

# Contact

Volume 22

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*A monthly publication of Christian Church of Mountain Home in the interest of promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ and goodwill among His people, our friends.*

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### Chief Shepherd

Jesus Christ

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David Benedict  
Forrest Cotter Don Truitt  
Rick Schmeski Bruce Wolf

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Ted Bankes James Darr  
Jason Schmeski Joey Peglar  
Gene Frazier Eric Dwyer

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Gene McCoy

### Youth Ministers

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Vanessa Peglar

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Papua New Guinea

Brad & Linda Berg, Mexico

Saleem & Naylah Massey  
Pakistan

Jay & Romola Henry, India

Ernest & Numreta  
McFarland, India

Central Christian College of the Bible  
Ozark Christian College  
Show-Me Christian Youth Home  
Christ on Campus

I said, "Well, that's what it says in the Bible." He replied, "No. I was there and I can tell you there is a difference between heaven and hell."

To be fair, he probably did not intend to diminish or discredit the Bible. But that is precisely what one does when more credence is given to experience than to what the Bible says.

A dramatic experience is not needed to know the truthfulness of anything the Bible says. Bumper sticker theology says, "The Bible says it, I believe it, and that settles it." Actually, it is settled simply because the Bible says it! My believing it doesn't verify its veracity. My experience confirms the Bible, but is not needed to validate it.

A common malpractice of biblical interpretation is to make the Bible agree with our feelings and experience. This can be eternally fatal. Just like my friend, whose personal story was offered as carrying more weight than the Bible, many people are choosing to face judgment on the basis of what they feel or have experienced. More incredible than expecting me to believe their story is that they actually expect God to accept it, despite the fact that it does not agree with what He said explicitly in His revelation.

An interesting, yet pertinent side note is the fact that my friend who had this dramatic experience has not been noticeably affected by it. He may be more spiritual, but there isn't any evidence that there has been a change in his life. Always the big talker, he now has something new and sensational to relate to any who will listen. That he had some experience I cannot and would not deny. But I do not give nearly as much credence to his experience as I do the inspired revelation of God's will.

Others not having such a dramatic story are just as guilty. Included are those who will refuse to accept what the Bible says because it does not correspond to something they

have experienced or felt. An example is the person who told me (I wish it was actually just one person.) that what the Bible says with regard to receiving salvation does not enjoy the same level of authority as his personal experience.

This kind of subjective theology gave birth to the meaningless circular expression, "I know that I know that I know." That is a lot of "I" and none of God. The confidence or assurance is based upon what I know as opposed to what God said. Those whom I have heard using this expression were conveying a confidence based upon their interpretation of some religious experience. In other words, their "knowledge" is not of objective truth derived from the Bible, but rather their subjective interpretation of a spiritual experience to which they assign divine significance.

In all candor we must also point out that even those whose theology is founded upon what Scripture says may be just as guilty of saying "no" to the Bible. The practice of many people does not correspond to their knowledge of what the Bible says. In effect they are saying "no" to the Bible.

Our language and our lives should reflect an appropriate respect for and submission to what the Bible says. Our testimony and assurance of salvation should be based upon what the Bible says as opposed to our interpretation of an experience. Our teaching should employ the words, "The Bible says," as opposed to "I feel," "God told me" or "God showed me."

In every way we must communicate that the Bible is the only reliable source of information resulting in a right relationship with God. The Bible is not merely the primary basis for knowing God's will, but it is the ultimate authority relating to all aspects of fellowship with God. Our feelings and experience must always remain secondary to the Bible.

**He said,**  
**NO**  
**to the**  
**BIBLE**  
*by Gene McCoy*





## Preacher's Pen by Gene McCoy

For other articles and information about our congregation, go online [www.ccmhar.com](http://www.ccmhar.com)

*The Preacher's Pen article is a synopsis of a recent sermon, the fuller version of which is posted on our website. Go to the Info Center, open the file labeled "articles," and scroll down to "The Basis for Confidence."*

### Baptism

#### Angie Bertel

was immersed into Christ for the forgiveness of sin just before midnight on Wednesday, July 11.

#### Bea Tigard

was immersed into Christ many years ago. But on Sunday, July 29, she marked her solemn recommitment of life to Jesus by once again re-enacting His death, burial and resurrection; this time with greater understanding and heartfelt resolve.

In his first letter, John states that we may know we have eternal life (5:13). There is only one basis upon which we may have this confidence.

Everyone you evangelize bases his confidence of salvation upon one of three foundations. Be prepared to help people evaluate them.

