



McCLAIN MINISTRIES

Since 2000 A Monthly Christian Newsletter Publication

January 2009



REBIRTH NEW LIFE

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Happy Birthday



Denise Jones

INAUGURATION DAY



The inauguration will take place on January 20, 2009 in Washington D.C. on the steps of the United States Capitol.



The presidential inauguration is the official day that the President of the United States is sworn into office. The purpose of the inauguration is to honor the incoming president with formal ceremonies, including: a Presidential Swearing-in Ceremony, an Inaugural Address, and an Inaugural Parade. Let us also make it a day of prayer.

MELVA'S CORNER

GOD CARES FOR YOU!

Tapping the Source of Power



Central Truth: God gave us the capacity to overcome; we are more likely to do so by consciously seeking Him rather than by fleeing in our confusion.

Most of us have areas of life in which we need to grow. We need more patience. We want greater self-discipline. We long to strengthen our families, contribute to our friends and make a difference.

Then come the setbacks. She doesn't get the educational opportunities she had dreamed of and sought. He is seriously hurt in a car accident. A business fails. There is a chronic illness. Some terrible personal tragedy strikes.

Believe it or not, growth and setbacks seem to be related. All sorts of studies point to it. Most people who survive great personal trauma aren't destroyed by it. They survive. They learn. They develop still-closer personal relationships. They grow from their experience.

Most of us know the term post-traumatic stress, but some experts in the field of mental health are now using the term post-traumatic growth. They point to people who emerge from severe life crises feeling enlarged rather than diminished.

They speak of spiritual development, stronger personal relationships, greater personal strength, deeper appreciation of life, and clarity about priorities.

"We're talking about a positive change that comes about as a result of the struggle with something very difficult," Dr. Lawrence Calhoun of the University of North Carolina said. "It's not just some automatic outcome of a bad thing." To be sure, some people bring a fuller sense of security in life to a trauma. They have a better support system. They learn how to rely more on God than self.

I know people who illustrate this phenomenon. A woman who survived a painful divorce from a cruelly abusive man is doing well in a career she never planned to have and caring for two children who have been protected from what she once had to endure. A man who wasn't supposed to survive widespread cancer seems perfectly healthy seven years after his diagnosis. A woman who didn't think she could survive her husband's death is happily married to a man who felt equally devastated at the loss of his wife two years earlier.

God made body, mind, and spirit to be marvelously resilient. Injury or illness, divorce or bankruptcy, relocation or a cherished person's death – each has the capacity to crush or dignify, disorient forever or reorient to the people and things that matter most. Since God gave us the capacity to overcome, we are more likely to do so by consciously seeking Him than by fleeing in our confusion. Trust Him . . . just trust Him! For He cares for you.

Scriptural References:

"So be humble under God's powerful hand. Then he will lift you up when the right time comes. Give all your worries to him, because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6-7 ERV) 📖

Higher Mountains... Higher Praises

I'M STILL STANDING

Jannice Horton

Looking back over the year I have a lot to be thankful for and to give God praise. Just to name a few, this time last year I was leaving one job and beginning a new one, God healed me during my 1st mass and communion in a catholic service, my eldest son became owner of a sub-way franchise, my daughter had a successful surgery, my 2nd son graduated from high school, my brother-in-law had a successful heart bypass surgery.

The Spirit of the Lord has just bathed me in his love like I never experience before and I long for more, since I have been doing the 21 day fast (3 years now) at the beginning of each year, this year I was successful in completing it. I got my supervisor to join me in the fast she was successful in completing it. This was her first time and we are doing it again this year together. I mentioned the fast to my sisters and they decided to join me this year. God is good! and last but certainly not least all my sisters and I spent a wonderful weekend (12/13/08) together, just us girls hung-out and enjoyed each other. Praise God from whom all blessing flow. Peace!

MIGHTY GRATEFUL

Mary Simpson

God has blessed me in such a mighty way that I just can't thank Him enough. He blessed me through two surgeries and my son Charles through back surgery all without any complications. Each time I came home He allowed my 86 year young mother to be able to care for me as though she was 40! He continues to bless her with good health daily. As Beverly Crawford sing in her song of worship, "If he does nothing else for me He has blessed me enough."

