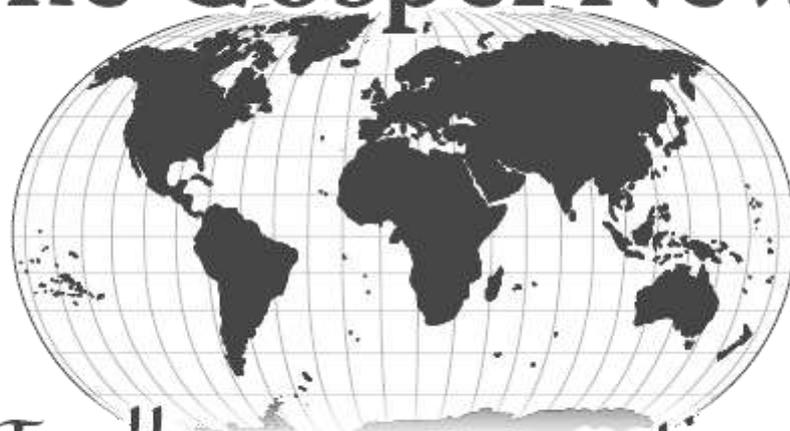


The Gospel News



“To all  nations”

Spiritual Growth

Someone said, I believe, something to the effect that “the unexamined life isn’t worth living”. And so it is. Self-examination has got to be an ongoing part of our lives, not merely a few moments each week as we notice the bread and wine creeping towards us. As I come up to 40 years old, I can just about start to look back, as well as look forward. In departure from my usual expositional style, I decided to share with you what I understand by spiritual growth. For each life lived in Christ, it will be somewhat different; but the essential processes are the same. The body of believers will ultimately manifest the fullness of Christ, the glory of God. I suggest this happens by each believer coming to reflect some particular part of that glory. One may develop wonderful patience with others’ weaknesses; another may develop faith in prayer for others’ illnesses. Between us, over history, we finally reflect the full body and character of Jesus. And when we’re done, He will come, as He finally sees His reflection here on earth. The temple was laid out, like the tabernacle, as a man’s body (when seen from a bird’s eye view); as if God’s intention was to look down upon His people and see Himself reflected in them. The Lord Jesus looks down upon His people, for all of them live unto Him in some sense, and wishes to see Himself reflected in us.

I once did a Bible School, comparing the lives of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Samson, Job, Paul and Peter. I discerned some common elements in their drive to spiritual maturity. Over their lives, they all display an increasing appreciation of the Name of God; a growing sense of the certainty of their salvation, as well as an ever finer conviction of their own sinfulness; a deeper appreciation of God’s promises and the basic doctrines of the Gospel; a marvel at grace; and an ever deeper Christ / Messiah centredness.

The Way of the Cross

It was the late, great Bro Jim Broughton who gave me good advice in my teens. His recommendation was to try to imagine the crucifixion of Jesus each time I broke bread, and each time to try to realize some new insight into His sufferings and achievement. I’ve indeed tried to do this, and I commend it. It’s been a factor in my growth. The margins of my Bibles are full of scribbled notes around the chapters relating the crucifixion. It’s midnight in Minsk as I write this. I’m still thinking of the little insight I had last Sunday. It was a reflection on the observations of many that what a man needs most as he dies... is not to face death alone. To have someone with him. The way the Lord sent Mary and John away from Him at the very end is profound in its reflection of His total selflessness, His deep thought for others rather than Himself. It also reflects how He, more than any other man, faced the ultimate human realities and issues which death exposes. He met them totally *alone*, the supreme example of human bravery in the face of death. And He faced them *fully*, with no human cushion or literal or psychological anaesthesia to dilute the awful, crushing reality of it. Remember how He refused the painkiller. And through baptism and life in Him, we are asked to die with Him, to share something of His death, the type and nature of death which He had... in our daily lives. Little wonder we each seem to sense some essential, existential, quintessential... loneliness in our souls. Thus it must be for those who share in His death. I’m grateful to Cindy for a quote from a wise doctor: “What you can really do for a person who is dying, is to die with him”. How inadvertently profound that thought becomes when applied to the death of our Lord, and to us as we imagine ourselves standing by and watching Him there. “What you can really do for a person who is dying, is to die with him”.

