

Braman Foundation of Charities REVIVE MAGAZINE

The Magazine of The Braman Foundation of Charities
including Biblical Studies and Discipleship

January / February 2025



Asapalli Pre-Christmas Celebration

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BFC Editorial

To All Faithful Readers:

Happy New Year 2025!!! God bless you as you have been given yet another year in which to carry out His will in all you do, say and think. Be Blessed!!! The Braman Foundation extends to all our readers, our donors and friends a very Blessed New Year!!!

The marking of a new year can be a time of reflection, renewal and a time to rejoice. Be sure to spend time alone to reflect upon the year past. Count your blessings and be ever grateful for what God has done, is doing and will do as you reflect upon the 2024 year. Renew your faith and grow what may be a flicker into a flame and get on fire about what God has done in you, who you are in Christ and what can be done through you in 2025. What are your plans for 2025? What will you do to grow in a greater understanding of who you are in God. Perhaps you are going to grow in your solitude with the Lord. Study the Holy Scriptures more and more. Maybe you are going to teach a study at your local church. What ever you are being called to do remember that if it leads to growing in love with the Lord and your Neighbor you are on the right track. Finally remember to rejoice in what He has done to you and through you. Often we have to shake off the worldliness and move forward in rejoicing in the Lord. Be ever blessed as your 2025 unfolds.

Here at BFC we will continue to serve through our platforms of Mission work, Community Programs as well our Corrections work. We have just come back from India where we were blessed to participate in their pre-Christmas Celebration. Inside are many pics as well as a short report. In 2025 we will continue to resume our BIHL Conferences in Africa as well as India. Here in Poughkeepsie our Community programs continue to grow and serve those in need. So we look forward to not only continue that work but to expand our Operation Blessing Bag.

We are very grateful for the work that the Lord has used us through 2024 and look very much with anticipation what will be done in 2025. And so it is with great honor that we extend A very Happy New Year to you all, your families and loved ones.

Always in Divine Friendship,

BFC



The 2025 Scripture:

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel basket, but on the lamp stand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14-16

BFC Revive Magazine

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Asapalli

Missions: India

Letter from Peter Braman

On Wednesday we arrived December 11th at Asapalli in Fulteral India. As always we were warmly welcomed by the children in the hostel. The Holy Spirit is very much present and we enjoy the company and peace at Asapalli. We were able to worship with the children daily and Fudia Braman was able to produce several Christmas Videos with several of the children. Asapalli was all decorated for the birth of Jesus as the children and all of us anticipated the Annual Christmas Pageant. The Pageant was held on Monday the 16th for several hours. Several hundred folks from the local community as well as the students and staff were in attendance. The children are all so talented and it was a blessing to be able to participate in this event. Gifts and awards were given. I think the two best events to attend from the States: The October VBS or The Annual Christmas pageant.

Much expansion continues here at Asapalli. New Conference Rooms and Guest Housing is currently being added to the 2nd floor of the Admin. Building. Julia Rose, the founder's cottage has been revitalized and looks very nice. Plans are under way to add several floors to the school buildings which will give a total of 3 School buildings. A reminder that Asapalli services 1200 children daily, with 200 that live full time at Asapalli. BFC in its attached report has decided to revitalize the Asapalli Children's Sponsorship Program. Of the 200 children living at Asapalli, there 25% of the families or 50 families that cannot pay the \$8.00 per month for room and board. Additionally, out of the remaining 1000 children that daily attend school at Asapalli about 800 of them can pay the 8.00 monthly fee. So BFC is going to do a greater effort to fill the gap. So your donations are needed. Every little bit will help.

Charles Rymbai, the Asapalli General manger reports to me that all is well with the Indian Government and all is going well with all of its legal paperwork as Asapalli is not only an accredited 2 year university now put also is a regional food bank for the North East Region of India.

So I am happy to report that all is well as we continue to grow in our support of Asapalli. There were conversations concerning the dentist office, but no final arrangements. Several yrs ago Baybrook Dental owner, Gina Canale and her son traveled to Asapalli. Gina at that time was very concerned about their dental hygiene at Asapalli and volunteered to help support an office. Currently, this project is on the back burner. I am hopeful we can move forward. It is a very needed service here at Asapalli.

Finally, I was reminded in our annual meeting that Asapalli is very much interested in hosting children from America. In the BFC Magazine Revive we have been ADV this program and are ready to move forward. If your church or organization is ready and interested please contact the BFC Office or email me directly at peter@bramanfoundation.org.

Faithfully Submitted
Peter Braman



Anticipating a Fresh Start

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” - John 1:1-5, 9-14

Our text can be given in one word of three letters. Make each letter a capital. The word is found in II Corinthians 1:20. The word is YES.

The New English Bible reads: “With him it was, and is “Yes”. He (Christ) is the “Yes” pronounced upon God’s promises, every one of them. That is why, when we give glory to God, it is through Jesus Christ that we say, Amen!

On this last Sunday of an old year let us meditate in anticipation of a fresh start. There is a certain glory beginning again suggested by the calendar. We are thinking especially of our spiritual lives.

The examination questions had been written on the blackboard. A tenant student soon went up to his teacher’s desk and said, “Teacher, do you have an extra piece of paper that I could have? I messed this one up.

The teacher saw that it was full of blots and soiled by erasures, and gave him a new sheet. She smiled encouragingly at him and said, “You will do better next time.”

It is the boy who holds our attention in the incident, but we must think, too, of the kindly teacher. It was Jesus’ way of doing things – when people mess things up he would take their soiled sheets and give them a fresh start. I hear him say, “Here is a new year, my son, you will do better this time.” And indeed, we will with Christ at our sides, guiding and directing us.

The man who can begin again is, to say the least, not dead. He hasn’t come to a full stop. He isn’t a drop out.

Then, too, he hasn’t stepped into a “center of indifference.” The man who does that isn’t exactly dead; he is a dismal swamp personality.

The man who can take a fresh start hasn’t settled down into an everlasting “NO”. He doesn’t live in the “dim” world of denial. He is not a despairing man. The passing years are not used for the confirmation of his pessimism. If you have the merest clicker of optimistic light, thank God you have it; by following the gleam you can take a fresh start. The man who can take a fresh star is not dumb. He is not like the man who, starting his car, let it run in neutral, all the time thinking he was going somewhere. He has sense enough to put life into gear.

Beginning again, it is possible for a person to discard undesirable encumbrances. Changing direction or goals is a possibility. Pressing on, becoming steadfast, running the race, is often by a series of fresh starts.