A Prayer for Our Nation



A PRAYER FOR OUR NATION

Almighty God, You have given us this good land for our heritage. We humbly ask You that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of Your favor and glad to do Your will. Bless our land with honorable endeavor, sound learning and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties and fashion into one united people the multitude brought here out of many nations and tongues. Endow with the Spirit of wisdom those to whom in Your Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that through obedience to Your law we may show forth Your praise among the nations on earth. In time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble do not allow our trust in You to fail. Lord we entrust the United States of America to Your loving care. You alone are the true source of our cherished rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Reclaim this land for Your glory and dwell among Your people. Send Your Spirit to touch the hearts of our nation's leaders. Open their minds to the great worth of human life and the responsibilities that accompany human freedom. Remind Your people that true happiness is rooted in seeking and doing Your Will. Amen.

WEBSITE OFFERING

www.mcclainministries.org

FAITH MOVES MOUNTAINS – DOUBTS
CREATES THEM
(Excerpts)

FLEECE OR FAITH

I hear people reference the Gideon story now and again, but I'm not sure they do so with the full awareness of all that is going on in it. That is why I have spent so much time developing the story with some degree of detail. I most often hear people tell of "putting a fleece before the Lord" in ways that smack of flakiness rather than faith, I'm afraid! "Lord, if you want us to buy that house we just saw, make the phone ring in the next ten minutes." "God, if you want me to ask that girl for a date, make her look up and see me while I'm staring at her." "Lord, if this is the car you want me to buy, let the next thing the salesman says to me be about the automobile's sound system."

In the real world, I understand insecurity. I know about wishing that I knew exactly what to do or say, just whose advice to heed, and what guaranteed approach will lead someone I love to accept Christ or return to him. I don't think the story of Gideon is meant to encourage me to seek for signs or to put God's patience to the test.

Gideon already knew what he was supposed to do. God had spoken – and spoken very clearly – on that point. Gideon's fleece showed his fear and lack of trust. Come to think of it, Gideon's fleece was more appropriate to someone who believed in Baal than someone who had heard from God. And I wouldn't be surprised at all if this superstitious test derived from the polluted and weakened faith of his family rather than from the Holy Spirit who had come upon Gideon.

So why did God "cooperate" with an unspiritual demand? He was more interested in rescuing his Chosen People than in arguing with and teaching Gideon in this crisis moment!

So what, if anything, can we learn from Gideon? Let's go back to the process of his evolving relationship with God and see.

First, we should never be shocked at the spiritual chaos in our world. It isn't God's fault that the world is fallen and under a curse. He neither willed nor created war, tyrants, crime, divorce, lies, slander, or death. He is not the source of our human pain, but he does often use our anguish to turn our hearts to seek Him.

Second, humility before the Lord is certainly the only posture truly appropriate to any of us. Like Gideon, when we hear God speak into our confusion and distress, it is more appropriate to think "What are mortals that you would pay attention to our cries!" than "What took you so long?"

Third, we must be careful not to drag our feet in obeying God or to insist on this or that "sign" before we follow Christ. During His personal ministry, Jesus called those who demanded miraculous signs "a wicked and adulterous generation."

Furthermore, he told them that His resurrection from the dead would be the only sign given to them (Matthew 12:39-40). At some point, your demand that God give you a sign beyond Christ's death and resurrection for you is an unholy "putting God to the test" – something Scripture forbids (Deuteronomy 6:16) and Jesus refused to do (Luke 4:12). Jesus said his sheep would hear his voice and follow Him (John 10:27).

Fourth, the first positive step any human being takes toward God is repentance. We break down the heart-idols that have been keeping us from Him. That we have valued

above Him. That have taken us down the path of disbelief and sin. "The kingdom of God is near," said John the Baptist. **"Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15).** Before the kingdom rule of God can become a reality in your life, before you can express God from within, you will have to repent and tear down the idols of money, sex, and power that have been your preoccupation. If you'd prefer to hear it from an apostle of Jesus rather than his forerunner, Peter put it this way: **"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19).** Divine refreshment and the peace that surpasses understanding cannot come to a heart that is stony and impenitent.

