

Virtual Christian Magazine

Hope And Encouragement For The Real World

"Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."—Daniel 12:3

Volume 9 Number 4

May 2007

Amazing Grace: A Lifelong Love Story

By Roc Corbett

Page 3



These touching moments display a God-given love that nothing can extinguish.

I Was a Stranger...

By Mike Bennett

Page 4



Some of the congregation just could not accept someone as "odd" as "Carlene," and started spreading awful rumors. How could she feel comfortable coming back to a church where people labeled others without even knowing them?

An Open Letter to Singles

By Susan Blumel-Berg

Page 7



Are many or most of your friends married with children? Do you wish you could also connect with that "someone special," but it just hasn't happened?

Growing Older Gracefully

By Janet Treadway

Page 10



Emma was the sweetest lady I knew, and Miles brings warmth and smiles to everyone he comes in contact with. They are the role models I want to follow as I grow older.

Never Give Up!

By Daniel Fitzpatrick

Page 12



During a time of unemployment and depression, a little puppy brought a sparkle of life back into my heart. Until she disappeared...

Lessons of the Snake and Toad

By Gary Jacques

Page 14



I couldn't believe what I was seeing in my backyard, and you may not believe the life lessons it taught me.

Letters to the Editor

Page 16

Virtual Christian Magazine Staff

Lorelei Nettles - Managing Editor
Mike Bennett - Issue Editor
Mike Bennett - Editors
Gayle Hoefker - Editors
Jada Howell - Editors

Patrick Kansa - Editors
David Meidinger - Editors
Suzanne Morgan - Editors
Amy Stephens - Editors
Debbie Werner - Editors
Jack Elliott - Reviewers
Eric Evans - Reviewers

Don Henson - Reviewers
Don Hooser - Reviewers
Leroy Neff - Reviewers
Becky Bennett - Proofreader
Chris Rowland - Web Design

[Copyright 2007 United Church of God, an International Association](#)

Amazing Grace: A Lifelong Love Story

By Roc Corbett

These touching moments display a God-given love that nothing can extinguish.



ONCE IN A WHILE one is blessed to witness a moment of revelation, the final polishing of a fine jewel when its brilliance begins to shine.

In our small congregation, there are a husband and wife who recently celebrated their 71st anniversary. The day before their anniversary, the husband, whose Alzheimer's disease is progressing, was placed in a nursing home. Though there are times when he doesn't remember who his family or friends are, he has remained caring, gentle, peaceable and loving. A few weeks later his wife, whose mind is sharp but body is frail, was placed in the same nursing home, in a different wing. They have been able to visit almost every day, but the conditions are quite a bit less than desirable.



A couple of days ago the lady told my wife and later myself that she had wondered about the verse that says we must love God above all else and all others. As she prayed, she came to realize that she did love God and Christ more than anyone or anything else; yet her love for her family and friends was not diminished. Her thoughts had turned to God more than to people, and she realized that she now understood the verse. This realization, or revelation, brought great peace to her, and that peace seems to be with her still.

Today as I visited, she was very weak. We prayed, reminisced and read a letter a friend had sent. She mentioned that she felt that she didn't have much time, and I asked her if she wanted me to bring in her husband for a visit.



When he arrived, it was as though his memory was restored. He tenderly held her hands, spoke lovingly to her, massaged her feet and comforted her. He asked, “Do you remember...?” about several choice memories, and then, “Do you remember your husband?” It was so touching, so loving, so right. They had a chance to say their good-byes.

It is amazing to witness the grace God bestows upon those He loves! These two beautiful people are among those of whom God says, “The world was not worthy.” It’s an awesome privilege to help serve God’s people. As I write this letter, my wife is sitting with our friend tonight. She knows she’s not alone.

Epilogue

Hazel died peacefully the next morning, in her sleep, just as she had hoped. There were several more amazing moments as the nurses discussed their experiences and faith with me, one even asking to be anointed. Hutch, Hazel’s husband, was granted the power of a sound mind to know what was happening at the funeral, and to understand and express his love for his beautiful bride and for God. My ministry was enriched by seeing God’s mercy upon these two wonderful people.

It is amazing to witness the grace God bestows upon those He loves!

