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## The Battle for the Bible and Its Implications for Today

**I perceived how that it was impossible to establish the lay people in any truth except the Scripture were plainly laid before their eyes in their mother tongue. (William Tyndale)**

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# The Battle for the Bible and Its Implications for Today



By Richard McDaniel

*The earliest challenge of Satan was: “Yea, hath God said...?” This direct challenge to the authority of the Word of God has continued to be a part of the adversary’s tactics throughout all ages. In this article, Richard McDaniel gives an overview of the issues governing Bible translation and the accuracy of the same.*

## Autographs

The New Testament was written originally in Greek and completed sometime between AD 75 and 100. The original texts (such as the Gospel of John, Epistle to the Ephesians, etc.) are known as the “autographs.” These original writings are no longer in existence. They were probably worn out by AD 200, if not before.

The Old Testament was written in Aramaic and Hebrew. The Hebrew version most commonly known by the church is the Masoretic Text. An early Greek translation of the Hebrew is called the Greek Septuagint. In some Bibles of today, such as the Authorized Version (KJV), the Masoretic text was used in translating the Old Testament. Many other versions use the Septuagint. This summary will focus primarily on the New Testament.

There are approximately 5,400 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. They range in size from a fragment with parts of a few verses to the complete New Testament. They range in date from the second century to the sixteenth century. They contain many thousands of variant readings. The vast majority of these are misspellings or other obvious errors due to carelessness on the part of the copyists. There are, however, thousands of variants that need to be evaluated when reconstructing the original text.

## Classifications

These manuscripts are classified under one of four textual types. First is the **Byzantine Text**. The name is derived from the Byzantine Empire, which refers to the Greek-speaking Roman Empire from its rise in 27 BC. This is the region from which the New Testament was written, with up to 24 of the 27 NT books written from Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome. The other three may have come from Palestine. (None were written from Alexandria.)

Antioch was within the Byzantine boundaries. It was here that the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians. The Byzantine Text is the type of text

copied by Byzantine monks. There are more manuscripts of this text type than of the other three combined. This line of manuscripts (also known as the **Traditional Text** or the Syrian Text) is reflected in the Greek Textus Receptus that was used to produce the King James Version of the Bible. The manuscripts in this text type are in essential agreement (of up to 90 percent) with each other. They date, in large part, from the fifth century on.

**The Alexandrian Text**—The name refers to Alexandria, Egypt, where scribes prepared most of these texts. Most contemporary versions of the Bible are derived from this textual line. These manuscripts total less than 100 and differ significantly throughout from the Byzantine text types. They also differ from one another. They are the oldest known manuscripts. Modern-day scholarship vastly favors this textual line.

**The Western Text**—This line has several sub-groups of manuscripts or families within it. The text is longer than the Alexandrian, is sometimes given to paraphrases, and is closer to the Byzantine Text.

**The Caesarean Text**—This text type seems to be a mixture of Western and Alexandrian line of manuscripts.

## Today’s Greek Texts

Today there are three basic Greek texts of the New Testament in circulation: the Critical Text, the Majority Text, and the Textus Receptus. The **Critical Text** is the basis for the majority of modern Bible translations today. It is reflected in the Greek NT of the United Bible Society, fourth edition (UBS-4), and the Nestle, Aland, 27th edition (NA-27). These two texts are identical in regard to their Greek text but differ in their footnotes, which discuss the different textual variants. The Critical Text reflects the aforementioned Alexandrian textual line.

The **Majority Text** catalogs the majority of the existing Greek manuscripts and reflects a consensus of these manuscripts. It doesn’t use all of the existing manuscripts but uses only a portion of them, reflecting what is considered the majority.

The **Textus Receptus** was the standard Greek text for centuries. It was used by translators during the Reformation and is responsible for the Authorized Version (KJV) and its English forerunners. The Majority Text and the Textus Receptus are very similar because both reflect the majority of

existing Greek manuscripts.

In comparing the Greek Textus Receptus with the Greek Critical Text there are almost 6,000 differences. These differences are significant in that many verses or parts of verses that are in the Textus Receptus are not in the Critical Text. That is why the modern versions of English Bibles have substantially fewer words than the Authorized Version. In addition there are many places where words have been changed; and, in doing so, the meaning is altered.

### Family Trees

If we go back now in history and follow these two textual lines as if looking at family trees, what would they look like? The lines are drawn quite clearly. On the one side, representing the Byzantine Text in English, is the Authorized Version (KJV). On the other side, representing the Alexandrian Text are the ERV (or the RV), the RSV, the ASV, the NASV, the TEV, the NIV, the New World Translation, and many others.

### Byzantine Line

Let's begin with the Authorized Version. Fifty-four scholars were appointed to this work, which was completed in 1611. The method of translation used was "formal" or "verbal equivalence," which is a word-for-word rendering from Greek to English. There have been four major revisions, the last one in 1769. Primarily, what was revised was spelling and printer's errors. The text remains consistent. The translation committee members of the 1611 edition, in addition to scholastic ability, were known to be of godly character. Their translation was based primarily on the 1589 and 1598 editions of the Greek New Testament by Theodore Beza. The Greek New Testament of Robert Stephanus (1550) was also used. Both these men relied heavily upon the Greek text compiled by Desiderius Erasmus in 1516, which was based on manuscripts following the Byzantine textual line (or the Traditional Text). Martin Luther used Erasmus's Greek Text in producing his German Bible. It was used also in the translations of the Swiss, French, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, Spanish, Czech, and Italian Bibles of the 1500s. These were the Bibles used almost exclusively by Christians for 400 years.

There were other English Bibles that preceded the King James Version but that follow the same Byzantine Text. They are the Bishops Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Great Bible, Matthew's Bible, the Coverdale Bible, the Tyndale New Testament. Wycliffe's translation was notable in that it put the Bible into English; however, it did not strictly follow the Byzantine Text but was a translation from the Latin Vulgate.

The trail continues through the centuries. Groups of Christians known as the Paulicians, the Bogomiles, the Anabaptists, the Waldenses, and the Albigenses are all found to have used translations that reflect the Byzantine Text. These groups were operative from about the eleventh century onwards. Going back in history to the third century, there were three men known as the Cappadocian Fathers. They are Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa. Quotations from their writings reflect the Byzantine Text.

