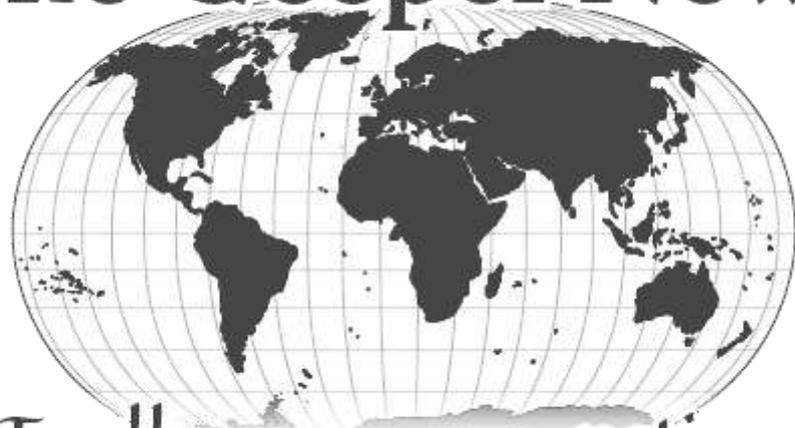


The Gospel News



“To all  nations”



Editorial: Antidote to Despondency

There is no need for despondency when we review God's declaration of His mind toward the creatures of His hand. On the contrary, we are caused to marvel at His extreme love, forbearance, pity and mercy. Let us start with those with whom we should think God would have no patience --the world, of which the apostle says, "the whole world lieth in wickedness". Yet "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son", because "God desires not the death of the wicked" but rather that "the wicked should turn and live". Having "turned", can we imagine that God, who desires his salvation, would at the last lightly turn him down?

Paul felt the force of this loving gesture of God, and so he compares man's pettiness with God's bounty. He wrote to the Romans: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (5:6-8).

No wonder, then, that John declared, "We love him, because he first loved us" (while we were yet sinners). And seeing that God first invited us there is no need of fear when we reciprocate that love. We are on safe ground. God has graciously offered, and we gratefully accept.

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18).

Yes, but how do I know that I can count myself among the elect? The answer is simple (allowing that we have the truth), because no one can ever become acquainted with the truth without God working specifically on his behalf, for Jesus declared: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). Among these we must reckon ourselves.

Now if we were told that we could choose a righteous man to pray for us (and "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth MUCH), whom should we choose? Obviously Jesus. Do we then feel that our case would be in competent hands? Of course. Then listen: "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me...Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (John 17:9,20).

Among this latter class we are found. Now having drawn us and prayed for us, is it rationally conceivable that Jesus would willingly allow us to prove abortive? God forbid, and so from thenceforth God hedges about our lives with the express intention of our ultimate salvation. This He has plainly declared through Paul: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). Of such it is written: "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayer" (1 Peter 3:12). And again He has said: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

Paul asks the question: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" No one! And so he continues: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

It is His love and His avowed intention of consummating the work commenced in us that causes

our flagging spirits to revive. Again we listen to Paul: “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us...” (Eph. 2:4). This being so, He will finish the work: “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” Do what? Preserve us “blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:24,23). There is nothing to make us fearful here; rather is there assurance (not presumption). Rather does this contemplation impress us with an overwhelming consciousness of our insignificance and unworthiness – in a word, a contrite spirit. In this again we have cause for assurance and even joy, for, says God, “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isa. 66:2).

“Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isa. 57:15).

In view of these things, how faithless and wavering must we appear to God when oftentimes we are weakened or turned aside from our steadfastness by pressure from the world. How often do we deserve the chiding of God through Isaiah?

“I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die...and forgetest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy: and where is the fury of the oppressor?” (Isa. 51:12-13)

H.H.

News from Africa

news from cameroon

BAKUMBA

We are very happy to announce that 10 brethren with 32 Sunday School children and contacts are now meeting in their new temporary ecclesial hall. The hall measures 8m x 4m with 10 benches and a table. We thank the CBM welfare and the Ludlow ecclesia for their support.

Bro. Mbella Elias

BANGEM

I thank God for allowing me to write to you. God opened my eyes and I was baptized at Epen-Bangem. Today my eyes are not only opened, but God is sending me to preach the gospel. At present I am teaching nine people; God is guiding them and me. Above all, I would like you to send me *Bible Basics* to help me in my teaching.

Bro. Ntungwe Felix

MENJI

We plead with you by this letter to keep sending us any preaching material you have produced. We cannot pay, but we know that you understand and will send us your precious works so that we can also share them.

Bro. Oliver Mbiaoh

MUTENGENE

I hope you and rest of the *Gospel News* team are doing fine. I am so sorry for the long silence due to internet failure. Many thanks for sending us every edition of *Gospel News*. I do pray for all our brethren, especially those who are facing persecution in the Moslem world. We, the brethren of the Mutengene ecclesia, are looking forward to welcoming our brethren from the UK in the days ahead, we do hope (God willing) we shall share the good news together.

Bro Constantine Fonkem

MWYUKA

The crime of Calvary was the work of many hands. Was it Caiaphas and the priests, eager to satisfy their life of ease, profit and comfort? Was it Pilate, held in the web of past administrative errors, now determined at all costs to avoid another appeal to Caesar and to protect his career? Or was it Herod? Was it the mob who shouted applause for Jesus' crucifixion? Or the soldiers who obeyed orders and drove nails through His flesh. But what was our Lord's reaction amidst all of this? Luke 23:28 tells us, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves". We can identify ourselves with the aforementioned people if we fail to acknowledge that Christ died for our salvation and live by his commandments, as we await his second coming.

Bro. George Nwuanjeah

WUM

The Wum ecclesia report with sadness the falling asleep of our Bro. Beng Lawrence on October 23, 2004. He sleeps in the Lord until the Master returns. Live by faith not by sight: "In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him, and said, Thus says the Lord, set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover. Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, saying, Remember now. O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept bitterly." The Lord said to Isaiah, "Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the prince of my people, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you; on the third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord. And I will add fifteen years to your life" (2 Kings 20:1-6). Here we see God's power over life and death, health and sickness. Let us follow after the things of the Name and of the Kingdom, then we shall not fear sickness or death. "Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you. He will never permit the righteous to be moved" (Ps. 55:22).

Bro. Chrisanthus Achuo



Photo: Bro. Achuo

I thank the Lord for leading me where heavenly pastures are to be found. I also thank Jesus for his priesthood. I thank you people very much for the spiritual material you sent. I have been baptized and fellowship with those in Christ of the Wum ecclesia. I beg you: I don't have a complete Bible and planner or a *Bible Basics*. Please, if you will, send everything to my post

box. I will be grateful for this.

Bro. Zun Evaristus



Photo: Bro. Zun Evaristus (right) in the school library.

news from ivory coast

ABIDJAN

I am an Ivorian and manage English a little. I am very pleased to receive *Gospel News* where I meet Brothers and Sisters giving their views and news. I use this occasion to express my gratitude for the long period of time you have sent me the Magazine. I was baptized in 1995 and that day everything changed. I remember my Brothers and Sisters in my prayers. I pray that God's Kingdom will appear soon to give us the comfort we have toiled for. I want to assure my Brothers and Sisters that we in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, are well and we are with you all. It is just sad to learn of our beloved Brother Faris of Kandahar being murdered.

Bro. Benjamin Emolo

news from kenya

AHERO

It is just because we cannot meet the cost of running a mail box that we use the school boxes. They are not always dependable, mail can get into wrong hands, sometimes lost or even opened to check what is inside. While we are weary of starvation, we hear that our maize is sold in your markets by unknown elements in our government; the situation is still prevailing lightly. We yearn for the time when things like this will be history. The war on terrorism could be identified with Armageddon. If the Bush administration shows unwillingness to uproot Al Qaeda and arrest Osama Bin Laden, then Russia could come in. Most of our human governments forget that they are installed by God, for His purpose. Your fellow in the walk Zionwards,

Bro. Lawrence K'owiti

BARICHO

What is an ecclesia? Does every believer know what it is? It is a group of called-out ones. God told David that he was not to build Him a house, but his son would build it (Solomon's temple. 2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17). But the main lesson is that we, God's people, together become God's 'house' and Jesus is the chief cornerstone (read 1 Peter 2); he was the "stone that was rejected"

Bro. David Karaba

BONDO

Through *Gospel News* I have learned especially of Christadelphians globally. Without it I would never have known of the ecclesial groupings within Africa and all over the world. Here at Bondo ecclesia we were blessed last year in that two friends were baptized, one was doing the Correspondence Course and the other was a local contact with the help of Bro. John Yonjo. So

we now just comfort one another, pray and have the Sunday service together, looking forward to the Lord's second appearing to be the King and reward the righteous with the eternal life here on earth; we eagerly pray to be among them.

Bro. Vincent Odhiambo

Here in Kenya we are tirelessly making many preaching efforts everywhere before the return of the Lord, and hope you are also doing the same. In Kenya last year there was a shortage of rain during the planting season, as a result crops have failed terribly and the end result is hunger. There are other signs: the political climate in Kenya is not good at all, as there is a lot of bickering among members of the ruling party. There are fears as well, due to high crime rates and despite police efforts they have come to nought. We hear of murder, rape, drugs abuse, theft every day. There are also charismatic sects who claim they possess the Holy Spirit gifts and powers. The biggest 'sign' is the parable of the fig tree; when it shoots forth we know for sure that the seasons are near. When we see the Jews regathered in their homeland, and Arab opposition to it, those studying the Scriptures know very well that the Lord can come at any moment. Let us all lift up our eyes and our heads, for our redemption is at hand.

Bro. Raphael Joni Aimo



Photo: This was taken last year when Brothers and Sisters from Bondo ecclesia paid a visit to Dago for the one-day Bible School held at Bro. Raphael Aimo's home. On the left is Bro. Benedict Miruka who has now fallen asleep awaiting the resurrection.

BUNGOMA

We would like to take the opportunity of thanking you for *Bible Basics* and *Gospel News*. These materials have helped us much in terms of spiritual development. Brothers and Sisters also thank you for your spiritual devotion in sending us these things. We would like you to keep up this exercise so that the truth reaches every angle of this world. We understand very well that these are the last times, seeing present events fulfilling Bible prophecy. We would be grateful if you could send things like 'Eureka' (Vols. 1-5), 'Elpis Israel' and an *Exposition of Song of Solomon* and any other books you know to be of importance and help to us.

Brothers Chrisantus Wanjala & John Simiya

"Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him". Ezekiel 34:3-5: "You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the crippled you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and they became food for all the wild beasts".

Bro. Francis Mayende

I am newly converted, being a baptized believer of the gospel, sharing the one true faith. I was recently introduced to *Gospel News to all Nations*; the contents of it greatly interested me because I have come to learn that most parts of the world have received the good news about the Kingdom of God. I introduce myself to you so as to learn more about the Scriptures; I also want to give gratitude to you for the books you sent to Bro. Eric Wamalwa, in fact, brother, these books have greatly helped me in godliness. I therefore request you to consider me for receiving

more books.

Bro. George Maina Wabwile



Photo: A discussion with friends and Brethren and Sisters (second left is Bro. George Maina).

KANDIEGE

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”. Any thing of value will not come if we are only spectators; we must participate to receive the prize. The example of believers in the first century should be ours. ‘They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in prayer, and in breaking of bread” (Acts 2). If we continue in the same calling the reward will be ours.

Bro. John Okello

KOBUJOI

We are looking forward to a visit from the UK., which seems exciting to me and I hope it is the same to the contacts in the Kobujoi area. Getting to Kobujoi is rather difficult owing to the state of the roads. They are mud roads and so during the rainy season things can get so tough. But our Brethren are not cowards, they will brave the roads and get to Kobujoi. May our Heavenly Father grant them a safe and very much blessed journey.

Bro. Geoffrey Chirchir

LOITOKITOK

When writing this letter I am 600km south of Nakuru ecclesia. The nearest ecclesia to me is Mombasa, almost 300km. Nairobi is around 350km. The roads connecting me to this area are bumpy and very dusty, becoming impossible during the rainy season. Many of the people in Loitokitok are nomadic Masai tribe who cannot speak fluent Kiswahili or English. Apostolic churches are everywhere in Loitokitok; I am the only Christadelphian here. I am appealing to members who might live along the Kenya and Tanzania borders to try their best to meet with me so that we can spread the true gospel. I would remind Brothers and Sisters world wide of Luke 21:19, Matthew 24:13 and Mark 13:13, all of which speak of the need to stand firm that we may be saved and be in the everlasting Kingdom of God on earth, when it will be full of the knowledge and glory of the Lord (Habakkuk 2:14).

Bro. Peter Thuro Kanuki (in isolation)

MARALAL

I am thankful to God for His kindness and goodness to us in keeping us well and uniting us in our remembrance of our absent Master. I am very happy to have had your letter and *Gospel News* giving more encouragement regarding the soon coming of Christ to establish the Kingdom of God, which we are eagerly waiting for. I am here at the far end of Kenya (isolation) with my wife and four children and also have some four students who I am instructing through *Bible Basics*. We must give ourselves to the service of God; we cannot serve God and mammon. “In everything give thanks to Him, for this is His will and pleasure concerning you”. Also, let Christ dwell in our hearts by faith and in the footsteps of Christ Jesus. I send a photo taken after teaching children the Bible stories.

Bro. Joseph Nuani



Photo: Bro Nuani and his children

MATUU

We are so glad to hear of so many converts through the waters of baptism, including some from the Muslim community. *Gospel News* is always giving encouragement from various Brothers and Sisters throughout the world. How challenging it is when one reads the progress of an ecclesia or individual or how a Brother/Sister first received the message of truth. We also read of the distress/tribulation of our Brethren and Sisters. We in the Central area of Kenya are making good use of *Bible Basics*. We have an annual programme whereby each ecclesia studies from the book every Sunday and also an evening study; this has been taking place since January last year. From Jan-June we studied Part 1, 'The things concerning the Kingdom of God'. From July we studied Part 2 on 'The things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ'. We have now studied the Life in Christ and finished by the study on fellowship. This has been encouraging for Brothers and Sisters, and even for our friends.

Bro. Lazarus Kingoo

MBITA

One very important point must now be emphasised: there will be two sorts of people in the Kingdom of God – mortals and immortals. There will, in fact, be a – three-tier structure: First, the Lord Jesus Christ, the immortal King; second, His immortal helpers and third, multitudes of ordinary flesh and blood mortal men and women, who will be the mortal population of the Kingdom. Read: Isa. 65:19-20; 1 Cor. 6:2; Luke 22:29-30; Rev. 20:6.

Bro. Daniel Ogembo

NANYUKI

May I inform you that the work of God here is growing, for we now have two other friends who have joined our studies. As I read *Gospel News* I understand that *Bible Basics* is now translated into Kiswahili; may God bless those who have arranged this. I request two *Bible Basics* in Kiswahili for the two friends who cannot understand English.

Bro. Francis Kinandu

TIRIKI

In our district there are many who believe in the Trinity and it is very hard to turn them from their belief. I ask you to send me some booklets to show these people the Truth.

Bro. Mondest Gwademba



Photo: Bro. Gwademba's two sons, Alex (left) and Douglas

Photo taken at Ndisi, October, 2004, sent by Bro. John Kine



SUNA MIGORI

The reason for my long silence is because of ill health. Thanks to the Lord I am now well and I am able to be in touch once again with the loved ones, especially Brothers and Sisters in the Lord. More good news is that we have been blessed with an ecclesia close to where I reside. We used to walk quite a long distance to attend Sunday meetings, but sometimes, when I was ill, I was isolated. I am very thankful to those at Karabu for starting a meeting in a Brother's house in Migori, even though we are small in number – four Brothers, three Sisters, 10 Sunday School children and one contact. Our hope for the coming Kingdom surpasses everything. If Jesus remains away we hope he will keep adding more to his flock when we will be forced to look for a bigger space for our meetings.

Bro. Joseph Onyango

TONGAREN

I enclose an article on Gen. 2:24. Many brethren have completely misinterpreted this, having gone as far as rejecting their parents in regard to assisting them.

Bro. Martin Wamalwa



Photo: Bro Martin [left] and Bro Solomon

news from nigeria

ENUGU

The 17 *Bible Basics*, Igbo version, sent through my Sister wife's name got to her and has been claimed. Even before my arrival some Brethren and Sisters had taken some! We had no idea that such a version could be found in your stock. I thank Almighty God for this. You know that it is our duty to sow the seed, and it is God who gives the increase.

Bro. Golden Onuoha

IKWUANO

I have received the parcel of printed matter, which I appreciate. This came at a time badly needed because it coincided with the date we planned an outing to spread the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God and to tell the masses who we are and what we believe. As a newly opened ecclesia in this part of the town, our duty is to let people know us and to talk to them about the coming Kingdom of God on earth – not in heaven, as many believe. The leaflets in the parcel helped us much and the response is tremendous. I am appealing to you to help us more to achieve our goal of saving souls. I request that you send me Eureka and Key to Understanding the Scriptures. I like to read some of the books written by the older Brothers, but cannot get

them because of financial constraints and they are not available here.

Bro. Friday E. Umesi

KANO

“Silver and gold have I none, but that which I have I shall give”; in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ let the blessings and favour of God locate you always. May He continue to hedge and protect you till Christ returns for your kindness. Please keep praying for us, for God’s guidance and protection, especially here in Kano and other troubled areas.

Bro. Chris Anyanwu

OGOJA

I am writing from my country home. I retired from the Government service and had to relocate from Calabar to Ogoja where I have been living in isolation for over a year now. Only one Brother (Bro. Michael Nyiam) comes to me from Calabar once in a long while. I am trying to get some converts, but it is fairly difficult because out here everyone already belongs to a conventional church. I am not relenting however. I compiled a list of libraries in 2001; were you able to accomplish the task of sending copies of *Bible Basics* to them? I need a lot of literature to read now that I am in isolation and idle. I need a lot of leaflets and pamphlets to give to the people I am preaching to. Please send them to me. I retired on 30th June, 2003, and up till the time of writing this letter the Government has not paid me a single penny in the name of my retirement benefits, so I have been living in abject poverty, not sure of what to eat. My children have been thrown out of schools because I cannot now afford to pay their school fees..

Bro. Mike O. Takon

URHONIGBE

‘To be Right with God’ was a topic given at our Sunday class. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God”, Sin is the result of man’s disobedience in Eden. We have been put right with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has brought us, by faith, to God’s grace in which we now live. This is why we boast of the hope we have of sharing in God’s glory. God has poured out His love into our hearts by means of His Word and the work of Jesus Christ who died for the sins of the world. There is no other means whereby man can be saved. Sin came into the world through one man, Adam, and his sin brought death. The hope of salvation came into the world through one man, Jesus Christ, all by God’s grace.

Bro. Edogum Ambrose



Photos (above): Bro. Edogum teaching the women and children

(below) Bro. Aigbosare Frank teaching the men.



UMUNGASI

We thank our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ for our good health. The Amapulfe ecclesia are building a meeting place. We have cleared the area and are waiting for the job to start. We still need help in getting bags of cement and sand.

Bro. Samuel Amadi

news from south africa

LESOTHO

Before I came to the Truth I did many things I should not have done. But I hearkened when God said to me, "Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow". So, my dear and beloved Brothers and Sisters, as persons we are sinful by nature. However, God has just been so merciful to us and given His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins in order to make us clean, that is why it is stated in the Bible that Jesus was pierced for our sins and also bruised for our iniquities. As Christadelphians and as followers of Jesus Christ, let us try very hard indeed to imitate our Lord and be holy, for he is holy.

Bro. Bernard Lintsa

BOTSWANA

Since I got in touch with you my life has changed a great deal. The copies of *Introducing Bible Basics* and *Bible Basics* study manual you gave me have helped me overcome intellectual obstacles and also to remove doubts that hindered my spiritual growth. I mean, this is marvelous and I am touching the lives of many others, using *Bible Basics* as a reference book. Brothers, you have planted your seed in fertile soil! So, if you have any more material it will be great and a joy to receive. Also any material, particularly about 'apologetics', but I will appreciate anything you provide. Also, thank you for putting me on the mailing list for *Gospel News*, it is so exciting and revealing a lot. May the Lord strengthen and bless you and continue with the great commission – preaching the gospel to the people. Thank you, too for giving me a copy of the public debate on miracles. Also say Hi to Annette Henriksen, my personal tutor. I greatly thank her for her faithfulness and endurance; she always marks my scripts and posts them back so quickly. You are all so organized!

Gaotingwe Bamotshabile

news from tanzania

KASULU

We sing here – among other things. Our choir is comprised of men, women and our youth. The choir uses traditional instruments and the music is nice and attractive. The picture I am sending shows the drum, which is the common instrument. We should be very grateful to have any ideas and any help to modernize our instruments, which will help to enhance our praises to our God.