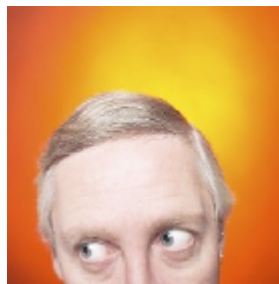
Recommended reading

This brief article touches on important biblical topics you may want to read more about. If so, feel free to download or request [You Can Have Living Faith](#) and [What Happens After Death?](#)

I Was a Stranger...

By Mike Bennett

Some of the congregation just could not accept someone as “odd” as “Carlene,” and started spreading awful rumors. How could she feel comfortable coming back to a church where people labeled others without even knowing them?



DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME you stepped in the door of your church? Were you a little apprehensive, nervous or unsure of yourself? Did you feel like an outsider, a stranger—an alien?

I remember well the first time I visited the congregation where my family now attends. I was on a pre-move trip to a part of the country I'd never been before, and I was there alone, without my family. I'd already uprooted my kids twice in the last three years and was not looking forward to doing it again. And my mother-in-law's first and uncharacteristic comment after hearing of our possible move was, "I have to tell you, that's not a very nice place to live!"



But my feelings of uncertainty were quickly washed away with the warm and welcoming attitudes of many of those I met. I especially remember an elder who greeted me with a big smile and friendly handshake. He asked about my wife and children, and months later when we moved, he remembered their names! We could feel the love that Jesus said would be the hallmark of His Church (John 13:35).

While most members do their best to warmly welcome newcomers, there are unfortunately some isolated cases where this has not been the case. Recently a woman sent me the following true story about an incident that happened some time ago.

“...And you did not take Me in”

“The first time ‘Carlene’ [name and some details have been changed] attended our local Sabbath service, I was a little taken aback. She was wearing pants, a country western shirt and loafers. Her hair was short and there was very little about her that was feminine. She spoke and laughed rather loudly like someone not used to being quiet. However, as I got to know her, I learned she had been a camp director for a wilderness camp for young people and had managed a horse ranch most of her life. That helped explain her dress and behavior.

“She talked to me about the expected dress for church, and I gave her the principle that we put on our best to come before God. Understanding the slacks and shirt she was wearing were the best she had, I did not pursue the subject further. It was clear she was delighted to be in Church and anxious to learn of God.

“But not everyone was so accepting. I heard comments from some of the members that they thought she should be told to wear a dress. Others were more concerned with her hair and somewhat masculine behavior. I tried to make them understand that having lived on a remote ranch most of her life, she was different from them, but she truly wanted to know more about God and His way. I said God would work with her in His way.

I especially remember an elder who greeted me with a big smile and friendly handshake.

“After a few Sabbaths, one particular woman told me Carlene was acting inappropriately toward some of the brethren in the Church. She got this notion, I suppose, because Carlene liked to touch people on the arm or shoulder when making a point.

“She was obviously a very earthy woman and had told me she slapped the ranch hands on the back when telling them stories or congratulating them on work well done. She'd put her hand on my shoulder when telling me a particularly funny story. But I saw nothing in it. We all touched and hugged each other in greeting and no one had ever complained about such things before. God

calls all sorts of people and, to my mind, though she might have been a little child where godly things were concerned, she was being called, of that I felt certain.

“Sadly, some of the congregation just could not accept someone so ‘odd,’ and more unsavory comments spread throughout the congregation. Inevitably, of course, Carlene heard them. She called me in tears that day telling me of the awful rumors she’d heard. She’d thought she’d found God’s Church, she said, and had never expected to be treated like an outcast among *God’s people*.



“I tried to console her and make her understand we weren’t all that way, but the damage had been done. She didn’t feel comfortable coming back to a church where people labeled others without even knowing them. She left, never to return.

“Did those who spread rumors about Carlene know she was married with two grown children? Did they know her husband had been very much against her coming to Church, and each Sabbath she’d had to travel over a hundred miles to attend? Did they know she had no extra money for clothes and had sold some personal items in order to pay for her transportation?”

Help, don’t hinder

Some coming to our congregations might seem odd or do things we are uncomfortable with, such as talk too loudly, stand too close or have some strange habit we don’t like. But, if God is calling them, how can we reject them? Remember, Jesus was criticized for associating with and encouraging people others regarded as unworthy (Matthew 9:10-13).

She called me in tears that day telling me of the awful rumors she’d heard.

Are we not *all* the weak of the world? In 1 Corinthians 1:27 it says, “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.” God looks at the heart and attitude of a person. Paul goes on to show in 1 Corinthians 8 the importance of not becoming a stumbling block for the weak (verse 9).

