

Braman Foundation of Charities REVIVE MAGAZINE

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

January / February / March 2026

Refresh. Renew.
Happy New Year





TABLE OF CONTENTS

BFC Editorial	2
Asapalli	4
The God of Hope <i>Sermon by Richard W. Braman</i>	6
Mityana Community Pentecostal Ministries	9
Elderly Care Program	10
The New Calendar <i>Sermon by Richard W. Braman</i>	11
AB Simpson: A Daily Devotional	13
BFC Featured Corner	15
South Sudan	23
Jesus Christ Church and Ministries	24
The Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church of America	25
Christian & Missionary Alliance Church	26
Living Your Own Life <i>Sermon by Richard W. Braman</i>	27
Ministry Among the Lepers	31
St. George Foundation	32
Turning Point Ministry (Ethiopia)	34
Spurgeon's Corner	35
Community Meetings	36

BFC Editorial

Dear Friends!

Welcome to the new year 2026!

We are ever blessed to be able to read this, to walk, and to breathe God's Air.

This year's annual scripture is all about waiting on the Lord and allowing Him to be your strength:

Isaiah 40:31 "Yet those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint."

So often in our lives, we operate out of our own strength, we refuse to wait on the Lord, and what ensues is just not God's Best.

We may be very talented, and we think we are doing well. But it is not God's Best. So often we pursue a goal, a project, believing it is right, yet we have not spent time seeking the Lord's way. Not everything good is God's Best. Perhaps what you may think is good is just that God has a better plan.

So if you are tired, worn down, feeling blue, then maybe it's time to renew your strength, allow the Lord to take the reins and give you a fresh pair of "wings" in which to carry out His will, and not your own.

In this issue, we will continue to explore and read the RWB Sermons. Sandi is now working on #'s 310-320 as she approaches the completion of all 378.

We will continue to bring you scripture and commentary from the greats: Spurgeon, AB Simpson, and AW Tozer. This year, we will be adding Thomas A Kempis and St. John of the Cross.

We are updating ALL our mission partners as well as sharing news on the works of BFC concerning our local churches in the greater NYC area.

God bless you and thank you for all you do! May this year of 2026 be your best year ever, and may you come to grow in a more in the way with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Always in Divine Friendship
BFC

The 2026 Scripture:

“Yet those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.”

Isaiah 40:31

BFC Revive Magazine

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BFC, Inc.

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Asapalli

Missions: India

Good morning brother Asapalli mission is grateful for your support we have conducted the activities in the past and the future to come in faith by God blessings and His Grace we are moving step by step for his Glory for any contribution you wish to donate you may send it directly to Asapalli FCRA account Asapalli mission shall remain ever grateful for your support.

We are restricted from preaching and teaching directly the gospel in the midst of all the challenges we are continuing to work out for the sake of the Gospel.



WALK WITH CHRIST ACROSS NATIONS

DOES YOUR CHURCH OR ORGANIZATION WANT TO PLAN A MISSION TRIP?

The Braman Foundation of Charities invites your church to join us on a life-changing mission—one that reaches hearts across the world while deepening your walk with Christ. Together, we bring the love of Jesus to those in need through service, compassion, and cross-cultural fellowship.

On previous missions, our teams have shared the Gospel and also met physical needs—bringing along dentists and other professionals to care for communities that often go without. These journeys do more than help others—they transform those who go.



TAKE PART IN ANY OF OUR CURRENT MISSIONS

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Vacation Bible School
Christian & Missionary Alliance Church
Ministry Among The Lepers

PAKISTAN

Jesus Christ Church & Ministry
The Holy Orthodox Catholic & Apostolic
Church of America

AFRICA

Mityana Community Pentecostal Ministries
Elderly Care Program
South Sudan
St. George Foundation
Turning Point Ministry

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its Discipleship Programs, please contact
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The God of Hope

"We are saved by hope."

- Romans 8:24

The text is chosen from Romans 8:24; "We are saved by hope." These words are very characteristic of the great Apostle Paul. The hope that sustains him is based on God. It has little or nothing to do with temperament or environment. Nor is the hope of which Paul writes related to life's palpable and tangible securities.

Paul held to a maximum faith. That is he only sort of religious faith worth holding. His faith was based on the belief that the God and Father of Christ is omnipotent and that he is sovereign in his creation. For Paul this world is a sphere in which God's mighty purposes are being slowly but inevitably worked out. All of us have some part in the working of that cosmic purpose. Paul in our text represents the tread of the New Testament documents that ring with hope of which God is the source and inspiration. Central to its message are these words, "We are saved by hope."

Let us now turn to ourselves. These are days of fear, foreboding, and frustration. Circumstances and events tend to confound hope rather than to inspire it. All of this was familiar language to the great men and women of the Bible. The prophets arose to rebuke this very mood and to bid their hearers to have faith and hope in God. Jesus bade his disciples to live in hope of achieving even greater things than he had been able to accomplish. We, too, must live in that mood. We, too, must cultivate the thought that in an ever-expanding world, a world where the horizons of truth are forever being enlarged, where new discoveries seem but to be indications of still greater things to come, God's mighty creative activity does not diminish.

If we can read aright the signs of our times, if we can see even but a little way through the dust, if we can pierce the veil of events, we live in hope.

If we consider our life as a ship at sea, then hope is our anchor; if as a pilgrimage, then hope is like a star that never fails to guide us home; if as warfare, then hope is our helmet of salvation; if as temporal, then hope is one of the trinity of treasures that abide.

We do live in an expanding world and in that world God is unceasingly at work. Were Paul alive today, he would be keenly and sensitively aware of all the tears and tragedy of our times, but he would also see the spirit of Christ haunting our world. It may appear at times as if the world had forgotten Jesus, but Jesus is not forgotten because he is unforgettable. God is in our history, not just as a vogue life force but as a redeeming and life-giving power.

God is in our humanity, such as it is, in the person of his Son.

In Christ, God is in the world to stay. Only Jesus Christ can show us what we may become. II Corinthians 5:17 reads, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come."

Here is God's model man. All the processes of the universe tend toward the fulfillment of the eternal purpose to make Jesus Christ the first-born among many brethren. Here is our highest hope and our main aim; "to be conformed to the image of his Son." Only Jesus can and does bring God and man together. That man and God should be at one with each other is the secret of the answer to our problem.

A German soldier in World War II wrote this to his mother. "If you should hear that our cruiser has been sunk and that no one has been saved, do not weep. The area in which my body sinks is also the hollow of the hand of my Savior from which nothing can separate me."

Christian people are finding more and more opportunities for doing things together. God is undoubtedly at work in the world where the Gospel is making an ever-expanding impact upon more and more peoples the Church of his Son, universal and comprehensive moves on the unity. In its keeping is a gospel message that will save the world.

Romans 8:18 says, "the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us."

The Christian's hope, being fixed and eternal, should carry with a definite reaction in outlook, personality, and action. Unfortunately, this is often not the case. Like Peter, we look at the waves. Like Martha, we may be burdened with much serving, losing side of the Lord of glory when it is our privilege to serve. Like Thomas, we magnify doubts rather than exercise the faith which dissolves them into the assurance of things not seen.

The church is rediscovering her message and it's saving power. Small wonder that we are rediscovering the virtues of the word "salvation." Salvation is nowadays the preoccupation of all who have keenly pondered human nature, and also the nature of our world. The church is its custodian. Apart from it, the church

could not justify her existence. Christianity is more than good advice; it is good news; it is glad tidings of redemption. By the mighty power of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, men's love can be changed.

From our own experience, I know that men's lives are changed by God. Your life can be changed to if you will let Christ enter your heart and speak to you. If this wasn't possible, there would be no point to our Christianity; for only after men's lives are changed does our world become a better place in which to live. Indeed as Christians, this is our hope.

Have you ever known a person who was looking for a perfect church? Respond to the man who says, "Show me a perfect church, and I will join it" (1) Such a church would not admit any of us. (2) Such a church would be a tremendous embarrassment to us. (3) Such a church would cease at once to be perfect if we were admitted to join it. The church is the hope of the world, but even in the church tares grow among the wheat.

I've heard some people say they do not come to church because the people in it are a bunch of hypocrites. You know this very, very well to be true, but how can we make the church better by staying away? We cannot. If we think we are that good, we should be there to set an example for the others. Frankly, this statement is just another excuse people use for not having to get involved. If we cannot have hope through the church, there is no hope.

We are saved by hope, for God's great purpose is being worked out in our times. True, this is sometimes hard to discern. Many people find it difficult in the light of events to believe that God is love. "How can God be love?" they ask, "in the light of the cruelty of our times?" One feels the force of that question, yet the very state of the world is proof, if we regard it aright, that God is love. God's love is the ultimate reality with which we must all deal. Any offense of lovelessness is bound to bring suffering. In a world where our wills are free within wide limits to choose our own way, it is always a gain given possibility that by our folly and stupid pride, we should bring terrifying disaster upon ourselves in our fellow men. Yet God, in his love, persist in the pursuit of his purpose.

During the battle of Britain, someone said to man on the street in London, "things look pretty dark don't they?" The man replied, "but the King says there's hope, sir."

The rainbow shown a million years ago in the midst of Niagara as it shines today. It shines on the surface of every sun lit bubble. It shines in the dew and above all, in the happy thoughts of young people, and in the ambitions of earnest, men and women. Through centuries of struggle, human beings have studied and viewed the rainbow, wondering at it, rejoicing in it. The races of the world have given it different meanings, but always in the same way it has represented hope-the storm departed, the sun is shining again.