We should always be looking forward. It is true we have to remember the past in order to try to correct our mistakes and to not forget good memories. As for our spiritual lives, looking back will do us no good. We have to start from where we are trying to overcome our faults and mistakes and fortunately Christ died so we could be forgiven and so we could have another chance, a fresh start. Christ gospel is the gospel of the “yes” – he denies only our denials. Each of us must choose between these two: whether he will live in a dim world of denial, or dare to affirm the highest and give himself to it.

First of all, where can you make this fresh start? Begin with a “yes”.

We are not dismissing doubt, a question mark, as the road to discovery. As William James put it, “Smiles and the word ‘yes’ prove too tepid and relaxed a moral climate. Some austerity and worthy negativity, some roughness, danger, struggling, and effort, some No! “No” must be mixed in to produce the sense of character, texture, and power. Our “yes” must be strong enough to involve a “no”. Nevertheless, one cannot make a fair, fresh start upon the foundation of a wriggling question mark. A man must find somewhere to put his feet.

Start with the strongest affirmation possible. We are not thinking now of taking some fresh start to put over a paltry program for a year. Start with a ‘yes’ that interprets life, gives it glorious and eternal purpose, supplies it with power, makes it victorious, transforms its question marks into exclamation points.

Too many of us know that our spiritual lives are not what we would like them to be and so we declare that next year is going to be different. We say, “I am going to change my life and start living it the way God wants me to live it.” But then we are trapped right back into the same old rut, perhaps because we are lazy, perhaps because it will cost us some so-called good friends, perhaps we are too comfortable the way we are. If we really know and believe we should be living differently, then let us make a solid affirmation and stick to it regardless of what happens. That’s what is wrong with many of us, we are “Lukewarm Christians”. We want to make sure we do not go overboard with concern to our religion.

Start also with an affirmation that is not an abstraction. Idealism, in which we may deeply believe, is sometimes a kindness to our advance. We may glow over the Golden Rule, but never do more than glow. We may prate about honesty and cheat our neighbors. We may set up absolute concepts of purity and love and truth and make the abstract a substitute for concrete life and deed.

The strongest affirmation has flesh and blood.

If things could be changed for the better by us talking about it, everything would be perfect in our world. Many of us talk a good fight and tell others how they should live their lives but we turn around and leave our lives just the opposite.

Because we came to church on Sunday, we believe we have the right to go out and cheat our neighbor on Monday. Some give when they have notoriety and publicity. Indeed, we desperately need to practice what we preach and not just in church.

Thomas Carlyle passed through a bitter ordeal. Doubt darkened into disbelief. The unwise seem to say “No”. Instead of falling into despair, his pain begat defiance, and his soul stood up and made protect.

From the everlasting know he passed to a center of a difference in which so many men live today in respects to ultimate issues. It was a decimal., As Carlisle admits, life lost its luster. The Earth seemed a dog cage, the grave a hound’s ditch. Slowly, by ways no words can trace, he found his way to a better mood, a cleaner insight, and the universe which had been so unresponsive, answered with an everlasting “Yes!” He was in a new world, no longer dead nor demoniacal, but divine, and the earth was a dewy valley with a lark song over it. His heart overflowed with a tide of love and pity.

Secondly, how then can we make a fresh beat start beginning with this new year? Meet God’s yes with Man’s “Amen”. “Amen” is “So be It.” “Amen” is men’s strong affirmation. Amen is acceptance of God’s deed in Christ. Amen may be a leap of faith from one’s own selfish and petty plan to the acceptance of God’s mighty affirmation. To God’s mighty “yes” a man makes a mighty response and lives of life through Jesus Christ that gives glory to God.

You can most definitely make a fresh start

right now. God will help you. Accept Jesus Christ into your life now and I guarantee your life will be different. Let Christ into your life. Give him a chance.

Some 1300 years ago a boy 10 years old named Steven entered the old monastery of Marsaba overhanging the brook of Kedron. He never left it. He became a wise teacher of souls and a healer of wounded hearts. He still sings to us in a tender, haunting hymn which, until 1862, lay locked up in the Latin tongue, but in that year was turned into limp, pathetic English. Listen to that voice and learn how you may hear the divine “yes” singing amid the discards and denials of life: “Art thou weary? Arts out languid? Failing, following, keeping struggling?”

Is he sure to bless?

Saints, Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, all answer yes.

What are we going to do? Put down a period in life? That is deadly. Step into a center of a difference? This is dismal. Just go round and round? That is dumb, stupid. Rubberstamp the divine “yes”? That requires no brains, no heart, no will. Base life on your own affirmations? Life becomes dull and drab. Say “Amen” to God’s “yes”. Say it like thunder! In that there is power, poise, purpose, discipline, achievement, victory.

Paul points to the fact that Christian say Amen through Christ. One cannot say Amen to anything except the reality which is in the Christ. Amen is the formula of confirmation, the expression of ultimate servitude. We are participants of his resurrection; therefore, we can say the ultimate “yes”, the Amen beyond our “yes” and our “no”.

What is more, Paul continues, as recorded in I Corinthians 1: 21-22; “And if you and we belong to Christ, guaranteed as his and anointed, it is all God’s doing; it is God also who has set his seal upon us, and as a pledge of what is to come, has given the spirit to dwell in our hearts.”

I think too in order to make a fresh start we should consider this “the Sacrament of the Present Moment.” The day in which we live is the day which matters.

Dr. Frank Boreham tells the story. He said he came to know this lady who silently worried herself a good deal about the future. Then one day she came upon some words in her Bible that pulled her up with a start: “This is the Day,” she read, “which the Lord has made; we will be glad and rejoice in it.” She paused, trying to puzzle out, as she read, which day was meant. Since no day was specifically marked out, she came very wisely to the conclusion that the day was living.

This was the day which the Lord had made! This discovery was so much to her that she scratched it letter by letter onto the pane of her window, so that first thing every morning she could look out on the new day through her new assurance.

By faith let us, you and I, do the same this year. You truly can make a fresh start from where you are and let Christ help you get started and help you continue on the way.

Mityana Community Pentecostal Ministries

Missions: Uganda

Pastor John Kamuleguya reports that they had a wonderful Christmas Celebration as The Children and Widows were given gifts and had a Christmas Dinner. Here are pictures for a graduation ceremony from the churches' Bible School.



Christmas Celebration

Missions: Freetown Sierra Leone

Patrick Sesay played a crucial role in continuing the beloved tradition of helping children during Christmas, a tradition that was first established by Fudia.

Every year, Fudia would cook delicious meals and prepare gifts and treats for the children, ensuring they had something to look forward to on Christmas Day. This heartwarming tradition became a staple of the holiday season, bringing joy and happiness to many families.

