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HOUR OF POWER FROM JULY 25TH, 2010

Why in the World Do You Need the Church? (Robert H. Schuller)

PROGRAM OPENING/TRUMPET FANFARE/V.O.

VO: Today on the Hour of Power: Bill Dallas went from the height of real estate success to a four by ten foot prison cell at San Quentin. That's when God transformed his life.

BILL: I would go down to the prison yard at San Quentin every day and I would go on the ground and I would crawl up in a ball in the fetal position, un-bathed, un-shaven, crying and this was as a believer in Christ, praying to God like Elijah prayed to God under the broom tree, take my life, I've had enough.

VO: Then Pastor Sheila welcomes as her special guest Carole Lewis. Her daughter was killed by a drunk driver, her husband was diagnosed with cancer and she lost her home in Galveston, Texas to Hurricane Ike. But Carole will tell you that absolutely nothing can separate you from the love of God.

CL: And I will never forget standing in that shower and shaking my fist at the devil. I said you have given it your best shot this time, but instead of killing me, you have fueled me and I will never quit.

VO: Also today, soloist Beth Groombridge.

BG: (SINGING) Victory is our reward through Jesus Christ our Lord.

VO: Then stay tuned as Dr. Schuller returns to the pulpit with his very special message just for you, titled, "Why in the World Do You Need the Church?"

RHS: On this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

VO: If you need a lift today, you've tuned to the right program. Join us today for the best hour on television, the Hour of Power from the Crystal Cathedral.

HYMN - "Joyful, Joyful.."

Joyful, joyful, we adore You, God of glory, Lord of love; Hearts unfold like flowers before You, opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away; Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day. Amen! Amen! Amen!

GOOD MORNING/INVOCATION

RHS: Good morning.

SSC: Good morning.

RHS: Welcome to the house of God. Feel the presence, the personalities here all generate some energy and it is spiritual because that's where your heart is and that's what the faith is. Welcome, Sheila.

SSC: Thank you, dad.

RHS: Turn around, shake hands with someone and give them the blessing, God loves you and so do I. Happy Father's Day.

Well, my dear son-in-law, who is married to my youngest daughter, his name is Jim Penner; he's helping me out this morning. Wave to them Jim, so they know who you are, yeah. Let's have a prayer:

Thank You Lord, thank You again. I'm just hung up on those words this morning, Lord. Thank You, thank You, thank You. Thank You for what we are about to receive. Thank You for the blessings You've prepared for us to be opened as gifts in this hour. Thank You God, that You know where we need and

what the need is and You're delivering it and we are rejoicing in our faith. Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN - "Medley – Rise Up, O Church/Shout to the North"

Rise up, O Church of God have done with lesser things. Give heart and soul and mind and strength to serve the King of kings.

Rise up, O Church of God the Savior's message strong brings the good news of love and peace that ends a life of wrong.

Rise up, O Church of Christ the world for you does wait to share your love and joy and faith rise up, rise up, be great. Amen!

BETH: And you know the world is waiting for us to rise up, for us to give a message of hope and so we sing together right now. Men, will you lead us? Rise up.

Men of faith rise up and sing of the great and glorious King. You are strong when you feel weak in your brokenness complete. Shout to the north and the south, sing to the east and the west, Jesus is Savior to all, Lord of heaven and earth.

Rise up women of the truth stand and sing to broken hearts. Who can know the healing power of our glorious King of love. Shout to the north and the south, sing to the east and the west, Jesus is Savior to all, Lord of heaven and earth.

Rise up church with broken wings fill this place with songs again of our God who reigns on high by His grace again we'll fly. Shout to the north and the south, sing to the east and the west, Jesus is Savior to all, Lord of heaven and earth.

Shout to the north and the south, sing to the east and the west, Jesus is Savior to all, Lord of heaven and earth. He is Lord of heaven and earth.

SCRIPTURE – Ephesians 3:14-21 - JP

JP: You may be seated. The great thing about applauding worship is you're applauding God. Jesus is indeed Savior to all. He is Savior to all.

