

CHRISTIAN WORKER

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

VOLUME 109, NUMBER 2

THE MESSAGE PEOPLE NEED

Kevin W. Rhodes

People choose churches for a lot of very peculiar reasons. Some judge a church by the friendliness of the people. Others judge a church by the size and beauty of the building. You would think more people would judge a church by the message that church represents and the message they hear when they go there. Of course, I guess in some cases they do. They go to hear a message that suits them, tells them they are all right, pats them on the head, and always cheers them up. Jesus must have seen attitudes similar to these, because in Luke 7:24-28 he addresses it. In John the Immerser, God did not send a preacher that fit into society of the day. He did not send a preacher to preach a social gospel and appeal to felt needs. He sent a preacher to preach His message and to prepare people for His coming. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he essentially told him that he should be like John--not like the typical orators, philosophers, or rabbis of the day. (1 Tim. 1:3-8). The role of a gospel preacher is indeed designed by God to provide what people need. But what people need is not always what they want. Regardless, a gospel preacher gives them what they need anyway.

People need to know the truth (1 Tim. 1:3-4a). People often assume they know the truth, when they actually just call whatever they believe the truth. It may even be a half-truth. But that is not what people need. People need the whole truth (Acts 20:26-27). They need nothing but the truth (Gal. 1:6-9). They need to be able to concentrate on the truth (2 Tim. 4:2-4). And they need the truth for people to have unity (John 17:17, 21). Jesus said, “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). People may want to hear a lot of things, but they *need* the truth.

People need to be aware of their responsibilities (1 Tim. 1:4b). Have you noticed how far some people will

go, at school or at work or anywhere else in society, to avoid taking responsibility? This extends to every walk of life, but it manifests itself greatly in the spiritual realm. Christians have the responsibility to respect God above all (Ecc. 12:13), to revere Him in life and express that in worship. More than that, Christians have the responsibility to help others become stronger spiritually (Eph. 4:16), teaching, guiding, and correcting one another in the mutual pursuit of heaven. Thirdly, Christians have the responsibility to accept what God says. Period (Jude 3; Acts 6:7). It most certainly will be difficult at times, but that does not make it less of a divine

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THE GREATEST COMPLIMENT EVER GIVEN

Cody Westbrook

Recent studies have shown that taking the time to offer a simple compliment has a great impact on the mood and emotional well-being of both the giver and the receiver. No one should really be surprised by that information. Solomon said long ago “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Pro. 25:11). “The tongue of the wise is health” (Pro. 12:18). Everyone appreciates a good compliment from time to time.

Far greater than a kind word from a friend, however, is a statement of confidence from the Creator. Genesis 18 records the occasion of the Angel of the Lord appearing to Abraham to warn him of Sodom and Gomorrah’s impending destruction. Genesis 18:17-19 chronicles the Lord’s question, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” followed by two answers: Abraham shall become a great nation (v. 18) and I know him (v. 19). The second reason given for the Lord revealing His plans to Abraham is noteworthy. It speaks to the character of Abraham, not just as an individual but also as a father and as a leader. It could be seen as the greatest compliment ever given.

The Lord said of Abraham, “I know him.” The word, “know” is rendered as “chosen” in some translations. It is a very flexible term, with a wide variety of meaning in the Old Testament, and thus context must play a role in translation and understanding. Keil and Delitzsch describe it as an acknowledgment or choosing in anticipated love. One writer described the idea of this passage as, “I have entered into a deep, intimate, daily, personal relationship with him.”¹ Jehovah used the term in Amos 3:2 to say to Israel, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” Hosea wrote, “I did know thee in the wilderness” (Hos. 13:5). The Lord knew Moses by name (Ex. 33:17) and Deuteronomy 34:10 says of him, “And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.” Of all the

people on earth with whom God could have entered a covenant relationship with, He chose Abraham because He knew him intimately. He knew his character, his motives, the decisions that he would make, and even the decisions and direction which his descendants would choose. Such knowledge allowed the Lord to choose Abraham in confidence that he would be the man the Lord needed him to be.

Not only did Jehovah know Abraham’s character generally, He knew what kind of father and leader of his home he would be. “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.” To command is to order or give directives with authority. The “way of the Lord” refers to a lifestyle of obedient confirmation to the will of God (Deu. 8:6; Jer. 5:4-5). The terms “justice” and “judgment” have to do with fulfilling ethical demands. It is a matter of doing what is right generally (Pro. 21:3; Jer. 23:5) but also dealing with one’s fellowman in a way that is right and fair (Deu. 16:19; Amos 5:24; Ps. 106:3; etc.). No doubt Abraham would learn the lessons of Sodom and Gomorrah and pass those along to future generations. But more than that, he would ensure that, like Joshua, he and his house would serve the Lord (Josh. 24:15). As the head of his family, it was incumbent upon Abraham to ensure that those under his domain served God faithfully, and Jehovah was confident that he would do just that. What an incredible statement of confidence.

