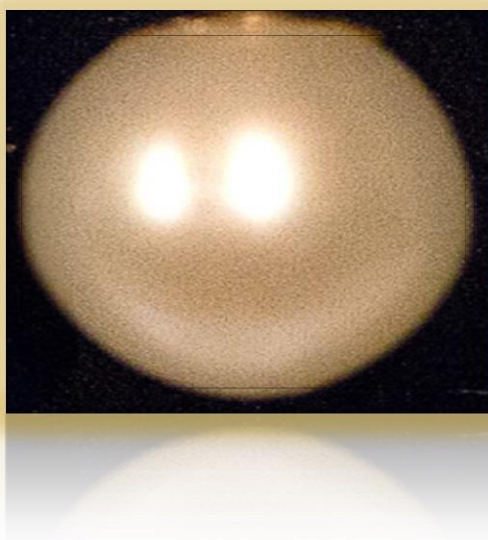


Pastor's Letter *(November 15, 2019)*

Do You Polish Your Pearl?



"365-253 - Pearls" by Ruth_W is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

You do know that you have a Pearl, don't you? Jesus Christ identified it long ago (in Matthew 13:45-46) as "the Pearl of Great Price" because of its rare beauty. However, that beauty will only continue as long as it is well taken care of by its owner. The Pearl that Christ talked about features for us His priceless calling, His way of life, and our future entrance into the Kingdom of God.

In the parable of the Pearl of Great Price, a merchant seeking high-quality pearls came across one pearl that was so large, so beautiful, so rare, and (justifiably so) so enormously expensive that he had to liquidate his entire fortune to pay for it.

Do we cherish our calling and our future just as much? Perhaps we do ... but the Pearl of Great Price is nothing that we can take for granted. It is amazing how the proper care of a literal pearl contains vital spiritual comparisons that we can relate to. A pearl is very delicate and can be easily tarnished. Consider the "dos and don'ts" of the ideal maintenance of pearls:

- 1) Pearls are very sensitive. When cleaning them, only use pure distilled water that has no chemicals, because even mild soaps and cleaners can be very abrasive to and can permanently scratch sensitive pearls, which are very porous. Never store pearls in a plastic bag. Some plastics emit a chemical that in time will potentially deteriorate the stone. Impure products only threaten to corrupt and compromise a pearl of great price.

Water is symbolic of God's Holy Spirit. We need the unadulterated, doctrinally sound, spiritually balanced presence of God's spirit in our lives. If someone puts their pearl in a compartment for an extended period of time, it is recommended that they also place an open bottle of water in the same compartment. This prevents the pearl from dehydrating to the point that it could crack and deteriorate to the point of losing all of its value. Unadulterated water can be a pearl's best friend.

- 2) For maximum luster, rub a drop of olive oil onto the cotton cloth to softly polish the pearl.

As we know, olive oil is symbolic of God's Holy Spirit. God gives us His Spirit to spiritually sparkle in a life of ever-increasing optimism (Galatians 5:22-23)

- 3) Use a cotton cloth—never a brush or a chemical that will be too abrasive.

Christ's way of life is carefully balanced so as to not be too demanding or too lax with us. Matthew 11:28-30 reassures us that Christ's way of life should fit us well and not seem overwhelming to follow. Sin is abrasive. Sin can devalue us if we let it. However, with God, our value can appreciate.

- 4) If wearing a pearl necklace, always put on hair spray and perfume first and the necklace last, so as to minimize chemical exposure. Moreover, be aware that bodily perspiration dangerously risks tarnishing a pearl necklace.

Just like false doctrine, outside chemicals are very detrimental. If we keep the sparkle of God's kingdom foremost in our minds and enable ourselves to be polished with His Holy Spirit, we will be cherishing the Pearl of Great Price. Nothing else is more important!

It's Time to Invite the Public

As I mentioned last week, we will begin inviting to church the subscribers who live within 20 minutes of our meeting hall. Each time we do, we will feature a particular topic that we trust will interest our readers. On this first round of presentations, we will address the topic of *Why Were You Born?* We will mail out the letters a week before that particular Sabbath, and will conduct the meetings at our regular church hall.

I will begin on November 30 in Ocala and December 7 in Tallahassee. The Vero Beach and Ft. Myers will have their presentation on a December date to be decided by next week. I want to do this once a month with postage money that I requested months ago from the home office.

