

# the Informer newsletter

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PCAI FELLOWSHIP  
PARAGON CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE INT'L & PCAI CLERGY ASSOCIATION  
JANUARY 2017

## Leave Your Safety Zone and Launch Out Into Deep

By Dr. Henry Harbuck / PCAI Int'l President and General Overseer

In Luke 5:4 Jesus said to Peter, "Launch out into the deep [water] and let down your nets for a catch." This is a message for us today as we look toward the year of 2017. If you plan to travel the path of the *Status Quo* then you likely will never break any new barriers or reach new goals in 2017. Just to live your life following the crowd and never be willing to leave your *Safety Zone* will translate into failure. Sometimes, we are like Peter who fished throughout the night, but caught no fish. It must be deduced from Luke's narrative that Peter may have remained in shallow water throughout the night lest a dangerous storm arise and drown him, or he stood onshore because of his fear which resulted in total failure.

It amazes me how fearful some Christians are. While some Christians preach and claim they are living by faith, I see nothing of the kind. Some are so nervous about the unknown and taking risks that they stay on the shore and never venture into deep waters to brave the unknown. If you are one who feels you must always be in the *Safety Zone*, be informed that the *Safety Zone* only exists in your mind—your thinking is hindering you from reaching the top of the mountain. There are many unknowns in life, but when someone dares to launch out into uncharted waters, great things happen.



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## 2017 The Year Of...?

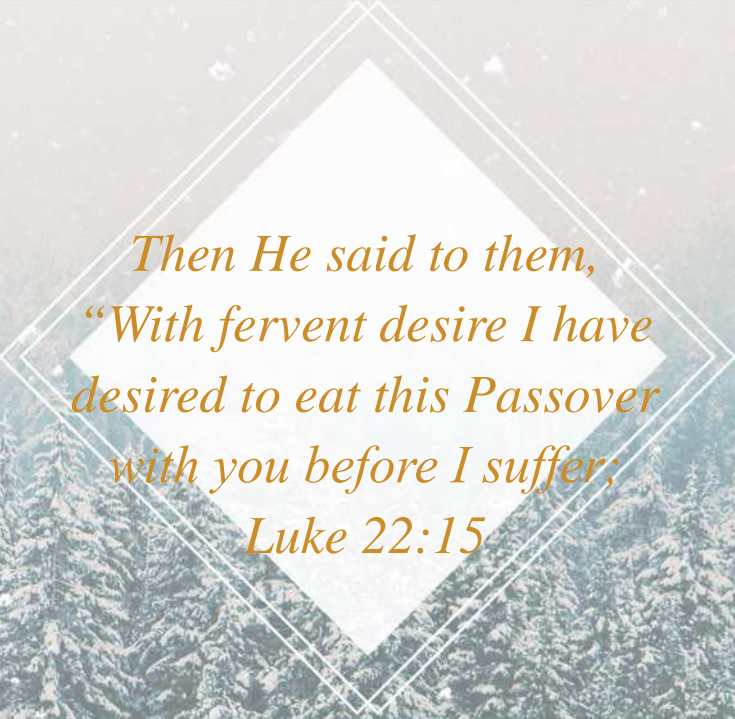
Instead of someone else calling it or naming it, why don't we name it or call it what we want it to be. God changed Abram's name to Abraham. Instead of "Exalted Father" it meant "Father of a Multitude," by calling him this name it was a perpetual reminder of God's sure words. His new name implied a "Look Ahead!" A future hope.

I remember years ago when I first opened my printing business in Houston, I named it "Burling Printers." A proper name if you want to project a depiction of the person owning it. But as time went on, a new change was in order to more broadly express the scope of and mindset of the

business. I called it "Proficient Printing." (Proficient: competent or skilled in doing or using something.) I wanted to instill in the minds of buyers for the industry not just who but what our business model believed about itself and what we offered to the public.

