

# the encourager

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## An Amazing Bolivian Experience

by Kit Abbey

Hola! It's been a short while since I've been back in the country from my trip to Bolivia. First, I want to thank all of you for your prayers and well wishes for my team and me. We were safe the whole trip and while half of us got sick (including me!), nothing too serious occurred. For the first week, we lived and worked in Torotoro, which is about four hours outside of Cochabamba, in the middle of absolutely nowhere.

It is the most beautiful place in the world. The second week was centered in Cochabamba.

While in Torotoro, my team was split up into two groups: adventure tourism and cultural/agricultural tourism. The adventure group spent lots of time hiking, rappelling, caving, camping, and other outdoorsy activities for which Torotoro is famous. My group visited many farms and micro-irrigation sites as well as some cultural attractions such as a women's weaving co-op. This establishment is autonomous from the municipality and the women are very proud of their work and business. Their mantra is *Warmi Kallpacha*, which in Quechua means "strong women." One afternoon we visited their store, hoping to support their business but never imagined what would happen next. After we had finished shopping,



we found a few Quechua women making bracelets with our names on them on the front steps. Hesitantly, we asked if we could watch and soon, the group multiplied and all generations were present as we sat and learned from the weavers. Everyone was laughing and talking and watching. At first, I hung back and was merely observing; English, Spanish and Quechua were being spoken at the same time. I began to weep - I realized that the mix of languages was to me, music, in its most basic, raw and beautiful form. It was at that moment that I was certain that Music Education is the absolute right major for me to be studying right now, an issue I've been struggling with for the past two years. The Lord made it very clear to me that my passion for unconventional "music" (such as language or noises in nature) needs to be shared with people. I felt so at peace in both my major and choice of college that I just stood there, watching the interaction, and silently crying. I share this story with you because I feel so strongly about the need for unity between cultures and languages. These strong Quechua women taught us about how the whole weaving process works, the significance of different colors and why the practice is central to their culture.

After a week of recognizing several potential tourism sites, we headed back to Cochabamba for

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Here I am with my two songbirds from the orphanage: I taught them the "Fifty Nifty United States" song on the 4th of July and they loved it!

“Bolivia,” cont. from previous page

another week of writing reports for Food for the Hungry, sight-seeing and working at the Baker Orphanage. We had such a blessed time with the girls there—we played dodge ball, hand games, fun group games, read books, painted nails, had a picnic for the 4th of July and did some maintenance work. Those girls blessed us beyond words and I pray that I may return someday to see them again.

I am so privileged and thankful for the chance to return to Bolivia. The country has changed my life. Not only has my knowledge base broadened; my goals and dreams now include Bolivia itself. Thank you all for your prayers and support. We will continue to fundraise for several more months, so if you are still interested please visit [www.messiah.edu/external\\_programs/agape/national\\_international/international.html](http://www.messiah.edu/external_programs/agape/national_international/international.html) and click on “Donate to Student International Missions.” Also, if you never received the emails I sent prior to my trip (as per Messiah’s new policy on fundraising), and have any questions regarding my trip, the Agapé Center, or Food for the Hungry, please don’t hesitate to contact me!



Above: Kit trying out a zampoña, a traditional South American pan pipe. Photo by Amy Ward.

Left: The Cultural/Agricultural tourism group standing in the Andes on the way to Carasi, a biodiversity site a couple hours from Torotoro.

Bottom Left: The group enjoying papaya while touring a papaya farm. Photo by Amy Ward.

Bottom: Thanked by (the village of) Rodeo Escalon. All photos courtesy of Kit Abbey unless otherwise noted.



# THE FAITHFULNESS OF ABRAHAM

Pastoral Ponderings

by Pastor Ed Visser

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. - Galatians 5:22-23

How do we exhibit these qualities which are the “fruit” of a Spirit-filled life? Over this year, I’ll use this column to explore the fruit of the Spirit more concretely, by looking at characters in the Bible who illustrate these spiritual traits. These were real people exhibiting spiritual fruit as they lived their daily lives, often in the midst of tough times. As we look at their stories, we also learn how we can better develop such fruit in our lives as we open ourselves to the Spirit’s work within us.

