

# *Braman* Foundation of Charities REVIVE MAGAZINE

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The Magazine of The Braman Foundation of Charities

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## The BFC Editorial

We at the Braman Foundation continue to press into what the Holy Spirit is seeking to accomplish His purpose through our work. We held our Annual Board Meeting on January 27, 2018 at the Queensbury Hotel. Much of our work for 2018 is featured in this issue of Revive.

Braman Foundation of Charities continues to seek in kingdom building through Loving our Neighbor, working with inmates and working discipleship, through its missions and community programs.

During 2018 will see expanded efforts in discipleship conferences in Africa and India. In addition, will continue to sow into the communities of Schenectady and Albany. We will also begin work in Gloversville and Poughkeepsie. Fourth quarter 2018 will begin the Life Line program in bridging men into a furniture manufacturing process. BFC continues to answer the call to bring students to NY for higher learning at the university level. Through our "Operation Blessing Bags" program we distributed over 650 Bibles. In 2018 we plan on delivering over 1,200 bibles throughout our community partners. Throughout our mission work in India, Africa and Haiti we continue to grow with our brothers and sisters.

It is through God's grace, your financial commitments and your continued prayers that we answer the call: "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." Christ, as our example, continue to seek through our work a spirit of unification with in the brethren.

In this issue we feature the writing of John Wesley. John Wesley's commitment to Holiness that reminds us all to press into the Holy Presence of God.

Enjoy this issue and may your walk in Christ continue to grow through your commitment to abide in Him. May Christ ever be present as you grow in Holiness.

God bless and thank you!

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## Meet John Wesley

Born on June 17, 1703 to a dissident rector of the church of England to Samuel and Susanna Wesley, John was educated at Christ Church at Oxford and graduated determined to become a priest. While at Oxford in 1729, John and his brother, Charles (a noted hymn writer), formed a study group with friends, Robert Kirkham and William Morgan. The study group known for its emphasis on methodical study, devotion and piety as called by others, "Methodists."

These Methodists grew in numbers and frequently served communion, fasted, had social services, and worked with the poor and unemployed. In 1735, the year of their father's death, John and Charles left Oxford and the group dissolved.

Persuaded to come to America by his Oxford friend, John Burton and the governor of the colony of Georgia, Colonel James Oglethorpe, John Wesley began to evangelize Indians with some Moravian emigrants. After an unsuccessful courtship with Sophia Hopkey, Wesley returned to England in 1737.

In London, Wesley found himself captivated by Luther's doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone as expounded by Martin Luther in his commentary on Galatians. John Wesley yearned for a simple faith rooted in personal commitment and piety. On May 24, 1738 in Aldersgate Street, London, during a meeting of primarily Moravians, Wesley's intellectual commitment to the faith was transformed into a "warm" personal experience as Luther's preface to the commentary of Romans was being read.

From the age of thirty-five after the defining moments at Aldersgate, John Wesley began proclaiming the good news of salvation by faith everywhere possible from pulpits, horseback and on the streets as he was often met with persecution and ridicule. The congregations of the Church of England rejected him and his enthusiastic preaching. He often went to religious societies attempting to infuse fresh, renewed spiritual fervor into their gatherings. As these groups began to be spiritual renewed, Wesley wrote *Rules of the Band Societies* in December 1738 to guide their meetings.

In 1739, Wesley joined George Whitefield in preaching to the unchurched masses throughout Britain. To avoid any scandals, John Wesley wrote the *Rules for the Methodist Societies* in 1743. A prolific writer as well as preacher, Wesley founded the Methodist movement. He ordained pastors in America, when the Church of England refused to do so in 1784. Toward the end of his life, Wesley became a noted and recognized figure in England where he died in 1791.

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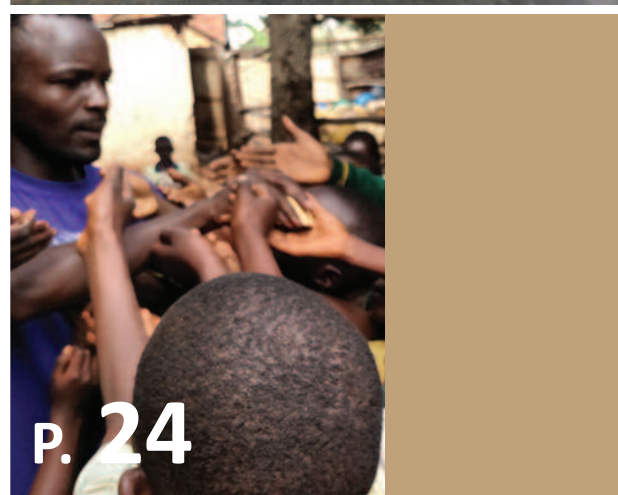
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## Asapalli: A Village of Hope

Asapalli “A Village of Hope”. founded in 1944 reaches into the communities in the Northeast Region of Assam, India. For over 40 decades Asapalli, through the movement of the Holy Spirit, has been reaching the lost to bring them into an understanding of Jesus’ commandments to Love Thy Neighbor.



### Vacation Bible School

In December 2017, we hosted the first ever Vacation Bible School on the grounds at Asapalli. Additional VBS sessions have been scheduled for June 2018 and December 2018.

## New School Building

Join us as we pray and grow support for our third school building on the Asapalli grounds. Started in 1944 with 5 children, Asapalli now gathers over 700 children, teaching the Love of Christ. Our third building will allow us to serve over 1250 children.

Each child is taught the Love of Christ and educated to achieve a high school diploma. Our teachings grounded in biblical standards and disciplines. Children experience authentic Christian and biblical discipleship as a child in their respective class. In addition, we offer permanent residence for over 700 children.



 <p>Jovet Pohra S/O: Gideon Suchang Father's occupation: Cultivator Vill: Nagakhal P.O: Monarkhal Dist: Cachar, Assam</p>	 <p>Chingga-hmuan Paite D/O: Dalliansang Paite Father's occupation: Farmer Vill: Buangmuai P.O: Jiribam Dist: Tamenglong, Manipur</p>
 <p>Poughalen Gomei S/O: Sanga Gomei Father's occupation: Farmer Vill: Luangkho P.O: Tausem Dist: Tamenglong, Manipur</p>	 <p>Hrangdingien Hmar S/O: Mrs. Dikhthang Beite Mother's occupation: Cultivator Vill: Lower Oerhupien P.O: K.H. Zeikhan Dist: Churachandpur, Manipur</p>
 <p>Lathian Mangthang D/O: Lathiesang Hmar Father's occupation: Cultivator Vill: Ngampabung P.O: Churachandpur, Manipur</p>	 <p>Sharon Gomei D/O: Mathlhuai Gomei Father's occupation: Farmer Vill: Luangkho P.O: Guakhol Dist: Tamenglong, Manipur</p>



## Child's Sponsor Program

## Platinum Jubilee - 75th Year

November 24 and 25



## Girl's Dorm Project

The goal of this project is to improve hygiene, privacy and cleanliness.



The photo above is the old style bathroom.

# Finding Faith

by: John Wesley

MANY COMFORTERS ASSURED ME THAT I HAD FAITH. As A Wesley, I was supposed to have faith. I was an ordained minister from a family of ministers. My brother, father, grandfathers, and a great-grandfather were all ministers. I was ordained at the age of twenty-two. I received my Master of Arts degree from Oxford, England. I preached on faith to the faculty and students at St. Mary's Church, Oxford. But I did not have the faith which I wanted and knew that I needed. This faith by the power of the Holy Spirit would come to me later. Then I would be able to lead many into the same powerful spiritual experience.

I had a sort of faith during my early life. But devils also have a sort of faith. Still, neither they nor I received the faith of the covenant of promise. Even the apostles had a sort of faith when they were first with Jesus in Cana. Then and there, they "believed on him" in a way. But they did not yet have the faith which overcomes the world.

## *THE DESIRE FOR TRUE FAITH*

The faith I wanted was a sure trust and confidence in God. I wanted to experience forgiveness from my sins and a oneness with God through the work of Jesus. I wanted to be returned to God through the faith Paul wrote about, especially in his letter to the Romans. Like him, I wanted a faith which would enable me to say, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20-21).

I wanted a faith which no one can have without knowing he has it. Many imagine they have this type of faith, but do not. My comforters imagined I had it, but I did not. I remained miserable in their poor comfort.

Everyone possessing this true faith is free from sin. The whole body of sin in him is destroyed. He is free from fear, receiving peace through Jesus while rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. He is free from doubt, having the love of God shed abroad in his heart through the Holy Spirit which is given to him. He is assured that he is truly a child of God through the witness which the Holy Spirit bears in the heart of the faithful.