Now that Fudia is here in New York, with the support of BFC, the tradition has been able to carry on, allowing the community to continue celebrating Christmas in the same generous and festive spirit. Patrick's dedication has been instrumental in keeping this cherished custom alive, ensuring that children can experience the same warmth and love that Fudia once shared.



Elderly Care Program

Missions: Kenya

Jomo Otieno and his staff were able to put on a Christmas Celebration for the Elders on Christmas Day. Jomo's team continues their labor of love to help these Elders. Providing food, health services and companionship- all week long



BFC
Featured Corner

A New Start
Corrie ten Boom

Lord Jesus,
at the start of this new year,
we ask for a fresh beginning.

Wipe our sins away
with your precious blood.

Cleanse our hearts
of bitterness toward others.

Help us
to live each day
in close communion
with You,
our true and faithful guide.

Amen.

Notable / Quotable
The Narrow Way
Matthew 7:13

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go by it, because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

Many may believe they are entering heaven, but few will truly find the way. Self, worldliness, and deception are always claiming our time and deceiving us. Christ is the way, the only way to true freedom!

Freedom that can't come through effort, but freedom that comes through surrender of self. The “Narrow Way” of following Christ; who had no self and was a perfect incarnation of God. In fact, His only son given up for you. That you, through Christ, may know Him and follow the “Narrow Way.” Never give up my friend, but rather learn to let go of the things of this world. Be “all in” for Christ!

The world and your self will lead to destruction. You can see all around folks striving to conform to the image of this world: more money, more desires fulfilled, more and more. Yet you can not fulfill your inner desires rooted in self, no! No! No! These desires must be transformed into desires to really know God. To really love the Lord with your whole essence. Then He will transform you through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Give yourself to this process and follow the Narrow Way to the Kingdom.

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A Positive Christmas

“When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.”
- Matthew 2:10

Our theme, “A positive Christmas” suggest there is or could be “a negative Christmas.” What’s wrong with Christmas? This is a question that we frequently hear. The answers take various forms – “too commercialized”; “Christmas is paganized”; “we have lost the Christ in Christmas.” To some extent all of us may agree with such criticisms, but whatever of fault there may be in the celebration of Christmas, its correction lies neither in criticism nor into coming to and becoming a part of the negative trend. The minus must be counted by the plus. Let us apply the principle of overcoming evil with good. In other words, if we take something out of or away from our modern-day Christmas, we need something worthwhile and good to replace it.

Perhaps our problem is not to put Christ back into Christmas. He was and has always been there. Our problem is to get Christ into the other 364 days of the year. Basically, isn’t this our problem with all of life. We all say we are Christians. We want to be associated with and be a part of Christ’s church. Some of us think we only need to act like Christians while we are at church and the rest of our lives we can live as we choose. This is why we have so many problems in life.

The story of the Wiseman will give us suggestions on how we may do this. Matthew writes concerning them: “When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were coming into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented to him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

First of all, let us find joy in Christmas. Follow the Wiseman’s example, who “rejoiced with exceeding great joy.” Joy is a contagious thing; your joy will kindle another’s. How many hearts will feel joy because you are joyous? Let us create an atmosphere of joy and happiness no matter where we are. You will be surprised how this catches on and how many people begin to have the same feeling.

It was a star that stirred the traveler’s joy. It was a sign. The wisdom and joy of these Wiseman was not that they had seen a star (they could pick up a star on any clear night); their joy lay in the significance of this star. This star pointed to the birthplace of a King. A modern Christmas of lights is more than a thing in itself. Like the ancient star it is a sign. At Christmas time we find joy at the source. What a thrill it must be to stand at the source of a great river, such as the Mississippi, or the Nile. Those Wiseman of old stood at the source of joy. Preceding them were the shepherds to whom the angel said, “Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy.” Draw near to the babe – at Bethlehem’s gate there was a spring of water, but here in the stable was the real spring of Bethlehem, which issued the most joyous of all the religions of me and kind.

Finding joy we have the joy of ‘finding’. Some of us may have lost the Christ. Remember Jesus stories of the lost sheep, the last coin, and the lost boy – and note the joy that came with their finding. Here in the cradle at Bethlehem is to be found him who has been lost to many. Of course, it should be put to the other way, for are not we the ones who become lost?

Indeed, we are the lost sheep. We are the ones that have strayed from the flock. Some of us are lost and perhaps do not even know it. What a wonderful feeling it is when we are finally found, for God is always searching for us.

By his autobiographical account of how he became a Christian, C.S. Lewis reminds us in his book, entitled, "Surprised by Joy", that joy can also be a means of bringing us to God. And even the man who comes to God through his sorrows must sing with joy when he arrives. Of course, if the pursuit of pleasure monopolizes a man's life, it can cause him to forget God. But it is equally true that pain, dedication to one's work, even service to others can also crowd God out of a life. Protestantism in particular should be able to re-interpret the importance of pleasure and take a more positive view of the joyous Christmas season.

In other words, we have to strike a happy medium or a good balance between work and play and helping others. Life cannot be pleasure all the time; nor can it be work all the time.

The failure to wrestle positively with a question of how pleasure fits into the life of the Christian is at all times a serious shortcoming. But, as we stand on the threshold of the age of automation and the prospect of more leisure for all, the failure to come to terms with pleasure may be catastrophic. As man spends less and less time in his work and more in relaxation and recreation, it will be tragic if the church finds itself unable to relate Christianity to pleasure as well as to work. The Christmas season offers the perfect opening for Christian interpretation of pleasure.

Find joy in Christmas – the joy of expectancy. By the intense awareness that the babe of Bethlehem is Emmanuel, God-with-us, we have the anticipation that he will triumph over evil in the world, even over sin and death.

At Christmas time there is much of fun and frivolity and pleasure. Let us not treat it negatively; rather let us add to it, from each of us, a portion of contagious joy.

Secondly, let us put worship into Christmas.

The Wiseman fell down and worshipped the child. They certainly gave us a good example to follow.

There seems to be something spontaneous about their act. They were in the mood to worship. Their joy became the means of bringing them to God. Even when a man comes to God in sorrow, he finds joy and worship. The days of true Wiseman were quiet and slow moving, not so with us. We find it more necessary to cultivate the mood, but it will come at unexpected times, when you hear the bells ring out a Christmas carol, when you see a face radiant with the true Christmas spirit, when memory brings back a Christmas scene of long ago.

