

# Faith Network

A Newsletter for Cooperation in the Churches of God

March/April, 2011

## Lessons From Quebec

It is time to learn a lesson or two from the *Quebec Act*.

*The Quebec Act of 1774* was an act of Britain's parliament during the aftermath of the French and Indian War. Its purpose was to set the procedures for the governance of Quebec and other North American territories ceded to Britain as a result of France's defeat. In its time the document was an enlightened one, although many American colonists didn't see it that way.

Britain, by this time a solidly Protestant nation, guaranteed the free practice of the Roman Catholic faith in these newly acquired territories, a common sense provision given the heavily Catholic French population. But this provision for religious tolerance set off a storm of alarm in the thirteen colonies. Many of the colonies had designs on the formerly French lands of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and other areas that would eventually comprise the Northwest Territory, and these areas were included in the new act. Quebec was not that far away, and antagonism inherited from the European religious experience was very much in the cultural memory. Alexander Hamilton spoke for many when he said, "The act makes the

effectual provision not only for the protection, but for the permanent support of Popery."

Put differently, many colonists felt betrayed by what they viewed as a sell-out of principles.

Even as late as 1770, most of the colonies had a lingering, deeply ingrained suspicion of Catholicism. Only three colonies allowed Catholics to vote. In the New England states, except Rhode Island, they were unable to hold public office. In addition,

*"the state of New York held the death penalty over priests who entered the colony; Virginia boasted that it would only arrest them. Georgia did not permit Catholics to reside within its boundaries; the Carolinas merely banned them from office."* (Religion and the Continental Congress: 1774-1789, by Derek Davis, p. 153)

The Continental Congress eventually petitioned the King, expressing their concerns over,

*"...establishing an absolute government and Roman Catholic religion throughout the vast region."* (Davis, p. 154)



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History teaches an abundance of lessons. Several come to mind immediately.

**1** The Olympic sport of “Jumping to Conclusions” was practiced during the Colonial days. British motives behind the *Quebec Act* were nothing more than recognition of the reality on the ground. The newly acquired lands were unshakably Catholic, and anything but religious tolerance would ensure further conflict and bloodshed. The British understood the art of the possible, a lesson lost on many people then – and many people today. A small political compromise in order to ensure the enactment of 80% of what one wants is too often branded as a sell-out of principles and is often taken as proof of sinister motives and subterfuge.

**2** The British move to enlightened self-interest in Quebec was a wise one, but it didn’t stop demagogues from milking it. The Continental Congress on the one hand protested to the King about the encroachment of “Popery” (notice the name calling, which should be a red flag in its own right), while with the other hand they were trying to court these same “papists” to the revolutionary cause. They even attempted to assure the Quebecois that the freedom of conscience in religious matters is one of the inalienable rights granted by the Creator. One must believe that the people of Quebec noticed the disconnect, but whatever they did or did not notice, they remained loyal to the British Crown during the conflict.

If you have ever been through a “church war,” you know about the barrage of accusations, personal attacks, and name-calling that seem to be the standard ammunition of such affairs. You

know about the courting of prospective followers and the promises made. You also know about the political hay that is often made in the wake of decisions that are often simply a small administrative detail, but are viewed by others as the proverbial camel’s nose under the proverbial tent that will eventually lead to a full-blown retreat into paganism. And you would also know that most of the time this is overblown for political purposes.

**3** The third lesson I draw from this is a positive one. Within a short radius of my office are numerous houses of worship, both churches and synagogues, reflecting the rich diversity of the community. That diversity is typical of most places in the country. That’s completely unremarkable today, but that’s unusual in the annals of history—indeed it is unusual in most of the contemporary world.

But the past few weeks I have noticed something that is in fact remarkable, and I noticed it more than once. The neighborhood around my office has a number of synagogues, and recently I have noticed next to the synagogues’ normal signage a second sign. The second sign announces to passersby notice of Sunday Christian church services to be held in the same building. Here are cases of two diverse religious groups, historically at odds to the point of persecution, sharing the same building for their respective worship services.

