

E-Messenger

First Church of Christ

The topic of Bruce Jenner has come up a few times. Bob Russell wrote this open letter to Bruce Jenner.

An Open Letter to Bruce Jenner

Bruce Jenner's exclusive interview with Diane Sawyer aired on national television last week. Jenner is the former Olympic decathlon winner and current reality television personality who recently shocked America by announcing his intention to transgender from a male to a female. His decision is especially surprising because Jenner is now 65 years old. He's made it known that he is already undergoing hormone treatments to become a woman.

I did not view the entire two-hour interview since I found it painful to watch. Seventeen million people did watch it, however, making it the week's top-rated program in all areas. Jenner said, "For all intents and purposes I am a woman. That female side of me is who I am. 2015 is going to be a wild ride, but I hope I am going to be okay."

We can all sympathize with Bruce Jenner's search for a meaningful identity and personal peace. He explained that he has been confused about his gender identity since childhood, and as a boy

he sometimes wished he were a girl. It seemed very strange to me that he admitted that he still finds women attractive and wants to have sex with women, but he'd still prefer to be a woman.

The puzzled Diane Sawyer responded by asking what has to be one of the most bizarre questions of all time, "Are you a lesbian then?" Really? How ludicrous! Have we gone mad? Have we lost all sense of reason? The Bible warns that the thinking of those who reject God will eventually become futile and, "Although they claimed to be wise, they became

July Issue

Volume 3, Issue 7

Inside this issue:

July Servers	2
Birthdays & Anniversaries	2
Calendar	3
Facts & Figures	4
Love All	4

fools." (Romans 1:22)

The reactions to the Bruce Jenner saga illustrate the disastrous consequences of the

(Continued on additional page)

WALK BY FAITH

Grief is an emotion that is most commonly thought of as being experienced when someone suffers the loss of a loved one. Many other life experiences can also cause grief, but how grief is handled is what becomes most important. It can for many people become a dark, withdrawn period of life. A person may choose to shut themselves off from family, friends, and functions where interaction is necessary. Grief is without a doubt a strong emotion. However, grief is also an important part of the healing process. It can initiate a time where new beginnings occur, where a person can find themselves on the pathway to joy.

In the 8th chapter of Nehemiah, the Israelites have gathered together on the square in front of the Water Gate. They are listening to Ezra read the "Book of the Law of Moses". It was a greatly anticipated time. A wooden platform has been built for him to stand on so all can see and hear him. Ezra begins reading at day break and reads through until noon. The Levites are there and are further instructing the people on what they are hearing so they fully understand the words. The people understand that they and generations past have failed to recognize and worship

God for who He is. They fall on their knees and worship and mourn. They are in grief over their lack of obedience to the Lord. Then Nehemiah, Ezra, and the teachers told the people not to mourn or weep or grieve and Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

Joy is found through grief. The Israelites grieved over their indifference to God, but grief

brought them to repentance. God's joy was increased as His people recognized and worshiped Him. They found that they can now participate in His joy and gain the necessary strength daily to place their burdens on Him and receive His joy and strength.

How do you live each day? Are you consumed by grief, mourning the day and all its activities? Do not mourn, do not grieve. Release your burdens and receive His joy to strengthen you each day and shout to the world "the joy of the Lord is my strength".

Continually Overcoming,
Tim Calvin

Serving in July



**"WE WILL
SERVE
THE
LORD
OUR
GOD
AND
OBEY
HIM."
JOSHUA 24:24, NIV**

Greeters:

- 5—John & Nora Altman (A)
- 12—Joan Brown (A)
- 19—Cindy Perry (A)
- 26—Bettie Finken (A)

Communion Ministry:

- 5—Jim & Pat McPeak
- 12—Jason Gregg
- 19—Kevin & Barb Gallagher
- 26—Brock Rohrer

Prayer Warriors:

Sherry Trubey & Erica McNamara

Welcome Center:

- 5—John/Nora Altman (9); Ron & Shellee Brown (9:45)
- 12—Lesley Shirkey (9); Kevin/Barb Gallagher (9:45)
- 19—Jordan/Heather Day (9:45)

Nursery:

