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We have so much for which to be thankful as we finish our summer season! Like David said in Psalm 103, “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name...and forget not all his benefits.” We are particularly grateful both for what we know, and for what we have seen.

Psalm 103:7 says that the LORD “made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.” Now, think about that statement. God revealed His ways, and God revealed His acts. I do not think that in this case those two revelations are poetic synonyms. I don’t think that “ways” and “acts” are two ways of saying the same thing.

God revealed His ways to Moses. How? How did Moses know God’s mind regarding idolatry and adultery, honesty and honoring parents? Did Moses just guess or feel or experience? No! God made known His ways with His words. God gave Moses His absolute, objective Truth which Moses then recorded for us. So, we know God’s ways because we have God’s Word.

But the LORD also revealed His acts. “He made known...his acts unto the children of Israel.” Israel knew Who God was by what He had said, but they saw God’s character and power illustrated by what He did!

If you had asked a Jewish man who had escaped Egypt if Jehovah God was powerful, what do you think he would have replied? If you had asked such a man about God’s provision, to what would he point? How did Israel know about God’s acts? The answer is that they saw them. They had experienced them!

Anyone who had followed the LORD out of Egypt could testify, “We were trapped between a great army and a great sea, but I saw God part the Red Sea and defeat the Army of the Egyptians! We were hungry, and God gave us food from Heaven!”

We dare not trust our experience to find the truth. God’s Word is Truth. But we dare not be content merely to read about God as if

He were history. He makes history. He is the story! Christ once rebuked the Sadducees by saying, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”

And so, as those of us here on the Ranch look back on this summer of 2008, we thank God both for His Word and for what He has done through the preaching of it here on the Ranch. We are amazed as we consider what we saw this summer. We thank God for what we experienced first hand!

This summer we served groups from New Hampshire, California, and South Korea. We were privileged to work with one church for the forty-eighth consecutive summer. We had campers whose parents and even grandparents came as campers! We saw scores of people come to Christ, some of whom had never even heard the Gospel before!

We can testify that the God of the Bible, the God of Moses, and the God of great power is alive and well today! “Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.”



New entrance



Junior boys and girls from South Korea



Times Have Changed

by Evangelist Bill Rice III



It caught my eye when I was talking with Evangelist Tim Thompson, his wife Brittany and their one-year-old son, Seth. I had seen it many times. In fact, I had seen it so often that, for the past several years, I had not even taken note that I had seen it!

But there it was: a little box two inches square, a receptacle. Anyone seeing it would know that it was there for the purpose of receiving some kind of plug. I became curious.

“Hey, do you guys know what this is?” I said. Neither Evangelist Tim Thompson, who had just finished preaching in the auditorium fifteen minutes before, or his wife Brittany knew what it was. I didn’t even ask Seth!

Do you have any idea as to what it was or is?

Before prayer meeting in the Webber Auditorium this morning, I took Evangelist Nathan McConnell and Evangelist Matt Downs to the John R. Rice Auditorium.

“Do you know what this is?” I asked.

Nope, they did not. Mrs. Cowart, who was in the John R. Rice Auditorium working at the Book Table with her two young children in tow, didn’t know what it was either.

Dying to know what it is? Well, I hope so, because I am going to tell you. It is a phone jack!

What is a phone jack? Well, you know how you plug your house phone into the wall. Thirty-five years ago, plugging a phone into a receptacle was more like plugging in your iron. The receptacle, which was an inch thick, would receive a four-pronged plug. Okay, so why was there a phone jack in the John R. Rice Auditorium?

In the 1970’s, the entire office staff at the Ranch—that would be Mother and two other

ladies—would be working at camp. Two were probably in the Dining Hall, and a third attended the services with the phone that had been unplugged at the office and plugged in at the John R. You never knew when someone might call, and we had to have someone around the phone to answer. Since the “someone” was in the service, the phone had to be also. The ringer was turned down, and it was not at all uncommon for the congregation to be singing “Stand up, stand up for Jesus,” while a lady in the back was answering the phone and saying, “Bill Rice Ranch, may I help you?”

