



The Banner of Truth®

International Voice of The Church of God of North Carolina

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**If in this life only we have hope in Christ,
we are of all men most miserable. 1 Corinthians 15:19**

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HE IS RISEN, ALLELUIA!



International Overseer
~John A. Wilkins, Jr.~



The resurrection of Jesus Christ is of no significance to those who do not believe it is true. We must first believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He came that we might have life and that He went to the Cross in our stead and was resurrected from the dead. He is both God and man and that He ascended back to be with God and that He is preparing a place for all of us that love Him and have been born again and washed in His blood and our sins are covered by His blood.



That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens

with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Ephesians 2:12-22

Our HOPE is in these facts today and through FAITH in God and our Lord Jesus Christ we have peace like a river that flows through our soul. Without faith it is impossible to please God.



Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. Hebrews 11:1-3

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Hebrews 11:6

This is a simple recipe for success in Christian Living and with this you can have all three of these active in your life, **BELIEVE, HOPE AND FAITH.** These will crowd out misery and cause you to have a wonderful life in the Lord!

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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“BE OF GOOD COURAGE—GOD IS NOT MOCKED”

International Overseer
John A. Wilkins, Jr.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6:7

What does it mean to be mocked? When people are mocked, what effect does it have on them? It normally leaves them feeling defeated, deceived, extremely let down, intimidated and taken without validity. The purpose of mockery is to scorn and belittle someone to the point of causing them to be found without merit or to leave them without much effect or in other words a person that is without trust or sincerity. They attempted to mock Christ and make Him seem untrustworthy and fake, but he was not intimidated by anyone, because He knew His purpose was to save sinners and have and show mercy on them. He even asked the Father to forgive them while He was spit upon on the cross and knew all the shame that could be put upon Him by man. He said, “...**Father forgive them; for they know not what they do...**” When a man mocks God and Jesus Christ it is apparent that they do not know what they are doing, because they are not mocked by any man on this earth. The things that man is doing are coming back at them and they will reap from what they are sowing. Today we have men and women who believe they can steal from God and still are ministers of the Gospel, but Hell is waiting for them as they continue to do good deeds in His name on earth while they have left Him in their hearts to serve the Devil. Folks, please do not fall into this

category of sin as helpless children, but resist temptations to cheat on your tithes and offerings to Him. Some say, “We haven’t done anything against the Lord” yet they have slaughtered their brethren with word and deed. There are a lot of people who appear to be godly and living for God, but they will be turned away when they come before Him at the end of life.

Many will wonder when did we see someone in need and not minister to them. God will remind them, listen to the Bible:

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee?

or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. Matthew 25:31-46

Many have lost the vision of winning souls to the Lord. Their vision is dim as to how to minister to others around them and they never see someone hungry, in prison, shut off due to illness and

broken to pieces because of sin. When we do it to the least of these, we have done it or not done it to Him. The Ten Commandments are written for our benefit, four of them are in relationship to how we treat God and six are about how we treat each other. Do you suppose that is an indication that we are important as God's children and we should treat each other with loving kindness and godly tenderness as we await the Lord's return? I want to spend my life treating others that may not treat me so good with godly kindness and love in order for them to see Him in me. God is coming back to earth in the form of His Son Jesus to gather His Church and take Her out of this sin cursed world, but it will not be filled with the phonies and corruption. He is coming back for the ONE that has made Herself ready and is full of His holiness and perfected in Him. She will be ready and there will not be a conglomeration of all these churches we see today that are carrying the standard of the world with all its confusion and sin. When He left Her there were instructions given. Please listen to the Book:

*When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, **Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?** And they said, **Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?** And Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus*****

answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.** Matthew 16:13-18

The Church that He is coming for is the one He is building and nothing will stop it although at times it looks doubtful that She will make it. Look at the times when the early Church in the Bible was almost put out of existence and then She would return, then look at the "Last Days Church" and it looked like the end, but NO here She comes back. Look at 1923 when darkness overshadowed the Church and it looked as if there was no hope. All of our properties were taken and the headquarters had no publishing department anymore and we had to use whatever facilities that could be found and Bishop A. J. Tomlinson went out on an old fish box to preach the revival message of the Church. God used his willingness and built another Church that would fill every corner of the world in a short time over the top of the larger and better organized body which took the same name. Then in 1955 when the name became such a controversial subject and it was back to court again and court was not pretty, but God came in on the scene and the "of Prophecy" was added to distinguish between the two that were claiming the history. If we claim the history correctly, God will honor us just as He did Bishop Tomlinson and everything will be okay and Jesus will receive honor and glory again. God is not mocked and they that attempt it will suffer ruin and God will fight our battles,

but we must be willing to serve in His army until the battle is won.