Bro. Wildens Haruna



Photo: Kasulu Area Ecclesial Choir

LUGUFU

I was glad to hear from you, for *Gospel News*, 'signs of the times' and the booklet. We need 10 Kiswahili *Bible Basics* to use at our Bible study. We remember you all in our prayers. We would like to see photographs in colour. We desire to spread the truth, but lack the Kiswahili Bibles. Our Bible Seminar was postponed and held on Sept. 16-17, 2004 (instead of Sept. 1-2). We enjoyed sweet fellowship with our local brethren and sisters from both Lugufu 1/2 ecclesias and also the company of interested friends. The subjects were: The Bible – Inspired and Infallible (Bro. Isidore Mwibeleca); The Fundamental Message of the Bible (Bro. Isidore); Baptism (Bro. Rehani Pascal); Christian Marriage (Bro. Amnobe lyungu); The Life in Christ (Bro. Lwendo Bulvma). We thank members of Lugufu 1 for their contribution and Bro. S.M. Harris (Evesham UK) for the exercise books and pens, which were gladly used during the Seminar. We thank God, our Heavenly Father, for His care, ensuring all went well.

Bro. Isidore Mwibeleca

Comment: We have considered printing the pictures in colour, but feel the extra money required would be more profitably spent on our preaching activities at the present time.



Photo taken during the Lugufu Seminar

MIKUMI

I write to inform you that our Brother Anord Kihunrwa fell asleep in Christ on November 15, 2004, here in Mikumi, after a short illness of malaria. We shall miss our Brother very much. We were three brethren, so now we remain just two in our ecclesia. We look forward to the resurrection when we will see our Brother again.

Bro. Robert Mwaseba

MUSOMA

My children are well and are doing fine at school as well as the CIL Sunday School lessons. My missionary work here in Musoma is also going well and I have a contact ready for interview and also some students taking the early lessons in the Bible Course. About a month ago I received the '*Exploring the Bible*' Course, which I am now taking. I am planning to go home to Kenya for 3-4 weeks, God willing. My son Kevin is going to Standard 7, if our Lord remains away; Cherlingstone and Bev are fine and enjoying staying with their grandma. I worry about Bev. As she is still very young to stay away without me; it makes me unsettled. I'm really happy reading and seeing pictures of brethren and sisters world-wide. I'm also very happy seeing and reading news about the Bible camps, in fact I feel I am also among them! I am not lonely as I have contacts around me and brethren and sisters. I got a message from the Mwanza brethren informing me that they had purchased a bicycle for me and will soon bring it to me. It will really

help me in seeing my contacts as they are far away. Life in Musoma is very difficult as there has been no rainfall for almost six months.

Sis. Monica Achieng



Photo: Sis. Monica Achieng with Justine, a student.

UVINZA

Our activities are still going well and God Himself is doing well upon his servants here in the Camp, that's why we are now in good condition. Some among our Lugufu ecclesial members have been resettled in the USA by UNHCR since April, 2004. Please continue to send us books, pamphlets etc. Our source of spirituality depends upon us all fortifying one another.

Bro. W'lkola Wabene

news from uganda

BUSHENYI

We are very fine with Bro. Godwin Mugasi who is serving us nicely. I am requesting books and also your prayers, as my work is not going smoothly. I am a driver, but my boss is not giving me enough money. Pray that I may get another job.

Bro. Ahabwe Amon



Photo: Bro. Ahabwe Amon (left) with a Bible student

KABERAMAIDO

Thank you for your great help of prayer and also for *Gospel News*. Prayer can do great things (James 5:13-18). Many rebels (LRA) are reporting back home to Government soldiers every two weeks. Praise God for the power of prayer. Northern Uganda is now becoming well and fine because of the rebel groups reporting and the Government is planning to send us back home to our village around March or April, our first rainy season, God willing. As a result of this rebel group's activities we have great fear of famine from the beginning of the year to July. The Government has planned to give us houses, and seeds like maize, beans, cassava, but it will all be very late. So, Brothers, pray for us. Life is still hard; to be in a place which is not your home land is very difficult. We have been farmers from our youth, but not having farmed our land we have nothing in store for when we are back in our village. Thank you again for your prayers.

Bro. Opio Bosco

KASESE

I hope you are safe in the hands of our God who has set us aside from the world to do His will. I

request you to send me books to support our Bible study lessons and for preaching the word. Try to send me what is available please.

Bro. Isaac Cox

news from zambia

CHIPATA

I have some Brothers here who would like very much to start receiving *Gospel News*. We ourselves are all brothers and sisters of Christ and always trying to follow in his steps, but when we look back something is always missing. The Bible tells us that we are all sinners and can be made well when we meet Jesus. But, do some brothers and sisters stop others from meeting Jesus as a Healer? How can we say to a sick person who wants to meet a doctor, You can't? Are we trying to follow Christ's steps by doing what we think right in our own mind? No one is righteous no, not even one (Rom. 3:10). Christ was always talking about forgiveness, not judging others.

Bro. Alfred Bwalya

KABWE

There is just something about *Gospel News* that draws me closer to every brother and sister who contributes to its pages. But the most important thing is that I simply love the way you bring out the conflicting religious values between Christians and non-Christians in Islamic nations. It is touching to realize how many brothers and sisters are being persecuted for their faith. Before I sat for my promotional exams on 15th-19th Nov, I approached the College administration and was fortunate enough to be given a portion on the Agriculture Production Unit to work on; I was cultivating. It was quite a tiring job; worse still I was under pressure – working and at the same time studying for the exams. I am currently considering 'The Last Days' and feel that a world-wide famine on the horizon is really part of it. There is so much that is currently happening in the world that constitutes part of the 'signs' of the last days. Our book library still needs some books. If it is possible for you to supply more, we would be very grateful.

Bro. Lapulani Malata

KAFUE King Solomon warned, "To the making of many books there is no end, and much devotion to them is wearisome to the flesh" (Ecc. 12:12). Solomon was not trying to discourage reading, he was just advising us to be selective. The seventeenth-century French philosopher Rene Descartes said, 'When one reads good books it is like having a conversation with men of breeding who lived in the past. We might even find it a selective conversation, in which the author expresses only his most noble thoughts.' Not all writers, though, are worth 'conversing' with, nor are all their thoughts really 'noble'. So the oft-quoted Bible principle again comes into play: "Bad associations spoil useful habits" (1 Cor. 15:33). Yes, the people with whom we associate can mould our personality. Have you ever spent so much time with a friend that you have found yourself beginning to act, talk and even think like your friend? Well, reading a book is like spending hours conversing with the one who wrote it. The principle Jesus stated at Matt. 24:15 is thus pertinent ("Let the reader use discernment"). Learn to analyze and weigh what you read. All humans are afflicted with a certain amount of bias and are not always totally honest in their portrayal of facts. Do not, therefore, accept unquestioningly everything you read or hear: "Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one considers his steps" (Prov. 14:15). We should be particularly cautious about reading anything that expounds a

philosophy of life - teen magazines, for example. And what about books that plunge into weighty philosophical questionings? The Bible warns: "Look out. Perhaps there maybe someone who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men and not according to Christ" (Col. 2:8). The Bible and Bible-based publications such as this offer far better advice (2 Tim. 3:16).

Bro. Lotson Kayuni

KALOMO

Here is a word of encouragement from me, and the message comes from the book of Deut. 31:6-8: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged". This is the word of encouragement my beloved brethren and sisters.

Bro. Lameck Mtonga

KASAMA

Gospel News produces good results in helping brethren, sisters and our youth to get to know each other on our side of the world, as well as those far off, and we want this to continue. I am sending a picture of our Sunday School in my house; the number of children is over 60 and they like learning about Jesus. There are also a number of interested contacts in the surrounding areas, but transport makes contact impossible. I really need a bicycle to reach them as the distance is too far to walk. I have a problem: What can I do when students have completed the Correspondence Course satisfactorily and want to be baptised? Should I baptise them?

Bro. Joshua Mushili

Comment: You need to refer the question of baptisms of suitable candidates to the area representative and Linkman. As baptism is essential to salvation, once a person has the required knowledge they should be baptised as soon as possible.

MH

LUSAKA

I had a brilliant time at the Bush Camp, full of much singing, listening, talking and laughing. The numbers of young and older ones was greater than that for the year 2003. I've made more great friends and that makes me feel really rich; we're keeping in touch through letters like crazy. Having Christadelphian friends is such a blessing to me that I can't let go – a very good topic by Bro. Don Styles about being friendly. Your Nov/Dec editorial, 'More on the Road Ahead' helped me know more important facts, and I just pray that God will help all of us do our best in making ourselves and others worthy of the eternal life He has in store for us. The 'Praise the Lord' six tapes has got some of the sweetest songs I've listened to in my life, and the 'Underneath His Canopy of Blessing' kind of drives me a bit crazy. Some here at home say that there's too much noise in the songs, but I love everything about them – including the noise!

Sis Bevelyn Tembo



Photo: Sis. Bevelyn ('Lyn') Tembo

Thank you for the Key Cards and your letter which are educative, spiritual and uplifting. May we all continue to encourage one another on our way to the Kingdom. I have friends who are interested in our preaching; they asked me about the English *Bible Basics*, so I am asking you to send some copies to me for distribution to them, God willing.

Bro. Paul Chembe

MISAKA

I know that a business is a job, any job, earning you money. If I want to have a business I must have the capital to start it. I must have a business plan. What business am I going to start? This is similar to working in the Truth; one has to decide what they wish to accomplish, what they need to do it; who will be interested and how to present the case.

Bro. Costa Mwape



Photo: Bro. Costa Mwape & Sis. Grace Chipata

MAKONDE

My family and I are very thankful that you have continued sending us *Gospel News*. We have just received the current issue. As usual, it contains much interesting news from all over the world – updating our knowledge about the way the Gospel is spreading world wide and how the brotherhood is faring in these last times of the kingdoms of men. We are delighted to hear that *Gospel News* is continuing as opposed to the rumour about its cessation. We pray that all of you who are contributing towards its continuity will be blessed with the resources to continue this noble work of preaching to the world and keeping our community well informed about its spiritual wellbeing. As members in isolation and in a rural area where there is no big hospital, we welcome with gladness the offer of the book, 'Where There is No Doctor'. We would love to receive a copy – please send us one. Eunice, the whole family and our small ecclesia join me in sending our love and well wishes in the Lord to you all. May the God of all comfort bless your labours for His Name and keep you safe for His Kingdom, which we all await with fervour.

Bro. Zacchaeus Muntete

NDOLA

I thank you on behalf of Ndola ecclesia; we do appreciate the effort of promoting the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Some people from other churches ask me why we do not put on 'uniforms' like some churches do during memorial services. We read in "Joel 2:12-13, "Turn to me with all your heart...rend your heart, and not your garments". "neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive" (Zech 13:4). Putting on 'uniforms' will not save us, because God looks at the heart of a person not on the outward appearance; He knows everything about us (read Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139; Eph. 1:44). The Bible also says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit". We can do nothing of ourselves. Phil. 4:6-7 tells us not to worry but to pray, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus". How we start the day can affect the rest of the day. We should start the day

praying to our Lord God through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We should use our leisure time reading the Bible, by so doing we will be using it profitably. The harvest is great, but the labourers few. Language differences cannot separate us from the love of God.

Bro. James Mwanza



Photos sent by Bro. Mwanza (a) taken at last year's Bush Camp at Fringilla in August and (b) taken at the Copperbelt fraternal in October last year.



PEMBA

I really thank you for all materials received. I appreciate the local Christadelphian community's efforts to try and reach out. May God allow this to continue, by His will. We have experienced drought in the country, except in the Northern parts. Maybe there will be changes, but weather changes seem to be world wide.

Bro. Wilfred Chibomba



Photo: Bro. Wilfred's pre-school children

SOLWEZI

Regarding the baptisms of two Brothers and one Sister who were baptized in a local cow pond, we should not think of the pond itself; we can all recall where our Lord Jesus Christ was born.

Bro. Joseph Kapimpa

News from Europe / Eurasia

news from albania

We are delighted to report the baptisms of ARIANA, VIOLA & DENIZA during a recent visit by brother Ben and sisters Liz and Abi. May the Lord guide them to his Kingdom.

news from belarus

We are delighted to report the baptism of ANDREJ; may the Lord bless his path to the Kingdom A Bible School for children, including orphans of Chernobyl, was held over Christmas. We really appreciate the support that made this possible, and the gifts of clothes and gloves for the children.

BARANOVICHI

I have no great wish to be in contact with prisoners, but I think may be this is the way God is leading me to serve Him. I was tutoring one man in prison on the correspondence course, and he introduced others, and now I find many writing to me. So this is perhaps how God is wanting to use me.

Bro. Leonid

LUNINETS

Our children are growing up now. We do truly pray for wisdom, so that they will grow up to know the Truth. I ask God too to grant me patience, to set the right pattern.

Bro. Sasha

SMALYANY

I was really encouraged to get a package with vitamins etc, thank you so much. I have to bring up my grandchildren and it is so hard to do this here, all we have is our land and animals and we are far from any city. But in all things, let us give glory to God!

Sis. Nina

TERESHKI

Reading about the building of the temple, I thought, that we Christadelphians are like a temple, each of us are the different stones, we must never allow any division, or else we will all fall. The road here is still impassable for me to get easily to the nearest station, so I have not been able to get to the meetings in Minsk all Winter.

Bro. Vladimir

VILEJKA

We really wish all blessings for every Bible School wherever it is, we think these gatherings are so important. We are with you all.

Bro. Gennady & Sis. Margarita

news from belgium

We're delighted to report the baptism of MARCUS in Leuven, after a long journey to the Lord. We look forward to fellowship with Him and are grateful to Bro. Graham Mitchell of the Walton ecclesia for coming over to assist Duncan and Cindy and David in the interview and baptism.



Photo: Bro. Marcus on left, then Duncan, Cindy, Graham, David and Ben

news from bosnia

SARAJEVO

We know man commits sin because he isn't faithful to God. And we all are created in the image of God. So He did a lot for us, so why can't we do as much as we can for Him? In our mission here in this country what ever we do we do for HIM! Because of our sinful nature we are not doing as much as we could do! I am ashamed of myself and other people because we are not trying enough! God help us if we stay like this! This life is worthless, we must prepare for the Kingdom life. God is the only truth and we will go after it.

Several days ago I asked my friend, Ivica, if he believed in absolute truth. "Yes", he said. "But I believe we spend our entire day trying to get away from it." I was proud of his answer. It reminds me of Jesus' words in John: "Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

(John 3:19-21).

Bro. Dzenan

news from bulgaria

We are sorry to report the falling asleep in the Lord of our brother Ivan Sharkov, and we look forward to the great day of resurrection even more. BAPTISED Nov 1995.

news from croatia

ZAGREB

I was thinking a thought, which I liked. That God is the 'I am'; He is a God who is concerned with us today, and is not just about things in the past or the future Kingdom. Things are very hard for me, with my health. So this is comfort for me, as I live one day at a time.

Sis. Anita

news from czech republic

PRAGUE

I have been thinking, how we are made of dust, how weak our lives are. I long only for our final meeting and being with our true Father, God, in His Kingdom, when we shall be changed.

Bro. Edik

I am very thankful for the spiritual care that you show to us. We are facing some problems here but we are OK.

Bro. Oleg

news from georgia

SUKHUMI

I pray honestly and openly before the Lord for each of you my dear brothers. I pray He will provide for us each in the hard moments we each face in these last days. I pray that He will give us soft hearts, as all around us, I believe in every country, is the spirit of hardness and selfishness.

Bro. Guram

news from germany

As you know I have been living here for a while having come from Kazakhstan. But things have not been easy especially with regard to accommodation, this question has been so hard for us having two young children. I thank God that He did great and wonderful things for us in our lives in this respect, as great, for me, as the great things He did in the past which we read about in the Bible.

Sis. Elena

news from israel

BEER SHEVA

The Lord God has sent me a great blessing, in the form of a new grandchild. After so much sadness in life, I realize He does not test us more than we can endure, and He has brightened up my life, and for this I thank Him.

Sis. Anna

KARMIEL

We are missing Duncan and Cindy so much here in Israel and are finding all means possible to get them over here, to give us more life and energy in our ecclesia here. We are praying for you all.

Sis. Natasha

PETAKH TIKVA

I am moving soon to Bat Yam, but Sis Natasha continues to gather us together and unites us for the breaking of bread. The most important thing for us is to serve the Lord.

Bro. Vladimir

news from italy

I have been trying to talk to some people here, also Arabs, about the things of Christadelphians, and I am showing them *Bible Basics* on internet and we are printing out the articles. I am trying to persuade them to baptism.

Bro. H

news from kazakhstan

We are delighted to report the baptisms of OLEG and IRINA. May the Lord guide them to His Kingdom.

ALMATY

I have been lying in the hospital for a month and my father is also sick. So things are so hard for us financially especially with clothes for the winter for the family. We love you all. I am praying for you, and wish especial greetings to brothers Rinat and Valdas.

Sis. Lena

KOKSHETAU

We warmly welcome you here! We warmly remember all our past visitors and we love you and would love to see you.

Bro. Yuri

I wish all of us to enter more deeply into the world of Biblical things, and I so hope the Bible School in Russia will help all to do this, and I am happy for you all, although the need to work means I can't come.

Sis. Tanya

There are so many here in our ecclesia who would love to come to the Bible School in Russia! But we are so many, and more than what there are sponsors for perhaps. We love you all and want to be with you!

Sis. Svetlana

I was just so very happy to know there would be a Bible School again in the Winter, and that I can come, and bring my husband there to be baptized I hope.

Sis. Galina

TAYNSHA

We are so terribly missing you all, and we so want to be able to get to a Bible School. Without seeing you all, it is like life is not going properly for us. We love you so much and we miss the energy that we take away from such meetings each time.

Sis. Tanya and others

news from kyrgyzstan

It is very cold here, and still I cannot find work because of lack of documents. I appreciate all efforts of all brothers for us all.

Bro. Jacob

news from latvia

We are delighted to report the baptisms of ARTUR and ANDREJS ; may the Lord keep them in their walk to His Kingdom. On the other hand, we deeply sorrow over the falling asleep of our beloved brother Sasha Gubin of Tukums. We earnestly look forward to the day of resurrection.

AIZKRAUKLE

I do not go out very much these days, I sit here and wait for my son to return from work, and I read the exhortations from the Isolation League. I am sorry for all problems, I am with you.

Sis. Irena

BENE

I so much appreciate the cassette tapes sent me of the Bible School, I have been playing them. We have many problems here but in all, God provides.

Bro. Nikolaj

DAUGAVPILS

I was very pleased to hear about the new Christadelphian Committee for Central Europe, and I am completely supportive of this new committee. May God bless all our work for Him.

Bro. Slava

I continue living here very poor. But I am with you. I read about the Christadelphian Committee for Central Europe and the changes with the CBM and I support the new system and pray for it and for blessing upon Brother Marcus and all his good work.

Bro. Petr

ENGURE

I am praying that this year, Jesus will return.

Sis. Vija

KRASLAVA

I think it is really quite amazing that brothers are traveling so widely in dangerous places to spread the Truth. I thank God for you and know there is a sister here in this town praying for you.

Sis. Valeryana

KUBULI

The recent Bible school in Jurmala will be for me unforgettable. I returned home with such spiritual energy and the feeling that I had really grown so far just that weekend, through the understanding of the word of God which we received. Our health here is poor, and we don't have even money to make the journey of 100 km. total to the local hospital.

Bro. Petris

LIEPA

I was taken into hospital for 5 days because of my heart, it is very difficult for me to breathe sometimes. They only prescribe me tablets, which I can't afford to buy. I pray for you. I remember that Abraham was promised the land but he never received it and he died in faith waiting for it, and he will receive it. This it seems is my position.

Bro. Viktor

MADONAS

I am very carefully reading the Bible and all literature I have been given. I remember with much joy the time when I came to the ecclesia in Riga. I am with you all.

Sis. Sarmite

PILTENE

Your letters are of great importance to me. It is very kind of you to deliver clothes to the needy families in Bosnia. May God bless you more and more. It means you are showing the *agape* love

of God.

Sis. Olga

TALSI

I am now understanding that the key to spiritual life is our habits, at work, in the family, while traveling, wherever we are. I am looking for the return of Jesus soon, and I think that the repentance of the Jewish people will be the great sign. I think that there is unease in the heart of every Jew, about the question of Jesus.

Bro. Vladimir

TUKUMS

My life at the moment is so full of problems- with health, work and everything. Please pray for me.

Sis. Vaira

VILANI

I pray for you and love you. All my bones are aching and I feel like life is leaving me, reminding me of how a fish looks when it is caught and then slowly dying. I can still read, I love reading the Bible, especially seeing how God worked with Israel.

Bro. Fyodyor

news from lithuania

VARENA

Justas and I are hoping to come to Latvia for the next Bible camp. We were so interested to hear, that a Sisters weekend has been arranged, this is great, the first time there was such thing for sisters.

Bro. Albinas

news from macedonia

SKOPJE

Fortunately I still maintain my blood-sugar level, and I hope that I will be able to keep it in the level I am in. I am working on the translation of *Bible Basics* and hope it will soon be done. With love and thanks to you all.

Bro. D

news from moldova

We really pray for God's special blessing on all the good deeds, to spread the Gospel to more people and help them.

Sisters Elvira and Irina

news from morocco

MARAKECH

I have been really unwell, the doctor prescribed so many drugs that are too expensive to buy. Give my love to all brothers.

Bro. Omar

news from norway

Linda will be 3 years in February. Time is flying. She's a very, very sweet girl, always satisfied and smiling a lot. I'm very thankful to God I have her. I continue reading the Bible and pray each day. I'm thinking about God a lot.

Sis. Helena

news from pakistan

KARACHI

Greetings to all fellows! Our brother Farooq was married to sister Tehreem on 28 January. We all traveled to Toba Tek Singh for this. They were happily married.