I have to believe that the great Virginians such as Madison, Jefferson, and Washington, all champions of religious liberty, would be very happy to see something like this that would have been unthinkable in Colonial times. [FN](#)

Faith Network is a voluntary effort by a group of individuals interested in promoting cooperation among the Churches of God and encouraging healthy relationships both within congregations and between them. Resources have been made available for the initial stages of Faith Network by members of the Church of God Cincinnati.

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## Book Review: ***The Power of Teachable Moments: Using Everyday Experiences To Teach Your Child About God***

By **Jim Weidmann  
& Marianne Hering**

When I first picked up *The Power of Teachable Moments*, I anticipated a quick browse would confirm that it really had nothing to offer me. What a surprise when I was fully engrossed before the end of the first page! I laughed aloud



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as Marianne Hering, one of the book's authors, candidly described the chaos in her household that followed having twins. Amidst this chaos, Mrs. Hering felt very out of touch with her older daughter during those critical teenage years, and that is what motivated her to be purposeful in her use of "teachable moments."

"Teachable moments" is an incredibly versatile strategy because it can be used with children of any age. Requiring no lesson plans, manuals, special knowledge, or preparation time, it is easy to implement and is suitable for families with busy schedules because it just takes a few minutes. Although the book's target audience is parents, this strategy would work beautifully for grandparents or anyone else who has a special relationship with a child.

What is a "teachable moment?" Many of us think of a crisis when we hear that phrase. The authors define it as a moment when something occurs that affords an

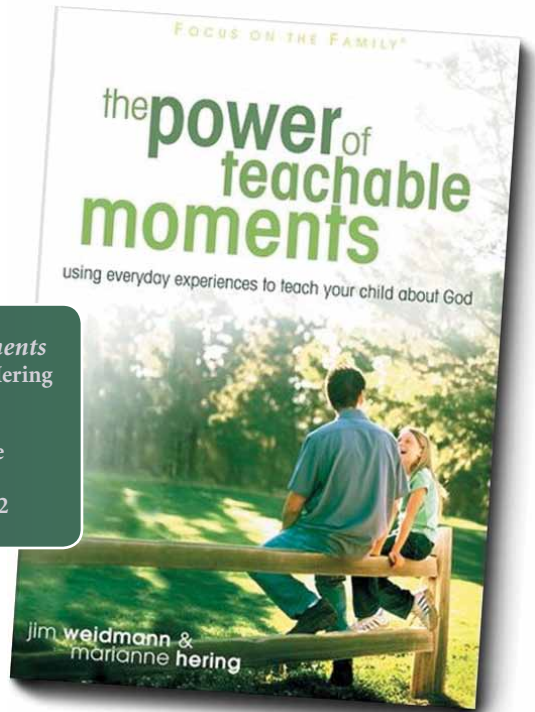


opportunity to impart a spiritual truth. To be successful, a teachable moment requires three components: a satisfactory relationship with the child, the catalyst (which may occur spontaneously or be parent-orchestrated), and Biblical truth. Examples of catalysts may be watching a movie together, a question posed by the child, seeing a spider, or making a wrong turn while driving.

This book opened my eyes to everyday occurrences that can be meaningful opportunities for spiritual training. Filled with stories from real parents and children who share successful and unsuccessful teachable moments, the book was unexpectedly entertaining. As I read, I felt as though someone was coming alongside me and mentoring me in how to spontaneously teach my child about God and His ways.

At the end of the book, the authors have included “101

Common Opportunities for Uncommon Teaching.” These opportunities include noticing a butterfly, seeing a military uniform, being stuck in traffic, relying on a flashlight during a power outage or camping trip, celebrating a birthday, enjoying watching a baby, feelings of inadequacy, or observing your child share or make a personal sacrifice. The “101 Common Opportunities, as well as examples throughout the text, leave the reader well equipped for creating their own teachable moments. [FN](#)



*The Power of Teachable Moments*  
By Jim Weidmann & Marianne Hering  
Copyright 2004

Published by Tyndale House  
ISBN-10: 1-5899-7120-5  
ISBN-13: 978-1-5899-7120-2

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*“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart...You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*

*Deuteronomy 11:18-19*

## Watching Our Father

When I was in Florida with a group observing the Feast of Tabernacles, I enjoyed looking over the balcony to the ocean and watching the families playing on the beach. On one of those occasions, I watched a boy who could have been anywhere from 8 to 11 following a man twice as tall as he was. I assumed they were father and son. They seemed to be looking for something on the beach. They made deliberate circles looking down. The boy followed the man, close but not very close, looking for all the world like his shadow come to life. He didn't appear to be trying to do that. He was looking down, busy doing whatever they were doing. He was keeping in step with his father, walking as his father walked. This boy had been watching his father and imitating him from birth, so he unconsciously became like him in the way he carried himself and moved.