Hear these words as we continue our service from Ephesians 3 that speak of Christ' love for the family His church.

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ from whom the whole family on heaven and earth is named. That He would grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might through His spirit in the inner person, your inner person. That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. That you being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend what is the width and the length and the depth and the height to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever, amen.

This is the word of the Lord.

ANTHEM - "Glorious"

Glorious, You are glorious, O Lord, our God most high. God of our worship and God of our praise, You are glorious, You are glorious. God of our living and all of

our days, You are glorious, You are glorious. Lord, we worship and honor Your name. With our voices we stand and proclaim, You are glorious, You are glorious, You are glorious, You are Lord, God most high!

Joyful praise to the Lord. God of creation, we praise You. Merciful, faithful shepherd of souls, Lord, we praise You, Lord, we praise You, restoring our joy, redeeming our lives, creating and blessing our dreams. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Glorious, You are glorious. Praise Him, all creatures here below. Glorious, You are glorious. Praise Him above ye heavenly host; praise God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

God of our worship and God of our praise, You are glorious, You are glorious. God of our living and all of our days, You are glorious, You are glorious. Lord we worship and honor Your name. With our voices we stand and proclaim, You are glorious, glorious, glorious, glorious, glorious, glorious Lord God most high! Glorious!

INTERVIEW – CAROLE LEWIS

SSC: SHEILA SCHULLER COLEMAN CL: CAROLE LEWIS

SSC: We are in the midst of our message series entitled HA! Hallelujah Anyway! And I just love this and even the other day, I was driving into work here and I thought oh this was not the way I wanted my morning to begin. And I was grumbling in my spirit and I said to myself ‘Sheila, are you going to practice what you preach or not?’ And so I started to sing praise songs. I remembered our message series HA! Hallelujah Anyway! And I started to sing How Great Thou Art. Immediately I felt my spirit change and so I’m really, really excited about this series that God has asked us to give to all of you.

And today the person that I’m interviewing has lived this like nobody else I know. Her name is Carole Lewis and she’s an author and a speaker and most of all she is the national director of First Place 4 Health, a leading Christian weight loss program and she’s had her share of personal struggles. Listen to this: In 1984, Carole and her husband faced personal bankruptcy. Then in 1997, her husband Johnny was diagnosed with stage four prostate cancer. In 2001, her daughter Sherry on Thanksgiving Day was killed by a drunk driver. And then in 2008, she lost her house to Hurricane Ike. A true Job woman, and yet some of her books are on thanking God no matter what and her current book is Give God a Year, Change your Life Forever. Please welcome, Carole Lewis.

Take a look at this beautiful woman of God. Would you believe that she is not a grandmother but a great grandmother of two? And I don’t even have one single grandchild yet. I am so impressed. God has really blessed. And what impresses me is that you do not reflect in your spirit or in any way shape, or form the trials that you have had to endure.

CL: It’s only the Lord. I’ve experienced how He walks with us every step of the way when we go through hard times. And so the joy of the Lord is what overflows in my life because of Him.

SSC: Wow. What a testimony, Carole.

CL: Well it’s all to Him.

SSC: Take us back to the bankruptcy. What was that like? How did you do Hallelujah Anyway in the midst of a bankruptcy?

CL: Well I wasn't doing hallelujah back in 1984. I was a rebel who had pretty much run my own life. I knew the Lord but He was definitely not the Lord of my life. And He used that horrible time in our life to bring me to the end of myself. It took something that dramatic and so I prayed the prayer one morning: Lord, I'm not willing but I'm willing to be made willing.

SSC: That's a great prayer. Say that one more time.

CL: Lord, I'm not willing but I'm willing to be made willing and I finished it with and please don't let it hurt too bad. I knew it had to be horrible.

SSC: Why is it that we're all so reluctant to submit our will to the Lord and why is it that we're afraid if we do that it's going to be awful.

CL: Well I don't really know why that is but I'm a very strong controlling person and so I pretty much live my life like God, You take care of heaven; I'll take care of earth. And I'll call You if I have a need. And so He changed all of that and He came in that very minute and began to work on my stubborn will so I thank God for that bankruptcy.