Just as William Booth, an independent evangelist who founded "Christian Missions," in 1878 wanted to broaden the perception of the ministry so he re-named it Salvation Army. I believe he looked to the future and God's impression to him, he established a global ministry throughout the British Isles, the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe. Harkening back to Abraham, it's never too late to

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*Then He said to them,  
"With fervent desire I have  
desired to eat this Passover  
with you before I suffer;  
Luke 22:15*

### *Leave Your Safety Zone... from page 1*

To launch out means that you must have a strategic plan that will help you reach your goal. Your goal may be to buy land for a new church, counsel more people, make more missionary trips, or increase the size of your congregation. Plan your work, and work your plan in accordance to God's plan—face your fears, they will disappear. As one great US president said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Truer words were never spoken than these. Devote yourself to breaking your old habits and doing something that will astound yourself and others in 2017. Remember Psalms 23:4 "I will not fear evil [or dangerous things],

because You [God] are with me." Compare yourself with modern aircraft and space ships, "Your attitude will determine your altitude." In other words you will never "fly high, unless you put your trust in Jesus to change your attitude and fearful thoughts toward "launching out into deep water." When you dare launch out into deep water, you will receive blessings from on high. ♥

**Happy New Year!**

# A Prosperous & Blessed New Year!!!

## IRS Announces 2017 Mileage Rates

- 53.5 cents per mile for business miles driven, down from 54 cents for 2016
- 17 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes, down from 19 cents for 2016
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

## 2017 The Year Of...? from page 2

“RENAME” something. Has 2016 turned out in such a way that you could name it ‘such and such’ and tie a ribbon on it with the feeling of helplessness as what you could have done to have changed its outcome?

People today change their names for just about any reason or for no reason at all. Reasons may be their relationship changed following a divorce, or they desire a less ethnic name for religious reasons. For instance Steve Kreucher changed his name to “In God We Trust” to honor the help God gave him during hard times. There has been a trend in changing your name because you want to worship a hero such as a singer, sports figure, political figure, etc. We all know the story book love of Jacob and Rachel and how he worked fourteen years for the woman he wanted to marry. A few years after the birth of Joseph, Jacob’s favorite son as well as his eleventh son, Rachael is pregnant with his twelfth and final child. On the day of the child’s birth, things turn bad for the mother and as she’s giving birth, she names the child “Ben-oni,” meaning “Son of my Sorrow” with her last breath. But Jacob did not let that name remain. Here is where we get our hope and faith for 2017. I’m not willing to receive something that brings pain or sorrow for me or the rest of my family. Remember God told Adam to name all the animals he created and told him “whatever you name it or what you call it, it will be.” Even today some 6,000 years later, Adam’s authority is still in place on all the animals we know he named. Jacob, the father, had his name changed to Israel and I believe he remembered how his outlook and up-look changed since that wrestling match. God had rescued him from his old life of bad traits (His name Jacob meant deceiver) and literally changed his name to Israel which incorporated the name of God; “you have wrestled with God and prevailed”. I also believe as he’s standing there trying to assimilate the fact his wife has now passed away and has

named the child after her sorrow, I believe deep down his mind goes back to his father, Isaac’s right hand being laid on his head and pronouncing the blessing he craved so much. As he looked at the child, it simply states, (Genesis 35:18b), “But his father named him Benjamin,” meaning “the Son of my right hand.” Why allow his son to go through life bearing guilt as the cause of his mother’s death and pain?

This year you can “RENAME” what the world has named your sickness or disease, what your relationships have been, what pathway your children have followed unapproved by you and you can “RENAME” it—call it what you want it to be! Do not accept the name(s) given to your life circumstances. This year is a year of blessing. I believe we have open doors and an open heaven to declare and proclaim healing, prosperity, chains of addiction broken, and the blessing from God to be a banner of love over you and your household this year. Like Jacob, call it what you want no matter what it looks like. Don’t let the world, or your circumstances name your year of 2017, “RENAME” it and call it what you want it to be! Then trust God and see His manifestation in the lives of those you love.