The Way of Personal Failure

Sin, both our own and the sins of others against us, is actually used by God in a wonderful way. Not that this of course justifies sin. But it is a fact that through our experience of the sin-repentance-forgiveness process, we grow hugely. Here we have the answer to those who cannot forgive themselves for past sins. God works out His plan of salvation actually through man's disobedience rather than his obedience. As Paul puts it, we are concluded in unbelief, that God may have mercy (Rom. 11:32). It was and is the spirit of Joseph, when he comforted his brothers: "Now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 45:5). And again, speaking about the sin of Israel in rejecting Christ: "Their trespass means riches for the [Gentile] world" (Rom. 11:12). Or yet again, think of how Abraham's lie about Sarah and unfaithfulness to his marriage covenant with her became a source of God's blessing and the curing of Abimelech's wife from infertility (Gen. 20:17). The righteousness of God becomes available to us exactly because we have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23,24). If we lie, then through our lie the truth and glory of God is revealed (Rom. 3:7). The light comes into the world - the light of hope of salvation, forgiveness of God in Christ - but this light reveals to us our verdict of 'guilty' (Jn. 3:18,36).

David was aware that God didn't really want sacrifice, or else he would so eagerly have offered it (Ps. 51:16,17). Instead, David perceived that what God wanted in essence was a broken and contrite spirit. The Bathsheba incident was programmatic for David's understanding of God, and his prayers and psalms subsequently can be expected to have constant allusion back to it. We meet the same idea of God not ultimately wanting sacrifice in Ps. 40:6-9: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire [but instead] mine ears hast thou opened [Heb. 'digged'- a reference to a servant being permanently committed as a slave to his master]: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come... to do thy will... thy law is within my heart". In Ps. 51:17, David had reasoned that instead of sacrifice, God wanted a heart that was broken and contrite. Here he reflects that instead of sacrifice, God wants a heart that has the law of God within it. This ultimately is the effect of God's law being in our heart- it creates a broken and contrite heart. But how? In the experience of most of us, the law does this through convicting us of our inability to keep it. And so we see how guilt and grace work so seamlessly together. David's broken heart was a heart which knew he had sinned, sinned irreversibly, and condemned himself. But this, he perceived, was the result of God's law being within his heart. But the words of Ps. 40:6-9 are applied in the New Testament to the Lord's death upon the cross. What's the connection, and what's the lesson? In essence, through David's experience of sin, and the work of God's law upon his heart, he came through that sin to have the very mind of the Lord Jesus as He hung upon the cross, matchless and spotless in His perfection, as the Lamb for sinners slain. Again and again we see the lesson taught- that God works through human sin, in this case, in order to bring us to know the very mind of Christ in His finest hour of glory and spiritual conquest. We must not only let God's word work its way in us; but we need to recognize when dealing with other sinners that God likewise is working with them. He doesn't shrug and walk away from sin; He earnestly seeks to use our experience of it to bring us closer unto Himself.

I've often asked myself *how* exactly the Mosaic Law led people to Christ. Was it not that they were convicted by it of guilt, and cried out for a Saviour? "The law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that... grace might reign... unto eternal life by Jesus" (Rom. 5:20,21). This was the purpose of the Law. And thus Paul quotes David's rejoicing in the righteousness imputed to him when he had sinned and had no works left to do - and changes the pronoun from "he" to "they" (Rom. 4:6-8). David's personal experience became typical of that of each of us. It was *through* the experience of that wretched

and hopeless position that David and all believers come to know the true 'blessedness' of imputed righteousness and sin forgiven by grace. The suffering and groaning of which Paul speaks in Rom. 8:17, 22-26 is in my view, probably a reference to the 'groaning' he has just been making about his inability to keep the Mosaic Law. Our helplessness to be obedient, our frustration with ourselves, is a groaning against sin which is actually a groaning in harmony with that of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, who makes intercession for us with the same groanings right now (Rom. 8:26). Indeed, those groanings are those spoken of in Heb. 5:7 as the groanings of strong crying and tears which the Lord made in His final passion. In this sense, the Spirit, the Lord the Spirit, bears witness with our spirit / mind, that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16). This clinches all I am trying to say. Our inability to keep the Law of God leads to a groaning against sin and because of sin, which puts us into a unity with the Lord Jesus as our Heavenly intercessor in the court of Heaven. But that wondrous realization of grace which is expressed so finely in Romans 8 would just be impossible were it not for the conviction of sin which there is through our experience of our inability to keep the Law of God. Our failure and groaning because of it becomes in the end the very witness that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16). God thereby makes sin His servant, in that the experience of it glorifies Him.