Birthdays & Anniversaries



- 1 Kaleb Hartman, Cindy Karnes
- 2 Lola Pardee, Carli Roughton
- 3 Marcia Gambler
- 5 Joan Brown, Jerry Hug
- 6 John Leppelmeier
- 7 Khloe Hartman, Leona Puff, Georgianna Weaver
- 9 Megan Rendleman, Ron Walker
- 10 Madelon Salisbury, Andrew Shirkey
- 11 Constance Caulkins
- 12 Wyatt Garza, JoNell Gotshall, Theresa Kuszmaul, Adam Perry

- 14 Corey Herendeen, Carson Strouse
- 15 Jordan Day
- 19 Gunnar Siebenaler
- 21 Regina Kidd
- 22 Thayn Day
- 24 Austin Brandeberry
- 25 Bettie Finken
- 26 Chris Gotshall
- 28 Hollie Carroll, LuAnn Jerger, Justin McNamara
- 29 Scott Bard
- 31 Chris Trubey
- 1 Clayton & Brittany Slesman (9)

- 7 Jimmy & Krystal Thornton (8)
- 9 Steve & Marilyn Lundy (38)
- 13 Ron & Ellen Walker (30)
- 20 Dan & Deb Nixon (30)
- 21 Darrell & Shirley Kinnan (58), Dick & Theresa Kuszmaul (31)
- 25 Henry & Regina Kidd (51)
- 28 Gene & Ruth Ordway (47), Kermit & Denise Riehle (30)
- 29 John & Janet Leppelmeier (43)
- 30 Gary & Teresa Brown (27)

Family News

Sympathy

The church family extends her sympathy to the following families:

- ♥ The family of Betty Higley.
- ♥ Roger Ellis and June Crowl on the death of their brother-in-law,.

Congratulations!

- ♥ MaKenzie Trubey on her marriage to Jacob Manges.
- ♥ To Ben Riehle on his mar-

riage to Emillee Goltare.

Save This Nation

In the days of the Civil War, a personal friend of Abraham Lincoln was a visitor at the White House. "I had been spending three weeks with Mr. Lincoln as his guest. One night I was restless and could not sleep; ...from the private room where the president slept, I heard low tones, for the door was partly open. In-

stinctively I wandered in, and there I saw a sight which I have never forgotten. It was the president, kneeling before an open bible; ...his back was towards me. I shall never forget his prayer: 'Oh, thou God, that heard Solomon in the night when he prayed and cried for wisdom, hear me. I cannot lead this nation without thy help; ...O God, hear me and save this nation.'"

--Clergy Talk



JULY

Sun

Mon




Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

			1	2 9:30 Ladies Bible Study @ Seasons	3 Church Office Closed	4 
5 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	6	7	8	9 9:30 Ladies Bible Study @ Seasons	10	11 8:00 Men's Breakfast
CIY MOVE in Cleveland, TN						
12 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	13	14	15	16 9:30 Ladies Bible Study @ Seasons	17	18
Mission Trip to Woodburn Christian Children's Home						
19 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	20	21 12:45 Visitation Ministry	22	23 9:30 Ladies Bible Study @ Seasons	24	25
26 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	27	28 Lunch Bunch @ Applebees	29	30 9:30 Ladies Bible Study @ Seasons	31	
Vacation Bible School						



FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

129 N. Walnut Street
Bryan, OH 43506

Phone: 419-636-3509
Fax: 419-633-7226
E-mail: firstcofc@cityofbryan.net

Love All, Worship One,
Make Disciples

Bryanfcc.org

Connect with us!



First Church of Christ



@FCCBryan



bryanfcc

Facts & Figures

<i>June 7</i>	
<i>Attendance SS 34</i>	<i>Worship 55/115</i>
<i>Offering</i>	<i>\$4,221.00</i>
<i>June 14</i>	
<i>Attendance SS 42</i>	<i>Worship 59/149</i>
<i>Offering</i>	<i>\$6,445.00</i>
<i>June 21</i>	
<i>Attendance SS 33</i>	<i>Worship 44/134</i>
<i>Offering</i>	<i>\$3,919.00</i>
<i>June 28</i>	
<i>Attendance SS 33</i>	<i>Worship 44/145</i>
<i>Offering</i>	<i>\$3,222.00</i>
<i>Needed for Budget \$5,980.01</i>	

Love All

Our Service Personnel: Kevin Bergman (GA), Igor Blinzler (MO), Jared Headley (CO), Lindsey Kaiser, Nathan McCoy (Japan), Stewart Martin (NC), Jessie Stillman (OH), Josh Severs (Afghanistan), Josh Tonneas (MA)