### Performance

#### PHYSICAL

The focus of this approach to confidence is physical in nature, specifically things we do (e.g., good deeds, works, faithfulness, achievement).

#### OBEDIENCE

The emphasis is upon obedience. Many people base their confidence of salvation upon how well they have obeyed God's commands and the keeping of "church rules." Their hope of salvation is measured by their church attendance record, faithful service, the amount of their giving, and the fact that they "got baptized." A fundamental flaw in this approach is the fact that confidence is based upon one's self — what "I" have done as opposed to what the Lord has done.

This approach is exemplified by the man introduced to us in Mark 10:17-22. Paul repudiated this approach (Phil. 3:4-9).

#### SUBJECTIVE

This basis cannot produce confidence because perfection is required (Gal. 3:10; Ja. 2:10). Like the young man who lacked one thing (Mk. 10:21), the one who depends upon his performance will always have the nagging doubt that he has done enough, been good enough, faithful enough, obedient enough. The reason for doubt is the fact that the standard by which his assurance is determined is himself. He knows he is not perfect in his performance.

So he must compare himself to others whose obedience he judges to be more lacking than his own. But this, too, is subjective, for he is the one making this determination in and by himself.

To enjoy any confidence upon this basis one must actually put his faith in himself, because he is the one who is determining how much obedience is acceptable or adequate. He must also assume the role of God to make this judgment. God has already judged this basis of confidence through His inspired apostle Paul (Rom. 3:20).

Our performance affects our perception. But even though we accept the fact that our performance is not adequate, we can still deceive ourselves by our perception.

### Perception

#### MENTAL

The focus of this approach to confidence is mental in nature, specifically our thoughts. Our assurance is based upon our intellectual and emotional assessment — what we think and how we feel.

When asked about their standing before God people convey varying degrees of confidence, usually beginning their response with the words, "I think" or "I feel." This reveals a wrong concept that our salvation is based upon what we think or how we feel. No one is saved on the basis of what he thinks or how he feels.

#### FEELING

Paul lived in all good conscience, despite the fact that he was persecuting the church (Acts 23:1). Cornelius was a devout man who feared God, was charitable and prayerful (Acts 10). Yet he needed to be evangelized. The rich young ruler felt real good about his standing before God until Jesus' words sunk in, at which point he went away sorrowful.

Feelings change with our circumstances. We change our minds frequently. We have the propensity to rationalize and justify to the extent that the foundation is continually shifting, resulting in perceptions that do not correspond to reality. This is not a solid foundation upon which to determine our eternal destination.

#### SUBJECTIVE

Our feelings and thoughts emanate from ourselves. This is a personal evaluation which, as any honest person will admit, is not reliable. It is also an individual assessment, whereas the basis for determining right standing before God must be universal, that is, applicable to everyone alike (Gal. 3:28).

Nevertheless, some troubling questions must be addressed. How do you measure feelings? How do you know you have had the right feeling? How do you know your answer to these questions is correct? More than that, how do you know they are acceptable to God?

And that is the point! The determination here is in the mind of man and not the mind of God. It's all about what I think and how I feel.

## Birthday Wishes by Melva Derrickson Willard

About ten years ago I attended Founders Day Conference in Akron, OH in commemoration of the beginning of Alcoholics Anonymous in that city. I accompanied my husband of thirty-three years (now deceased), who also served this congregation as an Elder. AA changed Bob's life in a way that sheer willpower, in-patient treatment and even church involvement did not.

Started by Bill Wilson in 1935, Alcoholics Anonymous began as a clearly Christian organization. Through the years it has become less Christian and more nonspecific in its spirituality — perhaps a sign of the times. Still, there are few organizations that have had the impact of Alcoholics Anonymous.

AA does not advertise, own buildings or employ staff. It does not have to do those things. If it works, people will come.

Alcoholics are searching for love and spirituality. But they have just been looking in all the wrong places. Besides the obvious difference in defining God “as we understood Him,” there are other areas in which the church and AA behave differently. In some areas, AA may be the healthier of the two.

Alcoholics Anonymous treats addiction spiritually and as an illness. The church has historically treated addiction as moral failure, equating it to a lack of willpower. The success of AA in healing addicts and the relative failure of the church to do so would indicate

that AA's perspective might be more scriptural (i.e. “bearing one another's burdens” rather than the church's pointing to the sin of “drunkenness”).

I wonder how God feels about AA. The church has, at times, failed with addicts where Bill and his friends have succeeded. In fact, the success is so great that the church has copied it. The Christian program, *Celebrate Recovery*, is a program which differs from AA in that “A Higher Power” has a clear name. But the same Twelve Steps are utilized.

