

BULLETIN

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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Updates from Rusty Hancock

Allow me to thank everyone for their heartfelt prayers, condolences, thoughts, cards, and memories in the passing of my mother, Jane Sellers Hancock. Although incredibly stressful and emotional for me personally, it is a pain that we all have experienced. We have all lost a loved one, it is just that MOMs are special.

Not only has a hole been left in my life, but a hole was also left in The Word of Truth Ministry. This is the first mailing of the Bulletin and Seed & Bread that she has not participated in one way or the other, dating back to 1963. As the writer and English teacher of our group, we relied on her heavily in each publication.

Sadly, another valuable life was lost from The Ministry. Joanne Louise Johnson (Hammond) passed away on February 23, 2021. Joanne was the daughter of Milt and Betty Hammond. The Hammonds have been instrumental figures in The Ministry for several decades. Devoted to the Word of Truth Ministry, Joanne went on to write, edit, and produce the ministry's newsletter. She also reviewed and edited longer articles exploring aspects of Christian faith and positive, Biblical theology.

My mother, Joanne and I were a three-person team that would publish the Bulletin and send it out to our mailing list of Bible students. I suddenly found myself alone on a one-man island. Overwhelmed with the loss of my mother as well as a dear friend, I was not able to keep up the demands of publishing this issue of the Bulletin in a timely manner. I would like to apologize, and ask your forgiveness, as this Bulletin is about three months late. I just hope I have kept the publishing errors and edits to a minimum.

Fortunately, I am surrounded by many wonderful friends of the Ministry that have supported and assisted me. Although separated by distance (and COVID), the work continues. A new generation accepted the baton several years ago and is running forward, one of whom is Nathan Johnson, who has been selected as the new Director of the Word of Truth Ministry. (Refer to his commentary on page #4.)

A "Mom & Pop" ministry, the Word of Truth has survived, and prospered, since the 1930's. Obviously, my grandfather Otis Q. Sellers, was the mainstay until his death over thirty years ago. But other dedicated believers have continued to "rightly divide the word of truth." Our new "fourth" generation is fully capable of teaching God's word and spreading it through print, radio, and the internet.

I pray for the coming Kingdom.

The annual Fall Conference has been rescheduled for the weekend of August 21 & 22, 2021, in Bloomington, Minnesota. Further details are in the flier of this Bulletin.

Let me end with a positive announcement. The legacy of Jane continues. On November 25, 2020, her great-grandson (and my first grandchild) was born. Meet Dustin Kane Hancock.



Grandpa Rusty and Grandma Kathie take little Dustin to his first Dodger game.

The "ALL IN" God Gamble

By Andrew Brown

Going "all in!" There is a rush of adrenaline when putting everything on the line, and this phrase extends well beyond cards. Such a move can be questioned as foolish and rash because everything could be lost... but what if you win? What if it's a sure thing? God makes an "all in" comparison of the Kingdom to an investment: *"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells everything that he has, and buys that field"* (Matt. 13:44 NASB throughout). This investor sees the value and sells everything he owns to have this treasure. The same "gamble" of the hidden treasure is dealt to all of us. Those who follow suit with the exchange find satisfaction.

Previous studies on the meaning of the word "kingdom" demonstrate that it means government. Many are looking to their government for help. Human governments are limited in their ability and wisdom to solve the complex issues and sort through the tangled desires of broken people. The more people look for government help, the less help they seek from the Lord. *"My help comes from the Lord"* (Ps. 121:2).

The Bible gives many warnings about trusting in the world. *"Do not love the world nor the things in the world"* (1 Jn. 2:15). *"The world is passing away and also its lusts"* (1 Jn. 2:17). Our focus and attention should not be hijacked. Our hope and joy is in Jesus, and we look to His coming reign. *"Do not trust in noblemen, in mortal man, in whom there is no salvation"* (Ps. 146:3). *"Even wise people die; The foolish and the stupid alike perish"* (Ps. 49:10). The Kingdom of God can and will right all the wrongs and set the quarrels straight. His rule is the answer to all our world needs.