Someone asked the other day, "Are you worried, are you discouraged? Do you feel like continuing the fight?" The answer is I am not worried and YES, I will continue to fight until we win. Our Commander in Chief is none other than Jesus Christ! He is leading His army and He is building His Church today just as He was in 1923, 1955, 1933, 1991, 1996 and March of 2017. Can you feel His Spirit? I was awakened this morning around 2:30 AM and the Lord showed me some bad things that are happening to His Church right now and how that some would choose the wrong instead of the right path. I could not go back to sleep for a very long time and as I rolled and tumbled I prayed that it would not come to pass, but only they who are being influenced by the wrong crowd will be able to change the course of history for themselves. The Church is on a sure footing and Her course is set and will not be changed by any man alive. Christ purchased the Church, He is building His Church and it is up to you and me as to whether we stay on board or give up the Ship. You and I do not have to make it, but His Church has to make the run successful and She is destined to finish the work She has been assigned to do. There are many churches with the name, "The Church of God" but they range all up and down the spectrum with SIN of all kinds. If you want two or three wives some of them will permit you to have them, if you want to gamble some will allow this, if you want to smoke, chew or dip some will be okay with this. You can wear enough jewelry to look as though you just climbed out of someone's tackle box and that is okay as long as it is

not gaudy, whatever that is. The Church of God of the Bible, the one Jesus purchased has standards of holiness which measure up to the Word of God. It does not compromise the Bible Teachings to please some of the members that think they are unnecessary and foolish. Some that have taken the covenant to become members of The Church of God (of Prophecy), The Church of God (of Charleston), The Church of God (Cleveland) and The Church of God of North Carolina and have put their jewelry back on over the covenant that they have taken have violated their covenant. They are covenant breakers and will certainly not be permitted into the world prepared by Jesus for those who love Him. Please notice that I have not said a wedding ring will be responsible for someone not making Heaven their home if they are not members by covenant. The covenant makes one responsible to God for that covenant and no one can excuse you after you have entered into it. It is like the marriage covenant in many ways, the covenant is what makes you and your spouse ONE, not the preacher doing the ceremony. If you choose another after you have taken the covenant then it makes you a covenant breaker and you cannot be saved as long as you continue to violate the covenant. Don't promise God you will not wear jewelry and then put it on, it will make you a covenant breaker if you do.

His Church will look for ways to please Him and walk close by His side in these "Last Days" not ways to adjust the Church teachings to fit our life style. Today it seems almost everyone is living in double marriage and that is not a reason to dislike everyone and work against them. We are to love them, but we

best tell them the truth and teach them that it is still forbidden by the Bible. The world is looking for someone to compromise with sin but we must not, yet we are to teach this in love and kindness so that we will not send them off to look for comfort elsewhere. Remember the Church Teachings are Bible Teachings, all 31 of them plus the rest of the Bible. Do you believe this is true? If not you must find out why and make changes to accommodate your true beliefs. I believe all of the teachings and desire to faithfully practice ALL of them to the very best of my ability. This is a "who so ever will" work and no one will be made to adhere to the teachings of the Church and Bible. It is an ALL volunteer force in this Army of God! No one is drafted, but many are called by the Lord to come away from sin and serve the Lord with gladness and those that do never want to look back. It is a walk away from SIN and hand in hand with Jesus we walk together for His glory and honor. He is coming for His Church without blemish or wrinkles and the spots will all be washed away by His blood.

He has called us to love one another as Christ has loved us and this is the key to successful living for Him.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. Ephesians 5:1-2

When we truly love Him then it makes it much easier to let go of the world and hold on to Christ in everything. Many people are having a hard time because they do

not want to surrender their life unto Him in order to live a victorious life without the vices and sins of this world. Bishop M. A. Tomlinson used to say that if we find someone that will not give up their rings for the Lord then when we look closer we will find other sins as well. During my years of pastoring I have found that to be true. Members of The Church of God who have taken the covenant and then want their rings back have other problems too. It takes a covenant breaker to put on the jewelry that they at first were so willing to remove from their body. It did not take so terribly long for Ananias and Sapphira to ponder over their promise and pledge to God to decide it would be better to hold back some of the price of the land. She was only three hours behind Ananias in making the same mistake and both of them fell dead at Peter's feet. They had promised God and then reneged on it, thinking it would be okay. Many men today in the Church make promises and pledges to God only to forget them almost as soon as they are made thinking it will be okay but it is not okay. Accountability is necessary and a very important virtue for The Church of God. You can't go off on your own with no accountability and expect God's blessings because they will not come to those who do as their conscience dictates to them to do.

For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprove are made manifest by the ➔

light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Ephesians 5:9-21

He will return for a Church that is pure and undefiled by the world, His Church, not by name only, but by His holiness and righteousness pure and unspotted. Many used to preach this and they were excited about it but lately there are hardly any churches that believe this. In my many years of preaching this message I have seen many give up on the holiness and purity of God's Church and they simply say now, "No one can expect these things to happen anymore", because the world has changed and it has, but God never changes and His Word never changes. Be of good cheer and courage—God is not mocked and He will deliver a Church to Jesus without spot or blemish.