## Abraham’s Covenant Faithfulness

Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” (Galatians 3:6, quoting Genesis 15:6)

“Our Father Abraham” is terminology found frequently in Jewish and rabbinic literature. It never appears in the Old Testament (OT), but the New Testament (NT) attests to it multiple times. This shouldn’t surprise us, as the OT was the Bible of Jesus and the first Christians, and many of the OT characters serve as examples of godly living. But if one man stood head and shoulders above the others, it was Abraham, who is actually considered the “father” of three major world religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). Abraham is esteemed for many virtues, but above all else he is venerated for his faith. He is the very embodiment of Habakkuk’s famous declaration (echoed in Romans) that “the righteous shall live by his faith.” So when Paul wants to point to an exemplar of faith, he tells the Galatians to “consider Abraham.”

But what does faith have to do with faithfulness, the seventh fruit of the Spirit? To see this, we must also “consider Abraham” from a Hebraic point of view. In the verse that Paul quotes from above, the key word is *emunah*, the Hebrew word for faith. While we translate it as “believe,” the word has a different emphasis in Hebrew than we tend to hear. In English and Greek, its primary meaning is to

assent to a factual statement, to agree with the truth of certain ideas. The word *emunah* does mean to have faith, but it has a broader meaning that has implications for what God calls us to as people of faith. It contains the idea of steadfastness or persistence. In Exodus 17 Moses raised his hands all day long until the Israelites won a key battle. It says that his hands remained steady (*emunah*) until sunset. In this sense it means steadfast. God is also described using the word *emunah* in Deuteronomy 7:9: “Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful (*emunah*) God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.”



So to talk about Abraham’s *emunah* tells us that Abraham believed God’s promises and had a persistent commitment to God which showed in his faithful life. This has implications about what it means to be a Christian. As James pointed out, Satan himself believes that Jesus died for the sins of the world and that he is God in the flesh, but just knowing that doesn’t redeem him! While Satan may have the right beliefs, he cannot say that he has *emunah* — a committed

faithfulness to the Lord. What God asks for goes beyond an academic decision to believe that a certain set of facts are true. He wants faith in his promises that results in a steadfast faithfulness to him. Let’s look at how Abraham exemplified *emunah*.

## Abraham’s Covenant Calling

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)

The author to the Hebrews, in his chapter on the heroes of faith/fulness, leads us through Abraham’s life. His faith/fulness started when he was 75 and God called him to *lech lecha* (literally, “walk walking”): to walk with God. This began a journey on a promise (with God as his only GPS) that would take Abraham through as many ups and downs as the geography he journeyed through. God promised him a large family that would bless the entire world with its presence (Genesis 12:1-3), a tall order for a childless 75-year-old with a barren wife! But Abraham showed his faith/fulness by continuing to walk with God through Canaan (where he erected altars to claim the land for God) and Egypt (because of famine). His faith/fulness expressed itself in his dealings with Lot, both in giving him the choice land and rescuing him when it became a war zone (Gen. 13-14). He entered by faith/fulness into God’s covenant in blood: while God’s blood would ensure it (Gen. 15), it was by Abraham’s blood through circumcision that it would be accepted (Gen. 17).

### Abraham’s Covenant Child

*By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. (Hebrews 11:11-12)*

But what good was a covenant with no descendants to pass it on to? Here we see that faith/ful Abraham was also human (good news for us in aspiring to faith/fulness!). He attempts to fulfill or at least maintain the covenant several times. Twice he passes off Sarah as his sister to save his own hide. Then, despairing that he’s only getting older (and Sarah’s showing no fertility), Abraham takes matters into his own hands with Hagar, the servant of Sarah, and Ishmael is born (Gen. 16). Remember, this is the exemplar of faith/fulness (which reminds us that we are called to be faith/ful, but not expected to be perfect)!

But God’s covenant plans are bigger than what even Father Abraham can bring about. Despite his lapse in faith/fulness, Abraham is given another outlandish promise: he and Sarah, ages 100 and 90 respectively, are going to be parents (shopping for Pampers and Depends at the same time)! Even though they laugh at the ridiculousness of it all, they faith/fully accept and live out the covenant promise. And their faith/fulness is rewarded with the laughter of joy at the birth of Isaac (“he laughs”), the child in whom the covenant will be continued.