Chrysostom is another man dating back to this period. He was a great preacher and expositor of the Scriptures living in Antioch and later Constantinople. His writings and quotations of Scripture again reflect the Byzantine Text.

Before this, we have the testimony of Polycarp,

**If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy who drives the plough to know more of the scriptures than you do. (William Tyndale)**

who is said to have been a bishop of the church at Smyrna. He wrote a letter entitled, "Polycarp to the Philippians." In his letter there are about sixty New Testament citations. His citations are consistent with the Byzantine Text. He is

thought to have been a disciple of the apostle John. In AD 155 he was martyred for his faith in Jesus Christ. Contemporary with Polycarp was Ignatius, a bishop in the church at Antioch, where he was arrested and sent to Rome to be martyred. En route to his martyrdom, he wrote letters to six different churches, as well as one letter to Polycarp. In his letters, his citations of Scripture, though not word for word, support the Byzantine Text.

In addition to the majority of Greek texts, the accounting of church history, and the testimony of the church fathers, there is the testimony of ancient versions. There are several old Latin versions (differing from Jerome's Latin Vulgate, which was compromised): the Ethiopic Version, Armenian, Georgian, Slavonic, Gothic—all of which date within the realm of the fourth century. Finally, there is the Peshitta, which is considered the oldest of the Syrian versions, dating to the second century or perhaps before. All of these are considered to follow in the Byzantine textual stream.

### Alexandrian Line

Now let's look at the other stream of manuscripts—the Alexandrian textual line. As you may know, there have been false teachers and prophets from before the Scriptures were even completed. One predominant line of heresies comes under the heading of Gnosticism. This is a broad category, which is multi-faceted. One of its fundamental teachings was that Jesus Christ was an *aeon*, a created god who in turn created the world. To them Christ was a begotten god from the "Unbegotten Father." The Gnostics offered their own writings

as inspired Scripture (such as the Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Peter, and many others). They are also known to have corrupted many readings found in the New Testament, and this accounts for some of the variants in the Greek manuscripts. Here is an example of such a variant that reflects Gnostic thinking. John 1:18 in the KJV refers to Christ as “the only begotten Son.” Some of the Alexandrian Greek texts read, “the only begotten God.” This reading appears in the NASV and other modern versions. Another example of a variant can be found in I John 1:7, which reads, “the blood of Jesus Christ...” in the Textus Receptus, while some of the Alexandrian texts read “the blood of Jesus...,” omitting the word “Christ.” This seemingly minor change is significant in that it now makes the verse compatible with Gnostic teaching. Gnostics believe that the power of Jesus, which is called “the Christ,” left Him while He was on the Cross, and that Jesus shed His blood and died when “the Christ” left him. This reading appears in the NIV, NASV, and other modern versions.

In the first and second century, Gnosticism and other heresies had a major influence upon the religious and philosophical leaders of the day. Taitan, a disciple of Justin Martyr, was influenced by Gnostic doctrine as seen by his writings. He formed a collection of the Gospels which he titled “Diatessaron.” He ventured to paraphrase certain words of the apostles in order to improve their style. There is no hard evidence, but is it not possible that this collection and others like it may have tainted the transmission of Scripture within the first hundred years of the completion of the New Testament?

Alexandria, Egypt, became a center of higher

learning, and in AD 190 the Catechetical School of Alexandria was founded by Pantaneus. He was succeeded by Clement in AD 200. There are approximately 2,400 NT quotations by Clement in his writings, many of which favor the Alexandrian Text. Clement was succeeded by Origen who was clearly a heretic. He rejected the literal interpretation of Scripture, was skeptical about the fall of man, depicted some of God’s attributes as merely symbolic, could not determine if the Holy Ghost was born or innate, and believed that Christ was unable to see the Father, just to give you a sampling of his belief system. He was a textual scholar of his day. Could not a man like this have the potential to taint the Scriptures in his revisions? His writings also favor the Alexandrian Text.

In the late second century and early third century, Eusebius came into prominence as a textual critic. Under Emperor Constantine, he was ordered to produce 50 copies of the Bible. It was suggested by Constantin von Tischendorf, as well as Fenton Hort and Alexander Souter, that two of these 50 copies were the manuscripts Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. These are the two manuscripts that provide, more than any others, the basis for many of the variants reflected in today’s modern versions. They date from AD 325 to 350 and are considered two of the best examples of the Alexandrian textual line. These manuscripts were discovered by C. Tischendorf, a textual scholar in the 1800s and promoted by him as he believed the Alexandrian textual line reflected the better readings. It was these two manuscripts that formed the basis for the Greek text

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## Meet the Board:

### *What Was I to Do? The Testimony of Larry Montgomery*

Being raised in a non-Christian home, I had no church or Bible background. In my early teens, a friend invited me to attend Sunday school with him. I did for a few weeks and received a Bible. When my

father frowned on this, I discontinued going. I was ungodly in all my behavior, and this mindset affected every area of my life. Living in Los Angeles and attending high schools where there was a lot of gang activity produced fear, and school was not a desirable place to be. This may have contributed to my lack of interest in study. When I was 17, I had a confrontation with a teacher and was expelled. My parents granted permission, and I joined the U.S. Navy in 1955.

The Navy was the beginning of a whole new way of life. Being off the streets and in an atmosphere

where I had to grow up was tremendous for me. At the same time, without any parental restraint, I was exposed to unchecked opportunities for my flesh, which led to serious sinful habits. At the age of 19, I was pretty much burned out with my lifestyle and began to think about needing some religion. *What was I to do?*

It was at this precise time, toward the end of my tour of duty in Japan, that I met a young man who had recently become a Christian. He was immature, but he proceeded to try and witness to me. I was fed up with my lifestyle but couldn’t seem to break the sinful practices my flesh enjoyed. While on watch together one night, he gave me a booklet to read, titled “Beginning with Christ.” It was not a gospel presentation but written for young Christians, citing promises in four areas of assurance from God’s Word. Being unsaved, I didn’t understand much of what was

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# The Root of All Evil

By Jim Lucas

This sounds very dangerous and mysterious. What could be the root of all evil? In order to understand the root of all evil, we must consider what actually happened when sin came into the world.

God said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26).

The image of God is manifested only by the Spirit of God and is seen in the fruit of the Spirit.

