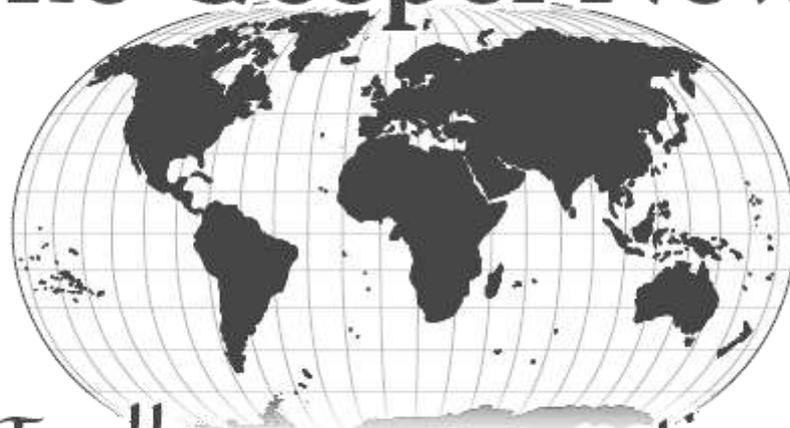


The Gospel News



“To all nations”



A Christadelphian Martyr

We have now obtained a photo of our murdered Brother Faris (left) of Kandahar, Afghanistan. Kandahar is one of the most fundamentalist Islamic cities on earth. According to the Koran, a convert to Christianity must be murdered within three days of his conversion. Brother Faris had his head chopped off by his father-in-law, using a garden spade. Our Brother is pictured here just after his baptism, writing a letter of greeting to his new Brethren and Sisters, in which he explains his determination to preach the gospel at all costs. We pay tribute to our brave Brother and long for the day of resurrection.

EDITORIAL: The Road Ahead

If, in the will of God, the Lord Jesus stays away any longer, Consider the following simple fact:

Non-Western membership of the Christadelphians doubles every 15 years

In order to get a more accurate picture, we need to consider the membership of the Christadelphians in the traditional heartlands of the UK, Australasia and North America. The figures we are dealing with are statistically valid; my figures may not be exactly right, but I am certain that the general trend and conclusion is correct. I have been involved in Christadelphian preaching work since my baptism in 1951 and can now look back over 50 years and marvel at what God has done. I dislike applying such statistical analysis to God's Truth, but we must look at the trends and be realistic about the possible road ahead.

Overall, Anglo Saxon Christadelphia is stable - sharply decreasing in England, but stable in Australia and North America. But the growth in the mission field is enormous. What the above figure indicate is not the success of a handful of enthusiasts, but the hand of God at work. Who would have thought even in 1990 that the true Gospel would be being preached in Russian throughout the (then) USSR? Who would have even dreamed of Bible Schools attended by hundreds of brethren and sisters in Russia? Who would have imagined 20 years ago Brethren and Sisters in China, Iran, Turkey, Vietnam etc.

It may well be that in 20 years? time we will be thinking: "Who would have thought, 20 years ago, that now only a fifth of our fellowship are Anglo-Saxons, that only a fifth of us speak English as our mother tongue...". And the differences may be even greater in my native England - when you consider the age structure of UK Christadelphians (mainly elderly) compared to the generally younger age structure of those outside the UK. The implications of what seems likely to happen need to be soberly considered by all of us, wherever we are in the world.

The Financial Implications

There has been an assumption by some that Western Christadelphians are under an obligation to constantly finance the mission areas. A consideration of the above facts indicates the impossibility of this. Substantial sums of money - in addition to the CBM expenditure - are spent from the UK in all aspects of the Mission areas? work. Assuming the number of converts doubles in fifteen years, it could mean that double the present amount of expenditure, plus inflation, would be needed if the present system continues, which clearly is unrealistic ?

especially if you think of the implications for, say, the next 60 years, consequently plans to make the mission areas more independent are urgently required.

Spiritual guidance

Not only will the supply of financial resources dry up, but Christadelphians of, say, Nigeria, or Latvia, or Jamaica, will have to look more to themselves for spiritual leadership rather than to the West. Imagine, for example, that our preaching in Cuba is blessed and a group of Cuban Christadelphians develops. Cuban Christadelphians will have to be Cuban Christadelphians, not a satellite of English speaking Christadelphians. They will probably have literature in their own language, their own ways of doing things, their own perspectives - *but* all bound together with the rest of us world-wide in that we have the same basic standards of doctrine, practice and a common Statement of Faith. Likewise Russian Christadelphians must be Russian Christadelphians, Ugandan Christadelphians must be Ugandan Christadelphians... not satellites of Anglo-Saxon Christadelphianism.

All this places a serious obligation upon those who first preach the Gospel in a country to ensure that they give much emphasis to teaching sound doctrine, that they encourage the first converts to really love God's word for themselves and that the correct concept of fellowship is understood by all of us, wherever we may be. We are one body ? arms, legs and feet of the same glorious whole. As a world-wide community we *must* be inclusive, truly aware of each other in thought and prayer; and it is my desire that for each country where the Truth is believed, some in the West will dedicate themselves to learning that language and entering into the culture of that nation. Those in the West with years of Bible study and generations of Christadelphianism behind them have so much to give by way of experience , exposition and the running of Ecclesias.

Funding

With so much work to be done there is a marvellous opportunity for true service. If our aim is to develop self-supporting communities of believers throughout the world, there should not be the need for long-term financial support for each country in which the Truth is pioneered. However, there is no doubt that money is needed for the pioneering work itself, and that the genuine need of brethren in crisis in, say, a Moslem country, drought, war,disease or disaster stricken areas, cannot be ignored by their comfortably-off brethren. I suggest God has made it that way because there are many with the potential to give of their God-given wealth (although they may not see themselves as being wealthy). God wants us in His Kingdom and we are told that it is hard for the rich to enter the Kingdom without shedding their wealth. Yet Western Christadelphians have undoubtedly moved socially upward. The average working class Christadelphian convert of the 1920s now has grandchildren often in the professions or with their own businesses. Or just consider the geographical location of most Western ecclesias: not now in the rough inner cities, but tucked away in some of the nicest corners of comfortable suburbia.

The contribution of new converts

There is without doubt a difference between an ecclesia comprised of zealous new converts and one mainly composed of third generation Christadelphians. Both need each other, the development of both depends upon both becoming inclusive of each other. The depth of knowledge of long-standing brethren needs to be shared with those new to the Truth, and the enthusiasm and lack of inhibition and crotchets of new converts need to feed back to the West. Our Western brotherhood, rent as it has been by materialism and internal schism, can learn a lot from the far greater appreciation of the basic doctrines manifested in many overseas believers. The lack of inhibition in preaching amongst new converts is something quite alien to Western Christadelphians, who seem hopelessly shy at telling the man next to them the good news of the Gospel of Christ and his cross, and ought to put the West to shame. I sense, too, a greater humility in them.

Familiarity has bred contempt in the West, and we are reaping what we have sown over the last generation. Perhaps a way of escape, God is offering for us is to become more inclusive of our overseas brethren, to recognize that we need to be re-converted by their example - rather as attending a baptism usually has a sobering effect upon us. Some of you overseas may be shocked at what you read, but this is how I personally feel about this ? and I am being open with you so that you realize something very clearly: *the brotherhood in the West really needs you; there are many of us who look up to your examples and gain inspiration from you; who see in you what we would love to be.* I know this is true, from the many comments which are made to me by appreciative Western readers of *Gospel News*.

Brave New World?

I am painting a picture of a 'Brave New World' for Christadelphia, where over 60% of us are Africans (given present trends) and the majority don't speak English as their mother tongue; a 'Brave New World' where we all write to and read regularly about brethren of different colours and languages; where we all enthusiastically believe and teach the same doctrines and where in love we have learnt to live with each other's differing perspectives and backgrounds. It has been estimated by the researcher David Barrett that by the end of the first century, the ethnic composition of Christianity was 32% white, 68% non-white, and that nearly a third of all Christians were African. It is evident that the situation at that time has similarities with that in the last days (passages like Matthew 24 show that the situation in AD70 was a type of that in the last days) and it seems that within the next few years, God willing, the ethnic composition of Christadelphians could be very similar.

Sometimes I see this as a real, exciting possibility and there is real evidence, that we are really on the road towards it. It may well be that once we reach this stage we will, as a community, have developed to that necessary point for our Lord to return. At other times I realize how far we have to go in our attitudes, in our need for unity and true mutual acceptance of each other, in our self-sacrifice, in our *giving* (in various ways), in our need to avoid needless sub-division, in our devotion to the ideal. I know there is resistance, on the part of some, consciously and unconsciously, to this 'Brave New World'. There always has been. Some don't want to stand

alone; others aren't prepared to let go. All I can say is that if we analyse again the trends, there is no doubt that God is at work. "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth", in this I have always taken untold comfort and I trust we all will in the new challenges which without doubt lie ahead.

Marcus Heaster

News from Africa

news from burundi

We greet you in the name of our Lord and Saviour. We ask you to pray for us because of our Sisters and Brothers who fled their quarters at Kinama, north of Bujumbura where the rebels are in confrontation with the government army. They are in the miserable situation of being lodged by members of their families in the quarters at Cibitoke. Please pray for us and for peace in our country.

Bro. Kashindi-Bin-Nyassinde



Photos. Above: The baptism of Bro. Kitambala Jean Pierre in August, 2003. Below: The ecclesia at Cibitoke.



news from cameroon

BUEA

We are fine. We plead with God for His blessings to foster His work in the ecclesia at Buea. While we try our best in doing our service to God, our handicap is getting *Bible Basics* and *Gospel News* to aid our evangelisation work.

Bro Agbor Martin Ebai

DOUALA

I am delighted to report the visit of Brothers Ian, Ged and Sisters Sue and Veronica in Douala. After our Bible talks on, "I know Thy Works" by Bro Ian, we moved to the baptismal action in

Bonaberi where two new babes were received into the faith. We also had two marriage blessings, that of Bro Tanyinjia Atabong Martin and Sis Lucy Atabong and also that of Bro Joseph Igah and Sis Therese Igah. The blessing ceremony was conducted by our U.K brothers with the quotations from the books of Gen. 2:28 and Eph. 5:22:25. May the blessing of the Lord be upon us till the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bro Amumbi Robert.

LIMBE

Thank you very much for the BIBLE BASICS. I will use Psalm 52:9 to thank you. I started the Sunday School in 2000. We are learning in SS the years of those of old, Methuselah 969 years and Noah 950 years, that the Bible is the only book that contains God's works and plans for man.

Bro. Princewill F. Mobit

Since I last wrote to you I have been sick, and in hospital for two months, but I am beginning to recover and will soon be discharged. Thank God for the Brothers who have been praying for me all this time, and to God for restoring me to health. Brother, I want everyone to pray for me and for the contacts who were preparing to be baptised; as they have seen no one, I wonder how they stand in the Lord, but thank God I bought some Bibles and sent to them for guidance. I intend to visit them when I get out of hospital.

Bro. George Njuh Ewi



Photo. Bro Leke Thomas in front of the Edea Ecclesial Hall, when in construction.

KUMBA

The Lord Jesus will soon come back to the earth; we should all be ready to receive him as our King.

Sis. Rachel Leke



Photo: Sis. Rachel Leke

news from ghana

KUMASI

I have been delighted with the content of the Key Cards you kindly sent to me. I am now inspired

to make a request: Having made a check I find there are many numbers I have not got. I should be grateful if you could send me these and hope you will not mind the inconvenience.

Bro. K.A. Gepi-Attee

SHAMA JUNCTION

There is much work to be done here, and if our Lord and Master remains away, God willing more will be added to the vineyard of the Lord. Events in the world tell us that the coming of the Lord is very near, therefore we should hold fast and support one another on the road to the Kingdom.

Bro. Joseph Oppong

news from kenya

BULIMBO

I take this opportunity to write and thank you for the work you seriously undertake. I am a new Christian convert from the Muslim doctrine. The books you have produced have changed my life fully. Really the truth is in the Bible, not in church doctrines. My family members are still under Moslem law, but I decided to follow the truth that will lead me to the eternal life soon.

Bro. Saligue Bukhebi

First of all I would like to thank you for the six free books you sent to me for the use of the church; we are very grateful and they may be used by some members of other churches who request for them. May our Almighty God bless you and may you continue in assisting us to proclaim the gospel news.

Bro. Emmanuel Joumer

I thank you very much for the materials you sent to me which I received without problems.

Bro. Moses Sande Joumer

KAKAMEGA

It was so nice to hear from you and I was pleased to receive a *Bible* from Bro. Malcolm Cross. I would also be pleased to receive *Bible Basics* in Kiswahili language.

Bro. Gibson A. Azere

KERICHO

I'm glad to take this opportunity to thank God for His love towards all men. My prayer is to ask God to open ways to enable brothers and sisters to continue giving support to our CBM and CAT to get more books for our library. May I also thank you for the work you are doing to assist us.

Please continue serving Him because your reward is awaiting yonder

there. Time will show when our Lord Jesus Christ returns to this earth to set up God's Kingdom.

I would like to inform you that the Lord Jesus Christ gave me chance to travel to Migori- KABABU ECCLESIA on Friday December 12, 2003. I joined our brothers and sisters there and we shared

the word of God and were together in memorial services on Sunday. The Lord is good He guided

me and came back safely. It is lovely for brothers and sisters to be together but because of the

distance it is impossible now. We are looking forward for that time when we shall share together

in the Kingdom. Please I am requesting you humbly to send to me ten copies of *Bible*

Basics (eight in English and two in Kiswahili). I am requesting to get preaching materials because the work is wide and I look for good reports in the future.

