

CHRISTIAN WORKER

“We are workers together with Him...” (2 Corinthians 6:1)

VOLUME 108, NUMBER 6

PRIORITIZING CHRIST

Mel Hutzler

Our new life in Christ changes the rule, relationship, attitude, and actions of our lives. This new life orders its priorities out of the mind of Christ. That is Paul's point to the church at Colossae as he moves into the practical portion of his letter. As people who have died to sin and been made alive unto God, Christians are to develop new goals, new moral principles, and a renewed determination to live on a higher plane. Paul opens this practical section by introducing the concept of prioritizing Christ.

Paul wanted the Colossians to learn how Christians should live. If you are raised with Christ then these are the things that you must prioritize in your life. Colossians 3 and 4 explain what that life entails. If we do not prioritize these things, then we cannot call ourselves faithful Christians. Likewise, we must ask ourselves a very important question: I say that I am a Christian, but am I? Paul will put us to the test to see if we are prioritizing Christ in our lives as we should.

Paul teaches that if we have truly been raised with Christ, then we must continuously seek the things that are above, where Christ dwells. What are you seeking and what are you looking for in this world? What is your pursuit? One of our greatest temptations is our career. We often define ourselves by our work. We find our value in our work rather than in Christ. Is your career your life's pursuit? What do you seek? Do you seek more possessions? Is your life about feeding the inner desires to have more?

Paul declares that Christians are to actively pursue Jesus. Christians must always seek Christ with eyes fixed toward Heaven. Our sight must always be focused on Christ and His rule and His authority. What are we looking for as we

live this life? Are we looking for Christ? Are we looking for a relationship with Him? Often, we are looking for and pursuing so many other things in life other than Christ.

Paul asks what we have our minds focused upon. Are you obsessed with Jesus? Are you contemplating Heaven? Are you thinking about physical things or eternal things? Where does your hope reside? The Christian will see all things in the light and in the setting of eternity. We will not live our lives as if this world is all that there is. We seek the things above by setting our minds on the things above. We can wonder about God and make assumptions that we know Him. However, the only way to truly set our minds on the things above is to humble ourselves and learn about Him through His Word. We must make time for God each day. Continually think about God's priorities and His will. Think about those spiritual things.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

JUNE 2022

APPLYING CHRIST
(Colossians 3)

Prioritizing Christ (Col. 3:1-4) MEL HUTZLER.....	1
Put to Death... (Col. 3:5-7) CODY WESTBROOK.....	2
Put Off... (Col. 3:8-11) JOHNIE SCAGGS, JR.....	3
Put On... (Col. 3:12-15) BRYAN HODGE.....	5
Teaching and Admonishing (Col. 3:16-17) ANDY BAKER.....	6

PUT TO DEATH . . .

Cody Westbrook

Christianity is a counter-cultural and transformative religion. The gospel changes hearts (2 Cor. 10:5) and transforms us into the image of Jesus (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:17-18). We pattern our thoughts, our words, and our actions after His will and example. This places us in a position of contrast in this world. We “walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8) in the midst of great darkness. We raise our children differently. We treat our spouses differently. Our priorities and everything about us are different. While this seems strange to the world’s eye (1 Pet. 4:4) it is exactly the way it’s supposed to be. We are called to “proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9). We must influence the world for Christ and not allow the world to influence us for darkness. Such a calling demands that certain influences and practices be removed from our lives. This is the subject of Colossians 3:5-7.

Paul wrote, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth...” (Col. 3:5a). To “put to death” is to mortify or to kill completely. The “members” which must be put to death refer to the “practices and attitudes to which his readers’ bodily activity and strength had been devoted in the old life” (F.F. Bruce). The command is predicated upon directives of verses 1-4 (“Therefore”). In view of Christ-centered priorities and Heavenly vision, it is imperative for us to change our lives accordingly. “The body of the sins of the flesh” is put off upon our obedience to the gospel (Col. 2:11). The old man dies (Rom. 6) but sometimes we are tempted resurrect him. But such cannot be the case. We must live in the present by dying to the past. But, what does that entail? Note five items specified in the passage.

