

CAPITAL CONNECTIONS

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*“And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment,”
(Heb. 9:27 NRSV)*

Powerful forces are at work around us. Though invisible, their effect is felt in innumerable ways in the real world. They’re intelligible forces. Some would even say they’re intelligent and becoming more so by demonstrating their ability to evolve and adapt.

Initially dependent, these forces press on like restless teenagers toward independence. Eventually they may uncouple themselves from their creators and demand fealty from those who’ve created them. These forces are algorithms.

You exclaim, “I thought there’d be no math!” Humor me for a few moments, please. Do you use a GPS? Do you own a “smartphone”? Do you stop at traffic signals? Do you visit a doctor’s office? Do you travel by air? Do you shop at local markets or department stores? Do you use Amazon.com? Do you own a late-model car or truck? If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, your life is governed by that powerful, unseen force that is not God. It’s the algorithm.

So, what’s an algorithm? Quite simply it’s a problem-solving tool. The mapping algorithm in your GPS constantly assesses options and alternatives while you travel from Point A to Point B. The latest GPS devices direct travelers in “real time,” accounting for changes in the traffic patterns from the time they set out on their voyage until they reach their destination.



You say, “Get to the point already!” Ok. There are two points to make; one now, and one in September.

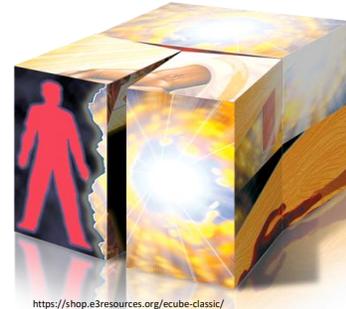
Algorithms are God’s idea. He’s the eternal problem solver. Understanding Genesis, we affirm, “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.” (Gen. 1:31 NRSV) However, something went wrong. We ignored God’s plan for his “very good” creation. A course correction was necessitated by the circumstance and a new algorithm was deployed.

The problem-solving component of an algorithm is its ability to change the plan in “real time,” based upon responses along the journey. “But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”” (Gen. 3:9 NRSV) The short answer to that question should have been, “We’re lost. Please help us.”

Adam and Eve did not understand how lost they were. Neither did they understand the implications of their disobedience. By departing from the simple algorithm that God stated, “Don’t eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or you will die,” death came for them, and for everything and everyone else.

Their disobedience required God to update his algorithm, allowing for humanity to arrive at his intended destination, eternal fellowship in his presence.

“...so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (Heb. 9:28 NRSV) This is good news. While we may be lost on the journey, we need not remain lost. We can choose Christ and arrive at God’s intended destination, eternal fellowship with him.



So, when did you realize you needed to have the algorithm in your GPS updated? When did you realize that you were lost, and, without a course correction, you’d not arrive at the destination you’d hoped? When did you trust in Christ and get back “on track”? Thank God that he’s got the algorithm programmed for everyone along their journey, and, “if” they will turn from sin and trust in Christ, “then” they will be saved. What a great algorithm! It’s at work around us all the time, praise God!

Next month I’ll tell you how you can play a part in God’s algorithm for evangelism and ministry, bearing witness to others about your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We’re thankful that God used our Children’s Bible Camp to help children get on track and stay there. Thanks Melissa and Sara for your leadership. We’re so blessed! And, thanks to all who contributed time, energy and materials to this year’s Bible Camp. It’s truly a congregational ministry.

And... The Big Give is the algorithm for this month. August 18th is the date. Did you sign up to help yet? You can begin delivering your items to the church at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 4th.

There’s a Sign-Up Sheet at the Welcome Center. We need your help with Publicity/Flyer Distribution, Food/Hospitality, Donations Organization, Donations Distribution, Prayer, and Evangelism and Ministry. Happy Summer!

Blessings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Pastor John



Media Library Connections

There is a great deal of planning and work that goes into a Church Library Conference – probably into any and all conferences. A year or two before the Conference, the date, location and featured speaker must be secured. Following that, the theme, workshops leaders and schedule, overnight accommodations, food service, vendors, and beginning

publicity must all be selected. Between these lines are many more areas to plan, people to involve and “nail down”. The conference this year in Corvallis was well executed and attended.

Patrice Johnson participated in the culmination of this year’s conference, enjoyed the 14 authors, the Presbyterian Church and Library, and interaction with the activities and attendees.

Those of us in the Salem Capital City Chapter and the Mid-Willamette Chapter now get a break of 7 years before again hosting. Next year the Boise, Idaho Chapter will be hosts, and you will soon see information about books, audio books and DVDs by conference authors and vendors in the CBC Library.

Again, thank you for allowing me to be involved and to represent Capital in this larger group of church librarians.
–Bonnie Brough

CAPITAL’S SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE

What a great summer! In Adult I and II, Wendy Feth has led *The Case for Christ*; Jeff Stell led a study on ‘Different Religions’ and will be leading another study starting August 5 on the ‘Five Love Languages’. Rob Tavares is currently leading *The Age of Opportunity* dealing with teenagers and adolescents and how the family works with them.

The Youth have been studying *Feed the Dog*. The book is about seven habits for discipleship with Brock Gill introducing each chapter/topic. What they do not cover on Sundays with Linda, they cover on Thursday nights with Pastor John and Anna Stell.