### Abraham’s Covenant Test

*By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to*

*sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. (Hebrews 11:17-19)*

So Abraham has his covenant child. In a sad episode, but one that also shows his covenant faith/fulness, Abraham sends away Hagar and Ishmael, putting all his eggs in one basket (as commanded by God). But what will happen when the covenant child is threatened?

For reasons beyond our understanding, God decides to put the exemplar of faith/fulness to one more test. It is the ultimate test of faith: will Abraham’s faith in the covenant God express itself in an action that made no earthly sense? Up to this point, God had not given any indication that he was like the “gods” of Canaan, who demanded child sacrifice. And this was the very person on which God’s covenant promises rested! Not only is Abraham wrestling with all his fatherly, protective instincts, but he is struggling with what kind of God he has decided to walk with. Also at stake is the very truthfulness and faithfulness of God himself: will he be true and faithful to his promises? While the author to the Hebrews suggests (in his midrash or sermon on Genesis 22) that Abraham was relying on God’s ability to raise the dead, that concept never came up in Judaism until intertestamental times. Ultimately Abraham, with no real reason or understanding at all, chose to be faith/ful.

Sometimes life will test us in that way as well, calling us to a faith/fulness that goes beyond all human understanding and willpower. Then we are reminded that faith/fulness is a fruit of the *Spirit* simply because there is no other way we could live it out unless the Holy Spirit has taken over our lives. True faith always expresses itself in action, faithfulness; and faithfulness can only be produced in one indwelt by the Holy Spirit.



## SAIPAN-BOUND! BY KOURTNEY AND JORDAN GRANT



Japan? Siam? Wait, where are you moving to? SAIPAN! If you haven’t heard of Saipan, we hadn’t either, before Nate and Alison VanEe made the move there last summer. Saipan is a small island, part of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. It is a *commonwealth* and NOT a *territory* of the United States—we were warned that the two are **not** to be used synonymously. Fortunately, this means we do not need work visas, extra shots, to change our money or to worry about international mail. We can still vote, pay taxes, send mail, and pay for things using the money that we have!

So, why did we decide to go on this adventure to Saipan? Good question. Jordan and I were both ready to spread our wings a little. We fought the bug last year when Nate and Alison went, but this year we were ready to pack it up and shed some earthly comforts and belongings.

It’s easy to get comfortable. We all like to be comfortable. Jordan and I have our routines, we’ve settled into a very systematic life. We wake up, drive to work together, work eight hours, go home, make dinner, and have our various weekday activities. We have a TV, a car, an A/C unit in our car and bedroom, more than enough food and beverages, friends, family, structure. In a world where life can be planned out to the minute, where we can figure everything out and provide for our needs, where is there space to depend on Christ? Where is space to depend on God for our daily bread and our needs? Where is space to *not* have it all figured out, to take each day and each opportunity as an answer to prayer that God is using us to do great things? For us, there just isn’t.

When we were reminded of the Saipan opportunity by Nate and Alison earlier this year, we decided it was time to shed some earthly weight, to put away possessions holding us back, to cut the ties holding us down, and to take a step of faith to go somewhere new. We had good intentions, we did, but we still tried to go about them with old mentality. We tried to plan it all, do it all, solidify it all and God kicked us in the pants. He closed doors we tried to hold open, he scribbled on perfectly-made diagrams of our plans for the year and told us if we were going to take a faith journey, we needed to stop trying to do it on our own.

Upon leaving, we have an idea about where we will be working—a tutoring center called ALAI (Advanced Language and Academic Institute), and we have an idea about where we will be living—with Nate and Alison, we hope. But that is about it. We have booked our tickets, we are packing up our belongings, and we are placing our very nervous and anxious hearts in the hands of God. We’re ready, bring on the adventure! You can follow us at <http://jkadventure.wordpress.com> to see how God works this all out for us!

### END OF AUGUST UPDATE:

Hello church family! Jordan and I have safely made it to Saipan! It was a long and crazy trip, but we are here and thanking God every moment! The island is beautiful, a small slice of paradise surrounded by sparkling ocean water and tropical breezes. I say tropical breezes but really it is **hot hot hot** here! Thank you Lord for preparing us for this heat by handing us an unseasonably warm Rochester summer before we came out here!

