



Looking Up...

The *MISSION TO CHILDREN*

Reaching Out

www.MissionToChildren.org

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"Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."

Lamentations 3:21-23



Keep Looking Up

Sometime, some ordinary day will come, a busy day like this, filled to the brim with ordinary tasks, perhaps so full that we have little time or thought for Him. And there will be no hint from silent skies, no sign, no crash of cymbals, roll of drums, and yet that ordinary day will be the very day before our dear Lord comes!

The day before we lay our burdens down, and learn instead the strange feel of a crown. The day before all grieving will be past, and all tears wiped away at last. When we shall bid farewell, nor see again, that bittersweet companion, pain. For by unmerited, unfathomed grace, our rapt eyes shall behold our Savior's face! O child of God, awake and work, and pray! That ordinary day may be today, and yet the setting of tomorrow's sun will find a billion souls still here, unwon!

(Martha Snell Nicholson)

"Look up . . . because your redemption draws near" (Luke 21:28).

Praise God Because He Is . . .

- Most worthy of our praise Psalm 145:3
- Gracious and full of compassion Psalm 145:8
- Slow to anger and rich in love Psalm 145:8
- Near to all who call on Him in truth Psalm 145:18
- Faithful in all He does Psalm 33:4

Praise God With Us...

- People in 3 countries (Canada, the USA, and India) are working together to accomplish MTC's 3-year "More Than a Million" CSI project in India
- An 87-year-old MTC supporter is memorizing Bible verses in our Christlikeness booklet
- MTC gifts provided Christmas outreach dinners to more than 5,000 children worldwide
- A megachurch in California is using MTC's Character Solutions materials this year and training young parents to help their children cultivate Christlikeness

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From My Heart

Closely Held Values

Dr. John Garmo – President

Three months ago Jan and I returned to Lithuania for a dozen days of ministry. Despite the cold Baltic winter, the warmth of those we served and the prayers of our prayer team made it a time of treasured blessing.

One of our key appointments was with the headmaster of a school in Kaunas populated with approximately 4,000 students ranging from ages six to eighteen. I met him twelve months earlier at our Character Solutions training in another city and you read about him in *Looking Up* about a year ago.

What gives a person the courage to make such a statement publicly?

During that seminar in 2007 he asked how he could help his students understand that the teaching they received at church and the teaching they received in school should be interconnected. He observed to his colleagues that students seem to think that life is compartmentalized—it is okay to live one way at church and another way at school. He wanted his children and youth to understand that the attitudes and behavior they learn at church are not only for church. Rather, they should demonstrate the same attitudes and behavior at school, at work, and at home.

His was a bold statement for a headmaster to make in the presence of professional colleagues in a country still recovering from traumatic Nazi occupation in World War II followed by decades of Communist rule. What gives a person the courage to make such a statement publicly? The answer: conviction; conviction that our attitudes and behavior on Sunday should continue on Monday and throughout the week, every week.

In 2007 we told him we were almost finished preparing a twelve-page booklet using the Scriptures to teach the same character qualities he was studying at our seminar for educators.

In 2008 what a privilege it was for us to place in his hand our guide for Bible teachers, entitled *Christlikeness!* He immediately arranged a meeting with two of his veteran teachers so we could show them this material and discuss how to present it to their students.

As you will learn in this issue of *Looking Up*, we describe “Conviction” as “Holding a value or belief so firmly that it affects my attitudes and actions.” The Kaunas headmaster demonstrated his conviction that attitudes and actions should be consistent Sunday through Saturday.

Later that day he took us to the actual Kaunas office of the heroic Japanese diplomat, Chiune Sugihara, who rescued thousands of innocent refugees from Hitler’s clutches at the beginning of World War II. This visit was particularly meaningful for Jan and me because our teacher’s guide section on Conviction features Mr. and Mrs. Sugihara. They valued human life and believed firmly that saving innocent victims of Nazi hatred was important enough to risk their own safety and sacrifice their good reputation.

How about you? Here is a question for you to discuss with friends when done with topics like weather, business, and family: What three to five values or beliefs do you hold so firmly that they affect your attitude and actions Sunday through Saturday?

“For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”

(2 Timothy 1:12b)



Visiting the historic Sugihara house

CONVICTION

*Holding a value or belief so firmly
that it influences my attitudes or actions*

Abraham (Genesis 12, 17, 18, 21, 22; Romans 4)



One day thousands of years ago God surprised an elderly man named Abraham. "I will make you the father of many nations," God promised. Abraham wondered how this could be possible, since he and his wife were very old and had no children of their own. But God performed a miracle. How joyful they were at the birth of Isaac when Sarah was age 90 and Abraham age 100!

