

# CONNECTING POINT

Volume 22, Winter 2020

## Magazine

A Quarterly Publication of Connecting Point Communications

## WHO ARE WE, REALLY?

*Our culture's confusion over identity is leaving people hurt, hopeless, and confused.*

...

*What can the Bible tell us about our unique place in the world?*



**LAST WORD: MIRACLES - GOD IS STILL DOING THE MIRACULOUS TO CONFIRM THE REALITY OF A RISEN SAVIOR! / PAGE 18**

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**Where God's  
Answers Meet  
Man's Questions**

# FIRST WORD: BY THE EDITOR

This month's edition of Connecting Point Magazine is focused on the ever-relevant topic of *Identity*. Knowing who we are and why we're here is essential to understanding our true value and purpose. Unfortunately, our society has detached the standards of identity from reality and created a concept of identity based upon one's preference and feelings. At the same time, identity politics is endeavoring to tell people how they must feel, based upon their sexual orientation, race, or social standing.

So, the disgruntled masses are told to be disgruntled and blame someone else for their plight, despite the fact that they may be living in relative comfort and not feel any particular injustice at the moment. Contradictions abound and incoherence reigns supreme, and everybody pretends that the emperor's new clothes are a thing of beauty, despite the fact that honest men really knows it's all a charade.

Our understanding of identity is crucial. If it is based in reality, it gives us healthy boundaries in which to identify our value and purpose. If we believe we are created to share in God's image, we realize we are especially made for communion with Him, as well as to participate in His purposes, to bring about the reality of His Kingdom in our world. This enables us to see beyond the many tags by which others may choose to label, and thus limit, our personhood and existence. Black or white, conservative or liberal, rich or poor – the list goes on, dividing rather than uniting our society, majoring on labels that do NOT define us but merely describe a single facet of our lives.

Jesus had a habit of renaming people. Simon He renamed Peter, which means "a stone." James and John he renamed sons of thunder. These names did not describe what either they or others might have seen, but they revealed a potential that Christ alone could see in them. Peter, who once denied he even knew the Lord in a moment of pressure, was anything but a rock. Later, however, he boldly preached the resurrection to the very men responsible for Christ's crucifixion.

Maybe identity isn't something to be assigned by pundits and politicians. Maybe instead, it's something we discover when we've had an encounter with the Master. Only He knows our potential and only He can shape us into the person He has called us to be.

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# CONTRIBUTORS

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Cameron's passion is for teaching and instructing on how to follow practical steps to pursue deeper spiritual truths.



*Rod Saunders*

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Rod Saunders is a graduate of Rhema Bible Training Center. An accomplished musician, Rod is the former guitar instructor at Rhema and has played in various worship teams for thirty years. He is the host of the YouTube channel *Jew and Greek*, with a blog by the same name. His passion is teaching the Bible and Christian apologetics from a Charismatic perspective.

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*Dr. Randy Bunch*

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Dr. Randy Bunch is the founder of Connecting Point Communications. He is also the pastor of Connecting Point Church in Taft, California and Northeast Christian Church in Bakersfield, California. He also serves as an adjunct professor at Summit Bible College, also located in Bakersfield.

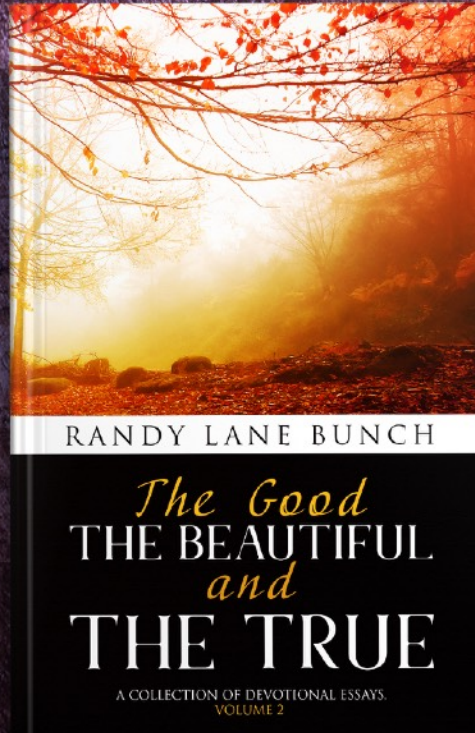
In his 35-plus years of ministry, he has served as church planter on both east and west coasts, as well as traveled extensively in local churches throughout the United States and also abroad. For more, go to [randylanebunch.org](http://randylanebunch.org) and [connectingpc.org](http://connectingpc.org).

