

ANYONE UP FOR A LOCUST LUNCH?

NUMBER 187

April 2024

Have you ever wondered Why John the Baptist's food ("meat") was locusts and wild honey? (Matt. 3:4, Mark 1:6) ... (No, it wasn't because Chick-fil-a and McDonalds weren't yet open!) There was a frightening reason. John's message was, "Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2-12), also the message of Jesus (Matt. 4:17). John was fulfilling Isaiah 40:3-4 which "prepared the way of the Lord." He scared the living daylights out of the people, preaching "the wrath to come."

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THE WHOLE BIBLE

A favorite verse of many Church of Christ members is Acts 2:38 "Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." It is a foundational verse for Jesus' church. You need to be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins.

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Do You Know the Way Home?

Americans are people "on the road" away from home many hours of the day, days of the week, weeks or months of the year, often suffering from "homesickness" away from loved ones and friends.

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DON'T TRIP OVER WHAT'S BEHIND YOU

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14 NIV)

What's holding you back, tripping you up? We all have lots of history – some good some not so much. Our task is to learn from our experiences and press on. God always leads us forward, into the future and beyond to eternity.

No matter what – quit looking in the rearview mirror. "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (2 Cor. 4:18 NIV)

Today is the day to make things right with God. Mend those relationships. Forgive others and forgive yourself. Move forward and keep your spiritual eyes on the prize. We are not there yet but our direction is heavenward bound in Christ Jesus!

Elizabeth Brown

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ANYONE UP FOR A LOCUST LUNCH? , P2

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John came dressed as the prophet Elijah with a leather girdle (II Kings 1:8) to warn the people and get them to repent. How do locusts and honey fit in? John was using **visuals** to enhance his message. In the Old Testament, God regularly judged sinful, idolatrous nations. He used six 'tools' to judge: Fire and drought and The sword (war) Famine (called "cleanness of teeth" in Amos 4:6) Pestilence (disease, plagues) Wild beasts (animals, insects) which are the 4 Sore Judgments of God, Ezek. 14:21. The wild beast judgment-by-insects is described in detail in the book of Joel. God tells Joel to have the people tell their children about it, and have them tell **their** children, and their children **another** generation (Joel 1:1-3).

"What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten, what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten, and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten" (Joel 1:4). Joel is describing the locust's life cycle. At each stage, they eat **everything green**. If it grows from the ground, the locusts eat it ... and they fly in by the billions. They so strip the land that cattle, sheep, goats starve to death.

Last century, a Red Sea swarm of locusts was seen that measured 2,000 square miles. They're incredible flyers, having been seen at sea 1,200 miles from land. It typically takes a country 7 years to recover. Joel 2 has a fuller description. There's **nothing** left to eat ... well,



except **locusts!** They're one of the clean foods listed in Leviticus 11:21-22. This writer has eaten---well ... tasted---a fried locust. It smelled like a raisin and tasted liked a Milkbone dog biscuit. Maybe it needed some ketchup.

Farmers, ranchers, anyone who lives off the land, absolutely **dread** seeing locusts coming! Of course, in Bible times, most everyone lived directly off the land. So, when John preached, "Repent! God's wrath is coming!" and bit into a locust (crunch, munch, munch), don't you know the people took his message to heart! (That

'coming wrath' he warned of was the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans in 70 A.D., 40 years later.) Here he was, dressed as Elijah, preaching doom and munching on locusts. No wonder "Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan

[River] went out to him and were baptized by him"! (Matt. 3:5-6) They understood **exactly** what John was saying!

How we interpret John's eating wild honey likely depends on one's outlook. John could well have been 'demonstrating' the message of 'the song of Moses' (Deut. 32:1-43) where Moses first describes the goodness and mercy of God toward His people, but then these people grow fat, thick, obese, and forsake God. (Are you listening, Nations of the World??) They sacrifice to idols and demons and thus provoke Him to anger. So God heaps arrows, hunger, pestilence and beasts on them. That certainly adds to---and fits well with---John's 'locust message.' There may also be a hat-tip to Isaiah 7:17-25 which foretells of the coming destruction after the virgin birth (which would be like Assyria's earlier destruction of northern Israel).