We are currently staying with Nate and Alison VanEe at their apartment on the school grounds where Alison teaches. We have a beautiful view of the ocean, as we are about 20 yards from the shore. Unfortunately, the apartments sits and bakes in the sun, and due to abundant looting on the island we keep it locked up tight while we are away, guaranteeing that often it is 10-15 degrees warmer inside than outside. The air conditioning is expensive to run here because of energy costs, please pray for us! But we are currently in the process of negotiating a rental high up on the hill with less crime, breezes, and shade from trees!

### We ask

for prayers as Jordan and I get ready to start at the tutoring academy. We were surprised by the poverty here and also ask for your prayers for the people living on Saipan and the economy as a whole. The government is very corrupt here, bringing economic hardship on the island. We just ask that you help us pray for discernment to do what God desires for this place.

Thank you all for your love and support, we couldn’t have made it here without you!

Jordan and Kourtney



## Monthly Special Offerings

### The special offering for September is **Rochester Christian School**

At Rochester Christian School we believe that knowledge of God and a life of faithful and joyous service to God begins in the home and is furthered in the school and the church. We believe one of the most important things parents can do is to provide a good Christian education for their children, and that the Christian school is an extension of the Christian home.



We view our school as an integral part of the process to prepare and nurture our children intellectually, spiritually, physically, socially, and emotionally for a life of Christian service. We aim to develop responsible, responsive citizens of Christ's kingdom. God has blessed our efforts since 1917.

At Rochester Christian School, education is based upon the active presence of God as revealed through His Holy Word, His Creation, and the Holy Spirit. Student interact and learn within a Christian community, guided by Christian teachers whose own lives model Christ's love.

For more information and ways to donate, please visit [www.rochesterchristianschool.org](http://www.rochesterchristianschool.org).

## Monthly Special Offerings

### The special offering for October is **Heritage Christian Services**

Heritage Christian Services is a thriving human services agency that supports more than 1,600 children and adults with disabilities; provides high quality child care; offers services to help keep seniors in the comfort of their own homes; simplifies daily life by coordinating home repairs and housekeeping for people of all ages and abilities; and matches business owners with talented workers who have developmental disabilities.

The agency started by supporting people with disabilities. It now operates more than 60 neighborhood homes, service coordination, respite, community habilitation and day programs and has been recognized by the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities as one of New York state's top service providers to people with special needs.

#### OUR MISSION

**To provide... A living and working environment that reflects the love of Christ in action; support and respect for each individual's gifts, strengths and needs; opportunity to mature, to learn and to grow; a life of dignity, worth and expression to which all are entitled as God's created children. This is their rightful HERITAGE.**

To find out more, go to [www.heritagechristianservices.org](http://www.heritagechristianservices.org).

# Body Life

by Joyce Hutt

## AN ELEMENT OF WORSHIP:

The other day, I was talking to a friend about the different elements of our worship service. Many of the things that we include in our worship were similar to what her church family experiences. She mentioned that during the evening worship service they have a time of Joys and Concerns. I knew immediately what she was referring to and quickly added that we have Body Life, also. Well, that was a discussion starter. "Body Life?" she asked with a puzzled look on her face. "What is Body Life?" I responded confidently that it was just like their Joys and Concerns. She was somewhat satisfied with my answer to her question, so our conversation shifted to discussing other things that we have in common.

However, long after the conversation ended, the question lingered in my mind. "What is Body Life?" I discovered that I had never really taken the time to think through the words "Body Life" or search the Scriptures to make some sense of this unique way to describe our sharing time. We participate in Body Life three to four Sundays a month, so it must be considered an integral part of our worship service—an important aspect of communal worship.

As a community of believers we are called the body of Christ. We gather each week to worship the head of the body, namely, Christ. Ephesians 5:23 says, "Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior." The church, confessing to be the body of Christ, also acknowledges that we live a new life, which is hidden in Christ. We are a living organism because we are connected to Christ, our head. "We have been crucified with Christ and no longer do we live, but Christ lives in us. The life we live in the body, we live by the Son of God." (Gal. 2:20) Each one of us has been crucified with Christ and we no longer live. Our lives are

hidden in Christ.