Yes, the purpose is being worked out by God. Paul, that cosmic-minded man, got a great glimpse of it when he wrote that the whole creation in travail, waiting for the

sons of God to be revealed. God is so great, so sure of himself, that he makes the very follies of mankind to serve him.

Out a tragedy great good has come. See what tribulations did for Jacob. See what the exile did for Israel. God knows how to turn, shame, and defeat, and frustration, and even tragedy, into victory. See what he did with the cross of Jesus Christ. There is the quintessence of tragedy, yet the cross, for long centuries now has been the symbol of radiant victorious faith. Consider how the blood of martyrs became the seeds of the church.

It Is written on a sundial on a pier at Brighton, England; "Tis always morning somewhere in the world": Someday it is going to be morning everywhere. The days of sin and pain cannot last always. Psalm 30:5 says, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

Paul wrote, "We are all saved by hope." Will you try it out? Will you put your hope in God? Do not give way to despair. You may have failed, but that is not the end. With God, failure is never at final. Do not imagine that it all depends on you. It does not. God counts, too. Prove this truth. Put your trust in God's power, and in his love. These truly are the basis of real hope.

Jesus Christ alone can show us God. We must know ourselves and see ourselves in a light which really reveals. Jesus only is that light. It is Jesus only, among all mankind's teachers, who unto each of us frankly exposes "the lower world within him, moods of tiger, and ape." None other than he who taught, "That which come out of the man, that defileth the man", is worthy to be trusted as the soul's Physician.

Jesus only can make bad people good, good people humble, and sweet, weak people strong, and strong people tender, because he alone, being just, is able to bear the sins of the unjust; and because, being the Lamb who was plain and is alive forevermore, he lives to make intercession for us and is able to make his abode within us.

Because what Jesus has to offer us reaches the very soul of our being and he alone can enter there-it is in Jesus only that we have the life more abundant. The more abundant life is a gift of Jesus only, because it is found in "righteousness and joy and peace," and they are the fruits of the spirit, even the indwelling Christ.

Jesus Christ only can make the future bright. He is the only hope for the world, for this life, for you and for me. The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord, but only when every knee shall bow before him. There is "sunrise tomorrow" with Jesus Christ. He only can make the ultimate future bright. One day we shall find earth fading and see nothing-save Jesus only.

Make sure that you do have hope. Accept Jesus Christ into your life now and know the hope that Truly is possible he alone can save this world of ours and us with it.

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"Yet those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint."

Isaiah 40:31

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BFC Thanksgiving Greetings

Thanksgiving
2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.

It is 2 Corinthians 8:9 where we think about what our definition of the word rich is. Surely our Lord did not not give His life so we might be rich in material blessings or even rich in safety or security. The Lord our God did not live a rich life of safety and security as He continuously placed himself in harms way to do the work of His heavenly Father. Jesus was thankful for the little, knowing that His true riches would be with His Father in heaven.

If you count your riches by who and how many love you it will still fall short of the riches from our heavenly Father. As Jesus traveled and spoke the word of Christ he was hated and feared.

Thankful to the Lord for His sacrifice



Thankful:
Thankful the Lord does not give us what we deserve! He does however give us everything we need. When we live in the knowledge of need we acknowledge all the Lord has given us and we are **Thankful**

Gratitude:
Gratitude is an act of faith - especially in the midst of life's challenges. Thank the Lord regardless of our circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18
God's love is there always, even when we cannot feel it and He promises never to leave us. As we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. **Matthew 6: 31-33.**

Thankfulness Leads to Witnessing
Psalm 9:1
I will give thanks to you Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. When you cultivate a spirit of thankfulness, it will spill over into your relationships. When others see you credit God for His love in difficult situations/circumstances, they will begin to wonder why?
You need not even speak the words of praise and thanksgiving - you need only to be an example of Christ at work in your life. To be a living example of kindness, love, and forgiveness as a Christ like life.

Philippians 4:6-7
Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving presents your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ.



An Inspirational Quotation
"And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him"
Colossians 3:17

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Mityana Community Pentecostal Ministries

Missions: Uganda

The orphans are receiving Christmas gifts. We have had a recent graduation. Please continue to pray for us. The Church has been in prayer. We have 30 children that are in need of prayer. Specifically pray for us to receive money to help our children. The ministry continues to grow here in Mityana. Please pray for us.



Elderly Care Program

Missions: Kenya

Jomo and his team come together so the Elders are able to celebrate New Years. We are very grateful for all the work they have done and are looking forward to expanding the program in 2026.



RWB Sermons

The New Calendar

"So teach us to number our days"

- Psalm 90:12

The calendar is one of God's splendid gifts to us what a blessing it is: it helps us in handling time.

It is our way of keeping up with the days, weeks, months, and years.

It makes possible a record of our activities.

It is a great aid to memory.

It enables us to make definite plans for the future and to meet our engagements.

First of all, the calendar is handed to you. You did nothing to get it. It was freely given.

The calendar symbolizes the year God has just allowed us all to enter. Sometimes we take our years for granted, but God gives them to us freely and by his mercy and grace, not by our merit.

God expects us to be grateful. He wants us to regard time as a sacred trust and to be good stewards of every day. Often, we waste our time with trivial things when we could be using our time to help God.

Secondly, the calendar is yours. It is personally, intimately your own. You can do anything you please with it. Significant experiences may attach themselves to the days and months. Your calendar will record your thinking, speaking, and acting. Be they good or bad, they will be your own.

Basically we can make of our lives exactly what we want to make. God has left the free choice to us. He is more than willing to meet us halfway and help us in all of life.

Thirdly, the calendar is brand new. We all like to get something brand new and we have this opportunity each year, in fact each moment of each day.

The calendar is not stained, blotted, blotched, marked up, ragged, and torn like the old 1969 calendar.

There is a human tendency to want to start things anew. The fundamental reason is that we are all imperfect. The essence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is

that God will allow us to wipe the slate clean and take a fresh start.

1969 has come and gone everything that happened, everything we did is behind us. 1970 is a new year and a time for profiting by our mistakes, a time to resolve to be better persons and to live better lives. We should start from this point, putting behind us the past and putting the future in front.

We can make a fresh start anytime a man anywhere determines that he is through with straining, ineffective, shotty, shameful living, and throws himself on the mercy of God. What a wonderful gift we have from God, the gift of forgiveness. It is strictly up to us individually what kind of lives we want to live. God will forgive us and help us to live the right kind of lives, if we really want to.

Fourth, the calendar is just for 1970.

It does not have attached to it old, blotted sheets from 1969. It does not contain pages from future years.

The fact that God is giving us a calendar just for 1970 certainly means this: he wants us to live to the fullest in 1970, he does not want us to try to live 1969 all over with its mistakes, failures, and grudges. He does not want us to pull into 1970 possible future worries, strains, and sorrows of 1971, 1972 or 1973. God wants us to say, "forgetting the things that are behind in 1969, and ignoring the possible troubles in 1971, I shall live faithfully in 1970.

1970 is the year we should be concerned about now. First things come first. The past is gone. Let us live the present.

Fifth, the calendar and the year it represents are going to be used by you. You cannot escape doing something. The daily experiences will make or break you. Here is, for instance, February 10. Will that be a day when you will be unkind, lazy or do a shameful thing? Here are 52 Sundays. Will you on these days ignore the church, God, and the welfare of your souls? Here is March 5. Will you on that day try to drive a sharp bargain or attempt to hurt someone? 1970 has 365 days, how

many days will you live without talking with God?

The Daily experiences may bring you opportunities to serve, to make right your relationship with your fellow man and God, and to live abundantly and gloriously.

How can you live rightly in the new year?

The primary requirement is your determination to live at your best.

It is important to take stock of yourself. In the light of Christ examine your heart.

Repent of the wrongs you have done.

Give yourself to prayer, Bible study, public worship, and service. I am not saying you have to spend your entire life and study for we all know this is impossible. I know once you become interested you will want to spend many free moments in it.

Dwell daily in the presence of Jesus Christ and ask him to be the companion on your way. There is no better way to start each day than in prayer to God. The whole day is brighter, things work out better, your attitude is different, and God will give you guidance for that day. Start each day in the presence of him who has given you each glorious day.

I cannot think of a better way to start the year than in Holy Communion with our Lord.

John 15:5 says, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same brenth forth much fruit; for without me, you can do nothing."

Branch and vine are living things, and the branch depends upon the vine for life. Jesus was not talking about vineyards, but about people in relation to him and each other. He is the vine, the source of life, strength, and productivity.

John 15:5 says something of the organized church today and of the parish, the basic unit of church life. As Jesus is the true vine, source of life we are granted by baptism, and we are expected to do two things: to grow and to produce. The extent of our growth and the productivity is measured by our actions.

Every now and then some unthinking church man asks, "What has the church done for me?" Can you imagine a branch, had it the human capacity of self-awareness, asking, "What has the vine done for me?" Jesus reminds his hearers that every branch which does not bear fruit is pruned out and burned, that the vine may become stronger and that the other branches may be more productive. Could not this be a judgment upon indifferent, unproductive Christians today?

Ask yourself what you have done for the church lately. Ask yourself not what the vine can do for the branches but ask rather more, what the branches can do for the vine and what you and I can do to glorify our God.