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ANYONE UP FOR A LOCUST LUNCH? , P3

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Honey would also be all that was left to eat after a locust plague because the bees would aggressively protect their hive and queen. But, honey may also be a reminder to the people of God's refreshment and revival (I Sam. 14:27-30) that would be coming after the Sacrifice of His Son, Jesus, for them. Honey as a refreshment is used elsewhere in the Old Testament, e.g. II Sam. 17:29, Psa. 81:16, Song of Solomon 4:11. My vote is for the former, the bad news about honey. This is because of the huge importance---tragedy, really---of the Romans' 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem ... something we fail to comprehend today. God's intent for man's salvation---redemption from sin---was for Himself to die in man's place, to take upon Himself the penalty for our sins.

To accomplish this, He assembled the Jewish nation (the 12 tribes of Israel) as His "Tool" to bring forth their/our Savior. He promised them that, in that Savior, they (and all mankind) would be restored to Him forever and be His Nation to the end ... and that "all Israel" would be saved" (Psa. 14:7, Rom. 11:26). The problem was, when the Savior came, as a whole they were too busy following the letter of the Law (and adding their own picayune rules to it) that they missed Him, overlooked Him, and they **crucified** Him in 30 A.D. (which, as part of the unsearchable wisdom of God, was exactly what God needed to fulfill His Plan!).

The apostle Paul describes this rejection of their Savior by saying, "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6) and "the children of the flesh are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed [of Abraham]" (Rom. 9:8). God, however, gave the Jews 40 years to believe and respond to the Truth of the apostles' and disciples' preaching, teaching, explaining His Plan of Redemption (out of their own books ... what

we call the Old Testament). But their minds were made up, not to be changed. Jesus was not the Savior they were expecting.

Their hearts were hard and they would not humble themselves to listen, despite the miracles that Jesus and His apostles worked in an effort to convince them. So they could not be saved. .In 70 A.D. God used the Roman army to bring an end to the Temple and the Jewish capitol, Jerusalem. The Romans left not one stone upon another (Matt. 24:2) in their search for the Temple's gold. Jesus used Prophetic Language (the language of the Old Testament prophets) in Matthew 24 Mark 13 and Luke 21, to describe that 40-years-away destruction.

He assures them that their **generation** would not pass until all those things would happen (Matt. 24:34, Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32). It would be---and was---the "end-of-the-world" for the Jews. The Kingdom that God had promised was/is His Church, His "called-out ones" (Luke 22:29, Col. 1:13, 4:11, I Thes. 2:12, Heb. 12:28, Rev. 1:9). As Peter said in his sermon, Acts 3:24, "All the prophets from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold of these days." God's Church is the Kingdom of which the prophets prophesied. And this is the Kingdom we'd like to invite YOU into! Come join us as we learn! (How about, instead of a locust lunch, we go for a quarter-pounder with cheese?)

Bruce Hopkins, Palestine, TX

THE WHOLE BIBLE , P2

Continued from page 1

Many groups override this biblical teaching with the Middle Ages Calvinist doctrine that salvation is a free gift, so it you have to be baptized for it you are earning it. It is not free. Therefore you have forgiveness of your sins **before** you are baptized.

Others baptize babies who have not had a chance to sin, as it functionally commits them to that group before they have a choice. Therefore you have forgiveness of your sins **before** you have sins. These are interesting reasons, but are not what the Bible says.

The question here is how much of the Bible do you need to follow. Our suggestion here is that you look at the Bible and say we are not going to follow some part, you no longer have Jesus' religion but rather you then have your own personal religion. It would be the church of **me**. What this means is that you need to follow the whole Bible if you want to be pleasing to Jesus.

One exception to this following the whole Bible would be if the Bible tells you to not follow a part of it. This is true in the case where the New Testament tells us we are no longer under the Old Testament (the Old Law). Galatians 3:24-25 "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor." Galatians 5:4 "You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."

That would modify the statement to say we are now under the whole New Testament rather than the whole Bible.

First century Christians did not have the New Testament, as it was being written. What should actually be a part of the New Testament wasn't settled until the fourth century. Maybe there could have been another book added to the New Testament, but we cannot make that judgment today. Since God is in control, we have to have faith that what is in the New Testament is what God wanted in the New Testament.

The church/state was so powerful in the early Middle Ages that the New Testament was kept from the people. God was in control and knows that, and His judgment will likely take that into account.

Today we have unrestrained access to the New Testament, at least in this country. Access is not our problem, but rather the availability of mistranslations. When the King James Version was released in 1611 our understanding was that the translators used their best efforts to make it faithful to the resources available, with the exception of the Greek word for immersion "baptiso" which was transliterated as baptism. Few people then or now were/are immersed. To make a new translation at that time without word processors was a major undertaking.