Bro. K

SAHIWAL

We are going to arrange a seminar here for women, to help them with their children and babies. There is a doctor at the hospital here, she agreed to give some talks for us. We are using this to spread the word of God to all peoples.

Sis. Safina

news from poland

We are delighted to report the baptism of KRZYSZTOF, after many years of studying Bible Basics. May the Lord guide him to the Kingdom.

POZNAN

The recent Bible School which there was really very encouraging. I think everyone who came was really helped and we all liked it.

Bro. Henryk

WALBRZYCH

I am very happy that I now have brothers in the faith. I only live in hope, that you will come to Walbrzych again, and we can have another such wonderful meeting. I've been searching for anywhere that offers free Bibles in Bosnian to help the brothers there, but without success. From my heart, I wish you all of God's blessings.

Bro. Krzysztof

news from russia

Carelink readers will recall the dramas related to our young brother Leonid and his military tribunal. He was finally given alternative service, and he has now been sent off to a military controlled factory in the Urals. He informed us that he is living in the hostel there, but they give him no money for food. The factory is shut until Jan. 10, and he will only receive money after a month. He has about \$10 of his own to live on until then. He's been told he will work very hard, the term of service is a tough 3.5 years, he will be a welder, must be prepared to work in dangerous conditions, and if he doesn't work hard enough or well enough, he will be sent into the army. So much for 'alternative service for conscientious objectors'. We have sent him some funds but he urgently asks for our prayers. He is a young 18, and very scared. He says he is reading his Bible a lot as he waits for work to start on Jan. 10.

news from russia

We are keeping in touch with our young brother Leonid, who following his military service tribunal has been sent to work in a factory in Siberia. We've assured him of your prayers.

ARMAVIR

Here I am in a truly bad situation. I am ill with so many things. Aleksej earns only about \$30 / month and this is only enough to buy gas for our heating, we have so little food, and I get weaker and weaker. If I could get a pension, this would help. But everything is so corrupt. I must go into a sanatorium for a period before the doctors will consider me as an invalid, but for that I must pay, and we have only debts, and no money. All this doesn't mean I have lost faith. Existence is so hard, but I do truly believe and hope for the Kingdom.

Sis. Galina

EFREMOV

I continue placing advertisement stickers for *Bible Basics* everywhere around this town. It is my great dream to build here a strong ecclesia. I was so delighted when people in the town told me that they had had a letter from Cindy in Latvia, sending them the *Bible Basics*. I am so hoping some will respond here.

Bro. Oleg

INZENSK

I was so happy to get the invitation to the Bible School and I want to thank in advance those who pay towards our fares, otherwise I could simply not come, as the fare is all my pension.

Bro. Viktor

IRBIT

I am working long hours at my work, from 8 in the morning to 8 at night. I have time to read Bible each day, and on Sundays we make the breaking of bread. We are all OK here.

Bro. Vladimir

JOSHKAR OLA

I wish to greet you all. I hold to my Bible very much, I am reading with you each day, and missing you.

Sis. Elena

KAZAN

We are hoping that most here and in neighbouring ecclesias will support the Bible school planned here, hopefully there will be a good number of brothers and sisters there. I am totally

against all division.

Sis. Ludmila

I have always dreamed of having my own flat instead of just moving around renting all my life, but this it seems will not be, but I am very joyful in my Christadelphian faith, It is the most important thing to me in life.

Sis. Valentina

KORKINO

I think of you very much. I so enjoy reading *Beyond Bible Basics* , and although I can't travel so much, I am totally with you all. I look forward to the time when all difficulties and struggles will end and we will be in the Kingdom of God.

Sis. Sofia

We are preaching to one young family here, they are our friends. They are listening to us with a big interest! We hope that God will turn those lives over to Him.

Bro. Alexei

PECHORA

I was so happy when I received the invitation to the Bible School; it is so very far for me, up here in the Komi Republic. But God willing I will come, although it will take me several days to travel each way. I so appreciate the support with the fares. Thank you to all.

Bro. Valerij

POKROVKA

My son is really sick, and I lost a parcel of Bible books sent to me. Things are so hard here in this village. I am committed to study, study and study the word of God to the end. I think much of Cindy and I am hoping only for the Kingdom of God. I am happy always to distribute the literature to all people here.

Sis. Svetlana

PYSHMA

I am celebrating my baptismal anniversary, and I wish to thank you for all your help and support.

Bro. Viktor

RZHEV

I continue planning my dream, which is to make a missionary journey around the towns of Tver, Smolensk and Pskov Oblasts. Please pray for me to realize this!

Bro. Sasha

SARATOV

We here are all eagerly awaiting the Winter Bible School. We are very grateful that our fares can be paid because of the generosity of others, otherwise, we would have no chance to come.

Sis. Raisa

SARANSK

I sincerely wish for all blessings upon the preaching I hear is happening. I am with you all although I can't travel much these days.

Bro. Nikolaj

SHADRINSK

At my old age I have had to get a job, working with metal, it is the only way for me to get enough

to buy food each week. I don't forget you all, although I couldn't come to the Bible School. I pray, I read, I am with you.

Bro. Pavel

SHAKHTY

We always eagerly await news of the new baptisms, new brothers and sisters for us.

Bro. Andrej

SHANINO

My health gets weaker and weaker. I remember the times I was able to come to the Bible Schools in the past, I am so glad I came, as now my heart is so weak I can do so very little and can't get out of the village. I fondly remember you all and cherish the hope that we will all be together in the Kingdom.

Sis. Tamara

SHCHYOKINO

I so so wish to be at the Bible School. I so want to see you all, and our wonderful sister Ludmila Kuritsyna. She always inspires me, when she stands up to comment on the daily Bible readings. But I am old and sick, I usually in Winter never go far from my home, let alone all the way to Kazan. But I hope I shall come. You are my only family, you mean everything to me.

Bro. Boris

ST. PETERBURG

Vandals destroyed our mail boxes in the block, so letters have not been getting to me. I had some encouraging correspondence with Br Oleg from Efremov, we see things the same way. May God grant us the strength and determination we need to endure to the end.

Bro. Valerij

TALITSA

I am looking forward to coming to the Bible School. I am preparing some talks.

Bro. Sasha

TYMSK

Here it is extremely cold. This Winter I am trying to build another room onto our house for the children. We have nothing else to do. Maybe we can place a bath there, for baptisms. I am in touch with brother Sergej and he has become very serious in his faith.

Bro. Ivan

VINOGRADOVKA

I was so much encouraged by your last letter. I feel so old and ill, my right leg hardly works at all, I walk only with a stick now. It has been very cold here and I live in primitive conditions, my pension buys only basic food, and medical treatment is so expensive. I sincerely wish you all blessing and strong health to serve Him.

Sis. Galina

news from serbia

BEOGRAD

Here the propaganda against all religion apart from the Orthodox continues. But I do not lose my desire to convert people here to the truth. I am even in touch with a man in Krasnoyarsk, Russia,

trying to persuade him.

Bro. Vladislav

SUBOTICA

I struggle with my flesh, I took comfort from reading of Romans 7, it is so very exactly my situation. At the breaking of bread, I give thanks for the victory in Jesus.

Bro. William

news from turkey

We are delighted to report the baptisms of SAEED and ROZHAN. May the Lord keep them in their path to His Kingdom.

news from ukraine

We are delighted to report the baptisms of SOFIA, GALINA, VALYA and VALENTINA. May the Lord be with them as they journey to His Kingdom.

KHARKOV

I am planning to come to the gathering, but I will only come if I can find the money to totally pay my own fare, this is important to me, that we make our sacrifice, when so much is done for us.

Sis. Ludmila

KHERSON Obl.

We here would truly love to come to the Winter Bible School. There is always so much spiritual food there and true love amongst the brothers and sisters. We are ashamed that we need help to get there because of our low salaries and high cost of tickets.

Sis. Nana

KIEV

I am sending warmest greetings. I truly pray that Jesus will return this year.

Sis. Elena

N. TORGAJ

We here very much wanted to come to the Bible School, the children especially. We are very poor as a family. The Bible Schools are such wonderful times for us, but we have some problems which make it hard to come.

Sis. Vera

POLTAVA

I read with much joy and surprise the article *Hearts that bleed*. It was a surprise, because these were exactly the thoughts I had been having, and I felt a great unity with the brotherhood on reading that. My health remains poor and I need all help I can get just to survive alive.

Bro. Vladimir

We have now booked the venue for the Ukrainian sisters' weekend which will be held here God willing. Already we have so very many who want to come and we are very excited about this.

Sis. Ludmila

news from uzbekistan

We are delighted to report the baptisms of sisters E and T in this Moslem land. May the Lord guide them to His Kingdom.

TASHKENT

My pension is in total \$6 / month and so existence for me is so hard. I appreciate all your love for me. Please pray for me and do not forget me here.

Bro. Oleg

Everything is OK with us here. My eyes are a little bit better, but I cannot watch any computer screen or TV screen for long. The doctor still didn't come to give a more detailed opinion on my diabetes. We worry for all brothers in worse problems.

Sis. Lena

News from the Americas

news from guatemala

Hello Loved Ones, January 6, 2005

Hope the holidays passed with much joy and love for you all. We took the opportunity to get together with our kids over Thanksgiving break, so the Christmas and New Years holidays we were not with our family. We had anticipated that our contacts would be very busy with their families and did not think we would see too much participation during December... and that was true in part.

In December we had the joy of having Bro. Bill Rawson with us from Spain. He generously gave nearly 4 weeks in service to the contacts here. He gave a beautiful class in the gospel of John and visited with some contacts in the home. He also was a wonderful help in helping us with some studies we had been using for our classes, bringing them to a more finished form. Carl began giving classes again this past month and Bro. Bill was a loving and experienced mentor who helped Carl have more confidence with each class. Bro. Erick Alvarado, Sis. Sara, and David were gone most of the month of December visiting family in both El Salvador and England.

Unfortunately we didn't have any new contacts attend Bro. Bills classes, but our regular attendees were faithful and enjoyed very much the topic, and having Bro. Bill here again. He was here in March and the contacts are developing a good relationship with him. It was obvious to us that December is not the time to try to reach out the community. Usually they are very receptive to flyers announcing Bible studies and such, but during the stressful time of December... it was a whole different ambience to the city. In December all the extended families in the states return home and the city is PACKED. Traffic is terrible and nerves are on edge... not anything like you see the rest of the year here. Anyway, all those factors seem to be why we didn't have new people other than a few requests for the coursework by mail, despite good advertising.

However, on the bright side... the holidays proved to be a unifying time for the contacts that come to classes here. We had invited 3 contacts who we knew didn't have family to join us for dinner on Christmas Eve. Two joined us the following day for bible readings in the morning and a walk in the beautiful pine forest park in the afternoon. On Sunday, as it turned out, found out that there were a couple of others who weren't with their families either and said they would have joined us. So that led to the question of we were doing anything for the upcoming New Years Eve. Since they were interested we planned a potluck dinner and devotional and possible hike the next day at the Barranca (a large Canyon at the edge of the city). We had 6 people show up for the evening devotional... very good we thought. Carl gave a beautiful slide show on the Joy we have in Christ. The next day, 5 were with us for hiking and reading. We gave out new Bible reading charts and explained how to use them and did the first readings after some of us had hiked halfway down the Barranca and back. We even had interested bystanders join us for much of the time we were reading and discussing (The area is very popular for hikers and joggers, but that day there were many families out as well due to the holiday). We had terrific discussions on many topics. We spent 4 ½ hours there all together... a great time and a beautiful view of God's handiwork!

In addition to this group we have been working some months with, we have also been encouraged by visits or discussions in the past week with a few other contacts who are looking to bring their whole family to classes this next month, Lord willing. It will be good timing to have the extra help of Sis. Ruth Laban (who will be arriving, Lord willing, the 10th), especially since one of these families has young teenage girls. Bro. Erick Alvarado returned to Mexico last night, but we are not sure how long he will remain assisting us here in Mexico as the family has their sights set on living in England sometime in the near future. We will try to make good use of his gifted teaching abilities before he leaves us.

Our outlook for the upcoming year is encouraging. We have several faithful attendees to classes now and still are receiving requests for coursework and literature regularly. Lord willing we will have 3 special conferences in the coming year in the spring, summer and fall. If you have interest in visiting and helping, please let us know. Spanish speakers are especially welcomed as our contacts love to interact with the brethren who visit.

Please keep preaching efforts in your prayers and give generously. Advertising is not cheap in any part of the world. There are many who are seeking to really know their Bibles, and few who offer sound teaching.

Much Love to you in our Masters Name.

Your Sister by Grace,
Cynthia Paiva

News from Asia

news from indonesia

As we know that on the 26th Dec there was an earthquake and Tsunami in Aceh Indonesia. The disaster was very terrible. According to the report of the Social Department on 26th Jan 2005 there were reported 291,271 confirmed dead and still more missing. But after the report even until nowadays there were still many dead being found in the ruin and on the seashore. Padang is the cement factory where about 600 people work, almost all the people were missing, only 20 people are still alive. One of the private hospital all the patients, nurses and doctors were swept away.

Was it the same as the Noah flood? As Jesus said in Mat 24, that it is one of the signals of the coming of Jesus Christ?

The Tsunami was very terrible, the water about 10 m high and it was very vast about 700 km per hour near the coast, and the water went far away about 140 km from the seashore.

Bro. Sigit Sulisman.

Comment. Brother Sigit sent me several ghastly pictures with heaps of decomposing bodies, which stuck in my mind for days. Initially we intended to print them, but decided not to.

news from philippines

We are delighted to report the baptisms of ALFREDO and CECILY, whose thrilling personal testimony appears elsewhere in this issue. May the Lord keep them strong in His way until His Kingdom. We're delighted to report that the ongoing distribution of Bible Basics and holding of Bible Basics study classes along with counseling for the families of alcoholics, has been blessed with the following baptisms: ANGELOU, ARNEL, ALGEN, MENDY and RENE. They are all in the Moslem controlled area of the southern Philippines.

We had our baby OK, we called her Christian Heaster. For couple of weeks now, I have been alone in doing the visitation. But God has been truly faithful to us because my wife's health has been slowly reviving. It was seemingly funny since we only trusted God's power to work into the herbal medicines that we have been using for her treatment.

Bro. Alfredo

news from thailand

We are delighted to report the baptisms of the first Christadelphians in this land. Brother TEERAYOOT and Sister RATANAPAN were baptized into the Lord, and we wish them every blessing in their journey to the Kingdom.

I am working to tell my cousins and family about Jesus. But my mother went to Hong Kong to work just now.

Sis. Ratanapan

I am hoping to soon complete the translation of *What is the Gospel?* to Thai. But I am very busy with my work.

Bro. Teerayoot

The Beautiful Story in Exodus 32:1-14

Exodus is a Greek word meaning “going out”. The account through Moses explains the cruel bondage of Israel in Egypt and the journey through the Red Sea and the wilderness to Mount Sinai.

In Exodus 32, we read that the people of Israel had sinned and rebelled against God and thus divorced themselves from God’s face. In order to test Moses, God suggested a plan to him, the test was so great that many people would have made a grave mistake by accepting it. God said to Moses, “Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them and that I may consume them and *I will make of thee a great nation*” (Exodus 32:10). Because Moses knew that the promises were to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants and God does not change His promises, Moses did not say ‘Thank you God I will grasp the opportunity. I resign as leader of Israel so that you can freely destroy them’. He could even have thought, ‘Now I will be a famous man, the man of a great nation as their father’. Instead, Moses refused to be separated from sinful Israel because he loved them. He told the Lord that if He would not forgive Israel, He should destroy him too. He was associating himself with them as our Lord did with us. Moses reply was, “Oh, this people have sinned greatly, yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin, and if not blot me out of the book of life which thou hast written, I pray” (Ex 32:32). It is rather difficult for us to imagine with our practical earth-bound and scientific mentalities the amazing happening of that event, for most of us would have answered ‘Yes’ to God’s proposition.

Moses and our Lord Jesus are heroes who can speak to the world about “God is love”, and that evil thoughts are brought about with individuals, societies and nations where love is diminished. Let us love each other so as to make our Ecclesias beautiful places till our Master Jesus comes. So Jesus, come soon.

Bro. James Mwangoma (Lomba Mbeya, Tanzania)

Thanksgiving

People expect others to show appreciation for acts of goodness shown by them. These acts extend through all ages and social classes. Children appreciate the kindness of their parents and parents also appreciate the obedience of their children. Leaders become grateful when their supporters sing their praises for efficient discharge of their duties and truthfulness. In all cases, one must give thanks.

Thanksgiving is an expression of gratitude for an act of goodness done to one. It is usually expected that a gift will bring gladness into our hearts, and not sorrow. But the ways of God are mysterious and humans do not understand that He sometimes causes unfavourable things to happen to us. Disaster may strike when least expected but, like Job, there is no need to criticise God. “And the Lord said unto Satan (the adversary), Behold, he is in thine hand, but save his life’. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal, and he sat down among the ashes. And his wife said unto him Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this Job did not sin with his lips” (Job 2:7-10). Job refrained from blaming God. David also took

consolation from God's intervention. The people of Israel frequently met such situations and had to learn to cry unto the living God (Judges 6:1-14) Scripture urges people to give thanks to God and trust Him on all occasions.

The fingers on a hand are all different, but each has a separate function that makes the hand whole when the fingers are used together. Spiritual gifts operated on the same principle for the advancement of the church (1 Corinthians 12:4-12). Paul advised the Philippians to seek their happiness in God and to give thanks to Him always. Success and satisfaction are given by God, but not by strength. Strength will prove useless if the Lord is against us. It happened to Jonah (Jonah 1:2-5), and to the Israelites many times (Joshua 7:2-5). The pains of death, sickness, heartbreak and misfortune have to be accepted as well as the joy of childbirth, wealth and good health.

Jeremiah:29:11-13; "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. And ye shall seek me, and find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart". "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2). The Lord,wishes goodness, love, righteousness and prosperity to all his children who obey him.

David said, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Psalms 23:6). Peace be with us all in the Lord at his coming to set up on the earth God's peaceful Kingdom.

Bro. Joseph Oppong (Shama, Ghana)

The Boiling Pot

Jeremiah, who was set apart and appointed a prophet to the nations, saw a boiling pot tilting away from the north (Jer 1:13). In his days it was Assyria, today this scripture is about to be fulfilled by the latter day Assyrian king of the North. Be careful or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life. Be always on the watch and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man. Let the reader understand and he who has an ear let him hear. This is what the Lord Almighty the God of Israel says, the whole world will know whose word will stand – mine or theirs.

When all this comes true - and it surely will - Christ will set us free, and we can have a degree of confidence in the day of judgement, because we have tried to serve him. We have been baptised into Christ, have clothed ourselves with Christ, who will then transform our lowly bodies, so that they will be like his glorious body, being renewed in knowledge in the image of our Creator. The Lord says of those who have not prepared themselves, "My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. They exchange the truth for a lie and worship and serve created things rather than the Creator". "All day long they twist my words speaking abusively against whatever they do not understand; grumbles and fault-finders, they follow their own evil desires, they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage".

God's intent is that now, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to all...according to his eternal purpose – the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.

Jesus Christ exhorts us, "If those days had not been cut short no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. At that time the Son of Man will appear with power and great Glory"; unleashing against the rebellious nations his hot anger, his wrath, indignation and hostility, "He will rule them with an iron scepter". He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruninghooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more. Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree.

He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. And he will be their peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Gladness and joy will overtake the redeemed and sorrow and sighing will flee away. Watch the boiling pot and always pray that it may not spill over you but that you may escape the seething ingredients. Remember, in this world you will have trouble, but take heart. Christ Jesus has overcome the world. God bless you.

Bro. Joshua Pakali (Kariba, Zimbabwe)

Serving the Lord

Being Christians entails that we no longer conform to the patterns of worldly desires but rather follow the example of Christ. Like an un-switched on kettle that cannot boil, Christians cannot be on the boil if they remain switched off from Jesus Christ. We simply can't be on the boil if we are not plugged in. Jesus wants us to be switched on; we should remain switched on as we await the return of the one whose "right" is the Kingdom – Jesus Christ our Master and Saviour.

"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep our spiritual fervour, serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11). That's the way it should be, moving on with the right friends in fellowship. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

We must serve God "It is the Lord your God you must follow; and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him" (Deut 13:4).

Bro Itai Tembo (Chegutu, Zimbabwe)

Seeking God's Approval

God's intimacy is with the upright ones. Those blameless in their way are a pleasure to Him (Proverbs 3:32; 11:20). On the contrary, those who persist in offending God by stubbornly ignoring or defying His righteous feelings will shortly become the objects of His displeasure (2 Thess 1:6-10). Indeed, He will soon bring an end to all the wickedness so prevalent today (Psalm 37:9-11).

The Bible makes it very clear, however, that God does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). He would much rather display His affection for righteous people who love Him than express His displeasure upon those who choose to be irreformable. God finds pleasure not in the death of the wicked one, but in one turning back from his way and actually to live eternally (Ezekiel 33:11).

So no one needs to become the object of God's anger. God is very tender in affection and merciful (James 5:11). With full confidence in God's feelings, we can throw all our anxiety upon Him, because He cares for us. Be assured that those who make God's heart rejoice have the wonderful prospect of enjoying His approval and friendship. Hence, it is now more urgent than ever before to make sure of what is acceptable to the Lord (Ephesians 5:10).