And then there's intellectual failure: the way we misunderstood Scripture, had wrong ideas which, over the years of prayerful Bible study, are being corrected. But my observation is that what I'm calling intellectual failure- e.g. a Bible reader believing in the immortality of the soul - usually has a moral reason behind it, subconsciously. We so often wilfully read Scripture the way we secretly want to understand it, willing ourselves to the same conclusions as our fathers. Prayer before daily Bible reading is essential; but it must be genuine prayer, an utterly sincere desire to be taught the way of God whatever this requires us to jettison.

The Way of Preaching

The experience of preaching leads to our growth. Paul Tournier in *The Meaning Of Persons* perceptively comments: "We become fully conscious only of what we are able to express to someone else. We may already have had a certain intuition about it, but it must remain vague so long as it is unformulated". This is why anyone involved in preaching, public speaking, writing or personal explanation of the Gospel to someone else will know that *they* have gained so much from having stated in so many words what they already 'know'. And in the course of making the expression, our own understanding is deepened, our personal consciousness of what we believe is strengthened, and thereby our potential for a real faith is enhanced. Tournier's observation is validated by considering the record of the healed blind man in Jn. 9. Initially he says that he doesn't know whether or not Jesus is a sinner, all he knows is that Jesus healed him. But the Jews force him to testify further, and in the course of his witness, the man explains to them that God doesn't hear sinners, and so for Jesus to have asked God for his healing and being heard...surely proved that Jesus wasn't a sinner. He was sinless. The man was as it were thinking out loud, coming to conclusions himself, as he made his bold witness (Jn. 9:31,33).

The parable of the sower leaves us begging the question: 'So how can we be good ground?' Mark's record goes straight on to record that the Lord right then said that a candle is lit so as to publicly give light and not to be hidden. He is speaking of how our conversion is in order to witness to others. But He says this in the context of being good ground. To respond to the word ourselves, our light must be spreading to all. The only way for the candle of our faith to burn is for it to be out in the open air. Hidden under the bucket of embarrassment or shyness or an inconsistent life, it will go out. We will lose our faith if we don't in some sense witness to it.

Witnessing is, in that sense, for our benefit. When the disciples ask however they can accomplish the standards which the Lord set them, He replied by saying that a city set on a hill cannot be hid (Mt. 5:14). He meant that the open exhibition of the Truth by us will help us in the life of personal obedience to Him.

Discussing Scripture with others has been invaluable in my own experience of Bible study. Particularly is it valuable to discuss with Christians and even non-believers who come from a totally different culture from your own. Thus discussion of the parables of the lost in Lk. 15 with Middle Eastern peasants raises a number of issues which few Western expositors have hit on - e.g. the ways in which the elder son's refusal to attend the banquet was such an insult to the father; the way an older man never runs in public and humiliates himself by doing so. The problem is, we come to Scripture through the lenses of our own culture and background. Leslie Newbigin, a lifetime missionary in India, commented: "We do not see the lenses of our spectacles; we see through them, and it is another who has to say to us, 'Friend, you need a new pair of spectacles'"(1). Newbigin had some thing of my own experience of the value of discussing Scripture with people from other backgrounds; he speaks of the need of "the witness of those who read the Bible with minds shaped by other cultures"(2). This is not only true in a world-culture sense but it is helpful to discuss with all manner of folk. Even though we may not agree with them, an hour spent in discussing Revelation with a JW, or Paul with a radical Christian feminist who thinks Jesus is a woman... all this sows stimulation in our subsequent reflections.

More than anything, preaching has taught me the immense value of the human person as an individual. The Lord's parable of the strange shepherd who leaves the 99 and gives his all for the one - the foolish one, the lost one, the antisocial one - is programmatic for me. The need is the call. If one person needs fellowship, forgiveness, love, the teaching of the Gospel, baptism, encouragement, re-fellowship, support, money, whatever... the value of them as an individual must be paramount. No matter what it costs us, how far we have to travel [in whatever sense], how much 'trouble' we get into, how foolish we look, how out on a limb we put ourselves. The value and meaning of the individual person was paramount in the Lord's teaching and example, and it must be in our worldviews too.