The plan includes having volunteer brethren neatly hand-addressing envelopes after services once a month. This can be done in a minimal amount of time. Upon completion, we will have one of the brethren ask God to bless the pile of letters that we will take to the post office. Mr. Armstrong traditionally did so when he and his wife mailed out the early Plain Truth magazines to the public.

Sample Letter



United Church of God an International Association

Greetings,

It is my honor to send this invitation to you as a subscriber to *Beyond Today Magazine*. As a local representative of the Beyond Today program and the United Church of God, I appreciate the interest people have in attending any of our events or asking questions about the Bible.

Periodically, I will mail out announcements of our activities and free public presentations that will address a variety of subjects including *Why Were You Born?*, *Where Do We Go From Here in Bible Prophecy?*, *How to have a Happy Marriage*, *How to Conquer Anxiety & Depression*, plus a variety of other meaningful topics.

With the Bible as our foundational guide for establishing Biblical truths, we encourage you to not simply believe us because we claim that something is true but rather do as the Bereans did in Acts 17:11 and “prove all things” (as 1 Thessalonians 5:21 tells us to do). In this world of uncertainty, there is no substitute for being sure of our convictions ... especially regarding true doctrine. Our subscribers can have great peace of mind as we prove exactly what the Bible does say on the great issues of life. So, in a sense, we are like one major news outlet (to which we have no relationship) that says: ‘We report, you decide.’

Our next Ocala public presentation will be south of Ocala, west of I-75, off of highway 484, at the Marion Oaks Community Center. We will meet at 294 Marion Oaks Lane, November 30, at 1:30 P.M.

At that time, we will look at perhaps the most basic question of all: *Why Were You Born?* Most people have no idea why God created man. Some view mankind’s current situation as a product of mere happenstance. Others go further to claim that mankind simply evolved and has no meaningful existence or future. They couldn’t be more wrong—but how do you prove that? How does one know? And what can that mean for us?

Do come Saturday, November 30, as we establish from the Bible why we were born. The answer will amaze most people.

Most sincerely,

Braden Veller

Pastor, United Church of God—Ocala

—<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/ocala-fl>—

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Pray for the Seminar Series



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Please remember to pray for the upcoming seminar presentations on *Why Were You Born?*

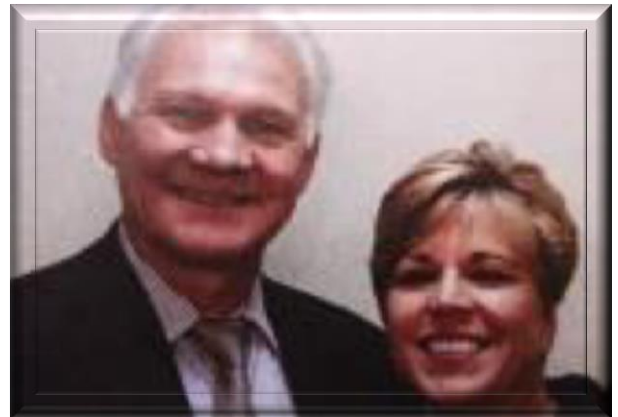
Bob & Sandy Orosz

This past summer, we began running a short bio on each speaker who contributes in these four congregations. To continue, it is my privilege to share a brief bio about Bob & Sandy Orosz.

Sandy has lived in this area of Florida most of her life. Bob is from Ohio and is an alumni and former football player for Ohio State.

Both went to Ambassador College in Pasadena, CA, and worked there for the church in publishing and television. Herb Vierra—the head of the television department—made Bob his right-hand assistant in managing a 14-million-dollar annual budget and coordinating schedules of the four TV presenters who we had back then.

He was ordained a deacon before their move to Zephyrhills, FL, roughly 25 years ago.



Bob has an MBA degree in business and currently manages various aspects of real estate.

President's Letter

You might have noticed one of our local speakers pictured in the latest letter from the president:
<https://www.ucg.org/members/news/update-from-the-president-november-14-2019>



Michael Fike gives an expository sermonette during one of the Pastoral Development Program sessions.

This Sabbath

Lonnie Mooneyham will be in Tallahassee, Moses Summers will be in Ft. Myers, Randy McQuien will be in Vero Beach, and I will be in Ocala. Wishing everyone a wonderful Sabbath!

BV