As we partake in our Lord's Supper this day, let us put away our faults, our sins, our mistakes. Let us take on a new life with Jesus Christ at the center. Let us come prepared to meet our Lord at his table this day. Let us start 1970 off right in the sight of God.

Braman Foundation of Charities Books Now Available

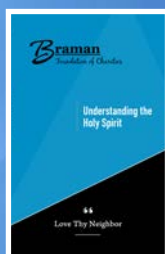
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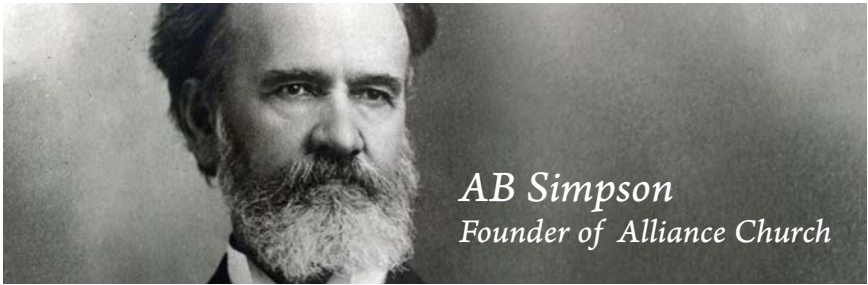
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A Daily Devotional



AB Simpson
Founder of Alliance Church

“Redeeming the time” (Eph. v.16).

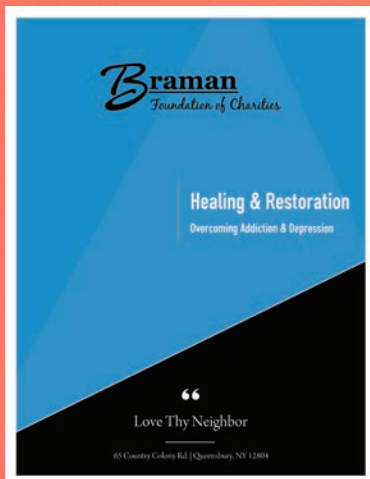
Two little words are found in the Greek version here. They are translated “ton kairon” in the revised version, “Buying up for yourselves the opportunity.” The two words ton kairon mean, literally, the opportunity.

They do not refer to time in general, but to a special point of time, a juncture, a crisis, a moment full of possibilities and quickly passing by, which we must seize and make the best of before it has passed away.

It is intimated that there are not many such moments of opportunity, because the days are evil; like a barren desert, in which, here and there, you find a flower, pluck it while you can; like a business opportunity which comes a few times in a life-time; buy it up while you have the chance. Be spiritually alert; be not unwise, but understanding what the will of God is. “Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, buying up for yourselves the opportunity.”

Sometimes it is a moment of time to be saved; sometimes a soul to be led to Christ; sometimes it is an occasion for love; sometimes for patience: sometimes for victory over temptation and sin. Let us redeem it.

If your church or organization is interested in offering a program to overcome addiction, please contact the Braman Foundation.



Healing & Restoration

Millions of us suffer needlessly from addiction and depression. The reasons for this are many. In this program we emphasize the 12 Step Method of Recovery, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Meditation techniques to overcome difficulties. We also rely on God's grace to help you be lifted from your dilemma. If you or a friend or loved one suffers from difficulties surrounding addiction or depression please contact us for our free booklet.

In addition we are available to schedule a convenient time when we can present a workshop for your organization to study these principles. All of the principles really are not new, but when presented together in one workbook and when applied in one's life, miracles can occur. Be sure to call, email, write, or fax us. May you be blessed as you seek greater joy and a truly happy life.

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BFC *Featured Corner*

Aiden Wilson Tozer

(April 21, 1897 – May 12, 1963)

American Christian Pastor, Author, Magazine Editor, and Spiritual Mentor

Early life

Tozer hailed from the tiny farming community of La Jose in Western Pennsylvania. He was converted to Christianity as a teenager in Akron, Ohio: While on his way home from work at a tire company, he overheard a street preacher say, “If you don’t know how to be saved ... just call on God, saying, ‘Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.’” Upon returning home, he climbed into the attic and heeded the preacher’s advice.

Pastorate

In 1919, five years after his conversion and without formal education in Christian theology, Tozer accepted an offer to serve as pastor of his first church. That began 44 years of ministry associated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA), an Evangelical Protestant denomination, 33 of those years serving as a pastor in several different congregations. His first congregation was a small storefront church in Nutter Fort, West Virginia. Later, he served thirty years (1928 to 1959) as the pastor of Southside Alliance Church in Chicago; the final years of his life he spent as pastor of Avenue Road Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Observing contemporary Christian living, Tozer felt that the church was on a dangerous course toward compromising with “worldly” concerns.

Born into poverty, Tozer was self-educated and taught himself what he missed in high school and university.

Authorship

Tozer began writing in 1931 for the denominational magazine of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Alliance Weekly (now Alliance Life), which became the platform from which his writing career emerged. He later wrote the monthly column “There’s Truth in It” (1936–37) and “A Word in Season” (1944–46). In May 1950, he became the editor of the Alliance Weekly, a position he filled until his death in 1963.

At the urging of David W. Fant, publications secretary of the C&MA, Tozer wrote biographies of A. B. Simpson (1943) and Robert A. Jaffray (1947). It was the publication of Tozer’s third book, *The Pursuit of God* (1948), that made him a household name among evangelicals. In addition to the 12 books he published in his lifetime, more than 40 other books have been compiled from his magazine features, editorials, and transcribed sermons.

During his lifetime, Tozer’s works were published by Christian Publications, Inc., the denominational press operated by the C&MA. The publishing house declared bankruptcy in 2006 and was purchased by WingSpread Publishers of Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. In November 2013, Moody Publishers acquired Wingspread from parent company Zur Ltd., a transaction that included more than 60 Tozer books and pamphlets. Some of Tozer’s works are now in the public domain and have been issued by multiple publishers.

“Looking Forward in Christ”

Pastor & Author A.W. Tozer

December 28, 1958

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the watercourses. One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord and surname himself by the name of Israel. Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts. I am the first, I am the last, and beside me there is no God.

Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him. And I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut. And I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight, and I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut and sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places. Thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name.

I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. There is no God beside Me. I girded thee, though thou hast not known me, that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things. Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together. I, the Lord, have created it. Part of Isaiah 44 and 45. Let us pray.

Our Father, we thank Thee by the wonder of the Spirit in working. Thou dost take these words drawn from an old, old book, written to a people that we are separated from by origin and by every human thing. And yet by Thy Spirit they are applied to us as though they were written for us and sent down just this morning.

We bless thee for these encouraging, hope-filled words. We thank Thee not only that Thou hast made them applicable to Israel and fulfilled them in Israel and will yet fulfill them, but we thank Thee for the

thousands and multiplied thousands who have slept off, resting their heads upon such comforting words, who have gone into battle, who have gone to far parts of the earth, who have faced impossible situations trusting in these words. And Thou dost never, never let them down, but Thou dost bless them and keep them.

O Father, we pray Thee, Jesus Christ our Lord, that Thou wilt help us now, since our fathers trusted Thee and were not forsaken. Grant that we may trust Thee, and we know we shall not be forsaken either.

And we pray Thee, O God, Thou wilt be with our people scattered round over the earth, be with the nations which we are apart, down on our human side as our President, and we pray Thee for the Congress soon to convene again.

We pray thee, O Lord God, for those who labor in these high places, simply men, poor men, men with breath in their nostrils, and, O we ask Thee, Father, thou wilt make them able for their jobs. And we pray Thee for Thy work round the world in the cause of missions, wherever there are men and women preaching the gospel.

We pray Thou wilt bless every radio program, Thou wilt bless every effort of men and women to get a language, to learn it, to preach in it, and to win people and teach them and instruct them in the way they should go and baptize them and make them into little groups that form churches.

Help Thou, we pray Thee, our God, this day. Give us a cheerful outlook on life, and let us expect that we shall see a performance of all things promised us. Bless the sick and the bereaved and the troubled and the distressed. We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.

In the book of Hebrews, the twelfth chapter, beginning with verse 22, But ye are come unto Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

And then a passage in Acts 14, verses 21 and 22. And

when they had preached the gospel to that city, that is, Derbe, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.

Now, this being the last Sunday of a very eventful year, and being a kind of springboard over into a new year that will, for our church, be a momentous year, and for the whole world, I want to summarize, and sort of add up, some of the things that I find in the Book, and tell you what it's all about, and why we've got to go on.

In the book of Hebrews, I read to you that we are come unto. And the real work of any minister of the gospel is to present Christ in such a way that people gather unto Him. He says that wherever there are those gathered unto Him, in His name there am I in the midst of them.

Now, when we meet His conditions, and they're not hard, really, they're not hard. When we meet His conditions, we are a church. I wish that I had, in the very earliest time of my Christian life, been taught of the wonder of the Church. I had to learn it by myself. Not even in the Christian and Missionary Alliance is the emphasis placed, where it belongs, on the assembly of the saints, the gathering of the people unto Christ. We believe it, of course, everywhere, but the emphasis doesn't fall there as much as I feel that it should. But when we meet His conditions, we have His unseen presence.

