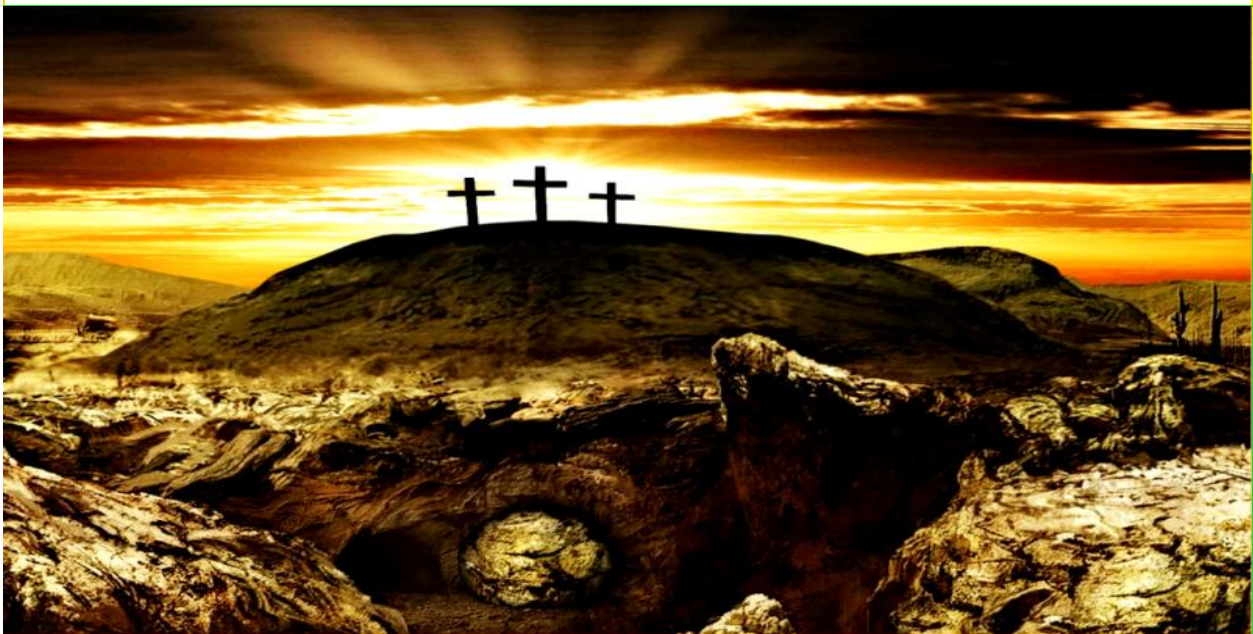


VOLUME LXXXII
April 2018

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF



"He is risen"

MATTHEW 28:6

Submit your comments to our Editor, Jacquie Hinton, about "The Shepherd's Staff;" and, any other thoughts you might have about the publication that you feel will be constructive or interesting to our readers. You may do so by emailing us at:

newsletter@pahrupcc.com





Diversity of Worship Styles

An out-of-state Christian friend recently asked me a question regarding certain elements of worship at a church this person had started attending. As I crafted a Biblical answer, I realized that there are probably some (many?) in our own church family that have had similar questions and would appreciate some clarification. So, this month's *Shepherd's Staff* column will deal with this issue.

The essence of the questions is summarized like this:

I am currently attending a church that does a few things differently than what I am used to. One is that most of the worshipers raise their hands while singing. I've been told by some that this is bad, and by others that it is a good form of worship. I don't know if there is anything about this in the Bible. A second issue is that sometimes during services prayers are offered over certain individuals and these prayers are accompanied by raising hands or "laying on of hands." Is this appropriate? I want to be worshipping the way God wants me to and I know there are many different ways to do that. I want what is best for our family.

Now to address these questions:

The Bible does include references to raising one's hands in worship and/or prayer. For example:

Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen,' lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. (Nehemiah 8:6)

Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. (Psalm 63:3-4)

I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling. (1 Timothy 2:8)

The simple answer is that raising hands in worship and prayer is a Biblically acceptable thing to do.

