



GMAF Newsletters 2001

By

Mark McGee

Introduction

Grace Martial Arts Fellowship began in 1990, went online with a website in 1995 and began publishing newsletters to the Christian martial arts community in 1998.

Because of the quality of information found in those early newsletter articles and the fact they are no longer available online, we've decided to re-publish many of them in the coming weeks and months. Our hope is that a new generation of Christian martial artists will be blessed by the wisdom of those who were on the path before them.

GMAF NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2001

Welcome to the GMAF Newsletter! We pray it will encourage you in your Martial Arts and Outreach for Christ.

Thoughts from the Master

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.” Jesus Christ

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” The Apostle Paul

Wisdom Notes

“Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee; they shall withal be fitted in thy lips.” Proverbs

“Dearly Loved”

by Mark McGee

One of our family’s favorite verses is Colossians 3:12: “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” The New International Version reads: “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

Christians are “holy and beloved, holy and dearly loved”. The Greek word for “beloved” is *agapao*. It expresses God’s Attitude toward us: He loves us deeply and dearly. If we are honest with ourselves, which is not an easy thing to do but helpful at times, we will see how difficult it is to love us. Human beings are, well, not nice at times. We say bad things, do bad things, think bad things ... in general, we’re a bad group. Paul said it perfectly when he described humans this way:

“There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Romans 3:10-18

Not a pretty picture, but it's the Truth. And it is that very Truth that makes Paul's statement in Colossians 3:12 even more precious. Humanity is sinful. It is like rotting flesh on decaying bones. Yet, God dearly loves us! Why? Because of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus makes all the difference in God's Attitude toward us. Without Jesus, you and I would be just another lump of clay prepared for Divine judgment. "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin...For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:19-20, 23) "...who were dead in trespasses and sins...and were by nature the children of wrath." (Ephesians 2:1,3) With Jesus, we are dearly loved and protected for a great eternal purpose. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all

and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference... Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” (Romans 3:22,24-25) “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:4-7)

Christians are the most fortunate of humanity. We have experienced God’s Love, Grace, Mercy and Eternal Kindness. We are forgiven and our nature has been changed from “children of wrath” to “His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” However, before we gloat over our good fortune, let’s remember what we were and what we would be without Christ. All glory belongs to God. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the

gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9) We owe God everything, including our lives.

So, what does all that mean? We are saved by Grace. We are dearly loved. We are forgiven. We have Eternal Life. Those are basics of our faith. But what does it mean today, in the real world?

It means we have responsibilities and obligations to God and others. It doesn't mean we have to perform good works to "earn" our salvation, because that's free, but it does mean we do good works "because" of our salvation. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Our new nature as children of God includes a view toward good works. What are those good works? What is it we should do with our lives now that we are "saved," "free" and "in Christ"?

Let's go back to our favorite verse in Colossians. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." We have a special responsibility to our family and friends and other members of the Body of Christ. That responsibility is to have an attitude of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and longsuffering. That attitude leads to the actions of forbearing and forgiving. We begin by putting on (*enduno* – to envelope in, clothe with) a Christlike attitude. Because we are holy (set apart for sacred service) and beloved (loved deeply and dearly), we are becoming "like Christ" in our thoughts and behavior. One Christian writer said we "become so possessed of the mind of Christ as in thought, feeling, and action to resemble Him and, as it were, reproduce the life He lived."

The first action is “Forbearing one another.” The Greek is *anechomenoi* and means “to bear with, endure, put up with.” It’s a picture of the reality of relationships within the Body of Christ. The fact is that Christians are human and thus flawed. We are not always easy to put up with. It takes a “Christ- like” attitude to get along with some Christians. Before we get too proud, let’s remember that other Christians will need a Christlike attitude to put up with us. The word is used in Romans 2:4 and 3:25 (“the forbearance of God”) to describe God’s withholding of punishment against sinners while He gave them the opportunity to trust Christ for their salvation. God wants us to use that same attitude in our dealings with others. Not an easy job, but necessary.

The second action is “Forgiving one another.” The Greek is *charizomenoi* and means “to bestow a favor willingly and unconditionally.” The word comes from *charisma* (“a gift of Grace”) and tells us what we’ll need to willingly and unconditionally forgive Christians who sin against us. We will need special “gift of Grace” from God. Human beings don’t have a good record of forgiving others. If we’re honest, we’ve

all had problems willingly and unconditionally forgiving Christians who did us wrong. That's natural. What's "supernatural" is "forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Yikes! That's a tall order. God wants us to forgive sins committed against us in the same way Christ forgave our sins committed against Him. Whew! We'll need a BIG "gift of Grace" to do that.

God's Attitude toward us has been Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness and Longsuffering. God's Action toward us has been Enduring and Forgiving. Christ is our Example: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor." (Ephesians 5:1-2)

We are "dearly and deeply loved" by God. Let us now love each other "dearly and deeply." By so doing we will demonstrate the reality of our Faith and the power of our Message.

“Mastering Kempo” by Dr. William Durbin

We're pleased to share with you a new book by Soke William Durbin. Soke Durbin is a Christian brother and ordained minister. He is founder and director of Kiyojute Ryu Kempo Bugei and Ki Bugei Kai – Christian Martial Arts Association, Inc. of Frankfort, Kentucky. He is a Vice President of Juko Kai Kokusai Remmei. Dr. Durbin is a recognized world authority on the history and practice of Kobujutsu, Jujutsu and Karate. He was a student of Richard Stone, Bill “Superfoot” Wallace and Dr. Rod Sacharnoski. Dr. Durbin's martial arts ranks include:

- Shodai Soke – Kiyojute Ryu Kempo Bugei Kaiden – Kiyojute Ryu Kempo Bugei
- Soke/Kiyojute Ryu – Shinjo Ryu Iaijutsu/Kenjutsu Hanshi – Juko Kai Karate
- Hanshi – Juko Kai Jujutsu
- Judan – Juko Ryu Kobudo/Kobujutsu Kudan – Nihon Ryu Kempo
- Hanshi Hachidan – Juko Ryu Kempo
- Shihan – Koga Ha Kosho Shorei Ryu Ninjutsu

- Shihan – Koga Ha Kosho Shorei Ryu Koppo
- Rokudan – ISTJ Judo
- Rokudan – Kenshin Kan Shorin Ryu Kobudo
- Shihan Godan – Dai Yoshin Ryu Aikido
- Shihan Godan – Shorin Ryu Karate
- Shihan Godan – Juko Ryu Toide
- Shihan Godan – Juko Ryu Aikijujutsu
- Shihan Godan – Okinawan Goju Kempo Karate
- Shihan Godan – Oikiru Ryu Jujutsu Bugei
- Yodan – Seidokan Motobu Ryu Toide
- Samdan – KwihanKu Sik Tae Kwon Do
- Si Bak – Shaolin Chung Kuo Chuan Shu Kwoon Tai Chi

Dr. Durbin is associated with many martial arts organizations, including:

- International Okinawan Martial Arts Union (Juko Kai, Seidokan, Kenshin Kan)
- International Kosho Shorei Association Sei Kosho Shorei Kai

- Koga Ha Kosho Shorei Ryu Kempo Japan Martial Arts Society
- Dai Nippon Seibukan Budo/Bugei Kai
- Zen Kokusai Soke Budo/Bugei Remmei
- International Martial Arts League

Dr. Durbin has been a dear friend of GMAF and shared his writings with us for publication in previous GMAF Newsletters. He also has written articles for major martial arts magazines, including “Black Belt Magazine”, “Aikido Today Magazine,” “Inside Karate”, “Inside Kung Fu”, “Inside Martial Arts,” “Martial Arts Masters”, “Martial Arts Ultimate Warriors” and “Karate/Kung Fu Illustrated.”

Dr. Durbin’s newest book is titled *Mastering Kempo*. He writes about the history, philosophy, techniques, tactics and training of the Art of Kempo. It is one of the best martial arts books I’ve read in the last 40 years. I highly recommend it to anyone who loves the martial arts. The fact that Dr. Durbin is also a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ makes this book even more special.

Here are some comments about “Mastering Kempo” from other martial artists.

“As one of the leading practitioners of Kempo, Durbin has in-depth knowledge of the history and philosophy of the martial arts. I recommend this book heartily to all martial artists who wish to expand their knowledge and understanding of the intricacies of the martial arts.” Bill “Superfoot” Wallace

“William Durbin is the most objective, authentic, and accurate Kempo historian in America today. I have studied his methods and worked and practiced with him for five years. His skills and abilities in the martial arts, especially Kempo, are fascinating. I enthusiastically recommend Mastering Kempo to everyone involved in martial arts.” Bill Beach, Judan/Shihan

“Bill Durbin is unequalled as a researcher and teacher of the art of Kempo. This work shares his technique and philosophy gained throughout his 30- year career. I am honored to recommend Mastering Kempo.” Richard L. Stone, Hanshi Senior Master

Human Kinetics is the publisher. You can order Dr. Durbin’s book online at

<http://www.humankinetics.com/> for \$19.95. It is well worth the investment. (Review by Mark McGee)

“Carrying Other People’s Burdens” by Shidoshi Johnny Russell

My intent in the messages I send out is to edify warriors of the Cross of Christ to a higher commitment and dedication to service to the King of Kings. My method in doing so is to stimulate its thinking rather than to stroke its complacency.