Now, this I want to say again, this is a summary, and I'll probably say many things I've said before, but I want to repeat that we gather unto Him, and when we gather unto Him, we have that unseen Presence. Now, this to me is more important than anything that possibly could be offered to me, that we are met where Jesus sheds the oil of gladness on our heads.

And the conditions are unto me, not unto a favorite preacher. It is too bad that churches follow preachers. This I say is too bad, but it's true in a measure, I suppose everywhere. But we do not please our Lord when we gather to a man, no matter how good a man he may be. We do not please our Lord when we gather unto a name, no matter how great the name may be, except it be that Name which is above every name. And He says that we are to gather in My name, and that means not in the name of any denomination.

We are met here this morning not in the name of a denomination. Or if any have come in the name of a denomination, then I would kindly ask you to rethink this and see whether you are serving God rightly. For we are not met in the name of a denomination, neither are we met in the name of a cause.

That is why I sometimes look rather with a dull interest upon those gatherings, those bristling, scintillating gatherings that are met unto a cause, met to promote a cause. No, an assembly of Christians never meets to a cause. They meet in the name of a Person, and they gather in Christ's name, not in the name of a cause.

Now, there are many causes, many excellent causes, the cause of foreign missions, the cause of world evangelism, the cause of jail work, or many, many, many causes that are being promoted by the people of God, and properly so. But if we meet in the name of our cause, it won't be very long until the cause becomes the center of attraction and Christ fades into the background. And that is always bad. Christ must be first and let him tell us about the cause.

We are met to worship. We are met to worship, to worship the Triune God. And then as we worship the Triune God, He'll whisper the cause to us. He'll whisper to us what He wants us to do.

And then we're not met in the name of any peculiar doctrine. We are Protestants, of course, and we stand for all the truth, the doctrines of the truth, but we're not met in the name of a doctrine. We are gathered unto Him today. And we are gathered sort of as the lame were gathered there at the troubled pool in the fifth chapter of John. You remember why they came there to that pool? Because an angel went down once a year and troubled the waters, and whoever was in first, he got healed, according to the story we have here.

And, oh, I suppose that maybe there were times during the year when there weren't so many there. But when it came around about the time of the troubling of the waters, or when they hoped the waters would be troubled, then they gathered and lined up as they do in front of a ballpark or somewhere else, and waited long in turn. And Jesus Christ, our Lord, came, and he became to them the Healing Pool. He has been to many thousands the Healing Pool. Do you know, my friends, that if your heart is all right, you can stand almost anywhere else.

If your heart is all right and you're restful inside and you're relaxed inside your spirit, in your heart, and everything is all right between you and God, you can stand just about anything. There's almost nothing that will get you down if you're restful inside your spirit, if your heart is warm.

Any of you who may be having troubles of any sort, financial troubles or home troubles or any kind of troubles, I recommend that you take a few hours off. You can do it. You say, but I haven't the time. Certainly, you have the time. You could fall down and

break a hip, and then you'd have time. Take days, weeks off. You could get hit with a car and you'd have time. You could have a heart attack, and you'd take time. You can have time, all right. Take some time off and go before God and do this.

I recommend you do this. Do it before the new year comes in. I recommend that you go and write down your faults and flaws and sins on a piece of paper and lay them before the Lord. And then turn to the Scriptures that tell you that if you confess your sin, you'll be forgiven, and God will cleanse from all unrighteousness. And get your soul shriven. Get it bathed completely. Get it washed. Get it forgiven. Get it so that you're not troubled.

If your conscience isn't bothering you, but God seems close and everything's all right, it'll be a healing pool to you, my friend. And even if you are troubled about the matter of physical healing and you do have difficulties, physical difficulties, you'll find you can bear up under a physical difficulty with great equanimity if you have a restful heart. But the troubled heart, who can bear?

And then we're gathered today unto Jesus Christ as the Jews gathered to Joseph. You'll remember when Joseph went down into Egypt that he was the sort of the key to the whole thing. And when he went down there, things started going bad for the folks back home. Then came troubles and then the hour when there was a famine in the land and they went down to Egypt and there they found Joseph and they had to keep going back to Joseph. And finally, they went back and gathered around him and he stood for them before the great land of Egypt and before Pharaoh and he got them a place and got them established and got public favor on them. It was either Joseph or starvation.

So, we gather to Jesus Christ. Not one of two possibilities, nor one of three possibilities, or one of ten, but one of one. It is either Jesus Christ or starvation. And so we gather today to Jesus. And I wish we could keep that in mind. And I wish that sense would suddenly come over us that we are gathered unto him, unto Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, unto the innumerable company. Not we are going to be gathered, but we are gathered unto, it says. In the present tense, we are now gathered unto. We're gathered unto that which, though invisible, is completely real and trustworthy.

And then we're gathered unto Jesus as disciples gathered to a school, as students to a college. We're learners from Jesus. I often think of that famous saying of the great educator Mark Hopkins. They said, if you put a boy on one end of a log and Mark Hopkins on another, you had a college. Just let Mark Hopkins sit there and talk to a boy on a log and you

had a college. And so we learn about the things we are to be taught by our Lord.

Well, Jesus Christ, of course, is the whole faculty. He's the whole teaching staff. By the Holy Ghost he reveals truth to us. And we're thus disciples gathered unto Jesus, nobody knowing it all and nobody being the final word.

Occasionally somebody will write me. I have a letter now that I have to answer, saying, I'd like to know about thus and thus. Whatever you say, we'll accept. Whatever you say, we'll believe. Now I don't want any reputation like that. I don't think it's very widespread, but a few people foolishly believe that if I say it, that's it. I don't like that at all, because I could be wrong.

I remember once hearing Dr. L. H. Zimmer, that great German preacher who established that great church that's still going on, the largest church in the Alliance with a missionary offering of nearly \$100,000 a year. Why, I heard him stand up in the New York board meeting with President Schuman there and the vice president, I think I was vice president at the time, and the others gathered around there, the leaders in the Alliance, and some question came up, and they said, well, Dr. Simpson believed this way, and somebody read a passage from Dr. Simpson, and that great preacher got up, put his hands on the table in front of him and said, brethren, Dr. Simpson could be wrong.

And I've enjoyed that. I've enjoyed remembering it, that here was a man, though a loyal to his society and a loyal to his fellowship, yet he was not going to take the word of a man. Any word I give you might easily be temperament.

My opinions could rise out of temperament, out of a background you know nothing about, out of just sheer ignorance.

I remember when Dr. Samuel Johnson, the great lexicographer, made the first English dictionary. He defined the word hock, and he said the horse's elbow. And gathering afterward, a literary gathering, some woman who wasn't too delicate said to him, Dr. Johnson, why did you define hock as a horse's elbow? And she expected, of course, a very learned defense of his position. He stopped eating long enough to look her full in the face and said, ignorance, madam, sheer ignorance, and went on eating. Even though he was perhaps the most learned man in England, or one of the most learned men that England ever knew, he still was willing to admit, I did that because I was just plain ignorant. And it's entirely possible for a man with all the best intentions in the world to say things that are not so.

But Jesus Christ is the teacher, and we come unto Him and the anointing which you receive of Him abided in you, and you need not depend upon your teacher altogether. You can use him, and he'll help you, but don't lean on him. For that same Anointing teaches you all things, says John.

So, we gather unto Jesus because we're so tragically ignorant and so filled with truth that isn't the truth at all, but something else that we need to get rid of.

And then we're a spirit-drawn company also. You know, I was meditating over this and thinking of what draws people.

I have a friend, I don't know why I could call him a friend, he's a very jolly fellow and very friendly to me and to Mr. McAfee when we go down for tickets. He is always friendly, and he's a barn dance fan. And he's a nice, kind, middle-aged man, but he just loves barn dances, square dances, and that's all he wants to talk about. And sometimes I tease him a little and say, how are you coming? Oh, wonderful, wonderful. He even invited me to join, but I don't think I want to at my age. But when they gather together, they gather unto barn dancing.

I suppose it's harmless enough, I don't know. I never did and don't intend to start it. I don't recommend it. But they gather for that. Others gather for literary reasons. Some gather to hear concerts, and that's a legitimate thing. Some gather to hear political speeches, that's a legitimate thing. Some gather to hear scientific papers read, and that's a legitimate thing.

Well, there are many reasons why people gather together, but a church gathers for only one reason. They are a Spirit-drawn company gathered unto Jesus Christ the Lord. They're gathered to Him, and that's their reason for gathering. And there isn't any other reason, or if there are other reasons, there are secondary and tertiary and on down the line. They are not primary. Spirit draws us together, and we are gathered as a delegation. We are gathered as a delegation unto that, making up that company.

I don't know whether I overdo this or not, but I think that this is one of the most delightful passages in the entire Scripture. We are come, we are come unto Mount Zion, of course that's a spiritual Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels.

God, why can't I see the angels? Why are we so blind? Why are we so given up to mechanical things and material things? Why do we see walls and chairs and seats and pulpits and pianos? Why don't we know that we are gathered unto an innumerable company of angels and to the General Assembly

and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel. And there we are gathered unto all these, these are thy riches, O Israel, and these make you rich, and you need very little else.

Well, you know when Moses blew the trumpet, all Israel gathered together, whatever they were doing, women busy in their tents with their housework, taking care of the baby, and men busy doing whatever the men were doing, and the children busy playing.