God’s statement of confidence in Abraham should provoke a very important question: could He say the same about me? Husbands and fathers have the responsibility of leading their homes (Eph. 5:22-23) and teaching their children—bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). It is truly a weighty task that involves character and commitment. It is one that requires a man to submit himself to the Lord, lead by direction and example, admit when he is wrong, put the needs of his wife and family ahead of

¹ John T. Willis, *The Living Word Commentary on the Old Testament: Genesis*, Sweet Publishing Co.1979, Austin, TX: 258.

his own, and so much more. No man could fulfill this role perfectly, of course. Even Abraham fell short from time to time (cf. Gen. 12:10-20). But the man of God is dedicated to His cause and continues fighting and moving forward. So, if the Lord were to discuss you as He did with Abraham so long ago, what would He say? Would He see a man of character who lovingly leads his family with great conviction? Would He see a man who puts his own desires first and shirks his responsibilities as a husband and father? Can He depend on you as He could Abraham?

CW

ATTITUDES TOWARD OUR BRETHREN

Ronnie Scherffius

The word unity is found only three times in only two books of Scripture. David wrote, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Ps. 133:1). As much as it is good for brethren to be one, God provided those things necessary that brethren might “come in the unity of the faith” (Eph. 4:13) and by His inspired apostles both admonished and instructed how we might maintain unity: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:1-3). Let us briefly note these four attitudes we must possess for peaceful unity to exist among us.

First, we must have an attitude of lowliness. The word translated lowliness is from a Greek term that carries the sense of “having a humble opinion of oneself; a deep sense of one’s littleness” (Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament) and is translated as “humbleness of mind” in Colossians 3:12. Lowliness is the opposite of pride: “A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Pro. 29:23) Paul demonstrated this when he admonished the Philippians “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory [a vain opinion of self]; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Phil. 2:3). Furthermore, this was Paul’s practice as he labored among the Ephesians: “Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been

with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind” (Acts 20:18-19). Paul both instructed and practiced lowliness among brethren. How great the peace and unity in the church if we all cast off lofty attitudes of self and maintain the attitude of lowliness!

Second, brethren must adopt the attitude of meekness. While lowliness has to do with a correct attitude of self, meekness addresses our attitude toward others, especially those who are injurious and seek our hurt. The meek man is mild and gentle. The meek man does not react harshly or with a mean spirit. The meek man is not a coward though he does not react suddenly with anger. Neither does he harbor vengeance against his antagonist. Meekness, therefore, assumes a new heart, i.e., a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). No man of the world would ever assume a disposition of gentleness toward others who might openly oppose them or even actively seek their hurt. Paul addressed the Corinthians “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:1) and admonished the Galatians to seek the restoration of the wayward “in the spirit of meekness” (Gal. 6:1). How great the unity and peace among brethren if we all exhibited the attitude of meekness toward one another!

Third, brethren must possess the attitude of longsuffering. One who is longsuffering truly possesses his emotions and exhibits self-control. Thayer notes that longsuffering “is the self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong” and is “opposed to wrath or revenge.” Where meekness is one’s attitude inwardly toward those who might mistreat them, longsuffering is more of maintaining outward actions. Solomon wrote: “A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife” (Pro. 15:18). How beautiful the state of the church and how rare occasions of strife would be if Christians would only be longsuffering with brethren.

Finally, there is the attitude of forbearing one another in love. It should be noted that our forbearance is connected to love, and it should be emphasized that we are to forbear one another. One has noted that in the Christian life, we are “helping one another to sustain - helping to support each other in all the miseries and trials of life.” Forbearance involves bearing with one another’s weaknesses and not ceasing to love because of faults. It is a “tolerance without which no group of human beings can live together in peace.” Speaking of the state in which the apostles often found themselves, Paul wrote, “Even unto this present

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Southwest School of Bible Studies