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it

should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:26-32

Don't you ever believe that Noah built the Ark by himself? No, God sent him helpers and workers to host the beams into their place, and as they did this, no doubt they mocked him and said discouraging words to him. They probably asked him about the water that was to make it float, maybe how deep will it be? Do you really think it will float? How long will it be on the water? All of their mockery did not stop Noah from building the Ark. Will you stop working on The Church of God, because some do not believe in It anymore? When they say, "No one can measure up to the Bible standard anymore" or they say, "We live in a different time now we must preach a more liberal message if we want to win people". This idea was promoted back in the early 90's and ended in the Church splitting again into several factions which are now all struggling with financial deficiencies and turmoils unknown since the early 1920's. Instead of growth it has resulted in the sale of many church properties in order to float the budget of the various headquarters. The records of these groups do not reflect the TRUTH, but rather the best efforts are made

to hide the actual size and accomplishments of these groups in the United States. There is growth in some of the countries of the world, but there is little to be realized in finances from them due to their poor economy. You can give out rice and other foods and gain great numbers of recipients who claim to be with you, but wait until the rice runs out and see what happens then. If your members are serving because of rice, they will also leave because of rice! Let's be real about The Church of God and be true to Her doctrine and biblical principles even if we have smaller numbers to report. Our reports must be honest and correct instead of inflated and projecting growth that is simply not there. God will not reward His Church because of numbers, but because of sincere holy vessels of honor that reflect His glory in the House. A glorious Church will probably not be the biggest, only the ONE that He has perfected through His shed blood and His Word. God is not playing with His Church, are YOU? Soon the God we serve will say, "Son go get your Bride" and it will be over because His Bride will have made Herself ready and the marriage supper will be the next stop. Do you believe this or has it become just a fable to you in your mind? This is an important Bible Truth that we must grip and hold to; because it is what the Bible says will happen regardless of the lies told us by the theologians who in many cases cannot tell you how to be saved. They don't know Jesus and have never been introduced to Him yet they have spent their lives in college learning His Word. There is nothing wrong with college unless you do not know the Lord when you go. It is important to know Him!

Yes, He is coming back for the Church that He is building, not the ones built by man. No mention of mega churches are ever found in the **Bible**, they are the false churches found on television run by men who live in fine mansions and fly the world in their jet airplanes. The Bible Churches all had their small numbers and were usually hated by the communities in which they operated. The love for Jesus usually was from the few whose lives were touched by Him raising their loved ones from the dead or healing their withered arms or legs. When He told them how to live and how to love one another, they usually turned and went another way just as they do now. If we could only get man to fall in love with Jesus today, then they would not want to hurt each other or say all manner of evil against one another, but they would want to love just as He loved.

Now when we look at the Word of God and then look for the Church to fit the pattern we grow discouraged, because we do not see the Church as being perfect for Him at this time. Let us examine the scripture at this point.

But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son,

the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath
1 John 2:20-27

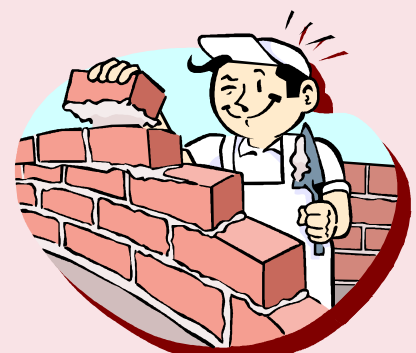
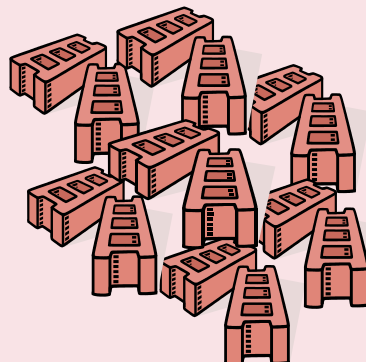
We must have divine revelation for the Church to be revealed, and when we have it, and it remains, no man can deceive us or take us away from the vision. Do you have a vision of The Church of God? If you don't have a vision, then why not get one from God today? The TRUTH does not come from man, but from God!

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. Revelation 19:7-9

She will be ready without question! Do you believe this? If so, get on board now and let's believe and know that our God is not mocked! Christ only organized ONE Church, He only purchased ONE Church with His blood and He is only coming back for ONE CHURCH, the one He is building now. He did not call us to build His Church, because He said, *"...I will build my Church."*

"BE OF GOOD COURAGE—GOD IS NOT MOCKED" □

SPECIAL THANKS TO "ALL" who are Participating in the **Brick Plan.
YOUR HELP IS
GREATLY APPRECIATED!**





LIFT UP THE HANDS

Nellie Lowe
ABM Secretary

I live in the Northwest. Utah to be exact. This year we have experienced an extremely cold winter. We know that around mid to late October we are going to begin to see the geese fly south. Every year I look toward the sky and look for the geese in their familiar V formation headed south to get out of the cold. But I really look forward to hearing that familiar honking and seeing that familiar V formation in the spring when they come back to us. This signifies to me an end of the cold dark days of winter. If you haven't guessed, I'm not a fan of the cold.

I'm sure most have heard the reason for the geese flying in the V formation. Scientists have discovered that as each bird flaps their wings it creates an uplift for the bird following immediately behind. Therefore, many birds fly together in order to give themselves a greater flying range than if they flew on their own. When the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the formation and another goose takes its place in flying point. And that constant honking, is their way of encouraging those in front to keep up their speed.