Perhaps you think it isn't important to be in the right mood to worship God but I believe it is important to prepare ourselves for worshipping God. Certainly, by continual talk, chatter, laughter we shall never be prepared to meet God. I am not saying we should not laugh and have fun and talk, all I'm saying is, there is a place and time for everything and if we really and truly want to find God he's here we have to want to and we have to prepare ourselves for the worship service. This is the reason for the hymns and the other rituals of our worship service.

Christmas is exactly the same. We must know what Christmas is, what it stands for and what the celebration of Christmas does for life. We have to understand it's meaning before we can learn to appreciate it.

St. Francis of Assisi is usually credited with being the "Father of the Christmas Carol" – from "his jovial singing", came a new idea about the holiday season. Now the use of the yule tide

music has become almost universal and we shout the glad tidings to the world.

“Then let us sing amid our cheer, Old Christmas comes but once a year.”

The Wiseman became deliberate. They opened their treasures. We, too, can make this a positive Christmas by deliberately worshiping in our homes, by grasping a quiet and meditative moment at work, by attending worship in the church.

I hope someday we can get away from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. We rush hither and yon, shopping, wrapping presents, decorating the tree, preparing food for the big feast. We sometimes forget what and why we are celebrating. We become too busy. We should take time out of our busyness to really think and meditate about the true meaning of Christmas and what a difference the birth of Christ has made in our lives. Let us take time for worship in our homes as well as church.

Thirdly, let us most definitely put love into Christmas.

“Love came down at Christmas time” is the line of a poem. Love came down to make us loving men and women. Inherent in us is the capacity to love; to love God, to love our neighbor, to love one another. I am not referring to a gushy, sentimental thing either, but a love that shows concern, a love that cares, a love that matters, that’s the kind of love I’m talking about.

Let us move in our meditation out from the Bethlehem scene to Nazareth and Galilee and even onto Calvary that seeing the love of Christ we may find ourselves loving him in return. Above all love someone, a child, a wife; a husband, a friend. Make love particular.

Love by giving. Love by giving self. The giving of things without the giving of self is bare and spurious; is a negative giving. This must be a positive Christmas. Anyone can

give gifts, material things, but to really give of yourself requires much more energy and thought and this is real giving. This is how Christ gave. He gave up his whole self and something that will always be remembered and appreciated.

Christmas truly is a story of divine and human love, which has a magnet-like tug on our hearts. A compelling, compassionate, and all-encompassing love explains the attractiveness of the day. Without love, there could never have been a first Christmas. Apart from the love we bring and the love we offer and receive, Christmas would be as dreary as an all-day drizzle.

We in our modern world sometimes get far away from the original meaning of events and why we should be celebrating. We tend to twist things around to suit our purposes, to meet the changing situation. Sometimes when this happens, we get too far away from the real meaning and purpose of things. Let us this year bring Christmas back and help to reestablish the true meaning of the event in our own lives and in the lives of those around us.

It is written of the Wisemen that they went back home by a different road. They walked a road they had never walked before. This may be our own experience. Put joy and worship and love into Christmas. Then you will do far more than you think to make this a positive Christmas in the world about you, and you will make it positive in the world of your inner being. You may find yourself walking a new and better road. Truly a road that will lead you to the foot of our Lord’s cross.

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A Monthly E-Commerce Newsletter
by Braman Foundation of Charities

&

The
Mid Week Message

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“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel basket, but on the lamp stand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 5:14-16

South Sudan

Missions: Africa

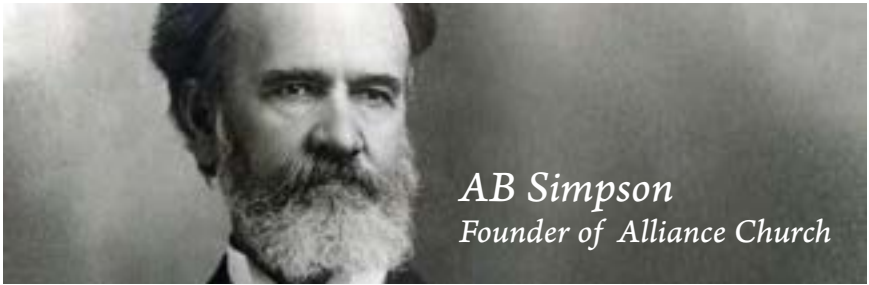
Thousands of people have been displaced from Khartoum and around Sudan because of the war and many have come to South Sudan to seek refuge. They have lost their homes, their jobs, and many have lost family members in the violence and upheaval.

A Healing Hearts, Transforming Nations workshop was conducted in Juba at the SSPEC Midaan Simba congregation from 27 – 29 November. Participants were invited from the SSPEC Arabic-speaking congregations as well as from Gorom refugee camp and several pastor and leaders from Nuba Mountains who have also been affected by the war. This was the first HHTN workshop that our team has conducted in Juba with all the teachings in Sudanese Arabic without translation, which helped the target population of people from Sudan to be able to discuss and feel at home.

We give thanks to God for making this workshop possible after several months of praying and waiting to see it happen. It was a meaningful way to minister to people who have been affected by the current war in Sudan and to help people to experience God's healing and love and in a fresh way. We celebrate that several different congregations were represented and that people came from different communities and parts of Juba. We also give thanks that as we have more trained facilitators that a diverse team of facilitators could be available for this workshop who were able to teach effectively in Arabic.



A Daily Devotional



AB Simpson
Founder of Alliance Church

“A Prayer for the New Year”

What shall I ask for the coming year?

What is Your will to do?

What would You do for me, dear Lord?

How can I best serve You?

Lord, I would ask for a holy year,

Spent in Your perfect will;

Help me to walk in Your very steps—

Help me to please You still.

Lord, I would ask for a trustful year;

Humble, and yet so high;

Help to bow at Your holy feet,

And in Your presence lie.

Lord, I would ask for a year of faith;

Give me Your faith divine,

Taking my full inheritance,

Making Your fullness mine,

Lord, I would ask for a year of love,

That I may love You best;

Give me the love that fails not,

Under the hardest test.

Lord, I would ask for a busy year,

Filled up with service true;

Doing with all Your Spirit's might

All that I find to do.

Lord, I would ask for a year of prayer—

Teach me to walk with You;

Breathe in my heart Your Spirit's breath;

Fill me with Your power to do.

Lord, I would ask for a dying world;

Stretch forth Your mighty hand;

Scatter forth Your Word—

Your power display

This year in every land.

Lord, I would ask for a year of joy,

Your peace, Your joy divine,

Springing undimmed through all the day,

Whether of shade or shine.

Lord, I would ask for a year of hope,

Looking for You to come,

And hastening on that year of years,

That brings us Christ and Home.



Biblical Studies

God has given us His Holy Spirit.