Having preached about this true faith, I was sure of its substance. I knew that I was yet to attain such a faith. In order to find this faith, I contracted to serve as a missionary. I was not searching for any financial gain in missionary work. God had given me many material blessings already. I was not seeking any honor. Purely and simply, I was seek-

ing to live wholly to the glory of God and to save my own soul.

By God's grace, I was able to have direct witness of this living faith through a group of Germans soon after leaving for the mission field. There were twenty-six of these unusual Christians on the ship.

In mid-ocean, we encountered three violent storms in rapid succession. All the passengers, except these Germans, were in fear for their lives. I had to ask myself, since I was so unwilling to die, "How is it that I have no faith?"

The third storm, a hurricane, hit at noon on Sunday. By four it was more violent than any of the, other storms. The winds roared and whistled all around us. The ship rocked to and fro with great violence. It shook and jarred with an unequal, grating motion, so that no one could stand without holding on. Shocks came every ten minutes. It seemed as if those shocks would tear the ship apart.

At seven I made my way into the quarters of the Germans. I had already observed the seriousness of their behavior. They gave continual proof of their humility. They were willing to do the most menial tasks rejected by others, and take no pay. They would say of the tasks performed, "It was good for their proud hearts." And also, "Their loving Savior had done more for them."

Every day was another occasion of showing a meekness which no affront or insult could remove. If they were mistreated, they went away without a complaint. I wanted to see if they had been freed from fear. I knew they were delivered from pride, anger, and revenge. But what about fear?

They began their services with a psalm. In the middle of the service, a great wave rolled over the ship. It covered the deck and poured down inside as if the ship were about to sink. A terrible scream came from the other passengers, but the Germans calmly sang on. I asked one of them afterwards, "Were you not afraid?"

He answered, "I thank God I was not."

"But were your women and children afraid?"

"No. Our women and children are not afraid to die," he replied mildly.

After that I tried to watch their behavior as often as possible. They were always busy, usefully employed, cheerful, and in good humor. They had done away with all strife, anger, bitterness, clamor, and evil-speaking. They walked

and lived as true witnesses of Christ.

A contrast to their meekness was the impression which I gave to some. One man was particularly cold toward me. I asked him the reason for this. He gave me a detailed reply. "I like nothing you do. All your sermons are satires upon particular persons; therefore, I will never hear you again; and all the people are of the same mind, for we won't hear ourselves abused.

"Besides, they say they are Protestants. But as for you, they cannot tell of what religion you are. They never heard such a religion before. They do not know what to make of it. And your private behavior: All the quarrels that have been here since you came, have been long your making.

"Indeed, there is neither man nor woman in the town who minds a word you say. And so you may preach long enough, but nobody will come to hear you."

After two years of poor results in this chosen work, I thought it was time to leave the mission field. I took a ship home.<sup>18</sup> On the return, I had much private time to think about my Christianity. Had this solitude helped me to become more Christian? Not if Jesus Christ is the model of Christianity!

My mind was full of thoughts. Some I wrote in my journal. I became a missionary to convert the heathens; but oh, who shall convert me? Who, what, is He who will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well, and believe myself while no danger is near. But let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled.

Then on the last evening aboard ship, I wrote this review of my situation. "It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country in order to teach heathens the nature of Christianity. But what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why, what I least expected! I went to the mission field to convert others, but was never myself converted to God. I am not mad, though I thus speak, but I speak the words of truth and soberness; if haply some of those who still dream may awake and see, that as I am.

"Were they not students of philosophy? So was I. Were they not students in ancient or modern languages? So was I, also. Are they informed in the field of theology? I, too, have studied it for many years. Can they talk fluently about spiritual things? I could do the very same thing. Are they generous in their giving alms? I gave all that I had to feed the poor.

"Do they give of their time as well as of their money? I have labored more than them all. Are they willing to suffer for others? I have given up my friends, reputation, comfort, and country. I have put my life at stake wandering in strange lands. I have risked my life at sea, been parched with heat, consumed by work and weariness, or whatever it pleased God to allow upon me.

"But does all this make me more acceptable to God? Does all I ever did or can know, say, give, do, or suffer justify me in His sight? By no means! If the words of God are true, all these things, though holy, just, and good when enriched by faith in Christ, are worthless without such faith and good only to be consumed by the fire that shall never be quenched.

"This is what I have learned in my travels and services. I am fallen short of the glory of God. My whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable. As a result, my whole life cannot produce good fruit because I am an evil tree. I am alienated from the life of God as a child of anger, an heir of hell.

"My own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness are far from reconciling me to God whom I have offended. These make no atonement for the least of my sins, and my sins are more numerous than the hairs on my head. I know in my heart there is nothing in or of myself which can plead an earning of God's mercy. I have no hope except of being justified-saved freely through the redemption that is in Jesus alone."

#### *RETURNING HOME*

My only hope is that if I seek Jesus, I shall find Christ. Then I shall be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

There are many reasons to thank God for the missionary work, even though my plans were not fulfilled. By this experience, He had humbled me and shown me what was truly in my heart. I learned to be more cautious about men. I am now sure that if we trust God in all our ways, He will surely direct our paths in this world. One side effect was that I 'became free from my fear of the sea, a fear troubling me since my youth.

And equally important, I was able to meet and know many of his true servants. During this time, I learned the languages of German, Spanish and Italian. I believed some good use would come of this in the future.

Within a week of my return home, God sent three more German Christians who had the faith which I sought) One of them, Peter Bohler, was to lead both my brother

Charles and me into this new faith. I was able to spend much time with Peter.

With regard to my own life, I wrote down and renewed all the resolutions of my life.

1. I would use absolute openness and candor in all my conversation.
2. I would continually seek to be serious, not willingly participating in levity or laughter even for a moment.
3. I would never speak unless it tended to the glory of God. In particular, I would not talk of worldly things. Others may, some must. That would be of no concern to me.
4. I would engage in no activity for pleasure unless it tended to the glory of God. I wanted to thank God at all times and for all things. Therefore, I must reject all activities which I believe I could not so thank Him in and for.

#### *AMAZED BY LIVING FAITH*

In my discussion with Peter Bohler, I was amazed by his accounts of a living faith. He insisted that the fruits of holiness and happiness were part of such a faith. I went back to my Greek New Testament to verify his claims. I resolved to accept the testimony of the Scriptures. I was sure that God would direct my search. He would show me whether this doctrine was of Him.

Even though I did not yet have this living faith, I began to speak about it in public.<sup>21</sup> I went into the prison to preach to the condemned. I prayed with a condemned man. He knelt down with much heaviness and confusion. He arose in cheerfulness.

"I am now ready to die. I know Christ has taken away my sins. There is no more condemnation for me," he eagerly reported. As he was taken to his execution, he continued in the same composed cheerfulness. In his last moments he was the same. He enjoyed perfect peace, assured that he was accepted in Jesus.

On my next visit with Peter, I assured him I had no objections about his claims on the nature of faith. I agreed that faith is a sure trust and confidence which man has in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he is reconciled to God. I could not deny that both holiness and happiness were fruits of the living faith, just as he claimed. My review of the Scriptures proved this.

What I could not understand was what he spoke of as an instantaneous work. I could not understand how this faith could be given in a moment. How could one be turned from sin and misery into righteousness and joy in the Holy

Spirit instantaneously?

I returned to the Scriptures to search this point again. I particularly studied the Acts of the Apostles. To my utter astonishment, I found scarcely any instances of conversions except the instantaneous kind. Few were as slow as that of Paul who was three days in the labor of the new birth.

I had but one retreat left. I granted God did these things in the first age of Christianity, but times had changed. Was there any reason to believe that God works in the same way now as He did then?

The next day I was beaten out of this retreat, also. Peter brought me Christians who testified God had changed them in a moment. In a moment, they said, God had given them a living faith in Jesus. That faith transferred them from darkness into light, out of sin and fear into holiness and happiness.

Here my disputing ended. I could now only cry out, "Lord, help my unbelief!"

#### *MY HEART WAS STRANGELY WARMED*

My brother Charles was greatly opposed to my understanding of the living faith. It made him angry to hear me say that I did not have real faith. He called this "the new faith."<sup>24</sup> However, Charles agreed to a long conversation with Peter about it. It pleased God to open Charles's eyes. He also saw clearly what the nature of the one true living faith. Through grace alone, we are saved.