When God created Adam, He gave him a physical body, a soul, and a spirit. Adam knew God in the Spirit. He walked with God and was content. God had given Adam something that He, himself didn't have, and that is a physical body. (The Bible says that God is a Spirit and we must worship Him in Spirit and truth - John 4:24). The body has needs, and God was very gracious and supplied all the needs for Adam's body.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat" (Genesis 1:27-29).

Adam and Eve lacked nothing. God had supplied all their needs. The time came, however, that they would be tested to see if they trusted in their Creator. For this purpose, God had placed in the midst of the garden one tree from which they were forbidden to eat the fruit. This tree was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and they were told not to eat from it or they would surely die. (See Genesis 2:17).

Not only did God put this tree there, but He also allowed Satan to come into the garden to tempt man. Satan knew that this tree had been forbidden by God, and this enemy of God thought he would bring destruction on the man who was made in God's image. God loved Adam more than Adam could understand himself, therefore, He allowed this testing of Adam's faith, knowing all along that Adam would fail. Then God would reveal His great love for mankind. Satan had a two-fold plan: first, he would cause Eve to question God's integrity toward them.

He knew their weakest side was their flesh, because the flesh is very weak and needy. He would cause Eve to see that the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was to be desired and would provide all that she could ever need. Then she could be independent from God and could rule her own life. Satan started his temptation with a question: "Hath God said?" He knew full well what God had said. He is a deceiver and attacks the Word of God to destroy God's integrity.

Then he told a bold lie: "Ye shall not surely die." He began to cause Eve to become self-conscious (instead of God conscious) and to see that the forbidden tree would make her wise, like God (independent from Him, of course). Then when Eve saw (a new satanic revelation) that the tree was good for food and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat" (see Genesis 3:1-6). *This* is the root of all evil: man lost his faith and love for his gracious Creator and lusted after all that would make him wise and independent from God. He believed that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil could fulfill all his desires.

When Adam disobeyed God and trusted Satan's lie, he turned over his dominion of the world unto Satan; and Satan became god of this world. The world system operates on this evil principle; and the men of this evil world have come up with a monetary system, which has fomented the love for money because money (much like the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) is supposedly all you need to fulfill all of your (fleshly) desires. Money itself is not evil, but the *love* of money is evil. The love of money has caused lying, stealing, murder, war, hatred, jealousies, revenge, etc. This rage for money has entered many professing believers and has brought much havoc.

We thank God for His unadulterated Word that brings light and Godly instruction. In 1 Timothy 6 we find warning about men who believe that gain is godliness, and we are told that we should withdraw from such men:

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But

godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:3-10 ).

Contentment is the blessing that we all need. Adam had all that man could ever need, but through lust of the flesh he denied his Lord and started this quest for heaping up treasures on earth. It has become the norm. Even many who are professing believers are caught up in the frenzy. They fail to see the wickedness of their sin. For this purpose, God gave us the law of Moses, as Paul said in Romans 7:7: “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” It seems today that people are not even aware of the tenth commandment, which is, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s” (Exodus 20:17).


To covet is to desire greatly or to lust. To lust after the things of the world is as wrong today as it was for Adam, and the penalty for sin is the same, death. This root of evil is now entering in sheep’s clothing. Beware, many wolves have entered in among God’s people ravishing the flock. Jesus told us how we can know who the false prophets are; He said you shall know them by their fruits. He also taught us that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. When people who claim to be men of God spend more time talking about money than they do teaching the Word, you know that they love money. Therefore, flee, before you also fall into this same error. In 1 Timothy 3 we find the qualifications for an elder or overseer. One of the qualifications is that he is not greedy of filthy lucre (dirty money). I believe it is time for God’s people to refuse to support men who are lovers of money.

In Psalm 1:1-2 it says: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” The false teachers are coveting your money, and they are teaching you that by giving unto them you will be blessed with much money. We were warned that they would do this:

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Our cover: William Tyndale’s was the first English translation to draw directly from Hebrew and Greek texts, and the first to take advantage of the new medium of printing, which allowed for its wide distribution.

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” 2 Pt. 2:1-3

Nevertheless, we can truly thank God for His wonderful love that He has revealed for Adam’s race. He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, who was made flesh and tempted in every way that we are tempted, yet without sin. Thus He became the perfect sacrifice for our sins. He paid for our sin in full, and all who will repent and turn back to God will find forgiveness and the gift of Eternal Life. He who rose from the dead promises that He will never forsake us, and we are told that if we will walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). 

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*Larry Montgomery’s testimony, continued from page 4* being said, but the Holy Spirit took this reference from 1 Corinthians 10:13 and caused a phrase in it to come alive to me: “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

I confided to my friend that I was very interested and asked if he could talk to me further. He expressed his lack of ability but got up and went into the bowels of the underground bunker, where we were working along with a hundred or so other men, and returned with a commissioned officer. We spoke briefly, and he said we would talk together when we got off watch. About 12:30 AM we drove up to our barracks. I shared my deep concern. He presented a simple gospel message, then this officer and my buddy prayed for me;+ and we went to our barracks and to bed.

What a night began then! Under deep conviction of my sins, I tossed and turned, unable to sleep. At some point, I was given either a dream or vision. I saw myself running in the flames of hellfire, screaming and gnashing my teeth. I came out of this vision and began to call on the name of the Lord! I was the only one awake in the entire barracks. I didn’t know how to pray, but simply called on Jesus to save me. I said, “Lord Jesus, if you will save me, I will follow you all the days of my life.” I remember praying and saying, “ Lord, I have no power to stop my sinful

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# Doctrine, Conviction, Opinion, Part 2

**Steve Montgomery**



In the previous issue, we began considering the difference between doctrine, conviction, and opinion by comparing the *Authority* behind each. Now we will look at the areas of *Extension, Importance, Communication, and Development.*

**I. Extension:** Doctrine, conviction, and opinion differ in *extension*; that is, to whom do they apply, or to whom may they be applied?

**Doctrine:** Since *doctrine* is based on the clear teaching of the Word of God, the final authority for all Christians in all places throughout all time, *doctrine* applies to all believers. No one may say that because of their culture or the time in which they live they cannot believe in the deity of Christ or in His second coming. The doctrines of Scripture are unchanging and literally universal (Luke 21:33).

Although Christians believe that all of the Bible is inspired (2 Timothy 3:16-17), we do not believe that all of the Bible is of equal importance. The first chapters of 1 Chronicles are inspired, but they don't carry the same importance in God's plan as Matthew 24 to 28. Inspiration does not connote equality of importance.

