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INCLUDE GOD IN YOUR PLANS

By Pastor David Sininger, Abundant Life Christian Fellowship, Crystal River, Florida, re-printed in part from the Citrus County Chronicle.

" you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will we will live and do this or that.' " (James 4:15)

As we begin a new year, I pray this article finds you and your loved ones healthy, happy and looking forward to a positive and prosperous year.

Here we are again, just a few months into the new year and many of us have already reneged on our annual resolutions to lose weight, to stop smoking or to stop drinking; or maybe to start eating right, working smarter and working out three times a week.

There was an article a few years ago in which a man gave his idea of a perfect world. He said, "In a perfect world you would feel as good at 60 as you did at 17. And you would be as smart at 60 as you *thought* you were at 17. Potato chips would have calories, but if eaten with dip, the calories would be neutralized."

The truth is: this is not a perfect world and it never will be! I believe that the best days of our lives both individually and for the church lie before us. The bad news is that by now, some of us have already broken our promises to be more loyal and loving to our families and friends, to be much kinder to our co-workers and more noble and nice to our neighbors.

Spiritually, some of us have already broken our resolutions to pray before we eat, to love our enemies, to attend and contribute more to our churches and, yes, to be more pleasant and polite to all of God's people; especially those we regularly worship with on Sundays. Typically, for some of us the first thing broken each new year are our resolutions. By January 2, most people find that it's easier to break a resolution than a habit; and soon realize that the hardest promises to keep are the personal promises that are made to ourselves.



I think the reasons we fail to keep our New Year's resolutions is that they are often set immaturely and without divine consultation. Or perhaps they are set too high or are too selfish, or are set on the wrong thing or aimed in the wrong direction, which confirms the old adage, "If you aim at nothing, you normally hit your target."

However, I am more inclined to believe that most of us, either out of arrogance or ignorance, fail to consult or include God in our plans. We make our personal plans and New Year's resolutions prematurely without praying to make sure that our plans are aligned with the will and the Word of God. Biblically, Jesus taught us in the Lord's Prayer to ask God to let his will "be done on earth as it is in heaven."

That's why we are admonished in James 4:15 not to pre-plan our lives without divine consultation. Let's make it a goal this year to live in the will and walk in the Word of God.



Chairman's Corner

HAVE YOU SET YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER YET?

Due to the overwhelming response to the editorial in the Chairman's Corner two issues previous (December's IMA Herald), I decided to write a follow up article. The purpose is to bring accountability, exhortation, and assistance for you to take action in updating your church or ministry constitution and by-laws. Why is this so important? Most likely, much of the language in your current by-laws and/or statements of faith is archaic and irrelevant for people living in this new millennium. Please consider the following as it pertains to "setting your house in order?"

Context: If you search the Scriptures to find the context of the above bible verse, you will find the prophet Isaiah was sent by God to prepare King Hezekiah for a major change that was coming his way. God said, "Set your house in order" for you are going to die! That's a pretty major change for Hezekiah as well as for Israel whom he represented, wouldn't you say? God wanted to prepare Hezekiah's household and Israel for the alteration of events which were about to take place. God is faithful and always warns, exhorts, and prepares His people to have their spiritual houses in order.



Change: You don't have to be a prophet to realize that our country is in the midst of horrific change. Perhaps it's better to say we are in a cultural crisis. Signs and signals of the new presidential administration all point to a major departure from our once-followed standards given to our founding fathers. For example, sodomite unions that demand the same civil status as one-man, one-woman marriages can easily be construed to mean the same thing as "marriage" as written in most church doctrinal statements. Who would ever have thought that "marriage" could mean what is being accepted in many states today? To quote my wife, "How can a moral wrong be a civil right?" Do you have clear statement of your church or ministry views on marriage, preciousness of life, stem cell research, euthanasia, and abortion-on-demand? In most cases language needs to be updated and statements should be clarified on such moral issues.