Fifth, God's desire is to bless and empower His people by allowing us to walk in the strength of His Holy Spirit. With the same power and energy He projects. On the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection, Peter preached the gospel and **commanded those who had heard Him, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).** I believe baptism is not only important but necessary. Do you know of any command of God that is unnecessary? But baptism is not the heart of the gospel. In fact, baptism is not part of the gospel at all by Paul's definition of the Good News (cf. I Corinthians 15:1-4). Baptism is part of the total life response to the gospel you and I are expected to make. It is important to us as an affirmation of the gospel – our trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as our only hope (Romans 6:1-4). It is important to us as an event of identification with Christ and as an initiation rite into His spiritual body, the church (Galatians 3:27).

The critical element in Christian baptism is not water, however, but the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said that the birth "from above" that allowed one to participate in the kingdom rule of God was a single birth event that involves two elements – water and the Spirit. Water is the easy part. Water is the part we fight over. Water is the part that can drench your body and leave your spirit untouched. The quickening and renewing power in Christian baptism is God the Holy Spirit. Every saved person possesses the Holy Spirit, but the real challenge of a life of faith is to be possessed by the Holy Spirit. To be controlled by the Spirit (Romans 8:9). To be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18b). God doesn't want churches that are insane asylums or cemeteries; he wants churches alive by the power of the Holy Spirit to welcome the undesirable, hurting, and bruised people with whom satan has filled this world – and which most churches won't touch!

Sixth, being a Spirit-filled believer in a Spirit-filled church no more means that you are above temptation or exempt from weakness than Gideon was in his new life after God called him. He still felt insecure at times; so will you. He wanted a fleece-sign before he would be willing to do what God had already told him to do; so might you. He was called and Spirit-filled but still messed up; so can you be.

Seventh, the life of faith means that you trust God to give victories and achieve His holy purposes through you. With your flawed, insecure faith. Through unlikely means. When you are in the minority. The great power of faith never was in Gideon but was in the God who had called him and in whom he had put his trust.

The power of faith in your life is not in your ability to live above discouragement and never fall short of the ideal but is in the God who loves you, delivered you, walks with you, and promises to complete the good work in you that He has begun.

YOUR PAST DOES NOT HAVE TO DETERMINE YOUR FUTURE

“By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient” (Hebrews 11:31).

Talk about an unlikely person for the preacher’s list! Do you know her story? Do you know her history – her “baggage”? Did you note the adjective still before her name in Hebrews 11:31? “By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomes the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.” Even though there is a sense in which nobody can shake his or her past, the story of Rahab proves it doesn’t have to determine your future.

Though it was surely faint and hardly understood at all, Rahab’s heart heard and grasped the call of God in that ancient time. God’s grace was offered to her in the midst of the general unbelief of Jericho and the particular sinfulness of her own life. The tiny opening of her faith allowed God to work great wonders around her and through her. Rahab’s story is an unmistakable testimony to the truth that divine grace, forgiveness, and healing are extended to all – regardless of nationality or ethnic background or personal sinfulness.

If your sin is Rahab’s sin, God’s grace is offered to you. If you are a thief or liar or alcoholic or coke addict, redemption is available to you. NOW!

What saved this woman was not her character but her faith. The thing that made this outsider who had no claim to the promise made to Abraham so long ago into an insider was divine grace. She was not destroyed “with those who were disobedient” because God showed mercy to her – and, for her sake, to her entire family.

And what a marvelous confession of faith she made: “The LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.” Into her gloomy and unfortunate life had come hope that Israel’s God was a God of kindness and compassion to foreigners and aliens. Her faith embraced the possibility that this being known as Yahweh would allow an outsider to everyone else become an insider with Him.

Faith isn’t sight. It seldom has miraculous confirmation. It does not require a ‘fleece.’ It is, instead, the forward-looking capacity of a person to move in a new direction – guided only by a word from God. It is a person’s willingness to advance into an unseen future with more trust in God than in themselves. It is a woman’s courage to receive the positive reorientation of her life by grounding it simply in the word of God’s promise.

WRESTLING WITH GOD

Jacob was a rascal from birth. He grabbed the heel of his twin brother Esau as the two boys were born. “[Jacob] came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob” – a name that literally means “he grasps the heel” or figuratively “he deceives.” Esau became an outdoorsman and a hunter – his father’s favorite; Jacob was favored by his mother, who kept him around the house, taught him to cook, and helped him perfect the art of treachery. In his adult life, Jacob made a career of reaching out to grasp the rights and possessions of others – his brother Esau’s birthright (25:29-34), his father Isaac’s blessing (27:1ff), and his father-in-law Laban’s flocks and herds (30:25-43; 31:1).