But, this is the part that I find really interesting. When a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshots, etc. and falls out of formation two other geese fall out of formation with that goose and follow it down and lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies. Only then do they launch out on their own toward their destination. Now the reason this interests me is this....

Hebrews 12:13 ***“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make***

straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”



“Lift up the hands which hang down.” Many times in our journey, as servants of the King striving to reach Heaven, we may get tired, sick or discouraged. Or we know someone in this condition. It is our responsibility to encourage one another, be constantly vigilant and watchful for our fellow traveler. Letting them know that ***“The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up those that be bowed down.”*** Psalm 145:14.

When Joshua did as Moses commanded and led the Israelites into battle against Amalek and his army, Moses went to the top of the mountain and observed the battle. As long as Moses held up his hand then Joshua's army prevailed but if Moses hand dropped then Amalek prevailed. So Aaron and Hur came along side the tired Moses and held up his hands until “the going down of the sun.” And the Word tells us, “And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.” Exodus 17:5-13

Are we an Aaron and Hur? Can we keep up the hands that are hanging down? Satan is “roaming to and fro seeking whom he may devour.” And discouragement is his best tool. If he can get a person discouraged his

battle is almost won. We need to work at keeping each others hands lifted up.

I think the saddest commentary on Jerusalem is in Ezekiel 22. The Lord recounts all of the corruption and sins of Israelites and pronounces judgement on them. Then in verse 30 the Lord says, "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; BUT I FOUND NONE." There was no one to make intercession. No one strong enough to be a shield for another. No one strong enough to stick with the fallen and discouraged and stand in the gap for them.

The Assembly Band Movement is for the care and support of the membership of the Church. As a member, I am to have compassion for my fellowman. Enough compassion to stay with anyone in need. So many times when we ask for someone to help in the membership people think we are asking for money. But many times what is needed is someone willing to go to someone's home and pray with them till the wee hours of the morning. What is needed is for us to recognize when each other is discouraged and give them that lifting hand they need. I carry a note in my Bible that was passed to me in church one Sunday from a dear sister. She looked across the church and saw the

pain on my face (after my father had passed away). Her note simply said "I love you. I'm praying for you. I'm here if you need me." I knew she meant it. I knew I could depend on her if I needed to. Satan's job is not 9-5 and neither is ours.

I am surprised in this day of so much technology, cell phones, e-mail, Instagram, snap chat, etc., that so many of us can't get or give a word of encouragement. Give someone a call. Send an e-mail or text. Sometimes all it takes to encourage a person is to hear that someone is thinking about them and praying for them. It is time, way past time, we started to "lift up the hands that hang down" and "stand in the gap" for each other. **I need you. You need me.**



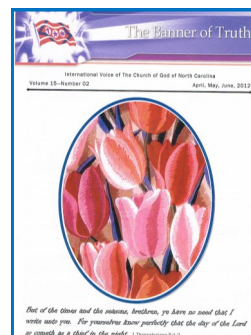
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Keep On Building

Cathy Elder
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John 19:30, 34 *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.*

I Corinthians 15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The salvation of the soul of a man and The Church of God are precious in the sight of God, because they came with a great price – the blood of His only begotten son, Jesus Christ. The Easter season is a wonderful time to consider just what Christ did by coming into this world as a baby and growing up and giving His life to die on a cruel cross as the supreme sacrifice for souls and for His church.

When Christ finished His work and ascended back to the Father, He sent the Holy Ghost back to His disciples to dwell in them and help them to accomplish the work He had left for them to do; and not only to them, but to the generations to come after them. The Holy Ghost is still present in this world today in the lives of those who are sanctified. The work of the church has been carried on by a faithful few down through the ages and is still going on today with a faithful few. But we are admonished by the scriptures to take heed unto ourselves and to all the flock. That which came with such a great price must be tended to with great care.

I Corinthians 3:9-11 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

There is a whole lot of building going on all around this world today, both in the natural and in the more spiritual sense.

As the church, we must be concerned about the spiritual building that is taking place. In **Matthew chapter 24**, Jesus warned the disciples to take heed that no man deceive them. How much more diligent should we be today as the end is upon us. It is up to us to preserve God's master plan and take heed how we build thereupon. We are living in perilous times where men have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. We cannot nor must we try to help finish up the great work before us without the power of the Holy Ghost working in us, through us and all around us to show us the way! We need the Holy Ghost to empower us to keep on building.

The enemy hates the program of God. Just as he has always worked diligently to hinder and even stop it, so he still does today and will all the way to the end. He knows what his end will be and that there is but a short time to work.

But somebody must and will count the cost and keep on building God's way in spite of all the tactics of the enemy to stop it! Many who once embraced the truths of God's Word now say that we were wrong all those years. No, we were not wrong to uphold the truth then and neither are we wrong to uphold it now! But, there is a price to pay. We will not be among the popular or the largest crowd in order to take a stand for what is right. We will be ridiculed, despised, and rejected in these later days, but so was Jesus Christ, the savior of the world and so was the early church. He was rejected by His own. He said we would be also. Will you be among the faithful few to pay the price and keep on building?

