



**TY GIBSON**  
co-director

## THE IDENTITY-SHAPING POWER OF FATHERHOOD

**“THE FATHER HIMSELF** loves you” (John 16:27).

Fatherhood is an identity-shaping vocation. Whether he does so consciously or not, a dad tells his child who and what to become. The child is significantly defined by the father’s manner of relating to him. By his actions and attitudes toward the child, the father projects an identity onto the child so that he grows up to think and feel about himself according to the father’s enacted vision of him. Day-by-day, hour-by-hour, a bequeathing of character occurs in the fathering process. The child comes to see himself or herself through daddy’s eyes.

If a child is raised being told in words or attitudes, “You’re stupid, you’re lazy, you’re in my way, I can’t trust you,” the child gradually loses hope and motivation to be anything different. Unless the child finds a different defining influence, or outright rebels against the father’s vision, the child will inevitably become whatever the father projects. In a very real sense the father’s

words act as scripting messages that inscribe into the child a storyline to be lived, a way of seeing and defining himself. As a result, an experiential course of enacted destiny unfolds.

On the other hand, imagine the effect of words and attitudes from dad like these: “You are intelligent, capable and full of potential. I know you will grow up to be kind and honest. You mean everything to me. I love you.” Unless the child chooses at some point to come under some negative influence or to rebel against the father’s positive vision, the child will become just what the father projected.

In a similar manner, but on a much grander scale, our heavenly Father’s words toward us operate as a self-fulfilling prophecy in our lives as we believe them. Faith is the means by which we place ourselves under the fathering influence of God. He speaks to us, and of us, according to the new person He knows we

may become in Christ. As we believe what He says in His word, His articulated love for us begins to redefine us in our own eyes in a positive light.

In other words, I begin to believe that I am who God’s love says I am!

The Father lifts all the shame away from our hearts by declaring us innocent in His eyes. He “calls those things which do not exist as

**GOD CALLS US RIGHTEOUS EVEN THOUGH HE KNOWS WE’RE GUILTY, NOT TO CONDONE OUR SIN BUT TO RESTORE ACTUAL INNOCENCE IN US.**

though they did” (Romans 4:17).

The context here is that God calls us righteous even though He knows we’re guilty, not to condone our sin but to restore actual innocence in us.

God’s Word, the Bible, is called by Paul, “the word of faith” (Romans 10:8). Since it is God’s word, it is God’s faith we encounter in the pages. Said another way, Scripture is a faith text. It is filled with promises and declarations and a whole new storyline, first foretold by the

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**JEFFREY ROSARIO**  
speaker

# ARISE: 12 CLASSES AND COUNTING!

**IT'S AMAZING HOW** fast time flies. The Cornerstone program has now graduated its 12th class. That's over 500 students since we started! It seems like just a few weeks ago we were having orientation for the newly arrived 2013 students on their first day of class. And in a flash it's all over. As always, this year's class of students represented several countries from around the world: United States, Canada, Austria, Germany, Venezuela, South Korea and Norway.

Our curriculum continues to morph and change into better things, which is really exciting. We never want to get static in our efforts to communicate the gospel in fresh and compelling ways. As we come to the end of yet another year, we realize that it could be even better.

We call the program curriculum, "The Story." It follows the narrative of Scripture from Pre-Creation to Re-Creation, from Genesis to Revelation, from Eden lost to Eden restored. For three and a half months the students get a big picture of what the gospel is all about and how to share it with others.

But the program isn't merely about sitting in a classroom, it's about encountering real people and seeing the gospel intersect with their lives. That's where community outreach comes in. Throughout the program, the students participate in about 200 hours of outreach. It's an opportunity for them to

put to use the things they learn in the classroom. It's one thing to learn information in class but the real experience is sharing it with others. Outreach this year included meeting people house to house, conducting in-home Bible studies, feeding the homeless, visiting church members, and ministering at a senior citizen's center.