SSC: Wow. She thanked God for the bankruptcy. Unbelievable. And then tell us about Johnny's diagnosis.

CL: Well my husband Johnny was diagnosed with stage four prostate cancer in 1997. He was given a year and a half to two years to live and God has been so faithful to us, through this 12 year journey with stage four prostate cancer. He's not in remission but he is doing well. In fact, people think he looks so well that he says you know nobody ever told me how good I looked before I had cancer. Do you think they're saying I look good with what I have? But he is doing great. Has a great attitude and we're..

SSC: What a miracle.

CL: ..it is. It is a true miracle.

SSC: Yes, one and a half to two years and here it is almost 13 years later.

CL: A lot of people in First Place 4 Health pray for us.

SSC: Wow. Amazing. And then Shari.

CL: Yes. Our sweet Shari was our middle child. She was 39 years old, married to Jeff and had three teenage daughters: 13, 15 and 19. And they had spent all day Thanksgiving Day at our home and Shari's last act that I saw was decorating my Christmas tree. She always did that on Thanksgiving Day because she knew she did it better than anyone.

So they left about 4 o'clock and at 9 o'clock that night, they were leaving Jeff's parents home and they lived on a very busy street and Shari, all five of them were in the car ready to leave and the parents and brother and sister were on the front porch and Shari remembered some clothes that she had in the back for her mother-in-law that belonged to my mother. My mother lived with us the last three years of her life and she was in a wheelchair so she wasn't able to wear her pretty clothes and so Shari was taking them to her mother-in-law and she got out and Kristin, the 15 year old, had a pie in her lap and so she got out and was standing beside Shari and her mother-in-law, waiting to put the pie in the back, and my granddaughter Kara, who's 19 at the time, saw a car coming down the sidewalk, headed for their car and she looked at the clock, it was ten after nine and she said oh God, don't let me be the only one in my family left alive. She knew that car was going to hit their car.

But the girl, the 18-year-old girl that was driving the car, hit a light pole and the car ricocheted and she missed Kristin, missed the mother-in-law and hit Shari. And it was a horrible thing. I'm so grateful that I was not there, but she lived a

couple of hours in a Houston hospital and died in surgery. And Jeff has done a fabulous job finishing the raising of those girls and they're doing well.

SSC: And how did your faith carry you through that, Carole?

CL: Well the morning after Shari's death, I was taking a shower and I will never forget standing in that shower and shaking my fist at the devil. I said you have given it your best shot this time, but instead of killing me, you have fueled me and I will never quit. And that has been the truth.

SSC: Wow. Wow. And God has, He has used you..

CL: He has.

SSC: ..and He has used you and used Shari, continues to use her.

CL: Oh yes, no doubt about it. We know where Shari is. We will see her again.

SSC: Yes. And then you lost your home in Hurricane Ike. I didn't know that until I just got your new book. I'd heard the rest of your story but not that.

CL: Well we lived on Galveston Bay, when Johnny was diagnosed with prostate cancer, we thought we might not be able to retire so we'd just retire early, even though I was still working, so I drove every day 46 miles to my office and back, but we lived right on the water, we could see the ship channel and the ships going by and it was like heaven to us. And so when Hurricane Ike came in, we put down the storm shutters and we evacuated like everybody else. Our home had been through Hurricane Carla and didn't have a drop of water in it so we had no worry at all. We didn't remove anything from the house but when the storm was over, our next door neighbors went back and when our neighbor called, she was just bawling. She said oh my goodness, it's all gone. The house is empty, everything's gone. And there were holes in every room, so they took pictures and brought them to us up at Round Top, Texas, where we were staying, and that was wonderful that I had a little bit of forewarning before we went back.

But yes it was all gone. All of our furniture is in Galveston Bay, everything that we owned and you know it's been quite a revelation that we all need to simplify a little bit. God provided a townhome for us to live in for 15 months that was totally furnished. We didn't need one thing and you know I had 15 months to think about all this stuff that we all collect. And I said my children will rise up and call me blessed if I don't replace all of that stuff.