Times have changed, haven’t they? Now we do not have a phone in the back of the auditorium, but there are probably sixty adults in the evening services with cell phones.

Don’t misunderstand me; I love cell phones. I keep mine in my pocket and on vibrate during the services. I check the weather with it every morning and scan through probably thirty e-mails a day! When I wanted to get a watch for a friend, recently, I checked Casio’s website on my phone to see the price.

Did I mention times have changed? And that is why the phone jack stood out in my vision so much while talking to Evangelist Tim Thompson after the service Thursday night. You see, he had just preached from Acts chapter one. He preached a truth that I had heard back in the days when the phone jack

was in use. I had heard it from men like John Rice, Tom Malone and Dad.

We have been able to improve our phones and a lot of others things here at the Ranch, but the truth preached here is timeless.

Want to receive Bill Rice Ranch updates on-line?

Sign up to receive the *Branding Iron* or *First Light* via e-mail.

First Light is a daily devotional from Evangelist Wil Rice IV from staff devotions at the Bill Rice Ranch. The devotional will come via e-mail five days a week beginning September 1st.



Click the *First Light* banner at www.billriceranch.org to sign up for the communications you would like to receive.

Needs at the Ranch

- Metal Chop Saw
- Mig Welder
- Jack Hammer
(Electric or Air Compressor)
- Rock Drill
- Leather Sewing Machine
- Concrete Mixer
- Sheet Metal Brake

If you have a lead on any of these items or you would like to make a donation of one of these items to the Ranch, please contact Dale Stover, 615-893-2767, ext. 105 or dstover@billriceranch.org

Thinking about a Vacation in 2009?

That’s right—2009! Family Weeks at the Ranch provide a great Christian family vacation, but you have to act quickly. This summer Family Week I was closed by April. Many who attended this summer have already reserved their place for 2009. As you receive this *Branding Iron*, we are on the verge of Family Week II. And, we would anticipate, some families will register for next year while they are here on the Ranch this year.

So...don’t delay! Or you might miss out. Family Week provides a relaxed atmosphere with lots of activity opportunities, great food, and uplifting fellowship. All of this comes for far less than the average family vacation! In addition, your family will benefit from services each day.

Family Week I June 28-July 3, 2009

Rick Flanders & Shelton Smith

Family Week II August 2-6, 2009

Wayne Hardy & Chris Miller

Deluxe rooms full!
Standard rooms and campsites still available.

Wil Rice IV and Bill Rice III speak each week.

All types of rooms currently available.



Whatever It Takes

What in the name of common sense would cause a church to send their young people 2100 miles on a church bus to the Bill Rice Ranch? Before we answer that question, you may be asking yourself, "Did someone actually do that?" The answer to that question is, "Yes!" In fact, during one week at the Ranch in June, we hosted four churches from the West that had driven—yes, driven—at least 1100 miles to camp.

Now back to the question at hand, "Why would someone do that?" After all, have you been on a church bus before? Have you gone more than 20 miles on that bus? *Luxury* might not be the word that comes to your mind.

Perhaps therein lies the answer. In the times in which we live, some people do what they do simply because they are gluttons for punishment. "If you can't get the best out of life," they think, "you might as well try to get the worst. At least you can feel like you accomplished something!"

Perhaps pastors are making the camp decision as a sinister way to torture the youth pastors and leaders who bring the young people to camp?

Could it be that churches have begun anti-optimism campaigns? The churches are

thinking, perhaps, that they could counteract the doom and gloom news media that gripe every night about the fuel prices. "We know what we'll do! We'll drive several thousand miles on a church bus that gets 5 gallons to the mile (do I have that right?) just to prove to CNN that we will not be bullied by OPEC!"

I am guessing that none of those are the real reasons. I hope you are thinking that too. Here's my answer—"A week at the Ranch is helpful to their young people." That's it? Yep.