Chapel @ 8:30 AM / Lunch @ 11:50-1:00

Time	First Year	Time	Second Year
Monday			
9:00-10:20	1, 2 Samuel - Clay Bond	9:00-10:20	Greek 3 - Trent Kennedy
10:30-11:50	Rhetoric - Trent Kennedy	10:30-11:50	Counseling - Steven Lloyd
1 - 2:20	GSP	1-2:20	Minor Prophets - Clay Bond
2:30-3:50	John - Steven Lloyd	2:30-3:50	2 Corinthians - Matt Gibson
Tuesday			
9-10:20	Judges and Ruth - Matt Gibson	9:00-11:50	Preaching Practicum - Carl McCann
10:30-11:50	Expository Preaching - Steve Lloyd		
1:00-3:50	Acts 1 - Carl McCann	1:00-2:20	1, 2 Thess & James - Matt Gibson
		2:30-3:50	GSP
Wednesday			
9:00-10:20	1, 2 Samuel - Clay Bond	9:00-10:20	Greek 3 - Trent Kennedy
10:30-11:50	Rhetoric - Trent Kennedy	10:30-11:50	Counseling - Steven Lloyd
1 - 2:20	GSP	1-2:20	Minor Prophets - Clay Bond
2:30-3:50	John - Steven Lloyd	2:30-3:50	2 Corinthians - Matt Gibson
Thursday			
9:00-10:20	Judges & Ruth - Matt Gibson	9:00-11:50	1, 2 Pet & Jude - Trent Kennedy
10:30-11:50	Expository Preaching - Steven Lloyd		
1:00-3:50	Deuteronomy - Mel. Hutzler	1:00-2:30	1, 2 Thessalonians, James - Matt Gibson
		2:30-3:50	GSP
Friday			
9:00-11:50	Advanced NT - Cody Westbrook	9:00-11:50	Daniel and Chaldean History - Trent K.
1:00-13:50	Joshua - Jim Lloyd	1-3:50	Ezekiel 1-3:50- Steven Lloyd

See Academic Calendar for Special Events

hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it” (1 Cor. 4:11-12). Truly it is only the love for the souls of our brethren that would cause one to forbear or “bear-under” the weaknesses and infirmities of one another. How desperately the church needs brethren who will forbear one another in love.

What is your attitude toward your brethren? Are you striving to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace with an attitude of lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearance toward your brethren?

CW

A JEALOUS GOD?

John Haffner

In the workplace, an employee who is jealous of his coworker’s promotion is not a good example. Within a family, a woman who is jealous of her brother’s new car would not be praised for it. Among married couples, a jealous husband who distrusts his wife and tracks her every action is not behaving righteously. The word “jealous” seems to be universally regarded as a negative trait. Why then does the Bible so frequently describe the God of Heaven as being a jealous God?

This term first appears as God provided the Hebrew people with the Ten Commandments. “...For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...” (Ex. 20:5). A bit further on, the statement seems to be made more emphatically. “For you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (Ex. 34:14). This turn of phrase does not reveal an alternate name for Jehovah, but rather it expresses a trait which is totally linked to His identity and character. This would be like the phrase, “Worthy is His name,” or when someone in the modern day might say, “Adventure is my middle name!” So, how is it that a key component of God’s identity would seem to contradict with other aspects of His character? The Bible teaches us that God is love (1 John 4:8). And yet love is not jealous (1 Cor. 13:4 NASB). How can God be both?

Part of the answer to this apparent problem is found in a study of Bible languages. The Hebrew word “*qana*” and the Greek word “*zelos*” both express the idea of warmth or heat. Depending on how the terms are being used, they can express a negative or a positive trait. The words merely present the picture of powerful, red-faced emotion or zeal, whether for right or wrong. As a bad example, Joseph’s brothers were moved by strong emotion to sell him into slavery (Gen. 37:11; Acts 7:9). In a good example, Paul urged the Christians of Corinth to earnestly desire spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:31) and expressed a burning desire for them to remain faithful in their relationship with God (2 Cor. 11:2). In all these cases, terms for jealousy are used. When these words appear in the Bible, they can express good or evil passion, but they always indicate strong desire. Careful study will lead us to discover what the strong feeling was in each situation and whether the one having the emotion was justified and acted rightly.

It should also be clearly stated that love and jealousy are not incompatible. God’s description of Himself as a jealous God speaks of the beauty of fidelity in a covenant relationship. He was not envious of the Israel’s accomplishments or seeking to control them against their will. He desired what was legitimately and rightly His, which was agreed upon (Ex. 19:8; 24:3). God and Israel had a spiritual marriage, though His people often played the harlot (Jer. 3:6; 31:32; Hos. 1:2). As a husband, He will permit no rival, and so He called for their return. This is the right kind of jealousy. Today, the church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-33). We have entered a covenant relationship and God still duly requires faithfulness to Him alone. Our God is a jealous and loving God.