Therefore, when the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, gathers and shares during Body Life, it should witness to the fact that we ourselves are dead, yet breathing the breath of the Holy Spirit. Our Body Life should give evidence to the fact that we are dead to ourselves, but alive in Christ, and that we all belong, both body and soul, in life and in death to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who with his precious blood has fully satisfied for all our sins. (HC Lord's Day I)

#### Here are some challenging questions to consider:

*Does our Body Life show that we stand in awe of Jesus, the head of the church?*

*Do our words reflect that we are the bride of Christ?*

*Does our Body Life give evidence that we have died to self and live for Christ?*

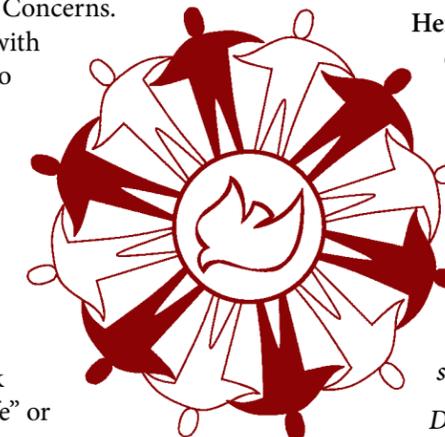
*Does our Body Life witness of His redemptive power in our lives, in the life of His body, and for the community?*

*Does our Body Life uncover new and surprising evidences of unity in the Body?*

*Does our Body Life confirm that we celebrate and nourish our new life in Him?*

*Does our Body Life encourage petitions for prayer and confession of sins?*

A true litmus test for Body Life would be, if after all is said and done, that Christ is glorified in his Body at WCRC and that everyone experiences a unity and blessing in Christ. Body Life? Yes, surely! What a great choice of words to explain such an important part of our worship! What an incredible opportunity to participate in something that celebrates our relationship to Christ, our life in Him, and our life in the body.



# Lessons from the Land

a travel series by Pastor Ed Visser

## God is Our Refuge

*In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame.  
Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness; turn your ear to me and save me.  
Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me,  
for you are my rock and my fortress. ~Psalm 71:1-3*



Masada stands as a huge outcropping of rock jutting 1,440 feet above the desert floor on the western shore of the Dead Sea. It is located 14 miles north of the southern end of the sea and 11 miles south of En-Gedi. Masada remains today one of the Jewish people's greatest symbols, and besides Jerusalem, it is the most popular destination of people visiting Israel.

Its history as a desert fortress goes back far into the past. David moved throughout this region of the southern Judean desert as he was hiding from Saul, and quite likely spent time on this mountain. Although Masada is not mentioned by name in the Bible, we see glimpses of it in several places where God is called a "rock of refuge", or "my fortress". Metzudah means "refuge" or "fortress" in Hebrew. (1 Sam 22:4-5, 23:14, 24:22, and Psalms 18:2, 31, and 144:2.)

The remains that we see today are from the time of Herod, who not only increased the fortifications, but built magnificent garden palaces on either end of the mountain. It almost never rains here, yet Herod built an elaborate water system to divert water that originated in the Judean mountains into cisterns at Masada. Servants carried water from there to upper reservoirs servicing the palaces, to an Olympic size swimming pool!

The reason Masada is one of the Jewish people's greatest symbols is for what occurred there during the Jewish revolt against Rome during 66 - 72 AD. A group of Zealots took Masada and it became a place of refuge for other Jews fleeing the Roman terrorism. For three years they were able to fend off the Romans and worship God while enduring the rigors of desert life. Finally, faced with certain capture and torture, the group of 960 chose to take their own lives, rather than be slaves of Rome. Today, when the recruits of the Israel Defense Force take their oath of allegiance, they do so on Masada to remind each generation of the price their forefathers paid for their nation, promising "Masada shall not fall again!"

To climb the arduous snake path in the 120° sun, to imagine looking down helplessly from above on your fellow countrymen enslaved to build a siege ramp against you, to stand at the precipice thinking across history about all the many who have served the Lord at the cost of their lives is to wonder if we would have the courage to stand that test for our Lord one day.



photos provided by Ed Visser



## DISCIPLESHIP AND VISION

by Pastor Ed Visser

**Gather** – To be and build authentic Christian community, which is in the habit of regularly and intentionally exercising a radical hospitality.