For our last thought of encouragement for 2017 and leaving 2016 behind notice the progression in Genesis 35. In Genesis 35 after he changed the name of his son to Benjamin, it says in verse 20, “Jacob set up a pillar over her tomb” and verse 21 in NIV says, and.... “Israel moved on again.” He left behind his sorrow and his hard times but now Israel went forward into his new season. ♥



*By Pastor Lynn Burling/  
From The Heart Ministries, Inc.*



# Year-End Checklist For Ministry Bookkeepers

**1. Housing Allowance.** Church/Ministry Boards and/or Congregations should designate an annual 2017 housing allowance for ministers who own or rent their home (and for ministers who live in a parsonage and pay some of their housing expenses).

**2. W-4 forms.** All employees should complete new W-4 forms to ensure accurate withholding.

**3. Notice of donors.** Donors should be advised in a church bulletin, newsletter, or by letter from the church, not to file their federal income tax return before they receive their Contributions Statement from the church. Some people may not be able to deduct certain contributions if they file a tax return before receiving their church contributions receipt.

**4. Christmas gifts.** Be sure to correctly handle Christmas gifts made by the church or congregation to a minister or staff member. In most cases, these gifts represent taxable income and must be reported as income on the recipient's W-2 or 1099.

**5. Handling end of year contributions.** The general rule is that a contribution is effective when delivered. This means that a check deposited in the church offering in January of 2017 becomes effective that day even if it is backdated to 2016. It is not deductible for 2016. One exception: **Checks postmarked in 2016 are deductible in 2016 — even though not received until 2017.**

**6. Business Expenses.** If your church reimburses some or all of a minister's business expenses, reimburse these year-end business expenses NOW.

**7. Reclassification of workers.** Now is the time to decide if you want to reclassify any of your workers for tax reporting purposes. If you have a minister or lay worker who is

treated as self-employed for federal income tax reporting purposes, and you would like to reclassify the person as an employee, the ideal time to make the change is on January 1st of the new year.

**8. Voluntary withholding.** Ministers' wages are exempt from tax withholding. This means they use the quarterly estimated tax procedure to prepay their federal taxes. Ministers who report their income taxes as employees can enter into a voluntary withholding arrangement with their employing church. Under such an arrangement, the employing church withholds income taxes as it would for any other employee; and it can also withhold an additional amount of income taxes to cover the ministers' self-employment tax liability.

**9. Order tax publications and renew subscriptions.** December is a good time to order your new 2017 copy of IRS Circular E (withholding table) and copies of Forms W-2, W-3, 1099, and 1096 that you will be issuing for compensation in year 2017. To order forms simply call the IRS toll-free number at – 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676) or visit the IRS website ([www.IRS.gov](http://www.IRS.gov)).

**10. NEED HELP?** If you need assistance on good tax information for churches and ministers, please contact the PCAI office.

## BLESSINGS!



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## Ministry/Church Tax/Law Updates

*In addition to the regular semiweekly and monthly withholding requirements, churches should note the following dates for this month.*

### January 1, 2017

Employees and employers each pay Social Security and Medicare taxes equal to 7.65 percent of an employee's wages. The tax rate does not change in 2017

### January 15, 2017

Ministers (who have not elected voluntary withholding) and self-employed workers must file their fourth quarterly estimated federal tax payment for 2016 by this date (a similar rule applies in many states to payments of estimated state taxes).

### January 30, 2017

Churches hiring their first nonminister employee between October 1 and December 31, 2016, may exempt themselves from the employer's share of Social Security and Medicare taxes by filing Form 8274 by this date.

### January 31, 2017

Churches having nonminister employees (or one or more ministers who report their federal income taxes as employees and who have elected voluntary withholding) must file an employer's quarterly federal tax return (Form 941) for the fourth calendar quarter of 2016 by this date.