Charles experienced this new living faith before I did. He was staying with a friend while sick with pleurisy. Because he was too sick to go out, several of us visited him on Sunday morning, May 21. It was Whitsunday-Pentecost Sunday. We prayed with him and left for church. Later that day, the Holy Spirit healed him and gave him the living faith in a moment.

I had continued to seek this faith, though with some strange indifference, dullness, and coldness until May 24. In the evening of that day, I went very unwillingly to a prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street. About 8:45, I was listening to a reading of Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. While he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, ***I felt my heart strangely warmed.***

I felt that I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation. An assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.



The moment I awakened the next morning, the love of Jesus, my Master, was in my heart and in my mouth. All my strength came from keeping my eyes fixed upon Him, and my soul waiting on Him continually. In church in the afternoon, I could taste the good word of God in the anthem. Its first line was, "My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord; with my mouth will I ever be showing forth your truth from one generation to another."

Yet Satan injected a fear into me. "If you do believe, why do you not feel a greater change?"

"That I do not know. But this I know, I have now peace with God. And I do not sin today. Jesus, my Master, has forbidden me to take any thought about tomorrow." This answer came from something deep within me. It was not me.

"But is not any sort of fear," continued the tempter, "a proof that you do not believe?" I wanted Jesus to answer for me. I opened the Bible and my eyes fell upon the words of St. Paul. "Without were fightings, within were fears." This inferred that I well may have some fears within me, but I must go on treading them under my feet.

#### *ENCOUNTERING PERSECUTION*

On the following Sunday, I awoke in peace, but not in joy. I remained in the same quiet state until evening. Then came the first persecution for my new faith. Many such persecutions were to follow over the years. I was roughly attacked in a large group as a fanatic, seducer, and a setter-forth of new doctrines. By the blessing of God, I was not moved to anger. After a calm and short reply, I went away.

I had preached in two churches that day. It was the last time I would be allowed to preach at either. I continued to be concerned for those who were seeking death through error in their lives.

It was my wish to visit the Germans. I wanted to be with the main body of Christians from which Peter and those whom I met on board the ship came. I was able to spend two months there. Some of this time was spent with Peter's family.

In Germany, I continually met with living proofs of the power of faith. Many persons there had been saved from inward as well as outward sin by the love of God in their hearts. They were freed from all doubt and fear by the abiding witness of the Holy Spirit who had been given them.

I heard their senior minister preach on four occasions.

Each time his topic was one which I wanted to hear. Three of these sermons concerned those who are weak in faith, the ones who are saved-justified-but have not yet received the new, clean heart. They have received forgiveness through the blood of Christ, but have not received the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

After returning from Germany, I began to declare this good news of experienced salvation. I preached as often as three times a day. I preached in the prisons to the convicted and the condemned."

#### *SURPRISING EXAMPLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER*

One day I saw a woman who was raving mad, screaming and tormenting herself continually. I had a strong desire to speak to her. The moment I began she became still. Tears ran down her cheeks all the time I was telling her, "Jesus of Nazareth is able and willing to deliver you."

Those who had received this new living faith through the Holy Spirit continued to meet together. About sixty of us were holding a love feast on New Year's Eve on Fetter Lane. At about three in the morning, as we were continuing in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us. Many cried out in complete joy. Others were knocked to the ground. As soon as we recovered a little from that awe and amazement at God's presence, we broke out in praise. "We praise you, O God; we acknowledge you to be the Lord."

The Holy Spirit began to move among us with amazing power when we met in His name. One of the most surprising instances of His power which I ever saw happened to one of the critics. I was visiting a woman who was furious about this new faith, and zealous in opposing it. My arguments only increased her anger. I broke off the dispute and asked her to join me in prayer. She agreed and we knelt together.

In a few minutes she fell over in extreme agony, both in body and soul. Soon after she cried out with great earnestness, "Now I know I am forgiven for Christ's sake."

A few days later I visited her again. Gathered that evening were some of her neighbors who also objected to the new faith. One man was attempting to pervert this truth. I entered into the controversy to speak on both the cause and effects of salvation. During the dispute, a woman listener fell pierced as with a sword. She left to go to another house, but began crying out while still in the street. As soon as we prayed for her forgiveness, He sent her that assurance.

These unusual works of the Holy Spirit continued to follow and bless my ministry. At Baldwin Street, I preached on

the fourth chapter of Acts. Then I asked God to confirm this teaching.

Immediately one who was standing there cried out aloud as though she were in the agonies of death. As surprised as I was, I was able to continue in prayer. We prayed until she received her sense of forgiveness and could give thanks to God. Soon after that, two other persons were seized with strong pain. It was not long before they likewise burst forth into praises of God, their Savior. Finally, a stranger was overwhelmed with both joy and love. He had received forgiveness of backsliding.

At another place a young man was seized with a violent trembling all over. In a few minutes his heart was filled with sorrow, and he sank to the ground. We continued in prayer until God raised him up. He was then full of peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Later, while preaching in prison, I felt called to say that God wills all men to receive this saving faith. I called to God to bear witness to this truth. Immediately one, and another, and another sunk to the ground. People dropped on every side as thunderstruck. One of them cried aloud. We prayed to God on her behalf, and He gave her the joy of the Holy Spirit. The same occurred with a second woman. Our prayers were answered and He gave her the peace of the Holy Spirit.

The next day the whole prison was filled with the cries of those whose hearts were being touched by God. Two of these received joy in a moment to the astonishment of the onlookers.

We knew many were offended by the cries of those on

whom the power of God came. One so offended was a physician who was afraid these cases involved either fraud or mistake. In one of my services, he stood next to an acquaintance of many years. His acquaintance broke out into strong cries and tears.

The physician could hardly believe his own eyes and ears. He stood close to observe every symptom. Great drops of sweat ran down her face and all her bones shook. He did not know what to think, being convinced it was neither fraud nor any natural disorder. When both her body and soul were healed in a moment, he admitted it to be the work of God.

Many continued to be offended, even more than before. Later at Baldwin Street my voice could hardly be heard due to the groaning and cries of those calling to God to save. A Quaker stood by very displeased at the confusion. He was biting his lips and knitting his brows. Suddenly he went down as thunderstruck. He appeared to be in terrible agony.

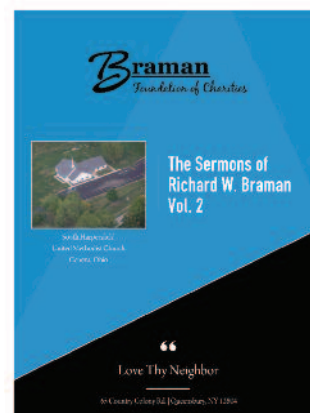
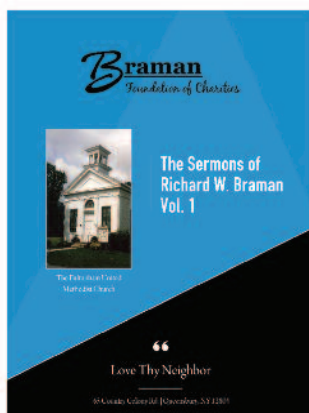
We prayed to God to forgive him of his mistake. Soon he lifted his head and cried aloud, "Now I know you are a prophet of the Lord."

Similar experiences continued to increase as I preached. It seemed prudent to preach and write on the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>44</sup> Many of these sermons were published. The published sermons include the doctrines which I usually preached. All of the following sermons are from those basic doctrines.

*(Excerpted from The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley)*



## The Sermons of Richard W. Braman





## Results of January Board Meeting

On January 27, 2018, we held our Annual Convocation and Board Meeting at the Queensbury Hotel in Queensbury, NY.

It is this annual gathering that we will execute our future work within the organizational structure; the Braman Foundation of Charities, Inc. We can rejoice for the small amount of kingdom building He has awarded through us and hope as we are obedient to grow this work in His name. To the glory of Christ Jesus, Amen.

Therefore, it is the hope at BFC that our annual meet to review our year and set the tone of assessment for the following year. In addition, we shall hold seminars here at the Queensbury Hotel. Our Lord and Savior: Jesus Christ!

While we reflected on 2017, we looked to where we could grow our plan for the next year. The next year will see great expansion with us adding a new student in our Foreign Exchange Program, proposing new efforts in Haiti, increasing Vacation Bible School session in India and Africa and much more.

In December 2017, we were honored with the Braman Foundation of Charities Bungalow. This bungalow will allow volunteers to have privacy during their stay in Asapalli assisting with VBS, teaching, or our dentistry program.

We plan on tripling our budget in the next year to help grow some of our current programs, as well as expanding into some new programs.