Walter Odongo

KIKONENI

Time is passing by and we are still waiting for our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who we expect soon to establish the Kingdom here on earth. Our hope is that we shall be among those who shall inherit that precious Kingdom. All over the world everyone is praying for peace and harmony. Kenya is trying to maintain peace, but still cases of political instability are reported. My fellow Brothers and Sisters here in Kenya are all right, despite the day-to-day problems in people's lives. May we meet soon in the Kingdom of God.

Bro. Gideon Mukeku

KIMILILI

I would like to offer myself to the service of spreading the gospel of God. I am a student aged 18 and have felt so much inspired by your letter, which is indeed a call from God, that is why I have written to inform you that I am ready for the work. Please note my address.

Bro. Isaac Wabuge

KITALE

I am thankful for you remembering me and sending me some more cards accompanied with booklets and leaflets to help me and the ecclesia. We pray that God will make you wise in preparing such material to support our faith. I am also thankful for *Gospel News* from which I am gaining knowledge through the views of Brethren and Sisters from all over the world. I saw my article about the commandments; I am pleased you have fulfilled all that you said in your letter. There are three interested friends who are in need of *Bible Basics*. If you can please send them to me, it would be better if we had the Kiswahili translation, because it is the language understood in our area. My acknowledgement goes to my tutor, Bro. J.T. Waycott, who is now aged; he is helping me with Lukosi ecclesia.

Bro. Joseph Katasi

I hope you are fine in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ just as I am with my family and all other members of Kitale ecclesia. Thank you very much for the books sent, they are really helping us to understand many things, which we had only a vague idea about. At the same time they are helping us to walk towards God's Kingdom. We are praying to the Lord to give you strength so that you can continue spreading the gospel.

Bro Peter Weksa

KOBUJOI

In the past I have had some problems with my P.O. Box, but Bro. Trevor has been helping me.

Bro. Geoffrey Chirchir

LUKOSI

I am very happy writing to you to thank you for the work you are doing in helping us in the ecclesia. You sent Bible Basics and added other interesting booklets, leaflets and some cards to make us wise in the word of God – particularly myself, I found my faith being built up through understanding.

Bro. Samson Simiyu Wanyonyi



Photo: Bro. Samson Wanyonyi

MARALAL

I'm very thankful for your letter enclosing a booklet for more encouragement concerning the soon coming of our Master, Jesus, and the events seen, fulfilling foretold prophecy. The Scripture says, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds and in their hearts also will I write them, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his fellow citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them. My wife, Sis. Judine, passes you warm and loving greetings in the truth, with the great hope of enjoying soon the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ.

Bro. Joseph Opiyo Nuani

MBITA

I am so grateful to receive from you, and thanks a lot for the work you are doing; may our God Almighty, together with His Son, multiply blessings to you. On my side, we are just OK, both spiritually and practically, except that we are experiencing some hardship because of famine. Just to request any book concerning Islam and some copies of *Bible Basics* in Kiswahili, if available. I send my hearty gratitude to all of you who spend hours in publishing this *Gospel News* which enables us to know the problems and blessings of Brothers and Sisters world-wide. I am so happy to fellowship with Brethren of Kababu since July 2003 to date. I truly admire the courage of my Brothers in Nyandenga ecclesia (in the picture) and other isolated Brothers and Sisters, at such great cost to themselves.

Bro. Richard Oduma



Photo: Nyandenga Brethren: Jared, John and Daniel (standing) and Richard and Eraline

MSAMBWENI

Since 2001 up to March 2003 we have been learning the Bible, through studying it. In April 2003, we became Brother and Sister, i.e. my wife, Sara, and I were baptised. Through Bible study the relationship between us has really improved. Surely the Bible has added happiness to our family, this is through reading chapters like Gen. 2:24-25, Ps. 45:10 and Matt. 19:5. 1 Peter 3:1-9 has shown us that the word of God brings peace. I personally would like to thank you for sending GOSPEL NEWS. I have been sharing it with Sis. Sara and it's real good; it makes us know much about other Brothers and Sisters world wide, e.g. March/April 2003 issue page 1, where there is a unique picture. Such pictures make people (myself included) understand that the gospel and

GOSPEL NEWS is for all races in the world. May God bless you.

Bro & Sis. Munga Lugo

NDALU

Thank you for sending me *Bible Basics* in Kiswahili and other literature. Let us look at what God is doing among people and nations for the preparation of our Lord Jesus Christ's return and rule.
Bro. Johnstone Kaliwanga

SINDO

Please try to serve me: We have a Brother, Richard Olang, who was baptised in 1973, who has a son learning in USA, and he would like him to be sent *Bible Basics* in English and, if possible, to be put into contact with any Brethren in the US to learn more about our faith. I am getting on well in the faith and we still maintain our Memorial service.

Bro. John Owalo Onani

TONGAREN

May God our Lord do miracles so that the gospel can spread all over the world through native languages. As Jesus said, that gospel should be preached to the whole world and then the end will come. Preaching the gospel through native languages is surely a sign that the end will soon come

Bro. Sikolia Kapa.



Photo: Tongaren Sunday School and teachers

I want to thank God for giving you the will to spread the word world over. The kind of change you have inspired in people through this will be rewarded. I congratulate you, too, for the literature you sent to me late last year, all received; I am strongly assured that it is going to have a great impact in the lives of many people who will want to share it with me.

Bro. Moses Wafula

news from lesotho

Really, I am so grateful for the wonderful book, 'Why Are we Here?' sent to me as a gift so that I might read it and increase my knowledge in the word of God. I just say, Thank you for the book. Here in my beloved country it just seems as though the times prophesied has come by the events taking place; I would like to mention some: (1) There is famine in so many parts of the country and a huge number of people are dying. (2) Due to starvation, many people have turned to being killers or blood-suckers. Some have turned to thieving and so break our houses and steal things and sell them very cheaply for survival. There is also a hatred currently prevailing

among people. There is no love. In families children rebel against their parents and some even beat up their parents. Things have changed and become worse indeed. So do these things show that the coming of Jesus Christ is very near and we should be prepared for his coming? Really, I am very perturbed and fearful, for I do not know what is going to happen in the future. Only God knows what will happen and I trust Him and regard Him as both my Shield and Fortress. The reason for many of these happenings seems to be unemployment. Please pray for me that God, will hear my prayers when I pray to Him, asking for employment. I thank you for *Gospel News* which I receive. I am grateful for it and realise that it contains good news about my Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Bro. Bernard Lintsa



Photo: Brothers and Sisters of the Cyangugu ecclesia and their children

news from malawi

BUA

I do appreciate your work in publishing *Gospel News*, indeed, you're following the works of our Lord Jesus Christ that words of God must be spread all over the world, that whosoever believes and is baptised may attain the Kingdom. My father fell asleep recently. The problem is that after my husband died, leaving me with two daughters, I came back to my parents and enjoyed being with them, my children also got used to calling my father their father and not 'grandpa'. They are now asking me who are they to call 'father'. I answer that God in heaven is our Father, but I often feel depressed with the question, as the kids are so young that it will take time for them to understand what I mean. The second thing is that my living now is so much poorer. I earn my living by farming, but one has to have farm inputs, e.g. seeds, fertiliser, etc. The thing is it is impossible for me to go into town to look for employment because my mother is old and town life with children is really difficult. So your prayers for me are most helpful for both spiritual and physical things. I enclose a picture of my daughters and me.

Sis. Bertha Khonje



Photo: Sis. Khonje with Charity, left, and Florence

BLANTYRE

I receive *Gospel News* and am greatly touched with the various activities of praising God all over the world; please continue sending it to me. I am very much interested in translating *Bible Basics* into the Tumbuka and Nkhonde languages; Tumbuka is my mother tongue and it is spoken by over five million people in the whole Northern region of Malawi.

Bro. Evans K. Mfuni

KANENGO

I have not been receiving *Gospel News* magazine. Please, I beg you that you send it to me. *Gospel News* is a very helpful magazine and boosts people's spiritual capacity. When I did receive it I was kept abreast of what is going on in the world. If you could send me 'Elpis Israel', 'The Visible Hand of God' it would be much appreciated. Since you sent me, 'Why Are We Here?' I haven't received any booklets from you; I rely on you, as you are the one who writes to me.

Bro. Robson Tiyamike

KASUNGU

It gives me great joy to write again in *Gospel News*. It was early morning last September that we set off for town for a Brother's project, when a pick-up Toyota full of firewood entered our main road –M1 – only a few metres away from the crossroads. We heard a smash from our back. A friend of mine sat on my left-hand side with the driver on my right. Alas! The three of us didn't know what was happening. I then realised that the driver was crying, the car's head was pointing in the direction from which we had come and wood was scattered all round the area – and the friend to my left-hand was nowhere to be seen. After struggling hard to get out of the damaged car and standing up I realised that we were in the accident, and I can't believe how I was saved from it, but I remembered Deut. 32:39, "See now that I myself am He. There is no god beside me. I put to death and I bring to life; I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand." The friend from the car died and I sustained injuries to the scalp, stomach, legs and hands. The driver and I were taken to hospital. God worked some miracles for us – mainly for me because I failed to walk, but can now do so. Brothers and Sisters, pray with me to God and thank Him for sparing my life. We all need each other's strength and encouragement. Since my baptism in 1995 I have never been written to by any UK Brother except Bro. Duncan; my address is: Chamkusu School, Boyole Own Village, Box 298 Kasungu.

Bro. Alexander J.C. Banda



Photo: Bro. Alex Banda (sitting on right) with friends

MZIMBA

Your fellow Christadelphians here greet you cordially in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Please be informed that Malawi, though a small country, has over 12 million people who are thirsty for the word of God, but their thirst for the word is overshadowed by constant hunger for food and other necessities. People are by nature really hard workers, but despite their hard work in their gardens, they harvest little yields due to lack of fertilizer and good seed. Therefore we Christadelphians this end humbly request their fellow Christadelphians that end to please assist us in procuring fertilizer so as to be self-sufficient in food.

Bro. James C. Nyoni

NKHATA BAY

Sorry, for I have spent a long time without notifying you about how I am keeping. I am very sorry to tell you about the death of my father in 2002; he was laid to rest in my village. I am facing

problems with my brothers who I stay with; before my father died they loved me, but since my father passed away they are not taking care of me. I am your Brother patiently waiting for the second coming of our King to establish God's Kingdom.

Bro. Joel Singini

news from nigeria

ABA

Thank you for helping me to get more books. Kindly send me three copies of English *Bible Basics* for some friends. Life is still difficult, as earthly leaders never think good of their subjects. The recent increase in the price of fuel has brought more hardship to Nigerians generally. We pray for the quick intervention of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom which will consume all these earthly kingdoms (Dan. 2:44).

Bro. James E. Ogbah

AKURE

I received the parcel and letter and am very, very grateful for the kind gesture and the contents, especially the two *Bible Basics* that I immediately gave to the two people who had been pressurising me no end. I made it known that it would be a great disservice if they did not study the book well and abide with what was written inside it, taking into consideration the pains taken to print the book, the cost of postage etc. to save a soul. They thanked me for my effort, as they didn't want to believe me when I told them I had written to you. As you are aware, many of our people here are semi-literate and by translating into their own language they can understand quicker and more souls may be won.

Bro. Sunday Awodumla

IKWUANO

We pray always for all of you who devote your time and life to spreading the good news of the future coming Kingdom of God on the earth to those countries of the world that have not heard the wonderful news. We implore you not to relent, no matter what difficulties you may find on the way. God will guide and protect you in your endeavours.

Bro. Friday E. Umesi

MAPUIFE

Some time back our Sister Rose Nwogu received a serious wound to her right eye when she was in her garden. Soon as we saw the wound we rushed her to hospital and she was admitted for treatment. The doctor said the eye should be operated on, which has been done. The box of *Bible Basics* has arrived – no trouble on the way. Thank God it has been received. We would still like some more which will be very useful to us.

Bro. Nwogu



Photo: Sis. Rose Nwogu

news from rwanda

We are a group of six Brothers and three Sisters who are regular in our ecclesia. We send you our picture so that other Brothers and Sisters world-wide can see us and pray for us. We are receiving Gospel News each time.

Bro. Theophile Mwagalwa

news from south africa

IDUTYWA

Sis. Zelpha gave me a Bible in 1999 and told me the difference it would make to my life. In 2000 she tutored me and I was baptised into the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ in 2003.

Sis. Andiswe Mbuqe

news from tanzania

With great sadness we report the falling asleep of our dear Brother Silvesta Kateniba last November 16 at the age of 60. He had a stroke while returning from his field. Our Brother leaves us an example to emulate for his faith, love and devotion to the Lord's work. He had in the past few years become bodily weak with the engulfing poverty conditions, but is now awaiting resurrection to come face to face with the Lord Jesus whom he trusted. We buried our Brother at his home in Lipangalala. About 500 people attended the funeral, in which we seized the opportunity to introduce the Christadelphians, read and spoke from Psalm 146, exhorting everyone to seek their own salvation by searching the Scriptures. *Bro. Kimimino Mnzava*

KASULU

Since I left Kigwa and came to the Lugufu camp my living conditions are worse. I sold everything at a low price and spent all the money on train fares and then to be rejected; the Immigration has forced me to leave Kigwa. So I have many difficulties and do hope you will help me. I found brothers and sisters who preach the gospel and we break bread together.