Called to change

Of course God expects us to change ourselves, to strive to overcome the weaknesses that put others off. We are to have a teachable attitude and to learn to dress and act appropriately for church services. That is part of the love we show for others and for God.

We’re a family. We are responsible to welcome and nurture all of God’s people.

Sometimes a minister or a mentor in the Church will need to guide someone to see something that needs to be changed. One minister told me of some scary looking young men who came to church to learn. And over time one of them did learn and lost the combat boots, militant garb and distinctive hairstyle. He became an active, leading member in the congregation.

I also heard of a young man who began to attend services who had long hair, way past his shoulders. No one criticized him, but the pastor after a few weeks spoke to him. He said that perhaps he had observed that the men in the congregation did not have long hair. He also discussed with him the scriptures about men's hair length, such as 1 Corinthians 11:14. The young man was a bit upset, but after about three weeks or so he returned to services—with short hair! He is now a baptized member and a young leader in the congregation.

Welcome to the family!

We're a family. We are responsible to welcome and nurture all of God's people. Instead of shunning those who seem odd or unsociable, we have the opportunity to get to know them, love them, support them and help them.

Then Christ can say, "I was a stranger and you took Me in" (Matthew 25:35).

Recommended reading

For information about building right relationships and friendships, please see the chapter ["The Importance of Right Friendships"](#) in the booklet [Making Life Work](#).



An Open Letter to Singles

By Susan Blumel-Berg

Are many or most of your friends married with children? Do you wish you could also connect with that "someone special," but it just hasn't happened?



EVER FIND YOURSELF WONDERING how you can better "deal" with being single as a Christian? It has been good for me to think back and remember these times again—after all, it was most of my life!

Your feelings as a single are normal, and there are no easy answers since God created us with a natural desire for a mate. I think what helped me most was remembering that God loves me, and

consciously appreciating the many ways He shows that love—often through our friends, sermons, etc. He promised to work with us and be with us. (Satan would prefer that we forget these things, and focus instead on feeling neglected, rejected, discouraged, etc.)

Life is a short span of time in relative terms, and during this time we are not promised a mate, children, expensive homes, etc. We can be miserable, or we can learn to be content “in whatever state” we find ourselves (Philippians 4:11).

So, here’s my “sur-thrival” guide for making the best of the single years—“to survive and thrive” as a single, however long this time may be...

1. **Dream dreams!** Dream wonderful dreams, set realistic and meaningful goals for yourself and live life with gusto! For a while, in my 20s, I had many dreams that hinged on being married first. For instance, I dreamed of going to Hawaii for my honeymoon, not as a single.

Then one day it hit me that I might never marry. Did I really want to miss seeing Hawaii because of that? If going to Hawaii really was an important and good dream, I should work to make that dream come true, whether single or married. A few years later, I did go to Hawaii as a single, and then I went a second time as well—it was really fun and quite an adventure!



2. **Fight the negatives.** Hebrews 13:5 says, “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.” Philippians 4:11 states the same thing, “For I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.” We cannot control all of the experiences of life, but we can control our response to them.
3. **Stay connected to God.** Talk to Him as a Father and a best Friend. Study His Word as one who always wants to get to know Him in a deeper way, and always ask Him for your “needs.”



One prayer I prayed in despair many times was for encouragement. Over the years, the answers to various prayers have been “no” or “not now.” But all the times I prayed for encouragement, God *always* answered that prayer by encouraging me in ways that were very surprising, powerful and moving.

Another important prayer is to ask to be filled with each of the fruits of God’s Spirit and to grow in these fruits (Galatians 5:22-23). We should reflect and glorify Him in our daily lives, our appearance, how we keep our home, what we eat, etc.

4. **Seek to grow in other ways too.** Be motivated to learn new things at work and to get better at what you do. Proverbs 22:29 teaches us to excel at our work, so that our skills will

be “in demand.” Our “good work” is also the means by which we gain the resources to achieve some of our dreams.



Consider also taking an occasional class, reading a good book, trying a new recipe or attempting things outside one’s comfort zone. For example, for those of us in the United Church of God, taking advantage of opportunities like going to Ambassador Bible Center or serving at United Youth Corps projects or Challenger Camps provides wonderful opportunities for growth in many areas of life!

