



Handcrafted Website

Maybe you've noticed how this website is quite different from more corporate-looking sites. I like to say it is a sort of hand-crafted work, so to speak. It is not based on a set template or pre-designed models. In fact, I want it to have a more informal, friendly feel to it.

CAH Newsletter

Welcome to our first CAH (Christ Alive Here) Newsletter. I will use it to give you progress reports on the website and our ministry and to give you my personal reflections on Scripture and various issues.

I have been telling people that the website/blog is in the early stages, but it has been months now. If it started as a baby, it might be approaching toddlerhood, almost ready to walk.

Truth is, most websites are never complete because they are always changing, especially if, like this one, it also has a blog attached.

I will be sending the Newsletter to subscribers periodically to keep you current on our progress and to present new and different content for subscribers only.

I hope you will find them

My wife and I are lay people. We both have masters degrees and are trained educators. We have a lifelong fascination with and study of Scripture, and spiritual and theological issues. I have been a writer and poet for decades. My wife, Helen, is a writer as well, and she provides me with vital editorial assistance.

We think the fact that we are married and have been professional educators for most of our lives and being lay people gives us a unique perspective that some professional theologians, ministers and pastors might not have. Not better, just different. You will, of course, be the judge.



Progress Report

My biggest challenge with ChristAliveHere.com so far has been the mobile site. 66% of people who look at a website do so on their smartphones. I had not been aware of this statistic until I began to work on this website. Although I have lots of experience developing sites, I haven't paid much attention to the mobile versions of sites. The web authoring software I use presents editing problems transferring the desktop site to the mobile site. And the look of pages on a computer or tablet is very different from one on a smartphone. I have slowly but surely gotten it done.

The major pages of the website are complete on both the desktop and mobile versions.

Incomplete pages are:

- Spirit
- Inquiry
- Subscribe
- The blog, the biggest remaining challenge

This will be the first blog I have done that allows posts from someone other than me. For example, people who subscribe to the blog will be allowed to submit stories or writing for editorial consideration and posting. This feature requires procedures for tracking, recording, and editorial processes of submissions.

This will be a new adventure for me requiring major decisions and “foundation work.” It is also very difficult for me to predict how long this will take. Periodically I will keep you posted on progress with these newsletters.

Glenn

Editor/Developer

Trusting God

I have been reading and reflecting on Romans in the New Testament for a few weeks. What a book! I can hardly believe the depth of Paul’s teaching in this work which some people consider to be the most important book in the Bible. This week I was reading Romans 4. I like the way *The Message* by Eugene Peterson presents the first three verses.

So how do we fit what we know of Abraham, our first father in the faith, into this new way of looking at things? If Abraham, by what he did for God, got God to approve him, he could certainly have taken credit for it. But the story we’re given is a God-story, not an Abraham-story. What we read in Scripture is,

“Abraham entered into what God was doing for him, and that was the turning point. He trusted God to set him right instead of trying to be right on his own.” Romans 4:1-3 (NIV)

Abram believed the Lord, and [God] credited it to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:6)

In verses 4-8 Paul says that it was because Abram (later called Abraham) believed God, that God cancelled his sins and declared him “not guilty,” **not** saved by good deeds, because that would mean that salvation is not a free gift. It is given

to those who do NOT work for it. Abram’s relationship with God is not an economic one, dominated only by transactions.

“God was a kind of cashier or a banker”

For years thought I had to be a good boy to go to heaven. That sounds simple, but it changed my view of God and therefore my life trajectory. I believed I had to make payments to God to get through the gates. I believed God was a kind of cashier or a banker to whom I owed a

lifetime of doing good things. This was a great burden. I didn’t resent God for it because who could resent the very essence of good. But still he was a banker and a good one.

I finally left behind this perspective of God and have come to believe in a God of love with whom I want a relationship. He is all about love and relationship not banking people’s savings to see if they were going to join him in heaven. And it wasn’t until I was born again and baptized **by my choice** (rather than my parent’s choice) that I came to feel really bound to God as a Father who was forgetful, because he concentrated on me, his beloved but prodigal son, and not on my heavenly savings account. (Romans 3:28) I came to believe in God as my Papa on whom I could depend, a Papa who wants a primary relationship with me not a secondary one (like my relationship with my senator or the telephone company). Like my bond with my wife which is primary in my life. I do good stuff for her because I love her. I act out of commitment, not of fear. If I cheat on my taxes and steal from the IRS, I would be afraid to get caught and held to account. And that would be what I deserve.

“I am bound to a Father who is forgetful, who concentrates on me his beloved (prodigal) son. And because of that focus, and his love, he can’t remember my sins.”

Frequently I like to use the word *trust* rather than faith because it has more meaning to me in my relationship with God. All God wants from me and from us is for us to trust him. When we make friends, getting that trust gives us joy.