This has been a wonderful way of using different material and leaders. Thank you to all who have led out for us. In September we’ll meet to discuss how it went for everyone.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR CANDIDATE

After 6 months of research, the Ministry Research Team recommended hiring an Associate Pastor to focus on ministry to young adults and young families. Based on that recommendation, Capital voted in January 2016 to form an Associate Pastor Search Committee.

The Associate Pastor Search Committee started by getting organized, creating documents and developing a process. Then in March 2017, we were ready to post the position on various websites. The first application was received March 21, 2017.

Since then Capital has received and reviewed 57 applications, had initial conversations with more than 30 individuals, conducted 21 interviews, and held 14 in-depth formal interviews. Several times the Committee was sure we had found “the one”. Each time God said, “Not yet.”

On Wednesday, July 18, the Committee conducted a formal interview with Thomas McCarty and his wife McKenzie. At the end of that interview, the Search Committee members unanimously and enthusiastically voted to invite the McCarty’s to visit Capital in person.

The Committee is excited and hopeful that this long, time-consuming task might be at an end, but more than anything we want God’s will for Capital. Please pray earnestly that God’s will *will* be the outcome of their visit.

The McCarty's bio and basic itinerary is available at the Welcome Center. This schedule was designed to offer everyone at Capital an opportunity to meet and speak with them, without overwhelming the McCarty's at any one event and still providing them free time to explore the Salem area.

The various opportunities for you to meet the McCarty's are on the August calendar and will be listed in the bulletin. Look for the event most appropriate for you and then be sure to save that date.

Your Associate Pastor Search Committee

Linda Warberg, Chair

Jeff Feth

Bryan Haws

Melissa Hiltz

Harvey Johnson

Elaine Lipton

Sara Ricketts

Jo Stell

Melody Tavares



For years I assumed that, because I was younger than my husband and friends we traveled with, I was more immune to accidents or injuries.

I was wrong.

INCIDENT #1: In 1984, when Earl and I were living in Klamath Falls, we traveled to England to visit our son Kevin when he was stationed in the Air Force there. Planning to fly from San Francisco, we arranged to stay with Earl's sister, who lived in the Bay Area.

The morning we were to fly, I woke with a pain in my back – a ruptured disk. Having had problems with bursitis in my hip, I realized that this was different. But... we had tickets to fly to England, and we were going.

When we arrived at the airport, we noticed they had a medical clinic, so we checked in. I explained the pain and its locality to the doctor on duty, who confirmed my theory that it was probably a ruptured disc. He advised me to stand as much as possible on the plane, rather than sitting, and he gave some pain medication.

Kevin met us at the airport, only to be made aware that Mom was not in good shape. I had stood as much as possible while on the plane, but that was not easily doable. Kevin took us to his apartment, where I lay on the couch, while the two men went to get dinner.

The next day, Kevin took me to the clinic on the Lakenheath Air Force Base, where they took me in, checked me over, and gave me a bed, with directions to "rest." That I did for nearly two weeks, including the July 4th celebration, where I could watch fireworks out the hospital window. (The major perc: this was only the only American base in Europe that had 31 Flavors!)

Rest helped, but wasn't a cure. When they released me, I walked with a cane, which was somewhat helpful. Sightseeing was on my agenda, and that included Madame Tussaud's Wax

Museum, Covent Garden (where Eliza Doolittle from “My Fair Lady” was a flower girl), and Harrods, the world’s most famous department store, where I got a “Harrod’s bag” with nothing in it.

Returning home, I eventually had a chymopapain injection that, according to the surgeon, “turned the gristly disc into marshmallow,” and I’ve had no pain since.

INCIDENT #2: In 1999, Earl and I took our best friends, Bill and Virginia, to Australia, with plans to visit our friends there and also spend time in New Zealand. We had bought airfare for the trip and worked out an itinerary. AND..., because Earl and our friends were older than I was, we bought travel insurance. (Maybe I *am* smarter than I thought...)

On the eighth day of our trip, Earl and I were walking through the Queen Street Mall in Brisbane, looking for souvenirs. We had seen a crystal kangaroo with opal chips in it at one store and were going back to purchase it. We planned to go in one door, only to discover that it was locked, so we headed for the door on the other side. I did not see the steps...

I fell down the steps and was seriously injured. The ambulance attendants who came to transport me to the hospital said they had seen others with similar accidents, but not with *both feet*. Turns out I had fractured the fibula in my left leg and injured the ligaments in my right foot. I was in the hospital for nearly a week, while we waited for the swelling to go down, so they could put casts on both legs!

We then spent a week staying with dear friends, who had been in the church Earl pastored in the Brisbane area. They treated us like royalty, even giving us their bedroom with a private bath. (A stool in the shower allowed me that luxury, but I do remember laughing long and hard when I had to call Earl to come hand me the soap that had fallen on the floor of the shower.)

Because we had purchased travel insurance, we got all our money back. And therein lies a story told earlier: because we got all that money back, we were able to replace our old mobile home with a new modular home, so when we wanted to move to Salem, we could! The old mobile home would not have sold – but the new one sold quickly, allowing us to make the move and resulting in a new awareness that God so often works good things out of bad.