5. **Stay connected with people.** Be a good friend—keep in touch. Be a good listener. Show interest in many different types of people, both male and female, young and old.

Practice encouraging others—visit the sick, widows and orphans after services and during the week by phone, volunteer to help or serve when you can, show appreciation for the efforts of others on your behalf and develop a good sense of humor and positive outlook.

6. **Friday and Saturday nights?** Sometimes these were difficult for me. What to do? Keep busy. Make the evening meal nicer than everyday, and invite brethren to share the evening with you. Or, write a card or letter to someone who is sick. E-mail friends to encourage them, and work on Bible studies of “special” interest.
7. **Use wisdom in dating.** Yes, being single is not always fun, but consider also that being divorced or in a stressful marriage is not fun either. Use wisdom with any serious dating. An unwise choice of a mate, or getting married just to be married, is not the answer.

Here’s a beautiful scripture to close on. We already looked at the beginning of Hebrews 13:5, but look at the next part: “*He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper’*” (Hebrews 13:5-6).

*But all the times I
prayed for
encouragement,
God always
answered that
prayer.*

Remember, God loves you, and you have the love and prayers of many in God’s Church as well!

Editor’s note: Susan Blumel-Berg, Ph.D., CFLE, was single until age 50. She is now married to Wil Berg, pastor of the Jackson, Wyoming, United Church of God congregation, and teaches online courses in “family sciences” for the University of Wyoming.

Recommended reading

For more information on dating, see the chapter “Dating Dos and Don’ts” from our free booklet [*Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension*](#).

Growing Older Gracefully

By Janet Treadway

Emma was the sweetest lady I knew, and Miles brings warmth and smiles to everyone he comes in contact with. They are the role models I want to follow as I grow older.



AS A PART OF THE BABY BOOMER AGE GROUP, I find myself reflecting more and more on aging. How would I like to be when I become a senior citizen? How would I like to be remembered when I die?

We have all been around older people. Some lift us up with their wonderful example of giving and sacrifice and tremendous wisdom. We also encounter elderly people who are very difficult, demanding and unpleasant to be around, and we simply groan with the thought of another encounter with them.

While sickness or the feeling of being useless can play a role in a person being unpleasant and demanding, it doesn't have to. I remember two elderly people, both dying of cancer. One was so demanding and felt the world was owed to her. Every time you were around her, you left depressed. I only visited her out of guilt.

Then there was Emma.

Emma was the sweetest lady I knew. She was in great pain, but never did I hear her complain. On my visits with her I would be met with a warm smile and a hug. I always looked forward to my next visit. Emma had very little in this life, but she gave much to all those who were around her. She had decided that sickness gave her no right to become demanding and cranky.

She was in great pain, but never did I hear her complain. On my visits with her I would be met with a warm smile and a hug.

There is another elderly gentleman who comes to mind when I think of how I would like to grow old gracefully. Miles, in his late 70s, brings warmth and smiles to everyone he comes in contact with.

Miles has had several leadership roles over the years, including being union president where he worked. Maybe Miles should be cranky and demanding according to some stereotypes, but he isn't. He learned long ago how to treat people and has made himself very useful to the Church and all those he comes in contact with.



Miles started attending the United Church of God when he was 74 years old, and soon after he was baptized. He hit the ground running by serving and getting involved. He became one of the oldest students to graduate from Ambassador Bible Center. He has involved himself with the young people by mentoring and encouraging them. He supports all the activities, and he frequently comes into the Church office to help stuff hundreds of envelopes with biblical literature.

In spite of all he does, in my many conversations with Miles, I have never heard him complain about anything. I don't think he even knows what the word *cranky* means!

As I reflect on how I would like to grow old gracefully, I am grateful to have been touched by outstanding examples like Emma, who has since died but is very much alive in my heart, and Miles. My wish and prayer to God is that I will become like them.

I am convinced we can choose, with God's Spirit, how we would like to grow old—gracefully or by being cranky and demanding. We owe it to those we come in contact with to make their lives better by our kindness and doing all that we can.

As we age, it is important to give some thought and prayer to how we would like to be as a senior. By asking God to mold us as we gracefully grow older; we can be a very positive light to others around us. After all, I want people to enjoy being around me, not to groan at the thought of it.

Recommended reading

For more information about how God's Spirit can guide you into becoming the person you want to be, download or request our free publication [*Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*](#).

Never Give Up!