In the course of his travels and adventures, two dreams of special importance came to Jacob. As he fled from Isaac’s home because of the anger of Esau, he stopped for the night at Bethel.

There he had the dream of the ladder or ramp or staircase reaching from earth to heaven and had the Abrahamic promise repeated to him – and was given a promise of personal protection by the Lord (28:10-15). He moved on from there to his Uncle Laban's, got his just deserts when he was tricked in a marriage contract, and eventually – with considerable wealth and a large family of his own now – started back to his original home by God's order (31:3).

On the way home to Canaan, God would humble Jacob significantly and teach him the importance of trusting the divine will over human schemes. What a dream at Bethel and twenty years with Laban had not taught him would finally become plain at Peniel.

Afraid for his life as he left Laban and turned toward Esau, he schemed as he traveled about a way to appease his angry brother. He sent messengers to him who were instructed to ask for "favor" in Esau's eyes (32:3-5). This language essentially amounts to an apology and a request to be forgiven. The messengers returned – evidently without making contact with Esau – and reported that Jacob's brother was coming toward him with 400 men (32:6). Terrorized now, Jacob's counter-measure was to divide his people and animals into two groups. The group in the lead would bear the brunt of any assault, and the one in the rear could try to escape (32:7-8). He prayed to the God of his father and grandfather to spare him, his wives, and his children; he based his prayer on the promise of future descendants that had been confirmed to him at Bethel (32:9-12).

He then instructed his servants who would be in front of him the next day to act as emissaries when they met Esau. They were to offer Jacob's animals to him as gifts by which he hoped to pacify his brother's anger (32:13-21).

Now that he had done all that he knew to do in preparation for the imminent encounter with Esau, Jacob was alone with his fears and his God. And he had a dream.

Jacob must have felt quite vulnerable at that moment. His possessions had been forfeited and sent ahead as gifts to Esau. His family was exposed to death. Wealth, family, personal safety – all were now dependant on the care of God. Step by step that night, he was moving toward complete self-surrender. The stage was set for the final event in that process. Alone and afraid, people are likely open to God as they are at no other time in life.

Suddenly a "man" appeared out of the darkness and began to wrestle with Jacob. In this dark night of his soul, it would gradually dawn on him that this was no mere man. God had come to him in human form, as to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre (32:30; cf. 18:1ff).

What a struggle it must have been! In one corner was Jacob, the man of ingenuity and scheming who was used to coming out on top. In the other was God, the covenanting God who wanted Jacob to learn that only those who abandon self-reliance can be exalted by the Lord.

The wrestling match continued until the dawn was about to break (32:24). It might have been called a draw, except for what happened next. And if it had ended that way, what a tragedy it would have been for Jacob.

The conflict brought to a head the battling and groping of a lifetime, and Jacob's desperate embrace vividly expressed his ambivalent attitude to God, of love and enmity, defiance and dependence. It was against Him, not Esau or Laban, that he had been pitting his strength, as he now discovered; yet the initiative had been God's, as it was this night, to chasten his pride and challenge his tenacity.

The wrestling ended when the strange visitor “touched the socket of Jacob’s hip” and dislocated it (32:25). Anyone who has had a shoulder or even a finger dislocated understands why the struggle would end abruptly at that point. As the man determined to leave, Jacob’s plea was this: **“I will not let you go unless you bless me” (32:26).**

What had surely begun to dawn on Jacob about this man’s identity was now plain. If the mere touch of a hand could cripple Jacob, there had been some other point to the wrestling match that night than to find out who was stronger. This was God and no human force can defy Him or overpower Him.

The strong-willed, strong-armed Jacob was changed in an instant from a wrestler who could not be thrown into one who could not stand unaided. He quit fighting and began clinging. . Here was a holy boldness, a holy determination. Here was Jacob at his best. Formerly he had deceived his father to get his human blessing. But he had long since been convinced of the inadequacy of that blessing obtained by those means. Now he wanted a blessing from God and he refused to go until it was given.

The blessing God gave Jacob was a name change that signified his new attitude toward the Lord. The name Jacob means “heel-grabber” or “deceiver,” but it was replaced that day with Israel (32:27-28). Israel means “one who strives with God” or, perhaps, “one for whom God strives.” Jacob had been broken before God, so now he could be Israel. The trickster had been transformed into one who depended on God.