Bro David Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)

St Lucia Grows

You will recall that in July 2004 Bro Ed Anthony was baptised; this was published in *Gospel News* together with photographs. You will be pleased to hear that through the grace of God Merlisha Cools, a friend of Brother Ed's, was baptised in November 2004. Photographs opposite of this happy occasion show bottom a group of the Ecclesia on the beach. The group of three shows Merlisha, Eddie and Bryan in the sea off the Vigie beach. Top is back in the meeting house where Merlisha was received into fellowship. The little Ecclesia in St. Lucia now numbers four Brethren and four Sisters, they are in need of all the support that is available, as obviously they are young in the Truth.

The fields are white to harvest, but the labourers are few.



* * * * *

From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, Oh God of Truth, deliver us.

Bro Bryan and Sis Joyce Pearse

Time While Waiting for the Lord

“Who ever keeps the fig tree, will eat its fruit; so he who waits on his master will be honoured. As in water face reflects face, so a man’s heart reveals the man”. Proverbs 27: 18-19.

As he went along Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus replied. Neither this man nor his parents sinned”. The Lord knows every detail of our birth, he could answer the disciples plainly in this way, instead, they were supposed to ask the mother or father of the blind but Jesus knew all. It was just that away so that the work for the Lord might be magnified by the people of this world.

Jesus said to the blind, “Wash in the pool of Siloam” this word Siloam means sent. The blind went and washed and came seeing. Now men were amazed, they asked, “Isn’t this the poor beggar?” Some said yes and some said no. Now the blind man himself believed and said, I am the one. The men demanded, “How then were your eyes opened?” He replied, “A man called Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to wash in Siloam. So I did and then I could see.”

The Pharisees Investigated the healing.

Jesus did it on the Sabbath day and they said, This man is not from God because he does not keep the Sabbath day to be holy. They reasoned in a party. Some said, Mmm! How can a sinner do such miraculous signs? Now they were divided, so they wouldn’t believe it until they sent for the mans' parents. Is this your son? Who you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see? The parents said, “We know he is our son and we know he was born blind”. But they couldn’t tell who opened his eyes. They said to them. Ask him, he is of age he will speak. The parents feared the Jews for they said, Anyone who acknowledged Jesus might be put out of the synagogue. Insults were hurled on this blind man when he told them it was Jesus, and they said, You are a fellow disciple of Jesus, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from (John 9).

Spiritual Blindness. Jesus heard that they had thrown him out and when he found him he said, Do you believe in the Son of Man? But the man asked who he was for he did not know. But he was told by Jesus “You have now seen him, in fact he is the one speaking with you.”

“The blind man believed after the Lord healed him and he worshipped him. Jesus said, For judgement I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind”. The Jews saw but they were still blind. It means they were blind to understanding the miracle of the healing of the blind man. They were spiritually blind even though they had eyes to see. Let us do the work; preach to every corner of the world while it is still day.

Jesus is our Master. Jesus is our refuge. Jesus is our shepherd. “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me. Just as the Father knows me I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also, they too will listen to my voice and there shall be one fold and one shepherd. (John 14-16). Be blessed in the coming Kingdom of our Messiah.



Above: Sunday School Party, East Bank Demerara, Guyana.

Below: Ruimveldt Childrens' Aid Centre, Demerara, plus teachers, Committee member and a visitor.



Bro Amos Chickanda (Kabompo, Zambia)

Heritage Children

Reading *Gospel News* permits the reader to share in the beauty of fellowship in Christ Jesus throughout the world. As a Sister told me last week, “By reading *Gospel News* I gain strength and manage to get my life into perspective by learning of my brethren and sisters in other lands”.

It allows us to recognise the plight of other brethren and sisters and their families in many countries and to conclude how blessed we are by the grace of God. I have seen many live in diverse and adverse conditions and under governments of this world that care little for the faith and hope that they hold so dearly. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to extend much love and greetings to all my brethren and sisters in whatever country and encourage them to hold fast to the faith once delivered to the saints in Christ Jesus. Your calling is of God. He knows of you and the difficulties that you continually face. Trust in Him and He will direct your paths.

In the Nov/Dec issue of the magazine, Bro. Marcus spoke of the “downward spiral of poverty” that affects so many of our brethren and sisters in many lands.

This spiral decline, he states, commences with

- an inability to obtain a balanced, nourishing diet, this
- leading to disease and sickness, and this, in turn,
- prevents employment, or even the strength to earn money by the labour of one’s hands, which also
- prevents the ability to care for one’s family and provide education for the children.

Of course, there are priorities in terms of education for the child of God, and we all appreciate that the parents’ first duty in this respect must be to teach their children God’s ways and His paths. Jesus was the Master Teacher, he taught his disciples at all times of the day and all of it was by example. The best form of teaching is not a lecture but by the way we live. Parents as teachers at home should not be so worried about maths or spelling that they miss the one needful thing – sitting down together and learning from our Master through Bible study and prayer. We all appreciate that understanding all knowledge and scoring high in school tests is not the formula for success.

This understood, I am also of the persuasion that those who have been blessed of God who, without exception, live in an affluent society, have a duty and privilege to help where they can

those loved by our Master in situations less advantageous than our own. So it was with the churches in Asia, as Paul reminded them, they had a duty to care for the poor at Jerusalem by giving of their wealth.

There are no doubts that with education, with the ability to read and write, to count and communicate, our children are better able to

- find employment, so that
- money can be earned to care for one's family, which, in turn,
- is able to pay for the medicines to limit disease and pain and
- to provide food for all to eat.

It was an awareness of these facts that initiated the formation of '*Heritage Children*' in 2003. Words that are taken from Psalm 127:3 where the Psalmist reminds us that "children are an heritage of the LORD".

This project was designed to support needy and vulnerable children of brethren and sisters in Nepal. It is targeted at providing education through sponsorship by an ecclesia, Sunday School, family, or individual brothers and sisters. The response has been a delight to see. It gives a very clear message to our brethren and sisters that others in a far off country who share the same Hope of Israel care for them and love them.

Education in itself is but the vehicle of relieving one of the main burdens of the family, thereby freeing up finance to pay for food, medicine, clothes and rent, and in the process ...

Schemes of this nature should always proceed with much careful thought and prayer, with many safeguards in place and, above all, the co-operation and agreement of all the ecclesias involved.

These thoughts are given as a model and not a request for sponsors, as I appreciate that such a project might not be suitable for all occasions. However, it does not mean that when opportunities arise we who are blessed should not fail to meet our duty. As our Father has loved us, so we should love others and help them where and when we are able.

Bro. Peter Fry (Wales, UK)

More On The Road Ahead - Education

As Brother Peter says above (refer [Article - Heritage Children](#)), we have been looking at three ways of trying to help improve the natural lot of some of our Brethren and Sisters. Already we have considered some basic ideas about health and medical care and growing nutritious food. Now we want to open up some ideas for basic education for those who for various reasons are deprived of this. The last few years have seen a number of substantial schemes, large comprehensive schools in Australia, sponsored schools in America, India and Cameroons, but there is a much greater general basic need in some of the Missison areas. The above sponsored scheme in Nepal is an excellent example of what can be achieved and is certainly a method that could be developed much further - but in total or part sponsoring of education one has to

remember it is a financial commitment for a number of years ahead. The following article on [home schooling](#) is another way. For some, the cost of the text books would be prohibitive, but surely there must be a number of our young people that have got laying around their early books that could be used for this purpose – indeed even postal tutoring could be considered for some subjects. There is a need for those in the developing countries to meaningfully help in this matter and we need ideas and suggestions from our readers as to how we can help and what those in the Mission fields feel would be the best way to achieve their particular needs.

Homeschooling

On this unseasonably mild winter morning, the children are playing in the woods. The last time I looked out they were building a fort, climbing trees and exercising their grand imaginations. Being a weekday, this is not a typical morning for most school aged children and in fact it isn't typical for us, but because we homeschool our children, spontaneity is crucial for learning. This is today's sampling of the joys of living and learning together. In a couple of hours the temperatures are forecasted to drop and we will be huddled over our books by the fireside.

This is a cameo of a family life unfettered by the artificial demands of modern life. It is a life that promotes simplicity, dependence on God and hard work. What should be made first in our lives, can be made first. It has been the way of life for this Christadelphian family for over a decade and it is a way of life many brothers and sisters are seeking.

There is nothing new about home education and it is a great relief to remember that the institution of school, as we know it, is a modern phenomenon. Godly parenting has always meant spending time talking with your children when you sit in your house, walk down the road, when you lie down and when you rise up. The parenting of Deuteronomy 6 is conscientious and demanding in any age or civilization but especially so in these perilous last days.

Homeschooling affords parents the crucial time to talk and walk with their children when the world has such an unfair advantage on their impressionable minds. The nihilistic message of the media and entertainment industry tends to distil in the classroom and the apostle Paul quite aptly describes the outcome in 2Timothy 3:1-5. These are the days of self-absorption, money grabbing, undisciplined living and abuse. A child is hardly equipped for the stream of negative cultural conditioning and the toll can be spiritually numbing. The toll can sometimes be a hostile attitude to learning and a loss of respect for the natural authority of parents. This too Paul identifies as a very real problem in the last days.

For many families in the truth, the motivation to teach their child at home is clear. But what makes it possible besides sheer determination and trust in God? Is it the economic freedom enjoyed in western countries? Could home education be taken on by parents in developing countries? Interestingly, a private school in Baltimore offering a formal homeschool curriculum was inundated with inquiries from concerned Russian parents after the Baslan school massacre.

Some of the questions about whether or not to homeschool are universal. For example,

Can the family manage on one income or can two parents arrange a work schedule to provide the care and instruction needed?

Are textbooks and school supplies available and affordable?

Am I, as a parent, qualified to teach?

A very real concern for parents in developing countries is the problem of poverty. How can parents with long hours, low wages or intermittent work consider any alternative to public education? If lack of employment is due to the collapse of the social and economic fabric of a country, the school system may also be in ruins. In such cases, is it possible to imagine that believing parents could embark on the daily education of their children? One observation homeschool parents have made is that what takes a class of 20-30 students six hours to perform, takes a parent and children at home about three. A morning of concentrated effort is all that is needed with no travel time and no waiting in lines. The challenge is unimaginable but we have known a woman who is single-handedly homeschooling two sons with income from taking care of other people's infants. She was motivated by the belief that with God all things are possible. Poverty and hardship can strike in any country and we all would be wise to improve our skills of old fashioned frugality and homemaking strategies in order to manage with less. These are the life skills we pass on to our children and it is all part of their education.

But what about educational resources and the availability of textbooks and school supplies? First, it is a comfort to remember that brilliant men and outstanding women were raised with only the Bible as their textbook in their formative years. In contrast, today the availability of resources in North America can be almost overwhelming. Many homeschool parents have fallen into the net set by big business using glossy catalogues advertising their textbooks and offering fancy packages. The simplicity of past generations still works best and consists of three ingredients: academic study, physical work and home or community service. Bookwork is only one part of the formula and although the Bible is not the only text, it is the most important. It is the first book to be read from together each day. Without the rush of getting out the door, the daily Bible readings can be enjoyed every morning. Even before they can read, children can join in the readings by repeating a few selected verses. This alone gives them a great jump-start into reading.

Resources may be as close by as grandparents or family members practising a trade or running a small business. Education in godly living begins with a desire to learn and when that desire is kindled the opportunities are everywhere. One great resource not to be overlooked if it is available is the public library. Learning in the social studies is especially well supplemented by the use of the library. Children at home will need a good, age-appropriate math text. In the upper levels, a simple answer key is very helpful for parents. There are many user-friendly workbooks available for grammar, language arts, science, history and geography. If there are not libraries, or if such texts are not easily available, it certainly seems possible that those who have an over-abundance ought to be able to provide for the needs of those without enough, in the spirit of 2 Corinthians 8:14-15; 9:10-12.

The last question to be addressed is, "Am I qualified to teach my children?" Do you read with understanding? Do you write and speak clearly? Can you add, subtract, multiply and divide? Do you love and respond to your children? These are the qualification that you need to be a good teacher. If it is any comfort to you, most parents who are considering homeschooling think that they can't do it and feel intimidated by the prophecies of failure. We must confidently remember that with a good, basic education we are more qualified than any teacher to bring out the natural talents and creative capabilities of our own children. No one is more qualified than a parent to know a child and provide for that child's learning needs.

Education is a large part of responsibility as parents. The responsibility remains whether we are actively involved, or entrust our children to others. One way or the other, there is a large component of trust involved; parenting is a journey of trust. We learn to trust in God's constant presence and care, and to have confidence that our inadequacies need not overwhelm us:

2 Corinthians 9:8 "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work".

As brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ it is so important that we open our eyes to the needs of our children and the needs of each other. Prayer to the Almighty and careful reading of His word are the sure ingredients for success. Childhood is a precious and fleeting time. The opportunities to walk and talk with our children go by quickly. What sacrifices can we make now for ways to provide for parents who want to school their children but need books and supplies. Above all we believe that with God all things are possible: He will bless our efforts.

Sis Carol Link (USA.)

Question Box: Household Baptisms

If they baptized whole households they had to baptize infants and children. So... what happens to the children when they die, the mentally deranged who cannot reason? If you can answer these reasonably well, I will pay for you to come and re-baptize me. Please answer each question. Thanks Brett.

Thanks Brett for the challenging questions, and it's so good to see that you take these matters so seriously. No need to offer to pay our fares, we'd be so happy to come!

However, your questions are in some sense incapable of a yes / no answer, for the simple reason that I'm not the Judge of all the earth. There is no question that God can save whom He likes, as He likes, when He likes.. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

All I can comment on is what the Bible teaches. There is clearly an association between baptism into Christ, and salvation. For salvation is only "in Christ". So far as we are able, we need to learn the Gospel, repent, and be baptized by immersion. What will happen to those without the opportunity to have done this? That's a question which I think is outside our possibility of answering. God is the judge, and He is the Saviour of men, through His Son.

However, what we don't have the right to do is to take things into our own hands by changing the clear meaning of Scripture to make it fit into our own fears or expectations. I think this is just what's happened by those who interpret the references to baptisms of households as "proof" for sprinkling babies. Firstly, baptism as a word means immersion - not sprinkling. And secondly, the Biblical records show that true baptism is always preceded by belief, and a baby certainly can't believe; because belief in anything requires some level of comprehension of the issues involved. He who believes *and* is baptized shall be saved, according to Mk. 16:16. Paul says we were buried with Christ in baptism, in which we also were raised with Him "through faith in the working of God" (Col. 2:12). Baptism therefore requires that we believe that God is going to work through what we are doing. A baby can't do this.

The examples of "household baptisms" in the New Testament don't state that babies were baptized. That's an assumption. In each example of "household baptism" the people who were baptized were ones who had been taught the Gospel (Acts 10:34-43; 16:14, 32; 1 Cor. 1:16-18; 16:15-16). The baptism of Lydia's "household" is often referred to. But let's note that Lydia did not live in Philippi (she was from Thyatira, on the other side of the Aegean Sea). Since she was on business, she probably did not bring her children with her, if she had any. The word "oikos" translated "household" also means "property". So it seems to me that it was her slaves / servants who were in her retinue who were baptised.

The "household" of the jailer in Philippi is another example. But the candidates for baptism were those who had "heard the word" (Acts 10:44,47)- and "hearing" often implies "understanding", rather than merely hearing sounds. Acts 16:32 says that Paul and Silas "spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house"; and only then did the jailer "rejoice, having believed in God with all his household" (v.34).

1 Cor. 7 says that there were cases where a family was divided between a believing husband and an unbelieving wife, and vice versa. This shows that first century conversion wasn't just the whole family following their head. The call of Christ is a call to individuals. And individuals respond personally by being baptized. Their family situation may encourage or discourage this, but ultimately it's a personal response. All the New Testament baptisms that are recorded follow personal conversion to Christ. This is why they are associated with such words as believe, repent and calling on His name (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12,13,36, 37; 10:47,48; 16:14,15,32-34; 18:8; 19:4,5; 22:16). The call of Christ is to individuals who are capable of hearing and responding to that call. How a God of love may save any others is not revealed to us.

Duncan Heaster

Personal Testimony

Originally I came from a big, very conservative Roman Catholic family. When I was [younger] I felt the calling of the Lord. I discussed a lot with the Catholic priests at the church where I was serving as acolyte (person assisting priest). But the celibacy gave me no alternative at that moment to choose other ways. On my quest to God I came in contact with a lot of 'churches'. From my childhood onwards I also had problems with the Trinity and with the infallibility of the Pope or an organisation (comp. Moon people & Watchtower Society). In the early seventies I had a lot of problems about my choice of profession: ballet, and the thinking of my father, considering this art as a big sin. All the problems resulted also in my questioning God and religion. Though I kept looking for the meaning and the source of life. In 1974-75 I thought to have found the Church closest to God's Word: a Baptist Church of the non-Trinitarian tendency.

About the Trinity, which I couldn't cope with when I was 6, I am convinced that there is only One God (Jehovah or Yahweh) the Almighty Father. Next to Him His Son Jesus Christ, the Messiah. On my way to God I still had to go a lot of steps. On my quest I came to the answers slowly. The 144 000, the situation of Jesus before His coming on earth, and a few minor details (not so important to faith, but more as theological questions out of further interest), were subjects not totally clear yet.

Later in life we were blessed with a child. When it had to go to the primary, we had to consider the doctrine of faith for the compulsory religious education. The family pressed for the Catholic faith and a lot of discussions went on. They also pointed out that the Catholic faith was the biggest and therefore also the right faith. I wondered if I was really so wrong in my thinking. That year I started doubting my faith, everything you can imagine went wrong. Machinery not working any more. A metal piece falling from a truck and damaging five cars. The replacement car not being delivered on time. Then there were problems with noises in the new car. Eight days later a woman who was not insured pushed me from the motorway, in a hit and run case. I had previously been dreaming of this accident. Two days we had to wait to see if I was going to continue to live. My brain, breastbone, vertebra, pelvic and feet were damaged.

In 1999 I had a serious car accident. At that moment I asked the Lord to be able to stay here in this world to take care off my family. Though I had asked for a priest or a vicar when taken into the intensive care, I saw none of them. The only people who could give me certain answers were Jehovah's Witnesses. I do then agree that a lot of things they say seem to be things which can be justified by the Bible. But the big problem for me is their submission to the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. More conscious of my duties and respect our ONE and Only God, I got back on the road, this time to be sure to find the right track to His blessings.

More and more non-Trinitarians are being pushed into the corner. In Europe a lot of Baptists changed denomination and went as their American Brothers over to the Jehovah Witnesses. But when I think of the thousands of people who died for the right cause of choosing for the only One God...I keep referring to the murders, which happened in Brussels in the 16th century. But I am convinced, that in case I should give a wrong idea to other people, I would better denounce the present Baptist denomination. I do hope to be strong enough to swim up the mainstream. After going through the Bible thoroughly again, I started getting different viewpoints than the Baptists. I began to see the importance of the ordinary carpenter's son Jesus from another perspective. I found no proof of His pre-existence and found more similarities in the Abrahamic faith, Bible Students and Christadelphian thinking and my faith.

I will not give up. Thanks to the Lord our Heavenly Father, I am able to find those who are blessed to serve Him. I do pray that I shall find the knowledge to (fully) understand His Word, that He will bless those who are willing to serve Him, and that He will accept me as one of His slaves to spread the Good News.

Bro. Marcus Ampe (Brussels, Belgium)

There will be no Place to Hide

The story is told of two hunters who came across a bear so big that they dropped their rifles and ran for cover.

One man climbed a tree while the other hid in a nearby cave. The bear sat down between the tree and the cave. Suddenly, the hunter in the cave came rushing out, almost into the waiting bear, hesitated, and dashed back in. The same thing happened a second time. His friend frantically called out, "Woody, are you crazy? Stay in the cave till he leaves!" "Can't", panted Woody, "Theres another bear in there!" The Scripture says that a similar kind of dilemma will some day come upon the godless. They will find trouble in the very place they run for safety

(Amos 5:18-20). According to Amos's prophecy, these people may be religious, and ever long for the coming of the Lord, without realizing that His arrival will present for them the greatest problem of all – judgement of their wrongdoing. They love evil rather than good, and expect the Lord's protection without ever submitting to His authority. But some day there will be no place to hide.

Bro. E. Kagogodza, Dandamera (Concession, Zimbabwe)

Something for Nothing!

This is an extract of an advert in a local paper advertised by a donut shop:

'FREE! 3 DONUTS, WHEN YOU BUY 3 AT THE REGULAR HALF-DOZEN PRICE'

If that rather confusing statement means you can buy six donuts for the price of six, it's not exactly a bargain! So many of the seemingly great buys in our world are like deceptive advertisements. You end up receiving nothing for something, when you thought it would be the other way round. Think about it in spiritual terms. Various religions require a long list of activities in exchange for what amounts to hopelessness. One religion, for instance, expects its adherents to eat only leftovers, never injure a living thing and denounce all preferences of sounds, colours, smells and people. In return for all this meaningless (and impossible) self-denial, the individual hopes to be reincarnated to a better life.

In reality, spiritual rewards are God's to give and He does so on the basis of His Grace. Only God's plan of salvation offers something that is truth (Rom.4:5). Christ paid the price for our redemption; all He asks is that we put our faith in Him. Any other plan is nothing for something.