1. Fornication is a general term for every kind of unlawful sexual activity. Christians must “flee sexual immorality” (1 Cor. 6:18). It is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) and as such, those who practice fornication cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10).
2. Uncleaness has to do with that which is impure

and unholy. It can refer to the general rejection of holiness (1 Thess. 4:17) but is predominantly used in the New Testament to describe moral impurity related to fornication.

3. Passion refers to uncontrolled desires which enslave a person. It occurs only twice more in the New Testament and in both cases describes uncontrolled sexual desire (Rom. 1:26, 1 Thess. 4:5).
4. Evil desire comes from a compound Greek term which denotes setting one’s heart on that which is evil. Desire alone is not necessarily wrong. God created us with natural desires which are good when governed by His will. But when our desires are aimed toward wickedness, they become sinful. See James 1:14-15, Acts 20:33, Matt. 5:28, etc.
5. Covetousness is greed—an inappropriate desire to have more. “An inordinate longing to possess, own, use, or experience something makes that thing an idol. When one concentrates so intently on obtaining the source of a passion, it becomes an object of devotion. Whether this greed is expressed in the form of a sexual craving or any other desire that takes the place of service and dedication that belongs to God alone, it is idolatrous” (Owen Olbricht).

While not exhaustive, this catalog of sins very accurately describes the forms of wickedness present in the 1st century world, and even in our own. Sexual sin and materialism are found in practically every corner of modern culture, from books, to television, to social media, and everywhere in between. “Sex sells and money brings happiness” is the mantra of a godless society hell bent on maximum pleasure. But such practices cannot be characteristic of those whose hearts are set on Heaven.

Additionally, Paul identified two reasons to substantiate the command of verse 5. First, these kinds of sinful activities are deserving of God’s wrath (v.6). Second, those things no longer characterize the identity of the Christian (v. 7). God’s wrath refers to

His righteous anger. It is judicial in the sense that it is not uncontrolled or irrational but governed by His holiness and justice. Note that the phrase “is coming” is a present tense verb in the original text. Similar to Romans 1:17, the idea is that God’s wrath is an ever-present reality for those who practice ungodliness such as was listed in the previous passage. The second reason given is that the sins described in verse 5 defined who they were in the past, not the present. Obeying the gospel involves the old man being put to death (Rom. 6:1-4). To engage in the sins of the past would be akin to exhuming a rotting corpse.

Christianity is a counter-cultural and transformative religion. When one obeys the gospel, everything changes. It was imperative for the Colossian saints to remember who they were and whose they were. As those who were “buried with Him in baptism” (Col. 2:12) it was paramount for them to live like Him and for Him in order to be with Him in eternity. The same must be said about Christians today. We must be ever mindful of the fact that we belong to Jesus Christ, the greatest blessing one could imagine. As such, the sins of the past, particularly sexual sins and materialism per this context, must be put to death, never to live again.

CW

PUT OFF...

Johnie Scaggs, Jr.

In the overall context of Colossians 3, Paul lays side by side some things we must put on and some things we must put off. Twice in our text, Paul states that we are to “put off” things that have to do with the old man of sin. The phrase “put off” is from “ἀποτίθημι,” meaning to “lay aside, or to take off.” From this, we can fully understand that Paul is saying that these things are things we must take off as if we were changing clothes and moving away from them. That is, we are to “put off” the filthy garments of the flesh and “put on” the new clothes of the Spirit. We must completely divest ourselves of these before we can grow toward the mature man of faith.

Paul earlier wrote about the believer putting away the uncleanness of the past. “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of

Christ” (Col. 2:11). Now that we have put away the old man of sin, we also need to take off his garments. If the Spirit is leading us, then we need to take off the works of the flesh and put on the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:18-26).