“So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, ‘It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.’ The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip” (Genesis 32:30-31).

Then, ever so slowly, God’s love becomes visible in your suffering. You begin to realize that what you have been going through has taught you what no sermon or theology course ever could: God alone is ultimate and keeping faith with Him means everything.

Suddenly there is a point to what you have been experiencing. It has humbled you and made you sensitive. It has purified you and let you see God more clearly. It has changed your priorities about everything.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mark your calendars for the month of **January 2009**. Please join us and take the next step in your walk with God.

Home Bible Workshop Schedule



January 10

**Home Bible Workshop
5:00 P.M. CST**

“The Power of Intercessory Prayer”

January 24

**Home Bible Workshop
5:00 P.M. CST**

“The Power of Intercessory Prayer”

LET’S CONTINUE TO BRING THESE
GAS PRICES DOWN

Have you contacted your representative
yet?



<https://forms.house.gov/wyr/welcome.shtml>

The Power of Partnership

I am so thankful our paths have crossed. In fact, I believe it was a divine appointment. Over twenty - five years ago, an encounter with God changed my life forever, and I believe He'll do the same for you. I consider it a privilege to have the opportunity to share the truth of His life-changing power and grace with you.

God called me to teach the truth of the Gospel to the body of Christ with special emphasis on God's unconditional love and the balance between grace and faith.

At McClain Ministries we are working diligently to fulfill that call by training others and by developing ministry materials designed to help you in your relationship with the Lord.

Your interest in partnership is evidence of the fact that not only has this ministry affected your life, but you also have a desire to help someone else and believe this message can provide that help. Together, through partnership, you and I can reach thousands of people with the good news of the Gospel.

I believe the message the Lord has entrusted me to deliver will change the way the body of Christ perceives God. However, it doesn't matter how important the message is or how well I deliver it, until the message is sent, no one will hear. Partnership makes the delivery possible.

The Apostle Paul understood his role as the messenger, but he also understood that partnership was not only about what he received but what the partners received as well. In **Philippians 4:19** he wrote, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." This was written by Paul to his partners.

The Philippians were the only ones who supported him after leaving town. In fact, they wanted to give more but didn't have the opportunity. Paul was saying that there is a special provision for those who recognize the power in partnership.

For me, it has never been about "you" supporting "my" ministry. If you're a partner, then consider this our ministry, and together we will accomplish God's will. In fact, I'm an extension of you and your obedience to God. Like Paul, I'm just the messenger that God has called for a specific purpose. If I fulfill that call, the fruit will be evident to everyone, and if I don't, then God will find another messenger and direct your support to that person.

Although I am committed to doing my part to bring revival to America, we have an awesome opportunity to make a big difference in people's lives around the world. Our current projects must be funded by those of us who are more blessed.

Do you remember when you first began to partake of the message from this ministry and how it affected your life? There are thousands just like you all over the world, waiting to hear the truth that will set them free. Will you help us? Together, we can do it.

You may never realize what your gifts accomplish during your life on earth, but I can promise that in eternity, people from all over the world will thank you for your investment in their lives. I want to thank you in advance for your consideration and response.

Please make your gifts payable to, "**McClain Ministries.**" All funds given for Community Outreach projects will be used for that purpose exclusively until the projects are fully funded. Any surplus will then be applied to the McClain Ministries general account.

HERE ARE OUR CURRENT PROJECTS:

Computer Clinic
⌘
Tutoring Classes
⌘
Community Pantry
⌘
National Bulletin Board Service
⌘
Internet Radio Station
⌘

We are pleased to offer the ability to make donations to McClain Ministries online using your credit or debit card. As you all know we have five (5) ongoing projects at this time. And all of our projects are funded through donations. Thank you so much for your support.

Just simply use the link to go to our website at:

<http://mcclainministries.org/>

Then Click onto the **DONATE** button
Enter the amount and update

Scroll to the bottom of the page and
you will see the following narrative.

Thank you for your Support!

✦ **REMEMBER OUR TROOPS** ✦
KEEP THEM IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Father, be our soldiers' strength and their shield from every danger. When troubles come, set them on a high rock out of reach of all their enemies. We implore your help for all our military forces! Empower them to be brave, stouthearted, and courageous. And fill them with hope which sustains them through every day.