Recently I was inspired to read the book of Nehemiah. In doing so, I found a wonderful example of leadership in the building program of God. In the first chapter of the book, the man Nehemiah was

concerned about the remnant of Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and about Jerusalem. When he learned that the remnant was in great affliction and reproach, that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and that the gates were burned with fire, he was very troubled. The Bible says that he sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven. In **verse 11** he made an earnest plea to the Lord to hear his prayer and the prayer of His servants who desire to fear God and prosper (to push forward). How concerned are we today about the fact that the harvest is so great, but the labourers are so few. The Word of God is being attacked on every side, retranslated to fit certain life styles and twisted around completely. Christians are losing their lives because of His Word.

In the 2nd chapter of Joel, verse 1 the Bible says ***Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: verse 12 Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning:... verse 17 Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, ...*** How many people can you list who are lost without God? How many churches are having Holy Ghost revivals? There are many things to be concerned about today. I say it's time to follow Nehemiah's example and call on God for a moving of His Spirit among us all.

Nehemiah then made arrangements to go to Jerusalem to repair the wall and the gates. But of course this was not without opposition. Anytime you set out to do anything for God, you can expect opposition. They tried to trick him, but the Lord took care of it. The Holy Ghost will lead us around the traps of the enemy if we will stay in tune with Him.

Nehemiah 2:19-20 ***But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the King? Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.***

They knew the names of their enemies and we know the name of ours today. It is the devil himself straight from the pits of hell who has always tried and will

always try to hinder and stop the program of God! He uses whosoever will allow him to.

Ephesians 6:12 ***For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.***

The suicide bombers, the harmful gases used by the Syrian leader on his own people and other wicked rulers of this world have become vessels for the devil to overtake and use to destroy many innocent lives.

I Peter 5: 8-9 ***Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour:***



We know our enemy today, but greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world. We are more than conquerors through Him!

Nehemiah and the workers faced much ridicule because of the work. It was even said that if a fox were to walk on the wall they had built that it would break it down. It is said of us today that we are so small and weak, how can we possibly be the Church. What can be accomplished by such a small group. But the Bible says that they prayed and kept on building ***...for the people had a mind to work.*** (Chapter 4:6) When their enemies heard that the wall was being built, they were very angry and conspired to fight against them. Nevertheless, they prayed unto God. Then Nehemiah said to the people in v 14 ***... Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.*** God intervened and they were able to keep on building. They had a tool in one hand and a weapon in the other. This was a great work and they were separated one far from another. Does that sound familiar? Though we are few and far between, we must keep on building. Each time they became weary, God came on the scene and strengthened their hands for the work. We are not just fighting for ourselves, but for our sons and daughters and spouses. We must maintain the teaching of the pure doctrine though the enemy fights it on every hand.

Christ established His Church while He was here and

said these words in Matthew 16:18 *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Again, we are fighting to preserve the doctrine and to see souls saved.*

Jude 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

How do we pull them out of the fire? Jesus said the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church. A gate is something which is stationary. It does not move. As the church continues to be built, and as she prays to God for souls, she will go to the gates of hell and pull those souls out of the fire to salvation!

In the sixth chapter of Nehemiah, we find that **the wall was finished**. When their enemies heard that the wall was finished, they were very sad because they perceived that this work was wrought of God. Then Ezra the scribe read the book of the law to the people and the Levites caused the people to understand the reading and the people wept. Then it was declared to be a holy day unto the Lord. They were instructed to eat, drink and be glad because they had understood the law and not to be sorry; ... *for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*

One day, our work on this earth will be finished. It will be worth all the sacrifices made to be a part of God's program. Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning.

Psalm 126: 5-6 *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*

What a day that will be! **Keep on building til He comes!** □



FROM THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL OVERSEER

Thurman Lowe

Hobbs, NM



We have been very busy since we visited the churches in the fall. We made the trip to Mexico and it was very good being able to meet the people in Mexico and make new friends. When we returned from Mexico my wife's mother was hospitalized we spent nineteen days at hospital before the Lord took her home.

We have sold our business and property and we are in fast mode to clear everything out so new owners can take possession the first of April. I wanted to visit all the churches again before the assembly but I don't know how all the time will work out for us. We also have to go and clear out my mother in laws house so we can sell it. With all that is going on I'm trusting God to help us get all this done so we can get to work for our Lord.

Pray for us as we work for the Lord and get our personal affairs in order. I know nothing is impossible for our God. Our desire is to please God and build His church for His glory.



I will be sending out letters to the pastors soon and we would like to encourage all our pastor to **make plans to attend the assembly in Dunn, NC.**

We appreciate the support and love all has showed us as we travel and visit. We pray for each one daily that God will bless you and strengthen all of us as we work for God.