The somewhat more complicated answer is that our actions/styles/word choices/etc. are all flavored by and interpreted within our cultural context. In recent decades many churches & denominations have been characterized by a dangerous tendency to misuse the Bible through poor standards of interpretation and even worse examples of application. The result is that such groups have a very weak grasp of sound theology and some are even guilty of teaching heresy while claiming to be heralds of truth. These have failed to follow God's clear instruction to ***Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)***

Many of these same churches have also embraced a very emotionally expressive worship style that includes things like the raising of hands in worship and prayer. This "association" of raising hands and questionable theology often results in a pendulum swing in spiritually-conservative Christians that causes them to shy away from what is otherwise Biblically acceptable (raising hands) so as to avoid being classified with those whose theology is off-base.


I must admit that I fall into this "spiritually-conservative, non-hand-raising" category.

That being said, it is important to recognize that the Scriptures do not forbid such a worship style—indeed, many verses would support it.

The bottom line is this: the style of worship and prayer is a non-critical issue, and believers should acknowledge that there is great latitude within the Body of Christ to engage in a variety of worship styles as long as

Those who worship Him ... worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:24)

The ***truth*** of which Jesus speaks is really the most important factor.

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For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

At any church you attend, you must be careful to understand their doctrinal positions and ensure that they measure up with Scripture. If a church rejects or compromises a critical doctrine, that church is unbiblical and must be avoided. If they are on target regarding critical doctrines, then it becomes the responsibility of the individual believer to discern whether he/she can worship God with a right heart in light of the many other factors involved (worship style, style of teaching and preaching, ministry emphases, etc.).

By way of clarification, a **Critical Doctrine is a fundamental teaching of the Bible which is essential to salvation**. You cannot be saved if you reject one of these Biblical truths. (A complete, fully-informed understanding of these truths is not essential for salvation, but a deliberate rejection of any of these Biblical teachings is a rejection of God's truth regarding our need for salvation and His means of provision and thus is a rejection of God Himself.)

Just a reminder, here is a list of key critical doctrines and primary Bible passages where these doctrines are taught:

1. You are a sinner. (Romans 3:23; Isaiah 64:6; 1 John 1:8-10)
2. Sin separates you from God. (Romans 6:23; Isaiah 59:2)
3. Jesus is God. (John 10:30)
 - He is sinless. (Hebrews 4:15)
 - He died in our place. (Romans 5:8)
 - He rose bodily from the dead. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
4. Jesus is the only way of salvation. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)
5. You must be *born again* by putting your faith in Jesus. (John 3:3)

I hope this helps as each of you seeks to stay close to the Lord and to be Biblically sound in your theology and practice.

Serving the Savior,

Pastor Keith





Recommendations: Objectivity

He wasn't much to look at: his unique Swiss style of dress typically set him apart in a crowd. After all, most folks didn't wear a hiking outfit and knickers (even if it was the sixties and seventies). He had the most Billy goat-like goatee that I've seen on a respectable individual and his comb over didn't really hide his thinning head of hair. He had a higher voice than one might expect and wasn't what you'd call a commanding presence. All that said, Francis Schaeffer is one of the foremost intellectual Christian giants of the twentieth century.

After coming to a point of dissatisfaction with his own spiritual health and resolving to approach all of his life from the lens of Scripture, he and his wife Edith moved to Switzerland to start L'Abri. This "shelter" in the Alps was set up to welcome any and all who would come. Young people disillusioned with the predominating worldviews of the day would make their way to L'Abri, stay there for weeks at a time, and just discuss reality with Francis Schaeffer. He was an apologist, a philosopher, an international speaker, an author, and a gentleman. He's one of my favorite authors and he lived a fascinating life that's worth checking out. I would happily commend to you any of his works. They're all worth reading.