Bro. Lawi Pililo

Many thanks for your help in spreading the gospel by sending us *Bible Basics* in Swahili and others in English for our brothers and contacts; these will be helpful to us in spreading the gospel. We also appreciate your work in spreading the gospel by sending *Gospel News* which we receive regularly. May God bless you. We would like to have some copies of the book, In

Search of Satan (“KUMSAKA SHETANI” in Swahili).. Last September at Mtabila we had very happy fellowship with Brethren from the UK, Bre. Arthur East, Paul Dredge, also Bre. Benoit Mukendi (Arusha, Tanzania), Sammy Mutunga (Mawandao, Kenya) and Brethren and Sisters from Muyovozi ecclesia.. We also had interviews for baptism and baptised three of six contacts, they are Bro. Baranyizigiye Liberiyo, Bro. W. Choyanga Jotham and Sis. Firela Isaac, afterwards we had a breaking of bread. May God bless them on their journey to the Kingdom of God. I enclose a picture of this visit.

Bro. Charles Hakizimana



Photo, from left: Bre. Ntahokagiye Gabriel Fidel, Hakizimana Charles, Sammy Mutunga and Arthur East.

KIGOMA

I am writing to inform you of the baptism last year of Sis. Banderembako Fidela of the Muyovozi ecclesia during the visit of Brothers Arthur East and Paul Dredge, accompanied by Brothers Sammy and Benoit, at the Mtabila ecclesia. Last year Bro. Gahitira Leverien and Sister Hakizimana Josephine and I were baptised during the visit of Bro. David. Now Muyovozi ecclesia has four baptised members; we are very glad and thank our Lord. We bread bread together, remembering the death of our Lord and look for his return to earth. We recently had copies of English Bible Basics, but would like it in Swahili and French.

Bro. Habonimana Isaac

LIGUFU

I would like to report to you that we were very happy to welcome to our ecclesia four Brothers from different places, among them, Bro. Arthur East and Bro. Paul Palmer from the UK, Bro. Sammy Mutunga from Nairobi, Kenya and Bro. Benoit Mukendji from Arusha, Tanzania

Bro Wabene Bernard

MANG'ULA

Last year our small ecclesia had a visit from Bre. Phil Ashcroft from UK and James Katondji from the D'salaam Mbagala ecclesia. Despite all the problems, the visit was a success and we are very thankful for the material grants sent by our UK brethren. I also thank Bro. Arthur East for his help. All was thankfully received through Bro. Phil Ashcroft. We take the opportunity to announce, for general information, our postal address, which is now: P.O. Box 78, Mang'ula, Tanzania, E. Africa. May the Lord continue to care for His people with love as we all walk in the wilderness towards His Kingdom, with the hope of attaining the promised everlasting life with our Lord Jesus when he reigns as King.

Bro. Joseph A. Makwinja

MBEYA

I have been encouraged since receiving information about the work you are doing, especially in Pakistan. May God bless you. Through faith we can do what seems impossible. I heard about you all from Bro. Graham Cooke (Phil. 1:6). Pray for me so that I may be strong in His work.

Bro. Jonathan Nkombe

TABORA

I was very happy to receive your letter and my hope is that you are well. Thank you for sending me *Bible Basics* in Kiswahili; when I received it there were many Christians and every one wanted to read it, so now I haven't any type of *Bible Basics*. I need, if possible, 15 copies in Kiswahili. Also if possible send clothes because there is a contact who is lame.

Bro. Ezra R. Baocuti

UBENA

I appreciate the material received from you, including Bible Basics, all are very helpful. I would like to introduce to you my neighbour who is very interested in the booklets sent to me; we have been sharing them and I would be very pleased if you would send him a supply.

Bro. Nkonge Mwakatage

news from uganda

BUGIRI

How is the preaching in the UK? We this way in Uganda have to say that Kigansilo are now working together and showing love and preaching unity to other people who now want to know the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bro. Patrick Opondo

KIPOMA

We express our thanks for the letters we receive. You know, this language you use in sending letters to us troubles us so much in reading. Why don't you tell people to translate into French or Swahili?. Here in Kipoma the situation is very bad; the problem is rations. I am an old man, aged 69, and want to eat and worship God only. Is there anyone who is 69 years old who can write to me so that we can make a friendship? For our Christadelphian church, we are now 39 baptised; many others have not yet been baptised, including many women whose husbands are already baptised.

Bro. Ikola Baudouin

MBALE

Loving greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus who we are waiting for very soon. I would first of all take this opportunity to thank the Almighty for His love to us all. I thank you who have managed to send us good news ever to renew the hearts of every believer world-wide. I pray that God will bless you. Let us encourage each other in good deeds and be strengthened in the word. The apostle Paul tells us to live holy lives (1 Thess. 4:7), to be awake. and put on God's armour, to pray as we wait for God's Son to come and set up the Kingdom on earth. Everything will be solved when he comes.

Sis. Harriet Wekoye



Baptism of Bro. Johnny Muhangi in a plastic-lined builders' bag in a hotel shower at Mbarara.

MBARARA

It is a long time since we last communicated; however, we are always close together as members of the same family of God and through prayer. We were very happy to host Brethren Kevin and Paul last month and were blessed with three more baptisms, these being in addition to the five we had prior to their visit; these include my wife, Jane, who in the past had not seen the truth of our faith, but God has now shown her the right way to take which will, in the end, lead her to salvation. I am happy that God is blessing my humble work of preaching and our ecclesia is growing. May His Name be praised. All the fruits we are reaping are the result of a combined effort of yourself and several others who have been supporting us here; may God continue to bless you for your support. I received two mail bags around the same time. Here in Uganda any item now received from abroad is taxed, it is called VAT (Value Added Tax), on top of the handling fee already charged by the Post Office.

Bro. Godwin Mugasi

news from zambia

CHINSALI

Since 1998, when I was baptised, I have stood firm in Christ, preaching the word of God to other people. Where I stayed is far away from Chifunsa ecclesia – about 8kms – but I force myself to go there every Sunday. I am poor and do not even have a bicycle – I go on foot. I also have a Bible study at home every day. Another thing is that I have about 15 students and teach them from *Bible Basics*. The Bible I use is in Bemba language, but it is difficult, as some people do not understand Bemba. I therefore am asking for an English Bible to help in my teaching. There are also some people who want to join us. I am one brother who is strong in preaching the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bro. Edward Mutale

KABOMPO

Thank you so much for having sent me some booklets. I've really enjoyed the book *Introducing the Christadelphians*; I now understand better how they began, I got it first from 'Elpis Israel', but the small book has given me more details. I am still meditating, referring to 'Elpis Israel' and connecting it with my Bible. It is a wonderful Hope. I have found the true faith. So nice to hear that Duncan is now married. May God bless them.

Bro. Amos Chikanda

KABWE

Time is flying by so fast; very soon we will be holding another Camp! I have recently managed to purchase a pair of shoes and can't wait to put them on! I have been down with malaria for a couple of days and have lost weight. As I can't find work, it is difficult to have normal meals. I would love to go to the farm and cultivate, but I don't see myself meeting the farming requirements. I am a little low in spirits.

Bro. Lapulani Malata

MUFULIRA

Most people put trust in someone they can touch and see. The apostle John says "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Sin in the

flesh demands things it can see and touch, and 'sheol' – the Hebrew word for the 'grave' – demands all flesh. Psalm 146:3-5 says, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God." Solomon says (Prov. 1:7), "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction". People enjoy something they can see and touch instead of trusting in the living God.

Bro. Fred Mumba

Any sincere servant of God would be delighted to devote a good amount of time in personal Bible study (Psalm 1:1-3), yet there are demands on them for other things. In order to carry on as active servants of God, we need to have our joy and strength renewed from day to day by finding new and deeper aspects of the truth of God's word. It is good, even vital, that we make a conscious and constant effort to gain fresh insights into His word so as to keep ourselves spiritually stimulated.

Bro. Sakala William

MUZOKA

I really thank you once more for the news about Bro. David Jacob of Oman who is doing a commendable job in the Lord. I have now got 19 pupils for the pre-school/nursery level, plus the other two for tuition and will soon send you a photo. In the meantime a friend has asked me to have the snap scanned for a Newsletter to be sent to the Netherlands and the UK. Thank you for the CIL, Gospel News, and Glad Tidings, all of which I am enjoying. Again I say: We need to go! Let us go! We really have to take a step forward.

Bro. Wilfred Chibomba

SOLWEZI

In Zambia (Solwezi) we have some people who are interested in joining the Christadelphians, but they cannot understand the English language, therefore they are hindered; one of our students was disappointed when some Brothers came last year because she could not read English.

Bro. Joseph Kapimpa

news from zimbabwe

CHEGUTU

I am in receipt of the consignment of 18 Shona *Bible Basics* and have already started distributing them. We mourn the death of my father-in-law, who passed away after a long illness; this was in September, 2003. We continue to toil in the Lord's vineyard until he comes, which we hope will be very soon, as things get worse in this part of the world. Regarding the marriage bond, complete mutual love and sympathy existed in the beginning between Adam and Eve, whose nature we inherited. Adam and Eve were not only "one flesh" by marriage, but

by creation, for Eve was formed out of Adam by the action of a common parent – God. They would both inherit common hopes, aspirations and ideals. No other marriage has been like that one. The perfect reciprocal marriage will be found in the “marriage of the Lamb” with his bride, for the one was formed out of the other.

Bro. Itai Tembo



Photo: After the baptism of Sis. Agnes Phiri, stripped dress (Chegutu)

MAGUNJE

It was comforting and encouraging hearing from you, but I was sorry to know you had been unwell. We know these are some of the trials of this life, hence our desperate attempt to have nothing to do with it. We now know, without doubt, that the time is near when we are hoping to leave this painful life behind as we enter the Kingdom of God where there shall be no sorrow, hunger or pain – to name but a few things. Thank you so very much for the public debate you sent me; it was very educative and interesting and helped me explain some of the difficult aspects that go with that topic. I won't hide the fact that most brethren find it hard to explain why we don't believe in the existence of the Holy Spirit gifts in this age. Bro. Duncan's arguments left me no alternative but to picture him as a man working tirelessly for the Truth to be known, and this only being a result of wide reading and research. I thought you might like to know a little about me. I am 38, married to Mercy and the two of us have been blessed with three lovely boys, the elders of whom is now 16. My wife and I do not go to work, we farm and only get enough to see us through to the next planting season. With adequate rains we will be quite comfortable. We even manage to send two of our boys to school, but the past two years have not been good, what with the rising cost of living and successive droughts. I was born into a 'Salvationist' family, but learnt the truth four years ago and was baptised into the Name of Jesus. There is no looking back; my family and I have promised to work for Jesus to the end and are eagerly awaiting his coming.

Bro. Thompson Changata

MARONDERA

I would like to thank you for *Gospel News*. I also appreciated your letter
Sis. Shiela Chawaguta

RIMBI

We delight in the baptism of Sithembile Munyama and pray that she will hold fast to the truth she has received until the Good Shepherd returns, and we see the signs of his coming daily. I will be going to Chiredzi where I am looking forward to meeting Bro. Jonathan Zyayamwenye. Thank you very much for the 20 English *Bible Basics*; I have already given 16 away. I hope to see you very soon in the Kingdom, as there are clear signs telling us that it will not be long before the coming of the Lord.

Bro. Moses Dhlakama

I have visited Triangle to follow up students; they began by asking questions about God's promises to David and what happens when a person or animal dies. Another student-raised questions about demons, how they work within us, and why do some people believe in

them? He also wanted to know how Satan overpowers us, instead of God. We had a nice day with them all and covered many subjects; they also enjoyed our visit

Bro. Isaac Guzete

TRIANGLE

I thank God for His kindness and His wisdom. The year I was immersed everything changed – even my thoughts have changed. I was following an idol, a god I did not understand. The day I started receiving the books everything changed. Here is a picture of me.

Bro. Jonathan Zyayamwenye.

News from Europe / Eurasia

news from belarus

YUKHOVICH

I am sorry for not having written for a long time. In that time my husband Volodya was baptized and we are breaking bread each week regularly. We read together also. I want to thank you for all the literature. The new booklet about alcohol is really very important. My daughter is living in Riga and I so hope she will visit Bro Duncan and Sis Cindy and develop her interest in the Bible.

Sis. Iraida

news from georgia

ABKHAZIJA

I was unable to come to the Bible School as it is almost impossible for residents of Abkhazija like myself to pass through the blockade, and it is very hard to get the documents required for us to travel. I send my greetings to all.

Bro Guram

news from israel

BEER SHEVA

We are very sad that those who used to visit us now can no longer visit us, we love them and miss them because it was them who brought us to know Christ. At 81 it is very hard to do anything much but we love you all, even to take the letter to the post box is about the main sacrifice which we can make.

Bro. Viktor & Sis. Nina

I was visited recently by some visitors from England, the shame is I do not understand them as they don't speak Russian. I so wish that you could come here again and translate for us! I ask

you for your prayers for my family. I pray each day and night both to God through Jesus.
Sis. Anna

KARMIEL

We are praying for you here. We believe that soon the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in his wings. Our great hope is to again have fellowship together as we used to in Russian as we find a problem with the visitors we now get speaking to us in English with no translator.

Sis. Natasha

PETAH TIKVA

I am truly hoping that this year will see the return of Jesus to this land!

Bro. Vladimir

news from italy

BARI

I have been here for a year working. I miss you all and send greetings to those brothers from England whom I met in Romania. I miss the Bible Schools we had in Romania.