SSC: That's right, that's right. Well, and now you've written this book, Give God a Year, Change Your Life Forever. And I tell you what, people, I read this book because I can see how you have a story to tell and you have learned, you've learned some hard, hard lessons the hard way. And so I read this book and there are some things in there that I took special note of, but what caused the book? What is the motivation?

CL: Well in our program, First Place 4 Health, we challenge every member to give God a year. Our program is primarily a weight loss program, but we deal with the total person: spiritual, mental, emotional and physical. And so we know that God may want to deal in another area before weight loss. So I had written an article for our newsletter on giving God a year and told a story of a lady who had lost a hundred pounds in a year, just two pounds a week and it's possible to do that. And I closed my computer and I felt the Lord speak to my heart and say Carole would you give Me a year? And that's a lot easier for me to challenge you to give God a year than to actually do it myself. That is 365 days.

SSC: That's a long time; it sounds like, but..

CL: It went very quick.

SSC: Yes.

CL: Three weeks after I told God I would give Him a year, I had already written six chapters of this book, I was so excited about the message that God had given me to pray and obey and then Hurricane Ike hit. So I journal'd all of my trials and where I stumbled because we're not ever going to do life perfectly.

SSC: Right.

CL: But you know God has been so gracious and He's still answering the things that I wrote down that I wanted to do every day for a year.

SSC: Yes I loved the prayer journals, and I prayer journal and if you don't prayer journal, I really strongly encourage you all to do so. And the other tips in the book are just wonderful, wonderful. Its comprehensive and you're so real. So authentic.

CL: Thank you.

SSC: But I want to thank you Carole and let's have a prayer, shall we?

CL: Okay.

SSC: Lord Jesus, take this book, take this woman and use it for Your glory. You have children out there, oh God Your children are hurting. They may have lost their business to bankruptcy, they may be facing a stage four cancer diagnosis, they may have lost a child to death, and they may have lost their home to foreclosure or to a Hurricane but oh Lord, today they woke up and they said its all gone. There's no hope. And yet Carole stands here and says yes there is hope.

CL: Amen.

SSC: And there is a way out. So bless Your children, oh Lord. Teach them to look to You and to pray that prayer. Lord, I'm not willing today, but make me willing to be willing. Thank You Jesus, Amen.

CL: Amen. Thank you, Sheila.

SSC: Thank you Carole.

RHS: Wonderful.

SSC: Thank you. So Give God a Year, Change Your Life Forever. That's available at your bookstore or online at hourofpower.org. It's a wonderful, wonderful book and program.

SOLO – BETH GROOMBRIDGE – “He Loved Me”

He chose me before the world was known. He chose me to be His very own. He made me, then let me choose my way. I chose to move away.

He loved me when hope had taken wing. He loved me when I'd lost everything. He bought me; redemption's work was done through Jesus Christ, His Son.

Who shall separate me from the love of God? Shall dreams of tomorrow, pain, or sorrow, can the need of food or earthly possessions, the threat of war or man's oppression. In all these things victory is our reward, victory is our reward through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Of this I am sure, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, not height, nor depth, nor any creature shall separate me from the love of God.

Of this I am sure, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, not height, nor depth, nor any creature shall separate me from the love of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Lord!

RHS THANK YOU TO BETH GROOMBRIDGE

RHS: Thank you, Beth. Precious. How we love you.

INTERVIEW – BILL DALLAS

RHS: ROBERT H. SCHULLER BD: BILL DALLAS

RHS: My guest today is somebody who has been a ministry to me. A very unusual person, Bill Dallas the founder and CEO of the Church Communication Network, a satellite and Internet communications company that serves over six thousand churches across North America. Our ministry partnered with him in our Faith Forward movement and Rethink conferences. Today Bill is here to share how God reached into his life.