There is an aura of warm fuzziness that tends to surround the body of Christ that is due to its tendency to see itself in the role of martyr-ism rather than to be the overcomers and spiritual warriors who are on the offense attacking the Gates of Hell that Christ intends for us be.

Not long ago, I heard someone say that the job of the preacher is to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted. I think that statement is correct up to a point. In today’s modern culture, many believers would rather view themselves as victims than as overcomers and, therefore, seek out those ministers and ministries that offer solace rather than those that prod them toward personal responsibility.

The road we walk is difficult for all of us. It is not a question of how many sorrows we can valiantly bear but rather how many obstacles we can overcome. One can either be crushed by the weight of affliction or see it as an instrument of God so designed to build him up.

It was with that thought in mind that the Apostle Paul said, regarding his own life of affliction: “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10).

There is most certainly a time to comfort the afflicted. Failing to do so in an appropriate and timely manner is to contribute to that persons spiritual demise. However, there is little room in the Scripture for one who accepts the role of a perpetual martyr. Failing to see the difference is a pitfall that both the afflicted and those who minister sometimes fall snare.

To build one another up in Holiness requires discernment and wisdom. We must learn when to bear the burden of another and when to require him to bear his own. In one location Paul admonished us to “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). A few verses later he commanded: “For every man shall bear his own burden” (Galatians 6:5).

As a minister in martial arts ministry, I find I am more equipped to prod the faithful toward greater responsibility and growth than to pour the balm of sympathy over their self-pity. In the American West there are bog holes that cattle, in search of water, sometimes wander into. If left to themselves they will only be drawn deeper into the mire by their struggles. One role of the cowboy is to find cattle in such need and rope them and pull them out to solid ground and security.

As ministers of Christ, we must be on the lookout for believers who wander into life’s “bog holes.” We must be dedicated to drawing them out to the safety of solid ground through the ministry of the Solid Rock. Unfortunately, many believers who

are drawn into “bog holes” of life, become blinded by Satan and fail to realize the benefit of solid ground. It appears they would rather struggle in the mire of their own self-pity than to receive the effort and help required to place them on the solid ground of overcoming faith. Part of our responsibility in Christ is to sufficiently “prod the disoriented Christian so that they realize and address their need, submitting themselves to the help that is proffered.

As ministers and warriors of the Cross, our duty is not to make the afflicted feel comfortable in their affliction but rather to see them safely out of their sorrows and to convert them into overcomers, and fellow soldiers in God’s army.

Peace,

Shidoshi Russell

GMAF NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2001

Welcome to the GMAF Newsletter! We pray it will encourage you in your Martial Arts and Outreach for Christ.

Thoughts from the Master

“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Jesus Christ

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” The Apostle Paul

Wisdom Notes

“The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them.” Proverbs

“Marching Through Treetops: Success with God”

by Mark McGee

I have long been fascinated by the way ancient Israel waged war against its enemies. God’s people were always successful when they obeyed God’s Word about what to do and how to do it.

One of the most successful warriors of God was David. He was successful in battle long before he became King of Israel. God told the teenager David to face the heavily armored giant Goliath without wearing armor and armed with only a slingshot and stones. David obeyed God and killed Goliath with a single strike.

We know from previous studies of ancient Israel that David is an example of the power of God's Spirit in spiritual warfare when Christ is the King of our lives. Saul is an example of the lack of power of man's flesh in spiritual warfare when we are our own king. Christ wins spiritual battles, not our flesh.

David was a mighty man of war. He killed many in hand-to-hand combat. He led Israel's troops into tough military campaigns. Some of David's top army chiefs were also mighty men of war. Jashobeam, a Hachmonite, was an expert in the spear and killed three hundred men in one encounter. Abishai was also an expert with the spear and killed three hundred men in one encounter. Benaiah was a great fighter from Kabzeel. He killed two of Moab's best men, a lion in a pit and a seven-and-a-half-foot Egyptian who was expert with a heavy spear. Benaiah went against the giant using a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian and killed the giant with his own spear. Benaiah was a highly-skilled martial artist.

Thousands of talented soldiers joined David's army after King Saul was killed and Israel made David King at Hebron. They marched against the Jebusites in Jerusalem and defeated them. They could have looked upon their great strength and training and believed themselves invincible against any enemy, but that would have been a great mistake. They were powerful because David obeyed God. "So David waxed greater and greater: for the Lord of hosts was with him." (1 Chronicles 11:9) One of my favorite passages about Israel's battles is in 1 Chronicles 14.

"And when the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David. And David heard of it, and went out against them. And the Philistines came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. And David enquired of God, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? And wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the Lord said unto him, Go up; for I will deliver them into thine hand." King David defeated the Philistines and gave the glory to God. "God

hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand like the breaking forth of waters.”

David then gave orders to his army to burn the gods of the Philistines.

The Philistines weren't finished fighting David. They spread themselves abroad in the valley. David asked God what he should do. "God said unto him, Go not up after them; turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt go out to battle: for God is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines. David therefore did as God commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer. And the fame of David went out into all the lands; and the Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations."

What a powerful lesson for us! Wait for God to go before us to fight our battles. I don't know about you, but I have a tendency to want to fight my own battles. That's the flesh walking. We

don't have to think back too far for examples in our own lives of when walking in the flesh has made a mess in our lives and the lives of people we love. The flesh takes us in one direction: failure.

God told King David to hold back his troops from fighting until they heard the sound of going in the treetops. That meant God had gone before them to strike the Philistine Army. What was that sound? The Hebrew word for “going” is “s’adah” and translates as “marching.” Who would be “marching” in treetops? “... for God is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines.” The sound of marching was God’s Army going forth before the army of Israel.

Imagine for a moment that you are a member of the Army of Israel. You know that an enemy is coming against you with a great hatred in their hearts and a desire to wipe you and your fellow soldiers and your wife and mother and father and children from the face of the earth. You are waiting for orders from your superior officers to go up against the Philistines. The orders come and they are to turn away from the Philistines, go

over against some mulberry trees and wait for the sound of marching in the treetops. You are a good soldier, well-trained and skilled in the art of war, so you don't ask questions. You trust that your superior officers know what they're doing. You wait near the mulberry trees, then hear the sound of an army marching in the treetops. You look up but see nothing. You hear the sound, but do not see. Within moments of the sound of marching in the treetops, your superior officers give the battle sound and you rush forward with all your strength to engage the enemy. You look into their eyes and see a great fear which seems unnatural for seasoned warriors.

You pull your sword, raise your club or thrust your spear in front of you and find the battle to be an easy one. Philistines drop quickly as you strike them down with powerful blows of your weapon. Your shield staves off every attack of the enemy and the battle is yours. You look around at the dying and dead and watch the living Philistines flee for their lives. The word goes around the battlefield quickly that God won the battle. You smile, thank God and resheath your weapon, ready for the next opportunity to obey God's Word and experience great success.

The battles Israel's Army fought against the Philistines and scores of other armies of ancient times are no different than the spiritual battles Christians fight today. The Apostle Paul wrote: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." How do we succeed in spiritual battles? The same way God told David to win. "Go not up after them; turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that they thou shalt go out to battle: for God is gone forth before thee..." We succeed in battle even as David did. We wait upon the Lord and listen for the marching of His Army going before us to smite our enemies. "David therefore did as God commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer." We will also succeed in spiritual battle as we do what God commands us, wait on the sound of God going before us, and following through using the spiritual weapons of warfare.

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Ephesians 6:13

What is your spiritual battle? Are you fighting it in your own strength? Have you gone up against the enemy alone? Are you tired and bruised? Are you frustrated and angry? Then go not up after them; turn away from them. Go over to the mulberry trees and wait upon the Lord. When you hear the sound of marching in the treetops, you will know that God has gone before you to smite your enemy. Your battle will be easy, your victory sure.

May God bless you richly this month, my friend and warrior of Almighty God.

GMAF NEWSLETTER MARCH 2001

Welcome to the GMAF Newsletter! We pray it will encourage you in your Martial Arts and Outreach for Christ.