But when the high note of the silver trumpet sounded, all Israel gathered unto Moses. And then the trumpet sounded again, and the clouds started, and away they went through the wilderness on their way to the promised land. Then they were on the way, and that comes to my second text, where they met these men of God, and they exhorted and confirmed the souls of the disciples, and exhorted them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation come into the kingdom of God.

Now we are coming up to the end of the year, and some of us have lost loved ones from our home this year. Some of us have had loved ones leave and go to far parts of the world, and we have all lost good Christian friends who have moved away to many parts of this country and have gone from us. There have been distress and trouble, and many of us have suffered physically this year.

There have been a lot of troubles, but I want to exhort you to go on this morning. I want to exhort you. I don't want to teach the Bible to you because you know your Bible, but I want to base my exhortation upon what you already know about the Bible and teach you that you ought to go on.

Why? Why? If I had to answer the devil, I wouldn't honor him by talking to him. I wouldn't. If he were to come, I wouldn't answer him. I would not reply. But if I had to answer him or had to answer anybody, let's settle for communists. Let's say that some communist would come to me and say, now you are entering into a new year. You've been a Christian during 1958, and you've had a lot of troubles and all the rest. What's the idea of your going on?

You know what I could say to that man? I could say to him, oh, my brother, I'm a weak man and I may backslide before Groundhog's Day and have to be prayed back again, I don't know, because let him that standeth take heed lest he fall, and I don't know, I'm not boasting. Peter boasted and then he denied

his Lord before nine o'clock the next morning. So, I'm not boasting and saying what I'm going to do, but I'm going to give him reasons for hoping that I'll be doing, what I think I'll be doing, and that is following on in the way.

Well, Earth's greatest figure leads on out of there. Never forget that my friend. We have great figures, great men, you know, and they come up and go down and come up and go down, but He came up and never went down and never went into eclipse. He's the star that never sets and never has and never will, and He's the bright morning star and He shines out there and He leads on.

Some will be following Bob Kennedy this year or next and some will be following Paul Douglas and some will be following somebody else. And those men, I suppose, mean well and are as good as the average rank and file of men. I'm not speaking against them at all. I only say that I'm not following any man. I've not picked any man I want to follow.

I thank God for Wesley, I thank God for Henry Suso and John Tauler and Augustine, and I thank God for the great hymn writers and the good men who have written good helpful books. Of course, I'm grateful for all of them, but I'm not following any of them, because the world's greatest Figure stands there supreme above them all, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

They've had Him in a manger over the last few days, the last ten days. He's been shrunk back to a babe again and they've been carrying Him around in plastic, and He's been a babe in the manger. No, no, that babe hasn't been in that manger for nearly two thousand years, my friends. And though we celebrate the birthday, what we think is the birthday, though nobody knows, remember that that Babe hasn't been in that manger for two thousand years.

Jesus Christ, our Lord, is not a babe anymore. He is the man Christ Jesus, having gone through death and risen and now living at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. He certainly is the Shining Star. He's the greatest of all Adam's sons, because He's also the Son of God.

So, I couldn't follow anybody else. I don't know anybody else who could I follow. Could I follow Socrates. Socrates is dead and he never rose from the dead. Should I follow Joseph Smith? Joseph Smith is dead too. Could I follow Mary Baker Eddy? She died. They expected her to rise, but she disappointed them. She's still dead, and the way things are, I don't ever want to see her or have her get up.

But Jesus Christ rose and lives, and He has the appeal and the magnetic attraction that no other one

does in all the wide world. So, I could reply, well, I'm going to follow anybody, right or wrong, I'm going to pick the greatest of them all, whose name is Jesus. So, the best I know, I'm going to be a follower of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Now, I'll tell you another thing. Have you ever stopped to think about it? You Christians have invested an awful lot now. You've invested so much now. Think of you older Christians, what you've invested. Think of what some of you could have had if you hadn't invested so much in the kingdom of God. Think about it now, some of you.

Look back over your lives and think how much you've given to the Lord's work. Think of the tens of thousands of dollars and running into the perhaps hundreds that some of you have given to the work of the Lord. Think if you had that now, what a split-level home you could have with a picture window, and what all you could have, and how you could go to Bermuda. And up into Canada when it gets hot.

But you invested, you invested in this Kingdom. You know, there's such a thing as putting so much in that you'd be a double-barreled fool if you gave the whole thing up. You've just invested so much you can't afford to go back. You can't afford to say, well, I'm not going to work so hard at the things of God this year because I just feel that I deserve a little vacation from it all. No, no, no.

You don't deserve any vacation because you've laid up your riches in heaven, and there they lie, and there they are, and they're there for you. And so therefore let no man take thy crown, and let no man take away thy riches. I've put so much in and have so much there that there's no place else to go.

Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go? Can you think of anybody? Can you think of anybody? I can't think of anybody that I'd want to follow because I've put so much in the following of Christ that my riches all lie there anyway. Would you want to follow the latest scientific venture? I just learned a horrible thing this week, this last week, a horrible thing. I think it's one of the most awful things.

I said last week that if anybody went to the moon that I didn't want to go. But I don't know, but I may change my mind about that now. Because you know what I have learned this last week? I have learned that the Ford Motor Company and the Coca-Cola Company have for the last couple of years foreseen the talking satellite, foreseen it.

Only a few days ago President Eisenhower was saying peace on earth, goodwill to men from a hunk of metal flying around up in the air, that satellite. But you know that those two companies, the advertising

departments of those companies had foreseen this two years ago and have been quietly working to put their advertising in a satellite and send it around the world, changing the language with the longitude or wherever it is. If it's going over Holland it'll be saying drink Coca-Cola in Dutch and when it gets down to France it'll be saying drink Coca-Cola in French and when it gets into Africa it'll be saying drink Coca, I don't know, I think the moon might be a place of refuge, a place to hide in an hour like this.

How much longer is God Almighty going to let the peddlers take over His world? God made a garden eastward in Eden and he put flowers and trees and beauty there and put men there to relax and rest under the shady bowers.

But we've gone mad in our selling. And over the radio this last week when you'd be listening to a beautiful Christmas carol, the next would be, and so the thus and thus beer company sends you their finest holiday greetings. And then they would break into an anthem telling about Burpo Beer, the finest beer on the market. I wonder how much longer God Almighty is going to allow this thing to go on. I don't know, brother, I don't know.

But I do know this, that you and I are going to see some tribulations ahead, we're going to see some hard times. We've spent a lot of time, some of us have, we've had so much money and so many fine things and so many gadgets and we've pushed so many plastic buttons and had so many little machines hum into our workforce. We haven't known in this country what it is to endure anything.

And when we got so we had a few people out of work, we sighed a sigh like the Israelites in bondage and called it a recession. And yet everybody had everything. Brethren, we've got some troubles out there ahead and how are you going to go into them? You've got to go into them one way or another.

And I recommend you go into them following the Lamb, whithersoever He goeth, because you can't even think of anything else now, it's too late. You've been a Christian so long, some of you, that even if you've only been a Christian twenty minutes, you're a child of God and your name's written in the Lamb's Book of Life and God holds you in His hand and no man can pluck you out of His hand.

Well, another thing, some have loved faces looking down. I'm a very cautious man and I speak on these tender things only very rarely. Some have faces looking down and they expect you, you're discouraged and want to quit and say, ah, I'm giving the whole business up.

I tell you that there are faces looking down, they say

that it used to be among the sheep, an old shepherd when he wanted to get his flock across a river, he'd carry the lambs over and then the old sheep would swim. They'd swim across because the lambs were already over there.

A lot of people, any of you that have been a long time around our church ever sat down and counted up how many have gone from us these last times? Most recent one was Helen Asplund. They've gone, they've gone, they're not going down the valley one by one with their faces toward the setting of the sun. Whoever wrote that ought to have his liver looked into because he was sick. We're not going down the valley one by one, we're going up the mountain toward the sunrise, one after the other.

Am I going to live long enough to bury a whole generation? I've almost done it, a whole generation of God's dear Saints, and I've laid them away all around this whole area. I've planted seeds in the ground by the grace of God and sent earth to earth over I don't know how many scores. Their prayers aren't dead. He catches all our prayers in his bottle and all our tears, and their prayers haven't become ineffective because they're gone. They're still effective, yonder, and I know they're praying for me.

Godliness pays big dividends, my friends, and no matter what the future may hold, what it may be there next year, godliness pays big dividends. It's always right to be right, and it's always best to be on God's side and to take God's side and to live right.

Some of you could live a smoother, easier life if you weren't so faithful, I'll tell you that. The devil's told you that, so it's nothing new to you. You could get along a lot easier if you didn't give so generously and get up and go to church when you felt like sleeping.

You didn't get out and do God's service when you feel like sitting in front of the TV. You could get along a lot easier, put on a little more weight, feel a little more comfortable or uncomfortable. But I'll tell you, godliness still pays, brothers and sisters, it still pays to follow God. It still pays to be on the good side.

I've had funerals of people that I knew hadn't been very big successes. That is, you know, there hadn't been great successes as the world or even as the church counts success. But as I thought over their lives, I remembered one thing. If they knew what was right, you could be sure they were always over on that side. God takes that into account. A man knows what's right, and he's always over on that side; he's found over there, and it pays, pays.

Well, another thing is, the best company on earth is in the church, and I'm going to stick to it myself.

I'll have to be chased out of the church, or out of the church, blacklisted and forbidden to enter any Christian assembly, otherwise, you're going to find me in the house of God on the Lord's Day, and sometimes in between. Because everything else being said, the best company in the world is the company that meets unto Jesus.