—Psalm 28:7, Psalm 27:5, Ps. 28:2, Ps. 27: 14b

www.militaryfamiliespray.com

THE GOD EFFECT OF PRAYER

6:00 P.M. Hour of Prayer



SPEND TIME PRAYING FOR OTHERS

Use this wonderful supernatural tool the Lord has blessed us with **the 6 o'clock hour of power**. This is the time to intercede for the needs of others, the concerns of the ministry, and to pray for the leadership within our community, our nation, and our world.

Hearts throbbing as one, prayers ascending to heaven multiplied by those praying in **one accord**. Sharing burdens, joys, and petitions to bear. Lay all your cares at the foot of the cross and encourage others to do the same. Lives are being changed. Breakthroughs are happening.

PRAY FOR OUR NEW PRESIDENT ELECT – BARACK OBAMA AND HIS FAMILY



Dear God, We pray for optimum health, mental clarity and political prosperity for Barack Obama. We pray that what he lacks in political 'experience' you make up for with supernatural wisdom and power. We also pray that when his enemies come upon him they will stumble and fall; and that your love will fill his heart to the end that "Your will" be done through him.

We pray mightily for his protection. As we plead the Blood of Jesus over him and his family. We ask you to dispatch legions of angels to protect them from all hurt, harm, danger, and from all accidents and incidents as he presides as President of these United States of America. We pray blessings on his family as well. In Jesus' Name, AMEN.

Happy New Year



The Spiritual Significance of a New Year

I have always believed there is a great spiritual significance to new years. The transition from December 31 to January 1 every year reminds us of the truth that there are new beginnings to be had in this life. By God's mercy, we can make a fresh start of things. We can have clean slates. In biblical language: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (II Corinthians 5:17).

Spiritual renewal is the work of the Holy Spirit. When any one of us accepts what cannot be changed about himself and his circumstances, stops blaming others for his plight, and stands ready to move ahead with his life, God will take his surrendered heart and situation in order to begin shaping him anew. He will give constant reassurances that we are not alone in this universe and teach us to minister out of our pains and failures.

Paul had this process of ongoing personal revival in mind when he wrote:

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12-14).

"Corrections and Amplifications"

The Guardian is London's daily newspaper with a twist. It bares its soul daily in a confessional "Corrections and Amplifications" column. Edited by Ian Mayes, it admits mistakes and makes corrections on an average of five items each day. This stands in sharp contrast to the begrudging admissions in some papers — occasionally wrung out only by attorneys threatening suit.

"It strikes you, doing this job, that newspapers are the perfect invention for making mistakes," says Mayes. He has even taken some of his favorite corrections and published them in a book last month.

People, there is a lesson here. Not only newspapers but human beings are the "perfect invention for making mistakes," so we should not be so defensive and brittle about our blunders. I wish I needed to acknowledge only five per day! The wonderful thing is that no mistake, calamity, or sin needs to be considered final and fatal. **Acknowledgment of it brings forgiveness and forgiveness entails the chance for a new beginning.**

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:7-9).

Conclusion

The work of the church (Body of Christ) requires two hands. One hand is gospel proclamation, and the other one is a tangible exhibition of the gospel's power to build right relationships. The greatest barriers to bringing the world to faith are not bad preaching, bad music, and poor acoustics so much as the ugly realities of gossip, negative criticism, an unforgiving spirit and the refusal of Christians to seek reconciliation with one another.

Our failure to have the influence we should on the world lies largely in the fact that we are battling darkness and its grip on the world with one hand tied behind us! I am committed to seeking and living the unity of the Body of Christ with you. I won't talk about you if I have some grievance with you, but you can expect me to talk with you. I plead with you to do the same with one another.

Do you know why it is important for us to pursue the unity of the Body of Christ? It has been commanded by our Lord, for one thing. And it will be necessary to make an impact on a world that is disenchanted with "religiosity" (i.e., the structures and boundaries of traditional denominations) but eagerly searching for "spirituality" (i.e., meaningful truth about God, the destiny of mankind, and how to live wholesomely).