Bro. Mihail

news from kazakhstan

Photo: Bro. Henryk and Sis. Yevgeniya Budzialowscy, recently married in Poland.



ALMATY

I am looking forward to having my baby but I have been so ill here with the cold weather, flue and bronchitis etc. We are so worried about being able to clothe our baby. We are praying and reading, but are still faced by such problems.

Sis Valentina

(Note: Some clothes have been sent)

KOKSHETAU

We are very much with you and we keep praying for those poor Brothers in Iran and Pakistan.

Sis Ira and Sis Luba

news from latvia

AIZKRAUKLE

I am sorry for not writing. It is hard for me to get out but I dream of being able to come to a meeting. I wish to very sincerely thank you all for writing to me and sending me everything, exhortations etc, which have helped and encouraged me so much. I realize my problems are so small compared to those of our Brothers in other countries.

Sis Irena

BENE

May the Angels watch over each of you every step of your lives. I was very touched to receive greetings from so many countries after my baptism. I truly feel part of you all and pray for you.

Bro. Nikolaj

PILTENE

I am grateful for the letters and spiritual support I receive from Bro Mark Greeves and from Bro Charles French from Australia. I count it a privilege to thank God for all my many blessings.

Sis. Olga

REZEKNE

I keep on reading and re-reading the books. I am talking to many people now who are interested. Please pray for my son as he has so many problems just now.

Sis. Anna

TUKUMS

I again had my pension stolen and this very much shook up my mother who is very elderly, I always look forward to the meetings here, and I wish sincerely for the Lord to be with you all.

Sis. Vaira



Photo: Meeting at Tukums

news from moldova

CHISINAU

I am still getting over the loss of my husband Sergej. I spent so much money at the hospital when he was taken ill and I have such problems repaying it. Also my uncle died recently so I am being tested by God in many ways at once. I believe in the coming of the Kingdom of God very strongly now.

Sis. Tanya

I am so grateful that after three years being without gas, we now have gas, so I can be warm, especially as all day I have to work outside. I thank God so much for this blessing to me. Since Bro Sergej died things have been hard for us here, as we always gathered at his place.

Sis Elvira

DUBOSSARY

Things are very hard for me here. After the war we had here and the isolation policy we still have, it seems in our blocks we are surrounded by invalids, old and hungry people, it is very hard for us. My only hope is in the Kingdom of God.

Sis Tamara

news from norway

I miss Bible Schools! I often remember the Bible Schools I attended. Soon it will be seven years since I was baptised. It's amazing to think how God works in our lives and helps us. I pray each day – for my family, relatives and all Christadelphians. Prayers are so important. In the evenings when I put Linda to sleep I pray a long time.

Sis Helena

news from poland

Photo: Sis Filomena, Sis Jean Field, Sis Valerie Freer and Bro Jan Byrski at Bielska Bialo, Poland.



news from russia

EFREMOV

I am so sad I can't get leave from the factory to go to the Bible School. I ask you to pray for my situation as my former wife is seeking to take the apartment away from me and I shall be without anywhere to live, please pray for me. I seek in all this to act as would Jesus and the apostle Paul.

Bro. Oleg

IRBIT

I was so, so happy to return home and learn that my dear friend Viktor Moor had been baptized. We pray for you each evening and are always hungry for news of how our dear brotherhood is getting on in all their problems.

Bro. Anatoly

JOSHKAR-OLA

I'm unable to get to the Bible School so I am not looking forward to a long time now without any fellowship from Brothers and Sisters. I am so grateful for the literature about alcoholism, I am surrounded daily by this problem and fear for my children as they live surrounded by these temptations. I eagerly read all literature sent to me.

Sis. Elena

KALACH

I continue praying and reading each day and I am much helped by all the literature sent to me which I am reading with great hunger.

Bro. Nikolaj

KAZAN

We are eagerly waiting for the Winter Bible School, I want to take my daughter Kristina with me so she can meet with the Brothers and Sisters. We love you all and are waiting for the Kingdom.

Sis. Svetlana

Things have changed very much here since the arrival of Sis Ludmila from Kazakhstan. Now we meet regularly and she teaches us so well, we feel we are a real Christadelphian ecclesia . We are so happy and grateful to her.

Bro. Viktor

We continue meeting together at Sis Ludmila's for the breaking of bread. I so enjoy these meetings.

Bro. Andrej

I finally returned home from the Bible School, after some problems. It was truly a good school. I feel that the end will come soon, all we can do is prepare ourselves for it.

Sis Ludmila

KORKINO

I have been re-reading 'Bible Basics for Moslems' as I have some relatives who are Moslems who I so want to preach to. Islam is becoming a real problem for Russia now. Also I am enjoying understanding about the Orthodox church better through the articles in the Russian Gospel News. I want to understand people better so I can preach effectively to them.

Sis. Sofia

LESNOJ

Sister Anastasia is still the same, she is blind and I am doing absolutely everything in the house, the shopping etc, but I want to tell you all that I do this for her with joy. I am sorry for my long silence but I am holding to our Lord.

Bro Viktor

LIPETSK

I am much impressed by the new booklet about alcoholism, it is really necessary, but sadly here those people who most need this help refuse to come to God, who can be the only cure for it. I

am in eager anticipation of coming to my first large Bible School this Winter.

Bro. Sasha

POKROVKA

I was very happy to be encouraged to give details on anyone of my family or friends who would like a copy of *Bible Basics*, I am sending these to you. Then I can write to them and ask for their impressions. I am very grateful of all letters of encouragement sent to me.

Sis Svetlana

RZHEV

I had a great joy recently in that I was visited by Igor and Lena and we made the breaking of bread together! They also invited me to come to their meeting in Moscow. I look back and am so grateful to God that I found out about you all from an advertisement in a newspaper, and you have become my best friends and true Brothers.

Bro. Sasha

ST. PETERSBURG

The new booklet about alcohol is really very well written and helpful, I have seen so many talented lives destroyed because of it, it is a cursed legacy from the period of Communism. I am so sorry that I couldn't get to the Bible School this Winter. We are living here on the brink of poverty in every way.

Bro. Valerij

SARANSK

I have not visited a Bible School for two years but I am going to make every effort and sacrifice I can to come this year. I am very grateful for all the effort made for me and I pray for you all.

Bro. Nikolaj

I have just celebrated the anniversary of my baptism as I write this. I am filled with you, especially as a Brother sent me a calendar which arrived the same day. I thank God for the way His angels have worked in my life and brought me to you and to having the hope which I now have in my old age.

Sis Aleksandra

SARATOV

I so miss seeing the Brothers and Sisters at the Bible Schools and this year I want to make the effort to come. I have moved here from Kazakhstan and still face many problems with my documents. I love you all.

Sis. Raisa

SHADRINSK

With great joy I am preparing to come to the Winter Bible School, thank you for the trouble in organizing this School.

Bro. Pavel

SHANINO

I am praying day and night for various ones who have fallen into poverty or hard times, there are really so many amongst us. I muse as to why there is so much wealth in the Western world when here we are going from one poverty to another. I can't come to the Bible School as I am sick, but there are also some suffering in my own family due to a car accident, I can only pray for them.

Sis. Tamara

SHCHYOKINO

I keep meditating upon the way that some will be told in the end, "Depart from me, I never knew you". These words are so often in my mind. I am still grieving for the loss of my wife. I wish I could do more for you all, my health is weak and I can't even go to a Bible School at the moment, so I pray for you.

Bro. Boris

TAMBOV

I remember often my baptism in the river. I am a Christadelphian because I believe the truth and have explored the Bible widely, it is the closest I have found to the truth and I will therefore spread this truth to all I can.

Bro. Vadim

TVER

I have just spent an afternoon writing letters to you all. I am with you all. I have much enjoyed reading the new booklet about Alcoholism, this is really important for us in this area of the world. Even in the Old Testament we read in places like Isaiah 28:1 that there is great "Woe" for those who are alcoholic.

Bro. Igor

TYMSK

We have all been sick here, I also haven't been able to write because of a broken finger. Despite this we have been breaking bread on Sundays at 11:00 as always. I am trying by all means to get to the Bible School, it will be a miracle if I can, but I pray.

Bro. Ivan

UST KATAV

I am so sorry for my long time of not writing. There is not a day that goes by where I do not have some trauma or problem, in my family, in my health which is weak, or in opposition I find at my work, where people are somehow jealous of me and there is much religious gossip. But I am God's creation and I know that He will preserve me, and I keep praying that I will be among the sheep and not the goats when Jesus returns.

Sis. Elena

YEKATERINBURG

I am writing from here as I am now at college here. I am thinking much about God, I am grateful for your support, and I am hoping I may be able to share something of the truth with others here.

Bro. V.

ZELENODOLSK

We are now meeting together with the Kazan ecclesia whenever we can, numbering about 15 who regularly attend with Sis Ludmila. We all so love and respect her, she is a great blessing to us and has shown us how to live as true Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

Sis. Valentina

Photo: Bro. Vladimir and Sis. Nina with an interested friend



news from serbia

I am thinking still of ways to preach here. I am eagerly awaiting when Br. William will complete typing up my translation of Br. Stewart's book Numbers and Colours in the Bible. I know an Adventist here who is a great inspiration to me, he goes out on the streets each day and seeks to talk to people and offer them literature. I will never give up my hope of having an ecclesia here.

Bro. Vladislav

news from ukraine

KIEV

I am sincerely praying for Jesus to return this year to end all divisions between people and to bring His Kingdom.

Sis Elena

I am sorry I was unable to come to the Bible School as my mother is now critically ill. But I truly think of you and wish peace and blessing to be with all our Brothers and Sisters.

Sis Ludmila

NOVOMOSKOVSK

We are truly so sorry we can't get to the Winter Bible School but we will think of you all and are very much with you all as we too continue our walk with you to the Kingdom.

Sis. Ludmila, Bro. Stas

NOVY TORGAI

We here would all so love to come to the winter Bible School, we are very sorry if this won't be possible. We are living here in very poor circumstances and these Schools are the only light in our lives

Sis. Vera

POLTAVA

I make special prayers to God about all our suffering Brothers in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. I also pray more strongly, "May your Kingdom come".

Bro. Vladimir

We have the breaking of bread here every Sunday and I am leading the meetings apart from when we go to Kiev for the breaking of bread there. We think of you in Riga and love you all so much.

Bro. Gennady

ROVNO

I have been very ill and in hospital and it has been very hard for me to afterwards go to the village and gather food. My husband Bro Vitaly is not allowed to live where I live as I am in a woman's hostel, but we see each other each day. We have so little money. We pray to God and we love Him. We are reading His word daily and are so longing for Jesus return.

Sis Nadia

news from uzbekistan

TASHKENT

I am facing opposition from people here, but I do not fear. I realize that you are my most wonderful friends and true family. I very much love you and appreciate all you do for me.

Bro. Oleg

News from the Americas

news from mexico

Christmas is widely celebrated in Mexico. The decorations are elaborate, but what I mostly enjoy is that the poinsettias are naturally in bloom at this time and they use them for decoration everywhere. putting them around monuments and everything. They also grow as large as trees here naturally, so it is very beautiful. The bougainvilleas are also in full boom in many colours as well as other blooming trees, so over all there is much colour and beauty in these winter months.

It was very encouraging to see an increase in returned lessons during the holiday period. Many students obviously took this time to devote to their bible studies. We are now up to 150 on the mailing list for Guadalajara. Not all of these are active, as the first group we started in July have just received the last of their courses. Lord willing they will seek to continue with the next series. The exciting news of the month is that we believe we've secured a site to establish the new Centro Bíblico Cristadelfiano. It is nicely located three doors down from a street which carries the major buses which cross through the city. It is also partially visible from that street, so we will be able to put a sign or banner up which will be readily seen. It will have sufficient areas to park during our times of greatest use. It is actually a house which has been used for offices previously. It will need a little modification, which should be completed in the next couple of weeks. It has a downstairs living room area, which should be sufficient to hold our students for classes and out upcoming seminar in March.

Bro Bill and Sis Carol Rawson will be here from Spain for the entire month,
Carl, Cynthia & Carlie Paiva & Allison Cedarholm.

UN-NAMED COUNTRY FOR SECURITY REASONS.

Although we have had only one arrest, the sister involved was released after her defence, the judge expressing the opinion that we were "no threat to the xxx government." (The man who reported her preaching to his daughter and friends is now learning the Truth). Nevertheless we are unregistered as yet and several attempts have been made to have the police invade our meetings.

News from Asia

news from mongolia

ULAN BATOR

I am so sorry for not writing. I was sick, but God healed me and I am now completely OK! I am so happy, that my faith and hope and prayers were answered, now I see that in some way God can do miracles for us, and prayer has great power. I am so happy and I share this joy with you all.

Sis Vera

Fishers of Men

?Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.? These are the Master?s words. Jesus was speaking to men who were fishermen. I am sure, as it was their business and only source of income, they had acquired all the necessary knowledge on fishing. No man can be a successful fisherman unless he studies fish. He must know the things that they like and the things that repel them.

Jesus Christ called the twelve to be with him and that he might send them forth to preach (Mark 3:14). Jesus, who calls, is the one who knows how far the world is from the truth. He calls and teaches how to launch out into the sea of men who are in the dark and draw them unto God. He says, ?The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few?? (Luke 10:2).

We are urged to pray without ceasing, to live in faith and to do all things with love. Therefore let every brother and sister ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his field.

