



# TRUTH & RIGHT

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**WELLSBURG**  
CHURCH OF CHRIST



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## **NO GREATER LOVE**

In 1976, Shavarsh Karapetyan, an Armenian Olympic swimmer, had just completed a 12-mile run with his brother when they saw a trolley bus crash into a dam reservoir. The trolley bus sank 80 feet offshore at a depth of 33 feet. Shavarsh immediately dove in and swam to the bus and despite zero visibility, managed to kick in the back window, injuring himself in the process. He proceeded to save twenty people trapped in the bus, one at a time, for hours. The combined effect of the cold water and his injuries from breaking the glass window led to his hospitalization for 45 days after the incident, during which time he developed pneumonia, sepsis, and lung damage which ended his athletic career. For years, his story wasn't known, until an article about the event identified

him by name in 1982. In 1985, he happened to pass by a burning building and rushed inside, again saving people trapped inside one at a time until he collapsed. He was again hospitalized with severe burns and lung damage. He's still kicking it at 66. There are so many amazing points about this man that it's hard to settle on each one and systematically pour through each incredible detail in depth, but I'll do my best. I find it amazing and awe-inspiring as a wonderful example of selfless service. He basically risked his entire Olympic future and athletic status to save the lives of those he didn't even know. Jesus says this is the greatest thing any one of us could ever do. "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down

his life for his friends,” John 15:12-13. We all have been the recipients of that kind of sacrificial love. We have all been given the honor of having someone sacrifice their own life to save ours. When Jesus says there is no greater love than for someone to do that, He’s not saying there’s no point in anyone doing that ever again since Jesus did it on the cross for us. Rather, He is saying since our lives were saved by Jesus laying down His own life for us, there is nothing that will ever come close to that level of service than sacrificing our own lives for another, and we ought to be willing to be committed to being ready to do so. “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren,” 1 John 3:16. We will never truly know the level of gratitude fitting for Jesus or even the true purpose of the use of our own lives until we are willing to sacrifice our own life for others as Jesus did for us. What I love about this amazing example in Shavarsh is that he truly demonstrated he accepted this purpose of his own life with such grace and humility to even be willing to put his life at risk in another situation. In other words, he accepted that his true purpose was not about attaining

all the awards and accolades he could for himself, but about using his gifts and talents in ways that truly served others. He no doubt could have gone on to receive plenty of recognition and awards for his athletic abilities, but was willing to even sacrifice that life of a pursuit of personal achievement and celebration, as he went years without anything even being mentioned about his great act of heroism. Paul said that he also truly believed that all the personal achievements and fame he could have had and enjoyed were worth sacrificing in order to truly know Christ. Because to truly know and be of service to Jesus is to choose using our talents and abilities in the sacrificial humble service of others, rather than serving our own desire for self recognition or honor. “But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ,

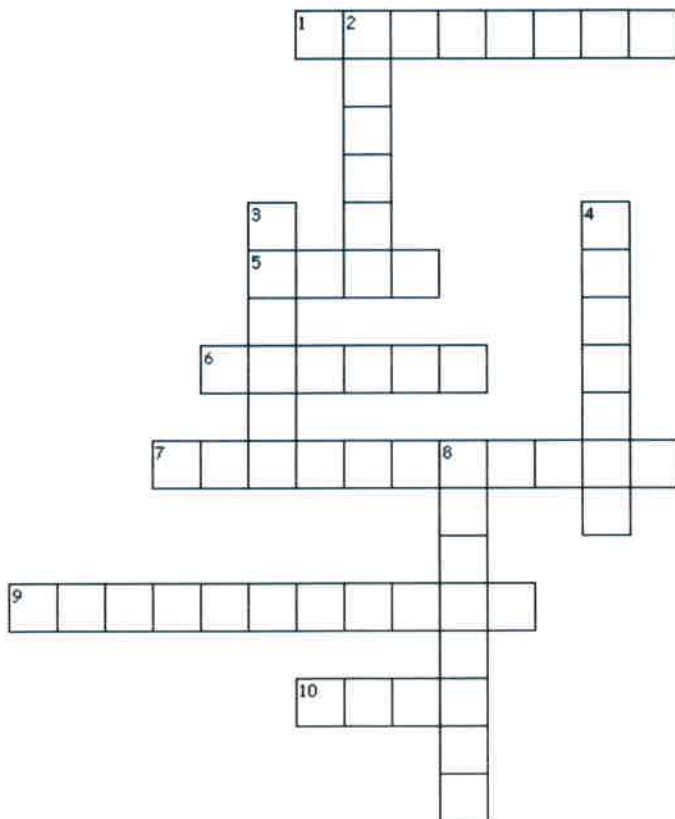
the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead,” Philip. 3:7-11. Paul says what is more glorious and valuable to him than any personal recognition or fame is to know the fellowship of His sufferings. There is no greater evidence that this is true in our lives than when we also are truly willing to suffer in service to the Lord and are willing to continue in that service even when no one is throwing any kind of spot light on us in the process. This is what I love about the example of Shavarsh. Despite going years without any recognition for risking his athletic career and his own life for others, he was just as willing to do it again when the opportunity presented itself. No second thoughts about whether or not it was worth it for him to act on behalf of the well being of others. Without any regard for his own well being or own personal glory, he was willing and ready to lay down his life in service. We have been called to act in the same way. “Which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him

when he has come in from the field, ‘Come immediately and sit down to eat’? But will he not say to him, ‘Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; and afterward you may eat and drink’? He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he? So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.’” Luke 17:7-10. “You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you,” John 13:13-15. So also is His sacrificial death on the cross for our lives, an example that we should also do as He did to us.

– Daniel Ruegg

# The CULT M T E

## C R S S W O R D



### ACROSS

1. In Antioch, it was told how God opened a door of faith to \_\_\_\_\_. (Acts 14:27)
5. When you \_\_\_\_\_, go in your inner room and close the door. (Mt. 6:6)
6. Two \_\_\_\_\_ pulled Lot back into his house and shut the door. (Gen. 19:10,15)
7. Isaiah sung, "Close the doors behind you until \_\_\_\_\_ passes by." (Is. 26:20)
9. Whoever entered a \_\_\_\_\_ house became unclean until evening. (Lev. 14:46)
10. Once inside the ark, God closed the \_\_\_\_\_ behind them. (Gen. 7:16;6:16)

### DOWN

2. \_\_\_\_\_ told a widow to shut the door behind her while pouring oil. (2 Kgs. 4:4)
3. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ a door no one could shut in Philadelphia. (Rev. 3:8;7)
4. God knew \_\_\_\_\_ would say the wilderness had shut Israel in. (Ex. 14:3)
8. The doors were shut where Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ to the disciples. (Jn. 20:19)