After graduating from Vanderbilt University with a distinguished degree, he went on into business and made some bad decisions that eventually caused him to lose his thriving real estate business and send him to San Quentin State Prison. There are prisons and there are prisons and there are prisons and then there is San Quentin. He was finally released in 1995 but during his time in prison God captured his heart. He's detailed his journey in his new book, Lessons from San Quentin: Everything I needed to know about life I learned in prison. That's the book. Welcome with me, Bill Dallas.

BD: Thank you, Dr. Schuller.

RHS: I can see Jesus Christ in your life but I can't roll it back to find out how you landed in San Quentin for two and a half years. Could you hear the iron door clang behind you?

BD: I heard it and I thought I was never going to get out. I had made some very poor choices prior to being sentenced. I was not a Christ follower. I cut every corner imaginable and deservedly so I ended up in San Quentin. But I'd come to know Christ just before I went into prison but when I went into prison it was a true test of my faith. And it brought me to my knees, literally. I would go down to the prison yard at San Quentin every day and I would go on the ground and I would crawl up in a ball in the fetal position un-bathed, un-shaven, crying and this is as a believer in Christ, praying to God like Elijah prayed to God under the broom tree, take my life; I've had enough. And I thought I was never going to get out of that prison experience.

RHS: Wow. You were not born and raised in a heavy Christian environment. When did you become a Christian?

BD: After I had lost everything in real estate just before I was about to go to prison, I was in my penthouse and I had all the fancy cars and the clothes and every toy that went with it and I lived a very wild lifestyle. Well it was all started being taken away from me because it was all being reposed and taken and just before my penthouse was taken, I was there one Sunday night and I was by myself and I don't know why, but I felt this emptiness that I'd never felt before in my life. And I dropped to my hands and knees and I asked Christ into my heart. And I remembered a saying I'd heard when I occasionally go to young life when I was in high school that the leader would mention about Blaise Pascal said that we're all created with a God shaped vacuum and until you put God in His rightful place you will go through your whole life searching to fill that hole with things.

Well I did, you know, I did it with sex and I did it with money and I did it with cars and I did it with career and everything else you can imagine, but it never fulfilled the hole until I asked Christ into my heart.

And there began my journey with Christ. But because of so many of the things I'd done in the past, my salvation was secure and my emptiness was now whole, but there was things from my past that I now was going to have to deal with and one of them was my real estate dealings. So a few months later I ended up getting arrested and then ultimately settled on a situation where I went to San Quentin to serve two and a half years. So I had the relationship with Christ but I had a lot of things to deal with. And then I ended up going to San Quentin and as mentioned it was the toughest, most difficult time I'd ever experienced in my life and I thought as a believer that I was never going to get out. Because I think sometimes as Christians we have the relationship with Christ but then when tough times come we wonder how do we get through them? I mean how do we get through it when God, He has saved us but how does He save us through our difficulties and circumstances? And through a few miraculous things that happened while I was in prison, God was able to not only get me through the experience but He was able to grow my character and give me strength that I never knew that I had.

And I think two of the things that really got me through the process was one I was occasionally being encouraged by things that I would read. One of the things, which was amazing I got a pamphlet from the Possibility-Thinking Institute, Dr. Robert Schuller. And in it I remember reading in the yard things like "tough times never last but tough people do." And one of my all time favorites, "inch by inch anything's a cinch." And which proved that if you could just keep walking you can get through it.

But the second thing, which God orchestrated; my mistakes but God orchestrated my mistakes for something good because He introduced me to a group of lifers. People that had been in prison for fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years; murderers, kidnapers and others who I at first thought before I went to prison were the worst of the worst and there was nothing good to be found in these people, but they had miraculous transformation in prison with Christ and they were new people and they became my brothers who groomed me and walked me and taught me how to live a Christ life.

In fact one of the reasons why I wrote the book, Lessons from San Quentin wasn't just so much about my story, it was about their story. About how you really walk in difficult times like what's happening today in our economy. What's going on with marriage when things are tough, how do you get through it? They showed me that you can get through the toughest of tough times. It may not be a physical prison; it may be the prison of your mind. You can get through it. And when I was told that I was invited to come speak here, two of the inmates, former inmates that actually were in prison for over twenty years, two of my brothers that helped me walk through the most difficult time of my life, paroled just recently and they live in this area so I invited them to come today and they're here actually sitting right down in front.