**Grow** – To be and build authentic Christ following disciples, who regularly and intentionally exercise a radical discipline and obedience.

**Go** – To be and build the kingdom of God in the world, regularly and intentionally acting in the world for the sake of the world.

A vision statement, such as the one above which we have adopted for ourselves as Webster CRC, seeks to capture a picture of a preferred future—who we want to be and what we want to build. Three key words jump out at me from this statement:

**Community** – We are challenging ourselves to increasingly become a family that gets into each other's lives, supporting, encouraging, and celebrating with each other. **[Gather]**

**Disciples** – We are challenging ourselves as individuals to grow in our relationship with our rabbi Jesus, not only learning what Jesus teaches us but also growing to be like him in how we live and think, in our actions and our attitudes. **[Grow]**

**Kingdom** – We are also reminding ourselves that we are not doing this in a vacuum, but we are a community of disciples acting as part of God's kingdom in and for the good of our families, communities, and world. **[Go]**

How are we doing in seeking to make this vision a reality? Soon after I moved here I was asked to write a note to be sent to visitors. In order to describe WCRC, a church family that I was still just getting to know myself, I turned to this vision statement for help. This is how I described us:

*We are a group of people who have found each other because of our common relationship with Jesus. We worship together, learn from him through our study of the Bible, and strive to grow to be like him as we make our way in this world. As we grow into a family and allow Jesus to guide the way we live, we expect to make a positive impact on our families, community and world.*

As I reflect on that statement nearly three years later, I hope that describes who we are, or at least are striving to be. Visions are always lofty statements, and often hard to live up to. We do not claim to have arrived, but only that we are still in the process of growing into a family, growing into disciples of Jesus, and growing in our impact on the world. The key word is *growing*, which, in the Bible, is all about the process of discipleship.

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**Biblical discipleship** is an interesting concept because it is both individual and communal. Jesus helped Peter to grow as a disciple individually, yet it happened mostly in the context of a community of disciples. That is also the way we grow as Christians. It is not “Jesus and I walking down Jericho road,” but a *group* “walking in the dust” and “sitting at the feet” of our Rabbi Jesus (to borrow the biblical terms). This also fits our vision statement, which states our *collective* hope and challenge for who *we* want to be and what *we* want to build. And it is our collective responsibility to grow into a community of disciples working for God’s kingdom in this world.

So what can I do as an individual to contribute to the vision of the whole? Make sure I’m working on my own discipleship, but in the context of our church community. Over the next year, we are going to explore discipleship in several of its facets. We will start this fall by following Jesus and his disciples around, learning from his three-year discipleship formation plan. During Advent we’ll look at “a disciple’s courage” in some of the Christmas story characters, and in Lent we will learn from Jesus, as a disciple’s model and Lord, in his suffering on the cross. Over the rest of the year, we will look at sermon series’ on issues such as stewardship, spiritual gifts, evangelism, and prayer. Hopefully, this year will challenge us both as individual disciples and a community of disciples seeking to “Gather, Grow and Go” for the glory of God and the building up of his kingdom.

**“The fear of the Lord is the source of life.” ~Proverbs 14:27a**



The Hebrew word *makor* means “source, fountain, or spring.” If you are a James Michener fan, this word might be familiar to you. The setting of his book, *The Source* (one of my favorites), is a fictitious location called “Tel Makor.” A tel is a mound that has been built up over centuries as a result of a city being rebuilt many times on the same location.

*The Source* (which Ray Vander Laan once told me was “the second greatest book ever written”) weaves a story about the archaeological digs at this fictitious tel which has a source of water — the reason for its name. In Michener’s distinct style, as artifacts are discovered from each time period, the story explains how the artifact came to be in a particular location. I found it to be a great play on the word “makor,” because there were so many hints at its meaning. What does a tel have to do with the word “source”? A source of fresh water is a critical need for all civilizations; so where there is a tel, there will be a water source.