Scripture tells us to, "Keep in step with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25) and to, "Walk as Jesus walked" (1 John 2:6). God is invisible to us. We can't observe him and copy his mannerisms the same way the boy had copied his father's. But we have the Scriptures to teach us what Jesus was like in attitude, character, and service. We have the Holy Spirit to give us understanding of spiritual things and give us the willingness and ability to behave as Jesus

would behave. We have Jesus who intercedes for us as our Elder Brother and High Priest and our Friend to help us learn.

We are advised to, "Fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2) so that we don't become discouraged when the road of



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life to eternal life gets rough and steep. It's easy to be distracted from watching our heavenly Father as we go about our daily lives. But if we lose sight of him, we can lose our way and begin to imitate the worldly ways around us. He is the Good Shepherd who looks for his lost sheep, but we can save ourselves a lot of heartache by keeping our eyes on him so we do not wander away from him in the first place. [FN](#)

# The Tongue

I bit my tongue a while back. I know: you don't care. Actually, neither would I under normal circumstances. It happens now and then: you bite your tongue, it hurts for a little while, and then you forget about it and get on with your life. In my case it happened at work when I ate my lunch too fast. Normally biting my tongue would have been no big deal, but I had just started taking blood thinning medication and my blood was so thin that the bleeding from the tiny wound in my tongue would not stop. I sprang a leak and had to go to the emergency room to have the bleeding stopped. Part of the treatment was a shot with a very long needle directly into my tongue. That felt as good as it sounds.

My wife says I'm the only person she has ever known who has gone to the emergency room for a bit tongue, but I don't care if I am. I don't know if it's possible to bleed to death through your tongue, but I wasn't inclined to find out. Besides, it's awkward at work when you have to spit out blood every fifteen seconds or so. Your clients and colleagues might get the impression that something is wrong. And I could just see the headline: **MAN DIES AFTER BITING TONGUE AT WORK DURING LUNCH.**

The tongue is one of those body parts that we don't think about too much until we bite it or something else brings it to our attention. It is actually muscle, and not just one muscle but a group of muscles which act with incredible harmony to allow us to eat and talk. We can even eat and talk at the same time, although that's not quite acceptable in polite company. The tongue is well

supplied with blood vessels, which was another factor besides thin blood which contributed to my bleeding problem.

Most children and some adults – hopefully not too many – will stick their tongues out at somebody to show contempt. In English we have several idiomatic expressions about the tongue. One is “Bite Your Tongue!” That means you don't say something you want to say because it may be offensive or otherwise cause problems with another person. As far as I know it does not mean to literally bite your tongue, and after my experience I'm never going to do that no matter what I want to say.

The Bible often mentions the tongue. It is frequently used as a figure of speech where it is mentioned that this group or that group of people speak a certain tongue. On the first Pentecost Christians spoke in tongues, or different languages. Various passages in Psalms and Proverbs exhort us to control the tongue, using it for good, as in praise and gratitude towards God, or withholding it from evil, as in backbiting and complaining.

One of the most pointed references to the tongue is in the third chapter of James. In the fourth verse of that chapter the tongue is compared to the helm of a ship. Like the helm, it is small compared to the whole body, but it goes a long way in revealing where we are and in what direction we are going spiritually. Another comparison is to a spark or small flame which can set an entire forest on fire. In verses 6-8 we read that



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*“...the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind. But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”*

That’s pretty strong language for a small group of muscles in the mouth, but history is replete with examples of the good tongue and the bad tongue. During World War II Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler were perhaps the world’s greatest orators. Through the power of speech they inspired the people of their respective nations to sacrifice and overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges. But that’s where the similarity ends. Hitler led Germany to totalitarianism, war, and ultimate destruction, while Churchill preserved his nation as a beacon of liberty and democracy. Both men used the power of the tongue, but with vastly different results.