Thoughts from the Master

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Jesus Christ

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” The Apostle Paul

Wisdom Notes

“Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” Proverbs

“Lover of Souls” Part One

by Sensei Mark McGee

“God is Great. God is Good. Let us thank Him for our food.” I remember that as being one of the first prayers I ever learned. It is a wonderful little prayer because it teaches us so much about God. He is Great. He is Good. He does provide our food and for that we should be ever thankful.

God does many fantastic things for human beings. He provides air, water and food to sustain our lives. He shows us mercy. He forgives our sins. He sent His Son Jesus Christ to sacrifice His Life on the Cross so that we can be forgiven. God is Gracious toward us every day in every way.

What motivates God to do these good things for us? What's behind His generosity?

Why does He bother for a planet full of sinful, God-hating people? Why?

Because He Loves us! God is the Lover of Souls. He created us from a Heart of Love. He created us for the Purpose of Love. He created the human soul so He could shower it with His Eternal Love.

How do we know God's Love is real? How do we know He'll continue to Love us no matter what happens? How do we know God will live up to the Love promises He made to us?

God's Love begins where it should begin; with Self-Love. God Loves Himself. Anyone who does not love themselves cannot truly love others. If God failed to Love Himself at any point in history or eternity, we could not trust His Love for us. I am pleased to report that God does now, has always and will always Love Himself.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that

we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” 1 John 4:7-11

What powerful truth! God is love. Love is of God. Every one who loves is born of God and knows God. God demonstrated His Great Love for us because He sent Jesus Christ into the world so we can live through Him. Love is not our loving Him. Love is His Loving us first. If God loved Himself and Christ and us in this way, we should also love each other.

Jesus Christ is God made known to the world in Flesh. Jesus Loves Himself. He Loves His Heavenly Father. The Heavenly Father Loves His Son.

*“But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.”
John 14:31*

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou has sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” John 17:23

Jesus Loves His Father. The Father Loves His Son. The Father Loves us in the same way He Loves His Son. The Love the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have with Each Other is the foundation of God’s Love for us, our love for ourselves and our love for others. We are truly a people of Love.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” John 13:34

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” John 15:12

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.” Ephesians 5:2

Jesus Loves you! Jesus loves your soul, your body, your mind, your spirit. He loves all of you. None of us are perfect. None of us do everything right. None of us are without sin. We all make mistakes. We all stumble and sometimes fall. But God's Love is forever. It is unconditional. He Loves us no matter what. He Loved you before you were born. He Loved you before your parents were born. God Loved you before He created the world and He will Love you long after this world is gone.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself; according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Ephesians 1:3-6

You received a Perfect Love when you received Christ as Lord and Savior. Everything Christ does for you is Perfect. Everything He does for you comes from a Perfect Love. That includes things we might call bad.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

We can face life and all its challenges knowing we are Loved. God calls us His Beloved. We are the souls He Loves.

Let the Love of God wash over you today. Feel His Hand upon your heart. Feel His Love fill your mind as you meditate on Him. Sense the Power and Joy of His Love in your life as you share His Love with others. Be strong in the knowledge that God’s Love is more powerful than the hate of the enemy. Go forth to do spiritual battle knowing that God’s Love in Heaven and in you is greater than the strength of your opposition. Do not fear. Do not give up. Do not look down. Do not forsake God or yourself. Do not turn away from those who are lost and in

desperate need for the touch of God's Love. Our opportunity to love others on earth is short. Use every moment, every opportunity, to demonstrate the Love of God for others.

“Jesus, lover of my soul, Let me to Thy bosom fly; While the nearer waters roll, While the tempest still is high. Hide me, O my Savior hide, Till the storm of life is past; Safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last.” (Charles Wesley-S.B. Marsh)

(Continued next month)

“The Game of Life”

by Grand Master Robert Xavier

The Lord Jesus Christ often used parables to illustrate the concepts He was teaching His disciples and followers. We're going to introduce an Overview of the Christian Life through the parable of a baseball game.

The game of baseball is symbolic of the “Game of Life,” in which we are all active players. The umpire is God and the final decision of whether we win or lose in the Game of Life is ultimately His. Unlike human umpires, God never makes a mistake in judgment. The Rule Book is the Bible, for in it we find God's instructions for the game. The ball diamond, with its bases, represents four important aspects of the Christian life.

As we go around the bases, we will see how each experience has a different meaning to each person, depending on his spiritual condition. The natural, carnal and spiritual men all see these bases in a different light.

First Base: Salvation

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33

What is salvation and why do we need it?

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

Salvation is the most beautiful word in the Bible, if we fully understand its meaning. If we were drowning and someone threw us a lifeline, we could understand that kind of salvation. If we were slaves and someone bought us at the auction market, then gave us our freedom, we could understand that kind of deliverance. But spiritual salvation is vastly more meaningful. It is the single most important event in our lives because it determines both the way we live here and where we will live in the hereafter.

Salvation is the most beautiful word in the Bible. By responding to God calling us and receiving Jesus Christ as our Savior, we are completely loved, accepted and forgiven by God and it's a totally free gift!

Why do we need salvation?

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Psalms 51:5

“From Adam to us, each one of our fathers and grandfathers have conceived children until we were born. We all have been born with Adam’s spirit of rebelliousness and have been separated from a natural love for God. But God Who is all Love has always continued to love us with an Unconditional Love. God gave His Son Jesus Christ to die for us, so that we all might know the True and Perfect Love of God and the love of others and ourselves. (Read Genesis 3:1-24)

God created you to have an intimate, personal relationship with Him forever!

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” Revelation 4:11

If we are to approach God and have a personal relationship with Him, we must do so on God’s terms. He desires holiness in His people: “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.” (Leviticus 19:2) Since we obviously have not been holy, we need our sins to be forgiven and cleansed. Without this forgiveness and cleansing, we would be without hope, “for the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23)

We need to be separated from sin and set apart to righteousness. This is not something we can do by our own strength or ability. Jesus’ disciples asked Him, “Who then can be saved?” His reply was simple: “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:25-26)

The Gift of Salvation

This gift of salvation was provided for us by God because mankind – by nature – is sinful and needs the righteousness that only God can provide: “As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one...’” (Romans 3:10)

The greatest gift of love that mankind has ever received was the sacrifice of God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for our sins. Being without sin, He was able to take the sin of all mankind upon Himself in one great sacrifice. This act provided salvation for us by the Grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This gift of salvation, which we receive by faith, provides all we need to live a whole, healthy life here on earth, and in eternity.

(Next month: The Benefits of Salvation)

When a Door Closes, The Lord Opens a Window

By Sensei Charlaine Engelhardt

We moved recently, because of adversity, but also by God's call. The pastorate Don had went sour, so the Lord took us to a small church in need tender loving care. Instead of trying to find our places in an active, established church, He put us into a small, dying church with a dedicated group of older adults. There were no children at all for ours to mingle with. We had been placed there to heal and bring healing, to regroup and aid in the growth process of this church. We have a church family who loves and appreciates our family, following Don's pastoral lead. Don is bi-vocational as pastor rather than full-time, giving him the ability to meet more people in the general public. The Lord placed us in a less stressful place, but totally dependent upon Him.

I had been going to one university, so this meant a need to transfer to another. I filled out the paperwork for transfer and sent it in. We knew I couldn't go to school during Fall semester and we would also have to wait to begin martial arts ministry

again. It was frustrating, but necessary. However, there was a twist to the plot that only God knew about. Our family needed for me to look for outside employment. My plans of unpacking, helping Don at the church, and surveying the area for martial arts ministry potential had to be done differently. Only one month later, I began working at our local YMCA in the Aquatics Department. It happened that I went in to pay for our family membership; the lady who was at the front desk when we took our tour was out sick. In her place was one of the department supervisors for Aquatics. I asked if there was work since I needed a job. She asked me a couple of questions and then sent me to talk with the other supervisor at the pool. They hired me. My swimming was very rusty and in need of work. I am able to learn what I was studying for in college through training programs and can earn certifications in various areas. To make a long story short, The Lord put me in a place where I could be employed and still get training in various fitness areas. There was no way I could go to school, but He gave me what I needed not only for today, but for later as well. We also begin a new martial arts ministry next month. Is everything rosey? No, but I see God's hand at work through all of these events.