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IMPORTANT TO  
KNOW WHAT YOU  
BELIEVE AND WHY.



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# WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

Hello, My name is

DR. RANDY LANE BUNCH

**Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone). John 1:42**

God knows you. Beyond that, He knows who you can be. He does not see you in the light of your limitations, but as the finished product He's called you to become. This is evident in the way Jesus dealt with His disciples. Simon He called, "Stone," or "Peter," as it is also translated. His given name was Simon, which means "reed." This was certainly true of his character as seen in the gospel accounts. Simon was a man of

extremes, and like a reed, easily blown about by the winds of circumstance.

One moment he's in the Garden at Jesus' side, cutting off the ear of a man threatening harm to his Master, the next he's running for fear of capture. One moment he's swearing to go to with Jesus to prison and death, the next he's denying he ever knew Him. That was Simon, but it was not Peter.

The Bible says that God “calls into being that which does not exist” (Romans 4:17). He did that with the stars and the planets, and He does it with people as well. Again and again, throughout the scriptures, we see God calling people to do great things who are desperate to educate God as to their lack of qualifications. Moses, a man once brimming with ambition to be used by God, had long since hung up his cape and cowl and resigned himself to being a shepherd on the backside of nowhere when God told him that it was at last time for him to lead His people to freedom. He objected to being their deliver on the basis of his lack of communications skills.

Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep himself and his crop hidden from the Midianites, when the angel of the Lord found him. The angel called him a “mighty man of valor,” despite all evidence to the contrary, and told him that he was God’s man to deliver His people from oppression. Like Moses, Gideon tried to backpedal out of his assignment, pleading his family’s insignificance as his reason for opting out of God’s divine call on his life.

When Samuel the prophet came to Jesse’s house to anoint one of his sons as King over Israel, David was thought so insignificant by his father that he wasn’t even called in from the field where he tended the sheep. He was truly the “least” of Jesse’s sons according to

his own family, but God saw past the limitations of his stature and family position to the heart of a warrior yet to be revealed. In fact, the scriptures are full of such stories; men who were unlikely heroes, born to the wrong family, in the wrong town, with little or nothing to recommend them except for God’s irrevocable call and His divine insight into their true character.

Like Peter, the brothers, James and John, were given names by Jesus as well. He called

them “sons of thunder.” Many have assumed it was because they were tough and reckless, forgetting that these names were not given to describe who they were when Jesus found them, but to describe the men He saw them capable of becoming. In reality, James and John came from a well-to-do family, and when it came time for them to try to secure a position for themselves in His kingdom, they actually sent their Mother to lobby

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**“IN FACT, THE SCRIPTURES ARE FULL OF SUCH STORIES; MEN WHO WERE UNLIKELY HEROES, BORN TO THE WRONG FAMILY, IN THE WRONG TOWN, WITH LITTLE OR NOTHING TO RECOMMEND THEM EXCEPT FOR GOD’S IRREVOCABLE CALL AND HIS DIVINE INSIGHT INTO THEIR TRUE CHARACTER.”**

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Jesus for places at His right and left hand (see Matthew 20:20-21). Essentially, they were Momma’s boys who tried to use their family connections to position themselves ahead of their fellow disciples. But Jesus saw past these limitations to the men they would become, eventually sacrificing much for the Kingdom of God and the Lord they loved. In fact, James would become the first of the apostles to die a martyr’s death, and John would suffer cruelly on the prison Island of Patmos in his old age because of his devotion to Christ.



In fact, all these men became what God saw they could. Moses was used by God to bring the superpower of His day to its knees as he brought the children of Israel out of four hundred years of Egyptian bondage. Gideon would ultimately lead a small band of three hundred men against the innumerable Midianite army and secure a great victory for Israel. David became the warrior poet of Israel, great in battle and numerous in conquests, as the hand of the Lord brought him one victory after another. He was known as a man after God's own heart and the benchmark by which all the other kings of Israel and Judah would be compared. Simon Peter, the once inconstant disciple, became the Stone Jesus envisioned Him to be. As one of the principle leaders of the early Church, he would ultimately give his life for the Lord he once denied, crucified upside down at his own request, feeling unworthy to die in the same manner as his Lord.