Interestingly, the Bible presents a frequent image of God as the *makor* of living water, which is often pictured as flowing out of Jerusalem:

*My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring (makor) of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water. (Jeremiah 2:13)*

*How priceless is your unfailing love! ... you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain (makor) of life; in your light we see light. (Psalm 36: 7-9)*

*There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. (Psalm 46: 4-5)*

And we will finally find the source at God’s throne in heaven!

*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations... (Revelation 22:1-2)*

**a word for today: Yareh** by Pastor Ed Visser

## bits & pieces from evangelism by Bernice McGovern

Prayer. Prayer has been the subject of several articles for the *Encourager*. I’m reminded of the message from the “Today” devotional on the deception of the Israelites by the Gibeonites. The telling statement from Joshua 9: “The men of Israel sampled their provisions, but DID NOT INQUIRE OF THE LORD.” Prayer, inquiring of the Lord, takes on added significance as we begin a new season at WCRC. We begin the season with the temporary loss of some of our Praise Team leaders, which will require new direction. Many of the programs which we held in years past no longer exist—can we be creative in replacing them? We earnestly need the Holy Spirit’s filling to give us vision, energy, and passion.

Not only do we need prayer as we begin the season, we need ongoing prayer for a world in turmoil, for those suffering from poverty, those enduring persecution, those displaced by war. We need prayers for our

nation, suffering from unemployment, from the devastating effects of drought and raging fires, from changing mores that find Christian values coming under attack. We need prayers for our missionaries, our council, and our pastor. Once we had an active group meeting twice monthly, bringing all of these concern to the Lord in prayer. That number has dwindled, both in number and meeting time. Can we pledge to revive this essential ministry?

There is just a bit of news from our missionaries. Don Slager writes to thank us for our support, reporting that the consultant checking of the Kisi Bible is near completion. He asks for prayer for a typesetter by the end of the year, and for his return trip to Liberia in November. Rev. Palsrok’s retirement in October as CRWM Regional Leader for Europe and Asia is nearing; pray for him and his successor Paul Yu.

## Women’s Night Out article & photos by Nancy Van Harken

On June 6, 2012, twenty women showed up to Webster CRC for a night of fun, fellowship and some serious beading! Our beaded bracelet class was led by Nancy Van Harken’s friend Mary Elter. Mary has been beading since she was 12 years old, and taught at Studio 34 and Let’s Bead. Mary also brought her friend Barb to help! Barb has worked with beads for 20 years and currently works at Bead Breakout. They both circulated the tables to provide assistance. We appreciated their patience and direction, as it was not uncommon to hear comments such as, “I think I have a knot!”

Though only a couple people completed their bracelets that evening, we look forward to seeing those lovely creations in the future on the ladies from church who attended! There were ten women who participated that were not from our church. We are thankful for the community and fellowship we experienced that evening! God is so good! A big thank you goes to Kathy Porte, Linda Cieminis, Cheryl Stransky, Marilyn Van Harken, and Jean McDonald for their donations of refreshments, setting up, making beverages and cleaning up!





*WCRC bid farewell to several Praise Team leaders on Sunday, August 7. Andrew and Lisa Palmer are off to spend a year teaching and working in China, and Kourtney and Jordan Grant are off to spend a year working in Saipan.*

# template of prayer

**The DeVries Family**  
Pete & Bev

**The Heetderks Family**  
Jim, Jayne, Tina

**The McDonald Family**  
Tom & Jean

**Conrad Smith**

**Marilyn Stata**

**The VanBork Family**  
Jon, Jeanne, Kristin, Collin

**Susan VandenBout**

**The VanStaalduinen Family**  
Clarence & Sue

**Beth Wyand**

**Children & Worship Ministry**

**Men's Ministry**

**Sunday School Ministry**

The *Encourager* is now issued on a bi-monthly basis (every other month).

**YOUR submissions are more important than ever!**

Deadline for the Nov./Dec. 2012 issue of the *Encourager* is **OCTOBER 15.**

Send to Melisa Talma, Editor:  
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Keith Shugerts/Jane Stata  
Jack Bloemendaal/Ingrid Hunte  
Rich Bierma/Joyce Hutt

**Families they are responsible for**

Abbey-Flynn  
Grant-Otto  
Palmer-Sullivan  
Sytsma-Zollweg