John Thomas wrote at the end of his life about his regret for the "theological gladiatorship" of his earlier years. Likewise, looking back, I see that, initially, I understood 'preaching' as merely debating and combating theological ideas opposed to my own - with no significance placed upon the value of the person with whom I was in discussion. It's not that I think the doctrines of our faith are any less important now than I did then. Actually, the opposite. It's just that that person on the other side of the fence to you has, just like you, their inner traumas and struggles, their secret conflicts and dramas... and yet all this becomes hidden behind the facade of doctrinal debate and argument. I've learnt that it is to the person we must appeal if we are to win them for Christ, or win them closer to Him as we seek. If we are to convert and help others to Jesus, rather than to ourselves, we need to find "another mode of relationship" than mere intellectual argument. Such argument alone will not convert or persuade towards the cause of Christ. And yet, sadly, so much of our collective preaching effort has been taken up with exactly this kind of fruitless debate. Doctrinal argument tends to divide; whereas it is the common areas of experience which tend to unite. And so a woman reaching out to other women, perhaps other young mothers, will be a far more likely case for conversion than knocking on the doors and engaging all and sundry in doctrinal debate. But that woman, if she is to bring about an authentic conversion, must all the same convert her fellow-woman to something. And she likely

will have to talk around all the host of misunderstandings and wrong ideas which her friend has been exposed to in this sadly confused and lost world.

The Way of Biblical Study

Daily Bible reading from the *Companion* has been a blessing to me. And pray, fervently and intensely, to really understand and respond; that the word may become flesh in us, as it was in the Lord. I can't recommend these habits strongly enough. Through all the ups and downs, failure and success, sin and righteousness, the light and the black, and all the shades of grey, this is a habit I have rigidly kept up. And of course, serious prayer. I am grateful, and maybe in a literal sense it will be 'eternally grateful', that my dear mother taught me to pray on my knees as a little boy. Little could she have imagined what she was doing for me by setting me up in that way from which I would not depart. How in sin, in danger of my life, under arrest by Moslem fanatics, in rejection, in adulation, alone in so many lonely hotel rooms in the service of the Gospel... serious prayer on my knees was my salvation. Who am I to really give advice?... but all I can say is: pray to God, and hear His voice in His word, daily, seriously, intently. And develop habits that enable this. Set your alarm clock just 10 minutes earlier, or whatever is required.

The Way of Grace

That salvation is indeed a pure gift from God, unattainable by our own efforts, becomes more and more clear and awesome to me. But His grace works out in other ways, apart from in our salvation. So many times I have been saved from death or serious injury by grace. It is grace that we have what health we have, life itself. Grace that we were born into a situation whereby in the end we heard the Gospel. It was God's grace that gave me wonderful parents and the finest wife, that preserved me in ways great and small time and again. And you must surely know the same sense of grace.

Realizing that we are in the grace of God, justified by Him through our being in Christ, leads us to a far greater and happier acceptance of ourselves as persons. So many people are unhappy with themselves. It's why they look in mirrors in a certain way when nobody else is watching; why they're so concerned to see how they turned out in a photograph. Increasingly, this graceless world can't accept itself. People aren't happy or acceptant of their age [they want to look younger or older], their body, their family situation, even their gender and their own basic personality. I found that when I truly accepted my salvation by grace, when the wonder of who I am in God's sight, as a man in Christ, really dawned on me, I became far happier with myself, far more acceptant. Now of course in another sense, we are called to radical transformation, to change, to rise above the narrow limits of our own backgrounds. This is indeed the call of Christ. But I refer to our acceptance of who we are, and the situations we are in, as basic human beings.

Duncan Heaster

News from Africa

news from ghana

KOFORIDUA

I was not well for a few years and stopped attending meetings. Since then I wrote to Bro. Francis Odiko about my mind and he also directed me to see Bro. Thomas. Unfortunately I had sickness and was admitted to St. Joseph's Hospital, Koforidua for a full year. Even the doctor considered me dead, but by the will of God I am still alive; I seem to have stomach trouble. But before I came back home all my books had been stolen and I am therefore in need of more; if this is possible, please send to me. I am still thinking of you and Duncan. I am receiving the *Testimony*, also Newsletters. May the Heavenly Father's blessing be with you all. I hope to hear from you. Thanks, once again, for your kind remembrance of me.