Regardless of the perceived limitations,

whether of status or birth, whether geographical or societal, God raises up men from common circumstances to stand as giants in their generation, accomplishing great things, not by virtue of their own credentials, but by the grace of God upon their lives. So, what is your name? Like some of these we've mentioned, you might have named yourself "Stutterer" or "Fearful." You might have carried the moniker of "Insignificant" or "Overlooked." Maybe others saw you as "Dull" or "Unexceptional," but I can promise you that God has a different name for you, and that name is tied to your God-appointed destiny.

Perhaps the best illustration of this in the scriptures is the story of Jacob. Once a man who connived with his mother to deceive his father and stole the blessing of the first born from his brother, this man went through a life-long transformation through his encounters with God and his dealings with an uncle who proved to more than a match

as a manipulator and deceiver. Before returning to visit his once aggrieved brother, Jacob had a mysterious encounter with God as he wrestled with the angel of the Lord all night long, refusing to release Him until he received a blessing. Very often these encounters with the “angel of the Lord,” were a *Christophany*, or an Old Testament appearing of Jesus. In response, to Jacob’s demand for a blessing, we read:

So He said to him, “What is your name?”

He said, “Jacob.”

And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed (Genesis 32:27-28)

It was through this encounter that Jacob, whose name had meant *supplanter*, had his name changed by the Lord to Israel, which means *Prince with God*. It was not merely his name that had been changed but his

character as well, and for the rest of his life, Jacob would walk with a physical reminder of that encounter with the God Who had so changed him.

God has called each and every one of us to a significant life. His purpose for you is beyond the ability of the person you are now, but He sees in you another you, full grown in His grace, courage, and ability. You’ll never get there on your own, but He is with you as He was with Moses, Gideon, David, and Peter. His purpose for you is no less significant. Regardless of your deepest fear or your greatest liability, God sees a conqueror in you just waiting to be released through faith in His purpose for you.

*To purchase any of Dr. Randy’s published works, simply search for “Randy Lane Bunch” online, at Amazon, Apple iBooks, Barnes & Nobles, and more. You can also find links to his books at [randylanebunch.org](http://randylanebunch.org).*

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# WILL THE TRUE IDENTITY PLEASE STAND UP?

By  
Cameron Bunch

SIMON PETER ANSWERED AND SAID, “YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.” JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID TO HIM, “BLESSED ARE YOU, SIMON BAR-JONAH, FOR FLESH AND BLOOD HAS NOT REVEALED THIS TO YOU, BUT MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.

MATTHEW 16:16-17 NKJV

We have a fascination with the concept of identity, and it's not just in our first-world society of 2020. Societies for thousands of years across all cultures have been obsessed over the concept of identity. "Who am I?", "Who are we?", and "Who are they?" are all common questions we ask ourselves. Various ancient societies believed in shapeshifters; people who could take on the identity of another creature and visa-versa . Others had myths and epics about demigods: legendary warriors that were half-god and half-man. Hercules is one with which our society is familiar.

Though times have changed, as have our laws, views on social justice, understanding of equality, political parties and ideologies, technological innovations, and more, our fascination with identity has not.

The current generation, I would argue, is one of those most concerned with the issue of identity and yet seems to have the least understanding about it. Our parents' generation read comics about superheroes with secret identities. They read exciting books with stories about adventures, princes, princesses, heroes, villains, and brave knights, all of which this present generation has brought to life in movie form. We idolize different hero-type identities that we wish we could become. We put them on the big screen, wishing we could live their lives and be them.

In addition to this, reality television has become a huge sensation. We have now moved on from wishing we were these perfect people in fantasy stories to idolizing everyday people to whom we give the title of "celebrity," which someone has described as "someone famous for being famous." We televise the most glamorous parts of their lives, and, again, we wish we were them. All the while this is happening, our society is becoming more and more uncertain about who we really are.

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**"HOWEVER, IN OUR SOCIETY TODAY WE ARE RECOGNIZING 32 DIFFERENT GENDERS AND 24 SEXUAL IDENTITIES. THESE NUMBERS ARE ON THE MORE CONSERVATIVE SIDE BY THE RECKONING OF SOME, AS EACH DAY THIS LIST IS OPEN TO EXPANSION BASED ON THE PERSONAL, SUBJECTIVE FEELINGS OF INDIVIDUALS."**

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The concepts of gender and sexuality have been a relatively simple discussion for most of history. On the broadest scale, you had male, female, and an occasional biological anomaly resulting in a hermaphrodite, which was still for the most part recognized as either a male or a female. Sexuality was

pretty cut and dry as well. You had heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and asexual. However, in our society today we are recognizing 32 different genders and 24 sexual identities. These numbers are on the more conservative side by the reckoning of some, as each day this list is open to expansion based on the personal, subjective feelings of individuals.