The Kingdom (government) of Israel during Old Testament times is a fascinating study. Israel had a taste of greatness whenever they were ruled by God's judges, but that changed under Samuel. The nation said, *"You have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king to judge us like all the nations"* (1 Sam. 8:5). Samuel outlined all the negative outcomes a king would introduce (1 Sam. 8:10-18), but they did not care about the consequences of leaving God's leadership! *"They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being King over them"* (1 Sam. 8:7). God gave them over to their request to be like the nations around them. As believers, considering the unrest and disagreements surrounding politics and government highlights the ultimate answer of God to setting the record straight and reigning.

King Rehoboam's departure from God brought many consequences for his people (2 Chronicles 12). Shishak, king of Egypt, led powerful attacks against Rehoboam, and

Israel became Shishak's slaves, *"so that they may learn the difference between [God's] service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries"* (2 Chron. 12: 7-8). There is a huge difference between following the Lord and having His leadership and following men. King David also had learned this lesson many times over. A choice of punishment was offered to David for counting the army: famine, given over to his enemies, or the Lord's destroying sword. *"David said to God, 'I am in great distress; please let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for His mercies are very great. But do not let me fall into human hands'"* (1 Chron. 21:12-13). He knew the Lord was merciful and to be trusted.

Governmental power given to selfish individuals brings unintended evils. Consider the Roman government killing the innocent Jesus or the numerous prophets killed by the nation of Israel. Historically, power-hungry leaders led to martyrdom for many Christians. Conversely, the Creator of the Universe said, *"I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light"* (Matt. 11:28-29).

There is a day coming when the prayer *"Your Kingdom come"* (Matt. 6:10) will be answered, and the world will experience the perfect government. *"The government will rest on His shoulders"* (Isa. 9:6). *"There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace"* (Isa. 9:7). God's government cannot be changed by sin and death; it is not of this world. Righteousness and truth will spring from the earth. God's hand will reach into all avenues of life, and the leadership will directly answer to Him. Jesus will proclaim justice to the nations (Matt. 12:18-21). *"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of [His] throne"* (Ps. 89:14). He will rightly judge the thoughts and intents of the heart. He will bring an end to the iniquity, set up righteous leadership, feed the world, bring peace, and eliminate war. No one will fight against God's kingdom and prevail for it will rule from within men (Luke 18), as well as from without.

As we consider the world's leadership, we may get depressed, anxious, or frightful, but let disappointment and need keep our eyes on the joyous relief found in Christ and His coming Kingdom. *"Prepare your minds for action... set your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ"* (1 Peter 1:13) *"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness"* (Matt. 6:33). When we weigh the truths of God's kingdom let us be like the *"merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold everything that he had and bought it"* (Matt. 13:45-46). God's government is a guaranteed "bet." Let us celebrate our winning windfall hand together.

REFRAINING FROM COMPLAINING

By Candy Davis

Everyone knows a Grumpy McGrumperson, the person chronically moaning and groaning, grumping and griping about one thing or another. You and I may not be in the same league as Grumpy, but in honesty we all complain to some extent. About traffic, the weather, our brother-in-law... On the matter of complaining, however, Scripture is clear; complaining is not God's desire for us." Do all things without complaining ..." (Phil. 2:14 NKJV throughout.)

LIFE ISN'T FAIR

There is a truth about life that is hard for us to swallow: Life Isn't Fair (Ecc. 9:11; Psa. 37; 73; 2 Tim. 3:1-13). Bad things happen to good people. Like it or not, life will remain this way until the LORD takes control of the earth by His government in justice and righteousness. Until then, a measure of acceptance goes a long way: Accepting that people are imperfect and nature is corrupt, and both will irritate, disappoint and even harm us at times. Not to say, in accepting, that we approve of evil and wrongdoing. We "Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (Rom. 12:9). Having realistic expectations regarding life as it is in this corrupt world can spare us getting all bent out of shape with frustration and dissatisfaction at every turn.