## BFC Community Programs

The Braman Foundation is currently working with local organizations on Community Programs in three areas. In 2018, BFC is looking to expand our Community Programs into Gloversville and Poughkeepsie.

### Yarbrough Community Center Albany, NY *(photo above)*

Here, BFC works with This Is That Outreach Ministry providing literature and materials for the community.

### Grace & Mercy Fellowship in Schenectady

BFC provides 10 Blessing Bags per month for Grace & Mercy along with sponsoring a monthly dinner. Our foundation also gives to the church monthly.



### City Mission of Schenectady

Like our involvement in these other organizations, BFC is providing literature and blessing bags to help those in need in the community.

We join them in their goal to provide not only HELP for today, but HOPE for tomorrow.



# The Way to God

by: John Wesley

*The kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15).*

THE MEANING OF THE WORDS ABOVE NEEDS TO BE PONDERED. FIRST, the kingdom of God, which Jesus says is at hand, is the nature of true religion. Second is the way into it, through repentance and belief in the gospel.

Our first consideration is the nature of true religion, called the kingdom of God by Jesus in this Scripture. The same expression was used by Paul in his letter to the Romans. There Paul explained this by writing, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The kingdom of God, or true religion, is not meat and drink. It is well known that many have been zealous in the keeping of the ceremonial law of Moses.<sup>2</sup> Not only did the unconverted Jews do this, but also large numbers of the early Christians. They observed all rules found in the Old Testament either concerning meat and drink offerings, or the distinction between clean and unclean meats. They not only observed the rules themselves, but forced the same rules on all new Christians as they turned to God. Some of these event taught, "Except ye be circumstances after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

## WHAT IS TRUE RELIGION?

Objecting to this, Paul declared here and in other places that true religion does not consist of meat and drink or any ritual observances. Indeed, it does not lie in any outward thing whatever. It is not in anything outside of the heart. The whole essence of true religion is in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Forms and ceremonies, even of the best kind, are outward things, and not true religion. Suppose these religious ceremonies to be decent, significant, expressive or spiritual things, and helpful to both the educated and the uneducated. Consider them, as in the case of the Jews, to be appointed by God himself.

Nevertheless, they do not contain true religion even during the time that God's appointment of them remains in force. Strictly speaking, they do not contain true religion at all. This is even more true regarding rites and forms that are only creations of men.

The religion of Jesus rises infinitely higher and goes immensely deeper than all of these ceremonies. Ceremonies

are good in their place, just as long as they are subservient to true religion. It is not necessary to object to them if they are used only as occasional helps to human weakness. But let no one carry them any further. Let no one dream that rituals have any intrinsic worth. Never believe that religion cannot exist without rituals. Such a belief would make any ritual an abomination to the Lord.

The nature of religion does not properly consist of outward actions of any kind. It cannot be said to rest in forms of worship, rites and ceremonies. It is true that a man cannot have religion and at the same time be guilty of vicious immoral actions. Neither does he have religion who does to others what he would not have others do to him if he were in the same circumstances. And it is also true that he can have no real religion if he knows how to do good and does not do it.

Yet a man may both abstain from outward evil and do good, and still have no religion. Further, two persons may do the same good outward act—as feeding of the hungry—and one be religious, while the other is not. This is because one may do the act out of love and the other for the love of praise. Although real religion leads to good works and words, its real nature still lies deeper. Real religion lies in the hidden heart of man.

## RELIGION OF THE HEART

I say of the heart, because religion does not consist of right opinions or orthodoxy. While such matters are not necessarily outward things, they are not of the heart, but of the understanding. A person may be orthodox in every point, espousing right opinions and zealously defending them; he may think correctly concerning the Trinity, and every other approved doctrine taken from the Scriptures; he may agree with all of the historical creeds, and yet have no religion at all. He may be as orthodox as the devil, and still have no more religion than a pagan. He is indeed a pagan if he is a stranger to the religion of the heart.

This alone is religion as it is truly so-called. This alone is of value in the sight of God. Paul summarized religion in three particulars: righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

**RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**  
Righteousness. The first of these is righteousness. We cannot be confused about this if we remember the words of Jesus. He described the two great branches of it upon which hang all of the law and the prophets.

The first branch is the first and great commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and will all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."

You shall delight yourself in the Lord your God. You shall seek and find all happiness in Him. He shall be your shield and exceeding glad reward in time and eternity. All of your bones shall say, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides you."

You shall hear and fulfill His word, who said, "My son, give me your heart." And having given Him your heart, your inmost soul, to reign there without a rival, you may well cry out, in the fullness of your heart, "I love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

The second great commandment is similar to the first, and is the second great branch of Christian righteousness. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." You shall love! You shall embrace him with the most tender goodwill, the most inflamed desires of preventing or removing all evil from him and of obtaining for him every possible good.

Your neighbor is not only your friend, your kinsman, or your acquaintance. Your neighbor is not only he who is virtuous, friendly, and loving toward you. Your neighbor is every human, every soul which God has made.

The word neighbor does not exclude those whom you have never seen and whom you do not know—either by face or name—or those whom you know to be evil and unthankful. Even those who despitely use you and persecute you are not excluded. You shall love them all as you love yourself. You shall thirst after their happiness with the same thirst you have for your own. You shall use the same unwearied care to screen them from whatever might grieve or hurt either their bodies or souls.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Now is not this love the fulfilling of the law?
- Is it not the whole of all Christian righteousness?
- Is it not the sum of all inward righteousness?
- Does it not necessarily imply humility of mind, gentleness, meekness, and long suffering?

**And does not outward righteousness come from inward righteousness,** because love works no evil toward his neighbor, either by word or deed. Love cannot willingly hurt or grieve anyone. Love is also zealous of good works. Every lover of mankind, as he has opportunity, does good to all men. Without any partiality or hypocrisy, he is full of mercy and good fruits.

**Peace.** Happiness as well as holiness is implied by a heart

which is light toward both God and man. True religion is not only righteousness, but also peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. What peace? It is the peace of God, which God only can give, and the world cannot take away. It is the peace which passes all understanding—all rational thinking. This peace is a supernatural sensation, a divine taste of the powers of the world to come.

Natural man cannot know this peace from the things of the world. He can never know it in his present state because it is divinely given and spiritually discerned. It is a peace that banishes all doubt, all painful uncertainty. It comes from the Holy Spirit bearing witness to the spirit of a Christian that he is a child of God. This peace banishes all fear, which carries with it torment. It removes the fear of the anger of God, the fear of hell, the fear of the devil, and in particular, the fear of death. He who has the peace of God desires, according to the will of God, to depart now to be with Christ.

**Joy.** Joy in the Holy Spirit follows this peace of God whenever it is fixed in the soul. Joy is put in the heart by the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who works in us that calm, humble, rejoicing in God, through Christ Jesus. It is Jesus by whom we have now received this atonement, the reconciliation with God. It is He who enables us boldly to confirm the truth of the psalmist's declaration, "Blessed [happy,] is he whose transgression [unrighteousness] is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

It is the Holy Spirit who inspires the Christian soul with that even, solid joy that arises from the testimony of the Spirit that he is a child of God. It is that Spirit who allows him to rejoice with joy inexpressible, in the hope of the glory of God. This hope is of the glorious image of God, which is in part and shall be fully revealed in heaven for him, and which does not fade away.

This happiness and holiness, joined in one, are sometimes called "the kingdom of God." Jesus terms it that in the text before us. It is also referred to as the "kingdom of heaven," because it is the immediate fruit of God's work in the soul.

As soon as God sets up His throne in our hearts, we are instantly filled with this righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. It is called the kingdom of heaven, because it is a degree of heaven opened in our souls in this life. Whoever experiences this work of the Holy Spirit can testify in this life and the one to come: "Everlasting life is won, glory on earth has begun."

The constant theme of the Scripture, to which all agree, is that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in Jesus. He who has Jesus reigning in his heart has life, everlasting

life.<sup>8</sup> For this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus whom God has sent.

This kingdom of God, or of heaven, is at hand! As these words were originally spoken by Jesus, they implied that the time was fulfilled then. God, being made manifest in the flesh, would then set up His kingdom among men and reign in the hearts of His people. And is the time now fulfilled? Jesus said, "Lo, I am with you always [you who preach the remission of sins in my name], to the close of the age."

#### *THE NEED FOR CONVICTING REPENTANCE*

Therefore, whenever and wherever the gospel of Christ is preached, His kingdom is near at hand. It is not far from any one of us. You may enter into it at this very moment if you hear and follow His words, "Repent and believe the gospel."