Colleges, like the one I attended, teach individuals that gender is fluid, rather than based on their biological sex at birth. The same goes for sexual orientation. Educators

use illustrations such as the “The Gender Unicorn” or “The Genderbread Person” to describe how we’re all on a spectrum that can move day to day or moment to moment. If you haven’t seen either of these illustrations, I encourage you to google one of them to understand what I mean. We are no longer at a place of wishing we were other identities. Now are unable to choose an identity at all.

We have a serious crisis of identity in our culture, and our society is abandoning long-held objective truths for the sake of personal, subjecting feelings and to avoid having to understand who we are and stand for something definitive. The mere concept of objective truth has been put on trial; not only by the everyday man, but even by scientists

and scholars. Objective truth can be, by its very nature, offensive, especially to those espousing a relativistic viewpoint. After all, truth is immutable and rigid. The very fact that truth is solid and grounded is what makes it something we can trust, but when it conflicts with a person who believes something entirely different, there is a collision. Often in my life, I’ve collided against an objective reality, and it hurt and caused me pain. However, the only reasonable option for me was to bow to truth, surrender my incorrect assumptions, and grow. Our society, however, often responds differently and refuses to back down. That’s when a massive collision happens similar to when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object.



Regardless of how well one may persuasively demonstrate the immutability of objective truth, there are some people that will still strive to change it. Benjamin Franklin said, "A man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still". I think the question becomes, "Is it a war worth waging?"

Questions we have about our beliefs and understanding of the world are worth the investment of time. What happens if we surrender objective truth? What does this mean for our identity? Many people have these questions but give up on pursuing the truth because the pursuit of truth requires effort and time, and they are pit against the tidal wave of societal influences. I think, however, these questions are genuinely simple to answer.

First, is there such thing as objective truth? If there is, that means there must be someone who stands outside and above our limited human realm of existence to serve as an unbiased arbiter of objective truth. If you are like me and believe in God, then that means there *is* someone who stands in that place. This article will not investigate and discuss the evidences for the existence of God, for there are many who have written on this, and you can read their works. Suffice to say, we have a God who established objective truth and who also made us. This leads us to know that He must have a plan and purpose for us. How do we make this logical assertion? Much like an artist knows what his creation is, and just like an inventor knows what his invention does, God knows who we are and for what purpose He has made us.

"But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand." (Isaiah 64:8)

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5)

So if we accept that there is a God who has given us objective truth, and this God made us on purpose and for a purpose, we're left with one question: "So what?" What does this mean about our identity? It means that there is only one Person who can tell us our identity. Only one Person who *is* objective truth. God is truth. He is the only one who can answer the questions at the beginning of this article, "Who am I?", "Who are we?", and "Who are you?" Just like God revealed Jesus' identity to Peter, our own identity can only be revealed to us by God. David was a shepherd, not considered worthy enough by his own father to be brought before the prophet as a candidate to be anointed king. God said he was a king and sent Samuel to reveal to him his true identity. Even Jesus learned His identity by God's leading. "Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner" (John 5:19).

Now, more than ever, it's important to hold onto objective truth. When the waves of society are rocking our ship, we moor ourselves to the steady immovable truth of God. We pursue discovering our identity only through Him alone. There's a reason mental illness is so prevalent in our culture today. One reason is a loss of self and a loss of truth. We were not made to embody the lie of our present culture. We were made to be in fellowship with God and to understand who we are in Him.

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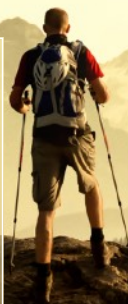
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# TONGUES

SPEAKING TO GOD IN A SUPER  
NATURAL LANGUAGE

RANDY LANE BUNCH

## CLEAR TEACHING ON A CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECT

There is perhaps no subject that has suffered more abuse than speaking with other tongues, and yet it holds the promise of great spiritual blessing, both to the individual believer as well as to the body of Christ in general. Sharing from both the Word of God and his own experience, Dr. Randy Lane Bunch helps to shed scriptural light on what has been for many a confusing issue.