The God Who is There
by Francis Schaeffer

Discovery


I don't remember how or when I first learned about Francis Schaeffer. I obviously would have known his name the day that I found a copy of *How Should We Then Live?* in a used book store. Maybe I heard it from my dad or from one of my professors at school, but I certainly didn't know what I was getting into when I picked up that green hardcover. "The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture"? Sure. Why not?

I don't mean to exaggerate, but I think it would be hard to overstate just how much of an impact Schaeffer's body of work has made on my thinking and my approach to Christianity. In the broadest of terms, Schaeffer's literary forte is worldview. In *How Should We Then Live?*, Schaeffer walks his readers through the centuries of our culture from a succinct and straightforward Christian perspective. The attendant film series has aged very poorly (you can watch it on YouTube if you're so inclined, but film quality and style scream the seventies), but the book remains excellent. You should read it.

At this point, you may be wondering, "Pastor Caleb, aren't you recommending that we read *The God Who is There*? When are you going to talk about that?" Good point. Let's transition, shall we? When I graduated from college, my parents generously purchased for me *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer – A Christian Worldview*. *The God Who is There* starts it all off. As with so many prolific writers, each subsequent work more or less builds on this book and its two "sister volumes:" *Escape from Reason* and *He is There and He is Not Silent*. Reading through *The God Who is There* sometime in mid- to late-2012 well-equipped me to think about thinking and to grapple with the themes presented in his other books and in the works of other apologists and philosophers.

Summary

Schaeffer gives us a thesis statement (of sorts) within the first two pages of his book: "[The] change in the concept of the way we come to knowledge and truth is the most crucial problem, as I understand it, facing Christianity today." It's always tricky to try to whittle a larger argument down to just a sound byte, but here's the thought: when we dialogue with and try to persuade people in our culture of the legitimacy of Christianity, we have to keep in mind that their ways of thinking are fundamentally different from ours. Where once there were certain rules of rationality on which everyone agreed (often the simplest principles of logic), now it is invaluable to remember that we can't count on people reasoning like we do. *The God Who is There* offers a breakdown of the development of this fundamentally different way of thinking.

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The argument put forth is that there is a trickle-down effect when it comes to worldview: it begins with the day's philosophers, seeps through art, music, and other forms of entertainment, and eventually pollutes entire cultures. Most unbelievers simply absorb their day's perspectives and too few Christians are aware of the threat. Our responsibility as believers is to identify this prevailing worldview, differentiate at an intellectual level where it diverts from historic Christianity (and from reason itself), and from there lead a broken world to a God who is intimately invested in humanity.

After a considerable amount of historical and philosophical groundwork, Schaeffer moves into practical implementation. When we see the inevitable flaws (and heartaches) in any non-Christian worldview, we can then use that to "take the roof off." This fascinating metaphor can help us understand how we're to approach what Schaeffer calls "the point of tension." In every non-Christian worldview, there is at least one major point ("of tension") that flatly contradicts reality. This "roof" insulates people from reckoning with the truth. We must lovingly, compassionately, and gently push unbelievers to the point where they see that their worldview offers only imaginary explanations for what is there. The non-Christian "must come to know that his roof is a false protection from the storm of what is; and then we can talk to him of the storm of the judgment of God."

Boon

From *The God Who is There*, I gained tools for discernment, a far better understanding of why our culture is the way that it is, and a fairly robust approach to knowing how to handle intellectual disagreements with Christianity. As I referenced, I don't think it would be too much of a stretch to say that Schaeffer has influenced my thinking more than any other author than God Himself (through His Word).

Approbation

The God Who is There requires a different thinking cap than many other books do. If you're one of these folks who already tells me that I make your brain hurt, please rest assured that Schaeffer will exhaust your noggin. You may be thinking, "I'm not an evangelist or an apologist – I'll pass on April's recommendation." I understand, but permit me to urge you to reconsider. God desires us to set our minds on things above. He wants our minds to be renewed. While I will never decry books that highlight Christian conduct or appropriate beliefs, there is still a need for us to know how and why Christians must think Christian-ly. This equipping can move us beyond some of our own ignorance regarding the devil's schemes and help us know better how to show grace to a dying world.