Bro. E. Kagogodza, Concession, Zimbabwe

Who Needs Changing?

How easy it is to find fault with other people. Their speech, dress, background and numerous other peculiarities are all points open to criticism. What is often overlooked is that fault-finding can be a cover up for the weaknesses and failures of the one who is criticizing.

Before criticizing other people spend some time alone with your Divine Father. The first truth you will learn is that you are not fault free, but as your failures and weaknesses are revealed you will realise through God's grace, what you can become. This act of self-realisation will result in a greater understanding of your fellowmen. You need to change before attempting to change other people.

Criticism seldom changes people, for most people are aware of their faults and have probably been trying to rectify them for many years. If instead of seeing the faults in others, you see their potential in Christ and expect them to express that potential in their daily lives, you will find that they do their best to respond to your high expectations. If you condemn a man by unkind and unjust criticism you may be confirming the low opinion he already has of himself, but if you

point him to the Living Christ you introduce him to One who is slow to condemn and quick to replace the old life with a new one.

Bro David Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)

A Staggering Truth

“Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways” (Job 22:28).

It is a proven truth that there is great power in the spoken word, yet everyone is inclined to use words in a thoughtless manner. If you rise in the morning muttering that it is going to be a terrible day, you will not be disappointed. If you persist in telling yourself that business is bad – in fact it has never been worse – you close the pathway of prosperity that can help things to improve. The words you use, strangely enough, influence the thoughts you think. You cannot talk cheerfully and confidently for long and retain an oppressive state of mind, so if you are feeling depressed, talk positively and creatively with those you meet.

Such a discipline is not, contrary to popular belief, “putting on a big act”. It is something much more constructive; it is decreeing something that you know to be true and bringing it into the arena of practical living. If you feel you cannot accept this truth, what is the alternative? You accept the principle that everything is going into a big decline, and there is little or nothing you can do about it, and while you are spreading this doleful information you are really decreeing that these things are sure to happen.

If God’s goodness and belief in His eternal purpose for mankind are part of your fundamental belief, you can do no other than decree His perfect will in your situation, and work for its fulfilment. I must never underestimate the power of the words I use on myself and others.

Bro. Stanford Lunzha, (Magunje, Zimbabwe)

An Example of Faith to Follow

Many people who accept that Jesus is their true Messiah, that God is their Creator and the Bible is His true revelation, find it difficult to apply these things in their own lives. Paul says in Hebrews 11:6, “For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek him” (RSV). In the Old Testament we read of king Hezekiah. Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death (Isaiah 38:11) and Isaiah was sent to him by God: “Thus says the Lord: set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not recover” (Isa 38;2 2 Kings 20).

Nowadays people (Christians) tend to flee from the truth and seek advice from neighbours, relatives, friends and health practitioners (traditional healers, Africa), neglecting God who is the source of all power. In our time they may have arranged for the inheritance with their sons, but Hezekiah knew that we can talk to God through prayer who will satisfy our needs. We are told that Hezekiah “turned his face to the wall and prayed to God” (Isaiah 38:2). The Bible speaks

with its own authority when it says God is the Creator of everything; He creates evil and light to confirm our faith in him. We should defeat temptation to sin as Jesus did when he was tempted, “You shall worship the Lord your God and Him you shall serve”. The same with believers today, we should pray to God as the source of all power. “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving an example that you should follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:21). “May the words of my mouth be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord” (Psalm 19:14).

Bro. Simon Mudavose (Masvingo Rural, Zimbabwe)

The Personality of God

It is a majestic, glorious theme of the Bible that God is revealed as a real being. It is also a fundamental tenet that Jesus is the Son of God. If God is not a real being, it is impossible to have a Son who was the “image of His person” (Hebrews 1:3). Further, it becomes difficult to develop a personal, living relationship with God if God is an unreal, intangible conception.

As God is so infinitely greater than we are, it is understandable that many people’s faith has balked at the clear promises that ultimately we will see Him. It is impossible for sinful man to see God (Exodus 33:20), although this implies that were it not for our sinfulness, God is indeed a being who ‘can be seen’. Israel lacked the faith to see God. Such faith comes from knowing God and believing His word. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). “His servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face and His name shall be in their foreheads” (Revelation 22:3, 4).

Such a wonderful hope, if we truly believe it, will have a profound practical effect upon our lives. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

“We shall see him as he is (manifest in Christ). And every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:2, 3). In this life our understanding of the heavenly Father is very incomplete, but we can look forward, through the tangled darkness of this life, to meeting Him at last. Our ‘seeing’ of Him will doubtless be matched by our greater mental comprehension of Him. Thus from the absolute depths of human suffering,

Job could rejoice in the totally personal relationship with God which he would fully experience at the day: “Though after my skin (death) worms destroy the body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another” (Job 19:26-27). “Now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Sis. Nancy Sikolia (Tongaren, Kenya)

The Book I Love Most

Despite the fact that we have the Bible reading planners as our guide, very few people adhere to the basis of divine principles on how to understand the ways God wants us to follow. As the Bible is the wonderful word of God from His own breath every one of us has a responsibility

concerning the Bible. God is the only Author of His word thus He can reveal the meaning of this word if we can properly use the word PROST the initials for: PRAY, READ, OBEY, STUDY AND TEACH.

PRAY Therefore we should *pray* for God's help every time we read, that we may have a revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of our heart enlightened

READ: if any believer does not read, he becomes weak and thin spiritually, hence we should read it every day and take time to think about what it means "Blessed is he who reads, and takes to heart what is written in it, for the time is near" (Revelation 1:3).

OBEY: reading is only profitable if we take it into our hearts and follow it into our living. "But be doers of the word and not hearers only". For those who only hear it is like a man who observes his face in a mirror and goes away and at once forgets what he was like (James ch1).

STUDY: another principle is study which is more than reading. Study a section of the scripture, read all the Scripture verses noted in the marginal lines for this helps to interpret one word by another, one verse throws light on the other.

TEACH: in 2 Timothy 2:2 we read, "And what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also". In so doing, a person also learns for himself.

Pray, Read, Obey, Study and Teach are some of the many bases of divine principles on how to understand the "Book I love most". We can keep ourselves pure by living according to the word by observing these principles, for the word of God is sharper than any double-edged sword it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Heb 4:12). Let the word of God dwell in you richly and may God light a fire of love in our hearts for His word till our Lord comes.

Bro. James Mwangomo (Lomba, Tanzania)

Christmas at Belarus

We were able to attend the beginning of a low key Christmas gathering organized by two sisters, aimed at Chernobyl orphans. As previously reported, there is a huge incidence of thyroid and other cancers as the long term consequence of the Chernobyl disaster. Whole areas of Southern Belarus, where we have several Brethren and Sisters, are uninhabitable and certainly unable to produce crops which would pass the most basic EU safety regulations. The tragedy of the area is somewhat overlooked in the face of so many other international tragedies. We have several Brethren and Sisters sick as a result of radiation and some have died. We are grateful for vitamins and financial aid which has been sent to those in need.

The Christmas Bible School for children was wonderful. The CBM had kindly donated copies of the Russian Christadelphian Sunday School lessons, and the CCM are grateful for their cooperation in this. Some of the 13 and 14-year-olds are really switched on and responded enthusiastically to our discussions about 'The meaning of Jesus for today', demonstrating some good Bible knowledge. We were able to distribute T-shirts donated from the UK, and also Bible Basics rulers and Bible reading calendars, encouraging them to read daily according to

the *Companion*. God willing, we will seek to continue supporting the Chernobyl orphans and young people in the area, as they continue to study weekly with a local sister. To top it all, we were able to interview and baptize ANDREJ, a highly educated and intelligent 49 year old man who has truly come to the Lord in Truth.



Sis Danita who also, alas, is a cancer victim, struggles to help the Belarus children with Sunday School lessons and games. A couple of years ago she also organized a Bible camp for young people, but was unable to do so last year because of lack of resources.

New Life in Jesus Christ

A new life in Jesus Christ means, we must leave our old life. We must not behave as pagans who walk in the wrong way with their bad thoughts. They are strangers to God's life because they ignore the words which should live in their hearts. They keep their old personality and they keep away from obeying God's (our Creator's) rule, so that they may do their own will. We as true Christians are taught how to know Christ and if we really hear him speaking we will grow in the truth as the years go by. We have to keep ourselves away from the old life, Ephesians 4:17-32: We must renew our heart and spirit. Let us put on the new life that makes us act more like God. That is why we must throw away lies! Everyone of us needs to speak truth to one another, because we are all made into one body. If we are angry, let us be careful so that we may not sin and our anger should not last for a whole day. We should not again allow evil to dominate us. Whoever quits stealing must work so that he/she may improve his/her life in the right way. We must chase away anything bad that can cause bad thoughts and envy. Verse 32 tells us how one must behave in the way that God our Creator appreciates, by forgiving others as God forgave us for Christ's sake. Truly, this word of God helps us to be obedient in front of God and to know how to communicate with others, for we are awaiting the promised Kingdom of Jesus Christ. We all need to have the Lord's love and to encourage others to search for that Kingdom.

Bro. Kitego-Shungaza (Otjuwiavongo, Namibia)

Hold On To Our Faith

As Christadelphians recognize there is only one God, one faith, one baptism, one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord and one Father. I believe that the present conventional religious systems that we see can nowhere be found in scripture. If we are all convinced that our doctrine is in line with the Bible and we surely live by it, there won't be anyone among us sliding back. If we feed on His word, I don't think any of us will dare look back, as this will weaken our

faith. By fixing our eyes and minds on the Kingdom of God, we leave no space for the rubbish of this world.

I believe that everything that we believe must be in line with the written revelation for the understanding of the ways of God. This will enable our eyes to be open. We must have a sense of the eternal power, greatness and holiness of God. If we fail to comprehend what is required from scripture, we are boarding a lost train. In other words, no religious services are acceptable to God which are not based on the belief of His promises, for without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6). So any religions which lose sight of scripture because of ignorance, or are misguided by the sinful fleshly mind which hates righteousness, is of no value and leads others astray.

To be a Christian we must be a man or woman of faith and not a mere rationalist or hypocrite or a worldly priest; our faith must be measured by conforming to the obedience of God. As Christians we must not forget that we are undergoing a period of probation, a time of preparation for the age of righteousness. This we can do by living by the Bible. It is worthy of deeper study for it shows us just what we are and what we need to be. It is then that we really appreciate just how much we have to overcome. Only in this way of submission to the teaching of scripture will unity and harmony be promoted. We must have the key to distinguish truth from error and to consider the Bible as the only reliable source of scriptural knowledge. It calls us not to rate human ideas above the word of God. Let us remember the words of the apostle Paul to the Ephesians "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit just as you were called to one hope when you were called" (Ephesians 4:3, 4)

Bro. Moses Dhlakama (Espungabera, Mozambique)

Is Righteousness God's Law?

The title I've chosen may stir our own opinion about righteousness? In all generations there have been those who want to be righteous.

We are sometimes being manipulated by our own thinking, we may unknowingly hurt other people by our own words and deceit. Matt. 7:1, "Judge not that ye be not judged." To have a good, closer relationship to each other is to understand, not underestimate each other's feeling, also not judging the person's appearance but to look inside the heart. We should understand one's shortcomings, and put our shoes in their shoes, as an old saying goes. Romans 3:10, "There is none righteous, no, not one." This verse is quite difficult to comprehend as we may be aware that all religions around the world seek for righteousness, even in politics, and social security of people, they tend to fight each other only for justification of righteousness, the reason why there's a Law because no one is above that except God Himself. Therefore when we are in Christ Jesus, "the law of the Spirit of life makes us free from sin and death", Romans 8:2. "That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit", Romans 8:4. Romans 10:4 "For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes."

As we go on in our spiritual life, no matter how rough the road is, we must continue to search our souls until finally we may find God's Law in our hearts. Gal. 5:14, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

I read in a book that in the middle of the word "LIFE" is an "IF". Fulfilment is for everyone if we have a vision of Faith, Hope and Love, but in the end, "the greatest of these is Love" (1 Cor.13:13).

And lastly, as we struggle on with our own spirituality may we remember 2 Peter 3:13, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Sis. Liberty Mendap, Hong Kong

Signs of the Times.

Earthquakes

Recent earthquakes have aroused interest in the possibility that these are a 'sign of the times', apart from Christ's words in telling us his advent would be accompanied with earthquakes in divers places. (Matt24:7 and Luke 21:11). There are other passages which associate earthquakes with the return of Christ: Isa.2:19-22; Ez.38:20; Joel 3:16; Hag 2:6,7; Zech.14:3-4. There are a considerable number of earthquakes every day, mostly minor ones, which do not cause a lot of damage and the total number of all types seem to indicate increased world-wide earthquake activity "in divers places".

Year No of Earthquakes

1990	16590	1995	21007	2000	22256
1991	16485	1996	19938	2001	23534
1992	19524	1997	19872	2002	27454
1993	21476	1998	21688	2003	31419
1994	19371	1999	22662	2004	28778

In addition to the increased frequency there are dire warnings of the imminent possibility of a number of major earthquakes. USA Earthquake Hazards Report 9.12.04 : "Deep tremors under San Andreas fault (California) could portend earthquakes". Israeli scientists have warned that a major earthquake in Israel is only a matter of time. Scientists Warn Of Massive Tidal Wave From Canary Island Volcano, says Science Editor, The Independent – London; "A wave

higher than Nelson's Column and travelling faster than a jet aircraft will devastate the eastern seaboard of America and inundate much of southern Britain, say scientists who have analysed the effects of a future volcanic eruption in the Canary Islands. A massive slab of rock twice the volume of the Isle of Man would break away from the island of La Palma and smash into the Atlantic Ocean to cause a tsunami - a monster wave - bigger than any recorded, the scientists warned": In the Mail on Sunday (London) Jan. 2 2005 Prof Bill McGuire reckoned that the La Palma tsunamis could be more than 300ft high.

5,000,000+ Children to die in 2005?

The UNO Food and Agriculture Organisation reports (2004) that more than five million children die each year as the result of hunger-related causes and under-nutrition. In many of the Africa countries, such as Angola, Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, over a third of the children are under-nourished. For the greater part, developed countries do little to solve this problem. Certainly the big Indian earthquake has mobilised tremendous international help to those in need which is fantastic as for in so many cases of dire need, the Western nations have not helped a great deal. – Think of the massacre of the Hutus and Tutsis where three million+ of them were slaughtered and the West did nothing to materially stop that or help the survivors, it affected many Brethren and Sisters and quite a number of them are still in difficult circumstances in refugee camps etc and need help. Likewise there is great need amongst brethren and sisters in many parts of the world which we are capable of helping more than we do. On the other hand these things are all signs of the times, heralding the coming of the Master who alone will put the world right, which is beyond man's capabilities. However, in the meantime James, words have a biting significance to those of us in the materialistic world, "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone".

BRITAIN'S CRIME WAVE

"Britain now has a worse crime record than France, Germany and the United States...people in England and Wales are now 30 times more likely to be robbed of their personal property and five times more likely to be burgled than they were 40 years ago...Offences now at 5.9m a year, seven times the figure of 40 years ago." The Mail on Sunday (London), 2.1.2005.

AIDS

The UN AIDS programme reported at the Dec 04 World Aids Day that there are now 39.4m people infected with HIV and in the past year 3.1m people have died of AIDS. There has been a substantial increase in the number of women infected, the report adds "women need more education, better economic opportunities and more effective ways to tackle the violence and discrimination that often leave them vulnerable to HIV infection".

WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION (2 Tim 3:3)

Gk. 'without natural affection for kinsmen'. There is a terrible breakdown of love by children for their parents and, alas, at times, parents for their children.

The UNICEF 2005 report makes one weep at the inhumanity being shown to children. The report offers an analysis of seven basic "deprivations" that children feel and that powerfully influence their futures. UNICEF concludes that more than half the children in the developing world are severely deprived of one or more of the necessities essential to childhood:

- 640 million children do not have adequate shelter
- 500 million children have no access to sanitation
- 400 million children do not have access to safe water
- 300 million children lack access to information
- 270 million children have no access to health care services

- 140 million children have never been to school
- 90 million children are severely food-deprived

The report continues, hundreds of thousands of children in conflict situations around the world are still:

- recruited or abducted as soldiers
- victims of landmines
- forced to witness violence and killing
- orphaned by violence
- targets of sexual violence

Add to this the December 2004 report of the 'International Rescue Committee' on Congo, that in one year 250,000 children were killed, and in the six year conflict 3.8 Million people were killed, that's the equivalent of the entire population of Ireland or Los Angeles. Then think of the traumatised children in Darfur, Western Sudan, who have seen their fathers killed and mums raped before their little eyes. Amongst the atrocities at Darfur were children being burnt alive (BBC News 28.9.04). It is incomprehensible to grasp the scale or degree of brutality children are suffering by such inhumanity - "without natural affection". Whilst one admires and thanks God for the faith and guts of the Christadelphian Missionaries who have not only taken the Gospel to such places and established the Truth in them, but shared in their hardships, I feel most of us have failed to comprehend the enormity of the problems some of our Brethren and Sisters face in these desperate areas. Many look after orphaned children and live in poverty and only survive by gifts from the world's famine relief agencies. The deprivations mentioned in the UNICEF report apply to many children of Brethren and Sisters and they love their children but are powerless to satisfactorily provide for them. Of course it is only right for those in the developed world to care for their children and show their love at times by a little pampering to them. However, we also have a responsibility to care for those not so blessed and should not shut our eyes to their needs. I am certain that the compassionate Jesus would have us to help them more. He not only said "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me" but we read "He took a child, and set him in the midst of them, and when he had taken him into his arms, he said unto them. Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me" (Matt 19:14; Mark 9:37).

Godly Giving

"The point is that you can't be too greedy" (Donald Trump). This was one of the many 'inspirations' quotations on a business website I recently visited. Here's another: "You can be greedy and still feel good about yourself" (Ivan F. Boesky). That's the world in which we live, one driven by greed, one where greed is not only acceptable but also promoted as being good. There's a word which the Bible uses to describe this greed, it's 'covetousness', and it's listed as one of the things that will exclude us from the Kingdom of God. It's mentioned right there alongside fornication, adultery, theft and drunkenness (1 Corinthians 6:10).

Built into the Law of Moses were checks and balances to ensure that oppression was not perpetuated by those motivated by greed. It's too bad the world doesn't operate that way today. Developing countries are forever in debt to wealthy nations, and even the 'generous' moratorium extended to nations affected by the tsunami at the end of 2004 only provides these countries with a short period of reprieve. Not so under the Law. Every 7th year all debts were cancelled! It was a gift from the creditor to the debtor. And further to this, a stern warning was given for those who might have a thought in their wicked hearts that says 'I will not lend because the year of release (the 7th year) is near'. The Law of the Lord was sensitive to those in need and inspired graciousness towards them. How foreign this is to the world today. Banks today wouldn't lend you a cent if they knew they weren't going to make more than they gave, and that's generally how people give today. Think of the effort required to prize open wallets and purses during fund raising events. In general, people do not give unless (a) they will benefit from doing so (b) they are forced to do so (c) they are put in a position where it is extremely awkward not to or (d) there is strong social pressure to do so. In contrast, God wants us to *freely* give. He wants us to open our hands wide, to be generous. He wants us to give based on a need and not just when we have surplus. He wants us to give even if there's no hope of receiving anything in return. We find all these principles of godly giving mentioned in Deuteronomy 15. Elsewhere in scripture we learn that God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7), that is, it is more blessed to give than receive (Acts 20:35) and that those who sow sparingly will also reap sparingly (2 Corinthians 9:6). God opens his hand wide to us (Psalm 145:16), we can show our appreciation by reciprocating this generosity to others. By compassionate giving we not only show our love, but God's love (1 John 3:17), we not only give to those in need, we lend unto the Lord (Proverbs 19:17).

We often seek examples from the children of Israel when they were in their wilderness wanderings. Well, here's an example we do well to contemplate. Moses asked the children of Israel for a willing offering (Exodus 25:2). How did they respond? Were they willing to part with their possessions? Absolutely! There was an outpouring of giving. The possessions they were given when they left Egypt were willingly and generously offered for the Lord's service. So generous were they in their giving that Moses had to make a commandment for them to stop! "And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing" (Exodus 36:6-7).

There's a saying that goes like this, 'The real measure of our wealth is how much we'd be worth if we lost all our money' (J. H. Howett). That's the point isn't it? All the 'getting' of material possessions does nothing to increase the value of who we are. Like many things in this life, we need to radically depart from the accepted norm of the world when it comes to the giving of our money, of our material goods, of our time or our love. It's not what we give. It's not how much we give. It's *why* we give that's the all-important factor.

Forget the so-called 'inspirational' quotes of the business world. Here's one that is worthy of full acceptance: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Jesus Christ).

James Flint (Arima Ecclesia, Trinidad)

Tame Your Tongue

A tongue is a small part of the body which enables us to talk. In the beginning God created man and gave him the ability to speak a language which was totally different from the animals He had created. Adam could communicate with God all the time. Even today, we believe that every word in the Bible was spoken by God before it was written by His people.