My favorite thing about the outreach program is seeing the students stepping out of their comfort zones to do things they would never have tried on their own. Many of them engage in personal ministry for the very first

## THE SAVIOR'S WORDS

"Mary was storing her mind with the precious words falling from the Savior's lips, words that were more precious to her than earth's most costly jewels."

Ellen White  
*Desire of Ages*, p. 525

## OUR NEIGHBORS

"There are many who need the ministrations of loving Christian hearts. Many have gone down to ruin who might have been saved if their neighbors, common men and women, had put forth personal effort for them. Many are waiting to be personally addressed."

Ellen White  
*Desire of Ages*, p. 141

## CHANNELS OF LIGHT

"All who are consecrated to God will be channels of light. God makes them His agents to communicate to others the riches of His grace. His promise is, 'I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.' Ezekiel 34:26."

Ellen White  
*Desire of Ages*, p. 141



time during the program. I love the nervous tension in the atmosphere as they venture out to meet and interact with total strangers. That's one of the valuable lessons ministry provides—becoming comfortable with the risk of rejection.

Getting the opportunity to overcome the fear of rejection, along with fellow classmates with whom to share the experience is an empowering journey. It's liberating to learn that, though we all have our individual part as co-laborers, this is really the Lord's work. I think of Dan, one of our students who was nervous about giving his first Bible study. Now he knows that he can do it! But what's even more exciting is that he took a local church member along with him to make the connection so that in his absence there is someone that can follow up on that relationship.

One of the things that sticks out the most to me about this year's class is hearing the students share testimonies at graduation. They

talked about the paradigm shift they experienced. They got a fresh perspective on the character of God. One student said, "I've heard people say it but now I know firsthand that God is love is the central message of the Bible."

At the end of the day, we know that with all the classes, all the conversations, all the instruction that the students were exposed to, it would be impossible for them to remember everything. Actually, it would be impossible to remember *even half* of what they heard. But, as David mentioned in the final charge at graduation, the most important thing is that they remember "the one thing." And what is that "one thing?" Well, it's that thing that Mary was after as Jesus visited with her in Martha's house. Luke tells us that Mary "sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word" (Luke 10:38). That's the one thing she did. She sat at Jesus' feet to take it all in—His teachings and His life. The affirmation that Jesus gave her has

been preserved for us all to ponder: "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42).

Of course, the story of the Cornerstone 2013 graduates is far from over. In fact, now is when their story begins. Now is when they return to their own worlds and take with them the encounter they had while sitting at the feet of Jesus. They'll take that to their universities where Christ's mission will be woven into their academic pursuits. They'll take it to their workplace where they'll do even the little things for the honor and glory of God's kingdom. They'll take it back to their families where they'll reflect the love of God to their wives, husbands, and children.

May the Lord richly bless this new group of alumni to "go . . . and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19)!

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## COME SEE US!

### FEBRUARY 1-8

Simi Valley SDA Church  
Simi Valley, CA  
805.526.0141  
James Rafferty

### FEBRUARY 8

Los Alamitos SDA Company  
Cypress, CA  
714.236.4827  
Risë Rafferty

### FEBRUARY 10-26

ARISE Australia  
Chinderah, NSW  
0409 660 470; info@ariseaustralia.org  
Ty Gibson

### FEBRUARY 12-15

3ABN *Anchors of Truth*  
618.627.4651 / www.3abn.org  
James Rafferty

### FEBRUARY 15

Fall Creek SDA Church  
Fall Creek, OR  
541.937.3526  
Risë Rafferty

### FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 6

ARISE Australia  
Chinderah, NSW  
0409 660 470; info@ariseaustralia.org  
Jeffrey Rosario

## ... THE IDENTITY-SHAPING POWER OF FATHERHOOD *(continued from page 1)*

prophets and then personified in Christ. Scripture—God’s “word of faith”—casts a vision of what humanity may become in Christ.

And what a beautiful vision it is!  
*God, I embrace You as my Father.*

*Moment by moment, day by day,  
may I be more and more defined  
and shaped and remade by Your  
faithful love.*

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# CONVOCATION



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