For the Kingdom,
Pastor Caleb



Spotlight Letter Avenal, CA
Casa de Dios Christian Fellowship
Village Missionaries: Raul & Teresa Corona

School of Evangelists Alberto Mottesi.

We are very proud to announce that both Certificate and Associated students who have been taking the Alberto Mottesi evangelistic courses graduated in February. The graduation ceremony, which took place in Los Angeles, was very nice. Pastor Danilo Montero shared a wonderful message for the graduates and the attendees encouraging everyone to continue to seek God with all of our hearts and to also continue to spread His message of salvation across all nations. I am very excited to have so many of our congregation members be a part of this graduating class, and I am praying that God will lift up missionary couples from this class who will go out and continue to work for the Lord.



Advances of our new church building.

Yes! After a long time on standby, we finally have been moving forward with our project. We finished the electricity and the plumbing, we passed both of the inspections, so now we proceed with the insulation and covering the walls. We are working in the first restroom also. The people you see in the photos are our church people volunteering. They are taking advantage that they are not working on these days because of the rains, since most of them are field workers. All of them are directed by our contractor Michael League who also is giving his time as volunteer too. Praise the Lord!!! Hopefully we can have our open house before the end of this year.



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Please, pray that our finances do not diminish. We have seen how the Lord has been our provider on this issue. We have noticed a similarity with the biblical passage in which the widow saw how the oil did not cease while she poured it in the vessels. Amen!



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We pray that once in the new building our church people can keep this encouraging attitude as well as gratitude to our God by serving Him with more effort.



Raul & Teresa Corona are Village Missionaries our PCC Church Family Supports



"O, how I love your law! It is my meditation all day long...
Your word is a lamp to my feet and light for my path."
Psalm 119:97, 103

A step back in time as we step forward into the future...

News and Prayer Topics for March, 2018



Early Navigator Ministry with Sailors

Ministry in France with *Les Navigateurs* was very fruitful and full of answered prayer!

Karen's ministry in Germany with wives and single women continues as does Mike's with single men and husbands. (US Military)

Our Colossians 2:7 growing in discipleship group makes steady progress in learning the Scriptures by heart and going deep into Bible study related to Christlike character

Out of town visitors in March include family, veteran missionaries with whom we served in the Ivory Coast and local German Navigator staff who are moving into the U.S. Military Nav ministry, here in Germany!

We will have a full house until we fly to Africa for Easter.

Thank you for your support as we labor to know Christ and to make Him known!

Mike & Karen Kotecki

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Germany
navstaff.org/give/40956
The Navigators,
P.O. Box 6079
Albert Lea, MN 56007-6679
Mission Account #40956
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Mike and Karen Kotecki are Navigator Missionaries out PCC Church Family Supports



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*And now you've
gone away
And left us with
the memories of
your smile*

December 23, 1936—March 10, 2018



Does Somebody Need You?

By Vicky Hoffmann

The Spring Women's Retreat is over. Many of us spent a lot of time praying, asking God's will and His blessing. This year as I was praying these prayers I felt a nudge by God to pray something I had never prayed before when praying for the retreat. I felt strongly that God wanted prayer that those who were supposed to attend the retreat so that they could minister to others would hear Him and obey.

This was a new thought to me. Whenever I have seen a retreat or even a church event advertised in the bulletin my first thoughts are, "Is this something I'd like to go to?" or "Will I get anything out of it?" God has convicted me that this is a consumer mentality. What's in it for me? What will I get? And though it is prevalent in the world I am questioning its place in church. If a gathering of believers is truly the communion of the saints, then doesn't God call those with needs to attend, along with those who He plans to use to minister to those needs?

This is all that I really want to lay before you, what God has laid before me. I am asking God to change my heart, so that when I read the bulletin, hear of things going on at church or even in my neighborhood or community, my first response will be to stop and pray. 'Is this something you have for me, dear Lord? Are you wanting me to attend because somebody there needs me? Do You want to minister to me through this?'