In our personal lives the tongue can also be used for good or evil. What we say can be inspiring and uplifting or it can be damaging and negative. It can be negative for the simple reason that there is more than one way to hurt a person. A person can be hurt physically, but there is also psychological, emotional, and spiritual damage that can be inflicted by what is said to or about the person. We’ve all heard the cliché that sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me, but that isn’t quite true. Words can be very hurtful indeed in the form of put-downs, gossip, and innuendos.



Have you ever said something that you later regretted? Have you ever been hurt by criticism or being told to shut up or by being falsely accused? If you are over the age of five or six, you’ve had something of that sort happen. It’s all just a part of being human. James says that the tongue is very difficult to tame, which is another way of saying that human nature is very difficult to control. What we say is a reflection of what we think, and what we think is a reflection of our spiritual condition.

We should always be aware of the negative things we can say with our tongues. But even more we should be aware of the positive things we can accomplish: praise towards God, giving comfort, encouraging others, speaking the truth, showing compassion, giving thanks to others and to God. The list is endless, and the rewards are great both for us and others. And on those occasions when you do have to bite your tongue, just be careful not to do it literally – especially if your blood is thin. 

# Burying the Wounded

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I think for most people the idea of burying someone who is wounded but still alive is repulsive. Jesus dealt with this issue in the parable of the Good Samaritan. In the scribes' and Pharisees' eyes there were no "good Samaritans." In their own law they were not even expected to help certain classes or kinds of people, and Samaritans were designated as part of this category.

While Jesus had been called a "Samaritan" and told he was demon possessed, the scribes and Pharisees were considered by others as well as themselves to be "good people." As such, they were supposed to set the example in the way they lived. They were to intercede in the temple for the people; however, Jesus saw the hypocrisy in their traditions and in the laws they had added to God's word. Ezekiel says this about them:

*"The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them." (Ezek 34:4)*

In direct contrast, Jesus took action to show that we have choices in how we treat others, as when he healed the man with the withered hand (Mk 3:1-5). Jesus was often angry with the religious people around him for their lack of compassion towards people they didn't understand or felt superior to. He was angry at their stubborn, hard-hearted attitude towards the man with the withered hand. One of *Strong's*

definitions of the word "hardness" is "stupidity or callousness." Are we stupid or calloused in regards to other people?

While we need to use wisdom in how we help people, we are not to turn our backs on someone who is suffering and in need of care, love, and concern. Ignoring them is like "burying the wounded:" digging a hole, throwing dirt on top of them, and walking away. Who do we believe should be cared for and tended to and whom we are willing to help through tough times? This assistance could be physical, emotional, financial, or whatever.

Jesus commands us to preach the gospel and to heal people (Luke 9:2). Are all healings physical? What if people don't have any physical wounds? What if their needs are emotional and the wounds are on the inside? Are we "stupid and calloused," or are we "moved with compassion?"

Jesus understood what it is like to be left for dead and abandoned by everyone.

*"Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." (Psa 69:20)*

When we help others who are nearly overcome with adversity, Jesus takes it very personally:

*"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'" (Mt 25:40)*

After telling the parable of the Good Samaritan, when Jesus asked the lawyer who of the three was the wounded man's neighbor, the lawyer couldn't bear to say "The Samaritan." Instead the lawyer answered Jesus: "He who showed mercy

on him." The lawyer knew the intent of the law is mercy. He was caught in his own trap. Let us not be caught in that same trap. Let us not "bury the wounded." [FN](#)

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## It's Not What You Know, But Who You Know


We sometimes hear about people who get away with crimes because they knew the judge or someone important in government or business. Often such criminals do not reform, but continue their evil behavior. Once in a while, however, someone is "scared straight" and takes advantage of his exoneration to live in freedom in a law-abiding way.

Does the expression "It's Not What You Know, But Who You Know" have a Christian application? Indeed it does!