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# WHO TURNED OFF THE POWER?

**THE CHURCH IN THE WEST MUST  
REDISCOVER HER TRUE IDENTITY  
IN A HOSTILE CLIMATE OF  
SECULARISM AND PHILOSOPHICAL  
MATERIALISM WHICH THREATENS  
HER POWER AND HER WITNESS**



*The issue of Identity is not only a problem for individuals in our increasingly secular and progressive society. The Church in the West too must contend for truth and rediscover Her true identity, lest she should be further marginalized and ultimately cast aside as irrelevant.*

*Already there is an assumption in much of our culture that the Church has little to offer in man's quest for answers, as scientism and moral relativism are becoming the defacto governing authorities of a post-truth society. However, while the Church may have lost the position of "frontrunner" in the eyes of many, Her influence is far from dead. There are positive signs that true faith is on the rise, while powerless, dead religion is the true loser in the competition for our nation's affections.*

*Indeed, the Church has taken a hit, and while Jesus promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church, it is unquestionably true that much of the Church in the West has lost something of Her true identity. Softened by ease and neutralized to some degree by a theology of powerlessness, the witness of the Church has ceased to command the respect of the world around Her. Some of us believe this is about to change. The following articles are written as a partial, suggested prescription to assist in Her recovery.*

# SIGNS & WONDERS

By Rod Saunders

**GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD, AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE. HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE SAVED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED. AND THESE SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW THEM THAT BELIEVE. (MARK 16:17)**

As you read through the book of Acts, you'll see that signs did in fact follow those who believed and proclaimed the gospel. Now, a sign is something that gets your attention in order to convey helpful information or attract you to a business. Well, the gospel is helpful information on God's provision of salvation, and in the Bible, signs were given to confirm the gospel that was preached, like on the Day of Pentecost. And in a sense, God has a business that He is marketing. Remember that Jesus said, "I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49). What is the Father's business? Rescuing those who are condemned by sin.

Jesus told a parable about the Kingdom of heaven where a king was throwing a banquet, and people made excuses for why they couldn't make it. So, the king told his servants to go out and compel people to come and fill His house (Luke 14:16-24). So in a sense, the signs that confirm the Word are advertising for the greatest party ever thrown, and everybody's invited. Now some will respond without supernatural signs, but some won't for various reasons. So, the Holy Spirit manifests signs and wonders as He wills to help those who need a little extra encouragement.

Some dismiss the need for signs today. Others avoid them because they see extremism and error from people who believe modern signs and wonders. So, let's review what the Bible says on the subject. In Genesis 1:14 we are told that God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years". So, right from the beginning God gave us signs in the heavens. When God called Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, He did miracles before Pharaoh to show His power. Then when Israel was finally allowed to leave Egypt, God parted the Red Sea to save them from Pharaoh's chariots that were pursuing them.

The signs were also done for the benefit of Israel, to encourage them to trust in Jehovah. In addition to those signs, God gave Israel victory over their enemies. Word got out to the surrounding nations that the God of Israel was greater than all, and when Israel's spies went into Jericho, Rahab the harlot hid the spies in return for the promise of sparing her and her family when Israel invaded them. She saw the signs and believed in Jehovah and is listed among the heroes of faith in Hebrews, chapter 11.

In the New Testament, we see signs when Jesus was born. Isaiah 7:14 says that a virgin would conceive a child as a sign to Israel. The Wise Men saw the star that directed them to Jesus' home in Bethlehem. When Jesus turned the water into wine for the

wedding at Cana, John 2:11 tells us that this was the first sign that He did to reveal His glory. When He began His ministry, He chose 12 disciples to accompany Him. Peter, Andrew, James, and John followed Jesus because of the miracle He performed in filling their nets with fish. Had He simply said "follow me" it's doubtful that these four men would have left their livelihoods to follow

Him. Throughout the gospels we see people believing in Jesus because of the miracles that He did, and then in the book of Acts we again see people believing in Jesus because of the miracles they saw in the ministries of the apostles and disciples.

Despite all of this, many people today insist that the gospel shouldn't need signs anymore. In fact, many cite Matthew 16:4 as an example of why signs are not important. "A wicked and

adulterous generation demands a sign ..."