In the same way, some doctrines are more important than others. The Second Coming of Christ is a central doctrine of Scripture. However, the timing of the Rapture, while a doctrine of Scripture, is not of equal importance to the fact of the Second Coming. We may recognize a man as a brother in good standing with Christ and the church though we disagree with him regarding the time of the Rapture. We must stand strong and dogmatic on those things we have learned from Scripture (Philippians 3:15-17) while at the same time allowing other believers some differences in doctrine not central to the faith. We recognize that the Holy Spirit is *leading* us into all truth, not *plunking* us into all truth (John 16:13), and we are told to guard the unity of the Spirit until we all come into the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:1-13).

The central teachings of Christianity, such as the inspiration of Scripture, the humanity and deity of Christ, the Trinity, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, justification by faith, baptism, the church, the Second Coming, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment are not open to adjustment or divergence. Those who seek to adjust or change these teachings are apt for the label of heretic or unbeliever.

**Conviction:** *Conviction*, based both on the Bible and circumstances, cannot be universal in its application. *Convictions* extend only to myself and those under my direct authority. No Christian has the authority to impose his or her convictions universally or locally to the church. Conviction is personal application of the teaching of the Bible to our lives. An employer may require his employees to follow a dress standard based on his *conviction*, but he may not insist on that standard when they are not at work or are no longer in his employ. Parents should apply their convictions to their children while they are under their authority. Children will, however, grow up to take their place as adults in society and the church, and will form their own convictions before the Lord to whom they will give account.

Occasionally, a local congregation will take a certain position congregationally. For example, the congregational use of a certain Bible version in their church services. Although this is legitimate, it must be handled with caution lest it become an extrabiblical distinctive, a "bragging point" for the church to prove spiritual superiority. It *is* legitimate for a congregation to agree to use a certain translation in their services for the sake of clarity or practice. It is *not* correct for that church to *require* that members use only a certain translation in their own homes.

**Opinion:** Opinion extends only to the one holding that opinion. We may try to persuade others of our opinion, but it is not a requirement for fellowship.

**Example:** The *doctrine* of Scripture is that marriage is honorable in all and that God is the originator of family (Hebrews 13:4, Matthew 15:19). *Conviction* is that my wife and I should have a large family. *Opinion* is that less than five children is too few for any family.

**II. Importance:** How do doctrine, conviction and opinion differ in the *importance* they hold in our lives?

**Doctrine:** The importance of doctrine cannot be over-emphasized. True Christianity is identified by who and what we believe. It is who and what we believe that determines where we will spend eternity. It is who and what we believe that sets the course of our life and ministry. Christians, through the centuries and today as well, are dying for what they believe. Believers are

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## From the President's Desk

### Macedonian Call

Juan and Pat Guerra saw a church raised up in Tepatitlan, but health problems made it necessary for Juan and Pat to leave this group of new believers. One month ago, Martin, one of the leaders there, came to Atotonilco to ask us for help. We committed ourselves to help in three ways:

1. We agreed to arrange for someone to go every Sunday of 2009 to teach the Word.
2. We set a time to meet weekly with two men to teach Scriptural principles regarding leadership and church life.
3. We told them that we would share their need with other churches in Mexico and the U.S.

Just two weeks ago, I received an email from Martin telling me they had lost another family. Discouraged, he wrote me, "We have decided to close the church. We just can't go on."

Though Martin is discouraged, God is not. Perhaps the Lord has already raised up the worker or workers to stand alongside these saints. The ideal candidate or family will commit to at least one year to serve side by side with these Christians. There are language schools in the region, but a Spanish-speaker would be able to hit the ground running.

Are you that individual or family? The person the Lord raises up may be from the U.S., from Mexico, or from...? But if you think the Lord may be calling you to serve alongside this church, please write [sfmi@sfmiusa.org](mailto:sfmi@sfmiusa.org) or phone (541) 382-7081.

Whether or not you believe the Lord is calling you to work in Tepatitlan, you can pray for this church that is going through birth pangs in such an under-reached region of Mexico.

*Steve Montgomery*

### Health Fair

Believers from the church in Atotonilco, the Bible study in Cucarachas, and two churches in Arandas joined with a team of dentists, nurses, and workers from Yakima, Washington, to hold health fairs in three areas in the region.



Nonstop, from morning to evening, the team received an average of 160 people a day, including 80

a day to see the dentists. They saw a total a total of 800 people.

Blood pressure and blood sugar tests, eye tests,



and a visit to the dentist provide not only care but also personal contact.

Using the *Evangelcube*, Misael explains the gospel to the adults in their final stop: Spiritual Health. Each person received a packet with gospel literature.



Children who finished classes on hand-washing, teeth-brushing and nutrition moved to a class where they heard about eternal life.


In the evening, a film was shown. Kids and adults crowded in to watch.

The health fair was held one day in the village of



El Valle, a community just down the road from Cucarachas. Last year we held a health fair in Cucarachas, and there is now a congregation there. Those believers are helping with the fair in El Valle.

For two days, the fair was in the neighborhood of El Maguey, where we had our highest attendance. We are hoping to plant a sister church there in the coming months.

The nearby city of Arandas was the site for two health fairs. Arandas has a population of 78,000 people and has two churches. Both of those churches took part in the health fair. 

# Missionary Reports

## Africa

### Jerry Skiles

In December 2008, I was invited by the Peace Corps (PC) through USAID's Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer program to assist the PC volunteers in helping Malian villagers with marketing their products. My previous involvement with PC volunteers concerned their reputation of carousing in the large cities on their breaks when in Ivory Coast. Though some volunteers might justify or condemn the PC's reputation for being wild in town, I came away with an admiration for the sacrifice they make to impact the poor and needy. They live much like the native population. I saw some who were living in mud huts with thatched roofs. Their only means of transportation was a bicycle or the limited public transportation. I was with a supervisor when one volunteer was asked why he was not eating the host family's meals. He said he didn't like the gruel. I immediately identified with him. I can handle the gruel, but I don't like it as a steady diet.