The things which we are to “put off” are (1) Anger – a feeling of intense anger that does not subside, often on an epic scale. (2) Wrath – a feeling of intense anger, sometimes translated as “rage.” We often think of these two words in the same way, but there are some differences. “Anger” refers to an abiding, or habitual, anger that includes revenge. “Wrath” is similar to anger but especially refers to a sudden, violent outburst of anger.” (The All-Sufficient Christ – Theodore H. Epp, p. 130). One of the ways that we grieve the Holy Spirit is by having anger and wrath within us (Eph. 4:30-31). Instead of having anger toward each other, we are to be “...kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32). (3) Malice – wickedness, evil – the perverting of virtue and moral principles from their purposes to evil ends. When one has malice in their heart, they want to pay back what others have done to them. This goes against the golden rule. Jesus said, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matt. 7:12). Instead of getting back at someone, we are to go the extra mile. Jesus said,

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away (Matt. 5:38-42).

(4) Blasphemy – slander – abusive words falsely spoken that damage a person’s reputation. Gossip falls into this category, and it is a sin. It would seem that some would rather speak words that tear others down than use words that build others up. As Christians, we should refrain from speaking evil about others and practice speaking words of encouragement. Many of the seven things God hates have to do with blasphemy. “These six things doth the LORD hate: Yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

You are cordially invited to attend...

***The 44th Annual
Southwest School of Bible Studies***

Graduation Weekend

July 8th and 10, 2022

**Friday, July 8th, 7:00 PM
Graduation Banquet**

Location: Southwest Annex

Menu: BBQ

Cost: \$12.00 per person (adults and children)
Please purchase your tickets from the office, Valerie Lloyd or
Karen Speir.

Sunday, July 10th

Guest speaker for Bible Class and Worship Services will be John Baker
from Katy, Texas

9:30 AMBible Classes for all ages
10:30 AM Morning Worship
6:00 PM Evening Worship
7:00 PM Graduation Ceremony

Christian Women's Studies Program:

Chyrece Campbell

Southwest School of Bible Studies
8900 Menchaca Road | Austin, TX 78748
512-282-2486 | office@swsbs.edu | swsbs.edu



Bryan Hodge

proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, Feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, And he that soweth discord among brethren” (Pro. 6:16-19). (5) Filthy communication out of your mouth – abusive language – lewd or obscene talk. The dirty jokes and foul language one might have used before putting on the new man must end. The Christian cannot be involved in using language, whether in the form of dirty jokes or foul language, not becoming of holiness. Peter wrote, “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15-16). (6) Lie not one to another – the child of God is to refrain from lying to each other. Satan is the father of all lies, John 8:44 therefore, when one lies, they become the child of the devil. Paul wrote, “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Eph. 4:25).

Because we have “put off the old man with his deeds” (v. 9), we should take off the clothes he wears so as not to be identified with him any longer. Once we have put off the clothes, then move away from them lest, we try and put them back on. The consequences of putting back on those old clothes can be very destructive to one’s soul. Peter wrote,

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire (2 Pet. 2:21–22).

May God help us keep the old man of sin far from us.

CW



It is said that a tradition sprang up in the early years of church history concerning the garments worn following baptism. The historian Philip Schaff wrote, “During the week following, the neophytes wore white garments as a symbol of purity” (Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 2, p. 252). Of course, this is not something the Bible requires. It was a human tradition practiced by some.

However, the Bible does speak of a change of spiritual clothing that should occur. There are things that should be put off (Col. 3:8-9; Eph. 4:22). There are things that should be put on (Col. 3:12-15; Eph. 4:24). We should be concerned about how we present ourselves before the world. We should want others to see Christ in us (Col. 3:10-11; Rom. 13:14; Gal. 2:20; 4:19). It is not enough to put off certain bad characteristics. We are to put on Christ-like characteristics. We are to be Christians, followers of Christ.

Remember Whose You Are

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on...” (Col. 3:12). Alan Adams remarked, “We are not to dress like commoners, rather as ‘God’s elect, holy and beloved’” (editor Garland Robinson, 1997, Seek The Old Paths Lectureship, The Church at Colosse, p. 149). We are God’s special people (Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9-10 cf. Ex. 19:5-6; Deut. 7:6; 14:2).

How To Dress

Compassion for Others

Put on “tender mercies” (Col. 3:12 NKJV), compassionate hearts (ESV). We need to care about others. Jesus did (Phil. 2:5-ff). May we rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15).