RHS: Would they stand?

BD: I think they would and it's Ben Vaughn and Vy Lee, two of the greatest men I've ever met in my life.

RHS: Thank you.

BD: And these are men that really understand what it means to walk through the most difficult times of our life and to come out on the other side not hardened but have a soft heart. Not giving up but being stronger and ultimately helping others and you know my book, my life is a tribute to men like this.

RHS: You're wearing a wedding band. That's a lot of stories behind that, I'm sure. But I didn't realize you were happily married until this morning when I saw the band. Put a tear in my eye. God loves you, so do I. Thank you.

BD: Thank you.

MESSAGE/PRAYER – ROBERT H. SCHULLER

"Why in the World Do You Need the Church?"

RHS: Today's words that I want to share with you are intended to do honor and institution. It's called the church. In my lifetime, I have read and I have heard not a few criticisms of the church as an institution. And they will say, well we believe in Christ and in the faith, but we don't really believe in the institution of the church, made up of humans. Today, I speak for the church. I refer to the words of Jesus. In the gospel of Matthew, chapter 16, He turns to them and asks them the question hey, "Who do people say that I am?" What do people say behind My back? And Peter, always the impertinent one, said oh "Some say You are the Messiah. But we believe You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Now when Jesus looked at them and said "I tell you Peter, on this rock," meaning His confession of faith, "on this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." That's my text of the morning. Where did this idea of a church start? Didn't start with Peter or James or John. It didn't start with some pope. It started with Jesus. The simple Galilean. The Savior, the Messiah. "I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." That's where I'm coming from. I was a little boy in a country church in Iowa, went to church every Sunday, first as a baby in my mother's arms, then as a toddler. I learned to love the church. Sunday was church day and every Sunday we went to church and I heard words and I heard music and I saw faces and I was exposed to the church. It was a very alive place and that's where my faith was nurtured and cultivated and encouraged and motivated.

So I was just a little boy when I made the decision to become a preacher when I grew up. Never anything else but that; it was who I am and where I came from. I ask you today, what is the church? Where did it come from? What is its value? What is your part in it? Why are you here today? What can you do for this church that Christ founded? And what can the church do for you?

It's the 60th anniversary this month of my ordination as a minister of the gospel. All ordained ministers that were in that church at that time were asked to come forward and they put their hands on my head. I was just a young boy and I felt the weight of one hand and then another and the weight of 11 hands on my head so heavy. And the leader pronounced 'and now we ordain you Robert Harold Schuller to be an ordained minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Reformed Church in America. And do you accept this obligation? If so answer I do.' And I said, loud enough I think to be heard, 'I do.' Well, that's a long time ago. Sixty years as an ordained minister! I've been faithful. I've been a follower. I made the promises. To the best of my ability I have fulfilled them, thanks to my wife, my family and most of you here. Thank you.

The church, what is it? It is a divine institution. Yes, it is an institution. Don't let the negative cynics and critics put that word down. When a movement succeeds, it will always become an institution. Somebody has to pay the bills. There will be rules and regulations, you can't get around it. And that's true for the church. The church is an institution, made up of human beings. You are one of them; so am I. And we're called to follow the words of Jesus, who said "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creatures." And He said "I will build My church." He coined it. Ekklesia is the Greek word. The church was founded by

Jesus. And deliberately, intentionally and permanently it's made up of people who are not saints. They are believers. There is a difference. And you and I are called by Christ to keep this institution alive, from generation to generation, from age to age. Yes, now we celebrate 2000 years as an institution and the church has survived because of people like you. Not a few of them died for that faith.