I cannot think of another reasonable explanation. I know that if I were the one driving all those miles, I would count on getting some help!

It's not that the Ranch has a corner on truth, but the Ranch is a special place where the Bible preached is not merely impressive, loud, funny or inspirational—it is helpful. Lives have changed here this summer. Some of those lives were transported on a bus over 1000 miles to get here.

Actually these western churches just highlight



what we pray will always be true at the Ranch—that is, that the help received here will be worth the miles, worth the fuel bill, worth the vacation time, and worth the effort. We pray the Ranch will always be worth it—*whatever it takes*.

The Bill Rice Ranch is people!

And during the summer, the Ranch is a lot **more people than it normally is**. Summer staff members have come to us from all over the country to work with teens, juniors, the Deaf, and all the areas of camp necessary to make this work possible. Here are a few of their comments on their experiences.



"Working at the Ranch has been an amazing experience. My faith was stretched, and prayers were answered. I know I was hired to help others, but I feel as if I was the one being helped."

—Sarah Salmeron, California

"I was reminded of how clear, biblical preaching can break hearts and change lives when I had a group of inner-city guys come. It was a blessing to see changes begin in their lives."

—Jason Enderle, Illinois



"Working at the Ranch has changed my life in so many ways. I know that I am better equipped for marriage, parenting, and ministry."

—Cara Cobble, Tennessee

As you receive this issue of the *Branding Iron*, we are about to enter our **final week of camp**. The need to provide allowances for the summer staff is **\$5,500**. Your gift would make a difference. Would you **prayerfully consider sending a donation** this week marked for this need?

BACK AT THE RANCH...

Summer Highlights

While the Lord's blessings this summer are innumerable, here are a few highlights which demonstrate the Lord's goodness to us.



Well over 100 saved



Outstanding Independence Day Retreat at the end of Family Week I



Enjoyed improvements such as new carpet in the Administration Building

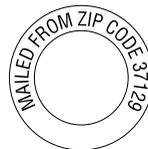


Deaf campers came to one of six Deaf Weeks



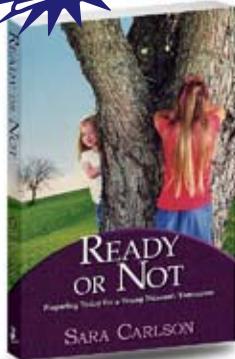
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Bill Rice Ranch PUBLICATIONS



Ready or Not:

*Preparing Today for a
Young Woman's Tomorrow*

Provides helpful instruction for teen girls and young adult ladies as they prepare for the future. Also an excellent resource for parents and youth pastors. More than 300 sold this summer at the Bill Rice Ranch. 286 pages. Special Price—\$12.00.

Summer Highlights—President's Pick

Now you can "hear" how the summer at the Ranch went with this 8-CD set of Evangelist Wil Rice's picks of the highlights of Summer 2008 preaching. \$20.00 each.

NOTE: Prices DO NOT include shipping & handling.
For orders, call **1-800-253-RICE, ext.117**
or visit our website www.billriceranch.org

Retreat to Advance Take a Step Forward this Fall

Youth Conference

September 12-13

Speakers—Wil Rice IV, Bill Rice III

Designed for teens and those that lead them!



Ladies Retreat

October 9-11

Speakers—Mary Rice, Toni Flanders

Be challenged with Bible truths in a relaxing atmosphere. Experience exciting Ranch activities including Midnight Madness at Cowboy Town, the Country Fair and our World Famous Rodeo!

Country Harvest

—2008 Theme



Men's Retreat

October 2-4

"It's the highlight of the year for our men's ministry!"
Pastor, Florida

"The preaching is excellent because it's applicable to a man's everyday life."
Pastor, Missouri



Bill Rice III



Rick Flanders



Wil Rice IV

Elementary Retreats

August 22-23 & September 5-6

Senior Adult Conference

September 18-20

Deaf College & Career Retreat

August 29-Sept. 1

Couples Retreats

November 6-8 & December 4-6



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