April 13-16, 2017 - Southern District Conference - Haiti

April 21-23, 2017 - Philippines National Convention

April 24-28, 2017 - Philippines National Youth Camp

June 21-25, 2017 - National Convention - Haiti

July 17-25, 2017 - BTI - Dunn, North Carolina - (Terms 1,2, & 3)

July 27-29, 2017 - International Assembly - Dunn, North Carolina

****USA Family Camp**** To be announced soon!

October 30-November 3, 2017 - Western District Conference - Haiti

November 26-December 17, 2017-BTI (Terms 1 & 2 Spanish)-Kinchil, Yucatan,
Mexico

December 1-3, 2017 - Dominican Republic National Convention



J. Wendell Lowe
Overseer of Montana

NOT REVENGE, BUT FORGIVENESS

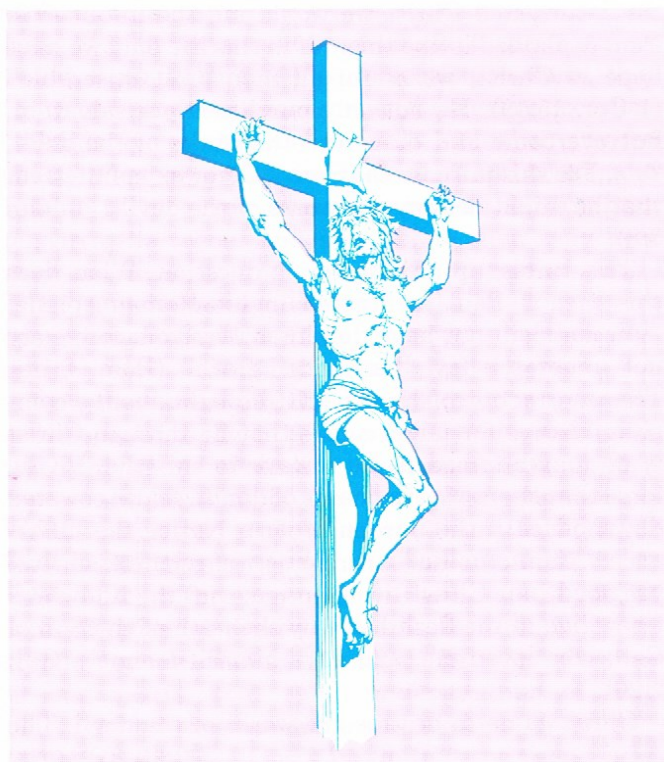
Golgotha was not considered the place of prayer, but Jesus prayed. According to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 23, verse 34, Jesus' first word from the cross was a prayer for His crucifiers, "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. . . ." For our Saviour to pray under such circumstances is perhaps the most amazing thing about this *first word*. The people of that day knew very little about the forgiveness of injuries. The Romans worshipped "Revenge" as a god. "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, blood for blood" was a way of life for the Hebrews. Yet, Jesus' prayer rang out on that black day and resounded to heaven asking the Father to forgive those wicked men. He did not pray for revenge, but for forgiveness.

Crucifixion was the invention of depraved minds, determined to make death as painful as possible. First, an upright was planted in the ground. Then the transverse piece was placed on the ground and the arms of the condemned were tied to it. A nail ripped through the palm of the right hand, then the

left. Next, by means of a rope or ladder, the victim nailed to his cross bar was lifted and made fast to the upright. A long spike was plunged through crossed feet to pin them to the timber. A strange *mercy* had devised a sort of saddle on the upright to rest a bit of the weight of the dying body. There the crucified was left to hang for hours. No one ever thought of this as the perfect place of prayer. Instead, it was usual for the victims of that horrible doom, frenzied with pain, to shriek, entreat, curse, and spit at the spectators. Therefore, it must have been shocking this day as Jesus only prayed for His persecutors.

Let us try and reconstruct that scene. In the original Greek the phrase, "Then Jesus said," might be changed to read, "Then Jesus kept saying," for the verb is imperfect which indicates continuous action in the past time. So with this explanation in mind, arriving at the place of the skull, Jesus looked around and prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." As the centurion pressed Him to the ground, tying His arms to the crosstimber, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." When the blunt spikes ripped through each quivering palm, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." As they elevated Him to the upright and as the huge spike tore through His feet, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." When the crowd screamed curses and mocked Him, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." When the soldiers parted His garments and cast lots for them, He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." That prayer must have stormed the Throne of Grace many times that day as Jesus kept up a steady barrage of burning appeal, "Father, forgive them. . . ." He sought no revenge, only forgiveness. What an example for us today!

Let us learn well the lesson put forth here. No other religion except Christianity teaches that one should pray for his enemies. Forgiveness and forgiving was made possible through Christ's suffering at Calvary. When we come to God as lost sinners, God, for Christ's sake, forgives us our sins. How beautiful that peace of God as it rushes into our hearts, replacing the great load of guilt. We have also been included in His prayer. Because of His prayer and because of His love, we, too, stand forgiven, washed by His blood. How marvelous!



NOT REVENGE . . .

Forgiveness brings with it a **pardon**. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). That pardon states that we are released, set free from the penalty of sins; praise God! Because of Jesus it is an unconditional release. When we cry out for mercy the Father is moved with compassion and forgives us and sets us free. God seeks no revenge upon us as sinners. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9)."