You say, but I happen to know there are some hypocrites there. Yes, so do I, so do I. So did Jesus. One of you shall betray me, said Jesus. And each one said, is it I, is it I, is it I? Even Judas said, is it I? Sure, Jesus had His hypocrites. The first church had their Ananias and Sapphira.

Paul had his Demas, the young man that he leaned on. Here was this old balding apostle, wearing himself to a shred, traveling around up all hours of the night, out in deep, driven out of cities, chased and whipped and beaten and thrown into jail. And he got a hold of a young fellow named Demas. And Demas was all full of fire, and Paul said to God, O God, maybe, this is my boy. And so, he leaned on Demas. And just when Paul got in a tight place, Demas remembered the old crowd and went back. Paul said, Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world. I know that there's a Demas, he'll be around, I know it.

I get literature, I could show it to you now, if the janitor hasn't carried it out and burnt it. I can show you literature that comes, Christian literature that comes from Communism. Christian Communism, Communist Christianity, if there's such an unholy thing, praising the freedom they have in Czechoslovakia or Russia or someplace else, praising the Communists for their religious freedom. I know that, and I know that there's a lot wrong with the Church.

But brother, give me five hundred people who regularly gather unto Jesus, and then show me five hundred that don't, and put them side by side and take your choice. I know that side I'll be on, if God will bless me and help me, and the people put up with me. I know whose side I'll be on this year. I say, a man is weak and it's easy to fall, not fall from grace, but fall in grace. God will keep you.

I'm talking about this miserable business of getting cold or lukewarm. They'll put up with me, the best company in the world, not this church necessarily, but the church, God's children, wherever they're from.

Go into any town, any town, get up in an airplane, say to the pilot, what's that town down there? And he says, that's Pittsburgh, all right, land. He lands. Go and hunt the best people, where'll you go, nightclubs? No, where'll you go, bowling alleys,

pool rooms, saloons? No. If you're looking for the best people, hunt up a gospel church. They may be a little narrow-minded, may be a little narrow-minded, I don't say they weren't narrow-minded Christians, but I do say, nevertheless, they're the best in the city. And if they'll put up with me, I want to put up with them.

Well, time is going to be short anyhow. It doesn't seem very long since we ushered in 1958, now 1958's a tattered relic, very little left, just a shred or two, then it's gone, then we enter 1959. I don't know how many of these years we're going to have yet, before our Savior comes.

Time is short at any rate, Christ will return, or death will come, but in patience possess ye your souls, for there is a crown at the end of the way. Take heed that no man follows, no man takes thy crown but follow the Lord and trust Him and put your hand in His and He'll lead you through.

The Son of God goes forth to war, the kingly crown to gain, his blood-red banner streams afar, who follows in his train. Who best can bear his cup of grief, triumphant over pain, God remembers the rest of it, who patient bears his cross, he follows in his train.

So, let's follow in the train of the Savior this year, let's expect trouble, let's expect trouble. Don't be like the newly commissioned second lieutenant that was thrown suddenly up to the battlefield. He let out a yell and started to run and said, they're shooting at me. The tough old sergeant said, well, what are you up there for?

So, I say to you, they'll be shooting at you this year, but what are you up there for anyhow? Of course we'll be shot at. Some of us will have bullet holes in our ears. Before the year is over, if the Lord lays a hand on us and heals us, if we keep our hearts right and keep right inside, we can endure an awful lot of pressure from the outside. When you're not right on the inside, you'll collapse. When you're right inside, no pressure can collapse you, but when you're not right inside, you collapse like an eggshell.

So keep right inside, walk with God, make the Book, make the Book, I've decided that by the grace of God, I'm going to read the Book more and other things less. Study the Book, learn it, memorize passages. I'm memorizing the Book of Revelation, part of it at any rate. Let's memorize, let's study, let's live by it and above all things, let's obey and be prayerful, and God will lead us through. He will make the darkness light before us. He will make the crooked straight before us, and all our battles He will fight before us, and the high place He'll bring down. Amen.

South Sudan

Missions: Africa

Words From Rev. Yagub Akoch

Greetings!

We wish you a blessed new year filled with the fulfillment of all the organization's aspirations and goals.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our esteemed brother, Peter Braman, for his support last year. This support was crucial to our ministry's achievements, especially in the children's program, specifically the evangelism and discipleship project.

We are now partnering with Samaritan's Purse to distribute gifts to children. Our church in Juba, specifically in Lologo 2, is part of their plan. Samaritan's Purse supports children throughout South Sudan with Christmas gifts in the form of small boxes containing supplies, toys, and evangelism and discipleship storybooks. They do not provide cash gifts.

Our goal in this partnership is to reach more children with the message of Jesus Christ and support their spiritual growth. Our church in South Sudan has a limited plan to reach 200 children in a single event. Our goal is for 100 children to believe in Jesus Christ, join our church, and become active members.

Therefore, we need funds to hold annual events to achieve these goals. We need money because we will be conducting a two-week training program for the children, where they will memorize selected Bible stories. This program includes twelve stories and twelve lessons, along with memorizing selected verses. Afterward, we will have a large day to distribute gifts and certificates to the children who have completed the program. We need \$1000 in support for this event annually.

We also have a plan for an early childhood education project, which we have shared with you. Additionally, we have elderly people and widowed mothers. The church is located in Lologo 3, near the Freedom Bridge. As you know, we have maintenance needs, but we have completed significant repairs to the building. We need \$600 to finish the remaining work.

Please don't forget my own needs; In a very big shame because I am not able to help my parents, and as you know from the first commandment in Christian teaching, "Honor your father and mother."

Thank you for your consideration and support.



Jesus Christ Church & Ministries

Missions: Pakistan

We shared a Christmas meal together with the elderly, distributed cash gifts among them, and all of us joined in thanksgiving that the Lord Jesus Christ is our savior.

On Christmas day the children presented a Christian table and we distributed gifts to the children as a way of giving.



The Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church of America

Missions: Pakistan

Words from Mission Director Pakistan, Servant of God Nadeem Samuel

Christmas Celebrations

This year's Christmas at St. Nicolas of Myra was marked by reverent liturgies and joyful carols in Urdu and English. The faithful gathered for Midnight Mass, where the Nativity Gospel was proclaimed and the congregation joined in hymns celebrating the birth of Christ. Children presented a short nativity tableau, and the parish shared festive meals together, strengthening bonds of faith and community.

New Year's Eve

On New Year's Eve, the parish gathered for a solemn thanksgiving service, offering prayers for peace and blessings in the coming year. The liturgy included special intercessions for the local community and for the Orthodox faithful worldwide. The evening concluded with candlelight prayers, symbolizing Christ as the Light guiding us into 2026.

Epiphany & Blessing of Homes

The Feast of Epiphany was celebrated with the blessing of water and the traditional house blessings. Parishioners received the Epiphany blessing in their homes, where chalk inscriptions of the Magi's initials (C + M + B) were written on doors, invoking Christ's blessing upon each household. The faithful rejoiced in the manifestation of Christ to the nations, renewing their commitment to live as witnesses of His light.

Summary: The ministry continues to grow in faith and fellowship, with Christmas, New Year, and Epiphany celebrated in dignity and joy. The parish remains a beacon of Orthodox worship in Sargodha, nurturing the faithful through liturgy, teaching, and pastoral care.

Yours in Christ,
Servant of God Nadeem Samuel



C&MA

Missions: India

The christian and missionary alliance of India's all churches are doing great ministry among different parts of the city. We have organized youth camp, Woman's conferences. Sunday school seminar and pastors conference in each year's.

Keep praying for unity and peace among the churches.

Keep praying for Tribal and mission's field.



Living Your Own Life

“Jesus looked at him and said, so you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas (which means rock).”

- John 1:42

It is said that there once lay in a shop in Rome a mineral specimen labeled “Rock-Crystal, price one franc”. One day an expert in precious stones came along and brought it at the dealer’s price. It is one of the most magnificent diamonds in the world – a jewel which is now the most flashing gem in a Monarch’s crown.

On a certain location Jesus faced a fisherman named Simon. With his keen perception of people, he knew at once that he had made a discovery. He began immediately to release greatness in the men. He gave him another name. He called him “Rock” – “Peter”. He put the man under the power of expectation. Peter could sense if he was to be something more than he appeared to be.

It was Jesus’s way of dealing with men. He has been called “the discover of individuals.” That Jesus was the discover of individuals is fully illustrated in John’s Gospel. Chapter by chapter the various persons appear. First chapter, Andrew, Simon Peter, Nathaniel; third chapter, Nicodemus; fourth chapter, the woman of Sychar; 5th, the lame man at the pool; 9th, the man born blind; 10th, the sheep that are known by name, 11th, Mary, Martha, Lazarus; 12th, a few Greeks; 13th and following chapters, the disciples including Judas and Peter and Thomas, a few women, his mother, Mary Magdalene. The book closest with Jesus in conversation with Peter; John is nearby. Truly Jesus was the “discoverer of individuals.”

It is now somewhat out of the stream of modern thought to speak of individuals. Too often today the individual is pushed around by the crowd, submerged, lost. He experiences terrific social pressure. Many times, we feel we have to conform to what others are doing even though we know

it is wrong. Truly we cannot blame society for our individual weaknesses. We should not be willing to confuse popularity for our ideals and principles. We need to stand on our own two feet. We certainly cannot expect others to do our talking for us or to make sure we have the things we think we should have. Perhaps we are too dependent on others’ influences.