Being a Christian who will rise in the resurrection at Christ's return (1 Thes 4:16) involves more than keeping a set of laws, ceremonies, and holy days. There is more involved than having Bible knowledge and believing specific doctrines. It involves *knowing* Christ and him *knowing* us. Jesus is going to save his own family and he knows who we are, just as we know who our own children are. God looks down and *knows* who are his.

Jesus illustrates this by comparing a shepherd and sheep in John 10: 2-5, 14, 27-29.

*"The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman*



*opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. ... I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me- ... My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."*

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When the Spirit of God enters us we become transformed, but not all at once. Yet somehow we come to know that something is now different. If we don't quench the working of the Holy Spirit we become transformed into a different creature. If we do not have the Spirit of Christ we are not a Christian (Rom. 8:9).

King Saul was given the Spirit of God and changed into a person with a different heart (1Sam 10:6, 9). It appears that this happened all at once with Saul. Nonetheless in future years we see Saul as an evil king obsessed with power and trying to kill David. It is a frightening warning that we can quench the Spirit and lose our connection with God.

There are ways we can know if we are Christ's. Consider that God disciplines his own children. Note Heb 12:5-8.

*And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons:*

*“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.”*

We know when God is disciplining us just as much as a child knows when his parent is correcting him. It happens when we have been drifting away spiritually and God does something to get our attention. It may be that a deep conviction that we have been going wrong hits us, or some event occurs and we know that it is God who has caused it. Have we ever had such experiences? Every true Christian has—and so have I. It can actually be encouraging since we grasp that God cares and is not giving up on us.

A scripture that Christians have commonly applied to the time after Christ returns to the earth, is experienced by true Christians now if we think about it. It is given in Isaiah 30:20-21.

*Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”*

The Holy Spirit “speaks” to us now. We do not hear voices, but if we are considering something that is either right or sinful, very often scriptures pop into our mind. Jesus said this is what would happen in John 14:26. At times we also “just happen” to pick up a book or article and what we read is exactly what we needed to hear. That’s because Christ knows us and He is the one who did it.

It is Christ who must live in us and create his own righteousness within us. Any righteousness we have of our own is tainted with pride, arrogance, and sinful motives. And we need constant forgiveness which can only come from Christ. Knowing Christ and being known by him is what counts. A chilling thing that we never want to hear is expressed in Mathew 7:23.

*“Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”*

God will look down and see us—those he knows. We are not saved by our righteousness or works but because of knowing and living in Christ. It’s not what we know, but who we know. Remember Luke 12:32—

*“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”* [FN](#)

## Family-Friendly Festival

What do you hope for when you go to the Feast of Tabernacles? Are you hoping for a good time? That's great! The Feast should be fun and enjoyable - but shouldn't it also be much more? Shouldn't we go home from the Feast energized and excited - filled with ideas and plans for the future of our children, our congregation and our lives?

Common Faith Network is hosting a doctrinally unified, family friendly, spiritually rejuvenating festival site in Sandestin, Florida for 2011.

### **Accommodations**

We selected our housing so that everyone could be close instead of spread out all over. It's in a gated community and has easy access to the bay, the beach, shopping and the convention center.

### **Workshops**

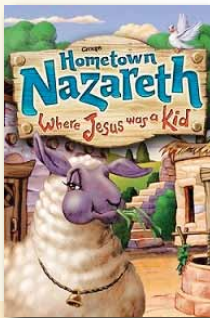
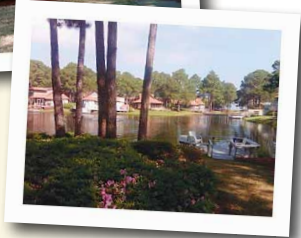
Our workshops take it up a notch. In them you will learn how to make real contributions to family, community and congregation.

### **Youth Programs**

**Hometown Nazareth** is an interactive, experiential program for children 4-12. They will be up and moving, learning and having fun.

**It's a Wrap**, for middle and high school students, who will develop a video. It's hands on, it's engaging, and it is fun.