And what does "repent" mean? It first means to know yourself. It is the conviction or self-knowledge. Awake then and admit that you are a sinner. Discover what kind of a sinner you are. Know the corruption of your inner nature. It is your inner feelings that have strayed far from God's original righteousness. It is because of the corrupt inner nature that the flesh always lusts contrary to the Spirit of God. We sin through our carnal mind, which is in enmity against God and not subject to the law of God, and cannot be.

Know that you are corrupted in every power, in every faculty of your soul. Know that you are completely out of the correct course, because you are corrupted in every one of these.

The eyes of man's spiritual understanding are so blind that he cannot see God or the things of God. The clouds of this ignorance rest upon us, and cover us with the shadow of eternal death. We know nothing that we ought to know before repentance. We do not understand God, the world, or ourselves. In this state, our will is not the will of God, but away from God and all that He loves. It is subject to all kinds of evil.

Our affections are alienated from God, and scattered everywhere toward the things of the world. All our passions, desires and aversions, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, are out of balance. This is because they are either placed on wrong objects or placed with the wrong intensity. The result is there is no spiritual soundness of the soul. From the top of the head to the soles of the feet, there is only spiritual sickness, confusion, unrest, and sin.

This is the inbred corruption of the heart, of the inmost nature. This is the evil root which cannot grow sound

branches. Unbelief comes from this. We have no concern about being in the presence of the living God. We say, "Who can know God? Who is He that I should serve Him? God doesn't want my service."

**The result of this unbelief is independence.** We begin to act as though we were God. Pride comes in all forms. We say, "I am rich, increasing in worth and worldly things. I do not need God. I have everything I need."

**From this set of mind comes vanity.** We develop a thirst for praise with covetousness and selfish ambition. Then comes the lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Anger, hatred, malice, revenge, envy, jealousy, evil surmisings all arise from this vanity. These attitudes and foolish lusts fill us with sorrow and unhappiness. If we do not deal with these feelings, they will finally drown our souls forever.

Now what kind of fruit can grow on this kind of branch? It's only bitter fruit which is continually evil. From pride comes vain boasting, contention, and the seeking and accepting of praise from men. By taking this praise, we rob God of the glory He should receive for our talents. God does not give His glory to others.

The lust of the flesh causes gluttony or drunkenness, sensuality and luxury-seeking, fornication, and uncleanness. The result is a defiling of the body which was designed to be a temple for the Holy Spirit.

We do not have enough time to discuss all the idle words we have spoken or the evil works we have done. At worst, these words and works are either wholly evil in themselves, or at best, they are words and works which are not done to the glory of God. Our actual sins are more than we are able to count or express. They are more than the hairs of our heads. Who but God can count the sands of the sea, the drops of rain, or our iniquities?

The reward of sin is death! This death is both earthly and eternal. The soul that sins shall die, according to the Word of God. It shall die the second death. This is the sentence, to be punished with everlasting destruction, out of His presence. It is to be removed from the glory of His power. Every sinner is under the sentence of hellfire. He is doomed already, unhappily head toward his execution.

All are guilty and deserve this everlasting death. It is the just reward for inward and outward wickedness. It is just that this sentence should take place now. Why can we not see this? Why are we not convinced that we deserve God's everlasting anger and damnation for what we have done, in and to His creation, and to His creatures? Would not God be fair if He caused the earth to open up and

swallow you?

When God works in the heart of man, He gives a deep sense that these things are true. This is the beginning of repentance. We begin to realize that it is by His mere mercy that we are allowed to live. Because of this mercy, we are not swept away from the face of the earth.

What will you do to appease God and prevent His justifiable anger over all of your sins? What will you do to escape the punishment you know that you have earned? You can do nothing! There is nothing we can do to make amends to God for one evil act, word, or thought of our past. If, from this moment, you could begin to do all things correctly and righteously, in uninterrupted obedience and purity, even this would not pay for the past. The debt would remain as great as it ever was. The present and future obedience of all men upon earth and all angels in heaven would never make restitution for one sin.

How absurd is the thought of atoning for our own sins! How foolish it is to think that anything we can do will repay or remove them! Such work costs far more than one or all can pay. By our own efforts, there is no way to remove our guilt. Because there is no help from within, without a doubt we would be sentenced to everlasting death.

Suppose that perfect obedience could atone for past sins. This would profit you nothing, because you are not able to obey God's commandments perfectly at any one point. You cannot do it.

How will you change your life from evil to good-both outward and inward? This is impossible unless the heart is changed first. So long as the tree remains evil, it cannot produce good fruit. Are you able to change your own heart from sin to holiness? Are you able to awake a soul that is dead in sin, dead to God, and alive only to worldly things? You are no more able to do this than you can raise a dead body from the grave. It cannot even be done in degrees. You cannot raise a dead body by degrees and you cannot awaken your soul by degrees. You can do nothing more or less in this endeavor.

**You are utterly without the strength required to change yourself.** To be deeply aware of how helpless we are is the requirement for repentance, the forerunner to the kingdom of God. An awareness of how guilty and how sinful we are is also needed. The sum of the two-guilt for sin and helplessness in sin-is repentance, which must be experienced by all children of God.

There are certain feelings which are part of this repentance. There is a remorse and self-condemnation so great

that our attempts at self-justification cease. There is a shame so great that we feel we cannot face God. There is a fear of the punishment of God. There is an awareness that a curse is hanging over the heads of all those who forget God and His will. There is a fiery indignation due to all those who do not obey the instructions of Jesus.

The result is an earnest desire to escape from that indignation, to cease from evil, and to learn to do right. When this occurs, you are not far from the kingdom of God. One step more comes after repentance. One step more and you shall enter into the kingdom of God-heaven on earth.

*AFTER REPENTANCE, BELIEVE THE GOSPEL!*

You have repented; now, believe the gospel.

The gospel is good tidings, good news for guilty, helpless sinners. In the largest sense of the word, gospel means the whole revelation made to men by Jesus Christ. This includes the whole account of what our Lord did and suffered when He lived among men. The essence of all of this is, Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The well-known summary is, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." The good news to the sinner is, "He was bruised for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed."

If you come to believe this, the kingdom of God is yours. By faith, you receive the promise. Jesus pardons and absolves all who truly repent and believe this good news. As soon as God speaks to your heart, "Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven," His kingdom comes into you and you have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Beware that you do not deceive yourself regarding the nature of this faith. It is not a bare assent to the truth of the Bible, the articles of creeds, or of all that is contained in the Old and New Testaments. Some have falsely believed that such is faith. The devils believe this much along with the rest of us. They believe this much and are still devils!

Over and above all this, **faith is a sure trust in the mercy of God, through Christ Jesus.** It is a confidence in a pardoning God. It is a divine evidence or conviction that God was in Jesus, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing to them their former sins and trespasses. In particular, it is belief that Jesus has loved me and given himself for me. It is the realizing that 1, even I am now reconciled to God by the blood Jesus shed on the cross.

Do you believe this? If so, the peace of God is in your heart. Sorrow and sighing have fled away. You are no longer in doubt of the love of God. You are now experi-



encing His love. His love is as clear to you as the noonday sun. You can cry aloud, "My song shall be always of the loving kindness of the Lord; with my mouth will I ever be telling of your truth, from one generation to another."

When you believe in this way, you are no longer afraid of hell, death, or the devil who has power of death. You are not painfully afraid of God himself. You have only a tender fear of offending Him.

**Do you believe?** If so, your soul magnifies the Lord and your spirit rejoices in God, your Savior. You rejoice because you have redemption through Jesus' blood along with the forgiveness of sins. You rejoice in that Spirit of adoption which cries out in your heart, "Abba, Father!" You rejoice in a hope full of immortality. You rejoice in an earnest expectation of all the good things which God has prepared for those who love Him.

**Do you now believe?** If so, the love of God is now shed abroad in your heart. You love God because He first loved you. Because you now love God, you love your brother, also. Since you are filled with love, peace, and joy, you are also filled with long-suffering, gentleness, fidelity, goodness, meekness, temperance, and all the other fruits of the same Holy Spirit. You have, in a word, whatever dispositions which are holy, heavenly, or divine. Now you can see with the veil taken away. With an open, uncovered face you see the glory of the Lord. You see His glorious love, and the glorious image in which you were created. Now, through faith you are changed into that same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

This repentance, this faith, this peace, joy, and love is what the world believes to be madness. The wisdom of the world calls this fanaticism, utter distraction. As you change from glory to glory, you as a man of God disregard the worldly critics. Never be moved by any of them. You know in whom you have believed. Let no man steal that treasure. Hold fast to what you have already attained. Hold fast and follow Jesus until you attain all the great and precious promises.