But, they're taking this verse out of context. Jesus wasn't saying that signs aren't necessary. He was pointing out that people who demand signs have bad motives. We see the same attitude today from people who reject the modern operation of gifts of the Spirit. They say things like "Prove it! Show us documentation!" Supernatural signs aren't done to satisfy the self-righteous Pharisees who think they already know everything there is to know about God. They're for the lost who don't know much about God or the message of salvation. God in His mercy manifests His power and love in a supernatural way to help encourage people to believe.

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**SUPERNATURAL  
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On the Day of Pentecost, the 120 believers gathered in the upper room spoke in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. This was a sign to the unbelieving Jews gathered in Jerusalem for the festival. Peter then stood up and preached, and in his sermon he quoted from Joel 2:30 saying, "And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke" (Acts 2:19). In the fourth chapter of Acts, the disciples were gathered together after Peter and John were threatened if they spoke anymore about Jesus, and they prayed, "... grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus" (Acts 4:29,30). So they prayed for signs and wonders. Now if signs are such a bad thing, and only wicked people desire a sign, why were the disciples praying for God to work signs and wonders through them? And why did God answer their prayers and continue to work signs and wonders throughout the book of Acts?

In Acts 6:8 we see Steven doing miracles and wonders. In Acts 8:6 we read, "And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did." Now, some say that signs and wonders were only done by the 12 apostles and Paul, but Steven and Phillip weren't part of the 12 apostles. They were just disciples, who a few verses earlier were waiting tables. This is part of the fulfillment of what Jesus said in Mark 16:17, "These signs shall follow THEM THAT BELIEVE." When Paul and Barnabas were at Iconium, Acts 14:3 says that Paul and Barnabas performed signs and wonders.

Barnabas wasn't one of the 12 either. Hebrews 2:3,4 says that God testified to the gospel "... by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will."

There's just no getting around it, folks. God gives us signs throughout His Word, and it's part of His New Testament plan for the gospel to be confirmed with signs and wonders. Now, some will say, "Yeah, but there are also lying signs and wonders in the book of Revelation." That's true, but that doesn't mean that we should forget about authentic signs and wonders. There are also false teachers in the Bible. Does that mean that we shouldn't teach the truth of God's Word? Of course not! Well, we shouldn't avoid signs and wonders because of lying miracles any more than we should avoid teaching the Bible because of false teachers. Moses didn't stop doing miraculous signs because of Pharaoh's magicians, so why should we back away from the supernatural because the devil can do a few tricks, too?

Sure, there's error and extremism in the signs and wonders world. That's why we have to use discernment and wisdom and be led by the Spirit. We have to be sure to give all the glory to God and keep the ministry of the Word first. But the Bible tells us to test the spirits, and to prove everything, and to hold on to the good. It says to forbid not to speak in tongues, and to despise not prophecies. To follow the Spirit of God we have to persevere through all of the criticism and all of the foolishness that inevitably comes with the supernatural. That's part of the cost of discipleship. But the rewards of seeing God at work by far outweigh the cost of getting there.

# LAST WORD: *Miracles*

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Dr. Randy Lane Bunch

It is not readily apparent to everyone just how much western materialism has influenced the faith of the Church in the West. By “materialism” I am not referring to the pervasive problem of greed for material things which has cheapened Christmas and turned it into a holiday exalting consumerism. I’m referring to *philosophical materialism* which holds that the only reality is what one can find in the material universe. Materialism is the philosophical foundation for atheism, which denies all supernatural events and transcendent reality. In short, materialism says there is no God, no heaven, no spirit, and no afterlife. The material universe is all there is. We are the stuff of the stars, as Carl Sagan tried to express it, poetically framing the nihilism which denies any hope of life after the grave.

In the Western Church, we have not agreed with Sagan or other materialists, but we have, in some quarters, capitulated to a lesser degree. In many churches, the idea of the miraculous still occurring is denied and sometimes even mocked. God has “gone into retirement” and simply doesn’t do that anymore. He gave us the Word and He’ll come back and fetch us home one day. That should be enough, or so say those for whom the end of the book of Acts was the closing of shop for the day of miracles.