Put on “kindness” (Col. 3:12). The original word can refer to “kindness shown, beneficence” (Peschbacher). Think of it as kindness in action. Our compassion for others should be manifested in actions (Gal. 6:10; 1 John 3:17-18). Jesus’ was (Phil. 2:5-ff; 1 John 3:16).

Humility With Others

Put on “humility” (Col. 3:12). We should not think of ourselves as too good to associate with and serve others (Rom. 12:16; Matt. 20:20-28). Jesus didn’t (Phil. 2:5-ff; Matt. 20:28; John 13:14-15). May we each be “clothed with

humility” (1 Pet. 5:5).

Put on “meekness” (Col. 3:12 NKJV), “gentleness” (NASB). The original word “described negatively... is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest” (Vine’s). We should be considerate of others. Jesus was.

Resilience/Restraint in relationship

Put on “longsuffering” (Col. 3:12 NKJV), “patience” (NASB, ESV). God has been “longsuffering” toward us (2 Pet. 3:9). Jesus is “longsuffering” (1 Tim. 1:15-16). We should not be quick to give up on others or cut others out of our lives. “Love suffers long” (1 Cor. 13:4).

Put on “bearing with one another” (Col. 3:12 NKJV), “forbearing one another” (KJV). A.T. Robertson rendered it “holding yourselves back from one another” (studylight.org). God has been forbearing with man (Rom. 3:25).

Imitate Christ in Forgiveness

Put on “forgiving one another... even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do” (Col. 3:13). Christ forgives. If we are Christians, He has forgiven us. God forgives (Eph. 4:32). Shouldn’t we be forgiving? We must be (Matt. 6:12, 14-15; Luke 17:3-4; Matt. 18:21-35).

Superlative of Love

“But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection” (Col. 3:14 NKJV), “...the perfect bond of unity” (NASB), “...brings together perfect harmony” (ESV). The word is agape. Alan Adams considers the things to be put on as the following garments: (1) vest = compassion, kindness; (2) pants = humility, meekness; (3) shoes = longsuffering, forbearing, forgiving; (4) belt = love. He said, “without this Christian ‘belt,’ one is at best unkempt and disheveled” (Robinson, p. 150).

Think of God’s love (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8). Think of Jesus’ love (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16). We need this kind of love for others (1 John 4:11; 1 Cor. 13:1-3).

Trust/Thanksgiving Toward God

“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts” (Col. 3:15 NKJV), “... the peace of Christ” (NASB, ESV). The word “rule” means “to be an umpire, to decide, determine; to direct, control, rule” (Thayer). Some believe “the peace of God” refers to “the system of peace” (cf. Eph. 6:15; Rom. 10:15). Others believe that it refers to inner peace which comes from God (cf. Phil. 4:6-7; John 14:27; 16:33). Either way, the world needs to see that we trust Him in this life and live for Him.

“And be thankful” (Col. 3:15). The subject of thanks

comes up often in this book (Col. 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15, 17; 4:2). We have much for which we should be thankful. Don’t be a pessimist. Show the world the joy of Christian living.

The book of Colossians is Christ-exalting, and our lives should be as well. Let us put on Christ each day. As the song says, “Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me...”

CW

TEACHING AND ADMONISHING

Andy Baker

Because Christ is the undisputed Head of His church, we seek Him to do all things to the glory of God. He always does the things which please His Father (John 8:29). There is no room for others who want to tell us how we can/do approach God other than what the Lord has said. Colossians spends so much time exalting Jesus and denying what men say in “the appearance of wisdom” about Who He is and how we relate to God (Col. 2:23). For example, when we teach the gospel of Christ “speaking the truth in love,” God is glorified (Eph. 4:15). When we forgive one another as we have been forgiven through Jesus, God is glorified (Col. 3:13). When we worship God with the word of Christ dwelling in us, God is glorified (Col. 3:16-17).