Precedent: Nobody knows the future except God Almighty. He does share some future events with His "servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7), but not everything. We can, however, observe patterns and precedents like: If the USA continues to follow European countries and Canada in their worldview on morality (or lack of it) and crafting legislation, it will soon be illegal to preach biblical truth. This includes areas of marriage, sexual purity, sodomy (homosexuality) and the like. Hate crime laws and the politically correct mindset will seek to put a stranglehold on the voice of preachers of truth in America. The precedent set in Canada, however, gave clemency to churches that clearly stated in writing their personal (biblical) views afore mentioned moral values. If the liberal left in our country has their way, having clearly defined constitution and by-laws will not be an option; it will be a necessity. So why wait? Set your house in order during this window of opportunity given to us by God at this time!



Consider: Prov 27:12: **A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.** (NLT) Here are some simple precautions to follow:

1. Check out your church's statement of faith, doctrine, and policies. Then update the language so that it's clear for the readers of today. Hab 2:2 says, **"Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it."**
2. Find some constitutions, by-laws and manuals that have already been updated and use them as a guide to adapt the contents for your own situation.
3. Follow your current by-laws and procedures to make necessary changes and updates in your constitution. (This includes following protocol as how and who needs to approve changes.)
4. If your church or ministry is affiliated with the IMA, make sure to send a copy of your approved and updated constitution and by-laws to the home office. This is a "must do" for ministerial protocol.

Our church leadership just finished approving our updated constitution, by-laws and ministry handbook. Ministers from several states and countries have requested these newly updated booklets and manuals. We are pleased to make them available to you for a \$30 donation. This includes postage and handling. Please send request to: Dr. Timothy L. Warner; %Northern Lights Christian Center; P O Box 757; Hayward, WI 54843; or email me at: nlcapast@cheqnet.net. May God bless you in your endeavors!



IMA WORLD MISSIONS

GOD HAS A WAY TO MEET YOUR NEED

By Rev. Carol J. Knapp, D. Div.

We have heard of seed faith before. When we plant a seed, God changes the nature of that seed so that it becomes a plant and it grows to make a way to meet our needs. Jesus likens our faith in God like a seed. When we put our faith into action, that is, when we release it to God It takes on the nature of a miracle in the making.

What is the mountain in your life: loneliness, loss of a job, disease, trouble in your home or something else? Be encouraged! Jesus shows the way for the mountain to be removed! The scripture says, "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed you will say to this mountain. Move from here to there and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you." (Matt. 17:20 NKJV)

I have seen things happen when you step out by faith after planting seed faith. Years ago one of the things we did was to, by faith, purchase a Pedi-cab motor cycle driven unit for our native preacher. He could make money during the week. It worked real well. A more recent story was last year while in Hong Kong the Church needed a trombone. We stepped out by faith and brought it. While in Wisconsin in October last year we expressed the need for a Saxophone. A lady took interest and said she would meet that need. Recently it arrived in Hong Kong and is being used in Church services.

First, God says that you have a measure of faith Rom. 12:3. Second, God says that this faith comes alive by "hearing" the Word of God. Third, God says that you can apply your faith to meet your daily needs. How? You do something as an act of faith. You put your faith in an action of love. With your measure of faith you act upon it. You listen to God's Word. Then apply your faith and your daily needs will be met.

A measure of faith would be showing to God what you can do to please Him by taking your faith and putting it into practice. Then hear and act on God's word. Apply your faith and your needs will be met.

I need a measure of faith to believe my daughter will be alright. She sprained two toes, had a bad migraine, lacked sleep, and had clogged sinus problems. Then apply by His stripes I am healed. The need will be met. I have seen totally insane people delivered by the power of prayer; it's wonderful to see this happen.

Rev. Carol Knapp and Rev. Raymond Knapp are missionaries to Hong Kong and will be returning on May 11, 2009.

North Central District Report

By Rev. Kathy Cronk

Sunday, January 11, was a typical old-fashioned Wisconsin winter day: sixteen degrees, high snow banks, and roads in "winter driving condition. The snow squeaked and crunched beneath our feet as we straggled into the restaurant next to the Plaza Hotel in Eau Claire.

The Midwinter Fellowship Gathering of the IMA North Central District. It's a loosely structured time of just getting together forfellowship! As we sat relishing the warmth of the restaurant and the good food being served, I was impressed by the spiritual reflection of the physical surroundings. There was a warmth of genuine friendship and fellowship that seemed to encourage a smorgasbord of conversation. I listened with interest to what was being said all around me. My heart was rejoicing and shouting, "This is the kind of interaction that the IMA is all about!"