Bro. Godwin Mugasi (Mbarara, Uganda)

Criticism

Our duty is to listen to reasonable criticism. The time is short. Some will appear in their true light to everyone. Many will discover that they have been wasting their time by hurting their brethren by bootless and embittering controversy, instead of redeeming the evil days by the

consolation of the truth. They will see too late that instead of imbibing the sincere milk of the word, they have been feeding on ashes; that instead of dispensing a portion of meat to the household in due season, they have been giving them gall and vinegar, that instead of strengthening the hands of fellow-labourers, they have been casting stumbling-blocks in the paths of the weak, and discouraging the hearts of the strong; that instead of rejoicing in the Lord, they have been fretting their soul with barren contentions; that instead of filling up a good account with works of humility, mercy and faith, they have been sowing a harvest of envy and strife; that instead of helping to purify a peculiar people, zealous of good works, their influence has been only mischievous, continually obstructing the work of the Lord, pulling down the work already done and throwing clouds and darkness over the beacon intended to guide the feet of the stranger to life eternal. Let us aim to be out of the ranks of this number, that the Lord at His coming may approve our faithfulness in small things and give us higher work to do.

Bro. E. Store (Kachingwe, Malawi)

How sweet is God's word!

Do we read the Bible regularly using the Bible Companion ? If we do not read the Bible daily then we will lose our fellowship with God. We will never find true happiness without this fellowship and contact with Him each day. Only from the Bible can we find out about God and the way He thinks. The centre of God's purpose is the life, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus and the only possible way we know that these things happened is from the Bible.

According to the whole of Psalm 119, the word of God is the central thing in the lives of any believer. It is the source of our conscience- otherwise we would not have any way of feeling bad about sin, as we would not know right from wrong. Also, our duty is to bring others to God. Romans. 10:17 says that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God". So unless we have the word of God in our hearts we can never take God to another person, because they can only hear the Gospel from us if we are teaching them the word of God.

So for all these reasons we understand why Jesus confirmed that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from God (Mt. 4:4). We are born as new babies by our baptisms, and so after that there is a very great need to feed and it is the word of God which is to be our food (1 Pet. 1:25; 2:2). It is like the manna which the people of Israel ate in the wilderness. Without this feeding each day, we will die, we will lose our ability to walk with God, we will die spiritually in the wilderness of the world. We are told in Lev. 5:17 that ignorance does not save us from being guilty of sin, so it is important for us that we know what is the truth and what are the commands of God, and so this is why we should be reading the Bible every day. David says that the word of God makes the simple wise, and we are all simple in that we do not know what is the right way to live before God without being enlightened by Him.

The word of God is called the "sword of the spirit" in Eph. 6:17, this is the weapon which David says he used to fight against his persecutors. The word of God is like a knife that is living and active, as we read in Hebrews(4:12). So the word of God is the power of God, this is how He wants to work in our lives. If we refuse to read His word, then we will not have access to this great power. It will pass us by. Also, we cannot just use the word of God occasionally, we must have regular contact with it, this is the way that we will be changed as people. Remember that

the first of all sins was a disobedience to the word of God. "Sin is lawlessness" (1 Jn. 3:4), so all sin is a form of disregarding the word or law of God. Jesus was the word of God turned into flesh, so He is our great example. It was because He loved the word of God so much that He could say that He always did those things which pleased the Father (Jn. 8:29).

Bro Gennady (Poltava, Ukraine)

The Redeemed of the Lord

The Gospel call is not to a trouble-free road. This is why Peter said, "We must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of God". Also Jesus said that those who endeavour to follow him must be prepared to deny themselves by carrying their own cross. The cross here is a symbol of trouble or problems. Yes, indeed, the cross must come before the crown.

As gold is tried by fire, so the test of tribulation for those who are being visited by God "in order to take out of them a people for His name". To take out of them a people for His name, may echo the words that "many are called but few are chosen". These chosen few will in the end result in a great multitude due to the fact that "He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:31).

In Revelation 7:13-17 one of the elders had this to say to John in a vision, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" John said, "Sir, you know". And then the elder said to him, "These are the ones who came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger any more nor thirst any more. The sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes". In other words, these are the ones who have overcome the world by their faith in God and have been redeemed by their Lord.

Bro. Sylvester Tembo (Mzuzu, Malawi)

Activities in North Tanzania and Kenya

KIGOMA

In the company of Bro Michael Owen (U.K.), his Sister wife Richmael and Bro Benoit Mukendi, we had a week of many activities in Kigoma from 10-16 July 2003. The activities were based on teaching the Brothers and Sisters how they should conduct their CBM activities in their respective ecclesias. Bible teachings on topics like Satan, separation from other churches and the Kingdom of God were taught by all of us. Brother Michael had a difficult time opening his Bible now and then to prove to the people that the Bible speaks for itself. Bro Benoit Mukendi did a good job proving to the audience he knows why he is here. Sis. Richmod was so patient, staying under the shade the whole day teaching both the Sunday school and Sisters. The trip

proved to be quite good and finally Lugufu camp was visited, although I had to leave early on the 16th. It was a sad departure.

From 15-25th September 2003, Bre Arthur East and Paul Dredge from the UK, and Bro Benoit Mukendi and I were here again for 10 days. Our main concern was the camps. We visited Nyarungusu, Mtabila and Lugufu and we were very happy with their progress. We had about 10 baptisms in total. Bro Arthur East had time to tell them about the CBM and how they were to organise themselves. The visit proved to be good and encouraging. At Lutale the advice was that they should conduct things in love, and if they put love in the ecclesia, the ecclesia would grow. It was sad to part with my brothers for their various destinations.



Bro Paul Dredge offering the right hand of fellowship to those baptised .

ARUSHU

As usual my fellow missionary workers, Bro Tim and Sis Judith Evans had already arrived at Golden Rose Hotel with their children Leah, Abigail and Joel. We had a good time together renewing our friendship and the children made me happy throughout our missionary trip, which lasted from 15-25 th August 2003. Bro Beniot and Thiery were there, always keeping us company with their wives. We had a week teaching the ecclesia at Arusha and Moshi about the principles and good way of life. We also spent some time teaching Bro Benoit and Thiery on how to conduct a baptism. We also went to Ferengeti where we met Sis Monica from Musoma, she is a Kenyan but staying in Tanzania. This took us one week. It was sad when I bid my family farewell.

MAKINDU AREA

From the 6-7 th September 2003 Zakayo Mutunga, Lazaro Kingoo, Monica Mutunga, Jacob Mutunga, Everline Kingoo and Dickson Mauni visited this area. Kai, Ikoyo, Kiboko and Makindu ecclesias were all visited. The main missionary activities were to teach them the way they should conduct their CBM activities, breaking of bread services and general administration. It was quite a successful trip with a promise to come back again.

KITUI AREA

Bre Zakayo Mutunga, Jacob Mutunga and Lazaro Kingoo accompanied me in this area. We had elders meeting at Ikutlia and we visited the following ecclesias from 18-20 October 2003: Ikutlia, Nthoiani, Nguu Nyumu, Muathe, Mutonya, Busyani, Mwangeni and Symithumo. We were encouraged by their love and their love for the word of God. We encouraged them to be patient in the problems of the world and to look forward to the day when the Lord will set up his kingdom here on earth. We left feeling we had served the Lord well.



Brethren enjoying wild meat at Kitui

MWANDEO ECCLESIA

The sisters had a wonderful meeting in August which was very encouraging. We look forward to a good one next year.



Bro Sammy Mutunga

Sisters Conference at Mwandeo Hope for People with Disabilities in the Kingdom

I am a 57 year old brother who has been baptized for 26 years. I have cerebral palsy caused by a breech birth. With cerebral palsy, the messages telling the muscles to move take longer to transmit through the nervous system from the brain with a greater amount of physical energy expended to move the muscles. I was ambulatory from age 3 to age 49. I accomplished the same things that persons without disabilities do. I attended public school, played sports, rode a two-wheeled bicycle, earned a college degree in 8 ½ years, and worked as a welding engineer for a worldwide engineer/construction corporation for 12 ½ years .

I woke up one morning with sciatica. The combination of strong quadriceps in my thighs with a weak arching back caused by the tendency of walking on my toes for 46 years created a hinged effect on the sciatic nerve. I have not been able to strengthen the muscles in my lower back.

Eventually I had to use a walker (a walker is referred to as a 'frame' in Great Britain) and a power wheelchair which can be lifted on and off public transportation buses to get around. Now I tire more easily because my muscles are losing flexibility with age and it takes more energy to move them. It takes me longer to perform tasks. When transported by the brethren, I use a manual wheelchair to travel long distances at meetings and other activities in the Truth.

Currently, I do volunteer work three days a week as a technical writer for a non-profit organization which provides services to people with disabilities who are poor. I am developing a plan for the organization to provide information, assistance and other services to people with and without disabilities in response to disasters. With all my physical challenges I have hope in the promises in Isaiah 35 and 40:29,31 for people with disabilities in the Kingdom of God on the earth.

Bro. Jim Stinehoff (U.S.A.)

Practicing the Presence of God

Believers need to be aware of the presence of God in their lives to escape the influences of the world. Like David in Psalm 16:8 they must set the Lord before them. Paul states in 2 Cor. 3:18, that when followers of Christ practice the presence of God, it is like looking in a mirror beholding the glory of the Lord. The result is, Paul further states, that believers are changed into the same image and reflect the glory of the Lord.

The verse in Hebrews 13:5, states 'be content with such things as ye have: for he (God) hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Believers experience contentment when they practice the presence of God, and their abiding faith and sense of His presence deepens. In Psalm 91, the Psalmist declares: 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.'

How does one deepen their sense of God's presence? Reading and studying the Bible. Solomon states in Prov. 1:33 'whoso hearkeneth unto wisdom shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.' How does one quiet himself so that he is able to prepare his mind for reading and by studying the Bible? listening to that 'still small voice' (1 Kings 19:12) to develop reverence. Habakkuk (2:20) states: 'The LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him?'. David exhorts in Psalm 46:10 and Psalm 4:4: 'Be still, and know that I am God? and, 'Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.'

Bro. Jim Stinehoff (U.S.A)

Responsibility in the Last Days

Jesus said that no man knows the day of his return, only the Father. The idea behind this is that we should be prepared to meet Jesus at any time, any hour of the day. We are told that Jesus will come suddenly, unexpectedly, so we have to be continually saying to ourselves, 'He may come today'. Until he returns, we have our normal duties to do and we must do them in a way that is pleasing to God. We live in a dishonest world, but we must not be tainted by their ways. Our principles must be the highest, our Lord expects us to be examples of the highest quality in our work in this life. We work for the future when Jesus will be here, and we want to live and reign with him. The future for us is glorious and all we are asked to do is to be faithful to him who has called us to his kingdom and glory.

To all members of the household of faith, let us be strong in faith to please God in all our ways, to be ready to meet the Master at the judgment seat. May we be like the faithful virgins with oil in our lamps, looking, waiting and longing for the Master's return, and may we receive those wonderful words from Jesus on that day, "Enter into the joy of your Lord". As we read in the New Testament, let us encourage each other and all the more as we see the day approaching (Hebrews 10:25). God does not want us to lose our faith, and He will try to win us back, as He did with the children of Israel, but we have to be willing to respond positively to the experiences He sends us. "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith. Be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love" (1 Cor 16:13,14). May all of us who worship God in sincerity and truth be ready to meet Jesus when he comes.

Sis. Savannah Bushenyi (Mbarara)

A More Sure Word of Prophecy

In this unstable, uncertain age, how exciting to know that there is something that is stable and sure. It is the eternal, unchanging and sure word of God. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:19-21).

There are some interesting phrases in this passage. For example, it speaks of "a more sure word". We are living in a world and an age in which so many things are unsure, so many uncertainties. As we come to the Bible, God's holy word, we find things that are sure. The "sure thing" mentioned here is the word of prophecy. In other words as we look to the word of God we have certainty about what will happen in the future.

Next, we notice that this passage says "take heed". It tells us how we should live in a day and time like the present. I really believe the Bible states how our lives need to be lived in order for us to be ready for Christ's coming. It states that prophecy is to be a light that shineth in a dark place.

No one will question that we are living in a dark time for we see the sin of the world around us. We see men and women going away from God. The Bible says there is a light and I believe that light is the Lord Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, it mentions a day star will arise in your heart and according to the book of Revelation that day star is none other than Jesus Christ. This passage states that in order to understand the whole program God has for the world in a prophetic way, no scripture is of any private interpretation. Rather, as we bring all the word of God into focus, we see God's unfolding of the place for the day and the age in which we are living. Holy men of God wrote these things (words) as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God. These prophecies were written 3000 to 4000 years ago by men of God, and today we are able to see that more sure word becoming even more sure. What a miracle it was to see Israel reborn in 1948. Remember the nation of Israel was trodden down in 70 AD by the Romans. In 1948 it came to life again, exactly as God's word in Ezekiel chapter 37, said it would.

Bro. Moses Dhlakama (Rimbi, Zimbabwe)

The Kingdom's Administration

Jesus remained in Jerusalem some little time after the temple incident. We find him working miracles in the presence of the crowds who were present during the days of the feast of the Passover (John 2:23). We are not informed what the miracles were, they were probably of the same character as those he afterwards performed in Galilee, of which we read that he healed "all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt 4:23).

Whatever they were, they produced the effect they were calculated to produce: many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did. They were mostly the common people of whom this is testified. Had Jesus been of the character imagined by some who, wishing to get rid of his divinity, invent theories that bring him into the category of human aims and errors, he

would have laid eager hold of the popular faith thus created by his miracles and would have fanned and encouraged it.