1 John 14:13

*“By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us,
because He was given of His Spirit”*



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BFC Commentary

Beloved, God has given us His Spirit, not, in the natural means, but because you have sought Christ, been convicted and know the presence of His Spirit in you.

And for this reason you abide in His Spirit and He in us. The Spirit is one, there is no separation. It is an illusion in your mind that you are not able to rest in this abiding or darkness though sin lurks. Darkness, sin is the greatest separator from the spirit. So ask the Lord, "Father, Christ Jesus I do not feel Thy presence. Reveal to me the sin nature in me that causes this separation, if it be Thy will. Amen!" Then be quiet and listen to the still small voice that will reveal, will answer you. Then renounce this sin, repent, turn away from and truly understand the significance of this sin.

Always, my child of God, recall as His son or daughter you are forgiven once repentance is confessed. He forgives, is your progressive sanctification. Let us explore salvation briefly.

Your salvation began when you first came to the Lord. Progressive salvation continues through your "New Man". Final salvation is upon your transition into the blissful eternity with Christ Jesus.

So know that as His child His spirit dwells in you as you are His son or his daughter. His Spirit is always and forever omnipresent. The

Spirit continues. This is why when you do not easily discern His Spirit or feel His presence you must seek why. For He yearns to dwell in you continually. Be conscious of His Spirit.

My Friend, be ever grateful to Him for this process, learn to be a blessing to the Spirit in you through spreading His message to all you come in contact with daily. He will never leave you or forsake you! Now praise the Lord! Reach your hands above your head and say "Yes and Amen". Say "I will be obedient." The Lord yearns for you to be obedient to His commands to love Him, your neighbor and yourself. Is your life a testimony to this truth?

And so, how do we define His spirit? What are the Spirits characteristics? In Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia in the fifth chapter and twenty second verse. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, and self control."

Now ask yourself is the facility of the Spirit manifesting in my life? Friend any ill will, resentment, hurt and fear, lusts etc., are not from the Holy Spirit. This is why we recommend that you spend time in a deep searching personal inventory to have revealed to you the liability, the darkness that has been transmitted to you through generational curses, your manifest sin and strong holds that you are not aware. This work is pain staking,

arduous and hurtful. Remember, in self you are not good. Goodness does not come through self only through Christ who is your spirit! Friend, this is one of the major factors why you struggle so why you are ineffective in being used by Christ and are susceptible to depression and fits of self pity. Remember the Spirit is not born out of the natural and your self is no good. You must learn to put on your new nature in Christ.

Let us explain once again. Seek God through the writings of our great friend and apostle Paul. This verse lets us explore the truth in Ephesians: His letter to the Church of Ephesians, the 4th chapter starting with the twenty second verse: “that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man who grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the Spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and holiness.”

Friend, are you daily growing in “your new man”. This is growing in your progressive salvation.

As we conclude this chapter, you are to be encouraged because the spirit is always seeking and is in you. Yet much of the time you are not able to feel his His presence or much less hear His still small voice. Don't be worried

rather grow in learning about the process of renouncing self, the old man, through the mystery of His grace in confession and repentance. Press into this inner work daily. Let repentance and confession grow into your daily devotion. Learn to not love your “self” but to love thy self in the Spirit. Don't be like the world, my friends, patting each other on the back, minimizing that there is no hell and convincing others that all roads, all paths, lead to eternal life. Only Christ is the King. Grow in this truth and pass it on to others.

This Biblical Studies is an excerpt from
An Understanding of The Holy Spirit.



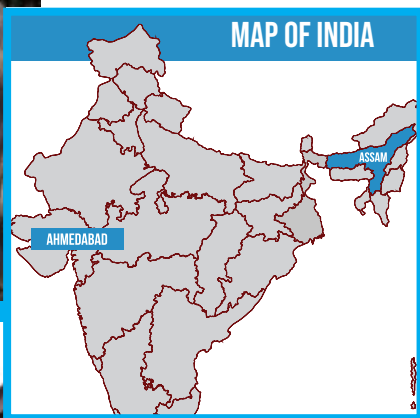
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Missions: India



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The Best from the Past

“And they brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent.” - II Chronicles 5:15

A certain congregation moved from a temporary chapel to a new sanctuary which had been built. On the appointed day they met in the chapel, engaged in prayer, formed a procession and moved to the new home of worship. The minister at the head of the procession carried the chapel Bible to the new reading desk; this was the ark. Symbolizing the tent of meeting and the priesthood of believers, each member of the moving congregation carried a handbook. The elders of the church followed, carrying the communion vessels to the new sanctuary. There, as in Solomon's day, “the trumpeters and singers where is one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord.”

Some things from the past must be carried into the future.

When we say that “everything changes” and “there are no limits to change”, we are uttering fallacies. Charles Malik, and noted world statesman, wrote in “Saturday Review” that he could enumerate 40 fundamental facts which defy all change.

“Change”, he says, “touches the less important, the form and circumstance, the setting and surroundings, the instruments and conditions – never the heart and the essence, never the grounds of sorrow and joy, of ecstasy and fulfillment.”

The procession that moved into the new sanctuary carried with them the symbols of the unchangeable.

If literally, everything changed, we would be in a real mess, even more than we are. How true it is that change touches the less important things in life. God's word doesn't change. Perhaps as the years go by, we interpret it differently because we become wiser through years of experience. But the

Bible has always been the same and it has always said the same thing. We are the ones that change not the Bible. The principles we should be living our lives by do not change and let's hope they never change. Again, we are the ones that change. We can change the outward appearance of things but inwardly they have the same value and meaning to us. It's like our outward appearance. Today we can do all kind of things to ourselves to supposedly change our appearance for the better and some of these things are debatable but inwardly we are the same person. The old saying “beauty is only skin deep” is very true. Actually, the only way, the only one that can change a person inwardly is Jesus Christ. If we accept him into our lives as our Lord and Savior we will be changed persons not only outwardly but inwardly and this is definitely a change for the better. But basically, some things from the past must be carried into the future. We cannot throw them away or leave them behind because they are too important to us.

When change is taking place all around us and we move into new situations, we must not despise our heritage. Eternal values have come down to us from the past.

Again, Charles Malik writes about “The Great Society” in the “Saturday Review”. He says, “there are living routes in the life and heritage of America; and its origins, and its fundamental statutes, and much of its poetry and literature, and much of its philosophy, in the Judeo-Christian religion which has always been at its base. Nay, more, the roots go farther back, to the whole of Western civilization – thus one is not proposing a new theory, a new ism; one is always begging people not to forget their origins and, in a sense, not to forget their God.”