Bro. Emmanuel Saffro

SHAMA JUNCTION

"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, for you are dust and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19). Ever since this statement was made against mankind after the fall of our ancestor, Adam, all has not been well. The struggle for survival continues unabated each day. More often than not man finds himself entangled in a web of one sort or another during this struggle. He becomes frustrated, helpless and hopeless.

In these trying moments brethren and sisters sometimes forget that there is the One, and only One, Lord Jesus Christ who can deliver us out of that bottomless pit of our problems. "And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, 'Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her and enquire of her'. And his servants said to him 'Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor'" (1 Sam 28:5-7). Saul did not humble himself to the Lord, so it did not go well with him. We are not to lean on ourselves, but we should "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" (Prov 3:5,6).

Some people confide in other mortals for solutions to their problems. Some take solace in drinking alcohol. In the long run, they will be worse than before. Let us put our trust in the Lord through Jesus Christ, for he never fails. Consider: "This Shunammite woman put all her trust in the Lord, and though her only son died, she said to everyone she met on her way to the man of God who asked about the family, 'All is well'" (2 Kings 4:18-37). So in times of problems, let us with trust say, "All is well". Thank you for your great encouragement and the advice you gave me during the time of my bereavement. I don't know what to say for your love in Christ to me.

Bro Joseph Oppong

news from kenya

BUNGOMA

Thanks for your letter and *Gospel News*. We also thank God for a New Year in which we are critically watching present world events, in conjunction with Bible prophecy. They instil into us a great hope that our Saviour will soon appear. Kiswahili is a national language and almost everybody whether illiterate or not can speak and understand it; thus Kiswahili magazines or literature are equally understandable and profitable to us.

Last year's Youth convention from 23rd to 26th Dec 2005 at Kaptama Ecclesia in Mt. Elgon District was successful. It comprised of teachers and youths from various Ecclesias and friends whose co-operation made for excellent fellowship together. We were happy to witness the baptism of Sis Shamin Chemtai from Kaptama and Sis Rebecca Nafuna from Kaisagati. We are also happy to report the baptism of Bro Justo Simiyu of Kaptama, Bro Robert Namwekholio and Bro Simon Waliaula, both from Nalondo, during the Bible Study on 7th-8th January 2006 at Nalondo Ecclesia. They now share the brotherhood with us in Christ and have promised to work tirelessly in the Lord's vineyard.

On 13th to 14th January 2006 Bro. Moses Masika, Bro Laban Sirengo and I had the privilege of attending a Bible study held in Uganda at Bro. Robert Simiyu's home in Butimbwa village, where friends' contribution was good and their eagerness for true doctrine seemed promising. Due to this, we left them with some Bible literature and Simon Cheteka, Fred Bisuche, Gabriel Khisa, Beatrice Kuloba and Sarah Tingwa promised to be solidly behind us. We have also been invited to Korosyandeti (situated on the boarder of Western Kenya) and Eldoret for the same work. This signifies that we still have a long way to go and the work seems greater and greater, hence we need your prayers and your support with Bible literature e.g. *Key to Understanding the Bible* and *Key Cards* to enhance this work as we eagerly await the greater day of our Master's coming.

Otherwise, as far as the book "*How To Grow a Balanced Diet*" is concerned, we have formed a large group of people from different parts of the country with the intention and vision of initiating and extending agricultural projects countrywide, as agriculture remains the backbone of the economy and largest source of employment in most developing countries. Stagnation in agriculture is the principal explanation for poor economic performance. Rising agricultural productivity is most important for us. We are in existence under the already registered National NGO called Bungoma Rural Resources Program (BRRP).

Bro Nimrod Masika

MALONDO

The enclosed photograph was taken in February 1978 in Nairobi during a yearly Bible School. They had come to the Bible School as representatives of their ecclesias from all areas the truth had reached. This was the time when Bro. Leon Shuker and his Sister-wife were in Kenya for one full year. I want just to draw the attention of readers of *Gospel News* to the four older Brothers in the centre of the photo who were the first Christadelphians in Kenya; most readers in Kenya will recall them. Three of them are now asleep awaiting resurrection (1 Cor. 10:1-12).