Years later God tested Abraham's belief that God would keep His promise. "Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and sacrifice him as a burnt offering." Although his heart was breaking, Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. Would God perform another miracle and bring Isaac back to life after the sacrifice? Puzzled but believing, he obeyed God by preparing an altar as God directed him and laying his son on that altar.

Just as Abraham lifted the knife to sacrifice Isaac, God shouted from heaven, "Abraham! Lay down the knife! Do not hurt the boy in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld even your beloved son from me."

Abraham respected and believed God so firmly that he was even willing to obey God's drastic command to sacrifice his son. In return, God saved Isaac and blessed Abraham with descendants as numerous as the stars.

What Jesus Said About "Conviction"

"When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that He was back home. Soon the house where He was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While He was preaching God's word to them, four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above His head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, 'My child, your sins are forgiven.'" (Mark 2:1-5)

Memory Verse: "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

Conviction in Action

Discuss 2-3 key beliefs taught in the Bible, including scripture references. Examples: Jesus is God, God's love is forever, etc. Display these beliefs in a "lap book" (a 3D report) or write on a card to keep in each student's Bible.

Other Biblical Examples

Caleb (Numbers 13:21-33; 14:6-9, 24)

Peter (Acts 4:16-22; 5:27-32)
3 youths (Daniel 3)

Scripture References

- **Conviction**
Joshua 14:7-9
Joshua 24:14-15
Daniel 1:8
Daniel 3:17-18
Ephesians 6:10-18
2 Thessalonians 2:15
2 Timothy 1:12

Conviction Inspires:

- **Faith**
Acts 3:16
Romans 4:20-21
Galatians 2:20
Ephesians 2:8-9
Hebrews 11
- **Confidence**
Jeremiah 17:7
Ephesians 3:12
Hebrews 13:6
- **Optimism**
Psalm 27:13
Proverbs 17:22
- **Enthusiasm**
Ephesians 6:6-7
- **Persuasiveness**
2 Timothy 1:12

Lack of Conviction

- **Apathy**
Revelation 3:16

The **MISSION TO CHILDREN**

Caring for, and cultivating Christlike character in, children—especially those at risk

MTC 2008 Christmas Outreaches: Indian, Ugandan, Colombian, and Salvadoran Style

One MTC Indian children's home celebrated their Christmas dinner outreach in a unique way—presenting Christlikeness teaching to those who came. Various children quoted memorized verses and stories from the Bible Teacher's Guide as they presented the Gospel and Christmas story. At this home the older children are teaching the younger ones what it means to have Christlike character. "And a little child shall lead them . . ."

In central Uganda about 2,000 children attended Christmas outreaches. They ate a delicious meal, heard the Gospel story, enjoyed exuberant African singing, and left with a small Christmas gift bag. Treats included a Jesus coloring book with pencils, a Scripture portion, candy, etc. Several Muslim children attended. There were numerous professions of faith and all were encouraged to attend Sunday School in nearby churches.

MTC Christmas dinner donations allowed about 400 at-risk children in Bogota, Colombia, to hear about God's love and enjoy a tamale meal as well as a Bible skit. Please pray with us that the many children who prayed to accept Jesus into their lives will come back to the ministry center to be encouraged in their faith.

Deaf children in El Salvador celebrated with about 230 attendees. The school staff performed Christmas songs in sign language. Bible dramas and games were enjoyed by all.

True to Salvadoran style the children finished by breaking a piñata. Two adults attending accepted Jesus as their personal Savior.

The Ripple Effect in India Begins in a Local Church

An Indian Pastor taught the character quality of "self-discipline" to his church believers. Most of them were arriving at services very late. After teaching this, everybody started arriving at the church on time. He has seen a vast

difference from his believers' old nature and the present. Many of his church believers are now equipped to focus on worthy goals in spite of all the obstacles in their lives. He is regularly teaching our Character Solutions lessons.

Worldwide Resurrection Dinners Continue MTC Tradition

Generous giving to Resurrection dinners this month will provide outreaches in about 12 countries around the world.

A meal and a small gift averages about \$3.50 per child. A Gospel presentation and delicious meal are part of the package. Our international partners demonstrate God's love to these often-neglected children.

Thank you, Mission To Children family, for providing money for over 5,000 needy children to participate in our 2008 Christmas dinner outreaches. With your help for the Easter outreach we can at least double the amount of children who hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



Resurrection dinner outreaches—an opportunity to demonstrate God's love to often-neglected children

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Membership in ECFA means:

- A clear and strong commitment to evangelical Christianity
- Belief in full disclosure
- The highest standards of financial integrity
- Adherence to strict standards