Now let us turn the spotlight upon our hearts in search of a spirit of revenge or grudge we may be holding against a fellow man. Jesus said, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14, 15). Jesus makes it very clear that in order for us to stand forgiven, we must also forgive. Too many times the Christian will allow the little stinging remarks made by another to take root in his heart until bitterness and malice *fouls* his spirit. It is too easy to forget that we have been forgiven for a much more serious condition than anyone will ever commit against us. Just as God had mercy upon us and forgave us, so must we have mercy upon others, even if they wrong us. Paul's instructions to the Ephesians also sheds some light on this: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31, 32).

You may think that you have been hurt so deeply that you just cannot forgive and forget, but God's grace is sufficient. Oh, how we need to seek God and lay our hearts bare before Him, allowing His grace to work that forgiving power in our lives. I read a testimony of a lady in California whose daughter was raped and strangled to death. The lady was a Christian, and she said she felt the bitterness and anger settling upon her. However, she began to pray and ask God for power to forgive the young man who committed the hideous crime against her daughter. God's grace began to work in her life. She received permission to correspond with the man in prison. She told him of Christ's love and that she loved him and wanted to see him saved. Later an arrangement was made through the prison chaplain for her and her husband to meet the young man. The chaplain said it was like a reunion of long lost friends as they stood

weeping and embracing one another. If God's power is strong enough to bring peace and forgiveness to a parent who has undergone such a traumatic experience as that, then surely God can help us to lay aside the grudges, the bitterness, the anger and the hurt we may have been carrying around for so long. Let us look at the example of Christ. Forgiving our fellow man is not optional with us; it is *a must*. We must forgive him just as God has forgiven us—totally, without reservation, unconditionally.

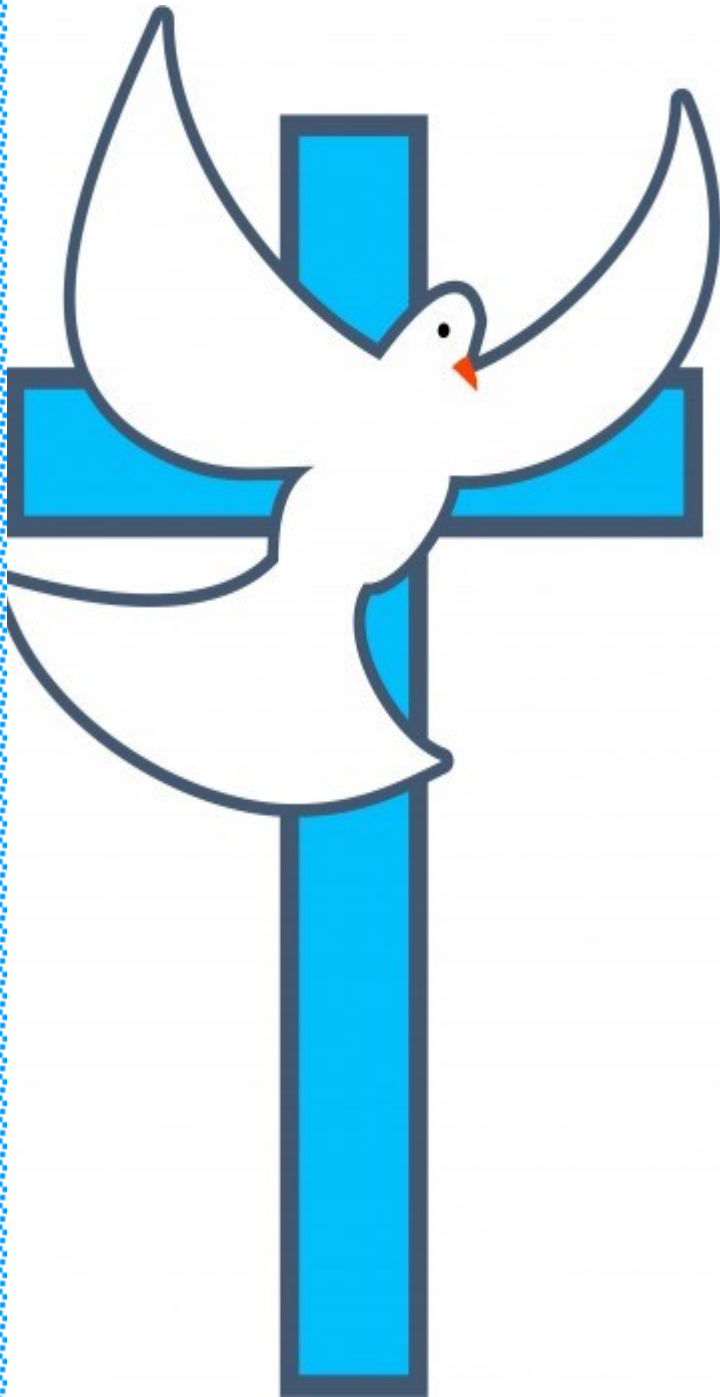
I believe the unforgiving spirit we carry around can and does hinder our prayers from being answered. Jesus said, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." But Jesus did not stop there. He went on to say, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:24, 25). It is therefore, necessary that we not only forgive our brother, but also to pray for him who has wronged us.