We do not always understand why God allows bad things to happen to His children. Nor do we see how He will work things out for us, but we can trust that He will work it for our good and His great purpose. In Genesis 37-45, what seemed like a promising future for young Joseph as Dad's favorite son and having big dreams did not work out according possible expectations. Some jealous brothers put a kink into the works, giving Joseph a very big surprise. Being dumped in a well was literally the pits! But to top it off, while he was being carted off as a slave to be sold in Egypt, Dad had been given a line by his brothers that Joseph was dead. God's plans had not been ruined. For it was in Egypt that Joseph's dreams were realized and his family saved from an impending famine. Joseph could have been bitter—at his brothers and God—but instead, he gave God the glory for using him to save his family. He even forgave his brothers, after making them sweat a bit. Joseph was not perfect, but he was faithful to God. He does not cause bad things to happen to His people. He also has not forgotten the plans He has for you or your family (Jeremiah 29:11). When we are faithful, He turns bad things around for good and clears up confusion. It is important to do these things:

1. Pray, asking the Lord to show you His hand in what is happening around you. He will tell you what you need to know when you need to know it.
2. Read Scripture passages dealing with God's promises to His children, examples of godly people in the Bible who have been blessed for their faithfulness.
3. Admit your own errors, ask for forgiveness from God and others who may hurt from what you may have said or done. Then make the changes necessary to not do those things again.
4. Write down what happened. Later, as you see things changing around you, write down what the Lord has been doing through the transition as a sequel.
5. Praise God for His goodness and faithfulness, whether you are able to see it or not. God is good all the time.

Keichu-Do Black Belt Ceremony (Washing of the feet)

by Soke Karl Marx Sr.

What we are going to do now, has only been done one time before in Keichu History. My son Victor was the first to introduce this into our traditional ceremony. It should have been done at every black belt test from the first one. We are as of this date here in Santa Maria California following my son's action and mostly by the prayerful suggestion of my wife Kathleen, going to preform this act of love as Jesus Christ did over two thousand years ago.

I speak from the Holy Scriptures found in John 13:verse 3-17. "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ROSE FROM THE SUPPER AND LAID ASIDE His GARMENTS, TOOK A TOWEL AND GIRDED Himself. AFTER THAT, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples feet, and wipe them with a towel with which He was girded.

After washing their feet, He put on His robe again and sat down and asked ” Do you understand what I was doing? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, because it is true, and since I the teacher have washed your feet, you ought to wash each others feet. I have given you an EXAMPLE to follow. Do as we have done to you. How true that the servant/student is not greater than the master/teacher, nor are the messengers more important than the message. You know these things, now DO THEM! That is the path of Blessings”.

A model of Servant-Leadership

When Jesus washed His disciples feet, He demonstrated a fundamental principle that He regularly stressed to His followers: To lead others, one must serve others. That is as true in public life and the business world as it is in the Church. No number of corporate/Dojo’s, Belt promotions, memos or rah-rah, ata-boy’s speeches exhorting Keichu-Do Instructors to commit themselves to an organization, its leader (Soke) or their students as well, will have as powerful an impact as a person of authority modeling consistently and clearly the

attitude of a servant: placing others needs before one's own, committing oneself to doing concrete things to meet those needs, and looking for neither favor nor reciprocity from the people one serves.

This of course does not conflict with a person's right to make a living, teaching Keichu. Nor the responsibility of every Keichu instructor to meet all the requirements, and standards set by the Founder and CEO of Keichu- Do, Karl William Marx Sr, his wife Kathleen Mary Marx, owner and President of the Business Keichu-Do-Cajun-Karate, and his son Vaughn Victor Marx, President of the World Keichu Instructors Federation, and Heir to Keichu.

The above statements concerning how Jesus Christ commands us to follow His example of LOVE and humility, are the subject of this event. We who are leaders, must remember that to become a leader one has first to learn how to follow. By the washing of your feet your instructors are by their example obeying Christ and teaching you that humility is more important than Martial Art techniques.

“A Martial Artist’s Prayer”

by Bryan and Elizabeth Baldwin

Dear Lord we pray thee. Keep us from doing wrong throughout the day. Be beside us as we undertake these exercises. Our sole purpose is to develop our bodies, to keep mentally strong, to be morally straight. It is God who arms me with strength and in Him I give thanks.

I dedicate myself before God to be honest in thought and deed and develop personal discipline To protect ourselves and our loved ones, from dangers that are forced upon us. I will keep the ways of the Lord and use my art only to defend myself, my family or those too weak to defend themselves.

Help us to do the things that we should, to be kind and good to others at all times. O’mighty God we thank thee for thy care, health and strength. In the name of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

GMAF NEWSLETTER APRIL 2001

Welcome to the GMAF Newsletter! We pray it will encourage you in your Martial Arts and Outreach for Christ.

Thoughts from the Master

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you...This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Jesus Christ

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” The Apostle Paul

Wisdom Notes

“I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.” Psalms 18:1

“Lover of Souls” Part Two

by Sensei Mark McGee

Look around you today. What do you see? People desperately in need of God’s Love. Christians are surrounded by a sea of humanity; people who are sad, depressed and downtrodden. What can we do for them? What can we say to affect their lives for good? What can we give them to make a long- term difference?

Some say money is the answer. Give people money and they’re happy and fulfilled. Do we know any unhappy people who have plenty of money? Yes, we do; millions of them.

Some say position and prestige is the answer. Give people a good job with position and prestige and that will make them happy. Do we know unhappy people who have position and prestige? Yes, we do; millions of them.

Some say power and influence is the answer. Give people power over others and that will make them happy. Do we know unhappy people who have power and influence? Yes, we do; millions of them.

Some say sexual freedom is the answer. Give people freedom to have sex with anyone they want and they'll be happy. Do we know unhappy people who have sexual freedom? Yes, we do; millions of them.

Some say alcohol and drugs is the answer. Give people all the alcohol and drugs they can swallow, smoke and inject and they'll be happy. Do we know unhappy people who have plenty of alcohol and drugs? Yes, we do; millions of them.

Money is not the answer. Position and prestige are not the answer. Power and influence are not the answer. Sexual freedom is not the answer. Alcohol and drugs are not the answer. What is the answer?

Jesus Christ! He is the Answer to everyone's need.

What is it that Jesus has that people need? Love! Love and Forgiveness. Christ Jesus is Love and gives Love. He gives Forgiveness and Eternal Life. Jesus is The Almighty Lover of Souls.

“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” (John 13:1)

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you...This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:9,12-13)

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

“And walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.” (Ephesians 5:2)

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” (Ephesians 5:25)

Jesus is not a sometime Lover of souls. He does not Love us when it's easy or convenient. He does not Love us only when we obey Him. Jesus Christ loves us “unto the end.” He Loves us so much He laid down His Life for His friends (that's us!).

Christ's Love for us is Supernatural. It's Eternal. It never ends. It never wears out. It never has a bad day. It never forgets. It never gets too busy. Christ will be with us always. His Love for us extends from the beginning to the end. He is always in a

good mood with us. He always has time for us. He always remembers our needs. He always gives us His Best.

Jesus gave us His Love so we could do four basic things during our lives:

- Love God
- Love ourselves
- Love each other
- Love the world

Without Christ we can do none of these things in ways that please God.

“Jesus said unto Him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.” (Matthew 22:37-38)

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Matthew 22:39)

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Galatians 5:14)

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” (1 John 4:20-21)

Jesus went so far to say “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:40) Jesus Christ taught that the primary directive of the Old Testament was to love God and your neighbor. Paul taught that the entire Law was fulfilled in one word: Love. That love was specifically toward others. What a message! What a challenge.

Many Christians are searching for a ministry. They wonder what God’s Will is for them. What does He want us to do? The answer is simple: Go forth and love someone. Love somebody; that’s our ministry. Many Christians look at their pastor or a missionary or an evangelist and think, “Oh, if only I had a

degree from a Bible College. Oh, if only I had the gift of preaching. Oh, if only" Christians are wasting their precious time with the "Oh, if onlys." You have all you need to begin a ministry. Look around you. See someone who needs love? Go love them. Show them the true power of God: love them.

How do you know God loves you? He gives you time. He speaks graciously to you. He forgives you. He listens to you. He cares for you. He meets your needs. He protects you. He gives you hope.

How do you know someone loves you? They give you time. They speak graciously to you. They forgive you. They listen to you. They care for you. They meet your needs. They protect you. They give you hope.

That's what you can do for others. Give someone love today. Give them some of your time. Speak graciously to them. Forgive them. Listen to them. Care for them. Meet their needs. Protect them. Give them hope. It's surprising how easy it is to

have a ministry of love to another human being. That's what God has called us to do. To use a common phrase: Just do it! Your home, your neighborhood, your town, your world will be a better place for it.

“The Game of Life” The Benefits of Salvation

by Master Robert Xavier

When we are “saved,” we are born again: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” (John 3:3)

When we are saved, we are made to be new creatures: “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

When we are saved, we have passed from death to life: “Verily, verily, I say to you, He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24)

When we are saved, we have been transferred from the rule of darkness to the kingdom of God's Son: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

When we are saved, we enter a new Personal relationship with God which gives us a spiritual life and vitality. This new life is a gift that will never die: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10-b)

These wonderful results of having new life in Christ are offered freely to all who trust in Christ for salvation:

"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: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)

Salvation is supernatural. It is based upon the revelation that God has provided redemption for the world from the possibility of being condemned on account of our sin.