I can tell already this will draw me closer to Him, more reliant on His voice, His will. This is a good place to be.

**God Has Added One More Day In Your
Life Not Necessarily Because You
Need It But Because Someone Else
Might Need You.**

Good Morning!!



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Blair, Nevada
By Bob Jacobs

Blair came into being in 1906 when the “Pittsburgh Silver Peak Mining Company” refused to pay outrageous prices for land to put up their mill in Silver Peak, Nevada. In Silver Peak, land speculators were driving land prices artificially high so the mining company surveyed a site three miles north of Silver Peak near the company’s gold mines; and named it Blair.

They established a 100-stamp mill at this location. At the time it was Nevada’s largest mill. They then constructed the 17 and half mile Silverpeak railroad from Blair to the “Tonopah & Goldfield” railroad mainline at Blair Junction. A post office was there from 1906 to 1915. There were also numerous saloons, and a two story hotel. Blair had a population of about 700 at its peak. The mill closed in 1915 when low grade ore could no longer be milled profitably. The town was completely dead by 1916.

Today a historical marker commemorates Blair along State Route 265 just north of the town of Silver Peak. Besides the historical marker the only reminders of the town are the stone building and the foundations of the old mill. Fragments of fine china can be found in the cracked mud floors. An old wood-burning fireplace and chimney act as the optical centerpiece among the walls, which remarkably, still hold strong after nearly a century of withstanding the elements. Atop the mill site stand several more stone structures, which provide a view of a peak in the distance with the intriguing name of Alcatraz Island. One strange, misplaced single-room building on top of the mill holds a different history. With almost every square inch of the wall covered in name and dates of visitors to the site, the building acts as a time capsule. The oldest account I can find scratched into the cement wall reads simply, “Donald Shirley, 1/25/42.”

To get there go to Silver Peak and take State route 265 north for about three miles; and look for the historical marker on the left (west) side of the road. From there it’s about a mile on a dirt road to get to the town.

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Micromanaging

Are you a “micromanager?” If you answer at least **ONE** of these questions “**YES.**” You are a micromanager:

- You always feel you would have/could have done the task better.
- You are never quite satisfied with the deliverables.
- You take great pride and pain in making corrections.

As any good manager knows, it is counterproductive to assign personnel a task and then feel the need to “supervise” and “oversee” the assignment. And, the worst scenario of all is to feel the need to change/modify/or crucify the final results.

Our ways of serving the Lord and our aspirations of how to serve Him may be different; but, in the end the results are the same - we serve for His glory! Does that mean that only “your” way is the right way? Does it in any way alter the end result? Does it mean we can boast about our success?

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV

But, I am guilty of “micromanaging.” Often, I pray to the Father to help me through or with something; and, then I try to tell Him how I want it done. We often say, “I have placed it in God’s hands.” And, then we strike out to do it our way. Or, at least we justify it by saying; we’re helping Him get to where we have asked Him to take us.

I am **SO** guilty of that. How do I stop doing that? I do it by something that is called “**faith.**”


***Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.
Mark 11:24 ESV***

Any parent will tell you that instructing your child to clean his room; and, after it is done you take over the task; is a counterproductive measure. Maybe the room is not like you would have it but, it’s not your room. If you want it a certain way, then do it yourself. The child is not **YOU!** Let him establish his own identify and self worth by having “faith” in him and helping him become who he is not who you want him to be.

Now, I am “preaching” to myself! Because that is exactly what I do when I “turn” my problems/circumstances over to God. Then, I “micromanage” His results. He answers my prayers and then I - because it isn’t answered the way want it – I modify it – just a “tad”. My mother always had the same answer when I was not satisfied with her response: “If you don’t like the answer, don’t ask the question.”

