place of worship:	Anywhere	Tabernacle first, then Temple (John 4:20-24)	No set place, church is assembly, not a building (John 4:20-24)
How to become a member	Physical birth	Physical birth or proselyte	Rebirth in baptism (John 3:1-5)

HEALING AMERICA

A timely new book by Richard Blount IV exploring the problems, causes, solutions, and benefits of being an American.



He provides an intentional approach for the country's healing process and aims at healthy relationships and spiritual maturity as the ultimate goal.

This book can be purchased for \$19.95 at: Amazon, Barnes & Nobles, and Westbow Publishing

- 28 - To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research.
- 29 - The problem with the gene pool is that there is no lifeguard.
- 30 - The sooner you fall behind, the more time you'll have to catch up.

Steven Wright

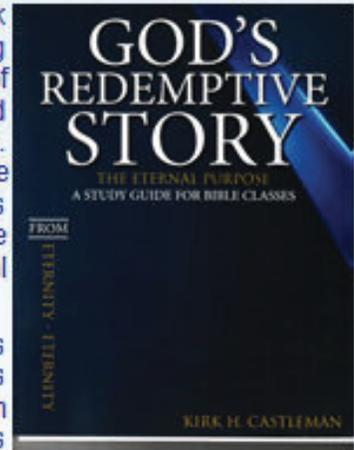
Need a hand with your student ministry? Here to help! Teaching, training, support and care for your ministers and volunteers. Twenty years in the trenches. Been there and done that. Let me know how I can serve and support your congregation.

Dave Blanchard

daveblanchard@fuller.edu

734-516-6008

A 13 lesson book written by a long time Church of Christ minister and servant of Jesus. Intended for Bible Class studies, this book can also be used for personal evangelism.



Most Bible class study books on this subject begin with Genesis 3. This study however, lays the foundation by beginning with a basic study-outline of Biblical History, which is sorely lacking among many Christians today. Then after laying this foundation, it seeks to present a "Synthesis of Scripture" by asserting that the theme of all the Bible is Jesus, His Death, Burial, and Resurrection! The Eternal Purpose of God for Redemption is then presented with an in-depth study of Ephesians 1, and other New Testament passages which describe God's redemptive plan.

It is not until the fourth lesson that God's Eternal Purpose in Genesis 3 is presented. Then other Promises, Pictures, Prophecy, and Prep-

"AN EXCITING STUDY OF GOD'S POWER AND REVELATION IN HUMAN HISTORY"

aration, are fully described. This study includes a description of the Davidic Covenant, as well as a helpful approach to Old Testament Prophecy.

This guide is helpful for all Christians, but especially new Christians who need an understanding of God's eternal desire for all the world!

This book can be bought on Amazon for \$10.



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LESSON TOPICS ARE:

- (1) **IF GOD?** Atheistic evolution vs the reality of a god.
- (2) **WHICH GOD?** The various offerings to be the god.
- (3) **WHICH GROUP?** A brief history of the world and of Christianity leading to a discussion of how to find Christ's church.

Located at occg.institute, TOPICAL LESSONS , 02 WINGS OF EAGLES

GUARANTEED CHURCH GROWTH!

If we provide a **REFOCUS WEEKEND**, we will guarantee that if your congregation does not grow 5% in 2 years we will donate \$5,000 to the Church of Christ related children's home of your choice in your name.

A REFOCUS WEEKEND IS:

- (1) Friday night: Area-wide youth rally at your facility; we provide the pizza & cokes
- (2) Saturday 8:00 - 2:00: Church growth consultation
- (3) Saturday or Sunday afternoon: Dream Session
- (4) Sunday Bible Class: A church growth lesson
- (5) Sunday morning worship: A church growth sermon

See <https://occg.institute/services/refocus/> for more specific information.

For more information, contact:
info@occg.institute





CALENDAR OF EVENTS

HOUSTON PREACHERS AND LEADERS LUNCHEON Every second Tuesday except December, For information contact David Wardrup - cell: (281)635-3135; davidcwardrup@gmail.com or Cruz Hernandez - cell: (713)560-9080; cruzalbertohdz2017@gmail.com

To post your event: info@occg.institute

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