And to you who have not yet known Jesus, do not let vain persons make you ashamed of His gospel. Never be frightened by those who speak evil of the spiritual things about which they know nothing. Seek Him, and God will soon turn your sadness to joy. Get your chin up. In a little while He will take away all of your fears and give you the spirit of soundness. He who saves and justifies is near. It is not He who condemns. It is Christ who died and rose again, who is even now at the right hand of God. He is there making intercession for you now.

Cast yourself on Him, with all your sins, no matter how numerous they are. Do this now, and you will be given entry into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

All those who misunderstand this way to God are in danger of becoming only "almost a Christian" rather than "altogether a Christian."

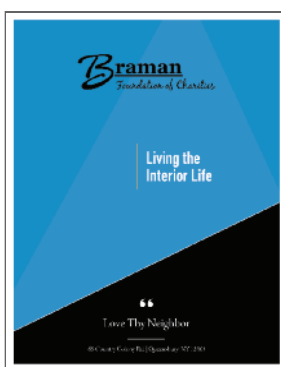
(From "The Way to the Kingdom," *Forty-Four Sermons*, Sermon VII.)

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## Woman's Ministry

For woman struggling with addiction, abortion, sexual abuse and domestic abuse.

"Living the Interior Life" is a program that teaches the individual affirmative prayer, meditation techniques, cognitive behavior therapy, overcoming addiction, physical exercise and proper nutrition. In addition, we offer guidelines on how you can learn to effectively apply these principles in your life daily and with God's grace overcome many of life's difficulties that until now you just simply believed you had live with. Learn to overcome many difficulties and be liberated from them forever.





## Uganda Conference on Discipleship

January 3-5 2018, the Braman Foundation of Charities sponsored a three day seminar on Discipleship training and Church planning. This event was exclusive to pastors and bishops.

The conference was held at the Enro Hotel in Mityana, Uganda, Africa. BFC will be conducting additional conferences during this year.





2018 BFC  
Schedule of Events



January 1-7  
Uganda pastors Conference

April 5-12  
Kenya pastors Conference

April 20-27  
South Sudan Pastors conference

May 27-June 2  
BFC Retreat at Holy Cross West park

June 20-27  
Asapalli VBS & Dentist

September  
Pastors Conference Northern Kenya

Nov 20-27  
Asapalli 75th year  
Platinum Jubilee Celebration

Dec 10-17  
Uganda Pastors Conference

Jan 25-27 2019  
Annual Convocation & Board Meeting  
Queensbury NY

# The Almost Christian

by: John Wesley

*Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*  
(Acts 26:28, KW).

EVER SINCE THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION WAS IN THE WORLD, THERE have been many in every age and nation who were almost persuaded to be Christians. From my own experience, I know that it avails nothing before God to go only this far. Therefore, it is important for us to consider what is implied in being almost a Christian. In addition, we need to know what is implied in being altogether a Christian.

*THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN POSSESSES HEATHEN HONESTY*  
The first thing implied in being almost a Christian is simple heathen honesty. No one should question this. By heathen honesty, I mean that honesty common heathens expect one of another. It is an honesty that many of them usually practice. The rules of honesty teach them they ought not be unjust. They should not take their neighbor's property either by robbery or theft. They are not to oppress the poor nor ever use extortion. They are not to cheat or over-reach anyone. In all dealings, they are to defraud no one and are to owe no man anything.

The common heathen also agrees that some attention should be paid to truth as well as justice. As a result, they shun those who lie and call God to witness to the lie. Also disdained is the slanderer of his neighbor and anyone who accuses another falsely. Indeed, they see willful liars as a disgrace to humanity and pests of society.

In addition, there is a degree of love and assistance which they expect from each other. They expect whatever aid anyone can give another, without depriving himself. And this they extend not only in the little things which can be done without any expense or effort, but also to greater needs. This includes feeding the hungry, if they have food to spare, and clothing the naked from their excess. In general, they are expected to give to any that need from the things which they do not need themselves. The first thing implied in being almost a Christian is this basic kind of heathen love.

*THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN HAS A "FORM OF GODLINESS"*  
The second thing implied in being almost a Christian is having a form of godliness. This is the godliness which is prescribed in the gospel of Christ—having the outside of a real Christian. So the almost Christian does nothing which the gospel forbids. He does not take the name of the Lord in vain. He does not curse, but blesses. He does not swear at all. He simply answers with a yes or a no. He keeps the

Lord's day holy, and does not allow either his family or guests to profane it. He avoids every word or look which might directly or indirectly lead to violating the gospel. He abstains from all idle conversation. The result is his avoidance of all detraction, backbiting, gossiping, evil speaking, foolish talking, and jesting. He avoids all conversation which is not edifying and which grieves the Holy Spirit.

He abstains from alcohol in excess and from reveling and gluttony. He avoids, as much as he can, all strife and contention. He strives to live continually in peace with everyone. If he is wronged, he does not avenge himself. He never returns evil for evil. He is not a railer, brawler, or scoffer. He does not criticize the faults or infirmities of his neighbor. He does not willingly wrong, hurt, or grieve any man. In all things he speaks and acts by plain rule, 'whatever you would not have done to you, do not that to another.' In his doing good, the almost Christian does not limit himself to cheap and easy ways of showing kindness. He works and suffers for the good of many. He strives to use all means possible to help those in need of help. In spite of the personal cost and effort, he acts with all his might. He gives this same effort whether it be for his friends or enemies, for an evil or good person. He has no laziness when it comes to doing good to all men, both for their bodies and their souls.

This *almost Christian* instructs the ignorant, comforts the afflicted, assures the wavering, quickens the good, and reproves the wicked. He works to awaken those who are asleep spiritually. He attempts to lead all those who are seeking God into an understanding of Jesus. His purpose is to get sinners to accept the forgiveness that is in Jesus. His wish is to stir up those who are already saved through faith to lift up the gospel in all things.

So we see that the *almost Christian* has a form of godliness. He, according to his opportunities, uses all the means of grace as often as possible. He constantly attends church and avoids all improper actions and appearances while there. He is not like some who do not act so properly, even though they have received the saving faith. Many of those who should know and do better act worse than the almost Christian. They come into church gazing around with listlessness or careless indifference. Sometimes they seem to be praying to God, but often are either asleep or reclined in the most convenient posture for sleep. Or, as if they believed God to be asleep, they look around and talk to one another. In this manner, they give no attention to the church service.

*THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN IS SERIOUS AND SINCERE*  
But the *almost Christian* cannot be accused of having only the form and not the content of religion. He is serious about his worship. He pays attention to the services. When

he comes for communion, it is not in a careless manner. He attends to communion with an air, gesture, and deportment which speaks nothing else to God but, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

The *almost Christian* also sets apart times for daily and family prayer and maintains a piety—seriousness of behavior. In his uniform practice of outward religion, he has the form of godliness.

The *almost Christian* has one more quality. He has **sincerity**. By sincerity, I mean a real inward principle of religion. It is from this inward principle that all of his actions come. So, if we do not have this sincere inward religious principle in our life, we do not have even heathen honesty. The sincerity in this person speaks to all the rest of the world. Even the heathen poet says, "The good hate sin through the love of virtue; you, on the contrary, commit no crime that will tell against you through dread of punishment."

**Therefore, if a man only avoids doing evil in order to avoid punishment, he has no reward.** Such a purpose will not mark even the most harmless man as a "good heathen." The doing of good through the motives of avoiding punishment, the loss of friends, profit, or reputation is inadequate. If from these motives, one abstains from doing evil and does much good while using all the means of grace, he is still just almost a Christian. If there is no better principle in his heart, he is altogether a hypocrite.

Sincerity is necessarily implied in being almost a Christian. There is included a real and hearty desire to serve God and do His will. It is necessarily implied that he has a sincere wish to please God in all things. He seeks to please God in all his conversations and actions. If a man is almost a Christian, this design runs through all areas of his life. This is the moving principle of his life. It is the cause of his doing good, avoiding evil, and using the ordinances of God.

The next question could well be, "Is it possible that anyone living could go so far as this, and be only almost a Christian? What more must one do or be to become altogether a Christian?" My answer is that I know from personal experience, and the Word of God, that it is possible to go this far yet be but almost a Christian. I went this far for many years, as I have testified, and was but almost a Christian. I used all diligence to avoid evil and to keep a clear conscience. I was careful of my time, using every opportunity to do good to all men. I was constant and careful in using all means to grace, both public and private. I endeavored to be serious at all times and in all places. With God as my witness, I did this with all sincerity, having a real design to serve Him. It was my full desire to do His will in all things, and to please Him who had called me to

fight the good fight to gain eternal life. Now my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit, all that time I was only "almost a Christian."