Cancer: Gwen Acker-Dickinson, Bruce Beerbower, Arlene Boyer, Sherry Buchsteiner, Martin Collins, Weston DuBois, Danielle Goltare, Carrie H., Dennis Holthues, Gene Johns, Molly Johnston, Judy Koerner, Pat Koerner, Chuck Lees, Marshall, Doug McClure, Chloe Merillat, Connie Pence, Tim Price, Jim Pringle, Elaine Purdue, Kathy Ritten-

house, Lyle Snavely, Dinah Stiltner, Barry Sweet, Tammy, Joe Vaccaro, Kathy Walton, Al West, Gloria Wright. **Other Concerns:** Ann Rittenhouse, Jennifer Mavis, Evelyn Fox, Bill McCarthy, Brianna Lloyd, Amy Boyd, Jo Harman, Troy Hug, Trevor Bailey, Leona Puff, Neighborhood, Geri Cox, Dale Boyer, Danielle Strouse, Mike Rosendaul, Bob Wagner, Paul Newcomb, Denise Easterday, Madelon Salisbury, Kim Walker, Asher, Georgianna Weaver, Brenda Ridgway, June Shook, Trisha Phillips, Annie Engel, Lola Pardue, Maribel Duckworth, Braylie Appel, Kelly Phillips, Brian Snive-

ly Family, Cameron Mishler, Darren Jones, Nathan Gambler, McNamaras.

Shut Ins: Fountain Park: Maribel Duckworth, **Hillside:** Floyd Puffenbarger, **Home:** Marcena Bly, Linda Lewis, Georgianna Weaver, **Fairlawn Haven:** Gerald Wetmore, **Genesis:** Vivian Holdsworth, **The Lakes of Monclova:** Roger Ellis

Philosophy of moral relativism that has swept over our nation in recent years. Kim Kardashian, Jenner's step-daughter tweeted following the interview, "I'm really happy for him that he is living his life the way he wants to live it. And that he has found inner peace and just pure happiness. That's what life is about. I don't know what life would be like if you always felt like you weren't yourself. As long as he is happy, and he wants to live his life, however he wants to live it, that just makes me happy. And I support him 100%."

The moral relativists are convinced that real meaning will be found in doing what you feel like doing, and that finding your "inner self" is going to make you happy. They conclude there is no transcendent truth and anyone who suggests there is a God to whom we are accountable is misguided. Moral relativists believe that anyone who holds that a meaningful life is found in serving God is a judgmental bigot who is determined to strip everyone else of their freedom of choice and happiness. But moral relativism creates chaos. It doesn't work at the bank, the pharmacy or when dialing a phone number. There are ten digits to my cell phone number. Out of millions of possibilities there is only one that works. Why do we think moral relativism will work in dealing with life's most vital issues? Jesus said, "I am the truth" and then He conquered the grave to prove it.

I've always admired what Bruce Jenner accomplished in the Olympic games. I'd love to have the opportunity to review with him what the Bible has to say about his situation. In spite of how much the moral relativists might protest, I believe these common-sense principles are from God and understanding them can ultimately produce joy in our lives. My letter to Bruce Jenner might go something like this:

Dear Bruce,

Following your interview with Diane

Sawyer recently, I am hoping you would consider the following Biblical insights with regard to your situation.

1. *The Bible says we are all born with a sin nature. King David wrote, surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:5) The Apostle Paul wrote, "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature." (Romans 7:18)*

We don't all have the same weaknesses, and we aren't all vulnerable to the same temptations. And granted, we often don't understand the demons other wrestle with. But we all gravitate to evil of some sort because we have inherited the sin virus passed down through Adam and Eve to every person.

If you are tempted to dress or act like a woman at times, that doesn't make you a woman inside any more than a child who is inclined to a violent temper is an animal inside. It just reveals the reality of your carnal nature and an area where you need to practice self-denial and discipline.