We are living in hectic times with wars, tribulation, crime, terrorism and hunger ruling many people's lives. A day does not go by without such happenings. Wars are rampant because leaders exchange nasty words. Before the war in Iraq, President Bush exchanged bad words with President Saddam which led to loss of life and destruction of property. The apostle Paul warns those who are idlers and who gossip to stop that kind of activity. Why? Because it does not please God (1 Timothy 5:13).

Man was created to live within the limits of law which God gave him. We should speak good things and listen to good words. The evildoer listens to wicked lips, but one who fears God must not at any time allow that to happen (Proverbs 17:4). We are not supposed to associate with anyone who goes round gossiping and revealing secrets (Proverbs 20:19). Anyone who goes round as a talebearer lacks understanding but we should remain silent

The danger of gossiping is spreading strife; whispering separates close friends. As Brothers and Sisters we should try always to bring peace and unity, not separation. "The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels for they go down into the inner part of the body and disturb a person's mind" (Proverbs 16:28),

In the day of judgement, everyone will be charged according to every careless word he or she has uttered. Therefore we should be careful in our ways of thinking about what to tell our brothers and sisters and how to react to difficult situations. God hears what we say in every language, wherever we are on earth (Matthew 12:36-37). Our own words and meditations of our hearts should be acceptable in God's sight (Psalms 19:14).

The apostle Paul tells us to avoid evil speech but to use only what is good for edification and is fit for the occasion. Those who hear should get grace. Bitterness and wrath and anger and slander are all to be put away. Only be kind to one another, tender-hearted and forgiving as God in Christ has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:29-32).

Bro. David Wanjala (Makhonge, Kenya)

The prophecy of Joel, the Day of the Lord and Armageddon

A brief summary –

There are 3 major times which we can call "The Day of the Lord."

1. In BC 587, when the Jewish kingdom was conquered by the Babylonians.
2. In AD 70, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews.
3. A future time when Jesus returns to save Jerusalem and destroy those who fight against it.

Joel says this will be “The great and terrible Day of the Lord.” (Joel 2:31)

In Joel 2 he foretells of a short time when God would pour out His spirit (power) on the Jews. In Acts 2 Peter tells us this was fulfilled by the temporary outpouring of the spirit (power of God to do miracles) in the first century.

The end of Joel chapter 2 tells us in symbolic language that “before the great and terrible Day of the Lord” the Jewish nation would be overthrown.

This was done by the Romans in AD 70.

In Joel 3 we read of the coming great battle, which will be the final “great and terrible Day of the Lord”. It is likened to the threshing of sheaves in a valley.

This is the meaning of the word “Armageddon”, found in Revelation 16:16:-

Arma = a heap of sheaves

gai = a valley

don = judgement.

In Revelation 16:16 the battle of Armageddon is predicted. But the previous verse 15, speaks of Jesus coming “as a thief” – suddenly - to his followers! Therefore Jesus comes to his disciples before the battle of Armageddon!

He could return at any time. Are we ready to meet Him?

Strength for the Journey

Where does a Christian get strength for the journey of life? We need power to go forward in the midst of life’s problems and difficulties.

Psalm 1 tells God’s people not to get their counsel from the ungodly, but to delight in God’s word. “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Psalm 1:1-6).

Our strength comes from God, who is always ready to help us. He does not faint or get weary. He never sleeps. In the book of Isaiah chapters 40 and 41, we are told that God knows all things. He gives strength and power to the weak. God said, “Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” Isaiah 41:10. We can still claim that promise today. The world has many things and activities, which they think they need to keep them going. But for the child of God the scriptures say “In quietness and in confidence shall be your

strength.” Isaiah 30:15. Do we take time to be silent and wait upon God? Do we study God’s word and renew our strength for the journey of life

In 2 Timothy 1:7 Paul says “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”. In Paul’s prayer for the church in Ephesians ch. 3, he asks God to strengthen the church through the Spirit in the inner man. Strength and power come from that connection with God. Christ dwelling in our hearts gives us strength to be rooted and grounded. It gives us understanding and knowledge. We are filled with the fullness of God. That’s strength. And Proverbs 3:5-6 says, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths.” Also the book of Proverbs (27:1-2) says “Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth, a stranger, and not thine own lips.” Goliath depended upon his own strength, but the Lord God gave David a great strength and he smote Goliath and cut off his head (1 Samuel 17:45-51).

Presently human beings depend upon their own selves, but the apostle James says (4:13-17) “Go to now, ye that say, today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

God has not promised a life free from trouble and problems. But God has promised strength for the day. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). We may feel weak, but through Christ Jesus we can be strong if only we trust and believe in him. For Paul says in Philippians 3:14 “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” “For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.”. verse 8, “And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” (1 Timothy 6:7) We are not to rely upon our own strength, but upon the Lord, as the book of 1 Kings 19:7-8 says, “And the angel of the Lord came again the second time and touched him (Elijah), and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.”

The Lord knows of all our weak points, so Brethren and Sisters, we have to ask strength from the Lord in our walk to the Kingdom as the coming of the Lord draws very near. Let us all therefore support and help one another through the strength of the Lord on that slippery and narrow road and have a place in that wonderful Kingdom of the Lord. May the Lord bless us all.

Bro. Joseph Oppong (Shama, Ghana)

In Times of Ignorance

Because it is the time of resolution, we should examine the word of God so that we can understand the Bible. We ought to make a choice when we have examined the Bible and the type of voices we hear in our lives. Psalm 119:130 says “The unfolding of your word gives light, it gives understanding to the simple”. Reading the Bible and praying are the starting point of a walk toward the Kingdom. Paul to the Romans, 15:4, stresses “Everything that was written in

the past, was written to teach us , so that through patience and the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope”.

We all hope for salvation and eternal life, and we should understand the conditions carefully so that we may not miss that life. They are set out clearly in the Bible and we should set aside a few minutes every day to search them out.

Psalms 119:105 says “your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path,” so if we want to walk towards the kingdom, finding the best way to take is to read the Bible. John 17:17 says, “Your word is truth”; God’s word are true, communicated by His Holy Spirit and recorded in the Bible. Belief in God’s word of truth is the rock upon which faith is built. Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, revealed that: “Holy men spoke from God as they were carried along by the holy spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). The Bible was written through the divine inspiration of chosen people. The Jews living a long time ago wrote the scriptures in different centuries and times, but the spirit of God moved in them all. The Old and New Testaments stand together, equally important and equally true.

The letter to the Hebrews (1:1, 2) says that in the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets, but in these last days (which includes the days we are living in now), God has spoken to us by His Son Jesus. The law, the history and the prophets all point forward to Christ who fulfilled the law by nailing it to the cross. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16) but Paul also says: “We must pay careful attention to what we have heard so that we do not drift away” (Hebrews 2:1-4). In our time of ignorance, God overlooked our deeds but now commands us to repent. I have indeed repented and I will never return to the times of ignorance. I believe in Jesus whom God has raised from the dead and whom he has appointed to judge the world one day. So I tell my children and grandchildren that when I go to my deep sleep and my body is laid in the grave, let no clan’s traditions be attached to my body. I repeat: when my days are over, my body will be cared for by Christadelphians and no other sect. If apart from Christadelphians, cursed be those that bury my body traditionally.

May Jesus our Saviour return soon so that he may establish God’s Kingdom on earth. Grace and peace be with you all from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Bro. Sikolia Kapa (Tongarem, Kenya)

There is a Purpose in All Things (Romans 8:28)

Thousands of years ago Zophar, a friend of Job, said “Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you prove the limits of the Almighty?” (Job 11:7). These words, spoken to Job as he was trying to cope with all his troubles, are as relevant in the lives of people today as they were when uttered by Zophar. People throughout the ages have questioned God’s actions and His purposes!

What is taking place in your life or around you may be beyond your comprehension, causing you to ask the question “Why?” But be assured that there is a reason for, and a purpose in, everything because all things are under the Lord’s control.

In order to be at peace you need to accept the fact that God loves you and that He wants the very best for you. In order that this may be achieved it is possible that your path may seem to be uncertain and He may appear not to be at your side to lead you. Remember He used the crucifixion to proclaim His glory and in the same way God will use your adversity to give you the victory.

Bro. David Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)

The Word of God

God's word was first spoken through angels: "Let there be light and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). In Genesis, the angels represented God. When the earth was being formed.

The angel said to Mary "Do not be afraid" (Luke 1:30-33). In Hebrews "Long ago at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). Peter also tells us "Men spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:21). In the word of God, we have something more sure, the prophetic word by which we will do well if we pay attention to it.

God spoke through Jesus: "He who comes from above bears witness to what he has seen and heard. Whoever receives his testimony, sets his seal to this: that God is true. For he whom God has sent utters the word of God. Whoever believes in the son has eternal life" (John 3:31-36).

God spoke through the apostles: "And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge" (Acts 10:42) and the prophets "While I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel whom I had seen in vision came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice" (Daniel 9:20-22).

Angels are created beings who act as God's servants and messengers. Jeremiah talks about the prophets: "Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, "Behold I have put my words into your mouth" (Jeremiah 1:19). Prophets were the people who spoke the word of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, which is God's power at work.

The apostles and some of the other early Christian were used to speak God's word directly: "Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly saying that: 'It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourself unworthy of eternal life, behold we are turning to the Gentiles'. For so the Lord has commanded us saying, 'I have made you a light to the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth'" (Acts 13:46, 47). In the last book of the Bible, Jesus himself speaks: "He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood and his name is the Word of God" (Revelation 19:13).

God's messengers are both those people who carry the messages of God and the angels. Whoever carries the word of God represents God himself, even down to the present day.

Prophets spoke in olden days only: "In ancient times, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). True prophets are not available in these last days of else, only false prophets.

Apostles were appointed by Jesus in the first century. When the apostles died, they did not pass on their apostleship to any others: the office of apostle died. Any apostles nowadays are pretenders. They lay up heavy burdens and put them on people's shoulders. They do all their

deeds to be seen of others. Also they shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces (Matthew 23).

Jesus Christ is message existing today and in the coming future. He is the first and the last. There is no other apart from him. He is yesterday, today and tomorrow We are in the edge of Christianity. We shall all be responsible at the judgement seat

Bro. Isaac Kapa

The Christadelphians

When a woman is united to a man according to law, his name becomes hers and in acquiring the new name, she acquires also all that it legally imports. In the same manner, when a believer of the "things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" is united with Christ according to "the law of faith", the name of Christ becomes his. He or she becomes by adoption, a child of the eternal Father and a brother or sister of Jesus Christ (CHRISTOS EN ADELPHOS). In that act by which the Christ-Name comes upon the believer, he or she acquires access to all that the scripture describes (Luke 24:47; John 1:12, 13; 20:13, 17; Acts 2:38; 4:12; 10:43; 13:26, 38, 39; 1 John 2:12).

Christadelphians as the name implies are simply the brethren (and sisters) of Christ: "He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11). We are a body of people associated together by a belief in "the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12), by immersion into Christ (Galations 3:18) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and thereby taking part in his resurrection (Romans 6:5). We do not profess to have received any new revelation, but hold that the scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are able to make one wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15-17). Believing in the divine authorship of the bibles, we think it is only reasonable to eschew any interpretation which fails to harmonise all the testimonies (Hebrews 2:10,11; Exodus 12:19; Deuteronomy 7:9-13; Luke 12:49, 50; 1 Corinthians 15:44, 50; Mark 16:15,16).

Our Faith

We believe in:

- One God, the Eternal Father, dwelling in Heaven, in light and glory inconceivable (yet covering everything)
- One universal irradiating Spirit, by which the Father fills all and knows all and when He will, performs all
- One Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, begotten by the spirit of Mary, filled therewith at his baptism, put to death for sin, raised from the dead for righteousness and exalted to the heavens as a MEDIATOR between God and man
- Man, a creature of the ground, under sentence of death because of sin, which is his great enemy – the devil
- Deliverance from death by bodily resurrection and glorification at the coming of Christ and the inheritance of the Kingdom of God – offered to all on condition of the following:-

(a) Of believing the glad tidings of Christ's accomplishments during his first appearing and of his coming manifestation in the earth as King of Israel and Ruler of the whole Earth and the setting-up of the Kingdom of God.

(b) Of being immersed in water for a union with His name, and redemption work

Bro. Sikolia Kapa (Tongaren, Kenya)

Personal Testimony

Glory be to the Lord Jesus Christ for his great love and wonderful works for our lives. It has been long since the bondage of sin have enslaved me. The power of alcoholism had caught me by the neck until things seemingly offered no chance to become better for my family and me.

It started when I was still a teenager, now I am 28 years old. I was raised as an orphan. I worked hard to find ways to have the so-called 'better life' – I worked my way up from early years in school until I finished college. I consider myself a hard working man because, were it not for it, I would be very far from finishing my college degree.

I started my career as a journalist. And eventually was appointed as an editor-in-chief of a local newspaper here in Southern Philippines. However, being an orphan, what I wanted more than anything was to experience what companionship is, rather than material accomplishments.

First, I tried to mingle with people, lost people. There I begin to know what vices are. So I adventured to see what they could offer to me. The vices that interested me most were not drugs, but ALCOHOL. Considering myself an intellectual person, I chose alcohol rather than drugs because, I thought, it would be a lesser evil. For a moment I thought it was, but as it went on longer – days after days, months, then years, I found myself being tied with a bondage I could no longer take away from me. I then became addicted to alcohol. The longer I engaged in it, the bitterer it became in my life. For so many years, the sting of alcoholism wrapped me. So then I longed to be free from it.

I tried to befriend others in the society that surrounds me. Perhaps, I thought, they would lead me to my quest for freedom from alcoholism. However, no person ever satisfied me, instead it worsened the loneliness and pulled me away from the peace that I longed for.

Maybe, I said to myself, my personal relationship with others is just too shallow, so I must go deeper. Thus, I engaged myself to a lady in the hope that she can help me find the freedom that I sought for. Later, she became my wife. My high expectation for marriage failed when, two days after we were wedded, I found out that the companionship with my wife could not even help me. The woman that I expected to listen to me when I would give myself to alcohol became my worst enemy. Overtime she would reprimand me for my drinking; I would look at her face as the 'devil's advocate'. It was indeed a disaster.

So instead of clinging to my wife for the cause of our marriage, I gave my faithfulness once again to my *compadre* – alcohol. This is then where our marriage was wrecked, torn-apart, and shattered.

Whenever my wife would rebuke me of my drinking, then she would have the taste of my fist. I keep on hitting her – I hit, hit, hit, hit, hit her. Instead of becoming an ideal, she became a battered wife. Many time she would spit blood from her mouth. Lots of times she would find her nosebleed. And it was countless times that she would have felt the strength of my fist in her face.

When my wife was two months pregnant, I remember hitting her and she held her stomach because of the excruciating pain. I could still remember the words that came out to her mouth when she cried: “Honey, please could you not show your mercy even to your unborn child?”

Twice were the times that I thought she would miscarry our baby because of the hitting that I had been doing to her. I wanted to stop my drinking and stop my hand from hitting my wife but I really couldn't do it. I felt pity on the child inside my wife's womb, but I just couldn't stop myself from hurting my wife.

I tried many ways to solve my addiction with alcohol but it was to no avail. I read lots of books on alcoholism, browsed through the Internet on the many solutions to this addiction, consulted physicians, but all these were to no avail. It instead worsened every passing day.

One day, while I was browsing in the web, I came across the websites entitled: www.carelinks.net and then www.bbie.org. The sites captivated my interest and I spent hours and hours reading the books there – --- I discovered that what I needed most is the true doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. It took so many of my tears to come to know that my ultimate need is the presence of God in my life, and my family. Later, after re-reading some chapters of *Bible Basics* and *Living with Alcoholism*, I went home and, for the first time, my wife experienced my warm embrace while telling her, “Honey, the true Jesus is all we need.” We spent that entire night in praying for God's forgiveness, and accepting Him as Lord and Saviour in our family. That was the first time my wife saw tears falling from my eyes.

For the first time in our married life, and in my entire life, I experienced peace that I can't described. After a long time of marriage, it seemed that our honeymoon stage in marriage had only just started – we eat, pray, hug, kiss, and sleep together. For the first time in my life I find that I belong to someone. In all my past life of alcohol and not knowing the Truth, I really felt alienated from everyone all those years.

The thing really amazed everyone that surrounds me. I stopped drinking and gave myself entirely to my family. Today, seldom is the time that my wife and I will not go anywhere together. I accompany her everywhere she goes. She now experiences that she has a husband.

With all those years, I found out that:

- a. Marriage plus alcohol will truly give tragic disasters to every family – either the husband, wife, or children.
- b. Commitment to each other is the most significant aspect of marriage (Were it not for my wife's commitment for our marriage, ours will surely have been a broken home. Once I heard her pray, “Lord, you know that, despite of the aches that I experience from my husband, I really love him so much that I could nor leave him.”)
- c. God is the only solution of every problems, frustrations, desolation's, and crises of our lives. The quest for freedom from anything starts when we surrender our lives to Him.

With all these goodnesses God has bestowed upon our lives, Cecile (my wife) and I gave our commitment to surrender our lives in the ministry of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. From day-one, that we received and committed to God's true gospel, we are continuously preaching to every family in our community – especially those families who were ruined by alcoholism. For almost three or four months now, there are already five families in our community who surrendered their lives to a quest for the true Lord Jesus Christ. And it is continuously growing.

We feel an urgent call. There are so many in our country that encounter the same problems and struggles. We know for sure that God called us to this ministry to administer the need of the millions of people here – who have deserted from the message of the true gospel and therefore are in bondage to the power of sin. We know for sure that there are husbands and wives out there that need God.

I resigned from my job, and also my wife, and we gave ourselves fully in the preaching of the true gospel. We are living according to our faith. As we answer God's call for us in this area, we know it is seemingly impossible for us to succeed. But I would say, "The naked eye may impossibility saw it, but we have these eyes of faith." We are living by faith.

My wife and I have this vision of establishing a ministry where every victim of alcoholism must be rehabilitated, especially those husbands of long suffering wives, those who were in just our position. In our area, alcoholism destroys 70 percent of every home. It means it is everywhere. It destroys much more than drugs. This ministry also aims at educating people who, after receiving God's providence of freedom, would surrender themselves to God and join me and my wife in preaching the gospel of God. These preachers, if there will be (and I know that there will be), I believe, MUST be educated with the untainted principle of the Bible as taught in *Bible Basics*.

I wrote this testimony in the hope that there is someone out there, within the four corners of this world, who would include us in your PRAYERS. Your prayers will be the greatest things that you can give to us. Or perhaps help us – my wife, in anything that you can and me. I thank God for my good friend Duncan and his wife Cindy for their prayers and support. For spending so much of their time for personally ministering to us. Truly, they let me feel that I have a family. My wife and my child means so much for me now because, as being orphaned, I have nothing in this world that I can call my 'own' except for them. So great is God's grace that I couldn't ask for more. King David says, "What shall I give to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" For my wife, and me our answer is 'OUR LIVES'.

Bro. Alfredo and Sis. Cecily (Southern Philippines)

The Carpe Diem Project in Bosnia

I am very happy to meet you. We Brothers here are trying to get to as many people as we can with the Gospel. I'll explain a bit. We are trying to do something to those who really need material help here, with clothes, food or paying the bills (electricity, water, heating). People here are hungry, have no clothes, specially older people and kids and families who lost someone in the war. All this we do on our own. We have no salary no pay, just God and faith. We do this because we want to support the preaching, by some real acts. To show truth and love by the actions as well as the teaching. My name is Dzenan, and I am student of finishing year

mathematics science. I am getting my degree in couple of months. I was a child who had bad life; war took everything I had. Some of my family and cousins were killed. I was poor and know how bad it was. I was going from door to door to find food for myself and my family. So I know how these people feel.

I feel that God is using me for something good here. Now, let me tell you a little bit more about my project here. 10 months ago I decide to start a magazine called Carpe Diem (in Latin-seize the day). I always wanted to help people. So this is how I started. I gathered a group of young people and asked their help with all this. The basic idea was to put younger people together and let them feel how does it look like when they help to others. It developed a relationship with people and then the most important with God!

Carpe Diem was used to tell people the truth, our truth on the way how we saw it as Christadelphians. This country is poor, and in our neighbourhoods you could find where there was people who did not have food on the table. Nobody took care of anybody. So we decide to change that. So we went from door to door and asked help for those who really need it. We got some clothes and food for a couple of families and that is how all started going. We even got reported in newspaper. So what we are trying is to get as many young people here, to give them something to do. We seven are a small group of people that have meetings and prayers together. We also helped to some of our brothers to find a way to God. I have personally baptised three brothers so far and I hope I do more. Bro. Duncan was the man who encouraged me with it. I am thankful to God that He gave me a chance to meet him. We helped a lot of people so far, we just finished a project with Christmas boxes, and we delivered a box to every child in two villages here. I think that we can change life of others and ourselves. We trust in God and His mercy. Any help that we can get we appreciate and we are most thankful for it.

Bro Dzenan (Bosnia)

The Secret of the Lord

Before READING this article please write down what you think is "*The secret of the Lord*"

The SECRET of the Lord is with them that fear him. Psalms 25:14 assumes that God will show such an one his COVENANT.

But it is necessary to realize that, Isaiah 55:8-9, is a fact and therefore ask God to show us his ways, Psalms 25:4-5. God's response is verse 12, with emphasis on teaching, so be willing to learn, Isaiah 55:1-3.

Hearken diligently! Incline your ear! Come! Hear! Live!

for God will make an everlasting covenant with you. So the "secret" is a "covenant" and the covenant the "sure mercies of David".