When will I learn true faith? When will I accept God’s answers to my prayers? I asked God for food. He gave me “cauliflower” when I wanted “ham.” I asked for “peace.” He gave me “turmoil.” Even when I just ask for “solutions”; and, He doesn’t give me the “solution” I want, I modify it just a “tad.” Should I go on and do what I think best for me; or, accept His answer? Accept God’s will! That is the answer. Don’t modify it. Don’t question it. Just do it and accept it by **faith** and not by “micromanaging” it.

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For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11 ESV

So, how do I reconcile that scripture with?

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. Matthew 21:22 ESV

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24

I'm so confused!! He knows His plans. Yet, I will receive whatever I ask in prayer? I thought about this a long time before I asked myself this question – If my child asked me to let him play with matches in a haystack – would I let him? **Yes**, I want to give him what he asks for; but, **No**, not if it endangers his life. That is just an unconditional – maybe unstated - parental response.

So, do I want my child to “micromanage” my responses? Indeed, I do not! His response to my denial should not be to go ahead and do it his way; but to have **FAITH** in me as his parent.

And Jesus said to him,, “If you can, All things are possible for one who believes.” Immediately the father of the child cried out and said “Lord, help me with my “unbelief.” Mark 9:23-24 ESV

Lord, help me with my unbelief. Give me the strength to accept your answers and not “micromanage” them into “my way.” For your way is the best way for the plans you have for me.



EDITORIAL STAFF

Jacquie Hinton – **Editor**

Pastor Caleb Walker and Karen Crispell– **Copy Editors**

Reporters and Contributors: **Our Missionaries and PCC family**



**Prison Ministry
First Quarter 2018**

Well, here we are again. Sorry we were not able to write to you in January and February of the New Year. I guess the best way to say it is that “Stuff Happened”.

In mid-January I spent three days in the hospital because of the nasty flu that has been going around. It is amazing how long it takes to get back on track after such an incident. However, I am now back on my feet and moving along. It's wonderful to be feeling good again!

Our first trip back to Boot Camp was a shocker. As usual our team left Pahrump about 4:30 pm on Monday and drove through the open range (an hour trip). When we arrived at the gate the officer on duty told us that Boot Camp is no longer in Indian Springs Prison. It has been moved to Las Vegas. Sooo, back in the car and another long trip back to Pahrump. It is understandable that they forgot to notify us, since we are not a regular part of their Military Training Program and they had many more immediate things to handle during the move. For us it means that we have one less day of ministry for our team.

The next day we called the State Nevada Headquarters that handles Volunteers and the secretary there had no information for us. We still do not know exactly what happened except that they seem to be shutting it down and sending the men back to the Courts to be reassigned according to the new decisions being made by the Judges involved. The men assigned there from Pahrump have been returned to NCDC (Pahrump Jail) and will be returning to the Judge who originally sent them to Boot Camp.

Our Sunday services at the Jail are continuing, including three Services each Sunday. Since there are a number of Pods (separate groups of prisoners) we are not able to see all of the inmates each week. There are approximately 150 prisoners at the Jail divided into Pods and each Sunday we see three Pods each week. Also some special times of ministry during the week.

At Inspirations Senior Living Center we meet every Tuesday morning for a Sing Along Service. It is a great joy to spend this time with them each week. It's an open meeting and you are welcome to come along with our Team Members at 10:00 am and “Sing-Along” with us.

It's a little late – but – Happy New Year.
God bless you,
Irene Hunt



Fellowship Dinner



Please Plan on joining us on Sunday, April 8th at 5:00PM for a special edition Church Matters. In addition to our regular times of worship, we will be enjoying a Mexican Food Fellowship Dinner. We look forward to spending time together and to spending time with our Village Missions District Representatives Richard and Ellen Hayes. Please Call Diane Horvath (575-649-4738) to sign up for food donations. Thank You!



The Awana Auction is on the horizon! Please mark your calendars for May 5. If you have new or like new items you would like to donate, we would love to auction those off to raise money for our Awana Scholarship Campers. Please drop them off at the church office anytime during the work hours throughout the week. As we look ahead to May, we're anticipating another great time of fellowship and fun!