There does seem to be a fatal flaw with this brand of theology, however. God does not seem to subscribe to it, neither scripturally nor in our modern world. Far from the days

of miracles being over, we are seeing miracles in unprecedented numbers in our world today. First of all, Jesus clearly told us that the works He did, His disciples would do also, even saying that “greater works” would be done by His followers (see John 14:12). Of course, if Jesus did the miracles He did by virtue of His divinity, as many wrongly suppose, we could never reproduce them since we are not divine. Yet in his epistle to the Philippians, Paul tells us that Christ “made himself of no reputation,” a relatively poor translation attempting to convey the idea that He “emptied Himself of His divine privileges” to identify with us. Thus, while retaining His divine nature and essence, He humbled Himself to become a man like us that He might be our sin bearer on the cross (see Philippians 2:7 in NASB, ESV, or other more literal translations). Thus, He did the miracles He did as a man anointed by the Holy Spirit, as the scriptures attest numerous times (Matthew 12:28, Luke 4:18, Acts 10:38). This same Holy Spirit empowers the Church to do the works of Jesus all over the world, demonstrating the reality of a living Savior (Acts 1:4-8).

Today in Iran, the fastest growing underground church movement has no buildings, no 501(c)3 corporations, and no hierarchy. Led predominantly by women, they boldly spread the gospel, seeing the miraculous, and living in the reality of the book of Acts. In Iran, there are no “make believers” with polite theologies that keep God tame. The reality of persecution has

purged the tree of all such useless and powerless faith. What is left is a real, vital faith that is taking a nation by storm. And yet, this is only the tip of the iceberg. All over the global south, the Church is exploding, even outpacing the natural birthrate. The miraculous is common in such places. Where real New Testament Christianity is believed, real New Testament miracles still occur. It seems that God's retirement party will have to be postponed!

As some of you know, we conduct a monthly Skype Crusade in an undisclosed Muslim nation.

This month's crusade was notable for its similarity to a story from the book of Acts. In Chapter 8, we are introduced to the evangelistic ministry of Philip, originally one of the seven deacons appointed by the apostles to oversee the distribution of resources to the neglected Grecian widows in the church at Jerusalem. After Stephen's martyrdom, Philip was among those scattered due to an outbreak of persecution. In Samaria, Philip sees great success as God confirms his preaching of Christ with signs and wonders. Simon, a local sorcerer, who had for a long time bewitched the people of the area through his sorceries, became a believer and even a disciple of Philip.

In our most recent Skype Crusade, we had eighty-eight people come to Christ and sixty-two reported healings. One healing had a

similar effect on some of the locals in this village as Philip's miracles did on Simon. In this village, black magic is heavily practiced, and several practitioners came to the Lord as a result of the meeting. However, in addition to these, there were also three men present who were teachers of black magic. One of the common healings reported in our Skype crusades are tumors disappearing. One girl had such a tumor on her arm, and during the meeting these three men witnessed her healing. As a result of this miracle, they came to the Lord, and we rejoice for their salvation!



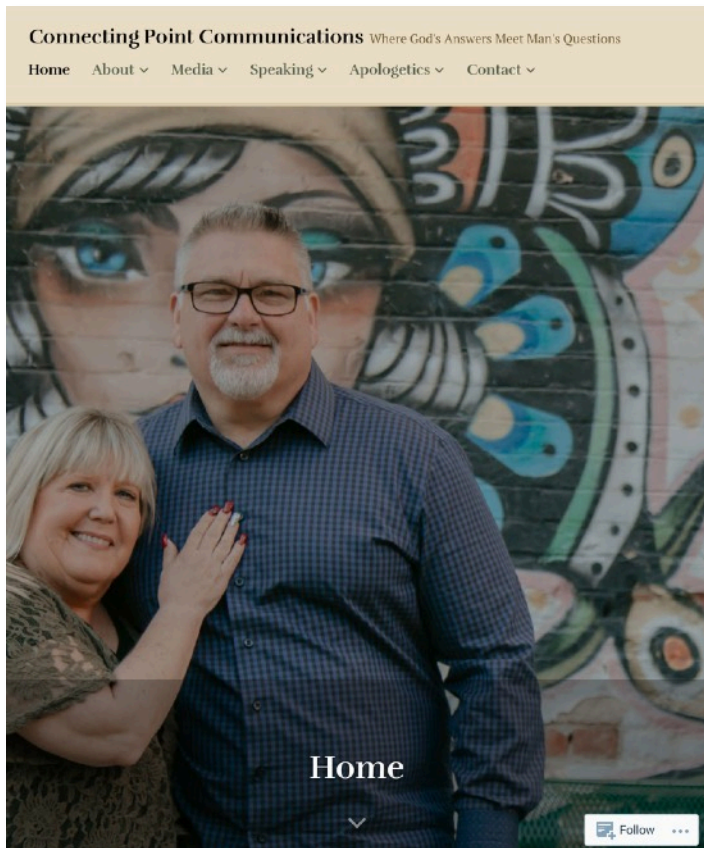
Last month, we also had many come to the Lord and many healed. Again, a tumor played a vital role in supplying a witness for Christ. A man who was in attendance in the meeting had a