#### BEING AN ALTOGETHER CHRISTIAN

You may now ask, "What more than this is implied in being altogether a Christian?" The love of God must be in the heart of the altogether Christian. His Word says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."<sup>3</sup> Such a passionate, "hot-not-lukewarm" love of God as this fills the whole heart.

**Loving God passionately.** Passionate, altogether love takes up all of the affections. It fills the capacity of the soul, and employs the fullest extent of all its faculties. Anyone who loves God in this manner is continually rejoicing in God, his Savior. His delight is the Lord—his Lord and his all. In everything he gives thanks to God. All his desire is for God and to the remembrance of His name. His heart is ever crying out, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing or no one upon earth that I desire besides you."

Indeed, what is there to desire besides God? He cannot desire the world or the things of the world. He is crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to him. He is crucified to the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life. He dwells in love, dwelling in God, and God in him. He is less than nothing in his own eyes.

**Loving others wholeheartedly.** The next thing implied in being altogether a Christian is the heart-felt love of his neighbor. Jesus also commanded his followers to love their neighbors as they loved themselves.<sup>4</sup> It can then be asked, "Who is my neighbor?"

The reply is, *every person in the world*. Every person created by God, the Father of all spirits of all flesh, is your neighbor. In no way may we exclude our enemies or the enemies of God from this requirement. Every Christian must love them just as he loves himself and as Christ loves us.

Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians describes this love to us. This love...

- is long-suffering and kind.
- does not have envy.
- is not rash or hasty in loving.
- is not proud or puffed up, thus willing to serve others.

- does not behave itself unbecomingly, but becomes all things to all men. Love seeks not its own way, but only the good of others, that they may be saved. Love is not provoked. It casts out all anger from him who has been made perfect in love. It thinks no evil, but rejoices in the truth. It covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

Still, there is one thing more which is implied in being altogether a Christian. This is the foundation-faith that cannot be separated from love. Faith is spoken of in excellent ways in the Scripture.

"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God."

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Our Lord himself declared, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life."

**Dead and devilish faith.** Now let no one deceive himself. Carefully note that any faith which does not produce repentance, love, and good works is not a true, living faith. Instead, it is a dead and devilish faith. Even the devils believe that Jesus was born of a virgin. They know that He accomplished all kinds of miracles and declared himself to be God. They also know that, for our sakes, He suffered a most painful death to redeem us from everlasting death. They believe that He rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and now sits at the right hand of the Father. They know that He will come at the end of the world to judge both the quick and the dead. Yes, these articles of Christian faith the devils believe, as well as all that is written in the Bible. Yet with all this belief-this faith-they are still devils. They remain in their same damnable condition, lacking the very true Christian saving faith.

**Right and true faith.** The right and true Christian faith is not only to believe the Scriptures and historical doctrines are true. True faith is much more than that. True Christian faith is also to have a sure trust and confidence in God, that by the merits of Jesus, my sins are forgiven, and I am reconciled to God's favor.

From this trust and confidence follows a loving heart prone to obey God's commandments. Whoever has this working faith is an *altogether Christian*. This faith makes it possible to love according to the commandments. It fills

the Christian with a love stronger than death, for both God and all mankind. This divine love does the works of God, glorying in being used for all men. It endures with joy any reproach because of Christ. It accepts being mocked, despised, hated, or whatever the wisdom of God permits the malice of men or devils to inflict. Whoever has this faith, thus working by love, is not almost, but altogether a Christian.

**Examine your heart.** Who can agree that these things I have said are true? I ask you to ask yourself about it. With God as your witness, ask your own heart:

- Am I altogether a Christian?
- Do I practice justice, mercy, and truth as the rules of heathen honesty require?
- Do I have the outside of a Christian?
- Do I have a form of godliness, abstaining from evil and all that is forbidden in God's Word?
- Do I do good with all my might?
- Do I seriously employ all the means of grace and ordinances of God at every opportunity?
- Do I do all this with a sincere design and desire to please God in all things?"

Most people are aware that they never come even this far. They know they have not been even almost a Christian. Most have not come up to the standard of heathen honesty, at least, nor to the outward form of Christian godliness. Much less has God seen a sincerity, a real desire to please Him in all the things they do.

Few people have ever intended to devote all their words and works, their businesses, studies, and diversions to God's glory. Most have never even desired that what they did would be done in the name of Jesus, the Lord. Few have hoped that their acts would be a spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Christ.

However, supposing that there are good desires behind human actions, do these make a Christian? By no means, unless they are brought to good effect. "Hell is paved with good intentions."<sup>9</sup> Great questions still confront you:

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart?
- Can you cry out, "My God, and my all?"

- Do you desire nothing but Him?
- Are you happy in God?
- Is He your glory, your delight, your crown of rejoicing? Is this commandment written in your heart, He that loves God loves his brother also? Do you then love your neighbor as yourself?
- Do you love every man, even your enemies and enemies of God, as your own self?
- Do you love them as Christ loved you?
- Do you believe Christ loved you, and gave himself for you?
- Do you have faith in the blood sacrifice He made for you?
- Can you believe the Lamb of God has taken away your sins, and cast them as a stone into the depths of the sea?
- Do you know He has blotted out any charges that were held against you, taking them away, nailing them to His cross?
- Have you indeed received this redemption through His blood, including the remission of your sins?
- Does the Holy Spirit witness to you that you are now a child of God?

The witness of the Word of God is that any man who dies without this faith and love should have never been born. Awake then, you who have been spiritually asleep, and call upon God. Call to Him for faith in the day when He may be found. Let Him not rest until He gives you this goodness.

Call to Him until He proclaims to you the name of Jesus. In Him you can know the Lord God, merciful and gracious,

long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. He has mercy for all, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Let no one convince you, by any words, to stop short of this great prize to which you were called. Call out to Jesus day and night until you know you can believe in Him. Remember that while you were ungodly and without strength, He died so that you might be godly and have strength. So pray always and do not faint until you can lift up your hands to heaven and say, "My Lord and my God!" Then you can declare to Him that lives forever, "Lord, you know all things. You know I love you."

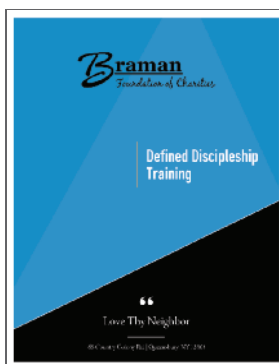
In this manner we all may experience what it is to be, not *almost*, but *altogether Christians*. Through His grace, the redemption that is in Jesus, we will be freely justified with this saving faith. We will know we have the peace of God through Jesus Christ. Then we can rejoice in the hope and glory of God and have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. We will have received all of this faith and love through the Holy Spirit, which will be given unto us.

It is obvious that the grace of God is needed to make us altogether a Christian. Our entire nature must be changed. We must be born anew.

From "The Almost Christian," *Forty-Four Sermons*, Sermon II.

#### HOLY SPIRIT POWER POINTS

1. The *almost Christian* has a form of godliness that grieves the Holy Spirit.
2. The Holy Spirit will bring conviction to the *almost Christian* that his love for God is only lukewarm.
3. The *altogether Christian* passionately loves God and wholeheartedly loves others through the faith and love given by the Holy Spirit.
4. The Holy Spirit witnesses to the truth that one is truly born again and a child of God—altogether a Christian.



## What is Defined Discipleship

In this body of work, you are learning that scripture is one of the most vital truths of overcoming self. We emphasize recognition as a beginning point as we discuss sanctification. There is a deepening of understanding of abandoning oneself to be replaced by the Holy Spirit. Trust this is not to be a give and take, but rather we are seeking you to go all the way in a permanent presence of God.



## Homeland

Homeland Orphanage and School was founded in 2009 in Mityana, Uganda in Africa. They serve 50 residential children and 57 from outside in homes of people who agreed to help adopt them from the orphanage.

We have expanded our impact this past year purchasing new desks and beds for the school and orphanage, funding a monthly radio show and helping expand their brick making business.



*new desk*





# Homeland School & Orphanage



*old beds*



*new beds*

BFC has worked to improve the conditions of the dorms at Homeland Orphanage and School. Starting with new beds for the girls and boys dorms.

Along with the new metal beds we purchased new mattresses.

BFC has extended our impact into improving the facilities at the school. We purchased 40 new desks for their primary school.

This allows the residents to improve their education because they can't afford to send their kids to different schools.