Notice that in the practical section of Colossians 3, it is unashamedly Christ-centered as the epistle demands: We always seek Jesus (3:1-2). We died with Jesus and will live with Jesus (3:3-4). We put to death the things that are not like Jesus (3:5-10). We seek Christlikeness with the people of Jesus (3:11-15). We fill the church with the word of Jesus and are always reminded to respect the authority of Jesus (3:16-17). We center our homes and our relationships on the lordship of Jesus (3:18-4:6). Consider for a few moments what is accomplished in “teaching and admonishing” in this section of Colossians 3:16-17:

The word of Christ is undisputed among His people.

The first word of 3:16 is important: “LET.” This is something that Christians have the choice to happen. “Let the word of Christ dwell...” The “dwell” is an imperative. It means that the Master is at home. In London, the flag raised over Buckingham Palace shows the queen is home, so people know she is there. The word of God held and allowed to dwell in Christ’s people shows Jesus is the undisputed Head of House and He is at home! Jesus is at home among His people when they deeply respect His word (Col. 1:15-18).

There can be no real “teaching and admonishing” when we choose to ignore the word of Christ! It is right to apply in asking both in an individual and in a congregational setting, “how ‘at home’ does Jesus feel in me and the congregation where I work and worship?”

There are means of allowing the word of Christ to dwell in His people. “Dwell” is the verb, and there are three participles (“ing” words) which tell how “dwelling” happens: teaching, admonishing, singing. Simply put, teaching is to put the information into the mind and heart. Admonishing is to keep the information in the mind and heart. Singing shows it has affected the heart. Said another way, people learn what is right, and people remind each other that this applies to all we do in Christ, and people show the attitude of gratitude for the Word. A person may be taught and understand forgiveness, but in the heat of their own struggle, they need to be admonished to do the right thing and correctly apply the teaching (Jas. 1:22). Both teaching and admonishing are necessary to let the word of Christ dwell in us and the singing shows the word has affected us.

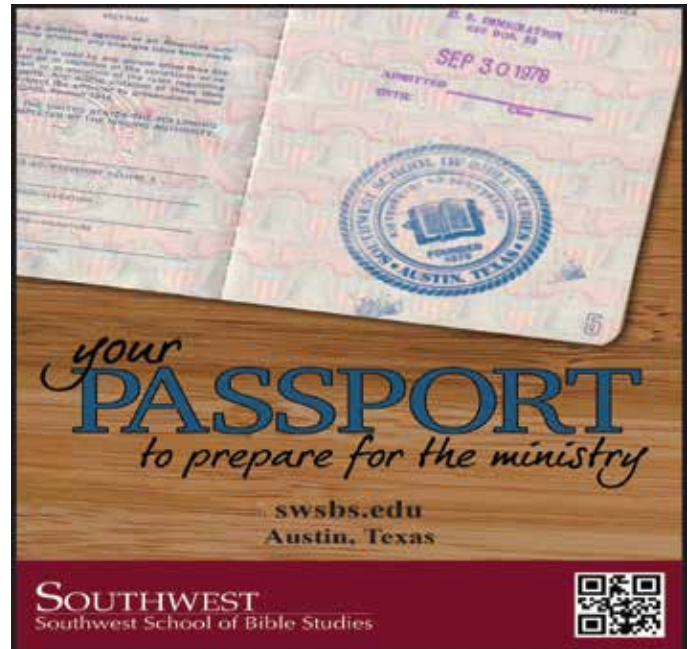
There are prescribed modes allowing the word of Christ to dwell in His people. “Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” show *how* teaching and admonishing takes place as God’s people allow the word of Christ to dwell in them richly. These song distinctions, while important in their own discussion, lead us invariably to the fact that teaching and admonishing is coupled with joyful praise and devotion to the One who has saved us. It is one thing to teach someone what’s right, remind them of what’s right, but still have them grumbling and complaining along the way. With teaching and admonishing coupled with songs of praise and devotion to our Savior, God’s people joyfully say and sing, “*All to Jesus I surrender!*”

The thankfulness is obvious in the singing of the people who let the word of Christ dwell in them. “Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” shows a tangible result of the people who have received the “teaching and admonishing” and are joyfully doing the word of Christ to the glory of God. The reason so many churches suffer in their song services by people not singing or not singing out, may come from this reason: we have failed to “let the word of Christ dwell in us richly!” Thankfulness flows naturally from genuine appreciation for the gift and the Giver. For one who doubts this, reread Colossians 1 and see how Paul compels the reader to drop to his knees in thankful appreciation to and for Jesus. When the word of Jesus has deeply impacted us, it will show in our songs.