tumor in his stomach. When we prayed for healing at the end of the meeting, he received a touch from God. When he returned to the doctor to have surgery to remove the tumor, they asked him how he felt. He told them he felt well and had no pain. Their subsequent tests proved what you have likely already guessed – the tumor was gone! As a result, this man and other members of his family came to the Lord.

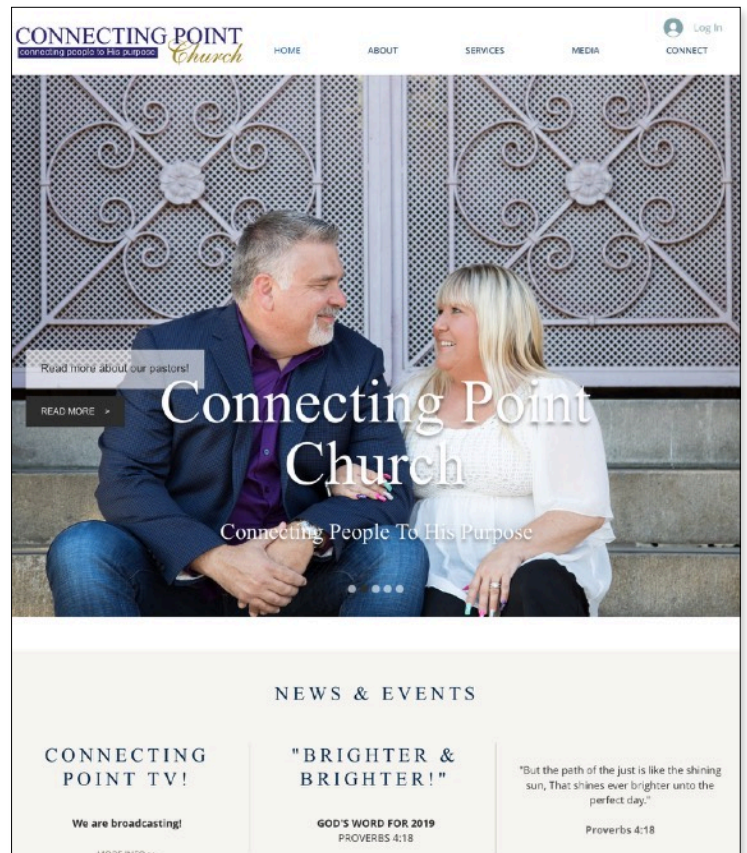
God is still in the miracle-working business, and He is no respecter of persons. He will respond to you as you reach out to Him in faith. Jesus is alive and every miracle performed in His name is one more evidence of a living faith and a triumphant Savior!!

# CONNECTING POINT MEDIA RESOURCES

*From the beginning it has been our vision to provide resource rich websites and materials that will minister to the needs of God's people. From these sites you can access our podcast, find links to our YouTube channel, as well as read our blog, access our Healing School materials, and much, much more. The best part? It's all free of charge!*



Randy Lane Bunch's personal ministry for Connecting Point Communications is found at [randylanebunch.org](http://randylanebunch.org), and contains links to the Connecting Point Podcast, Dr. Randy's Blog, Connecting Point Magazine, and much more! This ministry website is designed to provide a rich, comprehensive media ministry experience. The resources (except for Dr. Randy's books) are free and updated regularly. Remember, Dr. Randy is available to speak at your church or ministry event. To contact him, simply email him at [info@connectingpc.org](mailto:info@connectingpc.org).



Connecting Point Church is the name of the church that Dr. Randy and his wife, Maria, pastor in their home town of Taft, California. Additionally, they lead North East Christian Church in Bakersfield, California ([nechristian.net](http://nechristian.net)). The church website, [connectingpc.org](http://connectingpc.org), contains some of the content Dr. Randy's personal site has, along with directions to the church and service times. You can contact via email at [info@connectingpc.org](mailto:info@connectingpc.org) to request Dr. Randy to speak at your church or ministry event.

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