Instead of that "Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for he knew what was in man" John 2:24. He knew that the newly-born faith of the "many" referred to was a mere effervescence of sensationalism – the admiration of the marvellous and the excitement of novelty, and not the appreciation of the divine aims with which the miracles were wrought: an empty, ugly thing compared with the fear, faith and obedience of God in righteousness, holiness and love which it was the aim of Jesus to induce in the people who were to be taken out for his name. He therefore stood irresponsively apart from the popular enthusiasm, aiming merely to do the work God had given him to do in the laying of the foundation of the coming glory of God on the earth.

The ruling class stood aloof altogether. But there were some among them who could not close their eyes to the extraordinary things that were being enacted before them. Though not convinced that this man, introduced by John the Baptist, was "the very Christ", they could not help thinking the hand of God was in the matter in some way.

Among these was Nicodemus, a man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews. His earnest curiosity desired a closer view, but not in public. He did not wish to compromise himself with an affair of which he was in doubt, and which was odiously regarded by his class. He came to Jesus "by night". By what means he obtained an introduction and where the interview took place, we are not informed: and it is not important. Such particulars bulking large in human narratives are kept in their true insignificant place in a divinely written record. We may be sure that a man of Nicodemus' position would have no difficulty in finding his way to the presence of a carpenter. Seated before him, by the light of a flickering eastern lamp, Nicodemus, probably after some unrecorded preliminaries, unburdens the leading feeling of his mind: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him."

The presence of this complacent and purely human view of the situation would account for the abrupt and apparently otherwise irrelevant rejoinder by Christ: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Nicodemus was hoping to see the Kingdom of God, as a Jew according to the flesh and perhaps as a result of lending his official influence to the Messiah, if this were he. Christ's declaration was therefore very pointed. But Nicodemus did not understand it. He thought he was speaking literally: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus explains that this is not what he means, but that nevertheless there is a second birth which a man must be subject to before he can inherit the kingdom. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

If we suppose Nicodemus here asking, Why? we may see the point of Jesus next observation: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again". But again a question: Why is this fact (that that which is born of the flesh is flesh) going to show the necessity for being born again? It is as if Jesus had said, "No wonder you must be born again, seeing that having only been born of the flesh, you are only flesh, which cannot inherit the Kingdom of God."

Paul, indeed uses these latter words: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 15:50). If we ask Why not? he answers, "Corruption doth not inherit incorruption." If we ask

"Is man corruption?" we do not require an answer: we know it. If we ask, "Is the Kingdom of God incorruption?" though, we have to wait for the answer which is equally clear and certain.

The prophets tell us that the Kingdom which the God of heaven will set up on earth when human kingdoms have run their course, is to be given to the "saints of the Most High", (Dan 7:27), and that it is not to be left to other people, Daniel 2:44 ² but will last for ever, shall not pass away, (Dan 7:14). Consequently for a man to inherit the Kingdom he must be immortal. Jesus says its inheritors will be so in saying, "They shall not die any more" (Luke 20:36). Now a man merely born of the flesh is mortal and corruptible as we all know. He has no element of immortality in him. Therefore he must be the subject of a great change before he is fit to enter the Kingdom, which requires a change to immortality.

This great change Jesus describes as being "born of water and of the Spirit". Why should he so characterise it becomes apparent only when certain first principles of the truth are understood. It is one of those first principles that men are not born children of God, but children of Adam and heirs of the death that came by him, Romans 5:12-19, Ephesians 2:3, 12. It is another, that God purposes to generate, from among this death-doomed race, a family for himself, whom he will glorify with salvation. Acts 15:14, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 Thess 5:9. It is another, that the mode he has chosen in the development of this family is to present the gospel for acceptance, and to require the assumption of the name of Christ in baptism, 1 Cor. 1:21, Acts 10:48, Rom. 6:3-4, Gal. 3:27. It is another that those submitting to faith in Christ Jesus are considered as having entered the new family for the first time, 2 Cor. 6:17-18, Gal. 3:26, Eph. 2:13.

Begotten by the word brought to bear upon their mind, they have, in baptism, been "born of water", but are not yet finally incorporated into the family of God. At this stage they may perish, as Paul recognises 1 Cor. 8:11. At the return of Christ, they have to appear before him for judgement to be dealt with according to the state of the account they will be called upon to render. 2 Cor. 5:10, Rom. 14:12. If this is not acceptable they are rejected and depart to death. If it be such that the Lord can approve, they become the subject of that change which Paul calls the adoption, to wit the redemption of our body, Rom. 8:23.

As a result of this physical change which is effected by the Spirit in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they become finally and unalterably sons of God. They are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection, Luke 20:36. This consummation of their adoption is figuratively compared to a birth as in the case of baptism. Baptism is not a literal birth, but as it is the act by which a man, not a child of God becomes such, it is a natural figure, which speaks of it as a birth of water, so the operation of the spirit of God upon the mortal nature of the accepted saints, Rom. 8:11, 1 Cor. 15 vs.51-52, Phil.3:21 is not a literal birth, but it is the act by which a son of the earth becomes a son of heaven, 1 Cor.15:49, so it is natural to speak of it as a birth, a being born of the spirit. Without this divine birth in two stages, it is impossible that any man can enter upon the possession of the Kingdom which the Lord will establish at his coming.

The administration of that Kingdom will require powers that do not belong to mortal man. It will require such a knowledge of the thoughts of men as Jesus evinced, and such a capability of eluding human observation and control as he manifested after his resurrection. The rulers of the age to come must be as independent of man as the wind. As Jesus added: "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8.

With the ideas that Nicodemus had of a Kingdom of God, to be administered by mortal men, it is not wonderful that he was surprised at such doctrine. "How can these things be?" said he. Christ answered as if he had said "How can they not be?" – "Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things?" As much as to say that as a man in Israel whose position presumed an acquaintance of the Scriptures of Moses and the prophets, he ought to have known these things.

There is much more in Moses and the prophets than people are aware of. It requires close and constant reading to become acquainted with all that they reveal. The majority of people read them scarcely at all and those who do read them mostly do so without discernment. Nicodemus, from his position, must have been a reader, but evidently, he was in the position of those rulers of Jerusalem described by Paul when he said that "they knew not the voices of the prophet which were read in their synagogues every Sabbath day." Acts 13:27. Jesus found the resurrection proved in part of Moses where the priests could not discern it, viz. in God's declaration that he was the God of three men who were at the time dead, Luke 20:37.

Bro John Richard Chulu (Lundazi, Zambia)

Control Your Temper ?A word spoken in due season, how good it is.?

There are people who are very forthright. When faced with something with which they do not agree they express themselves very forcefully, often to the point of rudeness. They then say that they have given a piece of their mind. Unfortunately, it would be better if that ?piece? had never been given, for the hurt such frankness causes cannot be justified.

Of course, there is a time and place when, in the interests of truth, you must speak out plainly and clearly; however, there must be no bitterness but only an expression of understanding and love. Complete honesty is more effective when spoken in love and not in temper. Most people, when moved to indignation, express themselves on the spur of the moment and often regret what they have said. Especially is this so when a fiery temper lies dormant only waiting for an occasion to flare up at the slightest provocation.

Temper often makes you say things you do not want to say. The majority of people have said things they have later regretted. The surrendering of the temper to God, with the earnest and sincere prayer that He will control it, produces wonderful results. This may not be an immediate control but as you grow in grace your temper, over which you had little control, is conquered by the living Christ and the ?piece of your mind? you then give, will be wholesome, constructive and full of love .

Bro David Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)

Mission work

On 13th October 2003 Bro Tim Evans sent Bro Benoit Mukendi from Arusha to come to Musoma to interview some contacts here. Bro Benoit arrived very late at night. This was due to

some disturbances on the bus he had taken from Arusha. Bro Samson Mwanza and Bro David Kahama and I were already waiting in Musoma. We waited for Bro Benoit eagerly as this was the first time he had come to Musoma. Bro Benoit in his journey had some problems, as he couldn't get any food, only water. He arrived and rang us and immediately we went to meet him. When we arrived we found him tired and dull, like a lost sheep, but when he saw us the sadness turned to happiness. We could not imagine that it was midnight, it seemed like mid-day! We immediately took a taxi to his accommodation.

The next day, work started straight away. Benoit managed to interview two contacts for baptism, the other contacts were not ready, so were sent back to study again until December, God willing. Here we managed to baptise Bro. David Sanana and Bro Moses Asewe. I am very happy to have two more Brothers to help in doing mission work, and am no longer in isolation, but have a family. Bro Benoit managed to come along with three hymn books and one Bible for one Brother. My Brothers from Mwanza have been with me part and parcel - Bre Saimon, Samson, Emmanuel and Civillin. I thank them for their hard work and the love that they showed to me. Bro Samson decided to stay with me for three weeks helping me teach the contacts.. Brothers from Mwanza have been here helping me, as and Mwanza.

The photos of the Brothers from Mwanza and the Musoma contacts were taken in Musoma at my place. The contacts were baptised here in Lake Victoria on the 18th October surrounded by the boats, ships, crocodiles and some water animals. Safari men and business men were all amazed when they saw what was happening on the lake. What a wonderful day it was! On the next Sunday the new Brothers were welcomed in the meeting by Bre Benoit, Samson and Saimon. On the Monday Bro Benoit and Samson extended their journey to Seroneta to meet a Brother who I introduced to the truth with Bro Tim Evans. There are now three there doing lessons, one of them is a 75 year old man who has completed his lessons. Bro Saimon's wife Sis Christine, has been sick for a very long time, and I'm longing to go and visit her. Here in Musoma there is much hunger as there has not been much rain during the whole of this year. May we wait the coming of our Saviour who will relieve the suffering in the world. He is almost knocking at the door, and we must be ready to open the door whenever we hear the knock.



Sister Monica, centre with plate with interested friends



Ryoba, Monica, Moses and John

Sis. Monica Achieng (Musoma, Tanzanian)

Elders in the Ecclesia

An elder is a shepherd of God's flock, that is under his care, serving as overseer ? not because he must, but willing. He must be eager to serve and be a good example to the flock. We must clothe ourselves with humility towards one another, as God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. The body is made up of many parts, each part having equal concern for the other parts. There should be no division in the body, as God gives honour to the part lacking it. We are all parts of Christ's body, despite being given different kinds of gifts. Faith, hope and love must always remain with us, Without love, we can give all we possess to the poor and surrender our body to the flames, but still gain nothing (1 Peter 5:1-5 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; 13:3-13).

God's law must be in our hearts and written on our minds in order to make perfect those who draw near to worship. Therefore, an overseer must be able to teach. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, and draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience. Consider how you can spur one another on towards love and good deeds, and let us not give up meeting together to encourage one another.

In spite of sometimes being publicly exposed to insults and persecution, we must endure suffering and always sympathise with those in prison and joyfully accept the confiscation of our property, because we have better and lasting possessions in God. We are exhorted not to throw away our confidence in God, as it will be richly rewarded. The righteous live by faith, and are not of those who shrink back, turn away from the truth and are destroyed, but believe and are saved. When we persevere doing the work of God, we will receive what he has promised (Hebrews 10).

Jesus reminds us that he is the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep, because when a wolf approaches, he abandons the sheep and runs away, since he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. A good shepherd knows his sheep and equally his sheep know him (John 10:11-15).

The greatest amongst us should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. Amongst our friends, we must be the ones to serve. If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task, as he is entrusted with God's work. He must be blameless ? not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. He must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. In addition, he must love what is good, upright, holy and disciplined.

Holding firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, enables one to encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. An overseer must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect; otherwise, how can he take care of God's church, if he does not manage his own family? He must have a good reputation with outsiders and not be a recent convert, otherwise he may fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap (Luke 22:26-27; Titus 1:7-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).

Stressing trustworthy sayings, enables those who have trusted in God to carefully devote themselves to doing what is good. An overseer must remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceful and considerate, and to show humility towards all men. Avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, as they are unprofitable and useless. (Titus 3:1-10).

Acting according to our ability enables us to provide help for brothers who are suffering, regardless of our own shortcomings. Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. By carrying each other's burdens, we are fulfilling the law of Christ. Do not deceive yourself by thinking you are something when you are nothing. Each one must test his own actions, not comparing oneself to somebody else, for each one must carry his own load. Anyone who receives instructions in the word must share all good things with his instructor. We reap what we sow, therefore, let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up (Acts 11:29, 30; Galatians 1:6-9; 6:1-9).

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two witnesses. If he still refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if he still refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector (Matthew 18: 15-17). Elders in an ecclesia are humble servants of Jesus and God, and therefore must lead by example. They must not aspire to be elders, but the ecclesia must recommend them.

Bro. Lapulani Malata (Kabwe, Zambia)

Public Speaking: Lesson 4 Thinking and Speaking Under Pressure

It is the intention of this lesson to help us to more effectively preach the Truth in public, especially when there is a lot of discussion and opposition.

We must realize that this is not a new and novel experience but that it happens everyday at schools, at home, at work. There is always someone who will disagree with the plans and decisions we make. All too often people combat our ideas and suggestions with their own. What happens when someone disagrees with us at home or work? – we stand our ground if we believe we are right in our judgement. We back down only when we are not sure of ourselves.