2. *The Bible says a man is not to wear a woman's clothing. "A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this." (Deut. 22:5) That Scripture is in the Bible because people 3000 years ago must have struggled with the same inner feelings and confusions, suggesting transgender desires are not newly invented impulses. However, God said that those inclinations are contrary to His will.*

3. *The Bible says we are to resist evil instincts. "Dear friends I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires that war against your soul." (1 Peter 2:11) Admittedly, there is a civil war going on inside all of us. J. Wallace Hamilton called it,*

"Horns and Halos" in human nature. Robert Lewis Stephenson called it, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." The Bible calls it a battle between the flesh and the spirit. The Bible encourages us to fight the good fight of faith. "The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction, the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life." (Gal. 6:8)

If someone is inclined to alcoholism that doesn't give them a license to get drunk and perhaps injure others. Just because a man is by nature drawn to women other than his wife, that doesn't grant him permission to have a multiplicity of extra-marital affairs. The best advice to someone struggling with anorexia is not, "follow your feelings" but, "force yourself to eat anyway"--and trust that God made you to eat. And if someone struggles with a desire to be the opposite sex, that is not an excuse to succumb to the temptation and mutilate his or her body.

Bruce, when you trained for the decathlon, you disciplined your body and denied yourself certain foods that were probably appealing but you knew were unhealthy. You forced yourself to do exercises that were painful at the time, but in the end enabled you to experience a gratifying victory. That same principle applies spiritually. The Apostle Paul encourages us, "Live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want." (Galatians 5:16-17)

4. *The Bible says if we repent, we can be forgiven for the times we yielded to our carnal desires. In fact it says, "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) And, "For the wag-*

es of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

Some of us have yielded to greed, others to lust, anger or pride. Afterward we feel guilty and underserving. That’s why Jesus died on the cross. He paid the penalty for our sin so that we can be free of sin and guilt and even death. His Word promises, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)

5. The Bible says, “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:13) We don’t have to succumb to all of our carnal desires. We can overcome those instincts and predispositions that would drag us down into sin, despair and hell. With the Lord’s help we can have victory over the flesh. It may not be easy, just as training for the decathlon was not easy. But we can be more than conquerors through Christ who loves us.

The fact that John Hopkins University now refuses to perform transgender operations, having concluded it only compounds the problem, testifies to the wisdom of God’s Word. (See article below.) The best course of action for you is not to proceed with taking female hormones or mutilating your body, but rather to “Deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow Christ.”

Bruce, you are not a woman (or a lesbian) in a man’s body, you, like all of us, are a child of God in a carnal body that is plagued with daily temptations and harmful desires. But God loves you and me in spite of our sins and weaknesses. Christ died to cleanse us of sin and grant us a new heart and a new destiny.

My prayer for you is that you find that eternal significance that will give

you a peace that passes understanding. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.” (2 Cor. 5:17)

I am praying for you, Bob

Excerpts from article, “Transgender Surgery is Not the Solution” The Wall Street Journal, by Dr. Paul McHugh, June 12, 2014

“We at Johns Hopkins University--which in the 1960s was the first American medical center to venture into “sex-reassignment surgery”--launched a study in the 1970s comparing the outcomes of transgendered people who had the surgery with the outcomes of those who did not. Most of the surgically treated patients described themselves as “satisfied” by the results, but their subsequent psycho-social adjustments were no better than those who didn’t have the surgery. And so at Hopkins we stopped doing sex-reassignment surgery, since producing a “satisfied” but still troubled patient seemed an inadequate reason for surgically amputating normal organs.

“It now appears that our long-ago decision was a wise one. A 2011 study at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden produced the most illuminating results yet regarding the transgendered, evidence that should give advocates pause. The long-term study--up to 30 years--followed 324 people who had sex-reassignment surgery. The study revealed that beginning about 10 years after having the surgery, the transgendered began to experience increasing mental difficulties. Most shockingly, their suicide mortality rose almost 20-fold above the comparable non-transgender population. This disturbing result has as yet no explanation but probably reflects the growing sense of isolation reported by the aging transgendered after surgery. The high suicide rate certainly challenges the surgery prescription.”

“You won’t hear it from those championing transgender equality, but

controlled and follow-up studies reveal fundamental problems with this movement. When children who reported transgender feelings were tracked without medical or surgical treatment at both Vanderbilt University and London’s Portman Clinic, 70%-80% of them spontaneously lost those feelings. Some 25% did have persisting feelings; what differentiates those individuals remains to be discerned.

At the heart of the problem is confusion over the nature of the transgendered. “Sex change” is biologically impossible. People who undergo sex-reassignment surgery do not change from men to women or vice versa. Rather, they become feminized men or masculinized women. Claiming that this is a civil-rights matter and encouraging surgical intervention is in reality to collaborate with and promote a mental disorder.”

--Dr. McHugh, former psychiatrist in chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital

**Destined to win,
Larry Snavely**