BE CONTENT

The flip side of dissatisfaction is contentment. God desires us to be content with what we have (1 Tim 6:6-8). A man I know lives in a magnificent house on vast lakefront property. Even so, he complains—that the geese on the water wake him with their honking. The lawn service makes a racket mowing his grass. In contrast to Mr. Grumpy, many individuals living in homeless encampments would be content with four simple walls and a roof. Having their own patch of grass would be a bonus.

Then there is a neighbor woman whose husband surprised her with a luxury SUV. Yet she gripes the that steering wheel is not heated. This same woman complains to her husband that he loads the dishwasher all wrong. A few neighbors whisper that Negative Nellie should be grateful to have a nice vehicle to drive. And a generous and helpful husband. (And a dishwasher.)

Along with our possessions, God desires us to be content in our circumstances. The apostle Paul, no stranger to adversity, has this to say about contentment: "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Phil. 4:11-12). Note, Paul tells us that he learned to be content. He learned, not in a flash but—as the Greek word conveys—with practice. Lots of deliberate practice.

We can learn to be content, without complaint, the same as Paul—by putting into practice the actions we read in 1Thessalonians 5:16-18: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will [desire] of God in Christ Jesus for you."

1. IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS (v.18)

The deliberate act of stopping to give thanks in every situation may sound impossible, even ridiculous, but read the verse again. The words do not say to give thanks FOR everything; they say give thanks IN everything.

Take cancer. We are not thankful FOR the disease of cancer of course. But if we find ourselves or a loved one IN the grips of cancer, we can practice the act of deliberately looking for the good (Phil 4:8-9). We can be thankful for modern medicine which offers the chance of recovery. Thankful for the opportunity to share with family and friends loving thoughts that could have gone unsaid if not for this health crisis. And thankful for the opportunity to share the Gospel at this time when loved ones may be more amenable. Most of all in this, as in every trouble, we can take an eternal perspective (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

Our discussion on complaining is incomplete without making a distinction between the chronic complaining as done by Grumpy McGrumperson... and genuinely seeking godly counsel and comfort in troubling times from a trusted friend or relation. God wants us to comfort each other and build each other up (1 Thess. 5:11; Prov. 27:9).

2. REJOICE ALWAYS (v. 16)

It is impossible to complain and rejoice at the same time. With deliberate practice we can develop the mindset of rejoicing in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4). Rejoicing in all He has done for us; for His love and guidance today; and for what awaits us in His kingdom.

3. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING (v.17)

Philippians 4: 6-7 puts it this way: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Praying this way—IN everything, and with thanksgiving ("in everything give thanks")—blesses us with nothing less than the very peace of God, which feels better than any mumbling or grumbling ever could.

REFRAINING FROM COMPLAINING

When it comes to refraining from complaining, the Israelites, on their way to the Promised Land, did everything but. They grumbled their way across the Sinai to the point where the Lord put His foot down. No Promised Land for them! (Num 14: 26-32).

Today God does not mete out punishment when we complain (or ever). Today we refrain from complaining because we love the Lord and want to please Him.

God wants us to "do all things without complaining.....so that we shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:14-15). We are to shine as lights in the world—not darken it like an ugly storm cloud—as a Grumpy McGrumperson.

Journey to the Truth

By Nathan C. Johnson

Recently, The Word of Truth Ministry lost a great friend in Jane Sellers Hancock. It was my privilege over the last seven years to become her friend as well. As such, I witnessed firsthand her excitement upon meeting the Bible students in our Midwest group who have absorbed the truths that her father, Otis Q. Sellers, had recovered and taught from God's Word. She saw that we were studying those truths and carrying them forward. With this knowledge and with the return of her son Rusty to active Bible study, she knew that the ministry her father began would not die out with her generation of the group in Southern California. A new generation was stepping forward to continue with and expand upon those truths.