The Normal Experience and Our Preaching

Occasionally when we are *preaching*, our opponents will question our remarks through *interruptions and interjections*. Our performance in the face of their objections will only prove one thing and that is whether our knowledge of the Truth is sufficient. If we stand our ground and answer correctly we can confidently say we have a knowledge of the Truth. If, however, we have to back down and if we have no answer to the questions of our friends, it means we have not prepared ourselves enough. These lessons in public speaking will not help to get us out of trouble in our preaching; only a thorough knowledge of the Truth will make us confident preachers with nothing to be afraid of.

Two Things We Must Remember

1. *Strength out of weakness:*

Search the Scriptures and prove to ourselves the truth of God's statement 'My strength is made perfect in weakness'. Our weakness should be our challenge. Our inhibitions should be the springboard to test the extent of God's help, our weakness is the start of God's help to us and *not* the finish of our own strength.

2. *Help in time of need*

Sometimes difficult situations will arise in our preaching and we must not forget the power of prayer. God will help us in time of need, He will help us to remember our arguments and Bible passages, so we must have the presence of mind to pray when we are faced with opposition.

3. *Finally – Please remember*

A chain will only break at the weakest link and when the pressure is on us by those who oppose our teachings, make sure that the chain will not break through the 'weakness of a lack of knowledge'!

Chairmanship

The most difficult function at a meeting is the one performed by the Chairman. Speakers usually have time to prepare their talks but the Chairman must have the ability to cope with situations as they arise. We are now going to learn the methods to help us to be better Chairmen so that we can be of greater assistance at our meetings.

The Duties of a Chairman

1. *Purpose*

The chairman must appreciate the purpose of the meeting. In other words he must work to achieve the aim of the meeting. We have a variety of meetings to which a chairman has to *adapt*

The Sunday Memorial Meeting calls for solemn fatherly conduct. This meeting is usually uniform and as a result the chairman will not display powers of direction as the assembly is united in purpose.

The Public Lecture is different in many ways, which allows the chairman to be more out-going, more forceful, adopting a confident stand, as the audience in this case is more open to suggestion.

Other meetings such as Bible Class and general meetings give the chairman the opportunity to display his ability to handle interchange of ideas and free discussion. He should encourage the timid speaker and sometimes curb the over-enthusiastic speaker. The chairman should have the ability to help members form their ideas in clear terms.

2. *To act as host*

The chairman of our meetings is more than a figurehead and leader. He is the HOST at our meetings involving a high degree of fellowship. Our ability to be a good host will depend on our flexibility or how we cope with different situations.

If we, as the chairman, pray on behalf of the assembly, we should make our prayers personal and warm, reflecting the needs of the members of the ecclesia. This must never be forgotten. The chairman is a servant and must obey the wish of the meeting.

3. *Impartiality*

In meetings where there is to be open discussion, the chairman must learn to be *even-handed* or *impartial*. In other words, if the chairman has strong views on the topic under discussion he must not ventilate his opinion as this could disrupt a meeting. Also the chairman should not favour one side or the other but should be a *neutral controller*.

Sometimes it is permissible for the chairman to discuss his thoughts with questions. This can be helpful in two ways:

- a) Discussion may have lapsed and the chairman's thoughts would help stimulate further interest.
- b) The chairman's question could pose another alternative.

4. Keep your station

The chairman's duty at a meeting is to control and direct – he must never take over by *forcing* himself on the meeting. Furthermore he must never outshine the speaker. It is the rule a chairman should help the speaker as much as possible. Short, crisp, positive remarks will help a speaker when he is introduced, but if the chairman launches into a long dissertation, this will normally detract from the speaker's opening remarks.

The chairman should endeavour to lift the meeting to the highest possible level and his example would be a means of encouragement and inspiration to all other serving members.

5. The Agenda

A speaker may be able to do away with his notes, but the chairman must always be guided by the *agenda*. The agenda is the order in which things are to be done. It is written out before the meeting by the person responsible for the meeting.

Once the agenda has been prepared it is the duty of the chairman to stick to it, any departure or omission would have an adverse effect on the meeting. The chairman has to train himself to check the agenda before he moves on to the next item. The agenda will help a chairman to start and finish on time.

Bro. John Muyala (Bungoma, Kenya)

Confession

?He that covered his sins shall not prosper; but whosoever confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy? (Proverbs 28:13).

The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. God does not require Christians to pay everything in order to have the forgiveness of sin. We need not commend our souls to the Lord God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that ?confesseth and forsaketh? his sin shall have mercy.

?Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed?, the apostle James says (5:16). Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your

faults to one another. If you have offended your neighbour, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer.

Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt, have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance. The only reason why we do not have remission of sins that are past is that we are not willing to humble our hearts and comply with the conditions of the word of truth. Confession of sin, whether public or private should be heartfelt and freely expressed. The confession, that is, the pouring out of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity. ?The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit? (Psalms 34:18).

True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. But all the confessions should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which we are guilty.

Confessions will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life: everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin: the work that we have to do on our part so plainly described in Isaiah 1:16, 17.

But unfortunately, when sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrongdoer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed and unless he yields to the convicting power of forgiveness he remains in partial blindness to his sin. The examples in God's word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for the sin or attempt at self-justification. Paul did not seek to shield himself; he paints his sins in the darkest hue, not attempting to lessen his guilt (Acts 26:10). The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will appreciate something of the love of God and the cost of Christ's sacrifice; and as a son confessed to a loving father, so will the truly penitent bring all his sins before God. And it is written ?If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness? (1 John 1:9).

Bro. Erick Kipruto Mutai (Sosiot, Kenya)

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made – Psalm 139:14. Part 3 The Ear

“Oh blessed are the ears that hear the Spirit's voice” I have heard it said that it is better to be blind than deaf. If I had the choice, the decision would be a very difficult one to make. The world in which we live has become a very noisy place.

Low-flying fighter aircraft are particularly nerve shattering, and the noise of traffic in towns and on motorways tends to crowd out the songs of the birds, which is music to our ears, when we can hear it.

I feel sure that music is a God-given attribute, when one is able to hear the skylark, song thrush and the little wren. It is quite amazing the power generated by such a tiny bird as the wren, which produces such delightful music for our enjoyment.

Turning to man's capabilities in producing musical sound, we hear the human voice both in solo and choral form, and then we have solo instruments, orchestral and organ presentations, all designed for the enjoyment of the person with the listening ear.

We have a hymn which deals with the life of Samuel, the much loved son of Hannah who, because of God's answer to her prayer in granting her a son, Samuel, she 'lent' him to the Lord. The last verse of the hymn reads:-

Oh give me Samuel's ear
The open ear O Lord
Alive and quick to hear
Each whisper of Thy word
Like him to answer to Thy call
And to obey thee first of all.

This is the frame of mind God requires to see in us, so that we may be pleasing to Him, who is about to do great things in the earth by the Lord Jesus, when He returns to set up a world-wide Kingdom ruled over by Him, His angels, and His immortalized followers. This will be a time of such prosperity in the world that in the words of scripture, "the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes, him that soweth seed" (Amos 9:13). May God bless our listening, and may our ears always be attentive to His word.



Bro J Wilson (Windermere, England)

Eastern European Bible School: Two Ludmilas Give Their Impressions

From 22-29 December the Winter Bible School took place in a picturesque corner of Sverdlovsk Oblast. Siberia met us with wonderful weather. I had never imagined that the colours in Siberia would be so beautiful. The snow seemed unusually white and it almost reflected in the sun. The temperature sunk throughout the week but we were so happy together. I have noticed that all Bible Schools are blessed with fine weather. A bus was arranged to take us from the railway station direct to the rest complex where we had our School. The rooms were very clean and we all fitted in, we were initially 54 people from six countries [although more joined us later]. We were disappointed that two of our scheduled speakers didn't come, maybe they were frightened by stories of the Siberian winter. But for those of us who came, no kind of low temperature could damage the warmth which we shared as we realized again that truly we are God's chosen people who had gathered together. The Bible School was an unusually great success. We were helped by our speakers, Bre Steve Street, Igor Podgaisky, Sasha Solovyov, Marcus Heaster and Dima Krasavin. As always, the highlight of our studies was the reading of the chapters from the Bible Companion each morning, which were led by our brother Duncan. Many questions arose from what we read; many comments were made, to the extent that nobody in the audience was indifferent to the discussions. I think we all like this session the most because it is conducted solely in the Russian language.

The majority of the talks were given by our dear brother Marcus Heaster. He had with him a model of the tabernacle, and he also dressed up Brother Zhennya in the clothes of the High Priest. So we were really able to get a better image of how it was for the Brothers and Sisters in the wilderness as they travelled towards the Kingdom of God, with every detail of the tabernacle having such great significance. Marcus made it very real for us. He gave us each some incense which was like the incense used in the tabernacle, and I can still remember the smell of it which he put on each of our hands and faces. Marcus spoke on another theme also, about the parables of Jesus, all of which he illustrated so that we could remember them- the camel passing through the eye of the needle, and some candle lamps he brought along to illustrate the parable of the wise and foolish girls. I still remember the lesson from this, that we are the light of the world.

The word of God, which we learnt at the Bible School, is like the oil in our lamps. We must keep feeding ourselves on that word not just at Bible Schools. This is the way we can take the light to the world, by having the word within us, and then we will find ourselves taking the knowledge of the word of God to other people too. This is the only way our ecclesias will grow, if we are showing the light of God's love to the people around us and not just keeping to ourselves our theories and knowledge.



The highlight was the baptisms of Brothers Anatoly and Valerij, and Sister Olga. Bro. Sasha brought along some tapes of songs and hymns which were played and we gave them presents for their baptism; We then had the breaking of bread. We in fact spent the whole evening together in joy.

Most evenings we had a less formal time together. One evening I told everyone about my reflections upon the book of Esther. I think people's reactions were mixed, I felt like Balaam's ass speaking the word of God, anyway, everyone paid much attention. On some evenings Duncan showed us slides of our persecuted brothers and sisters. We also looked back at pictures of our Bible Schools over 10 years. This made our day of parting very hard, we cried and exchanged addresses.

Looking back there was something special about this Bible School. There were difficulties for many of us to get to this Bible School, and this is why there was 100% attendance at all lectures, and there was such a wonderful spirit amongst us. It was only by the faith, hope and love which come from God Himself that this wonderful week could happen. I want to thank the Brothers and Sisters who translated the talks for us, without them we would have had no contact with our visitors. But especially I want to thank Brothers Marcus and Duncan for their great work for us all for the Lord's sake. I know for sure that this Bible School was a taste of the Kingdom of God which is to come and it strengthened me to hold on until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sis. Ludmila K (Kazan, Russia)

Our much looked forward to Bible School was held again in December at Sosnovy Bor. The Bible School was always very wonderful. There was very good attendance at all lectures by our Brothers, it was clear that we were all concentrated upon the study of God's word. It was a great

joy for me to meet with Brothers and Sisters whom I have been seeing at the Schools for a long time and whom I trust and know as my true family. We were disappointed that some of the speakers on the programme didn't come, but the School was positive, because we who were there were joined together by the blood of Christ.



The great highlight for me was the coming of our dear Brother Marcus Heaster, who has written to us so much. We were not disappointed, as his lectures were so wonderful as well, and he was always illustrating them with pictures and examples. Although I have been to many Bible Schools, I think I will remember this one for a long time, God willing. I want to thank Aleksandr and Lidija, our local Brother and Sister, who did so much to organize this Bible School! May God enable us to keep on holding such wonderful Schools!



Sis Ludmila C (Poltava, Ukraine)

Evidence of my personal salvation

Does the Bible give an answer to the often-asked question whether or not a person can have any evidence of salvation? Can a person know if his sins are forgiven or not, or must he wait until judgment day to find out? It would be most unfortunate and risky to leave this most important question unsettled until then.

Yes, one may know, and the Lord wants us to be sure that we are saved. His invitation is "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28). He said, "For God so loved the world (sinners, everyone) that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is true that by nature all have sinned and come short of doing the will of God.

Man in his degenerate state, is dead in sins, lost and needs a Saviour to save him. Our kind and merciful Heavenly Father has provided salvation through Jesus for all who avail themselves of His wonderful grace. Jesus shed his blood and died on the cross “the propitiation for our sins”(1Jn 2:2). It is necessary for a sinner to feel in need of cleansing and forgiveness of sins imploring, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Lk 18:13). In contrition he acknowledges his guilt and confesses his sins, first to God and also makes proper restitution with men. He looks in faith to “The Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29).



MUHORONI ECCLESIA (KENYA) Top-The Brethren, Centre- Sunday School, Bottom- Other members.

Bro Emmanuel Joumer (Bolimbo, Kenya)

On Eagles' Wings of Deliverance

“On eagles’ wings of deliverance” tells of the way Israel achieved freedom all the way from slavery in Egypt, to security in the land of promise, from death to life, from helplessness to the heart of God. It was not the fearless fighting and brilliant military manoeuvring that startled the nations of the world. It was not by their own efforts at all. It was by what God did for them, God carried them on eagles’ wings. “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself” (Exodus 19:4).

The eagle is one of the birds specifically labelled in scripture as unclean and was not to be used for food (Leviticus 11:13). It is also referred to as a bird of prey. Our Lord gave a verse that is in many ways the most difficult statement He ever uttered, “For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together” (Matthew 24:28). For this reason the eagle is not used in the scripture as a symbol of God. Yet the eagle is admired and applauded for its exploits. It is the jet plane of the bird family. It soars the highest, goes the fastest and is superior to all other birds in this respect. These features are noted on the pages of the word of God. David, in giving a eulogy of Saul and Jonathan after they were slain, likens them to the eagle in the panegyric of praise, “Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, they were swifter than eagles” (2 Samuel 1:23). The eagle, though in and of itself is rejected as a symbol of God, is admired for its ability to fly. Therefore its wings are given as a symbol of our God. By the strength of its wings it is able to soar to the heights and perform unusual feats.