May I suggest a begin-the-new-year strategy for all of us? It is called repentance and is to be taken seriously. But it is not the sort of repentance some of you have tried. It is not the sort of repentance that names and corrects every fault but the type that simply surrenders the control of mind, heart, and life to God - one day at a time. We will call it Life - changing repentance.

Life - changing repentance gives up on trying to reform one's own life, surrenders the control to God, and accepts just enough strength to live a new day every day - one day at a time.

If you are willing to embrace this sort of mind-changing, heart-changing, life-changing repentance, I ask you to stand with me to pray for forgiveness and strength.

O God, our Father, deliver us from the sins to which we so easily succumb.

**Keep us,
From saying one thing with our words and another with our deeds; From criticizing others
for things we allow in ourselves;
From demanding standards for others which we ourselves make no effort to fulfill.**

**Keep us,
From flirting with temptation and playing with fire;
From the indecision that cannot say yes or no and be done with it; From the reluctance to
break with habits we know are wrong.**

**Keep us,
From trying to have the best of both worlds and trying to please both others and you;
From living one way on Sunday and another on Monday;
From anything which would keep us from giving our whole loyalty, our whole allegiance,
our whole life, and whole heart to you. We ask these things in the blessed name of Jesus
Christ. Amen.**

Now that you have prayed for forgiveness, I want you to communicate to the appropriate people what you have done. God already knows! But you may need to squeeze your wife's hand, wink at your Mom, or whisper something to your husband. Maybe you need to go to that person this afternoon or make a phone call to someone. Perhaps you prefer to write a short note to someone.

You may need to be baptized in order to seal and certify your relationship to Christ. The main thing, however, is to formalize what you've done with God and communicate it to at least a few key people in your life who would be thrilled to know about the step you've taken today. Making it known publicly will also help you carry through with the commitments you've made. Today is a new day for you!

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.’” (Lamentations 3:22-24 NRS)



A Prayer For Leaders



**Almighty God, you alone are King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and Ruler of All Earth's Rulers.
Therefore we ask you to . . .**

**Bless all those who have authority over us:
Parents who mold the lives of our children;
Teachers who shape the pliable minds of the young;
Local officials who are trusted to make our communities safe;
And all those who are charged with enforcing our laws.**

**Guide those who most powerfully influence our society:
Men and women who lead our states and nation;
Mayors, governors, representatives, and senators;
Justices who sit on our highest courts;
And those who surround and counsel our President-Elect.**

**Give wisdom to those who make far-reaching decisions:
May they use their influence for what is good, not evil;
May they model integrity and wisdom, not hubris;
May they come to know they serve you, not merely the voting public;
And may they rise above selfishness, pettiness, and partisanship.**

**Provide daily blessings to Barack Obama, soon to be our nation's president:
Protect his health, his family, and his mental powers;
Provide him with wise counselors and personal discernment;
Let him both model compassion and inspire confidence;
And let him lead in paths of justice and integrity.**

**Shape the new President of the United States:
Help him to be the leader of all our people;
May he continue to show wisdom beyond his years;
Lead him to bear great burdens with grace and dignity;
And let him be your instrument for rebuilding a nation's confidence.**

**Then, for those of us who follow, help us to lighten our leaders' burdens:
Remind us to pray for our leaders more and to criticize them less;
Help us to understand how heavy their responsibilities are;
Grant us grace to honor those who lead well and wisely;
And build for all nations a world of peace and hope.**

**In the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen**

KEY MEMBERS OF PRESIDENT ELECT OBAMA'S CABINET AND LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Vice President Joe Biden
Chief of Staff—Rahm Emanuel
Attorney General—Eric Holder
Secretary of State—Hillary Clinton
Secretary of Defense—Robert Gates
Secretary of Veterans Affairs—General Eric K. Shinseki
National Security Advisor—Gen. James Jones
Secretary of Homeland Security—Janet Napolitano
Office of Management and Budget—Peter Orszag
Secretary of Commerce—Bill Richardson
Secretary of Treasury—Timothy Geithner
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development—Shaun Donovan
Secretary of Health and Human Services—Tom Daschle
Secretary of Energy—Steven Chu
EPA Administrator—Lisa Jackson
Secretary of Education—Arne Duncan
Secretary of Interior—Ken Salazar
Ambassador to the United Nations—Susan Rice
Press Secretary—Robert Gibbs
Speech Writer—Jonathan Favreau**



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