CW



Kerry Clark

I don't know if you are familiar with the history of the Pony Express. The Pony Express ran from Saint Joseph, Missouri to San Francisco, California. That is a distance of 1966 miles. The trip was made in around ten days. The fastest trip ever made was seven days and 17 hours and the rider was carrying Lincoln's Inaugural Address. Forty men were normally used to make the trip. The Express had 500 of the best horses money could buy. The riders could not weigh over 125 pounds and orphans were preferred. The Pony Express even had a special saddle made for the trip. It was thin and light weight. The Pony Express tried to do everything they could to keep weight at a minimum. A special thin paper was used for writing letters and postage was \$10 per ounce. You may be wondering what all of this has to do with Bible-toting people.

The fact is, even with all the concerns about weight, the owners of the Pony Express gave each rider a full-sized Bible that he was expected to carry with him on every trip. Oh, how we need Bible-totin' and Bible quotin' Christians today. Just as there was a famine in the land of Israel during the days of Amos; there is a famine in the land of America today. Amos wrote, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it" (Amos 8:11-12). Certainly America is not in the exact circumstance that Amos spoke about, but we recognize that there is a famine of hearing the true Word of God today. What a difference we would see in America today if everyone practiced the Golden Rule as taught by Jesus Christ, "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). If everyone treated our fellow man in this fashion what a drastic change we would see take place. Divorces would vanish! Child abuse would disappear. Sin would fade away. America could be great once again!

So, what is the remedy? Exactly what the title of this article is talking about, we need Bible-totin' and Bible quotin' Christians. We need preachers who, as Paul instructed, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).

PS: The idea for this article came from brother Jim Dearman who works with TRUTH FOR THE WORLD. Their website is: "<http://www.tftw.org/>" Brother Dearman's message was from a "minute message."

CW

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

William Woodson

Of interest within its own right, and in view of ongoing discussions of importance among our people, is the determination of what is meant by the statement, "*the doctrine of Christ*," as given in 2 John 9. As remarkable as it may seem, there is difficulty and uncertainty in the minds of some as to the meaning of this expression. The following is offered as worthy of consideration in determining its meaning.

There is a significant combination of statements about doctrine and Christ which clarify the meaning of this expression. In John 7:16-17, one reads, "*Jesus answered them, **my doctrine** is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of **the doctrine**.*" Note the words in bold as we have done. In Acts 2:42, one reads, "*And they continued steadfastly in the **apostles' doctrine**.*" Then in 2 John: "*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the **doctrine of Christ** hath not God. He that abideth in the **doctrine of Christ**, he hath both the Father and the Son.*"

In John 7:16, there is the statement of "*my doctrine*." It would not be possible to maintain that this is different from "*the doctrine*" in the very next verse. Therefore, surely the reference is broader than the deity of Jesus, though the deity of Jesus is included in what Jesus termed "*the doctrine*." The "*apostles' doctrine*" is not the doctrine or teaching about the apostles, but must be the doctrine that they taught. Would anyone maintain that this doctrine was different in content from the "*my doctrine*" and "*the doctrine*" of John 7:16-17? With this in mind, what of the "*doctrine of Christ*"? Is it not clear that "*the doctrine of Christ*" and "*my doctrine*" are one and the same? Also, is it not clear that this is the same as "*the apostles' doctrine*"? The fact is the same body of teaching or doctrine is under consideration in these several verses. What one means, they all mean and refer to the teaching which Christ gave by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This whole "*doctrine*" includes discussion of the

deity of Jesus, to be sure, but it cannot properly be limited to just that important truth. Rather it includes the whole content of New Testament teaching. This understanding parallels the conclusion of Westcott, "...the doctrine which Christ brought, and which He brought first in His own person, and then through His followers...and the usage of the New Testament is uniformly in favor of it" (*Comments on II John 9*).

CW

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expectation. These are not options. They are obligations. They are a Christian's responsibilities (1 Tim. 3:15).