The Gospel teaches us that a man is to be himself. In spite of the society pressures on each of us, and the tendency of the many of us to overwhelm anyone of us, we are individuals.

How conspicuously absent are such words as humanity, society, civilization, and social order from the pages of the Gospels. Jesus never got lost in abstractions. To stress the community and neglect the individual is putting the cart before the horse. After all, regardless of how large a nation, or state, or county, or community, or any organization is, it is still made up of individuals and what each individual does and how he lives his lives has a great deal to do with how the nation, community or organization turns out.

I’ll tell you something else, we will never be saved collectively. Jesus Christ comes to each individual as an individual. Each of us has to experience the presence of God in our lives individually.

First of all, a man should find himself. He ought to discover his own significance, meaning, value and destiny.

We ought to be particular. The old meaning of the word “particular” was “possession” semi: it comes from the Latin root meaning “private property.” A man should possess himself.

Noah in the play "Green Pastures", using modern Negro dialect, says, "I am not very much, but I's all I got."

The call of Christ is for a man to find himself. Christ call to each man is the same as his call to Peter: "You are; you shall be."

The human self is not a gift, it is an achievement. It is not a static reality, sprung full – blown from the head of God. Rather it is painfully earned progress past lions in the way – a triumph over ogres real and imaginary. The attainment of a self is a running battle, a continuing process, and a victory that is never fully consummated until the chambers of our hearts flutter and feel for the last time.

The insight of Jesus in his parable of "The Prodigal Son", is true to the facts – the remaking of that young man's life began when he came to himself! By the same sign our common human tragedy is correctly represented in a recent cartoon. If physician faces his patient with anxious sublimity saying, "This is a very serious case; I am afraid you are allergic to yourself."

Truly, many times we are our own worst enemy. We really haven't found ourselves. Christ does not call us to find ourselves, to know what we are, what we want, where we intend to go in life and what we intend to do.

Secondly, a man should accept himself. In John's Gospel, chapter 21, there is a scene by the Sea of Galilee in which Jesus is still trying to apply discipline to Peter. They have been talking together about Peter's relationship to the Master, when Peter turns the conversation aside by saying, "Lord, what about this man?" Pointing to John, there is a slight reprimand in Jesus's reply. "If it is my will that he remains until I come, what is that to you?" Live your own life, Peter. Let John live his. You're Peter, not John. You have found yourself. Don't compare yourself with anybody else. Don't weaken your own life with any "if" or "ands" or "buts." There is a time to accept yourself.

One man says, "I am a failure." Accept the fact that you have made some failures; but you are not a failure. You are in the process of becoming. You need not accept yourself as a failure – you become a failure only when you do not use your

failures as stepping stones to success.

Frankly, if we do not have any failures in life, if we do not make mistakes, I doubt very much if we are making much progress. Certainly, if we do not do anything and try new things we will not have failures. You have to be doing something in order to fail at it. However, we need to profit by our own mistakes and failures and we cannot go right on making the same failures otherwise I'm afraid we would then be a failure. I think probably the hardest thing for any human being is to admit he has failed at some thing or that he has made a mistake. Many of us try to be perfect and everything we do and this becomes frustrating and practically impossible and certainly impossible to live with this kind of attitude and outlook on life.

Except the fact also that you are a sinner. Then only will you cry out to God, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Only in the acceptance of the fact does the change come, and life become sweet and clean and pure. Only in that acceptance is there that higher individualization that comes in the divine forgiveness.

When we truly accept the fact that we are sinners, then we are well on the road to becoming a reborn Christian. We should never forget that Christ died for the forgiveness of our sins. We are now able to have this forgiveness just for the asking. So let us accept ourselves as we really are and not as we think we are.

Thirdly, a man should expend himself. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick in his book, "On Becoming A Real Person", has a chapter on "getting oneself off one's hands." If one doesn't do this the person doesn't grow up. Simon remains Simon; he does not become Peter, the Rock.

By the outgo of self, one is delivered from egocentricity, self-centeredness, which makes for a frustrated and unhappy life. But, writes Dr. Fosdick, "A real person, maturely developed, is not egocentric. He has objective interest; he cares for other people for their sake's; he discovers causes and values for which he lives and may even die; he habitually forgets himself in creative work; the richest values of his life lie not so much in satisfactions as are found in letting himself go for aims outside himself and as Jesus said, "he finds life by losing it."

Some people show an interest in other persons for what they think or what they can get out of it. They do everything hoping for something in return. When we really start caring for persons because they are persons because within us we want to help one someone else, then we are on the right road. Again, I believe it's placing the value on things in life that are really important and not be concerned for ourselves. Truly, we will find life when we lose it for Christ's sake.

I heard something the other day which I think it's worth passing on to you. A young man said, "I want to live a moral life in a moral world." I wonder how many young people feel like that. Many I believe, and hope do.

Let us change the remark little. "I want to live a good life in a good world." Let's look at the remark for a moment.

"I want to live" – this is a sentence just packed full of mystery. We are always asking the question, who am I? What is it "to live?" Why do I want life? Here I am and life is living and I truly want to live. Every cell in my body, every instinct of my soul, wants

"I want to live a good life." Where is the boy or a girl who would say, "I want to live a bad life?"

A man who was a lifer, in prison, who might be judged as one who was committed to evil, asked for the warden of the prison to come to his cell. When the warden came to the prisoner he said, "Warden, I've always wanted to do some good in the world. I wonder whether my eyes could be transplanted in some blind person to give him vision." What if somehow that deep drive to do good had been touched in the man's life before he committed crime? "I want to live a good life" – that's deep down in you and me, isn't it?

"I want to live a good life in a good world." Well, there is a lot of good in the world, if we will open our eyes to see it. It is good to see the beautiful in the world; it is good to see men and women doing noble acts; it is good to read great thoughts and hear music that thrills our souls. It is good to feel that Jesus Christ is in the world.

But then we are compelled to say there is much evil in the world. It is hard to resist the temptation to be a part of evil. We want to live a good life in a

good world. What can we do?

We can hold fast to our vision of what a good world would look like. The Bible says the young people shall see visions. We must hold fast, in spite of everything, to the vision of the good world in which we want to have a good life. That good world must be made and it is up to us to make it.

Then we must hold fast to our desire. "I want" – who do you want? I want a good world in which to live. Jesus said that is the first thing to want. I think that is what he meant when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

Then we must hold fast to ourselves. I am I. I have only one life to live. I must live the good life. I must live in a good world. I must make the good world in which I want to live.

If you want to live a good life in a good world, the great God is on your side. He will help you do it.

We can help also to make this world better by thinking about and helping others instead of always thinking and being concerned about ourselves first.

Dr. Fosdick also said this; "Personal life is essentially dynamic and ceaselessly in motion. The common phrase, "building a personality" is a misnomer. Personality is not so much like a structure as like a river – it continuously flows into be a person is to be engaged in a perpetual process of becoming.

Fourthly, I mentioned achieve himself. In other words, he should find himself again. Once Simon answered to the name Simon: later he answers to the name Peter. There are great gaps between what we are and what we shall become, or what we hope to become. These bring tensions in life; these tensions may be a means of growth

Jesus's words to Simon as he walked by the sea of Galilee were, "follow me". His words to Simon Peter on another morning by the same sea were, "Follow me." I man must find himself, except himself, extend himself, achieve himself. Follow the Christ. Is this the key to living life at its best? I believe it is. The Bible tells us it is. Try it for yourself and find out first hand.

The Sermons of Richard W. Braman

NOW FEATURING VOL. 15

Through the ongoing efforts of Sandra Torrant, BFC Board member and advisor, Sandra tirelessly labors on digitizing the RWB Sermons.

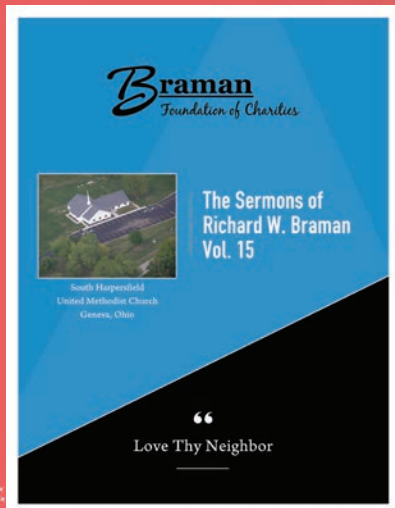
As you may recall Richard Braman, our founder, has written 378 Sermons as well as additional writings on Marriage and Baptism.

The Braman Foundation felt called to publish these sermons in Volumes of 20 sermons per volume. For our five years Sandra has been working on this project.

Today we are pleased to announce Volume 14 w/ Sermons 261-280. Additionally we have been publishing these sermons in the BFC Revive Magazine.

Many compliment BFC through messaging on these inspirational sermons. So with that in mind we can send you any volume you wish with your love offering.

Visit www.bramanfoundation.org. Thank You Sandra! Ask and you will receive!



Volumes 1-15 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 Among The Lepers

Missions: India

Words From Umakanta Guru

Respected Brother,

Greetings to you and also wishing all a blessed and prosperous Happy New Year 2026 on behalf of our family and all the believers here.