Salvation means wholeness: “having all the parts working.” It is not just an eternal rescue (although that would be a great thing in itself!), but it also includes health, functioning lives in the present, with our minds, wills, emotions, bodies and relationships all working as he intended. The experience of salvation means a person can be regenerated; with the character of Christ born within him, by way of the Holy Spirit. God accomplished a life-changing transformation for all who truly believe and trust in Christ!

(Next month: Dimensions of Salvation)

“THOUGHTS”

From Grand Master Karl William Marx Sr.

That tiny thought, good or bad, which can make you happy or sad. Wow! A thought can do that? The first thing in (or should it be out) of our mouth every morning should be the praise of God. I have noticed that my disposition in the mornings depends on my thought pattern at that moment. People who suffer from Anxiety attacks, manic depression episodes, and other emotional problems may learn something from this view of mine. When I feel depressed, I usually start to pray. My mind becomes distracted from whatever was disturbing me and I begin to focus on God. As time passes (Prayers are so useful and powerful) my mental condition changes to a peaceful joy of the Lord.

As always the Words of God are proven true to His faithful and actually to those who are not so faithful. ” What God say’s God Does” Problems will be found all our lives on this Earth. The choice of how we deal with each situation depends on us. For me this is difficult. To be happy and thankful when times are difficult is not my nature.

Remembering what Ephesians say’s That we are to give thanks ALWAYS for ALL things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. That’s a hard road to hoe for me. However thanks to the correct thoughts like those above to remind me, I can “out with the bad thoughts, and in with the good”.

This is just the first part of several parts concerning thinking the thoughts that helps keep the joy of the Lord present. One of my old saying’s is something like this” a person who thinks he’s thinking, without thinking, about what he’s thinking, might just be thinking stinking thinking. That is were many of us become ensnared with emotional problems. The thoughts we sometime think are responsible for how we fell during the time we are

thinking. I leave you with this, Just THINK about it. (Did I make a pun)?

Just me walking the walk, not just talking the talk.

Christ's servant Karl

GMAF NEWSLETTER MAY 2001

Welcome to the GMAF Newsletter! We pray it will encourage you in your Martial Arts and Outreach for Christ.

Thoughts from the Master

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.” Jesus Christ

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” The Apostle Paul

Wisdom Notes

“Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.” Psalms 143:10

“Spirit-Do”

by Sensei Mark McGee

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” (Romans 6:6) KJV

“But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.” (Romans 6:6) NIV

The Apostle Paul gives us tremendous insight into the Christian Grace Life in his letter to the Romans. He knew the concepts he promoted were not easy for Jews to understand since they didn't know God was going to work with Gentiles the way He did. Paul used many illustrations from the Old Testament (i.e. Adam, Abraham, Moses, the Law) to give the Jews insight into the new way of God working in the world.

Paul made a powerful statement in Romans 6:14 when he wrote: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." KJV "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace." NIV It is powerful because of what it meant to Paul's audience. Jews built their lives, their belief system, their economy, their future, their hopes, their dreams on the foundation of the Mosaic Law. Paul said believing Jews and Gentiles were not under (*hupo*) the power and authority of the Law, but under the power and authority of Grace.

That's a huge change for anyone, but especially for a devout Jew. They were raised to believe they were under the authority of the Law. That was their belief and practice in every aspect of life. It was their moral and legal safety net. Paul said clearly to them that their life had changed completely. They were no longer under the Law. They were under Grace.

What's Grace? How is that different from the Law? Grace (*charis*) is a favor done without expectation of return: an unmerited favor. How does that change a person's life? It is a different path, a new way of living.

Paul spoke pointedly to Jews: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that knoweth the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" He used the example of marriage to help Jews grasp what happened to them when they placed their faith in Jesus Christ. "So then if, while her husband liveth, if she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also

are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Romans 7:3-4

Christians are “dead” to the old way (Law) and “alive” to the new way (Grace). What is the Grace Way? It is the Way of the Spirit.

“But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.”
Romans 7:6

Think about that for a moment: serving in the new way of the Spirit. What does it mean to you to serve in the “new way of the Spirit”?

Martial artists are familiar with the “way” of something. The Chinese word for way is “tao.” The Japanese and Korean word is “do.” We have Karate-do, Tang Soo Do, Tae Kwon Do, Aikido, Judo, Jukado, Jukido, Kendo, Iaido. Each is a “way” of living, thinking, speaking, working and defending.

So it is with “Spirit-Do”: the Way of the Spirit. Paul compared the “new way of the Spirit” with the “old way of the written code.” That was key to the Jews understanding and enjoying their life in Christ. It is key to us today, whether we are Jews or Gentiles. God calls on us to follow His Holy Spirit and walk the Spirit Path. He does not want us to walk the Law Path. That is not for us. “We have been released from the law.

If you are practicing with your partner and he grabs you and you move your body in a way that releases you from his grasp, you are free from his hold. Your partner no longer has power over you. He can no longer control you. He can’t move you because he does not have you. The same is true with the Law and Spirit. When a person is spiritually lost, the Law, sin and death have a powerful grasp on them. When the person

receives Christ as their Savior, the Spirit moves them out of the hold of Law, sin and death. The Spirit makes them free from the power and authority of what once held them in a death grip. They are on a new path, the Way of the Spirit.

The Spirit Way is the way of freedom and truth. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:1-2

Christians walk on the Path of the Spirit Way. We do not walk on the path of the flesh way. The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ has made us free from the law of sin and death. Nothing can harm us.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Hallelujah!

Make this a great time in your life. Enjoy Spirit-Do. Discover all that God has for his children “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” It is an amazing life!

“The Game of Life” Dimensions of Salvation

by Grand Master Robert Xavier

Our salvation experience has three important dimensions.

1. Past salvation – saved from the penalties of sins.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23

2. Present salvation – saved from the power of sin in our daily lives.

“But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,

seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Hebrews 7:24-25

3. Future salvation – saved from the actual presence of sin in heaven.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1

Peter 1:3-5

The gift of salvation is God’s way of reconciling man to Himself through Jesus Christ:

“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

2 Corinthians 5:21

God desires to be in unbroken fellowship with us, and for us to be free forever from the effects of sin. He desires us so much that He was willing to transfer all of the sins of mankind onto His perfect and only begotten Son, who never sinned. This has broken the cycle of sin and death for all who turn to Him through faith in Christ. This has made salvation possible for us. God's gift of salvation for us is so complete, it covers our past, present and future. Now that's a done deal!

(Next month: How we get to "first base" in the Game of Life)

“Maria Forgot”

by Pastor Vasile Filat

Today, we studied John 20 to refresh in our minds the Events of that Great Day of Resurrection of our Lord Jesus. What a big contrast in this chapter. Maria forgot what Jesus said and when she had seen that the stone had been removed from the entrance, she thought that “they have taken the Lord out of the tomb....” She told this to Simon Peter and the other disciple who came and entered the tomb and after seeing that there

was not the body of their Lord they believed Maria's version... They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. There was no HOPE. It has been said that man can live three months without food, three days without water, and three minutes without air, but no more than three seconds without hope!... Maria stood outside the tomb crying...But!!! She turned around and saw Jesus standing there..... He spoke and gave her a so big HOPE!!! She went to the disciples with the news:"I have seen the Lord!" She brought HOPE to them.

The same day Jesus came and stood before them saying:"Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me , I am sending you." He sent them with that great HOPE and this HOPE is now in us. It is a so a privilege to be a servant of the HOPE WHICH IS IN JESUS. And this hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. May God bless you abundantly in the HOPE you have in Him and in bringing this HOPE to the ends of the earth.

GMAF NEWSLETTER JUNE 2001

Welcome to the GMAF Newsletter! We pray it will encourage you in your Martial Arts and Outreach for Christ.

Thoughts from the Master

“No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” Jesus Christ

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” The Apostle Paul

Wisdom Notes

“Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth; That thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me.”

Psalms 108:5-6

“Grand Ultimate”

by Sensei Mark McGee

The more I study and practice T'ai Chi Ch'uan, the more I understand why someone would have called the exercise “Grand Ultimate.” It is a wonderful Internal exercise for health and self defense that meets the broad needs of the human body and mind.

However, while T'ai Chi is an excellent form of whole body movement with great personal benefits, there is something much grander and truly the ultimate for every human.

Our “Grand Ultimate” is the Lord Jesus Christ!