Since that time, two distinctly different things have happened. First more old manuscripts have been found, enabling translations to be closer to the original documents. We have the ability to be remarkably close to the original manuscripts.

Continued on page 5

THE WHOLE BIBLE, P3

Continued from page 4

Second, and especially with word processing capabilities, numerous groups have had the ability to publish their own versions of the Bible. A favorite of mine is the Queen James Version. You should be able to guess what their emphasis is. More than that, publishers have endeavored to make the Bible more readable. Typically, the more “readable” a version becomes, the greater the probability that denominational teaching the editors believe will creep in as gospel truths. For example, the word “day” in Genesis 2:4 “This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven” becomes “This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.” in the New Living Testament. God apparently wanted to refer to the creation period as a day, but you would never know it in the New Living Testament.

Apparently the Chinese Communist are now working on a version. In the Gospel of John in which Christ says, “Let he among you without sin cast the first stone” when a woman is accused of adultery, this version ends not with mercy but with Jesus himself stoning the adulterous woman to death.” Who knows what else will change.

The only way you can be sure you are following all of Jesus’ New Testament is to get a relatively literal version and read it. **The chart to the right** shows a continuum of translation philosophies from interlinear (none) to The Message (thought for thought retelling of Bible stories). As we are serious about determining what God wanted us to know, most of our studies come from the NASV and Interlinears. The chart and a lot of other information is found at www.occg.institute, Bible Class / Topical Lessons / 07 THE BIBLE AND HISTORIES / 7.1 THE BIBLE. The further down the chart you go towards thought for thought, the

more opportunity there is for denominational errors to creep in.

God may well give a lot of latitude to people who are illiterate or who have no access to the Bible. If you are reading this, that would not be you. Your preacher, reverend, or priest is not going to stand up on the day of judgment for you. They are likely sincerely believers in what they teach, but if you want to follow the scriptures you need to recognize the vast majority of them are taught by their denomination what to believe, rather than determining God’s plan from His word.

You need not to simply believe what some authority figure says. You need to read the Bible for yourself. Start with a simple test. Does your group teach **“Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins”**. Few do. If they refuse to follow this biblical teaching, what else are they teaching in error?

Your attitude should come down to the 19th century motto **“Speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent”**.

Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E

This continuum shows how different Bible translations fit into the word-for-word and thought-for-thought translation philosophies

Word For Word



Do You Know the Way Home?

Continued from page 1

In present economic circumstances, many are concerned they may become homeless and worry about searching for a home they may never have. However; regardless of our earthly circumstances, every human has been provided opportunity for a permanent, everlasting home prepared specifically for all who discover Jesus Christ, follow His teachings, believe and place their faith and trust in Him alone. The Scripture of John 14:1-4 explains Jesus' promise: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also maybe where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Jesus had just explained to his disciples in John 14:6 "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

People who "believe in God", but doubt Jesus' persuasive arguments, coupled with His countless unexplainable miracles, find themselves to be victims of self-deceit, stemming from the very same temptations responsible for the Fall of the first man and woman. Adam and Eve did not "believe" or obey God's only command that would assure them of a permanent home in the presence of God in the Garden of Eden. Instead, they chose to believe Satan – the father of lies- when he told Eve "You will not surely die (by eating the forbidden fruit from the tree of life). For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil".

Being originally innocent in the presence and care of God's Holiness, neither Adam nor Eve had any concept or perception of "death", but were accustomed to making life choices about the food they ate, the activities of working the garden, taking care of it, and naming each living creature. Then they chose to listen to and follow the temptation of Satan, who had been expelled from Heaven because he led a rebellion against God. In his roaming the universe, and coming upon

humans living in a unique garden of creation, he seized an opportunity for revenge against God by tempting man to also disobey and suffer the consequences of falling away from God, thereby corrupting the world. He continues to roam the earth everywhere and is called the "prince of the world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11) and ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Ephesians 2:2).

From the moment of Adam's deception, infant humans born without "eyes open" to deception are unable to distinguish between good and evil – knowing at first only the loving care and protection of a mother and father. They live without knowledge or fear of death, often for many years, until events occur which make death undeniably imminent and real as they witness death of living creatures and people around them.

Therefore; it has been made known by Scripture; John 3:16-18 "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 Him to condemn the world, but to save it through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the Name of God's one and only Son."

In the midst of the turmoil that continues to corrupt the perfection of God's creation, the miracle of Jesus's arrival on earth signaled God's determination to not only save all who believe in Him, but also to be transformed. Through baptism, knowledge, faith, obedience and God' grace to experience new life in abundance while we praise God, serve Him and joyfully carry out the good works planned in advance for us to do. We experience renewal of our minds, refreshing of our souls and the satisfaction of a happy, productive and fruitful journey "on our way home".