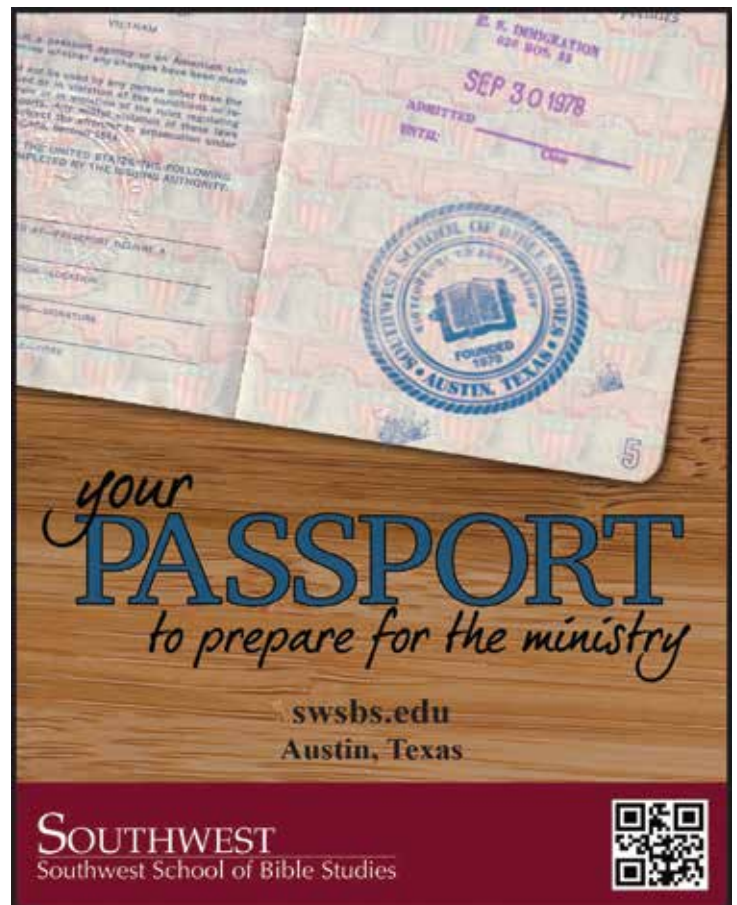
People need to have the right motives (1 Tim. 1:5). People sometimes think that we are only interested in external obedience...in things like worship, baptism, and attendance. But that is not the case at all. God cares about WHY we do things. Sincerity is not an excuse to ignore what God says; it is the very reason we should seek to do the best with what God ways. Therefore, it is essential that Christians love unselfishly (Matt. 22:37-40), seeking what is best for God and for others in every act in life (Phil. 2:4). Beyond that, Christians must commit completely (Matt. 5:8), making decisions on the basis of God's will and only God's will. Building on this foundation, Christians should develop personal integrity, having a good conscience devoted unto holiness (1 John 3:18-21). Thus, having taking positive steps forward from the heart, Christians must avoid hypocrisy, living with sincere faith before God and one another rather than playacting their Christianity (Rom. 12:9).

People need to be faithful (1 Tim. 1:6-7). This is not something we should just take for granted—of ourselves or anyone else. Christians, work diligently to keep your life in line with God's Word (Phil. 3:17). Do not try to justify yourself by ridiculous arguments from scripture (Gal. 6:7-8), rather humble yourself through sincere repentance (Acts 17:30). Aspire to please God—not to be liked or thought wise by men (1 Th. 4:1; 1 Cor. 1:18). Jesus said, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). This includes far more than worship attendance and contribution; it is the expression of a life given back to God because of all God has already given.

In truth, I would be the last person to suppose I understood what people want. Basic observations demonstrate just

how unpredictable some people are. It amazes me how some people vote. It amazes me what some people think is entertaining. It amazes me what some people think is intelligent. But I do not have to know what people want, because God has already told me what they need. All people need Jesus Christ if they want to go to heaven (Acts 4:12). All people need the gospel (Rom. 10:17). All people need to believe (Heb. 11:6). All people need to repent (Luke 13:3). All people need to confess Christ (Matt. 10:32-33). All people need to be baptized (Mark 16:15-16). And, yes, all people need to be faithful (Rev. 2:10). This may not be the message people want to hear, but it is the message people need to hear. However, God is not going to approve of you just because you have heard this message during worship. He is looking at whether you obey it once you leave.

CW





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“To Know Jesus and...make Him known”

From the Director's desk



Steven Lloyd
Director SWSBS

Southwest's Arise Workshop is right around the corner—March 2-5, 2023. Please register online to let us know you are coming. The congregation is providing dinner Friday and Saturday evening.

The congregation is not providing lunch as in the past, but the Southwest School of Bible Studies is hosting a lunch for the alumni and their family on Friday. This being the case, we need you to call the school or church office to let us know you are coming and how many in your family plan to accompany you.

“Arise: and Overcome” is this year's theme. There is a great line-up of topics and speakers to match. This year promises to be filled with practical lessons on topics that most of us will find useful—if not for ourselves, then in helping others. I encourage you to check it out at swcofc.org/arise.

Concerning the school, our attendance is still high with twelve first-year students and with nine second-year students. One of our first-year students decided to return home in Oregon. We will miss him and his family.

Our list of upcoming students in 2023 is beginning to grow as well. If you plan to attend school this August, now is the time to fill out the online application. It is not too soon to begin raising support. If you know someone who plans to attend, encourage them to contact us for the link to the online application.

I look forward to seeing you at Arise!

www.swcofc.org