There is always a reminder of the authority of the One whose word dwells in us. George Orwell’s terrifying novel,

1984, details a society with ominous reminders everywhere for all citizens, “Big Brother is watching you.” It was meant to assert the authority of a totalitarian state. Paul, not by authoritarian means, but by the appeal of thankful hearts reminds Christians that all we say or do, we do with submission to Christ’s authority. We are the ones who have received the teaching of Christ and admonishment of Christ and we dedicate ourselves to letting the word of Christ dwell in us and to apply it correctly. Thus, all we do glorifies our heavenly Father through our Savior whom we serve with our whole hearts.

CW



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

We should read Paul’s words over and over so that the principle sinks down into our minds. You and I are dead if we are Christians. If we are His, then our life is His. Furthermore, Paul explains it like this: “Your life is hidden with Christ.” Your life is not visible when people look at you. All that others should see is Christ. They do not see my life, but rather a life that is completely devoted to Jesus.

Paul speaks of the benefits of those who live a life for Jesus in verse four. When Christ appears, then you will also appear with Him in glory. Christ will make His glorious return, and when He does, we will see the glorious life we have in Christ. Our life is Christ’s, we seek the things above, where Christ is, that we may be with Him in eternity. May God help us to ever seek to make Christ our priority.

CW



www.swsbs.edu

SOUTHWEST

SOUTHWEST SCHOOL OF BIBLE STUDIES

Southwest graduates serve as preachers, authors, campus directors, missionaries, and school leaders on five continents. Whatever your passion, with strong academics and hands-on training, our collegiate program will empower you to serve Christ and His church.

FACULTY

Steven Lloyd Director
Clay Bond Associate Director
Matt Gibson
Carl McCann
Ronnie Scherffius
Cody Westbrook

- Two year full-time program for men and women
- Well-respected Bible faculty
- Verse-by-verse study of the entire Bible
- Training in expository preaching
- No tuition
- Living expense assistance available
- Studies in Biblical languages

“To Know Jesus and...make Him known”

From the Director's desk



Steven Lloyd
Director SWSBS

On behalf of the staff at the Southwest School of Bible Studies, I want to invite you to our graduation ceremony July 10th, 2022. Brother John Baker from Katy, Texas will teach our Sunday morning Bible study and preach the morning and evening lessons.

Brother Baker joined our staff this year to teach one of our Special Seminars on the Preacher and His Work. The last name may sound familiar. His brother Andy Baker has taught our Special Studies class on music for years.

Seven students will graduate this year: Greg Campbell, Tara Griffith, Adan Hernandez, Caleb Nash, Anthony Scherffius, Hailey Scherffius and Hannah Surlles. We lost one student along the way to motherhood. Ana Hernandez gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Raquel. This has occupied her time, but while she was a student, she excelled.

Most of the men have already found work preaching. Among our sisters graduating, two plan to continue their schooling. Another, Hailey Scherffius, will work alongside her husband Anthony in their new work.

Last month I mentioned the fact that we have 13 students incoming—five are women. Some may be reluctant to support a woman through school because their potential to make a living based on their training is not the same as it is for a man who graduates.

May I suggest that there are other reasons for supporting a student, whether male or female? Think about the potential good that may be accomplished by someone who has dedicated themselves to two intense years of studying the Scriptures. Imagine the potential benefit these students might be to any congregation they may attend after graduation. Think of the influence they might have in decades to come in teaching, or counseling from the word, or on the families to come. My own son attended SWSBS in 1993. He finished his schooling in Southern California and went on to preach for 29 years in full time and part time capacities.

Just think of the potential benefits of supporting a student like this.

We hope to see you July 10th.

www.swcofc.org