We need to start today—not tomorrow—and run a checklist of feelings toward our fellow man. Can we say that all is clear between us and our brother? Are there any long-held grudges or offenses which we have not truly, from the heart, forgiven? If so, let us look once more at the supreme example, the Author and Finisher of our faith who prayed that mighty prayer of forgiveness for those who so severely mistreated Him. Let us pray until we can truly say to everyone who has ever wronged us, "Through the grace of God I love you and I pray God's blessing upon you." If we fail to do that we will miss that great event yet to come—the resurrection of the just.

If man can believe that God created the man Adam from dust, why should he find it difficult to believe that God can bring back into existence man who has returned to dust?

The Story - an Easter Poem

by: Jim Price



About 2,000 years ago God sent His
only Son
To live a life exemplary
of how it should be done.

He loved, He healed, He lived the
truth,

They found no fault in Him,
But darkness schemed for His demise
In a battle it would not win.

This Man who came to save the world
Was betrayed and crucified.
He endured excruciating pain
On an old rugged cross where He died.

But the story doesn't end there
For in 3 days He rose again,
Fulfilling all the prophecies
Of how He would conquer sin.

He's still alive and living
In the world today,
And His grace is sufficient for all our
needs
As we travel along life's way.

If just by faith you'll accept Him,
He'll never leave you alone.
You see, it was for you He died,
Your sins He did atone.

Now He's preparing a place for you
And thru Him your salvation is sure,
Just give your heart to Jesus Christ
And Heaven will be yours.



Bible Training Institute
Jannece Colon
BTI Director



Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This year, just prior to our International Assembly, we will be holding our BTI—Bible Training Institute. We will be providing Terms 1, 2, and 3. BTI is a chance to get together with others in The Church of God of North Carolina in great fellowship with each other, as well as, to gain knowledge and understanding of the Bible and The Church of God.

We have a great staff that has been praying for BTI and the students. We are looking so forward to having you join us this year! The dates for BTI are July 17-25, 2017 in Dunn, North Carolina. It will be held at the International Headquarters at 310 W. Edgerton St. Our schedule starts at 8:00 a.m. with Breakfast followed by Morning Devotion at 8:30 a.m. in our Chapel. Classes will run from 9:00-12:00 noon with a lunch from 12:00-1:00, followed by the continuation of classes that will start at 1:00 p.m. and run through 5:00 p.m. The fee for this year's BTI is \$90.00. It will cover your breakfast, lunch, BTI book, class supplies, and class recognition. BTI is well worth every penny spent! We are looking forward to a wonderful year! Hope you can join us!

Our theme this year is: ***Here Am I; Send Me!*** Our scripture text is found in ***Isaiah 6:8***. Now is the time to plan on being at BTI! It only takes a \$25.00 deposit to hold your spot. If \$90.00 is a challenge for you to pay all at once, no problem, break it down into monthly payments with your final payment being due when you arrive at BTI. We are working on trying to find affordable arrangements for our students, but I do need to have numbers to make this more obtainable.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me, Jannece Colon at 575-631-3412 or by email at jc@thechurchofgodofnc.com. We want you to be able to attend, so please let us know what we can do to assist to make sure you are able to join us!

Here Am I; Send ME!! - Isaiah 6:8

Please be in Prayer! We are taking BTI Internationally in 2017! We will be holding BTI in Kinchil, Yucatan, Mexico in November and December. Participants will be able to take part in Term 1 and once completed, Term 2.

BIBLE TRAINING INSTITUTE

Mail Application to:
The Church of God of N.C.
P.O. Box 2109
Dunn, NC 28335

Phone: (910) 891-5017
Fax: (910) 891-5693



Bible Training Institute 2017
Location:
310 W. Edgerton St.,
Dunn, NC 28334

Dates: July 17-25, 2017
Times: 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.

I hereby make application for admission to Bible Training Institute

_____ **Term 1** _____ **Term 2** _____ **Term 3**

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Gender: _____ Birthdate: _____

Age: _____ (Students must be 12 years of age or older, unless granted permission by BTI Director)

*****16 years of age and under, must be accompanied by a parent or guardian!!*****

Name of Nearest Relative: _____

Phone: _____ Address: _____

Marital Status: _____ Single _____ Married _____ Separated _____ Divorced _____ Other

Are you Saved? _____ Are you Sanctified? _____ Are you filled with the Holy Ghost? _____

Are you a member of The Church of God of NC? _____ Yes _____ No

Where? _____

For what special work are you preparing? _____

If a minister, what license do you hold? _____

If in the ministry, in which state are you presently working? _____

Are you physically and mentally able to take this course? _____

Education: Elementary _____ years, Secondary _____ years, College _____ years

(No certain amount of education is required, but you should be able to read and write.)

I do hereby pledge myself to be loyal to all the rules as outlined by Bible Training Institute.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

A deposit of \$25.00 is required with the application (Non-Refundable).

Total BTI Fees are \$90.00 per participant

He is Risen...

"THE BANNER OF TRUTH"

310 W. Edgerton St.
P.O. Box 2109
Dunn, NC 28335-2109

Address Service Requested

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