Really isn't this what the candidates are saying again this year? We have so many

material things and luxuries in our lives, that it becomes easier and easier for us to forget about and collect our Lord. We forget that man himself doesn't have all the power. Man, you and I, have only what God has given us and he can take it away quicker than he gave it. So regardless of what the candidates promise it is basically up to each individual, what he wants out of life, what he is willing to sacrifice and what life really and truly means. No one person can change everything and we thank God for that.

We cannot imagine a church in a new sanctuary, however, modern it might be, without the Bible, the handbook, vessels of communion. For the church of Christ wouldn't be a church without these things. Most definitely some things from the past must be carried into the future. We just plain cannot get along without them.

This applies to Reformation Sunday which we celebrate today.

The Reformation is not a past event embalmed in history – it is a continuing experience. The Reformation was a creative departure from ways of religious life that threatened to stifle the Christian faith. The Reformation continues as meaningful now as it was for men and women in the days of Martin Luther and John Calvin.

As we attempt to understand the reformation and its meaning for us, and as we seek its fulfillment in our time, we need to confront two contemporary errors of which some of us, both Protestant and Non-Protestant, are guilty.

The first is the error of imagining that the Protestant church began with the Reformation. Protestantism did not begin with the Reformation. The name "Protestant" is a broad word used to describe the religious descendants of the reformers who united on returning to the New Testament Christianity at its best, and who refused any longer to accept forms and interpretations of Christian experience which were super-imposed upon the teaching and experience of the New Testament.

The reformers rejected the whole scheme of payments and commercial transactions with which the church had surrounded time in

eternity and salvation. The Protestant church represents the continuation of the New Testament at its best through 2000 years of life and experience. We are not a new church; we are the continuing Christian church.

The second error that needs to be faced is the error of imagining that the Reformation was simply a minority movement of protest. Actually, while they were elements of protest in the reformers position, needed protest against abuses, at the same time the reformer's major concern was an emphasis on affirmation. The affirmed basic New Testament teachings and experiences that were in danger of being forgotten and eliminated the Reformation and Protestantism are not religious movements against something, they are affirming creative experiences of Christianity.

There is movement from what might be called the Old Reformation into the New Reformation.

Was not the Reformation of the 16th century its self every valuing of all values, the repossession of a heritage, the reaffirmation of ancient truths? The procession into the new and changing era carried with it the Word of God, the doctrine of the priesthood of believers and that of salvation by faith.

Now we speak of a New Reformation, or "The Unfinished Reformation." The great reformers identified with the Protestant Reformation did not become monuments marking the completion of reformation. Rather they stand as landmarks along the continuing way. Every reformation is an unfinished reformation. There is a new movement into a new day. Somethings can be left behind, but the best, the true, the eternal must be carried forward and become creative in the world.

To talk about going back to Luther, to Calvin, to Wesley, is the talk of heading in the opposite direction from what Luther and Calvin and Wesley would themselves be going. They would not be going back. They would be going on. And that, at our best, is our objective, too – to be ready and willing to embrace whatever further light may be made known to us, out of the past, into the present and for the future.

We need to take with us these truths of Luther, Calvin and Wesley into the future and go on from where we are applying these truths, to our day and age. We certainly cannot turn backwards.

We still carry the Bible into the new day. There are differences of opinion about the fallibility or the infallibility of the book, but there is little disbelief in the viability of the book. We know that we cannot be a Christian without it and we know if we really want to know how to live our lives we can find out in this book. There are all kinds of disagreements about who wrote the book or when it was written but actually, we can let the theologians be concerned about this because it makes very little difference as long as Christians we read the Bible, believe that it is the Word of God, and live our lives according to its teachings.

If we carry the Bible into our new age, we shall recover our awareness of God. The experience recorded in the Bible tell us that God is overwhelmingly near and gracious. We shall find him the source of human courage and freedom.

The Bible in the hands of laity was the supreme instrument of the 16th century Reformation, but we should be pathetically naïve to imagine that the wider distribution of the Scriptures is now enough to communicate the Word of God to the New Age. The Bible must be at the center, and one of the great signs of the new Reformation is to be found in the advances made within the last third of a century in the scholarly investigation of the Bible into modern language, in Bible theology and preaching, and in Bible study by laymen through paperbacks and study groups.

The Bible is a library of human testimonies to the reality of God and to God's search for man. We honor the Bible best when we join its quest in our own day, and when we continue its witness in our own terms.

Certainly, we shall carry the Saviorhood of Christ into our world. Without this we would have no message. Without this we would wither and die. Without this we would have no Christianity for this is the whole heart of our Christian religion. We can never forget or put away the supreme sacrifice that was made

for our sake, the death of Jesus Christ upon the Cross and then the promise of everlasting and eternal life by the resurrection of Christ for the dead. If we didn't have something to look forward to, the promise of eternal life with God, there would be no meaning in our lives. There would be no purpose to this earthly life. We most certainly have to take the Saviorhood of Christ into the future with us.

We shall also carry the Lordship of Christ into the new changing world. We shall do this by rendering him obedience in our lives and by witnessing to him in all areas of our lives.

To say with our lips that we are Christians is not enough. We have to live as Christians and perhaps this is the most difficult of tasks we are called on to do. Temptations come our way. We see the way other people live and they seem to prosper. We have needs and desires that we think have to be fulfilled. We are always looking for the easy way out. We are tired of struggling and even though we do struggle we seem to end up on the wrong end of the stick. This is where our faith in God, our background and Christian teaching and our love of Christ and love of fellow men really come into being. We have to set an example for others to follow. Being true Christians, this is the way we have to live our lives. There could be no other way. So regardless of how discouraged we get a times, we must truly carry the Lordship of Christ with us into the future day.

The best from the past will serve us as we proceed into our new personal situations. Indeed, new situations will arise almost daily. We have to be equipped to handle them. The best way to be equipped is with Christ at our sides, guiding and directing our every thought, deed and action. Paul wrote that faith and hope and love are the abiding things and indeed they are. These are not new. They are as old as time itself. In essence they are unchangeable. Carry these into every situation and it will become a sanctuary as real as the one you left behind. Take these best things from the past and let us proceed into the future with more faith, hope, confidence, love than we had before.

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Braman Foundation of Charities has collected and discovered Promises and Commands from our Lord through scripture for decades. Additionally, we know there are prayers that have been written throughout the bible to give us both guidance and comfort. This collection, when reflected on will give deep direction, comfort, and joy.