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” Colossians 1:15-20 (KJV)

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities: all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the

body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”
Colossians 1:15-20 (NIV)

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is above all others. No one is like Christ. He is the Grand Ultimate. He is the “image of the invisible God.” He is the “firstborn over all creation.” By Christ “all things were created.” That includes things in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible. Look around you. Everything you see Christ created. He created the Universe. He created the Sun and the Moon. He created the sky and seas. He created the mountains and the valleys. He created humans and animals. He created trees and plants. He created birds and fish. Christ created all things and holds together all things. Someone said of Christ that He is the “Cosmic Glue.” Everything has its beginning, middle and end in Him. Christ also created everything you and I cannot see. He created

angels and spiritual beings. He is above them all. He is the Grand Ultimate of Heaven, the heavens and the earth. Christ has supremacy, pre-eminence, in His Body, the Church, because of His supremacy in Life, Death and Resurrection. God was pleased “to have all his fullness dwell in him.” Christ is not part-God, He is God. He is the Fullness of God. He is the Image of the Invisible God. We know God, see God, hear God because of Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Greek word for “supremacy, pre-eminence” is *proteuon*. It means “to be first, chief, to hold the first rank.” Christ is First. He is Chief. He holds the First Rank. He is Number One. No one can be higher than Christ because Jesus is First, Highest, Chief, the Grand Ultimate.

It is God’s desire to reconcile to Himself “all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven.” He has done this “by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” Peace is available to all people of the world through Christ Jesus. Christ is All, has done All and will be All forever and ever. We have nothing more to do but believe, receive, relax and enjoy Christ.

Everything we need is in Christ. We add nothing to Him. He adds everything to us. We can add nothing to our salvation. He is our Salvation. What we can do is practice the Presence of Christ every day as we pray, obey, study, love, forgive, share, teach, submit, lead, show mercy, and make a difference.

May we today enjoy our Grand Ultimate: Jesus Christ the Lord!

“The Game of Life” First Base

by Pastor Robert Xavier

“In a real baseball game, it takes a certain amount of skill and strength to reach first base, but in the “Game of Life” we attain this position not by skill, but by the sacrifice of our Savior on our behalf. God, in His mercy and grace, has provided a way for us to be reconciled to Him through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

Through believing (faith) and receiving Christ, our sins are forgiven. His Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our hearts, and our spirit is made alive with Him.”

“Jesus answered, Truly, Truly, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. marvel not that I say unto thee, ‘Ye must be born again.’ The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” John 3:5-8

When we respond to God the Father prompting our hearts to receive Jesus Christ as our Savior, His Holy Spirit gives us life! We are born again by the Spirit of God Who actually comes to live inside of us.

This new birth, or spiritual birth, is accomplished by the marvelous work of the Holy Spirit imparting eternal, spiritual life to us. At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit creates a new man which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness: “and that you put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” (Ephesians 4:24) This new man is “born of the Spirit,” according to the Bible (God’s Word). This is the only way a person can enter the Kingdom of God, and this can only be done through the Lord Jesus Christ Who died in our place and rose again to provide us eternal life. This spiritual birth is a completely free gift to us from God and is available to all mankind regardless of their past or present condition in life. This free gift is not based upon our age, education, nationality, or financial resources. It is not dependent upon what we have – or have not – done in the past. Nor does it depend upon our abilities or performance in the present.”

(Next month: Whosoever Calls Upon the Name of the Lord)

GMAF NEWSLETTER JULY 2001

Welcome to the GMAF Newsletter! We pray it will encourage you in your Martial Arts and Outreach for Christ.

Thoughts from the Master

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free ... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Jesus Christ

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” The Apostle Paul

Wisdom Notes

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Genesis 2:16

“Free Indeed”

by Sensei Mark McGee

I have been a freeborn citizen of the leading free nation on Earth for more than 50 years, but I have been “free indeed” for only 30 years. How can that be?

We have much for which to be grateful in the United States. Our ancestors fought and died for their freedom. They bought our freedom from tyranny with their blood. We have so many blessings in America today because of what they sacrificed in 1776, 1915, 1945 and so many other years between. Our parents and grandparents and great-great-great-great

grandparents had visions and dreams of freedom. They not only dreamed of freedom, they did something about it. They stood up to the evil that placed people and countries in chains, prisons and graves and won freedom for hundreds of millions of human beings, including you and me. But even their great sacrifice was not enough to truly free the world. It took another sacrifice to do that.

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.” John 8:31-37

The Jews who followed Jesus around in the 1st Century A.D. were a lot like Americans today. They depended on their nationality and heritage to protect them. “We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man.” Sound familiar? “I’m an American; I’ve never been in bondage to anyone.” What’s even worse are the people who tell us: “Of course I’m a Christian; I’m an American.” We’ve learned very little in the past two thousand years. We are still depending on nationality and heritage to save us.

Paul spent much time explaining this to Jews and Gentiles. People then, like people now, get it wrong. They hold up nationality, heritage, and obedience to rules, regulations and laws as their physical and spiritual salvation. Paul told them a story about two covenants; “the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all...Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the

Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.” (Galatians 4:24-31)

The birthplace of our flesh is of little importance in spiritual things. Unsaved people are born every day in every corner of the world. They are Jews and Gentiles. They are slaves and free. They are Africans and Europeans, South American and North American, Chinese and Russian, Korean and Japanese, English and Irish. They are every man and every woman, every boy and every girl.

“There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God... there is none that doeth good, no, not one...For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin...And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Where in time past ye walked according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” Romans 3 and Ephesians 2

No human soul is born into freedom. We are all born slaves of sin. What is our hope?

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference...Being justified freely by his grace thorough the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Romans 3 and Ephesians 2

The Truth will make us free, and if Jesus makes us free we are free indeed! We become “free” when we believe God’s Word about Jesus and about our sin and receive Christ as our Savior. The spiritual chains that hold us come off the “instant” we receive Christ. No prison can keep us. No grave can cover us. We are FREE INDEED! We are alive and on fire with His Love and Grace. Our lives are changed forever and ever.

If we live in a “free” country, like the United States, we should thank God every day for His blessings on us. However, living in a “free” country does not make us “free indeed.” Only Christ can do that.

How should we then live? “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” (Galatians 5:1) We have a great responsibility that goes along with God’s Gift of Grace. We should protect the freedom for which Christ died. We should never turn to look at bondage again. We should never leave our present path to return to our past. It would not be God’s will that led us there.

“Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither

circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.” Galatians 5:2-8

“Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty!”

I was liberated from sin and death into the Wonderful Light of the Lord Jesus Christ when He forgave me and saved me 30 years ago. He wants us to experience the full Liberty of His Grace. That’s what it means to be “free indeed.”

“Freedom!”

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

“For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

“The Game of Life”

Whosoever Calls Upon the Name of the Lord

by Pastor Robert Xavier

Our Heavenly Father has disregarded the world's value system and has made eternal life a free gift, available to all men because of His great love for us. Whoever truly believes that Jesus Christ is the son of God, that he died for their sins and that He was buried and rose again the third day, has eternal life. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal

life, and this life is in his Son.” (1 John 5:11) One man said, “God put the cookies on the bottom shelf so everyone can reach them.”

Remember, you only truly believe that which activates you. God wants to be number one boss of your life. He wants you to completely place your trust and faith IN HIM.”

“Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Acts 20:21

We must repent for the way we have rebelled against God’s plan for our lives; and we must have faith, which is spiritual commitment to our unseen Savior. God will provide you with the faith of repentance. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His god pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13)

What Is Repentance?

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

Repentance is “godly sorrow,” with a change of mind. this is not self-pity, nor is it the kind of sorrow you have when you want to manipulate someone into feeling sorry for you.

Repentance is simple, sincere sorrow in your heart toward God. It comes as a response to His efforts to show us He loves us, although we have SINNED.

When we see that God’s love was so intense and committed to us that He sent His only Son to actually die in our place, we can also see that our love for Him has not been love at all, but something self-centered and unfaithful. Repentance is a change in our minds. We must turn from believing we are sufficient to run our own lives. We turn to believing it is only Jesus, conqueror of sin and death at His resurrection, who is

the power of salvation for us. “THE LORD IS NOT SLACK CONCERNING HIS PROMISE, AS SOME COUNT SLACKNESS, BUT IS LONGSUFFERING TO USWARD, NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH, BUT THAT ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE.” 2 Peter 3:9

THE WORD REPENTANCE SIMPLY MEANS “TO CHANGE YOUR MIND”

(Next month: What Is Faith?)

GMAF NEWSLETTER August 2001

Welcome to the GMAF Newsletter! We pray it will encourage you in your Martial Arts and Outreach for Christ.

Thoughts from the Master

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” Jesus Christ

“Let all things be done unto edifying.” The Apostle Paul

Wisdom Notes

“The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the command of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” Psalm 19:8

“What We Do”

by Sensei Mark McGee

What we do at Grace Martial Arts Fellowship is simple: we support and encourage. We do that through prayer, words of encouragement, Bible studies, information, counsel, and guidance. Whatever is needed is what we do.