The time was good, and I had many times to share with the volunteers and work with the nationals on their projects. This assignment allowed me to be in contact with humble villagers and to visit with high ranking officials with the Malian government and USAID at the U.S. Embassy. A few days before I arrived in Mali, a well-known popular volunteer had died in a tragic accident involving a water tower they had constructed. Her death opened doors for serious discussions about life, what God is doing, and why things happen the way they do. As is often the case, I left Mali hoping that my help had impacted and profited them as much as or more than their lives had impacted mine. I trust that the Peace Corps learned from me that Christian missionaries are doing more than driving around in big 4x4s with mission names on the doors in the capital cities, but that they also are concerned for the well being of the national population.

The Peace Corps and humanitarian aid workers made me question what makes people sacrifice for others. The missionary/Christian community makes sacrifices that I can understand, but the PC workers often make similar sacrifices—and for what? Only a few of them are Christian, and yet they care for people besides themselves, even to the point of risking death.

January 2009, I returned to the tribe for my annual conference teaching. Seeing my friend and partner Hovare is always a delight. He shared how just prior to my arrival they had baptized 25 Christians who had come to know the Lord in 2008. These new believers came from the Loron and Loma tribe, and it was a joy for me to hear the news.

When communicating difficult news or wanting to pass on news, the Loron will often say, "You asked." Or "Are you asking?" Hovare always adds a slight smile. I got the news: the rains had ended early, and many in the

area had a small harvest of the stable grain, millet. Mature millet stalks are generally bigger than a thumb at the base. This year they looked like pencils. It was a terrible harvest. Shortly after I arrived in the village, people were coming and asking for work. Men were leaving their families to seek work outside the area, doing anything to provide food for their families.


Cherry told our local fellowship in Oregon, and they gave generously to provide some relief. The sacrifice on their part will not go unnoticed by our Father in Heaven and will do a lot to help the needy.

The teaching meetings went well, although in Gogo, a village woman had committed suicide the night before. The rebel forces extorted money from the family, so the meeting there did not have the joy as in other locations.

A high point was when new believers from two villages were laying foundations for a church building, and we went out and encouraged them in their efforts.

I had a chance to talk to some rebels from the area; and in the course of the conversation, they said the local rebels want to see an end to the division in the area. Many want to see change, but the head rebels who have power and money have gained it through the rebellion. If it ends, they will lose. Pressures for peace are growing, and I came away feeling that I may be able to influence peace in the area with more personal action. Public schools are opening; teachers are available, but resources to repair the school houses and teacher's houses are lacking. I am hoping to be able to return and assist in that effort and trust it will help in ending the abuse that is taking place in the area, as well as give an education to the young children.

This March and April, Ed Enns and I will be traveling in West Africa together encouraging the national church and surveying opportunities for future ministry. I will be visiting the Dagomba tribe in Ghana, where they adopted me into their tribe and made me a chief in 2007. I am hoping to be able to visit Hovare at that time and begin planning and organizing the work on the school in Bwaybiye, the Loma village where Cherry and I worked.

Jerry 

### Ghana, West Africa Skip and Julie Voetberg

Dear Family and Friends,

It is time for another update on the activities of the Voetbergs in Ghana and some of the things that the Lord has been doing here. This will probably be our last letter from Ghana for awhile, as we will be arriving back home by the first part of March.

The dry season has passed this week, and we have been blessed with afternoon rains to cool and freshen the air and settle the dust. I hope that all of the word that has gone out through the several villages here will have a

similar effect on the people here, for there is a lot of stale religious air pollution and the dust of man's doctrines that needs to be washed away.

One of the more recent events was a fruitful trip to the Volta region and Togo with Timothy and Clement. Clement is the Lucas's live-in hired helper, and it was his first trip to that part of Ghana and across a border. The Lord opened his eyes to the need for the gospel to be preached in those kind of places. Having lived here all of his life in Tarkwa, he did not fully comprehend that there were people living like that in Ghana. We visited the new little church that Tim and I had the blessing of preaching to last spring. It was encouraging to see their faithfulness to the Lord and that the Lord has added to their number. We were able to spend some time with them in the Word and also learn how we can pray for them better. It seems that the chief is harassing them for some sort of gift because he thinks the white missionaries are leaving money for them. I am reminded of 1 Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is the root of all evil." This is a constant topic everywhere we go here. The pastors lay such heavy burdens on the people here that many say they can not afford to be a Christian!

Our time with the saints in Togo was also good. We taught on God's eternal purpose, with a lot of time spent on the old man and the new man, the flesh and the spirit, sinners by Adam and righteousness by Jesus. They are going through some trials right now, so we hope that we gave them some good encouragement in dealing with that. Upon our return to Tarkwa we began another discipleship class with two local men, John Burwell, and Austin Ball, who have recently arrived from the States.

We still have regular contact with many of the people we first met here and pray that the Lord will keep them growing in His grace. Our church meeting has had a significant change lately. Early in the year, we had mostly single women at our meetings. Lately, though, we have had mostly single men. A few of them are zealous for the Lord and very often have a good word to share in the meeting. I would pray that the Lord would give us a few good families. Some of the men are married, but the wives don't attend.

We were also blessed in January with the arrival of John and Austin from the States, as they have not only added to our evangelism efforts, but they brought a guitar and a banjo! We have begun to have a few outdoor meetings in a local market area, and it seems that it is well received and fruitful.

On a family note, we can all notice how the Lord has been at work in each of our lives this last year. I believe that each of us has been challenged to grow in his grace and to a deeper walk of faith with Him. We pray that He will perfect that which He has begun in each of us.

As we get back to the States and make our adjustments, we will be praying to know the Lord's will in regard to future ministry in this part of the world. We want to thank those of you who have been praying for us, those who have mailed care packages, those who have contributed financially. You have all been a part of the work of the Lord in Ghana, and we pray for His blessing

to you.

*In His grace, The Voetberg Family* 

## **Atotonilco, Mexico**

### **Steve and Linda Montgomery**

Please read the AP article that follows. Concerted intercession is needed for Mexico. Paul instructs us to pray for those in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Join the brethren in Mexico interceding for the police, the army, and the government—municipal, state and federal—as they make decisions and take actions that will impact the future of the nation. Pray for the churches of Jesus Christ in Mexico as they look at how they can be the peacemakers in the midst of turmoil. Very little of this impacts the daily life of rural Mexico. The Highlands are tranquil and continue their pace as always. Nevertheless, many throughout the nation are involved, and these things may yet affect our region.