Larry S. Grubbs, Harrison, Ohio

YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW THAT....

- How is it that the government can't control gasoline prices...but the weather is something they can fix?
- We're churning out a generation of poorly educated people with no skill, no ambition, no guidance, and no realistic expectations of what it means to go to work.—Mike Rowe
- If kids knew what they wanted to be at age eight, the world would be filled with cowboys and princesses. I wanted to be a pirate. Thank goodness nobody took me seriously and scheduled me for eye removal and peg leg surgery. — Bill Maher
- Why were we told to lower our AC usage on hot days to prevent overwhelming the electric grid while simultaneously being told to trade in our gas cars for electric vehicles?
- Why is canceling student debt a good idea? Does it make sense to reward people who do not honor their financial commitment by taxing the people who do?
- Does it make sense to cut off oil from an ally and buy it from an enemy who calls for your death?
- Are we living in a time where intelligent people are silenced so that stupid people won't be offended?
- Is this a great description of America: Andy has left town and Barney is in charge?
- Who else had a 'ministry of truth'...Hitler... Goebbels...Stalin
- Eliminating the production of 500,000 American barrels of oil a day to buy 500,000 barrels a day from Russia is simply...well...stupid.
- I saw a movie where only the police and military had guns; it was called Schindler's List.
- If your electric car runs out of power on the interstate, do you walk to a charging station to get a bucket of electricity?
- Why are we running out of money for Social Security and Medicare and not for welfare, illegals and free college?
- I just got a full tank of gas for \$22. Granted, it was for my lawn mower, but I'm trying to stay positive.
- If an 18-year-old isn't mature enough to own a firearm, then maybe five year olds aren't mature enough to change their gender
- Sign in Texas: DON'T VOTE FOR WHAT YOU FLED!
- Nobody called it "Toxic Masculinity" when we were saving the world.
- Mice die in mouse traps because they do not understand why the cheese is free. Just like socialism.
- Want to stop drunk drivers from killing sober drivers? Ban sober drivers from driving. That's how gun control and COVID lockdowns work.
- If you don't want to stand for the national anthem, perhaps you should give your legs to a veteran who lost his. That way a real man can stand in your place.
- If socialism is so good and capitalism is so bad...then why aren't there caravans heading to Venezuela?
- History is not there for us to like or dislike. It is there for us to learn from. And if it offends you, even better...because then you are less likely to repeat it. It is not anyone's to erase...it belongs to all of us.

RAY SCOTT

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION #143: LUNGS 2: ALVEOLI

In the last issue we discussed that breathing was taking O₂ into the body and venting CO₂ out of the body through the lungs. In the described case of a single celled living thing, the cell membrane functionally acted as the lung.

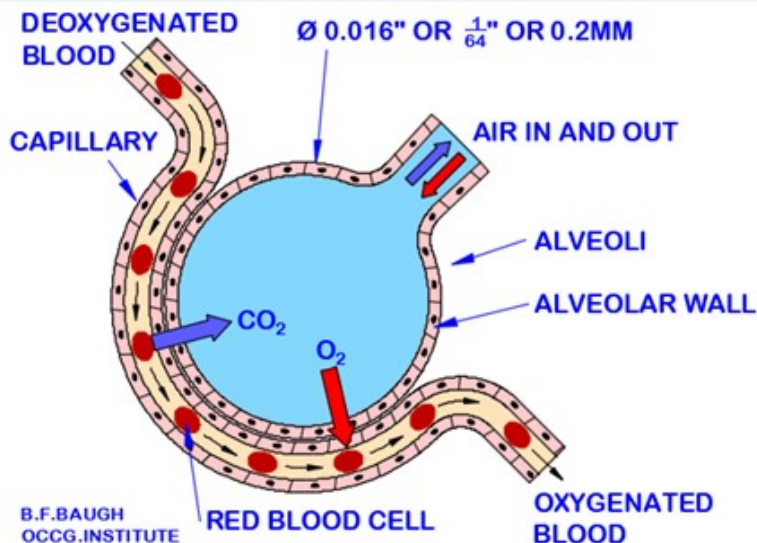
In the human body, this happens in alveoli (as illustrated in the first graphic). The alveoli is a tiny air sack with air inside it and capillaries on its outer surface. Blood high in CO₂ approaches the alveoli, deposits CO₂ into the Alveoli and picks up O₂ from the alveoli and leaves as blood high in O₂.