By “we” I’m not talking about myself or any one person in GMAF. We means “we.” That’s everybody who is part of the fellowship. We don’t have any dues or fees, no requirements or deadlines to meet. The one thing we ask everyone to do is encourage and support each other.

If it cost money to get encouragement these days, it would be very expensive. It’s not often that people hear an encouraging word. That makes encouragement valuable because so little of it exists. Even Christians sometimes don’t encourage each other as much as we should or could.

The Apostle Paul spent a lot of time in his first letter to the Corinthians addressing what Christians should do for each other. He told them what's important to do and not to do. He went into great detail about relationships and worship. He explained how God gave spiritual gifts to Christians and what they should do with their giftedness. Right in the middle of all that, Paul slipped in a little verse that placed everything into the correct atmosphere and context:

“Let all things be done unto edifying.” 1 Corinthians 14:26b

He wrote those words in the context of when Christians came together into one place for worship, public testimony and learning.

“How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.”

What does “edifying” mean? It means “to build up” as in building a home. It carries the idea of building as a process. Paul’s primary concern in his instruction to the Corinthians was they focus on “building up” each other instead of tearing down fellow Christians. If that was THE concern of every pastor, every teacher, every evangelist, every worship leader, every children’s worker, every youth worker, every believer in every church around the world ... we would live in a different world. We would leave every church meeting, every prayer breakfast, every Bible study, every choir practice, every youth meeting, every children’s church, every group experience encouraged and refreshed.

How wonderful that would be!

Most every Christian I’ve ever communicated with admitted to loving encouragement. None of us get enough of it. However, we should get plenty. God designed a system called “The Body of Christ.” If the Body works the way God designed it, every Christian would get all the encouragement and attention they needed. Unfortunately, the Body does not function well and

millions of Christians leave group meetings and services throughout the years receiving little or no encouragement. What a shame.

Even secular programs understand the need for encouragement. Some of the most successful businesses and sales and marketing programs in the world today are built around the idea of encouraging members of the program.

A recent bestselling management book asked some questions employees are asking about their managers. Notice the emphasis on encouragement in the workplace.

- In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work
- Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
- Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
- At work, do my opinions seem to count?

Think about these questions in relation to a Christian church or group. How would you answer these questions about your local assembly? Your pastor? Your deacons or elders? Who in the Christian community is looking out for the emotional needs of people? Have you received recognition or praise for doing good work in the last week? Does your pastor, deacon or elder seem to care about you as a person? Who is encouraging your personal development? Do your opinions seem to count in the church?

I hope you are encouraged today. If you are saved, you have every spiritual blessing. You have Christ in your life. You have hope. You have righteousness flowing through every cell of your body. You have it all! Thank God for it. Enjoy His Gift today and every day. Don't forget who you are.

If you read this and are not saved, you can be saved immediately. You don't have to wait for salvation. Today is the day of salvation. Now is the time to receive Christ into your life. God loves you. Christ obeyed His Heavenly Father and finished the work God sent Him to do. Jesus died for your sins.

He stands ready to forgive you and give you His Gift of Eternal Life. It's Free! Ask Him for it.

If you do ask God to forgive you and save you, let us know about it. We'd like to support and encourage you on your first day as a child of God.

“The Game of Life”

What is Faith?

by Pastor Robert Xavier

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1

- The Bible tells us that salvation is experienced through faith: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy
- house.” (Acts 16:31)
- Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is not just a mental assent to the fact that He lived, died for us and rose again. It is evidenced by the commitment which a person

who has faith makes with his very life. (Remember you only truly believe that which activates you to action!)

- Faith is a quality, which can be seen in our lives. Before you received Jesus Christ as your Savior you performed FOR acceptance of others and perhaps God. Once you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you perform FROM acceptance.
- It is very important that we do not just flippantly “say” we believe, while continuing to live like we don’t believe. It is important that we examine ourselves carefully to see if we are truly living by faith: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.” (2 Corinthians 13:5)
- Faith may be defined as freely trusting God’s Word concerning His offer of salvation through Christ. Anyone who truly believes commits and submits his soul to God. Having been reconciled to God through faith in Christ, it follows that we continue to grow in relationship with Him, since we are discovering how wonderful He is. This kind of faith becomes obvious in our lives, from the inside – out.

- Faith is not earned or deserved. God's Word tells us that God has given us a measure of faith: "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to every man a measure of faith." Romans 12:3
- Our faith is a gift from God. God's Word also makes it clear that we must exercise our faith in order to please Him: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6) Our faith is exercised as we come to God, and it is by coming to Him that we get to know Him.
- Jesus said, "...if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say
- unto this mountain, 'remove hence to yonder place;' and it shall be removed." (Matthew 17:20). Our measure of faith is never too small for us to tackle even the largest of problems in our lives. We tackle them by using our faith to come into the presence of the Lord, for "mountains" are

moved by His Spirit, not by our own might or power.
(Zechariah 4:6-7)

- In this world, we are too often judged by our performance, plus the opinions of others. With repentance and faith toward Christ, we receive Him into our hearts. He sends His Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts, bringing the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ to give us new life. We are now sealed for redemption and are able to live unto Him instead of only for ourselves.

“In whom ye also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” Ephesians 1:13-14

(Next month: Safe on First)

A Comparison/Contrast of the Relationships of a Sensei and Their Student, and Christ and His Disciples

Written by John Huff

The relationship between a sensei and their student is one of great importance. I have learned, in my short time as a student of the martial arts, just how special that relationship can be. It is a deep bond, which transcends mere friendship. My senseis are the light to a path that I have never traveled before. I do not know where we are going next, but I have learned to trust them as my guide.

Another important relationship, one with much more spiritual and eternal value, is that of Christ and His disciples. Simply by definition, Christians today are disciples. The dictionary says that disciples are: “1. People who believe in and help disseminate the teachings of a master. 2. One of Jesus, followers. The disciples of the Bible were persons of various backgrounds, some were anglers, some were tax collectors, and the list goes on. However, they all had one thing in common, they totally depended on the man, Jesus the Christ,

to light the path they so desired to walk. Jesus had simply said, “Come, follow Me. and they knew that this was something they had to do. So it is with us, as karateka and our sensei, we desire to walk the path they have walked themselves. The only difference being that our sensei can only touch the physical and “human spirit of our lives, as with Christ, who touches us deep into our very souls.

When we begin our studies in the martial arts we all go thru the “rules stage. Learning the etiquette of how we should conduct ourselves with our sensei, other students and both in and out of the dojo. Christ also taught the disciples about conduct, after he called the “twelve in Matthew 10 and Luke 6; He charged them with a basic set of rules of how to direct their ministries. One comparison that I was struck with was how we are taught that the ultimate goal of a martial artist is to be peaceable, but that we must defend ourselves.

Jesus taught his disciples in Luke 6:29 “And unto him that striketh thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.” (emphasis mine)

As we study at the dojo, we have experiences and lessons (good and bad), which help us grow in our walk as a martial artist. We learn thru basics and kata training, through Kumite, or just through common dojo practices. I know that there have been numerous times I have forgotten the basic rules and my sensei has had to call my hand at it. Quite embarrassing, though we have all done it. That something that was very important that we honestly knew was wrong, but either forgot, or our perspectives on the situation made us choose otherwise. This was the case on many occasions for the disciples, such as in Mark 8:31-38. Jesus had just foretold of His own death, and Peter grabbed hold of Jesus ready to rebuke Him, but Peter was the one who was rebuked, and Jesus did not pull any punches.

Jesus said in John 14:6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. Sometimes we fail to see the truth. Pilate certainly did. Before Him stood Truth Himself, and yet Pilate still refused. The story reads in John 18:37-38: Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

I have caught myself many times in the dojo, after I have been corrected on technique, thinking that I knew a better way, only to find out that I had been given “truth of how to perform the technique properly. Even though we see the compelling evidence, sometimes we still refuse to believe that we CAN do it. Jesus revealed to His disciples the truth of who He was through His miracles, parables and examples. This gave the disciples the confidence they later needed to begin their own ministries. The sensei also has to prove themselves

sometimes, not by miracles, but by leading by example and showing their superior skills to students eager to learn, instilling in them the confidence they need to succeed.

So why do we do it? Why do we put up with the rules, the hard training, and the scratchy gibe cause of our desire. The training our sensei presents to us is truly a gift. A gift of truth and enlightenment that through hard work and practice, (lots of practice), we will one day reap the rewards of self-respect, confidence and self-reliance. They even sacrifice time away from their families and their bodies for injury so that we may learn. However, rest assured that they would stick by our sides and finish the course, as long as we are willing to learn.