I never forget that for I wear a blue ring. The blue ring was slipped on my finger by a Christian minister in Ishtahabad, Persia, Iran. He was a Muslim and he became a Christian. And he gave me this ring. Its blue lapis lazuli carved in a negative is a lion. And he thought that I would be a lion for the faith. And he took it, slipped it on my hand. And it was not long after that and he was executed; executed by the government. Death penalty, he converted from Islam to Christianity. A lot of people have paid with their lives. That may not be the demand from you or me, but you and I are called to be shining lights in a dark world. For many people on planet earth, you are the closest thing they're ever going to come to Jesus. We better live it.

So it's a divine institution. As a young boy, I committed my life to that and then when the calling came to begin a new church in Southern California, didn't take prayer on my part, I knew it was a calling I had to come. And when we came here, I didn't go out and try to find all of the Christians living in town and invite them to come and help me form a church. They had it. They had the faith. They were already going to a church. I went to talk to people who didn't have the faith, weren't interested in religion. I met them in coffee shops. That's how we started and then I rang doorbells. Are you an active member of a local church, I would ask and they would say yes and I'd say good God bless you. But if they said no, we don't belong to a church; oh I said I'm thrilled to meet you. Tell me, why don't you go to church? Some of them would mention the sins and the shortcomings and I would remind them that the church is the only institution that specializes in trying to invite non Christians in. Yes. The church is the only institution that goes after what some people would say are the bad people. The sinners. We don't go out and try to find the best people in the county or the city or the town and get them to join the church. We say come, all you who are sinners and need salvation, come.

I'll never forget I was an ordained minister only six weeks, living in a little town in Chicago, Illinois, a suburb, and then there was a major rally to celebrate something in Christianity and leaders had rented Soldier's Field, biggest auditorium. I think it seated a hundred thousand people. Huge. And the event was held and Arvella and I went. It was filled, packed, every seat. Christians! And they sang the hymn "In Christ there is no east or west, in Him no south or north, but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth." They were the Orthodox, Eastern, Greeks, Anglicans, Germans, Lutheran's, Japanese, African, Episcopal. What a collection. This was the church and I was an ordained minister, serving that church. What a blessing.

Yes it has been a blessing, you say, but the arguments, the quarrels, the politics; oh anything that's nice is going to have its price, no doubt about that. Every institution will have its politics; can't avoid that. Decisions need to be made. And in spite of all of its faults, all of its shortcomings, all of its divisions and quarrels, there is a power that lives in the church and it has for two thousand years. And if you're going to invite non-Christians to become Christians and if you go to open the doors, anybody who comes well you're going to be a human institution as well as a divine calling. So, yes everything that's nice has its price. So in these 60 years of serving as a minister of Christ and 60 years of serving the church has been my pride and my joy and I thank you.

And now I pray that God who knows you better than you know yourself and God who knows you so much better than I, help you to become conscious that when you step in this place, it's not the building. It's the faith that's here in the minds and in the memories, in the hearts. People who are sitting around here. They know that there's a God because He came to earth to show Himself and that's Jesus Christ. And that He's become our Savior. And that He's 2000 years ago formed an institution, how do you like that word, called the church to keep the faith alive and never let it become extinct. So I say I love thy church, oh God, walls before me stand. Dear is the apple of thine eye, graven on thy head. For her my tears shall fall, to her my prayers ascend. To her my cares and toils be given till cares and toils shall end. Amen.

Let's pray: So God, we're a part of something that was conceived in the mind of Jesus 2000 years ago. Even in this place over 50 years ago people came together, believers and followers of Christ to create an institution that Sunday after Sunday and through the week could keep the faith alive. And so I pray for Your special blessing upon all of these persons here who are making it happen. Amen.

HYMN - "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

O God, our Help in ages past, our Hope for years to come. Our Shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal Home.

O God, our Help in ages past, our Hope for years to come. O be our Guide while life shall last and our eternal Home. Amen, Amen, Amen!

BENEDICTION - RHS

RHS: And now may the Lord bless you and keep you in your going out and in your coming in, in your lying down and in your rising up, in your labor and in your leisure, in your laughter and in your tears until you come to stand before Jesus in that day in which there is no sunset and no dawning, amen.