One important factor is that many Mexicans are returning to Mexico because of the economic crisis in the U.S. This may bring many believers who are currently in the States.

*Thank you for praying.*

*Steve and Linda*


### **Here is the article: *Prospect of Mexico's Collapse Grows More Precarious* (1/18/, Associated Press)**

MEXICO CITY — Mexico is rapidly becoming one of the world's biggest security risks with its indiscriminate kidnappings, nearly daily beheadings and gangs that mock and kill government agents.

The prospect that America's southern neighbor could melt into lawlessness provides an unexpected challenge to Barack Obama's new government. In its latest report anticipating possible global security risks, the U.S. Joint Forces Command lumps Mexico and Pakistan together as being at risk of a "rapid and sudden collapse." Retiring CIA chief Michael Hayden told reporters on Friday that Mexico could rank alongside Iran as a challenge for Obama — perhaps a greater problem than Iraq.

The U.S. Justice Department said last month that Mexican gangs are the "biggest organized crime threat to the United States." National security adviser Stephen Hadley said last week that the worsening violence threatens Mexico's very democracy.

And Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff recently told *The New York Times* he ordered additional border security plans to be drawn up this summer as kidnappings and killings spilled into the U.S.

The alarm is spreading to the private sector as well. Mexico is Latin America's second biggest economy and the United States' third biggest oil supplier, but the New York-based Eurasia Group consulting firm ranks it as one of the top 10 global risks for 2009. 

### **A Call to Prayer from Nate Montgomery**

In the political world, different organizations and associations have what they call "calls to action." Today

I would ask you to participate in a different type of call to action. I received a report from Elias Garcia's wife. Elias, who is the director of New Life Hispanic Ministries and the spearhead for the health team [see page 8], began to experience severe pain as a result of a kidney stone. When the pain was unbearable, he finally went to the clinic, where he was informed that the pain was a combination of things including a kidney stone and infection. However, of much greater concern was his heart. Elias' heart rate was extremely high, and he was therefore sent immediately to a cardiologist. This cardiologist performed some tests, including an EKG and an echo-sonogram. The initial results indicate that there is a serious problem with one of the valves in his heart.


The information so far is not entirely specific, but suffice it to say, there is plenty to be concerned about. I would like to ask all of you to pray. Your call to action is a call to your knees before our God. Pray that they would be able to minister God's love and His word freely to all they come in contact with.

Pray for Elias, that the infection would subside, the pain abate, and the heart condition improve and wisdom on how to proceed for treatment, both short and long term. Pray for Arelis, Elias' wife, and their children.

Thank you,

Nathan D Montgomery 

**Larry Montgomery's Testimony, continued from page 6** practices. Help me." I tried to confess every sin I could remember in my life. While praying I fell asleep. I awoke in the morning to face the day, opened my footlocker and before me was a brand-new carton of cigarettes. This thought came to mind, "I gave my life to Christ last night; I don't need these anymore." I gave them to a shipmate and told him what I had done (my first witness). He laughed and announced to all who could hear that "Monty has got religion!"

My lieutenant friend gave me a Bible, took me to the city of Yokouska, and introduced me to the Christian Servicemen's Center, which was directed by a member of the Navigators ministry. A whole new life had begun. This dear brother (now with the Lord in heaven) taught me how to read and study God's Word. I was instructed in how to memorize Bible verses and how to witness and share the gospel. Better than fifty years have passed since then. One highlight in my early Christian life were the years I spent in part time ministry at the Long Beach Servicemen's Center. Since meeting Dick York in 1971, I've had the joy of ministering the Word in several different countries including some years in Nigeria, West Africa, and have served on the Board of Directors of Shield of Faith since 1975. 



**Doctrine, Conviction, Opinion, continued from page 7**

willing to die rather than deny true doctrine because the doctrines of Scripture are undeniable. They are based on who God is.

**Conviction:** Conviction also holds a high place in the life of the believer. Convictions are the essential out-working of our testimony. While the doctrines we hold affect eternity, the convictions we hold affect our testimony. True convictions are identified by our willingness to die for them. We are willing to die for doctrine because of who God is. We are willing to die for our convictions because of who we are, by God's grace.

**Opinion:** Opinions are not issues of life and death and are not held so tightly that we would die for them. Again, some opinions are right, and others are wrong. Wrong opinions will have consequences, so although a bad opinion about whether one should race a train to a crossing may result in a tragedy, opinions about whether cars should race trains are not in general opinions of life and death.

**Example:** The *doctrine* of Scripture is that Jesus Christ will return again. If the government tells me not to teach that doctrine, I am obligated to obey God rather than men, even at the cost of my life. My *conviction* in this circumstance might be that I will teach this whenever opportunity allows, regardless of the presence of government agents. My *opinion* might be that every sermon should contain some reference to the Second Coming.

**III. Communication:** How should doctrine, a conviction or an opinion be shared with others?

**Doctrine, Conviction, Opinion:** *Doctrine* should be taught publicly, regularly, unashamedly. *Conviction* may be shared publicly but always with the clarification that it is personal conviction and not the mandate of the Word. *Opinion* should be shared publicly only with caution, in an appropriate forum. Opinions shared from the pulpit or by the teacher of a Bible study tend to be taken as doctrines.

**IV. Development:** How do these three areas differ in the manner in which they develop in our lives?

**Doctrine:** Doctrine is, by nature, unchanging. As we grow, we may come to a clearer understanding, but doctrine—the doctrine of the Word—does not change. As young believers, there may be basic teaching of the Bible we simply don't know. However, the basic doctrines of Scripture, once we have learned them, once we have searched the Scripture and found these things

*Continued on back cover*

*Battle, continued from page 4*

produced by Westcott and Hort.

Brooke Westcott and Fenton Hort began work in the early 1850s on what was first billed as a revision of the Greek Textus Receptus. It became, however, an altogether new Greek Text. Dr. Hort stated, “Our object is to supply clergymen generally, schools, etc., with a portable Greek text which shall not be disfigured with Byzantine corruptions.” Their work was influenced by Tischendorf and Lachmann, two early members of the German school of higher criticism. Twenty years later, in 1870, the year that the English Revised Version (ERV) was commissioned by the church authorities in England, they were able to distribute to the members of the revision committee a draft copy of their new Greek text. They both served on the revision committee for the ERV which was published in 1881, concurrently with their Greek Text.