By Daniel Fitzpatrick

During a time of unemployment and depression, a little puppy brought a sparkle of life back into my heart. Until she disappeared...



HAVE YOU EVER FELT SO SAD OR DEPRESSED that you could not envision an end to your suffering? It is not very easy to have a positive attitude, especially if you don't have someone right near you to give you encouragement and hope.

Even Jesus Christ, at His lowest point, cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46). This, of course, was right before He died on the cross. So He understands.

When you are really feeling down and you just don't feel like you can pull yourself up, you can look to Jesus Christ and the Father for assistance.

I learned a lot about never giving up hope from my sister—and from my dog...

A sparkle of life

In the spring of 1996 I became the proud owner of a small puppy. I was experiencing some difficult times in my life at that time: depression, unemployment, etc. This puppy brought a sparkle of life back into my heart.

Fast forward to the spring of 1997.

I had applied to the Peace Corps and was awaiting my invitation letter. I was visiting my sister in Vermont. My little puppy was now a very large one-year-old German shepherd/black lab. My dog was my life.



Lost!

Suddenly, in the blink of an eye, she was taken away from me. My worst fear happened. She was hit by a car. Fortunately, she was not instantly killed. She darted off into the woods, to die, I guess. She disappeared into a dense forest extending into a vast mountain range.

I was devastated. We searched the rest of the day and night for her, but she never appeared. I searched for at least half of the next day and finally gave up. I hopped in my car, and headed for my parents' house in New Hampshire. All I wanted was to be alone.

Upon arriving at my parents' house, I snatched the keys to the motorboat and headed out to the water. I drove around the bay a few times and returned. As I walked in the door, the phone rang. It was my sister Karen. She was very sorry for what had happened, but very disappointed that I had given up the search for my dog. Would I have done the same if it had been my child?

“Don't you dare give up!”

After the conversation with Karen, something inside me said, “Don't you dare give up! Go back to Vermont!” I took a couple of photos of my dog with me and photocopied them in color at a copy shop along the way. I attached a note about her disappearance. Upon arriving in my sister's neighborhood, I distributed about 100 of these “lost dog” posters.

Three days after her disappearance, a neighbor (who lived about 500 yards behind my sister, on the other side of the forest) called. She was sure she had seen a dog race across her lawn on the day and time of her disappearance. I decided to venture into the forest behind her house.

About an hour after I had entered her side of the forest, I was losing hope once again. I had reached another road on the other side of that stretch of forest.

I turned around, and there, in the distance, was Onyx (my dog) lying on the forest floor, licking her leg. I couldn't believe my eyes! I stumbled a few times trying to get to her. I think I startled her quite a bit. She even growled at me as I approached her. I understood why in the very next moment. Her right leg was torn open from her knee joint all the way down to her foot, right down to the bone. Somehow, even though she had such a devastating injury, she was able to run at least 1,000 yards to where she was. It must have been the shock of getting hit.



The end of the story

The end of the story is all good. I was able to carry all 80 pounds of her out of the forest and hitch a ride to the veterinarian. She was operated on and, to this day, is a miracle dog for that veterinarian. None of this would have happened if my sister Karen hadn't talked to me, and if I had completely given up hope of finding my dog in that spring of 1997.

This puppy brought a sparkle of life back into my heart. As I was sitting here tonight writing this article, it dawned on me that since that incident with my dog (almost exactly 10 years ago), I have not given up hope once, no matter what the situation. I have multiple examples of this that would probably fill pages upon pages.

Have you had an experience that changed your outlook on life for the better? Maybe that experience is happening right now. You may not even know it. I only see it now, 10 years later. God works in mysterious ways. I believe He was with me the day that I made the decision not to give up on my dog.

The next time some kind of trial hits you dead in the face, don't give up. Look to God for guidance. Listen to the advice of those who love you. Think positively. Finally, think of Jesus as He was dying on the cross. He could have given in to temptation and not died for all of our sins. He could have given up. But He didn't.

Never give up!

Recommended reading

With God in the picture, we don't have to despair. Download or request a free copy of [You Can Have Living Faith](#) for a biblical study of this subject.

Lessons of the Snake and Toad

By Gary Jacques

I couldn't believe what I was seeing in my backyard, and you may not believe the life lessons it taught me.



IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL SUMMER DAY. Not too hot and not too cool. A perfect day just made for mowing the lawn. I had been mowing for about an hour when I noticed a toad directly in my path. I stopped walking and waited for the toad to get out of the way of the noisy gas-eating monster I was pushing.

It took a few moments to realize he wasn't fleeing. Then I realized he was only half there. The other half was in a snake that was in the process of swallowing him. As I studied his situation, he looked back at me as if pleading for help. Oh boy! I thought. You have really gotten yourself into a pickle. Why didn't you jump when you had the chance? There was another set of eyes pleading with me not to take his lunch.

The snake's devious method of swallowing its prey starts with sinking its fangs into Mr. Toad.

I considered and decided to try to save the toad. I tried a number of things, but poking the snake in the eyes worked the best. The snake let go of his grip and "unswallowed" the toad. The toad didn't really move; the snake backed away. That was when I saw Mr. Toad had struggled so hard that he had broken one of his powerful legs.

I have considered that snake and toad many times. It seems that there are so many lessons in it—especially when we consider that Satan is called a serpent, and we are his intended prey.

Lesson #1: Our struggling cannot save us. It only helps Satan swallow us.

The snake's devious method of swallowing its prey starts with sinking its fangs into Mr. Toad. Mr. Toad tries to get away by moving his powerful legs. The fangs prevent Mr. Toad's legs from moving away from the snake, so Mr. Toad's legs are forced deeper into the snake. Each time Mr. Toad tries to move, the result is to go deeper and deeper into the mouth of the snake.



At the point the snake gets its fangs into the toad, the toad is dead. It doesn't matter how long it is before the toad actually ceases to live.

What sort of fangs does Satan try to sink into us?

Maybe something in the Church appears to be wrong. Maybe the Church seems to have wrong priorities or there is a better way of doing something. Maybe someone has hurt our feelings.

Maybe it's difficulties with family, people at work or neighbors. Maybe we have been unjustly accused or the victim of false rumors. Maybe it is our own inability to overcome.



So Satan sinks his fangs into us. We are inundated by "difficulties." What is our response? Isn't it to take the normal, natural actions that life has preprogrammed into us? Why do we do this? Because we think they work. When they don't work, what do we do? We try harder. And harder. And harder. And...remember Mr. Toad?

It is important we understand that when Satan attacks, our ways can't save us. We need God's help, as Simon Peter did (Luke 22:31-32). How quickly do we seek the help of God? Or do we keep trying our own way until we break our own legs?

Lesson #2: God's action is required to save us from Satan and his wiles.

I kept poking the snake in the eyes until the snake wanted to get away from me more than he wanted that toad. God will do the same for us.

So what is the process to secure God's rescue? "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

Step 1 is "submit" to God. We go to God in prayer and humbly ask for His help. We need God's protection from all of Satan's tricks and wiles. We need God's help to open our minds so we can see ourselves as God sees us and to see the situation we face as God sees it.

We need to search the Scriptures to educate ourselves to the mind of God on the subject and related topics.

Satan is called a serpent, and we are his intended prey.

Step 2 is "resist the devil." To resist, we put God's way of life into action in our lives. We have to work to make our thoughts and actions come into line with what we have been proving in the Scriptures is God's thinking on the subject. We need to try to do it happily and with zeal.

Step 3 is stick with it. God's way is to be practiced always, not just when the "difficulties" are upon us.

Lesson #3: When we see a brother or sister struggling, we need to pray for him or her.

Jesus Christ set us an example of praying for other Church members under attack by Sa-tan when He prayed for the apostle Peter (Luke 22:31-32). Is it an important part of our daily prayer?

Let's not forget the lessons of the snake and the toad. God will give us the vic-tory if we seek His help, study His Word, put what God leads us to into action and remember to pray for each other.

Recommended reading

To learn more about what the Bible says about Satan and how to overcome his influ-ences, request or download our free booklet [*Is There Really a Devil?*](#)

Letters to the Editor

To Soar Like Eagles

WOW! What an inspiring article. We just finished a unit on birds, and I wish I had read this before the unit. Ah, but there is always next year! I appreciate the improvements and growth since its inception, and it is truly an inspiration during the week to read the comments and have more inspiring resources to reinforce the concept. Anyway, your work is MUCH appreciated! Please let the author know this piece is much appreciated. It just goes to show that each of us has a place in this vast work.

— Susan Scott Smith, 3rd grade teacher

Some feedback messages are edited for space and/or clarity