Question: What sure mercies?

Answer: 2 Samuel 7:15. David wished to build a house for God. God says no, David's seed shall build God's house and his kingdom be established forever. There is emphasis that God's mercy will not depart as with Saul. This prophecy is confirmed with the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus, Acts 13:22,23,28-30&34.

Jesus no longer being subject to death *can sit on David's throne* forever as King, 2 Samuel 7:16. In some versions we find the Friendship of the Lord. It leads us to the greatest friend of God, Abraham and the COVENANT God made with him to give him the LAND, so we get the KINGDOM *on earth*.

Relevant passages. James 2:23; Isaiah 41:8, 2 Chronicles 20:7, Galations 3:16(the seed is Christ).

So both Covenants included in Psalms 25:14

SECRET – DAVID – CHRIST – KING (Ruler)

FRIENDSHIP – ABRAHAM – CHRIST – KINGDOM (Land)

Jesus said “Seek ye FIRST the Kingdom of God”. Surely our TOP PRIORITY should be to PREACH it first? Was that God's invitation in Matt1:1? (NT)

Jesus Christ – Son of David – King

Son of Abraham – Kingdom

If still in doubt be thrilled by the following:

Matt 13:10-17 and Matt 13:34-35

Sis Loraine Mitchell (Guyana)

The Purpose Of Trial

Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul has written: “Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8). If the Lord himself suffered because of his obedience to God through the tremendous trials he endured throughout his life, how much more the need for such pressure in our lives. In fact without tribulation, we would not learn the obedience of faith (Romans 16:26), and cannot please God (Heb. 11:6). Faith and obedience reveal their quality when put to the test. Again, the apostle Peter directs attention to the Lord Jesus Christ in that he “suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Peter 3:21). In like fashion, James would have us remember the “example” of others – “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” (James 5:10-11).

In this article I wish to draw to remembrance the necessity for trial in our lives. It is a prerequisite before entrance unto the Kingdom; for trial is intended to develop a character pleasing to our heavenly Father, that we might become fit vessels to bring honour to the Name of Yahweh.

Though we will not consider individual examples in these particular studies, we will address the general principle of trial as revealed in the word. In order to impact our minds, we will accompany the scripture quotations with some brief comments from Bro. Roberts, found in the book entitled Letters to the Elect of God in a time of trouble (available from Logos

publications). Therein, letters written by bro. Roberts to his fellow servants have been compiled to comfort them in the difficulties of life. These comments will serve well for every saint in any generation. Appropriately, Letters to the Elect contains headings as: “How trouble moulds character”, “A source of comfort in trouble”, “What trouble is designed to produce”, “The right way to view trouble”, “Why the ecclesias are troubled”, and “God makes choice of the humble”. We hope these comments, examined in their scriptural setting, will stir our minds to appreciate the need for suffering in our lives and encourage us to patiently bear up under the pressures of life, awaiting the relief that our Lord will surely provide at his coming.

Yours a fellow-servant in the vineyard.

Bro. Martin Barasa, Kiminini, Kenya

The Life Of The World

God saw that there was no life in the world because of our sins, people kept on sinning though men chosen by God kept on saying that we should do the Will of our Creator. Finally God gave the Life of the world (Jesus Christ) because he loved it. (John 3:16). He came into the world to add life to those who follows his teachings and do what he said. Since we have been taught about him we are seeking the life. Romans 6:8-10 always reminds us as Christians that someone is awaiting with a reward to that Life of the World. God has given us a choice to choose what we want. We have been blessed, we Christians, because we know the way to life. In Romans 6:23 it is clearly stated. Romans 10:9-11 “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Anyone who trust in him will never be put to shame.” All those who want to have the Life of the world testify that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. He is the Life of the world.

Bro. Farai Phiri (Chegututu, Zimbabwe)

Steep To Christ

Nature and revelation alike testify of God’s love. Our Father in heaven is the source of life of wisdom and of joy. Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of nature. Think of their marvellous adaptation in the needs and happiness, not only of man but of all living creatures. The sunshine and the rain that gladden and refresh the earth, the hills and seas and plains all speak to us of the Creator’s love. It is God who supplies the daily needs of all his creatures. In the beautiful words of the Psalmist, “The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. (Psalm 145:15-16)

God made man perfectly, holy and happy and the fair earth as it came from the Creator's hand bore no blight or decay or shadow of the curse. It is transgression of God's law, the law of love, that has brought woe and death. Yet even amid the suffering that results from sin, God's love is revealed. It is written that God cursed the ground for man's sake. (Gen.3:17). The thorn and the thistle, the difficulties and trials that make this life one of toil and care were appointed for his good, as a part of the training in God's plan for his uplifting from the ruin and degradation that sin has wrought.

The world though fallen, is not all sorrow and misery. In nature itself are messages of hope and comfort. There are flowers up, the thistles and thorns are covered with roses. "God is love" is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass, the lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection, perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green all testify to the tender fatherly care of our God and to his desire to make his children happy.

The Word of God reveals his character, he himself has declared his infinite love and pity. When Moses prayed "shew my thy glory", The Lord answered "I will make all my goodness pass before thee". (Ex.33:18-19). This is his glory, "The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." (Ex.34:6-7). "He is slow to anger and of great kindness" (Jonah 4:2) "because he delighteth in mercy." (Micah 7:18). God has bound our hearts to him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth through the things of nature and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, he has sought to reveal himself to us.

Bro. Fibion Ngozi (Banket, Zimbabwe)

The Trinity

Few doctrines are more generally accepted by the Christian world than that concerning the God-head known as the doctrine of the Trinity. Roman Catholic, the Greek Church and almost all denominations of Protestant, however they may differ upon some point, agree on this and believe that the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God: they further believe that all three are co-equal and co-eternal.

But the Scriptures always teach the unity of God, not the trinity. The following quotations clearly show this "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." Deut.6:4; Mark 12:29; Isa.45:5; 1 Cor.8:6.

Even as Jesus himself, after his resurrection, referred to the Father as my God in John 20:17. The further fact that "there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim.2:5.

The Son of God, born of a virgin mother, as recorded in Matthew and Luke: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35.

The Spirit of God is His power, irradiating or flowing from him, filling all space. By it he performs all his works, it is everywhere. Acts 17:27,28; Psa.139:6-12; Job 33:4: 34:14,15; Heb.2:4; Luke 1:35.

“This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3

Bro. George Wabwile (Bungoma, Kenya)

Consider It Pure Joy!

We can well remember the words spoken by the Lord Jesus, to his disciples, before he left this world; “..... then you will be handed over to be persecuted, and put to death, and you will be hated by many nations” – Matt.24:9

This had to happen exactly the way he said it. We can read from the book of Acts 7:54-60, how it was with Stephen, how he stood trial because of his great wonders and signs given him by the Lord. He had truth in him, as he was speaking the Lord’s word, and he was stoned to death – in Paul’s (then Saul) sight. When such situations occur, we must remember the Lord’s word in Matthew 24 – and to count it all joy, because even though he is asleep, in the Lord’s grace he will get a place in the Kingdom which will never end. Stephen fulfilled the Lord’s words.

The other fulfilment is in chapter 16 of the Acts of the apostles - - here we read of a girl who had a spirit to predict the future. Paul and Silas were there and commanded the spirit to leave the girl, but the brothers were seized by the owners of the girl, who brought them before the magistrate and they ended up in prison. Though in prison they sang hymns to the Lord, until they came out of it – encouraging the apostles to be strong and standing firm in the Lord’s service – vs.16-40. We will face such things also in times to come.

“We must go through much hardships to enter the Kingdom of God.” – Acts 14:22. Let us not give up doing what is pleasing to the Lord. The apostles were persecuted and beaten severely but they kept doing the good work, fighting the good fight of faith. Bro. James in his letter to the twelve tribes scattered in the world says, “Consider it PURE JOY, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance” – James 1:2.

He goes on to say, “brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You’ve heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about: The Lord is full of compassion and mercy” – James 5:10,11.

This may happen to us today. We must commit our everyday work to the Lord, that he strengthens us, even to stand firm and speak the word of truth if we stand trial for our faith in Him. If we stick to the truth and persevere, great is the reward from the Lord – in his Kingdom – May it come soon!

The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject you as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven” – Luke 6:22,23.

We must consider and take to heart these words of the Lord, and live in his truth, dear brethren.

Bro. Silas Chishimba (Mufulira, Zambia)

Life Is A Journey

In our daily lives we make several journeys to a destination we desire. Some are successful while others are full of danger. It can be from a city to upcountry or vice versa. On the way, the journey might have a good security or no security at all. We meet others going on the same route or the opposite, those who need our help or those who can help us. Life exchanges hands with death without a warning or prior knowledge as we proceed with our journey.

The book of Luke 10:30-35 gives us a clear picture of this reality. In life we meet with good and bad people, people of all walks. But the Bible points out clearly the characters such as robbers, priests, Levites and the Samaritan. This means that life can commence badly and end well (or the other way round).

Priests, who we put in the first 'good' people category may surprise us. They only want to help or assist those who are physically healthy and pass by those on the verge of death. This is hypocrisy. Priests should serve others, whether mentally, physically, spiritually or socially healthy or not.

The Levite – tax collectors – they only value a live person who can still be taxed. Dead ones are unworthy. They pay tax no longer. These are the people in our midst. They are wealth seekers – woe to them.

The Samaritan outstands these other characters mentioned above. These are people in our society, journeys, workplace etc. who draw their attention to have pity on us, share our grief, their belongings, to support in times of a dire need.

The theme here is neighbourliness, but who is a neighbour and what are the characteristics desirable of a neighbour? As we journey, may we plan them well in advance with our knowledge, but Proverbs 16:25 warns us. Jesus gives us a good guide and protection. John 14:16. Let us all beware as we are going where we have never been before. (James 4:14).

Bro. Rono Kibet Samuel (Fort Ternan, Kenya)

Are we ready to meet Him?

Today, worshippers of God face circumstances similar to those of Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego. Granted, God's people may not be exiles in a literal sense. Yet Jesus said that his followers would be "no part of the world" John 17:14. They are "foreigners" in that they do not adopt the unscriptural custom, attitudes and practices of those around them. As the apostle Paul wrote, "Christians are to quit being fashioned after this system of things" (Rom.12:2).

The three Hebrews refused to be fashioned after the Babylonian system. Even thorough instruction in Chaldean wisdom did not sway them, their position in the matter of worship was

non-negotiable and their allegiance was to God. Christians today need to be just as steadfast. They need not be ashamed because they are different from those in the world. Indeed, “the world is passing away and so is its desire” (1 John 2:17) so it would be foolish to conform to this dying, system of things.

Christians need to be on guard against every form of idolatry, including subtle forms (1 John 5:21). Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego obediently and respectfully stood before the golden image, but they realized that bowing before it was more than a mere gesture of respect. It was an act of worship and participation would incur God’s wrath. (Deut. 5:8-10). It was, in effect the saluting of the flag, although, because of the inter-relationship of religious connotation today, true Christians take an equally firm stand against idolatry.

The Bible account of Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego provides a sterling object lesson for all who are determined to render exclusive devotion to God. The apostle Paul evidently had these three Hebrews in mind when he spoke of many who exercised faith, including those who “stayed the force of fire” (Heb. 11:33-34). God will reward all who imitate such faith. The three Hebrews were delivered from the fiery furnace, but we can be sure that He will resurrect all loyal ones who lose their lives as integrity-keepers and will bless them with everlasting life. Either way, God “is guarding the souls of his loyal ones and out of the hand of the wicked ones he delivers them” (Psalm 97:10).

Bro. Jackson Nyakambire Concession, Zimbabwe

Wealth

There is always a happy time, which should be spent worshipping the Creator of heaven and earth. Israel had such happy times and these were called the Sabbaths of the Lord. Israel were instructed to observe these Sabbaths and these were their happy days because they spent them worshipping without any distractions. God was with them always. God commanded them to observe the Sabbaths and when they did so they were protected and were free people. When they followed and observed the Torah they were blessed. There is also a curse on people who did not heed God's commands.

Deut 16:1-2 "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover of the Lord your God. For in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt and you shall offer the Passover sacrifice to the Lord your God from the flock or the herd at the place which the Lord will choose to make his name dwell there."

When Israel was liberated from Egypt by God they were given commandments to be followed, including observing special days during which they were to make sacrificial offerings. This shows how God had blessed them in those days in that they had a flock or herd from which to offer a sacrifice. These offerings were to be eaten by the people themselves which was a very good thing to do. You sacrifice your lamb and you eat the meat; all the meat, nothing should remain for the next day. The bread and the meat were eaten at a single supper. Thereafter, for the next six days, they had to eat before the Lord their God unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there was a solemn assembly and they had to do no work on such days.

Deut 16: 9-11 "You shall count seven weeks; begin to count from the time you first put the sickle to the standing grain. Then you shall keep the feast of weeks to the Lord your God". We see again how God had blessed Israel as a nation. For a whole nation to rejoice in feasting for seven weeks, slaughtering flocks and herds for such a long period is such a blessing and a fulfillment of God's words that Israel was a land flowing with milk and honey without there being a need to import food from other nations. We look forward to the coming Kingdom where everyone will eat and rejoice. But before that there is hope in our lifetime that God will bless us if we keep His commandments.

Deut16:16-17 "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God at the place which he will choose: at the feast of unleavened bread, at the feast of weeks and at the feast of booths. They shall not appear before the Lord empty handed, every man shall give as he is able according to the blessing which the Lord your God has given you".

When we meet together, we must be able to give back to the Lord as much as we are able to give in thanks for that with which he has blessed us. Never should we go empty handed. It is up to us to do our part, to believe and be baptized, to live in faith and to preach the gospel. Let us hope in the Lord and seek His blessing, rejoicing in Him. In Matt.5:3-11 each verse starts with the word blessed. We are called for a blessing just as Israel was liberated from Egypt to a blessed land of milk and honey. We believe in Jesus the Christ and we were baptized in obedience, looking for a blessing from the Lord our God.

Deut 28:1-15 "If you obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments which I command you this day, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth and all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God".

Blessings from God are conditional on our obedience to His commands. Jesus said go and preach the gospel and whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. We must continue in faith until the coming of the Lord, breaking bread and drinking wine and rejoicing in our hope. Jesus said we have no life if we do not break bread and drink wine in memory of him.

As God blessed Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and saved Lot, so let Him bless us.

Gal.3:9 "So then, those who are men of faith are blessed with Abraham who had faith." Amen

Bro A Liwawa (Neno, Malawi)

Comfort, Peace and Hope

Comfort – a feeling that comes from knowing how much God and Jesus care for us (John 13:1). As Christians we really know that there is someone to turn to when we are in trouble (Matt.11:28-30). Jesus calls us, he wants to give us rest and learn humility from him. His yoke is easy and his burden is light, so what can stop us getting rest from him? Why let our heart be troubled? (John 14:1), Is it not easy to believe in Jesus? – certainly it is. The Lord will never leave us alone, never will he forsake us. (Heb. 13:5), so brothers and sisters let us gain comfort for the Lord is with us for ever and ever.

Peace – the calm that comes from trusting in the Lord. An ease that comes from surrendering our worries and anxieties to His power. Brothers and sisters, we have to live peacefully in the Lord, love one another, not worrying about worldly things, for the Lord is with us. “Peace be with you” Jesus said (John 20:26)? If yes, then let us enjoy it to the full and preach it to others.

Hope – having the strength that comes from knowing that even the deepest sadness cannot last for ever. Believing that happiness lies ahead. Having comfort and peace in the world, we must have hope. Although we are facing more problems in the world, such as earthquakes, war, hunger and so on, we must not worry. We know that Jesus is there for us and when he returns and establishes the new world, we shall rejoice. When the Lord comes, eternal peace will prevail, so we must have hope and patiently wait for that day. Read Hebrews 11.

Let us keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour of our Lord’s return..

Bro. Bautie Mbewe (Chegutu, Zimbabwe)

Bible School in Kazan (Russia) January 2005

In the beautiful Krutushka Sanatorium in Tatarstan, the Brothers and Sisters of Eastern Europe gathered together. Here 56 people from seven countries gathered together to grow closer to God. The love of brothers and sisters was clear. I arrived in Kazan a day early, because of how the train timetable was. But in a strange town, I wasn’t alone. In fact six others arrived earlier too. And we were welcomed to the home of Sister Ludmila Kuritsyna. We were so grateful for her hospitality to us.



Kazan Bible School



Receiving-in of the six new members

Brother Viktor Filatov had arranged everything and hired a bus to transport us from the city to the Sanatorium. We settled in and then we had the talks in a special lecture room. It was really convenient. So we studied the Bible together in a very nice cosy atmosphere.

With great interest we listened to the speakers, Brothers Bruce Parker from USA, David Bushell from England, Michael Floyd from South Africa and our brother Duncan Heaster. In the evenings, the brothers told us about the lives of other brothers and sisters in many places, like England, South Africa and Bosnia. We watched pictures and movies about those places.

Six men and women, who had truly learnt of the truth and accepted Christ in their hearts and confessed this in interview, were baptized. For the first time, they took the symbols of our Lord’s

sacrifice, the bread and wine. Brothers and sisters, these are like new-born babies. They have joined our Christadelphian family. Love, care, constant attention and patience must surround them. They are to grow up in the faith with us their older brothers and sisters. To celebrate this great event, we made a small concert, and in the evening, a 'sweet table'.

There was lots to do in the free time. There was a lot of snow, to make snowmen, and also there were skis to go skiing. The spiritual atmosphere, the feeling that we were being built up in your faith, the great weather and pretty countryside, these things will remain in our memories even more than the many photographs that were taken.

We realized that those who organized this gathering worked very hard for us. But their reward was that they helped us to come nearer to the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. So finally on 10th January the bus came to take us back to the city, from where one by one we got our trains home, to different parts of the earth. There were many tears as we said goodbye. From all my heart I want to thank our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the lecturers, those who gave money for this, the organizers, for allowing us this great opportunity to meet together, to feel our unity as brothers and sisters, to encourage each other as true brothers, and to grow in our understanding of God's word.



Above: young Brethren and Sisters and Sis Vanessa Floyd congratulating our aged Russian Sister on giving an excellent confession of faith. Below: two newly baptised, David and Michael, and by himself Bro Michael Floyd from sunny South Africa who could easily be mistaken for a Russian!.

Sis. Ludmila (Poltava, Ukraine)

Supporting Persecuted Sisters In Turkmenistan - An Update and Summary

Hand made camels, purses, bags etc. are produced by our sisters from their own sheep wool, and sold by sisters world-wide to support them. If you'd like to be an agent, see <http://www.carelinks.net/care/sis2602.htm> or email info@carelinks.net. More information is available from the local representatives in your area- Bro Ronnie van Rooyen [South Africa], Sisters Liz Emmens or Jean Field [UK], Robin Jones or Bev Russell [Australia], Tina Ching [Canada], Bro Clive & Sis Daphne Solomon [USA].

Dear Robin,

Thank you very much for your detailed e-mail. Thank you my dear sister for your help and support. Thank you very much that you found a sister from New Zealand who has interests in my handcrafts. I'll look forward to hear from her.

Re my family they are well and my sister is well. She is still weak but doing camels and cushion covers with a big pleasure. My mother and my elder sister prepare felts and colour the threads for scarves. We are so happy that God found the good God's people like you who have open

hearts to help us. Re the Christianity may be I had told before that Muslim and orthodox are officially registered but anyway the country is 'closed' and there were many persecutions of Christians. Adventists had a church but it was destroyed...much Baptists were persecuted...two years ago I was invited one ministry (they had called themselves "grater grace"). Many of this group were Russians but 2 Turkmen man and me too were arrested. But we had not to stay in prison. We were just only kept some hours and police asked lot of questions. They wanted to send us to prison and next day to send everyone to their region and forbid to come to capital but God helped us very much as the head of prison was out and police had to release us. The time of arrest was in the morning but I shall never forget that day...when I come home it was 3 o'clock of night and then I remember that I eat nothing and even did not feel to eat something. And from that day I go nowhere and asked God to read Bible myself and find the truth by the *Bible Basics*. My family, especially my mother was very angry as she was ill and plus my problems...it was my first adventure and second time it happened in the office where I worked as secretary and translator when the head of company saw my Bible. And then I lost my job. But that time I knew already Duncan via website and wrote letter to him. When he came to Turkmenistan and baptized my sister and me we were sure that God did not forget us...his love was upon us. I even thought to leave the country but I was afraid to run as my family (mother) will have to stay and I wouldn't like to make problems for them because of me...but the life was getting worse...and there is no jobs. I also had a plans to go to one of foreign countries to find a job as I have a Diploma have a good skills of languages (English, Turkish and Russian): and I was agree to have any kind of job: to look after children or wash anything's...but one day I read from the scripture that the people called to be His children are kings and queens. I liked it, I understood that God will never leave, forsake...I had a lot of dreams but God revealed my artistic abilities and I started to make new designs and make crafts...

Re the scarves, they are really weaved on the handmade small wood equipment but always working with hands moving to the right and left. I shall send some pictures. I have news about scarves: we did some camel's wool scarves. I thought camel's wool is very good and I used as scarf and even wrap my waist. It gives much warmth. I thought may be some people especially old people will like it. To weave a scarves is not difficult but to colour and make the threads take a time.