For ten years, during the formation of this new English translation, Westcott and Hort were able to heartily advocate their views in favor of the texts of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus in regular meetings of some of the most influential scholars of Great Britain and America. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that their text should be so well regarded by academia when it appeared. The ERV (or the RV) of 1881 was based on Westcott and Hort’s Greek Text as well as Tregelles Greek Text (1857). The American Standard Version of 1901 was an American edition of the same. Verbal equivalence was used in the translation process.

Much has been written about Westcott and Hort, their backgrounds and their theological biases. I will just briefly state that these were not men of outstanding godly character. They were both members of the Ghost Society at the University of Cambridge, which was engaged in occultic activity. They were acquainted with Charles Darwin; and, in his letters, Dr. Hort speaks highly of Darwin’s book regarding the theory of evolution. Westcott, in particular, had a great affinity for Roman Catholicism.

The New American Standard Version (NASV) was published in NT form in 1963 and in its entirety in 1971. Contained in its foreword are these statements, “This translation follows the principles used in the ASV 1901 known as the Rock of Biblical Honesty.” The Principles of Revision states: “In revising the ASV, consideration was given to the latest available manuscripts with a view to determining the best Greek text. In most instances the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Nestle Greek New Testament was followed.” Keep in mind that the NA-27 (of which the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition is a forerunner) is identical to the Critical Text of Westcott and Hort in regard to textual content.

The NIV was first published in 1973. It is not a revision of a previous translation, but as stated in its preface, “It is a completely new translation made by



many scholars working directly from the Greek.” The Greek text used however is an “eclectic one.” That is to say that the committee compiled their text from a variety of manuscript sources available to them, judging for themselves what readings were true or genuine. That opens the door to a lot of subjectivity and, in selective passages, the bias towards the Alexandrian textual types is clearly evident. Dynamic Equivalency, which is a thought-for-thought translation to provide overall meaning, was used for this version as well as the NRSV and the TEV.

In addition to the Greek manuscripts, there is another source for Bible versions. This is the Latin Vulgate produced by Jerome. The Vulgate is the foundation on which nearly all Roman Catholic versions are still based. Jerome was commissioned by Pope Damasus in AD 383 to produce a new Latin version of the Bible and completed the project around AD 405, giving the Catholic Church its official Latin Bible. He was influenced by the work of Eusebius. Several scholars, (notably Alexander Souter and Sir Frederic Kenyon) have said that he used a Greek manuscript closely related to the Sinaiticus, indicating the influence that the Alexandrian textual line had on Jerome. Many of his readings, however, reflect the Old Latin manuscripts, which support the Traditional Text. The Latin Vulgate was declared to be the authentic version of the Bible by the Council of Trent, which also decreed that it was free of doctrinal error. The Douay-Rheims was an English translation of the Vulgate, completed in full in 1609. It was published with extensive commentary and notes designed to uphold Catholic tradition and doctrinal positions in the face of the Protestant Reformation. This was the forerunner of other English versions to follow with a similar bias and approval of the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

At this point, I would like to include a quotation from the “Introduction to the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the Nestle Aland Greek New Testament” (or the *Novum Testamentum Graece*), edited by Bruce Metzger. On page 2 of the introduction, it states, “The text shared by these two editions (NA-26 and UBS-3) was adopted internationally by Bible Societies, and following an

agreement between the Vatican and the United Bible Societies it has served as the basis for new translations and for revisions made under their supervision. This marks a significant step with regard to interconfessional relationships.” What is demonstrated here is the acceptance by modern day scholarship of the Critical Text and the implications of that towards furthering “interconfessional relationships.”

### Footnotes

As we’ve seen with the footnotes included in the Douay-Rheims Version, there is great potential by the inclusion of such to guide the reader towards a certain bias or interpretation of Scripture. Even with the soundest of translations, footnotes that are not the inspired Word of God can be misleading. Rule 6 followed by the KJV translators reads as follows, “No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words which cannot, without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.”

Footnotes can also be used to create a bias towards a translation or used to justify the absence of certain verses from the text or to emphasize uncertainty. Stated in the preface to the NIV, p. viii is this: “Footnotes call attention to places where there is uncertainty about what constitutes the original text.”

We are all familiar with footnotes such as “the most reliable early manuscripts do not include these verses.” *My Dickson Study Bible* contains the following footnote at the end of Mk. 16: “Note: Verses 9 to 20 of the last chapter are omitted by the two oldest Greek manuscripts. Other authorities have a different ending to this Gospel.” The two oldest manuscripts they are referring to are probably the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus. Are they the most reliable? I think not. They are generally regarded as among the oldest. Another question. Is the oldest existing necessarily the best? No, not if it has been corrupted.

### Copyrights

There have been an average of two new versions of the English Bible published per year since 1900. It is a marketable commodity and one that is influenced by the copyright. I understand that there are two things that have a bearing on this. One is that there must be a certain percentage of the Traditional Text contained in the translation in order to be classified as a “Bible.” Secondly is that all new translations and editions have a certain percentage of changes within the text in order to be distinctive.

### Compromising the Witness

“In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” This is a principle found quoted multiple times in the Scripture. One of the things that has happened with the proliferation of translations

that have departed from the Traditional Text is that one or more of the witnesses has been removed. An example of this is with the phrase where Christ Jesus says, “I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” He states this three times: once in Matthew 9:13, then in Mark 2:17, and Luke 5:32. In the new versions, which have as their source the Alexandrian Text, the reading “to repentance” is only found in one of those verses, the one in Luke. Some people don’t see this as important; but when you consider that emphasis is established by repetition and the power of the testimony is diminished by removing some of the witnesses, it is very important.

### Relativism, Doubt, and Confusion

One of the popular slogans today, uttered derisively by the skeptics is, “Which Bible?” The continual publishing of new versions gives the impression that the search goes on to find the true Word of God and that nothing we have is 100 percent reliable. They easily see that Christians can’t agree on a text. In reality, most Christians don’t realize that this is a textual issue but consider it a matter of preference relating to “readability.” Thus the heathen look on and laugh. The conflict has given rise to an atmosphere of confusion over what indeed is the Word of God.

Second, the authority of the Word has been undermined. The impression given by the textual debate and the “sound bites” of the various Bible publishers is that we may not have had a reliable text in bygone years. Now we have these “older, more reliable manuscripts.” However, there is still “uncertainty about what constitutes the original text,” to use a phrase from the preface to the NIV.