Before Jane's death it had become clear she could no longer carry on her duties as Director, the position she had held since Mr. Sellers' chosen replacement David Hettema was no longer able to hold it. At that time, Rusty approached me, asking if I would consider the possibility of becoming the next Director. Since then, the Board has elected me to that position. I know that 32 years ago, when I first started to read and study the writings of Mr. Sellers, I never imagined that I would one day be the Director of the ministry he founded. I pray that the Lord will help me to be a good steward of the legacy of the truth in God's Word that Mr. Sellers recognized and taught.

I have met some of you in person and others of you have gotten to know me through my writings and other work over the last eight years or so. Yet I thought it would be good if I would use this column in the Bulletin to reveal some of my background to those of you who don't know me. I was raised in a Christian home, both going to a partial dispensational church and attending Christian school. My parents, however, taught me some of their unique perspectives on Scripture, including the Acts 28:28 dividing line. At that time, my family largely held to the teachings promoted by Mr. Charles Welch of England and not to those of The Word of Truth Ministry.

I started reading my Bible daily when I was 13 years old, and two years later I was realizing truly how much there was in it that I did not understand. One question I had that I asked my parents was why they did not believe in the doctrine of torment in hell, especially in light of the story of The Rich Man and Lazarus. In answer, they gave me Mr. Sellers' pamphlet of that name, and it was my introduction to his writings. Even though the pamphlet was his older, 1940s version, it was excellent. It fully convinced me that the traditional ideas I had been taught were incorrect.

Several years later, while at the home of my great-uncle Marlyn Clark, I happened upon his collection of *The Word*

of Truth Magazine. His mother, Emma Clark, was the one who first brought our family into an understanding of right division and advanced dispensationalism. I remembered the excellent pamphlet I had previously read, and I pulled out a volume and read aloud to my assembled family an article on the Philippian jailor. Quite a discussion ensued, with some of us agreeing with Mr. Sellers and some not. (I was one who agreed.) I asked my great-uncle what he thought of Mr. Sellers, and he told me that his earlier writings were pretty good, but then he got into some "crazy premillennial kingdom idea."

When we got home from that trip, my mother discovered that we had inherited my great-grandmother Clark's collection of *Word of Truth Magazines*, and she began reading them. (I guess she agreed with Mr. Sellers' views on the Philippian jailor as well!) She told me about it, and I started reading the magazines myself, figuring that when I got past the earlier material and into the "crazy premillennial kingdom idea," I could stop. A year or more later I arrived there, and instead of stopping, I found I agreed with Mr. Sellers and continued. His article on "The Earth, Not Heaven, Is the Future Home of God's Redeemed" rocked my world, and I realized that I had come upon a treasure trove of truth. I kept going with it and have not turned back since.

I started writing when I was 21 years old, after having been asked by a cousin to explain why I believed as I did. Since then I have continued writing, giving sermons, leading Bible studies, and, lately, teaching on the radio. I thank the Lord for every opportunity that I have to share His truth.

As for me personally, I work as an engineer at the 3M Company. I am an unmarried man and strive to live the life of righteousness that God would desire of a bachelor who belongs to Him. This has some disadvantages, but one benefit is that it gives me more time to devote to study, and I try to take every advantage of that fact. Besides the material published in *Seed and Bread* and *The Bulletin*, I have many articles posted on my blog site, precepts.wordpress.com.

In spite of the official cancelation of our 2020 Conference, we held unofficial, local conferences in Green Bay, WI and Lino Lakes, MN. Videos of the MN conference can be found on the YouTube channel Seed and Bread. Check it out and subscribe to be notified whenever we release a new video. We pray that you will enjoy this online version of our canceled conference. May the Lord bless your studies of His Word.