Now I am about the prices. In 1 parcel I can put up to 10 pieces of each items. If you want extra items I'll have to send second parcel. It is museums decision. But it is funny to get a permission from museum as my things do not have a historical values first and second they saw my products first time. I think it is a bureaucratic and I think this tax is unlawful advantage...

Sister G

Preaching in U.S. Prisons - Update

The faithful work of distributing Bible Basics in prisons has produced some wonderful results in America; here is the latest update.

We have some good news from here. A few Brothers and Sisters of the SF Peninsula Ecclesia, who were approved to visit K in the C.T.F. Prison in Soledad, did so on Saturday, December 18 to hear a confession of his faith. Now we have wonderful news that the Chaplain at about 2:00pm.

Baptized him on Sunday, December 26. We rejoice in this as K has been looking forward to being baptized for quite a while. We had to have approval to visit him first. Please remember K in your prayers. Now K will have a new life in Christ. I believe God really has called him out, as he is the second inmate to 'find *Bible Basics*' and want to know more in seeking God's truth. Kenneth is be our second inmate to be baptized. Praise the Lord! By the way, I had Bro. D meets up with K and they have been giving each other spiritual support when they can meet on Wednesdays for Bible Study. They are both in different sections of the prison.

I have heard from quite a number of inmates in prisons now all over the US. I do have inmates passing the word along for us, even from one jail to another. It is surprising work. I do believe the Lord is giving us what we can handle to give them the attention they need. It is hard to find Brothers and Sisters who are willing to write to prisoners because many people today want to e-mail. It does take a commitment to write letters and to be careful to not use a home address or last names of people. We have had incidents where the Chaplains in the Jail or prison have done research on The Christadelphians and tell the inmates we are a 'cult'. I feel that because of this, it is good to go slow and have the inmates be an example of brethren in Christ as a witness

It was wonderful to see all the Brothers and Sisters there again and the visiting ones. Bro. L was there and I was so happy to see him, because he has been in prison before. Bro. L came in to the Truth many years before I began doing this work. He is going to be a help to us in this work. He is a good example of a brother making it in society again and being active in the ecclesia. I'm really concerned about brothers being accepted into the ecclesia and a routine when they get released.

* * * * *

We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10)

Sis. Marilyn Seagoe (USA.)

Do We Please God In Our Lives

Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned. (John 3:18). Why? Because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. Here beloved brethren and sisters the message is clear – we need to believe in Jesus in order to please God.

Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that his/her deeds will be exposed (John 3:20-21) but whoever lives by the truth comes into light so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. Where can we place ourselves? The only hope is for us to prepare and be ready for his coming and to meet and welcome him. That can only come about when we please God now.

Just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, it was in this way death came to all men/women because all have sinned. (Romans 5:12). What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? (Romans 6:14) By no means, we died to sin, how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into

Christ were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into his death in order that just as

Christ was raised from the dead, through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Rom6:1-4).

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, *the lust of his eyes*, and the boasting of what he has and does, comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but he who does the will of God lives for ever. Let us check and change our direction aiming at the right direction, fixing our eyes on our Lord Jesus, who is able to redeem us.



Bro John Kasanda with his grandson Baleke

Bro. John Kasanda (Kasembe, Zambia)

The Antigua Ecclesia



This is the front view of the ecclesial hall, the building is there, the people are there, the children are there, but where are the preachers? Antigua needs a dedicated couple or a Brother very badly. The picture opposite shows the rear view. It is a lightstand without a preacher and interested friends ask “Where is your preacher?” We pray “send one Lord!” Bottom photo: Sisters and friends.



Sister Loraine Mitchell

Does Suffering Have A Purpose?

I wish to share this experience with my fellow Brethren and Sisters:

“Boy rescues a lady from a burning house.” A fire broke in a grass thatched house in my local village, Uriri. Many people rushed to the scene and tried to put the fire out. One man began to shout as he saw an old lady through the window. I tried to rush into the burning house. A few minutes later I hurriedly walked out carrying the old lady. She was still alive though severely burnt. I was also badly burnt.

We were rushed to the hospital where we were treated at the Burns Unit. The old lady ‘Matandarua’ was able to leave hospital earlier than me. I stayed for almost four months. I have to carry the scars all my life. My greatest happiness is that Matandarua was saved. Matandarua visited me in the hospital and the villagers prayed for me.

1 Peter 1:6-8 says: Be glad about this, even though it may be necessary for you to be sad for a while because of the many kinds of trials you suffer. Their purpose is to prove that your faith is genuine. Even gold which can not be destroyed is tested by fire! And so your faith, which is much more precious than gold, must also be tested so that it may endure. Then you will receive glory and praise on the day when Jesus will be revealed (John 15:1-6). From this I came to learn that suffering strengthens our faith in Jesus. When we suffer, we learn many things about ourselves. Suffering is then for a good purpose, since we learn to be more patient and to trust in.

Bro. Moses Maleya (Suna, Kenya)

Vessels for the Master's Use

The first step in beginning to grow spiritually is to understand that we must separate ourselves from all things that are evil, that contradict the way of Jesus Christ and His Truth. The word of God truly tells us, that he who would be clean, must “purge himself from these” and thus “be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use, prepared unto every good work...follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:21,22). If we make the first steps in trying to be clean, then God will give us the strength to go further. We take the first step of faith when we are baptized, but we must know that we are to go much further than that, unto holiness. But we have encouragement - we are to follow the holy things “with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart”. Yes, there are many others trying to go the same way as us.

We will not find the way to being a suitable vessel for the Master unless we seek to be this along with others who also call on the Lord. The way we have chosen is not easy. We must take strength from others. Alone, we cannot make this way unto the end. Every member of the body of Christ is also a child of God, they will be showing to us some aspect of the pure life which we ought to be living. If we each have a pure heart, or spirit, then the spirit of God will be amongst us, and we will feel this when we gather together. This will give us strength.

We will experience amongst us the true type of love, the love of God, which is not the same as the thing that passes for love in the world. If we love God, then we will love our Brothers also, as is said in 1 John 5:2. True love will never in any way allow evil to triumph over good, it will not call

evil to be good, nor vice versa. We will be encouraged only to greater efforts to be vessels usable by our Master.

Bro. Gennady (Poltava, Ukraine)

The Heart

Many sects are more concerned with emotion than with Bible teaching. They sometimes try to justify their attitude like this: You Christadelphians attach too much importance to knowledge. God wants your heart rather than your brain. The word 'heart' is found about ten times as often in the Bible as the word 'mind'; 'brain' is not there at all. God says that if you have a sincere 'heart' you can draw near to Him (James 4:8). To be saved, you only have to say that you believe in your heart (Romans 10:10), so why bother with a lot of knowledge? This argument sounds rather powerful until you look into it, then you soon realize that it is all based upon a common mistake. In Bible times people used to speak of the heart differently from the way we do nowadays, both in English and some other languages.

We usually associate the brain (or mind, or head) with thoughts and knowledge, and the heart with emotions such as love, joy, envy and hatred. So you might hear someone say, 'This man has the truth in his head, but I doubt if he has it in his heart'. In other words, he knows the truth but he doesn't seem to love it. (This, of course, is a figure of speech; any doctor will tell you that the heart does not really have anything to do with the emotions,) It is a pump created to force our blood to circulate around our bodies. Even so, it is a useful way of conveying an idea, even though it has no scientific basis).

Bro. Angelo Chege (Navonovu, Kenya)

Daniel 3:8-18

Today, worshippers of God face circumstances similar to those of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Granted, God's people may not be exiles in a literal sense. Yet Jesus said that his followers would be "no part of the world" John 17:14. They are "foreigners" in that they do not adopt the unscriptural custom, attitudes and practices of those around them. As the apostle Paul wrote, "Christians are to quit being fashioned after this system of things" (Rom.12:2).

The three Hebrews refused to be fashioned after the Babylonian system. Even though instruction in Chaldean wisdom did not sway them, their position in the matter of worship was non-negotiable and their allegiance was to God. Christians today need to be just as steadfast. They need not be ashamed because they are different from those in the world. Indeed, "the world is passing away and so is its desire" (1 John 2:17) so it would be foolish to conform to this dying, system of things.

Christians need to be on guard against every form of idolatry, including subtle forms (1 John 5:21). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego obediently and respectfully stood before the golden image, but they realized that bowing before it was more than a mere gesture of respect. It was an act of worship and participation would incur God's wrath. (Deut. 5:8-10). It was, in effect the

saluting of the flag, although, because of the inter-relationship of religious connotation today, true Christians take an equally firm stand against idolatry.

The Bible account of Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego provides a sterling object lesson for all who are determined to render exclusive devotion to God. The apostle Paul evidently had these three Hebrews in mind when he spoke of many who exercised faith, including those who “stayed the force of fire” (Heb.11:33-34). God will reward all who imitate such faith. The three Hebrews were delivered from the fiery furnace, but we can be sure that He will resurrect all loyal ones who lose their lives as integrity-keepers and will bless them with everlasting life. Either way, God “is guarding the souls of his loyal ones and out of the hand of the wicked ones he delivers them” (Psalm 97:10).

Bro. Jackson Nyakambire (Concession, Zimbabwe)

Serve God With Constancy

Daniel set a fine example for all modern day servants of God. His conduct was always above reproach. In his secular work Daniel “was trustworthy and no negligence or corrupt thing at all was found in him” Daniel 6:4. In a similar way a Christian should be industrious with respect to his employment. This does not mean being a business cut throat who eagerly pursues material wealth or who steps on others to climb the corporate ladder (1 Tim 6:10). The scriptures require that a Christian fulfil his secular obligations honestly and in a whole- ? way, “as to God”. Colossians 3:22-23, Titus 2:7-8, Heb.13:18).

In his worship, Daniel was uncompromising. His custom of praying was a matter of public knowledge. Furthermore, the high official and satraps well knew that Daniel took his worship seriously. Indeed they were convinced that he would hold to his routine even if a law forbade it. What a fine example for present-day Christians! They too have a reputation for putting God’s worship in first place. (Matt 6:33).

This should be readily evident to onlookers, for Jesus commanded his followers: “ Let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to our Father who is in the heavens.” Matt 5:6.

Some might say that Daniel could have avoided persecution by praying to God in secret for the 30 day period. After all, no particular posture or setting is required in order to be heard by God. He can even discern the meditations of the heart (Psalm 19:14). Nevertheless, Daniel viewed any change in his routine to be tantamount to compromise. Why?

Since Daniel’s custom of praying was well known, what message would have been conveyed if he suddenly discontinued it? Observers might well have concluded that Daniel was fearful of man and that the King’s decree superseded God’s law. (Psalm 118:6) But Daniel showed by his actions that Jehovah received his exclusive devotion (Deut. 6:14-15, Isaiah 42:8) . Of course in doing this Daniel did not disrespectfully flout the King’s law. Yet neither did he cower by compromising. Daniel simply continued to pray in his roof chamber, as he had been regularly doing prior to the King’s edict.

Servants of God today can learn from Daniel's example. They remain "in subjection to the superior authorities" obeying the laws of the land in which they live.

Bro. Jackson Nyakambire (Concession, Zimbabwe)

The Women In The Genealogies Of Jesus

These are the 5 women in the genealogies of Jesus (show on board)

Does anyone know why these five women are linked together?

They are the only women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus that is recorded in Matthew.

It's interesting that they are there at all because Jews didn't normally include women in their genealogies.

So the fact that they are there at all is really interesting.

is going to quickly read the genealogy in Matt 1 that mentions these women, skipping a few of the names.

Originally I was just going to talk about these 5 women in Matthew, but I found out how interesting all the genealogies in the gospels are. So we're going to have a look at those as well..

Does anyone know why history records were really important to the Jews? (because anyone who couldn't trace their family had no inheritance and you were treated as a dispossessed foreigner). So this made genealogies important... so they could claim their inheritance.

SHOW LIST

COMPARE Matthew and Lukes list - completely different till we get to David.

MATTHEW the genealogy only goes back Abraham. Any theories why?

I think it's aimed at the Jews... that's what all the commentaries say and Matthew seems to put a lot of emphasis on proving to the Jewish readers that Jesus is their Messiah... especially refers to Old Testament quotations about Jesus being the fulfillment of the prophecies.

Normally the information about these women would be hidden, but they are specially included there I think to emphasise that God shows grace...and that He works through the most unlikely people. I think He wanted to emphasize this. The 4 women not counting Mary all had unacceptable qualities to the devout keeper of the law. At least 3 were Gentiles. Today that might not mean much, but back then people were obsessed with racial purity. Having a Gentile in your family tree was like having your worst enemy for a grandmother. You could be looked down on in your social standing if you were descended from a mixed marriage.

The Jews liked to trace their ancestry back to Abraham, they were very proud of this. I think this list is a reminder to them that although they liked to think of themselves as righteous, their own past history was full of sin... especially with the mention of Bathsheba as Uriah the Hittite's wife.

Just a few pages over in Matthew 3 v 9... John the Baptist says to the Jews *“Do not presume to say to yourselves ‘We have Abraham as our father’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham”*

So its quite strange to have a list of names that traces the natural descendents back to Abraham, and then God says a couple of pages later, that if all He was concerned about were natural descendents, He could use a pile of stones. Its really not children of Abraham by the flesh God wants, but children of Abraham by faith. I think that the list in Matt. is designed to remind the Jews of their past, and to show it was a history full of imperfect people and sinners... and there were some God had blessed who weren't even Jewish...and He had shown them grace.

LUKE The genealogy in Luke does not have any mention of women... the commentaries say it was more aimed at Gentiles. It fulfilled the prophecy to David that Jesus would sit on His throne...he was descended from David through Bathshebas other son Nathan who was born after Solomon. Its amazing that these 2 lines go through 2 of Bathsheba's sons.

MARK simply says Jesus Christ the Son of God... so that makes the list of names a whole lot more simple... He just looks at Jesus as being the one who had been promised by Isaiah the prophet... the Son of God.

JOHN doesn't have a list of the blood line of Jesus, it makes the point that if we are God's children, then who we are naturally descended from doesn't matter. The gospel of John places the importance, on being children of Abraham through faith, not on being descended from him naturally.

Would read John 1 v11- 13

So John's gospel really emphasizes what God wants, children of faith, not those who happen to be born Jewish.

JOHN has the genealogy that I like the best...

So that's a brief look at the 4 gospel genealogies... now I'd like us to think a bit more about the women that Matthew included.

All these five women have lessons for us. They weren't all perfect, some of them made really big mistakes, BUT we can learn from their mistakes, and we can learn from their courage, and the things they got right. God used them all as part of His plan to bring Jesus into the world. The fact that Jesus came from such a line of mixed people, really emphasizes that it is a lineage of grace that Jesus was born into. These women would have been 'disqualified' if God's calling depended on righteousness of the Law. The mention of them here also shows that Jesus identifies with sinners even in His genealogy, just as in His birth, baptism, life, and death on the cross.

I'd like to make two lists on the board about these women.

1. Why they were unlikely choices to be in a Jewish royal line?

and then

2. what the challenges in their lives would have been... and maybe we can think about what we would have done in the same situation.

They women really were faced with some of the most difficult circumstances that you ever read about, and a lot of those circumstances were beyond their control,..some of them found themselves in a situations that were not of their own making, and some made bad mistakes... and got themselves into a mess. But God still showed grace to them, when the law would have condemned them.

We'll start with Tamar. Which is really not a nice story. Just to get the setting for Tamar's story... it was after Judah and his brothers sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites. Joseph was stuck down in Egypt and Judah left home and went and married a Canaanite... probably feeling very guilty about Joseph.

I'll just get to read a few verses to remind us of what happened to Tamar. READ Gen 38 v 6-7.. ok we know the rest of the story how God slew Tamar's second husband as well . Judah sent Tamar back home to live with her own family again , he was scared his next son would die if Tamar married him too. Then Tamar concealed who she was and met Judah on the road, and she ended up becoming pregnant to Judah... it's not a nice story at all, and I'd never given much thought to the plight of Tamar until I began to re-think things from Tamar's perspective.

I think it's really likely that when Tamar found herself in such miserable marriages, that she may well have done a lot of thinking and even had the opportunity from Judah , with whom she was now in contact, to find out about the true God... we are not told this, it's only speculation, but it's possible.

It's worth pointing out what the law said about what Judah and Tamar had done, Lev 20 v 12 says *"If a man sleeps with his daughter-in-law, both of them must be put to death."* So according to the law... both Judah and Tamar should have been stoned. the Law made no allowance for the intention of the heart and could only judge the situation by what had actually taken place.

Let's think about Tamar and her life.

Can anyone suggest what challenges she faced? E.g. Judah GOT a wife for his eldest son Er....2 wicked husbands... did she have any choice ... sent back to her parents in disgrace...All these bad things had happened to Tamar, and they were all out of her control... as far as I can see she had no say in any of theses thing, they were circumstances that just happened to her, so up to this point she had a really bad life, and it probably last for quite some years... because the youngest son had time to grow up... so she'd had probably years of a miserable life.

Obviously she didn't do the right thing by deceiving Judah, but he had not done the right thing by her either. So in a way it was perhaps Judah's wrong actions that had caused Tamar to do the wrong thing, and the lesson is that we can be the cause of making other people stumble like Jesus warns us of in Matt. 18 where he says "if anyone causes one of these little ones to sin." We can't entirely blame Judah for Tamar's sin, because we are all responsible for our own actions, but if Judah had done the right thing to start with, then Tamar wouldn't have been in the situation she was.

So what can we put on the board about Tamar?

Next in the list is Rahab. This is someone its easier to talk about because we know definitely that she was good. She is listed in the chapter of the faithful, Heb 11 and I'll ask to read out verse 31

Thanks , so we see that her faith was in welcoming the spies...I'll ask _____ to read Joshua 2 v 10-11

So Rahab recognized that the God of the Israelites was the one true God... and God would have seen this faith that Rahab had.... In fact maybe the whole purpose of the spies going into Jericho was really for Rahab's benefit. When you think about it..they went into Jericho, heard Rahab's report, and went home again... did they really need to be told that the inhabitants of the land were afraid, or was it God's way of saving Rahab because of her faith.?.. any thoughts?

So why was Rahab an unlikely choice for a royal line from a human perspective?

She had been a harlot... she wasn't Jewish

Now I'll ask _____ to read Joshua 6 v22-25

Can anyone detect in these verses an indication of some challenges for Rahab after she was rescued?

V 23... set them outside the camp. How welcome would most of the Israelites have made an outsider? They would have known she was a harlot, and they set her and her family outside the camp.

What challenges did she face?

(overcome the prejudice of not being Jewish, the prejudice of having been a harlot, maybe having to leave her family... we don't hear of them as joining also).

I think that there would always have been some Israelites who looked down on Rahab and thought of her as an outsider because of her past... especially as they placed so much importance on their roots and background of being Jewish. I think there are lessons here for us today, to be welcoming of people who don't come from our backgrounds.... We are told that Rahab married Salmon, and they had a son called Boaz. We know that Boaz married Ruth ... they had a son Obed who had a son Jesse, who was the father of David. So that makes Rahab David's great great grandmother. And Ruth was David's great grandmother ...no doubt it's from where David inherited some of his good qualities.

RUTH we all know her story really well. She lived in the time of the book of Judges... a time when God really did use some of the strangest means from a human point of view to achieve His purpose. The whole of the book of Judges is full of stories of people winning battles with no weapons, when all the odds were stacked against them. Stories like Shamgar beating 600 Philistines with an oxgoad (which was just a pointed stick) and Deborah and Barak fighting Sisera with no virtually no weapons except for their faith in God... and Gideon using jars and torches to beat an army. They were times of reliance and faith in God... and it was around this time that Ruth lived.

Would _____ read Duet 23 v 3-6. So these were pretty harsh words for the Moabites, and that's what Ruth was. So again under the Jewish laws, Ruth would not have been welcome, even though she had a wonderful character...The Law wouldn't have taken Ruth as a person into account, law just sees things from the legal perspective... and she shouldn't have been in the congregation of Israel, but she was.

What challenges did Ruth face?

Death of her husband, leaving family, going to where she would be resented. Not having

money.

BATHSHEBA

Unlikely choice.. she may have been a Gentile. Committed adultery. What she had to live with... resentment of other widows. Death of her first baby. Guilt of her husband's murder. YET 2 of her sons were chosen for a special purpose... surely God showing grace to Bathsheba as He had to David.

MARY ...she had an uncertain future.. .. I don't think that things turned out at all like Mary would have expected. What challenges did she face?

She would have had people looking down on her for being pregnant before she was married. It seems that Joseph died. Jesus didn't become king straight away... He was killed.

I'll end by reading out a paragraph I found on the internet:

"If the genealogy of Jesus comes as a stinging rebuke to human pride, it can also come to us as a gentle solace to whatever we have experienced at the hands of human devastation and dysfunction. The stories of Matthew's five women are the stories of widowhood, second and third marriages, incest, prostitution, lying, murder, adultery, economic hardship, foreign exclusion, and geographic dislocation. He reminds us that there is nothing that can separate us from God's love (Romans 8:39), and that there is nothing of life's bitterness that cannot be woven into God's providential, redemptive history for us. Our Stories are not over; there are more chapters to be written, may we hear, above all, the sound of God's voice in our lives as we remember their lives".

A sisters' class by Sis. Robin Jones [Hurstville, Australia]