The alveoli have an exchange barrier or *alveolar wall* sometimes less than 2 microns thickness (.00007874 in.), about the thickness of a soap bubble. It takes about 37 alveoli walls stacked up to equal the thickness of one sheet of notebook paper.

A typical pair of human lungs contains 300 million to 1 billion alveoli providing a total surface area for gas exchange of between 70 and 80 square meters. Each alveolus is wrapped in a fine mesh of capillaries covering about 70% of its area.

The alveoli are stretched 20,000 times a day. Blood outside the alveoli is a little richer in CO₂ than the air in the lungs, so the partial pressure difference drives the CO₂ across the barrier. The air in the lungs is a little richer in oxygen than the blood outside the alveoli and so the difference in partial pressure drives oxygen across the barrier into the bloodstream.

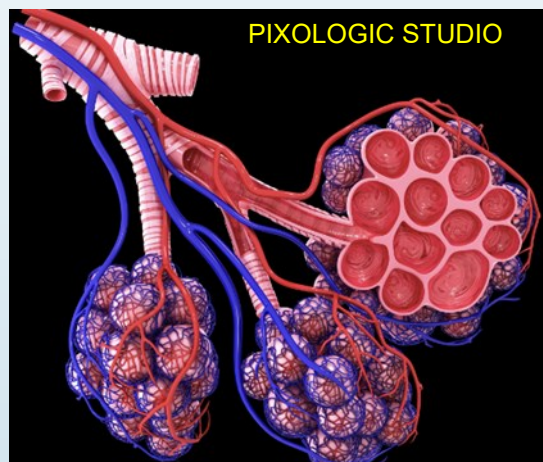
Note in the second graphic that the capillaries make a net around the alveoli. There are about 10 capillaries around each alveoli. For 0.3-1 billion alveoli, that would mean 3-10 billion capillaries which have a controlled blood flow rate around the alveoli. This is where my specific experience is an assistance. I am a registered professional mechanical engineer with more than 50 years of experience, including many



hydraulic systems designs.

It would be virtually impossible to build a physical hydraulic system with 10 billion flow paths having flow uniformly distributed to them. A dozen flow paths would be a challenge, and the system would only last a few years. Ten billion flow paths that would last 100 years is incomprehensible. It would be naïve to suggest that this could be an accident of evolution, and dishonest to claim that it was. This massively complex system which is common to all humans and many other living things is an extraordinary proof that God exists.

Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E



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Bob directs the Sunset Academy of Leadership Training. He is a coach, consultant, and full-time speaker, conducting workshops in leadership development. He is dedicated to helping leaders implement positive, transformational change and creating a vision to prepare the next generation of leaders. He lives in Virginia Beach, VA and holds a Doctorate in Intercultural Studies with an emphasis in adult leadership development from the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA.



ZONE LEADER
7 Tactics for Leading in the Zones

ZONE LEADER: 7 Tactics for Leading in the Zones

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ZONE LEADER

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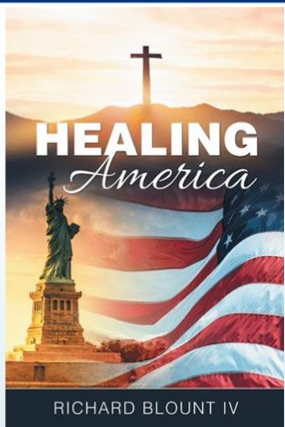


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Need answers! 🤔

Why is it that people say they "slept like a baby" when babies wake up like every two hours?

If a deaf person has to go to court, is it still called a hearing?

Why are you IN a movie, but you're ON TV?

Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?

Why do doctors leave the room while you change??? They're going to see you naked anyway.

From Ray Scott

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- (3) Sunday Bible Class: A church growth lesson
- (4) Sunday morning worship: A church growth sermon

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

For more information, contact:
info@occg.institute



GOD CAN DO IT!

Cremation is my last chance for a smoking hot body.
Barry & Ace

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

June 3-7, Global Reunion 2024, Hosted by Oklahoma Christian University, Edmond OK, See oc.edu/globalreunion

June 7-12, 50th National Jail & Prison Ministry Workshop, Corpus Christi, TX, See kingscrossingprisonministries.org.

June 30—July 5 Foundation School of Church Music, Twin Oaks Ranch, Buda, TX www.foundmusic.camp, cepym@msn.com, 520-249-8652

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