Have you ever been in a Bible Study group where there were three or four different versions being used? In an informal setting where the Word is discussed, a difference of opinion is enhanced by the difference of wording in the different translations. “My Bible says it this way,” one might say. In that kind of environment it is increasingly difficult to say, “Thus saith the Lord.” In a subtle way, the authority of the Word is undermined.

I believe that there is a direct correlation between the uncertainty of what Scripture really is saying and the rise of apostasy in the church today. Even though the major translations currently in use today probably agree on much more than they disagree on, the fact that there are readings that differ (some of them critical to doctrine), plants seeds of doubt. It also plants the seed that there is not necessarily an absolute standard. “There can be some relativity to the concept, because my Bible says it a little differently and gives me room for a different opinion.” I believe that this has opened the door for the same relativity to be applied

*Continued on back cover*

# 2009 Memorial Day Conference

## Twin Rocks Conference Center

Greetings again, and welcome in advance to the Annual Memorial Day Conference of the Shield of Faith Mission International. This year is the 55th anniversary of the mission and the 47th annual conference. We are looking forward to a very special time with you and your family on the beautiful Oregon Coast. Our theme this year is:

### Back to the Future: With Eternity in Mind

We are preparing to welcome what the Lord has prepared for us this year, and we are absolutely sure that all will be stirred by what we will learn. Come prepared to be blessed and to be a blessing.

As many of you know, we are almost certain to max out the facility of **Twin Rocks Conference Center at Rockaway Beach, Oregon**, so we encourage you to register as soon as possible. Fill out the registration form on the next page and mail it or fax it to the SFMI office right away. If you have friends that you would like to encourage to attend, feel free to make as many copies of the registration form as you need and send them in ASAP.

**As the conference grows**, so does the need for an increasing number of **volunteers** to make light work of keeping everything functioning smoothly. Consequently, our registrar, Chrissie Wise, has submitted a list of jobs and responsibilities that are covered by volunteers. It is better that there should be too many than not enough, so if you find on the following list things that you would like to help with, please make note of your availability on your registration form or call the office number **(541) 382-7081**, and leave a message for Chrissie.

### Volunteer positions needed for Memorial Day Conference:

- Help set-up (arriving early)
- Books table set-up
- Nursery overseer/helpers for meetings
- Children's ministry overseer/helpers
- Youth ministry overseer/helpers
- Family campfire overseer
- Run the sound system (will have to arrive early)
- Recreation overseer/helpers
- Communion set up
- Communion servers
- Helping tear down, pack up, put away



# Annual Northwest Conference 2009 Shield of Faith Mission International

Registrar: **Chrissie Wise**Mailing address: **P.O. Box 144  
Bend, OR 97709**Phone: **1 (541) 382-7081**Fax: **1 (541) 382-4471**

Twin Rocks Friends Campground Rockaway Beach, Oregon

## May 22-25, 2009

**How it works:** Arrivals begin at 5:00 pm Friday, May 22. **No early arrivals!** The first meeting begins at 7:00 pm. There will be no meal served Friday night. Please feel free to bring snacks. Saturday breakfast is our first meal, and Monday lunch is our last meal. We have spaces available for tents and RVs. There are family cabins and lodging for others. Bring your own bedding, or bedding can be provided for those in need. Twin Rocks Friends Campground is a **non-smoking** facility. Pets are **not** allowed. Copy as many forms as you need. Mail or fax completed forms to Shield of Faith office. We look forward to seeing you this year. **Register early!**

### Family Registration:

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail contact: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_ please include infants

Child: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_ Child: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Circle Choices

**Nights staying:** Friday night Saturday night Sunday night

**Accommodations:** Room Tent RV

**Meals:** Saturday breakfast Sunday breakfast Monday breakfast

Saturday lunch Sunday lunch Monday lunch

Saturday dinner Sunday dinner

*Special requests or needs:*

would like to work with children's ministry  would like to work with youth ministry

**Please mail or fax completed form to the Shield of Faith Office as soon as possible.**


**Doctrine, Conviction, Opinion, continued from page 11**  
to be true, they are unchanging foundation stones in our lives.

**Conviction:** Doctrine is unchanging, but convictions may change as we grow. Note that while the difference between opinion and conviction is that we will die for our convictions, the difference between doctrine and conviction is that, over time, our convictions may change. They do not change lightly or easily, but they *can* change.

**Opinion:** Opinion, on the other hand, may change fairly easily and is subject to persuasion, experience, and circumstances, as well as personal growth. Our opinions may change in an almost casual manner. Our convictions do not.


**Example:** The *doctrine* you hold and teach is that Jesus Christ is God. Since you have searched the Scripture to arrive at this, this will not change throughout your life. Your *conviction* may have been to emphasize the deity of Christ at the expense of His humanity. As you have grown in understanding the Bible, you have concluded that it is also important to teach the humanity of Christ. Your *opinion* might have been that the humanity of Christ should not be taught too often because it might confuse people. However, after reading through the gospels with this in mind, your opinion has changed.

**Conclusion:** We hold the truth in hand and heart: the Written Word in hand and the Living Word in spirit. Because we hold the Written Word and the Indwell-

ing Word so highly, we must not defile it by lowering the Word from an exalted position or by raising to that position other things that do not belong there. We are holding forth the Word of life (Philippians 2:16) and to do so rightly, we need to be certain we are not also holding out our convictions and opinions as part of that message. 

**Battle, continued from page 13**

to behavior. Many of us are outdated in our expectations for Christian worship and Christian standards of behavior. The church is in flux, and we are being left behind. Let me try to connect the dots here: different Scriptures, different opinions, different behavioural standards.

It is my hope that by my putting this together that, if nothing else, the reader might understand that the debate over Bible versions has to go back to the Greek and Hebrew texts used in the translation. All texts are not equal, and I pray that God will give us all discernment and then conviction to stand up for the truth. 

**Acknowledgments:**

*Crowned with Glory* by Dr. Thomas Holland

*The Identity of the New Testament Text* by Wilbur N. Pickering

“Another Bible, Another Gospel” compiled by Robert M. Baker

Encyclopedia Britannica

Encyclopedia Wikipedia

**Shield of Faith Mission International**  
**P.O. Box 144**  
**Bend, Oregon, 97709**

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