I heard snippets like these:

"I'm seeing in my church people a greater willingness to meet the needs of others, They've always helped the needy, but usually out of their excess. Now they are willing to sell something to be able to help someone else."

"My people want to grow and be effective fruit bearing Christians, but many don't know how. They need tools and need to be taught how to use them. I've been working on finding ways to help them."

"It seems like many of our efforts of evangelism haven't had the effect I'd hoped they'd have. How do you approach evangelism?"

"Everyone has a story. When you share your story no one can refute that. People need to be encouraged to realize that and to tell their stories."

All around me the room was full of fellowship. Brothers and Sisters laughing, loving, caring and sharing- a lot of burdens that needed bearing. There were questions, answers, listening, talking, comparing grandchildren and life's joys and sorrows. The meal was over, but we were reluctant to leave that place.

When we finally crunched our way through the snow back to the Plaza, groups seemed to congregate in different areas. The Youth Pastors and leaders shared as they played games by the pool. Another group was discussing fasting and other disciplines. Others were just enjoying visiting. Some were praying for those with needs.

It didn't seem that an IMA meeting could get any better, then came Saturday morning, and it did!

Happiness is a Choice

Guest Writer: 12 year old, Kayla Speth, Vincennes, IN, Pastor Don Smith's Great-Granddaughter

The five simple rules of happiness mean a lot to some people. This list of rules keeps you happy but also leads you to a non-stressful and healthy lifestyle. Using these rules can keep you out of trouble and you can also be trusted more often. One person I know who uses these rules is my great-grandfather, or as I call him Papa. He uses these rules each and every day.

The first rule is "**Free your heart from hatred.**" My great-grandfather is a minister. So with God's help, the first rule is fairly easy for him. He is not racist. He does not judge people without knowing them. He loves to meet new people and their family. Many people have taken advantage of him in the past, but he has always forgiven them. He did not like their actions but never thought negatively about the person.

"**Free your mind from worries**" is the next rule to being happy. Everyone has worries from time to time but he leaves it for God to take care of. When something comes up, he does not let it worry him because of his faith in God.

The third rule to being happy is "**Live Simply**". Papa lives simply by not caring about the negative thoughts that come out of people's mouths about him! He does not have to have the biggest house or the nicest car to be happy. He just wants a house to live in, food on his table every night, and a way to get from one place to another.

The fourth rule is "**Give more.**" He gives to everyone! There are the simple things like preaching to the people at the church to paying for the meal at the restaurant. Then there are the big things like being by your side and helping you after a death or a financial crisis.

The final rule is "**Expect less.**" He gives and gives. There is one thing that he will not do, take. He does not expect money from anybody or you to repay him in any way. He does not expect to be repaid! He just likes the feeling of joy he gets from helping others!

As you can see, my grandpa follows these rules every day. The five simple rules to being happy have helped him and many other people. Why don't you try these rules and see how they help you?

CENTRAL DISTRICT CONFERENCE

MARCH 24-26

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PASTOR & DISTRICT CHAIRMAN DON SMITH**

SPEAKER: REV. CURTIS SILCOX FAYETTEVILLE, TN

INFORMATION: 812-886-3109 CELL: 812-291-0222

COFFEE CUP CORNER

— From Pastor Sininger

Two preachers met for lunch at the local diner. After eating a sumptuous meal the conversation turned to discussing nutrition while they finished their coffee.

Pastor Readit commented, "According to a recent article, I just read, on nutrition, eating right doesn't have to be complicated. Nutritionists say there is a simple way to tell if you're eating right."

Rev. Skeptic replied, "Here we go again. I can't wait to hear the latest expert opinion on the subject."

"No! It's easy," Readit responded, "The key is color! Fill your plate with bright colors. Greens, reds and yellows."

"Great," Skeptic chuckled, "I did that last night, " "I ate a bag of M&Ms. But I never knew eating right could be so easy."

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The views expressed in the Herald Newsletters do not necessarily reflect the consensus of IMA members