God has worked outside the church many times to bring about change. Perhaps God has used Alcoholics Anonymous and its sister organization, Al-Anon Family Group, as a way to awaken the church. We give so much attention to getting souls to Heaven that sometimes we forget the work we are called to do here on earth. AA calls it recovery. We call it discipleship. In any case, we need to be personally involved with the suffering alcoholics and with their suffering families in ways that are not the “norm” in church circles.

Bob read *The Big Book* that Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith completed in 1939. He was convinced that AA is losing its way with its lack of acknowledgement of its Christian roots. Still, he admitted that even in its current watered-down version, Alcoholics Anonymous saved his life. Being sober led him to Jesus, Who saved his soul for eternity. And for that, we are eternally grateful. 

Happy 77th Birthday



## AUGUST MEETINGS

- 1 Finance Ministry Team
- 5 Education Ministry Team
- 6 Willing Workers
- 7 Benevolence Ministry Team
- 12 Missions Ministry Team
- 16 Property Ministry Team
- 17 Outreach Ministry Team
- 20 Elders
- 21 Hilltoppers
- 26 Family Life Ministry Team

Summer



Musical Arts Camp  
Aug. 5-9



Travis Hurley will be our honored guest on Sunday, August 12. He will bring the Bible message and update us on our ministry through the Bible college in Joplin, MO.

The Missions Ministry Team will host a noon potluck luncheon, at which time more information may be related about the needs, challenges and blessings at OCC.

## Preacher's Pen continued

Salvation does not occur in the mind of man but in the mind of God. The one whose basis of confidence is his perception has effectively unseated God from the throne and usurped the role of judge. It doesn't matter what you think or how you feel. That only which matters is what God says!

## Promise BIBLICAL

The focus of this basis for confidence is not on doing or thinking and feeling, but upon accepting God's word. Salvation is a promised gift (Eph. 2:8). It is not proving worthiness to God on the basis of works but rather God approving me on the basis of faith. It is not based upon human rationale but upon God's faithfulness. God's word

and faithfulness is the only sure basis for confidence.

This is not salvation by works but by faith — an active response to a command or promise. God's commands usually have a corresponding promise, as is true relative to repentance and baptism. We obey His commands as expressions of faith in His faithfulness to keep His promises. We are, as the hymn says, simply trusting Him.

## TRUST

The emphasis is not upon man — his performance or perception — but upon God. We are merely accepting God's word or taking Him at His word. We rely on God to do what He promises. When we are baptized, for example, we are expressing



### Preacher's Pen continued

faith in God's promise to wash away all our sin, to make of us a new creature, to clothe us in His robe of righteousness, to give to us His Holy Spirit, etc. We trust Him to make us fit for heavenly dwelling by giving to us all His grace gifts.

We depend upon God, not self. We trust God by accepting His terms and responding to His instruction (Acts 2:41).

#### OBJECTIVE

The basis of our confidence must originate outside and apart from us. The promise of the God of Creation is the only solid foundation for our confidence.

God is the One Who promises. He is the One who has what we need. He has offered to give salvation to us. He is

the One Who alone has the authority and is in the position to set the terms. We are in the position only to accept what He offers upon the terms He establishes.

My confidence is not in anything I have done. My assurance is not based upon the fact that I was baptized or been faithful in attendance and stewardship. My confidence is not upon my fickle, fluctuating feelings or prideful perceptions. My confidence is based upon the promise of God, Who, on the occasion of my baptism, saved my soul (Col. 2:11; Titus 3:5). He is the Rock of my salvation, the Savior of my soul, the Founder and foundation of my hope.

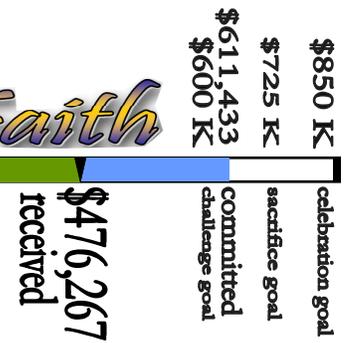
Read: Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 16:31; 1 Pet. 3:21 

**take note**  
  
 Music Choreography Bible teaching  
 August 5-10  
 Toddlers — grade 6

*Forward in Faith*

Contact Rick & Jan Schmeski if you want to participate in the joy of victory in this capital campaign.

*Not equal gifts but equal sacrifice*



The LORD'S COMMISSION is OUR MISSION  
Matthew 28:19-20

**Meeting Schedule**

Wednesday Evening  
 Sunday Morning  
 5:30 Supper  
 9:30 Worship  
 6:30 Bible Classes  
 11:00 Bible Classes

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