In present times, India has been witnessing a dangerous shift where religious minorities, particularly Christians, are increasingly subjected to targeted violence. What once were isolated incidents have now become systematic assaults driven by far-right Hindu groups such as the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal. These groups accuse Christians of converting Hindus under coercion or deceit, a claim which has little to no basis but is often used to justify violent attacks. The hostility against the Christian community is further exacerbated by the complicity of the state machinery, where the police, instead of protecting the vulnerable, are either passive spectators or active participants in these acts of persecution.

Please pray for the protection of His people in India and also pray for the ministry we are involved and reaching people with the gospel. We are remembering you also and the ministry the Lord has given you in various countries. We need your prayer and encouragement in the ministry.

With regards

Yours Sincerely in Christ

Umakanta Guru
Odisha State, India



St. George Foundation

Missions: Sierra Leone

To all those that have supported us through the Braman Foundation:

Happy Christmas from everyone at St. George Foundation Sierra Leone. Wishing you and the entire organization a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Thank you for all the support as we pray God continues to bless you. Amen



ST GEORGE FOUNDATION (SGF) REPORT FOR ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2025.

Games Competition

During this report period, SGF staff organized games for children in the neighborhood around Grafton and children at the ICC, had a football match together with caregivers, creating that kind of friendship interaction within the community school and the community. The games brought lots of fun and comic relief Games competition bringing children together to as a family with their peers. All the children participated in the event with smiles on their faces while they enjoy themselves.

Family Tracing and Reunification

Family tracing and Reunification is one of St George Foundation key activities for street and street connected children. During this reporting period SGF field staff reunified 5 (4 female and 1 male) children successfully reunited with their parents and caregivers, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Family Support Unit. The reunification was done in the Western Area Rural District and in the provincial areas. The reunification went well as parents / caregivers were pleased to received their children with smiling faces.

Christmas Party Celebration

Christmas is a major Christian holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, marked by tradition like gift-giving, decorating trees, feasting and family gathering. During the Christmas celebration SGF management organized Christmas party for ICC children and other beneficiaries that have passed through the organization, as a get-together, this Christmas party celebration is organized every year for the children that stays in the center and other beneficiaries that comes for holidays at the center. This year we celebrate our Christmas at the beach and SS Camp playing ground, different games are organized during the celebration, food and drinks are served to the children and caregivers.

Medical Report

In this reporting period, seven (7) children (4 females and 3 males) and three (3) staff got sick and

they were all taken to the hospital for treatment. The seven children were treated for malaria, typhoid, and cold. The three staff were treated for typhoid, malaria and cold. All seven of the children are doing well for now as they continue to take their treatment and the three staff are also on medication. Caregivers are still monitoring the health situation of children as the children continue to take their medicines.

A present number of children at the ICC.

As of present, SGF ICC is presently housing forty-five (45) children (Boys 20 /Girls 25)

Lesson Learnt / Challenges

- Playing ground equipment is a challenge, most of the equipment was damaged by the children.
- Electricity is a challenge our solar inverter has burnt and the EDSA light is one day in and day out.
- Children did not give correct information about their location, which delay the process, because some of them don't want to go back to their caregivers, aunts, and uncles.
- Most of the children are on the street due to street trading and lack of caring, maltreatment and physical abuse from their caregivers.



Turning Point Ministry

Missions: Africa (Ethiopia)

Words From Missionary Francis Losuswi

Brother Braman, please request your friends to support the construction of some churches, among the four churches, that I have under the trees and cheds. One church can cost only \$10,000. I also have needy children coming back to report to the school. Try your best to get people who are willing to support through your ministry/organization of charities. I will be happy. Pray for me. I have a meeting in Ethiopia border on March. I don't any fair or transport but I trust God for intervention. God bless you and your family.



SPURGEON'S CORNER

"We will be glad and rejoice in thee."

— Song of Songs 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.

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Community Meetings

Locally in Poughkeepsie, NY



BFC continues to work with local churches with its Community Programs. Over 400 churches have received mailings as BFC begins this project.

The BFC Community Programs help those believers grow in Discipleship and their personal relationship with the Lord.

Also BFC Community programs help through its Recovery Program. Its fifth program gives an understanding of modern materialism and its dire effects on one's spiritual walk with the Lord. Pray as BFC continues this work.

Food Pantry

Every Saturday, 10am-12pm



Prayer & Meditation

Every Sunday, 7pm



Bible Study

Every Thursday, 7pm



Locally here in Poughkeepsie, NY BFC will begin a Bible Study rooted in Orthodoxy.

This study begins Thursday the 19th at 7 PM at the Holy Comforter Rectory located at 18 Davies Place.


This will be a continuing study every Thursday night. All are welcome.

EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES


visit bramanfoundation.org to see our updated look

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"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

We believe only in truly helping our fellow man. As Christ stated in Matthew 22:39.

Community Programs


Braman Foundation of Churches



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Missions & Projects


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Corrections Program

Braman Foundation of Churches



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Meetings & Events

Calendar

Join us in various community meetings and events happening each week. The Braman Foundation of Churches offers Bible Study sessions, Prayer Services, Discipleship Meetings, and more.


Donate Today

The Braman Foundation of Churches helps children through missions while growing and strengthening our relationship with Christ. Thank you for your generosity and continued support.

[MAKE A DONATION](#)

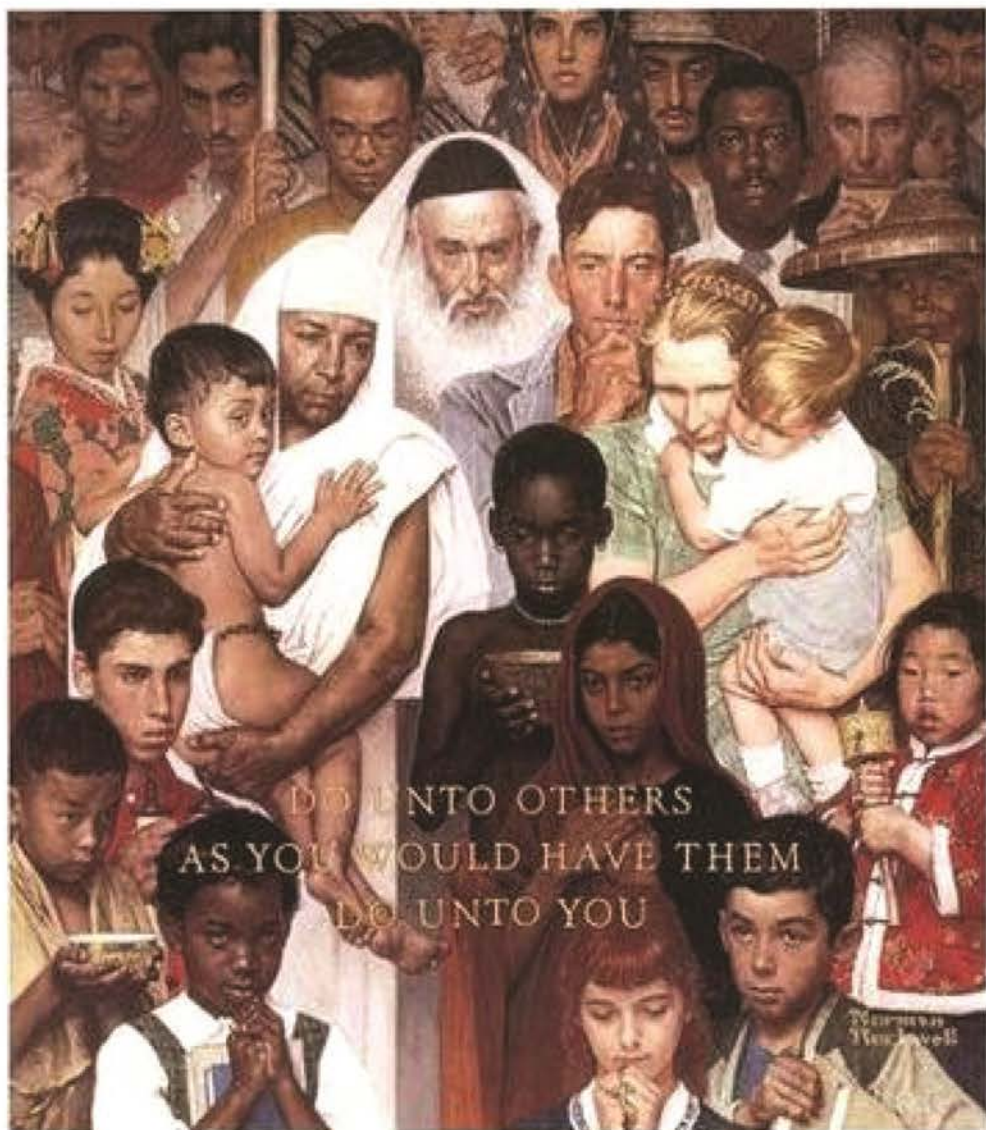
[<](#) [Today](#) [February 2025](#) [Month](#) [Week](#) [Day](#)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30	1



Presentations

We are available anytime to come into your church or organization to present the Braman Foundation. We are able to schedule in time and place that is convenient for you and your organization. It is very important that you are able to be presented with the full structure of the Braman Foundation. Then you will be able to make



NORMAN ROCKWELL **"DO UNTO OTHERS"**

Braman
Foundation of Charities

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