**For more information visit:**  
[www.commonfaithnetwork.com](http://www.commonfaithnetwork.com)



# The Changing Face of Religion



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There is a phenomenon happening within the American religious environment. *The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life* interviewed more than 35,000 people. Their conclusions are interesting. Most apparent is that, "... mainline churches are in decline and independent churches are gaining. The ranks of the unaffiliated are growing." This is bad news for churches with strong central governments, but it nevertheless may reflect where God's Spirit is leading.

I talked with a friend in Florida a few weeks ago who described the growing congregation his wife and children attend. He said it's a large church affiliated with a major protestant organization, but it surprised him that there was no indication outside or inside the building of denominational attachment. A visitor may leave without a clue of any connection with an organization outside the congregation. A deliberate attempt is made to underplay any denominational identity so as to blend with independent churches. And for good reason...

*The Pew Forum* observed that the religious face of the United States is changing.

- More than one-quarter of adults have left the faith of their childhood.
- One in four adults aged 18 to 29 claims no affiliation with a religious institution.
- People moving into non-aligned churches outnumber those moving out by a three-to-one margin.
- Changes in affiliation are swelling the ranks of nondenominational churches, while Baptist and Methodist are showing net losses.

*The Cincinnati Enquirer* quoted a lady from the east side of Cincinnati explaining why she left the Catholic Church of her youth: "I found myself going through the motions." It is reminiscent of Jesus' statement about those who worship God in vain. (Mat 15:9) He doesn't say they don't worship God, but that their worship is ineffective.

Penn State University sociologist Roger Finke was consulted on the survey. "In the past, certain religions had a real holding power, where people from one generation to the next would stay. Right now, there is a dropping confidence in organized religion."

In Cincinnati the church experiencing the greatest growth is nondenominational. It began 12 years ago with a handful of people in a rented room and now weekend services attract about 8,000 to 10,000.

There was a time when I thought the Sabbatarian Churches of God were immune from such national trends. But the past score of years indicates we are following the trend, not resisting it. Maybe that isn't so bad. The dominant COG organizations have shown no significant growth in the last 25 years. The plethora of home fellowships that have developed is evidence that many members still maintain the faith but have deliberately chosen to avoid one of the organizations that under-funds and undermines local congregations.

The First Century church is a phenomenal example of grassroots growth. They had no large organization of Christians to spur growth—or hinder

# camp outreach

Make Friends Meet Needs



it. The Jewish organized church tried to exterminate the infant church at birth. When a large Christian organization finally appeared it had all the wrong doctrines.

Every observable factor was against the fledgling Church. From national political parties to militant religious radicals, the early Christians were threatened, persecuted, and murdered. Yet the Church as a whole prospered. The first thirty years of the New Testament Church is known as the thirty years that changed the world. No other group of people has ever had such a dramatic impact on the world. No other group has contributed so much toward civilized living on this earth.

The persecuted minority that did this work did so without an organized power structure to support them. They were mostly a motley group of individuals holding to a common faith, meeting in in-home fellowships. There were no

“seminary-educated ministers.” Most of the groups had no trained leader and no outside financial support. They were filled with a zeal for the Gospel that eclipsed their shortcomings. And they grew.

The lesson from the First Century Church is that the Holy Spirit is a far better evangelist than any church. There is more power in the Holy Spirit than in all the money in the world.

A second lesson we might learn from those first thirty years is that no era since has relied so heavily on the Holy Spirit nor accomplished so much.

Finally, if we are indeed living in the last days, it would be good to return to the values of the First Century Church. Maybe it’s time to forget about organized churches. Maybe God isn’t working there. Maybe He never did. Maybe the real work has been with the grass roots individual who just follows the lead of the Spirit. [FN](#)

Wednesday morning 4/27, my daughter Ramona let Jonathan and Katie off at the high school about ten minutes away and got back home to the house we share in Rome, Georgia. Just minutes later, tornado sirens began blaring and our power went off. We had no idea serious weather was expected. A huge storm blew through Rome, downing power poles and trees, and smashing buildings. One brick structure had its bricks flung onto the nearby street at terrified motorists during the morning rush hour, while poles and trees fell onto cars, trapping their occupants. The city was a mess. We discovered power was out at the school also, so I headed out an hour later to try to get the kids. The way to the school was blocked with a downed power line. It took almost an hour to succeed at what should have been a ten-minute drive because of the traffic backed up by the power company crew's efforts. Mona's husband Scott came home from work, since power was out at his store. My husband George works from home,

so by early in the afternoon, all six of us were together and safe. But there was more on the way according to the news.