Understanding the Holy Spirit

Growing in understanding of the Holy Spirit is so important in one's faith because the Holy Spirit is your constant companion. Thanks to God through Christ the Holy Spirit has been given to us for various reasons. This body of work has been written to support this fact. One's faith must continue to grow in order to better serve the Lord in all our endeavors.



An Understanding of Devotion, Confession, Self Reflection & Repentance

This short essay is to help the believer with tools to bring him or her into a deeper relationship with Christ. Simply, to the point, and to testify in truth and the word of God. Progress into a relationship with Christ that is the single most important relationship in your life. He will never leave you, nor forsake you.

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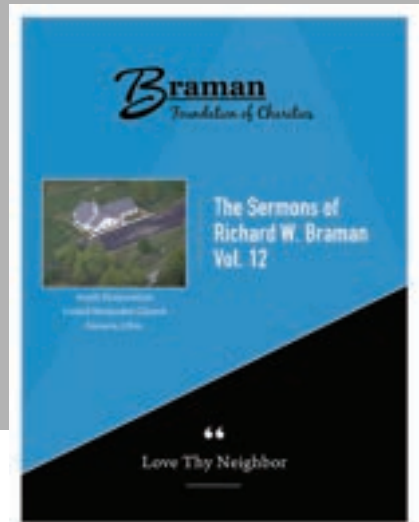
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As you read these sermons may the Holy Spirit continue to guide your path and may the Grace of our Lord continue to bless your life and your families' lives. If you have never had the experience of realizing Jesus as your personal Savior just ask him to come in your heart and He will. These can be read on our website.

Shout out to the BFC team for helping put this new book of sermons together.

About Sandra

Sandra Tarrant is a member of the Kirk of Kildaire, a Presbyterian Church, USA, in Cary, NC. where she serves in its Stephen Ministry-a lay care-giving ministry that supplements pastoral care. She is a past elder and educator in the Reformed Church of America. As a lifelong Christian, she is always looking for ways to serve Christ and his kingdom.



Volumes 1-12 of the Richard W. Braman Sermons are available to be downloaded from our website, bramanfoundation.com. You may receive a printed hard copy of any volume by calling 845-471-2286 or emailing info@bramanfoundation.org.


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Ministry in the State of Odisha

Missions: India



Letter from Umakanta Guru

Loving greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Thank you so much for upholding us and the ministry in the State of Odisha, India in your prayer. By the grace of God and through your continuous prayer, we are mainly reaching people and concentrating specially the rural area, by going door to door and village to village ministry, because the interior area are situated in the jungle and very much neglected to bring the good news among them. We are so much concern for these people and sharing the love of God among them.

For your kind information, we are working among the idol worshipers, though there is a lot of opposition and risk to our life, but still the Lord is helping us to share the truth. There are many numbers of people who are genuinely seeking the truth and willing to know the living God. People are in the villages illiterate but very simple to respond the gospel. Please continue to pray for this work in the rural area, so that we may reach many unreached villages with the gospel, in the result there may be many house churches will be established in the days to come.

We are continue to pray for you all. Please find few photographs of our ministry with families and as a groups, among whom we are working.

With regards
Yours Sincerely

Umakanta Guru
Odisha State, India

CORRECTIONS & PRISON MINISTRY

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Lifeline

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This program, when instituted, will enable any individual being released from a facility the opportunity to be united with a home church and a contact person in their home area. In addition, we will offer a mentoring program. Learn how to bridge inmates from the facility to your church.

C&MA Alliance School and Hostel

Missions: India

Dholka, in the Indian state of Gujarat, has long struggled with poor land quality and high rates of homelessness and extreme poverty, particularly among children. The Dholka Alliance Hostel and School has served the community for 117 years, beginning in 1904 during a severe drought. Alliance missionaries from North America arrived to support families facing famine, and found many children living in extreme poverty, often orphaned and without access to education. The missionaries provided these children with food, shelter, and education, offering them a better future.

Today, the hostel houses over 80 children and provides them with food, clothing, and shelter. The school serves over 180 students, many of whom go on to hold prominent positions in companies or engage in church ministry. Dholka's mission also extends to the village of Agawada, where an Alliance church was planted, with 75-100 people attending weekly services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the hostel temporarily sent children home for their safety but continued providing food, care, and spiritual encouragement. The school looks forward to reopening and continuing to nurture the faith and future of these children.



Jesus Christ Church & Ministries

Missions: Pakistan

May the joy of Christmas fill your hearts, and the peace of Christ come in your homes. I pray for your health, happiness, and prosperity in the coming year. May His blessings shine upon you and your loved ones this season and always. Jesus Christ Ministry had two programs one in the beginning of December and one program yesterday. Wishing you a Merry Christmas filled with love and grace!

Regards

Haroon Ashraf



St. George Foundation

Missions: Sierra Leone

St George Foundation is a child focal agency responsible to provide protection to vulnerable children in the Western Area Rural and Urban District. The organization work in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and the Family Support Unit and other development partners who regularly referred children of all categories of abused at the home. These children experience lots of exploitation while living with their primary caregivers in communities. As an organization, we provide, support and promote the best interest of children and provide an innovative mechanism to,strengthening policies and raise awareness with the government, stakeholders, development partners and the general public for effective service delivery towards children.

As we constantly received children on a daily basis at the home, many of them are traumatized based on the situation they may have encountered why living on the street. Providing psychosocial support to de-traumatized children has been a daily regular activity which are conducted through drama, skits, story telling, traditional songs and dance, games and mentorship and coaching and these activities has played a pivotal role to improve the mental health situation of children in our care. The children now feel more confidence and self esteemed in the home and are very cooperative in sharing their information with St George Foundation social workers for documentation and possible family tracing.

Providing services to children is of great importance in the work we do, St George Foundation provided shelter to two children (boys) of the same family who left their home town in mile 91 a provincial town outside Freetown the Capital Ccity of Sierra Leone, with the hope of locating their father who has long abandoned them after three years. The children's dream of high hopes as this was the very first time to travel to Freetown to meet their father.





The boys unfortunately reached Waterloo with no idea how big is the capital city without no contact or address to locate their father and this was how they became homeless on the street of Freetown, As the organization continues to provide valuable services with the support of Braman Foundation to children of all categories, these children were identified and referred to St George Foundation Interim Care Centre (ICC) for protection and possible family tracing and reunification with their families. After two weeks of their stay in the home, the two boys were successfully reintegrated back with their mother at the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and the children are happy and thankful to St George Foundation.

The continuous support from Braman Foundation has brought smiles on the faces of children, as we all strive to improve the well being of vulnerable children. We provide mentorship and coaching skills to make children more resilient in over coming their challenges and fears, we continued to provide healing the minds of children, we also ensure children are trained to be physically fit to improve their general well being. We want to extend thanks and appreciation to Braman Foundation for their relentless support to St George Foundation to improve the lives of vulnerable children.