Christ also sacrificed Himself, but here is where the similarities end. Christ was the ultimate sacrifice, an eternal one that affects the spiritual side of us all. He gave His life on the cross of Calvary, to insure that our confidence could be placed fully in Him. And our reward for trusting on Him is that of eternal life! Moreover, I do not know any sensei that can do that!

Would you like to know Jesus personally? The book of Romans 3:23 says “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Jesus says in John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me. Confess your sins and He is faithful and just to forgive you your sins! Come just as you are, and Jesus will give joy, peace, life, happiness, friendship and, most of all, eternal life with Him in Heaven. Trust in Him today!

GMAF NEWSLETTER September 2001

Welcome to the GMAF Newsletter! We pray it will encourage you in your Martial Arts and Outreach for Christ.

Thoughts from the Master

“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” Jesus Christ

*“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”
The Apostle Paul*

Wisdom Notes

“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.”

Isaiah 40:1

“The Comfort of God”

by

Sensei Mark McGee

This is a difficult time for everyone in America and people around the world who love our country. We are in a war with evil. That evil manifests itself in many ways, but the way it showed itself September 11, 2001 was most horrible and despicable.

I’ve spent every waking moment thinking about the attack on America this past week. My job as a television news director and web manager has meant my constant and focused attention on every detail of the tragedy, locally as well as nationally. I’ve prayed often through the days and nights for the victims and their families and friends. Friends who are in

television and web businesses in New York City have lost people close and dear to them. I admire their ability and tenacity to keep working even though their hearts are breaking. Many people we know in our area have lost close friends at the Pentagon. The loss is almost too much to bear.

We've also rejoiced with many who received word that their fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, and close friends were alive and doing well. It's been a tremendous opportunity to express the love and comfort of Jesus Christ to our friends when they feared the worst, and share the Grace and Mercy of God when they learned the best.

I've also thought and prayed for our Christian brothers and sisters who live in New York and Washington. Some of them died in the attack. Others are recuperating in hospitals. Thousands of God's children are praying for their torn communities and reaching out to help heal the gaping wounds in hearts and lives.

Paul told the Ephesian Christians, “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Paul was telling them to buy up for themselves every opportunity. One Dictionary of New Testament words stated it meant “making the most of every opportunity, turning each to the best advantage since none can be recalled if missed.”

Millions of Christians in America have an unprecedented opportunity during the coming days, weeks and months to share the most important, life-saving message in the universe. That is the Gospel of God’s Eternal Love and Grace through Jesus Christ. Jesus is well-acquainted with sorrow. He understands pain and suffering. Jesus knows what it’s like to be an innocent victim of brutal and evil attacks of wicked people. We have the opportunity to share the Gospel with a country in deep need of comfort and hope.

How do we do that? How can we possibly be up to such a task? Paul wrote the Corinthians, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. ” Our ability to comfort others during “any trouble” comes directly from God.

Jesus comforts people through us! He first comforts us “in all our tribulation.” That first-hand experience of receiving the comfort of God makes us “able to comfort them which are in any trouble.” We comfort others “by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” Ask God to help you understand His Comfort in your life during difficult times so you can comfort others in theirs.

The days are evil. We live in an evil world filled with evil people who design evil schemes and carry them out in evil ways. Our message is that God Loves people deeply and has shown them mercy by supplying the Gift of Life through Jesus Christ. He is the Answer to all their questions and the Comfort for all their needs.

Our prayers are with you as you minister God's Comfort to those who are hurting in your community.

“The Game of Life”

Safe on First

by

Pastor Robert Xavier

If you have received the Lord Jesus Christ and have His Spirit living in your heart, you have made it to “First Base” — Salvation!

“And this is the record that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in the Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

1 John 5:11-13

The Bible Described the Human Race by Three Basic Categories

- Natural Man: The Bible says the natural man cannot understand salvation. It is foolishness to him, because it is a supernatural experience. To him it simply means he believes there is a God somewhere up in heaven, and by going to church and living a good life, he will go to heaven when he dies.
- Carnal Man: The carnal Christian has a genuine salvation experience, but he lacks understanding of how he is to live out this new life in the present. Salvation may mean nothing more than a fire insurance policy which will keep him out of hell

when he dies. His concept of the Christian lifestyle at this point is very limited.

- Spiritual Man: The spiritual man realizes salvation is the first step in the journey which he will walk by faith until he sees Jesus face to face after death. He realizes it is a gift from God, who loves him dearly, as He does all men. He realizes that it cost God heavily to purchase redemption for us, and he does not want to make a disgrace of such a previous gift. He also understands that receiving Christ as his Savior means making Him Lord (#1 Boss) over his life.

GMAF NEWSLETTER November/December 2001

Welcome to the GMAF Newsletter! We pray it will encourage you in your Martial Arts and Outreach for Christ.

Thoughts from the Master

“And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.” Jesus Christ

“Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” The Apostle Paul

Wisdom Notes

“O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.” Psalm 107:1

“Give Thanks For He is Good”

by

Sensei Mark McGee

God wants His people to be thankful. He deserves it and it is a wonderful experience for us. God deserves our thanks because He has given us life and health. We owe everything to Him. All good things come from God. It is a wonderful experience for us because it brings our hearts and minds closer to Him. Thankfulness is a positive attitude and results in positive thoughts and physical response.

One of the greatest insights to giving thanks is in Psalm 107. The psalmist exhorts God's people to give thanks to the Lord because:

1. He is good
2. His mercy endureth for ever
3. He hath redeemed them from the hand of the enemy
4. He delivered them out of their distresses
5. He led them forth by the right way

6. His wonderful works
7. He satisfied the longing soul
8. He filled the hungry soul with goodness
9. He made the storm calm
10. His loving kindness

All that God does for us comes from His Goodness. That is where our thankfulness begins. “O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good.” God’s Mercy, Redemption and Deliverance come from His Goodness. God is Good. For that we thank Him for ever and ever.

One of the shortest Psalms is Psalm 117. Though short (only two verses), it packs in everything we need to know and understand for thankfulness. Here is the entire Psalm.

“O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us; and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord.”

The psalmist cries out to every nation on Earth to praise God. The reasons: His Merciful Kindness is great toward us and the Truth of the Lord endures forever.

What we learn from that Psalm is God is Great, God is Good. The children's prayer states the Truth so well. God is a Great God. He is All-Powerful, All- Knowing, Every Where Present at the Same Time, and Unchangeable. God is also a Good God. He is Loving, Kind, Merciful, and Forgiving. For all of these reasons, we should "Praise the Lord."

Other Psalms to read this month as you consider being thankful: Psalm 75, Psalm 118, Psalm 136

Our prayers are with you as you give thanks to God along with family and friends during this special season of the year. Thanksgiving and Christmas are wonderful holidays and a great time to gather with family and friends. It's also a tremendous opportunity to share Christ with others in our lives.

“The Game of Life”

Second Base: Perspectives on the Church

by

Pastor Robert Xavier

The Church is designed by God to provide the fellowship, biblical instruction, healing, guidance, maturity and sense of belonging believers need for continuous spiritual growth. It is intended to be a safe place where different forms of worship and service to the Lord can be expressed as a group. In this sense, it is a foretaste of heaven. It is designed to provide encouragement for the servants of the Lord to be renewed in their hope and faith.

The natural man “joins the Church” much the same as he would join a civic or fraternal organization. To him the Church is a building where God lives, where good people visit on Sunday morning and maybe even Wednesday nights. This building is to be highly respected and well-groomed at all times.

CHURCH IS NOT A BUILDING WHERE CHRISTIANS MEET.
CHRISTIANS ARE THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST.

If a street bum or dirty and ill-mannered person comes into this building, the religious man thinks God has been highly insulted that they have treated “His House” with such disrespect.

The carnal Christian may see the Church as a place to go for spiritual food and fellowship. He may go simply to have his own needs met, not realizing the treasure and purpose of God for the Church. If he is attending a “Church” which is not much more than a religious gathering, he may think it is a rule that he must go there in order to stay in good standing with God, even if it is boring and he doesn’t receive the nurture he needs.

THE SPIRITUAL CHRISTIAN IS AWARE OF OTHERS
AROUND HIM AND IS GROWING IN ABILITY TO MINISTER
TO AND SERVE OTHERS.

The spiritual Christian realizes the Church is the Body of Christ. He is aware of others around him, and he is constantly growing in his ability to minister to and serve others. He treasures the relationship which have helped him grow strong in the Lord, and he continues in them as a vital part of his healthy lifestyle in Christ. He recognizes that “Church” is wherever two or more are gathered in Jesus’ name, and he partakes in these gatherings as the Holy Spirit leads.

Taking God’s Grace to the World!

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