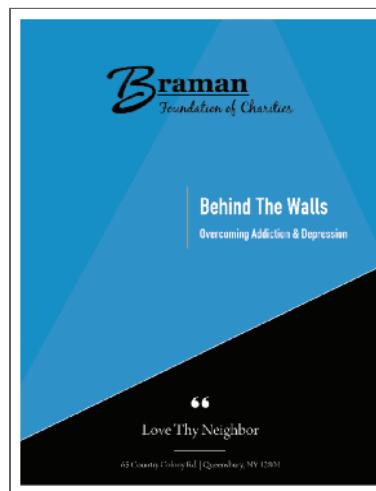


*new desk*

# Prison Ministry

## Behind The Walls

Behind the Walls In 1985, Braman began to witness his recovery from addiction in the New York State Correctional Facilities. Braman has presented programs since that time in many facilities including: Greenhaven, Fishkill, Downstate, Summit, and several local and county jails. It is a thorough program using the 12 step method of recovery, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Meditation techniques as well as a program for dealing with violent behavior. In addition, our program helps to provide clarification concerning the negative learned behavior that unfortunately comes out of some families.



If you are a correctional facilities administrator please contact us to schedule a convenient time when we can meet to discuss the program.

## Life Line

The Life-Line is a continuation of Braman Foundation of Charities. This program, when instituted, will enable any individual being released from a facility the opportunity to be united with a home church and a contact person in their home area. In addition, we will offer a mentoring program.

An inmate's most vulnerable time, whether they know this or not, is when they are released from incarceration. Months and years, depending on one's sentencing of forced incarceration are now dissolved. An individual is now "FREE", or at least they may think they are free; however, New York state statistics show that out of approximately every 100 inmates that are released, 78 come back into the prison system in some form. What can be done for the individual who wishes to change? The individual must truly have a change of heart. We can extend our hand!

We believe the most critical even for the individual being released from captivity is the first 24-48 hours after their release. Our Life-Line Ministry is designed to help eliminate the lure of temptation to backslide. If an individual so desires, we will help them find a home church and a friend or mentor upon their release.

This is a "grass roots" effort. The request obviously must be generated from the individual while they are still incarcerated. They are given a Request for Pre-Release Contact Form. They turn the form into the counselor's office at the facility. At that time, the prison will contact our ministry. We will then contact a church in their home neighborhood. Finally, we will give the information to the individual several days before they are released.



# BFC Mission Travel Program

## Introducing the BFC Bungalow

DEDICATED IN DECEMBER 2017

The Exclusive BFC Mission Travel Program Bungalow was dedicated at the Asapalli School for the volunteers who visit as part of the BFC Mission Programs.

Volunteers who visit the school are invited to stay in the bungalow, which includes a Built-in Kitchen, 2 comfortable bedrooms, private bathroom with running water, common room for relaxing, all centrally located on the exclusive private 11 acre Village of Hope Property.

The BFC Mission Program is currently looking for Teachers, Medical Staff, Dentists and other educators to come volunteer for a mission at the school.

# P.E.F.A. Kenya, Africa

The Pentecostal Evangelist Fellowship of Africa (PEFA) is a large Pentecostal Church in Kenya and lead by bishop Peter Midodo.

Here, Peter is in charge of the Lake Region with 184 churches along the Lake Victoria dry land and islands. Under his leadership are 204 pastors and 15 bishops.

Besides starting the Sowers School of Ministry which is where Peter trains his pastors and gospel ministers, they still have a big challenge in building churches.



Some of their congregations still meet under a tree for church service. Most of them have tin metal shade for church building. They are continuing to work towards having better places to worship.

## Life for Needy Integrated Community-Based Organization 2018 (South Sudan)



Redeemed Enriched Church - The rehabilitation of a learning center for orphaned, abandoned and less privileged children in the country of South Sudan.

The Braman foundation has started traveling to South Sudan to develop a plan and literature as well as distributing prayer requests and bracelets in the community.



## BFC Foreign Exchange Mission

In cooperation with SUNY ADK the Braman Foundation has announced the BFC Missions Foreign Exchange Program. This program will allow a student living and associated with one of the represented Missions of BFC to be able to attend College at the ADK SUNY campus in Queensbury, NY.

Currently there are hundreds of children graduating. Most if not all these children are not able to continue their education. The level of dedication and determination and discipline needs to be rewarded from these fine children.

Once a student is approved ADK will process student Visa applications.

As with all our programs we start out small. We work out all the kinks and move forward. At BFC

it is our hope that many students can be sponsored into higher education here in the U.S.



Matia Bukenya. He is our first student from Mityana, Uganda.

In our last issue of Revive Magazine, we introduced Re-joyce E. Rymbai, our first student in our Foreign Exchange Program from Asapalli.

Today, we would like to introduce you to our second student Lubega

*Turn the page to meet Lubega*

# BFC Foreign Exchange Mission

## Meet Lubega Matia



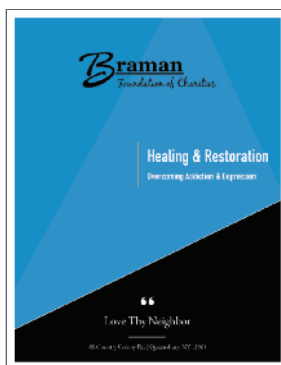
Lubega lost both of his parents in his final year of Secondary education, 2012.

Despite this loss Lubega was able to complete his studies and exams to earn his pass slip.

He attended a bursary at a Bible school in 2013 and received a certificate of Theology. It is not possible for Lubega to further his studies at this time and work is regulated by documents that he is not qualified to obtain. Working documents are given after someone joins the university and graduates otherwise the person would need have capitol to start up your own business or project.

Currently Lubega volunteers at Compassion Uganda and one day hopes to have an orphanage to look after many children.

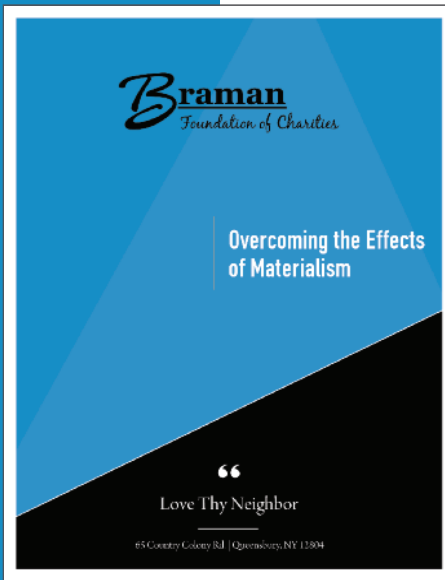
Lubega is a “Born Again Christian” and Gospel artist with five recorded songs. He wants to be a lawyer and Pastor.



## What is Healing & Restoration

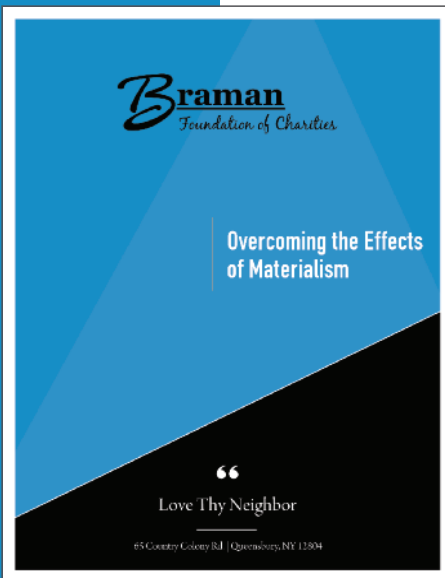
Millions of us suffer needlessly from addiction and depression. The reasons for this are many. In this program we emphasize the 12 Step Method of Recovery, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Meditation techniques to overcome difficulties. We also rely on God's grace to help you be lifted from your dilemma.

# New Community Programs



## Overcoming the Effects of Materialism

In this program we look how materialism in America has effected our lives, our finances, and how it has separated us from God. We explore the effects of pride. The idea of Covenanting our Neighbor and several other debilitating consequences of materialism in America. We use the 12 step recovery steps to admit, inventory our weaknesses and implement solutions for overcoming this difficult issue.



## Overcoming Sexual Addiction

This is a private program utilized discreetly in a prison atmosphere or church setting. In America there is a rise in pornographic addiction. In addition, we see a rise in pedophilia.

This program defines its origins and offers methods to overcome the addiction and obsession. We explore family ties. We inventory our lives and explore the root causes of the deviant behaviors that are destroying children's lives as well as destroying marriages.

This programs requires a 9 month commitment.



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