That afternoon huge tornados hit Tuscaloosa and Birmingham, Alabama and devastated both. Then they roared east. By 6 PM it was obvious that the main cell that had hit Birmingham



was making a beeline for Rome. Local radio was issuing the direst warnings they could. We have no basement, so began setting up makeshift shelters in the two little interior hallways outside a bathroom at one end and a bedroom at the other end of our house. Then we parked in front of the transistor radio in our living room and listened as the front approached.

By about 9:30, a mile wide tornado was described as approaching the village of Cave Springs about ten miles southwest of us. (By Friday morning, news showed parts of the village were devastated.) It was headed straight northeast, and at that point we headed for the hallways. At that instant, my friend Michael Deering called from Kentucky. He was watching on national news the live reports of the progress of the storm cell, saw the bull's eye painted right on Rome, and was concerned whether we knew how



dire the situation was. When I told him what part of Rome we lived in, he gasped and said it was in the center of the target. The tornado was expected to arrive within minutes.

We barricaded ourselves in and waited. I felt like the ladies in that scene in *Gone With the Wind* who are waiting in extreme tension to see if “their men” make it back live from a raid. And then... nothing!

I can only credit direct, divine intervention. The storm track veered unexpectedly in the last two or three minutes before it got to West Rome, and all we got was some hard rain and mildly heavy winds, not even any hail that we heard was tennis ball size in nearby areas.

When the warning was canceled about 10:15, we exited back to the living room, and stepped outside for a few minutes. I was stunned to look up through the trees and see STARS! Then we went back in and listened as they described tornados touching down south and east of us, one of them just south of Rome near Miller Mountain Road. I didn't know where that was. There was a watch out until 2 AM, but we never got anything more than a bit more distant thunder and lightning.

Thursday morning I drove to nearby Cedartown just east of Cave Springs for a dental appointment. Just as I reached the outskirts of Cedartown I spotted a Miller Mountain Road sign. JUST past the road, I looked to the right and saw where a tornado about a quarter mile

wide or more had touched down and smashed almost everything in its path. Starting on one side of the highway was a huge swath that looked like a giant lawnmower had mowed down the huge trees in its path, leaving barely toothpicks sticking up. The trees themselves were totally gone, evidently swirled up and away to elsewhere. A couple of stunned looking donkeys were grazing in what now looked like a pasture, with giant toothpicks sticking up here and there. On the other side of the highway the swath continued across another newly created toothpick field and up a hill and on to where I couldn't see. Fallen trees had smashed a house on either side of the road. People at each surveyed the damage... no doubt glad to be alive.



Our power was out from 8:30 AM Wednesday to 5:30 PM Thursday. It came back on just in time to save the food in our upright freezer. That inconvenience was all we endured, obviously nothing compared to what tens of thousands are enduring throughout the South now! I thank God for His tender mercy to my little family, and pray for His peace and comfort and guidance to be with all those who must pick up the pieces of their lives now. [FN](#)

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## With God In the Eye of the Storm

*One of the most widespread, catastrophic, and deadly outbreaks of tornados in the history of the US occurred on April 27 and 28, 2012. No doubt many Faith Network readers were affected by the storms that brought this destruction. The following is my little family's saga, as I reported it the day after the storms on an Internet forum I am part of. But it represents only one story.*



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By the time you read this story, the news services will no doubt have dropped most coverage about the aftermath of these storms. They will have moved on to obsessing on the very latest sensational stories in the nation and world. But tens of thousands of families will have only barely begun to pick up the pieces of their lives, mourn their dead, and try to move forward to some sort of normalcy. Many will need outside help for weeks or months for even the basic necessities, and eventually support to help them rebuild their homes, neighborhoods, towns, and cities. May reading this story be a reminder to you to continue to pray for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of all those so tragically affected. And may it perhaps nudge you to find ways you might be part of the continuing relief efforts.

...Eye of the Storm Continued on page 14