SPURGEON'S CORNER

"We will be glad and rejoice in Thee.."

—*Song of Solomon 1:4*



We will be glad and rejoice in thee. We will not open the gates of the year to the dolorous notes of the sackbut, but to the sweet strains of the harp of joy, and the high sounding cymbals of gladness. "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation."

We, the called and faithful and chosen, we will drive away our griefs, and set up our banners of confidence in the name of God. Let others lament over their troubles, we who have the sweetening tree to cast into Marah's bitter pool, with joy will magnify the Lord. Eternal Spirit, our effectual Comforter, we who are the temples in which thou dwellest, will never cease from adoring and blessing the name of Jesus. We WILL, we are resolved about it, Jesus must have the crown of our heart's delight; we will not dishonour our Bridegroom by mourning in his presence. We are ordained to be the minstrels of the skies, let us rehearse our everlasting anthem before we sing it in the halls of the New Jerusalem. We will BE GLAD AND REJOICE: two words with one sense, double joy, blessedness upon blessedness. Need there be any limit to our rejoicing in the Lord even now? Do not men of grace find their Lord to be camphire and spikenard, calamus and cinnamon even now, and what better fragrance have they in heaven itself? We will be glad and rejoice IN THEE. That last word is the meat in the dish, the kernel of the nut, the soul of the text.

What heavens are laid up in Jesus! What rivers of infinite bliss have their source, aye, and every drop of their fulness in him! Since, O sweet Lord Jesus, thou art the present portion of thy people, favour us this year with such a sense of thy preciousness, that from its first to its last day we may be glad and rejoice in thee. Let January open with joy in the Lord, and December close with gladness in Jesus.

Community Meetings



Prayer & Meditation

Every Sunday, 7pm



Discipleship

Every Tuesday, 7pm

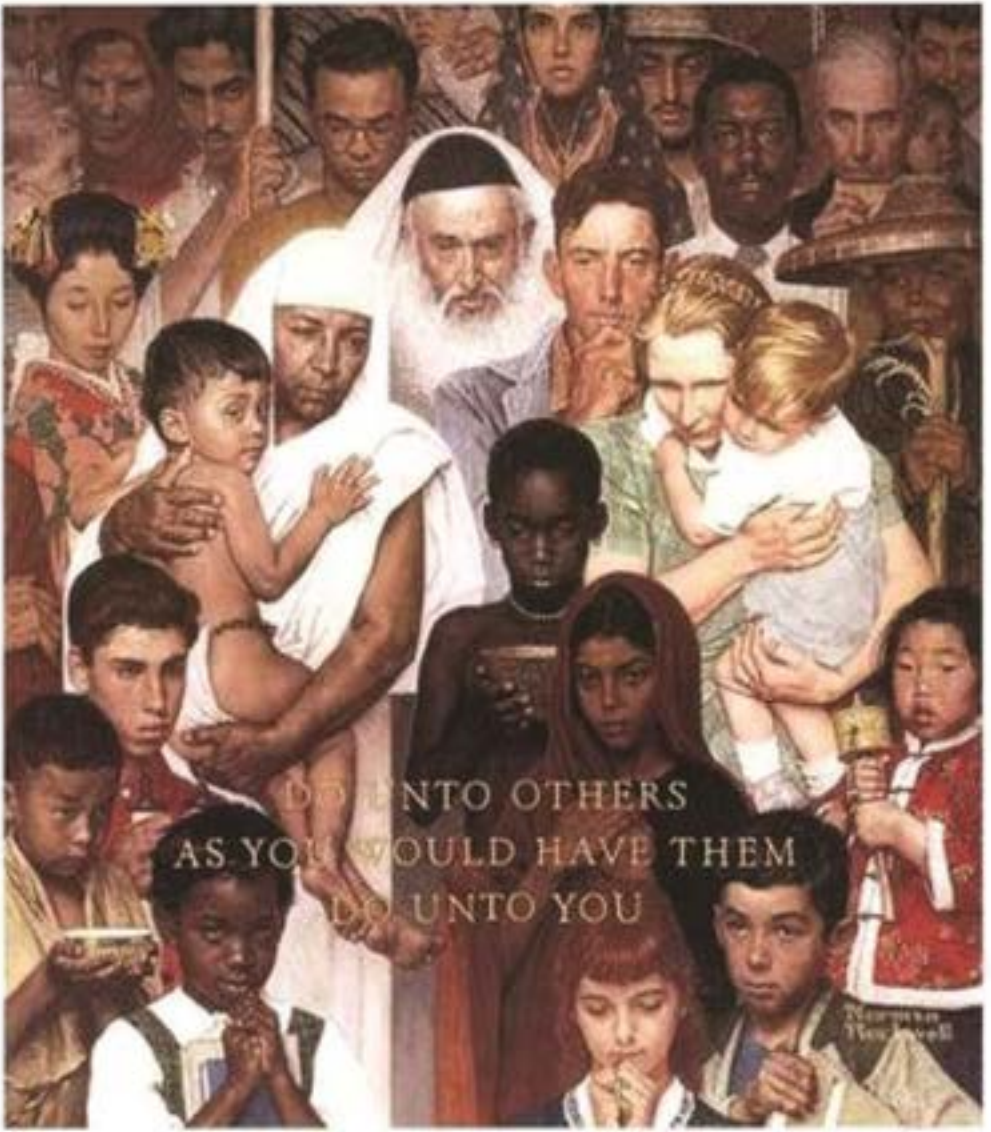
The BFC Discipleship Program continues to thrive on Tuesday nights as we study and discuss materials like Understanding of The Holy Spirit, a concise BFC booklet. Each week, we also work through the Discipleship Workbook. Additionally, several members of the senior community are transported in the new BFC vehicle to attend services at Beulah Baptist Church on Mansion Street. Attendance is steadily growing, as participants are blessed by the opportunity to study God's Word on Tuesdays and worship on Sundays.

On Sunday nights, prayer and meditation sessions are held at the BFC offices at 18 Davies Place in Poughkeepsie. While there are several regular attendees, more individuals from the local nursing home have expressed interest in joining, requiring additional time for transportation arrangements.

Overall, the BFC community meetings are well-established and continue to flourish as we grow in sanctification. We are especially grateful for the support and fellowship at Beulah Baptist Church and look forward to strengthening our relationship with them.

Thank you,
Fudia Braman





NORMAN ROCKWELL
"DO UNTO OTHERS"