Another remarkable characteristic of the eagle is its tenderness towards its young. No member of the bird family is more gentle and attentive watching over its young. It builds its nest high up on a mountain crag. Both parents bring food to the little eaglets and when they teach them to fly, both parents are involved in the training program. As the little one takes off from the dizzy height and attempts to follow its parents in flight, the eagle swoops beneath it and bears

the little fellow on its wings when it seems exhausted. Thus the eagle is set before us as being a symbol of God's dealing with His people, as He bore them "on eagles' wings".

"Eagles wings of deliverance" are set before us as the salvation that God, by grace, wrought for us. This is given in Exodus 19:4. At this point God had brought Israel out of Egyptian bondage to mount Sinai and gave them an opportunity to make a choice. As He did this, He said to them "Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself". In this verse God reviews their deliverance out of Egypt. He goes back over their passage through the Red Sea and how they were brought up to Mount Sinai.

'In Slavery'

This is a nation that was born in slavery and reared in the backyard in Egypt (Genesis 2:23). They had gone down to Egypt as one family of seventy souls under their father Jacob (Exodus 46:26-27). There they had become a great nation but in the course of time there arose a Pharaoh who "knew not Joseph" (Exodus 1:8). Since it was evident that God was blessing them, Pharaoh felt it was necessary, for the welfare of Egypt, to hold them down and as a result the Pharaoh put them under hard slavery.

'In hopelessness'

The people did slave labour in the backyard of Egypt, but in spite of that they prospered. There they became a great nation, great in size, great in ability but yet they had no power to extricate themselves from the awful slavery. There was no hope, no human possibility that they could get deliverance until the Pharaoh upon the throne was destroyed. Then the chances were that whoever came to the throne would not change their awful slave status but leave them to continue in their plight. Such was the condition of the people, and it was in that situation that God looked down upon them, and God remembered.

'When God Remembers'

The book of Exodus opens with God looking down upon these people. As He looked down, He did not see their wonderful ability, because any ability they had was God-given. God never saw any goodness in them, because they had no goodness in them. And it is of no value to say that they were the only people on the earth at that time that had the knowledge of God, for they did not, they were in idolatry. During the time of Joseph, Pharaoh gave them the best of the land and they enjoyed the fat of the land, and they forgot the God of their fathers, and became familiar with the gods of the Egyptians and started worshipping them. They were just about as bad as any people could be. God did not see in them anything that called for movement on His part because of meritorious works or any character within them. The thing that God said when He called Moses to be their deliverer was: "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt, I have heard them crying out because of their slavery and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come to deliver/ rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of the land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 2:23-25; 3:7-10).

When God remembers, He will not come down from Heaven Himself to deliver. He needs a man to stand in the gap between Him and the people (Ezekiel 22:30). Moses, a child born in Egyptian bondage was called and chosen by God to deliver the people of God from slavery and sin. The Bible says, "By faith Moses, when he had grown, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter; he chose to be mistreated with the people of God rather than to enjoy the

pleasures of sin for a short time” (Hebrews 11:24-25). Moses became the human agent for God to use in the deliverance of the groaning Israelites in Egypt. God chose this man from the Midian desert where He had trained him and schooled him. After forty years God brought him back to Egypt and said, “Now I am ready to deliver my people”.

‘The battle of the Gods’

Then a battle ensued, a battle literally of the gods. For God pitted Himself against the idolatry of Egypt and struck against that awful system that shackled the minds and spirit of the people and was holding them in spiritual bondage. Each of the plagues was directed against a particular god of Egypt. The sacred Nile was turned into blood. Frogs, lice and then flies swamped over the land, and the livestock died. Boils broke out on both man and beast, locusts devastated their crops, and darkness enveloped them for three days. When God finally came to the tenth plague it was awesome in its severity, but it took this to release the hold over His people in slavery – it turned the key in the lock and let them go free. The last plague was the death of the firstborn. Now the God of the Israelites was ready to show His people that He was redeeming them, not because of any merit of their own, but by the sovereign grace of God.

‘An unforgettable night’

God said it would be a night they would never forget. Today if you go to the house of any Orthodox Jew, you will find the Passover marked on their calendar. After all these years it is still being remembered, it is one of the oldest holy days on any man’s calendar on the earth. This is a day they remember, this is a day they shall never forget. It is the day that God brought deliverance to His people. These people were to select a lamb and slay it. The blood of that lamb was to be sprinkled on the door posts and on the lintel that went across the top of the door, and that night the angel of death passed them over. It was judgment from the Almighty God upon a sinful nation. The firstborn who lived that night knew that they were redeemed by the blood. The only thing that wrought redemption was the blood. That night the people ate the Passover with loins girded and lights ablaze, they marched out a redeemed people redeemed by blood.

This was only the beginning of their experience with the grace of God. When the people came down to the Red Sea they were trapped, Pharaoh was behind them with his chariots of war, beside them were mountains, and before them was the Red Sea. These people had no weapons to protect themselves they were easy prey for the Egyptians. Realizing their plight, these people were ready to go back to the backyard of Egypt. “And they said unto Moses, because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt; Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness” (Exodus 14:11,12). However it was not God’s intention to let them go back to Egyptian bondage. When God redeems He does a complete job of it. He never starts a work of redemption unless He finishes the work. And so God was prepared to deliver them again, but this time in an altogether different manner. The Bible says, “And Moses said unto the people, Fear you not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will show to you today, for the Egyptians you see, you shall see them no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace” (Exodus 14:13,14). Now it was time for God to fight for the Israelites. The Bible says that the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them and the pillar of cloud went from before their face and stood behind them. The cloud that brought light

to the Israelites brought darkness to the Egyptians so that one could not come near the other all the night (Exodus 14:19-20 compare 2 Corinthians 6:14).

Moses went down to the Red Sea and took with him the rod that had been potent when it was dedicated to God, the rod that had brought the plagues, the rod that had been used back in Egypt for the deliverance of Israel out of slavery. “Moses took the rod and smote the waters and the Lord caused the Sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry ground, and the waters were divided and the children of Israel went on dry ground into the midst of the sea” (Exodus 14:21,22). The same route that brought deliverance to the Israelites brought death to the Egyptians. The Israelites were people redeemed by blood and redemption by blood leads to resurrection. They passed through the waters of death and they came out on the other side to a new life. The writer of Hebrews says that “By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians, attempting to do, were drowned” (Hebrews 11:29).

Two other scriptures consider the events of the Red Sea. The first is in Psalm 106:8-11 “Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake, that He might make His mighty power to be known. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left”. This passage shows us that:

1. God saved them because of His name
2. That the Red Sea dried up
3. Not one of the enemy was left

In every complete deliverance not only will God save us, He will also destroy our enemies and those that hate us in order to complete the work.

The second scripture is Psalm 114:1-5 “When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary and Israel his dominion. The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?” This gives us greater insight:

4. That Egypt had a strange language
5. That when the Israelites were in Egypt God had no dwelling sanctuary in them and God was dwelling in Israel
6. That the Red Sea saw it (ie God dwelling or God coming with a host of Israel) and actually fled.

All this happened because God was there dwelling with Israel, His chosen people. In the same way He is with the faithful. Consider the case of Daniel when he was thrown into the lions’ den (Daniel 6:16-23) and Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego in the blazing furnace (Daniel 3:20-25) and Joshua entering Jericho (Joshua 5:13-15). God said in Psalm 50:15, “Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you and you will glorify me”. He kept His word before and He is still keeping it today. He will never change because of the changing world, He is faithful.

When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry ground and got to the other side they looked back and saw the Egyptians coming, they saw something else, the walls of water were breaking and the Egyptians were being engulfed and destroyed. Safely on the other side they sang the song of Moses, they were now prepared to sing the song of redemption. They had been

redeemed by blood, by power, by death and by resurrection. That is what it means to travel on eagles' wings.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:28-31)

Bro George Ewi (Limbe, Cameroon)

Miracles for the Hebrews

“Peculiar Strategy” The ways of Deity seemed peculiar, even bizarre. No General alive would approve of His strategy. Imagine it, if you can! He told them to just march around the city of Jericho and blow trumpets. But it worked! The walls with their massive towers, teetered and heaved, and crashed outwards to the earth. “The wall fell down flat” (Joshua 6:20), permitting the taking of the city. The walls were caused to fall outward! Now walls of cities do not fall outward but inward.

When Jericho was excavated (1930-1936) archaeologist Professor Garstang found something so startling that he and two members of the team signed a statement:-

As to the main fact, there remains no doubt: the walls fell outwards so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up and over the ruins into the city.

It was discovered that the city at that time had been burned, not looted – again corresponding to the Bible account.

King Jehoshaphat

Another strange strategy occurred in the days of king Jehoshaphat, when the country was invaded by an army that would make anyone tremble. But the king, with Yahweh's encouragement, sent out a choir at the head of the army to praise Yahweh for victory – even before the battle started! What a seemingly ridiculous act! But it worked. When the enemy heard the singers claiming victory, they were so alarmed and confused that they simply turned on each other, destroying themselves.

Gideon

Then there was Gideon's army of 32,000 men. Yahweh told him that was too many. So Gideon (although fearful and perplexed at the instructions) kept sending men home, until he had only 300 left. In the dead of night, these men approached the Midianite camp from three directions. On a signal, every trumpet sounded. Then, breaking their jugs so that 300 blazing torches were displayed, they rushed shouting, “The sword of Yahweh, and of Gideon,” (Judges 7). Awakened by the noise and the lights on every side, the enemy thought that an overwhelming force was upon them. Fleeing in panic, they mistook their own men for enemies and destroyed one another!

What strange methods! Again and again it happened. Time after time, by doing that which appeared not very sound, by violating all the rules of war, Yahweh made it plain that there was no way man could have done it. He himself was at work.

From - Scripture News Digest

Christ's Coming: When shall it be?

This is a soul-searching question that is on many people's minds these days. It was asked many years ago, when Jesus was still alive, by the Pharisees (Lk 17:20), and by his disciples (Mat 24:1), when they wanted to know when and what would be the sign of Jesus' coming and that of the end of the age. In both these incidents Jesus' answers leave us wondering whether we will be able to witness this long awaited happening. Jesus warns his disciples to be wary of false prophets who will come in his name. He stresses that it is neither for this generation nor the one to come to know the time nor the day, for no one, even him (Jesus) knows the day except the Father (God) who is the author of everything on earth and in heaven. However, Jesus gives some very understandable, though fearful, explanations as to what all those who claim to be Christians should watch out for. Jesus says we will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but he comforts us and tells us not to be alarmed. Nation will rise against nation; there will be famines and earthquakes. Such things must happen but the end is still to come. (Matt 24:9) Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray each other and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt 24:9-14). This should be a test of all times. In Luke 17:20 Jesus tells us that the kingdom of God does not come as a result of our careful observation. In Matthew 24:42 we read therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. The Son of man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. (v44).

Now where is this leading? The prophet Daniel, the man 'greatly beloved' of God, even pleaded with God in those long gone years, even before the birth of Jesus, to have the mystery of the end of the Age revealed. God did not tell him because such knowledge is not to be revealed. The true interpretation of Jesus' answers to this question can, as in Daniel's prophecies, only be left for us to meditate because we know from Jesus' words that the exact time of his return cannot be known until the final event actually takes place. What's left for us now? The explanation is clear. We should keep watch for all that must happen first - a time of trouble such as never was - and then the end will come. We should not be caught out, brethren and sisters. Let us go out in full force and preach 'this gospel of the kingdom' to the whole world, then and only then should we look forward to the end.

Bro Thompson Changata (Magunje, Zimbabwe)

The Promises to Abraham

The covenants of promises. The promises God made to Abraham are called covenants or agreements of promises which cannot be broken. The command in Genesis 12:1 (“Go to the land I show you”). This instruction represented three stages in the separation of Abraham for the new beginning which God planned through him. First, he left his country – Ur of the Chaldees. Then when his father died, he left his family who had also been travelling to Haran. Later he left his father’s house when he separated from Lot.

The promises were given at different times of Abraham’s life. The importance of the promises increased as Abraham grew older. (So then faith comes by hearing, the hearing by the word of God, Romans 10:17). We should not expect to be fully grown in a spiritual sense, but to grow in spiritual understanding just as Abraham did.

The first promise (Gen12:1-3) had phrases like – I will make you into a nation. This needed Abraham to accept, what seemed impossible, from the very beginning, because Sarah his wife was barren. So the call to leave Ur was the greatest test of personal faith linked to a promise which could only be made to a man of Abraham’s faith and spirit. In Deuteronomy 4:6-8 Moses told the nation of Israel of their special relationship with God because of their descent from Abraham “And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today? I will bless you”. The Lord had blessed Abraham with wealth and he had many servants, camels, sheep and cattle. The same promise was also made to David “I will make your name great like the names of the greatest men of the earth” (2 Samuel 7:9). All the details that God taught Abraham, he believed.

The last and greatest promise was on account of Abraham’s obedience to God in being prepared to offer Isaac his only son as a sacrifice. This brought Abraham closer to God than at any other time in his life.

All promises meet in Jesus the son of David and the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1). He was a child of Abraham by birth but also through his perfect obedience and faith. All this Abraham saw with complete clarity of vision and from Mount Moriah went down to his house justified as the friend of God.

Bro. Joseph Katasi (Lukosi, Uganda)