Bro. John Muyala



Photo: Malondo Ecclesia 1978

MIWANI

Thanks for sending *Bible Basics* to Miwani ecclesia; continue sending them, as they are very helpful. The ecclesia is growing; there are five students, two old people who are illiterate, plus 11 young people ages 2-18. We have a lot of needs as Miwani has almost nothing. I request you to pray for our ecclesia. May God the Father bless all of you for the work you are doing.

Bro. Peter and Sis. Jane Omuny



news from malawi

BALAKA

I am very pleased to receive the parcel of Bible Reader's Calendars you sent. I find it very helpful to use and promise to share these with my brothers and sisters in my ecclesia and surrounding ecclesias, in order to encourage them to read the Bible daily. Thank you for your assistance in helping me to spread the gospel, may God bless you. I beg all Christadelphians everywhere to pray for each other that we may pass through temptation and troubles. Here in Malawi the problem of hunger and disease is still proceeding. As you know the very greatest problem we are facing in our community is disease. Through the help of God I met with officers of health regarding how to combat diseases and by the grace of God they promised to help us with some kinds of medicine (First Aid Kit). But before they do so special training is needed to give more knowledge, in addition to those things learnt through the book "*Where There Is No Doctor.*" There is no money for this training, which will take about five days. They are not Christadelphians but they are health officers. Because cholera disease has also affected us in our community, the problem is bigger than before. This place is away from the hospital, about 18km. Lastly, I wish you all the best in your work, may God bless you. If possible may you send my name to the following address that they may send me *Glad Tidings*.

Bro. Edson Makwecha



Photo: Well wishers from the clinic, left to right: Janet Tsokalawo Nkhoma, an assistant environmental health officer, Lyston Gomiwa Bauleni, a health surveillance assistant, with Bro. Edson Makwecha at Kalembo Health Centre after the meeting. 'Where Women Have No Doctor' has been sent to the clinic.) *MH*

CHIKWAWA

I am a student of a Christadelphian, Brother Robert Folley, and already studying *Introducing Bible Basics* and *Bible Basics*, therefore could you please send me these books and they will give me more information about the Word of the True God. Please do not forget to send me *Gospel News* regularly.

Harlod L.B. Temboh

DEDZA

The calendars are like a *Bible Companion* to read the Bible throughout the year. Thank you, brother, for sending me a pre-paid envelope, please continue this, as it makes it easy to communicate with each other. I want to continue receiving *Gospel News* and other literature. I beg you to keep my name on the mailing list. I am informing you, brother, that the government

has sold the telephone exchange company where I was receiving my letters, so I have changed my address. The name of my ecclesia is “Umodzi” which means, “Unite”.

Bro. A.E. Bvumbwe Phiri



Photo: Mangombo Sunday School and their teachers



Photo: KASIVA - Bro. Satenford Chibfumbi and his son.

DOMASI

Thank you very much, brother, I have received the copy of the Chichewa translation of *Bible Basics*. Many people here want Chichewa very much, so can you please send 20 more copies.

Bro. B.S. Kawonga

LILONGWE

I am preparing to be married. Remember the story of Abraham’s son Isaac. Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel (an Aramean from Mesopotamia) and sister of Laban, Genesis 25:19-20. Your young brother Isaac P. Nagaheba is forty years old, the same as Abraham’s son.

Bro. Isaac Pierre Nagaheba

It is by the grace of the Lord that you are sending me *Gospel News* magazine always, also received with thanks Chichewa *Bible Basics*. Please, if possible, send me two Chichewa Bibles, two English Bibles and a quantity of English *Bible Companions* for the brothers who are not able to buy them because of difficulties.

Bro. Henderson Sosola

MALUWA

Thank you for your letter and for sending *Gospel News* which is good, I can and will read that book day and night because it tells me and others of the sudden coming of our Saviour, Jesus. It also deals with our fellow brethren and sisters in different countries and what they do to strengthen people in Christ. I am a man of thirty-five years of age, my wife is Elizabeth and we have children – girls and boys. Before I close this letter I want to inform you that I have a problem with some verses in the Bible, so I enclose a paper with questions which I need help with.



Photo: Bro. Charles Kasonya & family

MANGOCHI

I didn't expect *Bible Basics* to be published in Chichewa (our mother tongue). It will be easily understood when studying. Here in Mangochi we have five ecclesias, so if possible send Chichewa copies so that they could be shared among them. May I contribute my opinion especially on "Who are you? How did you hear about Christadelphians?" I hope it could be more attractive if we add the denomination we came from as follows: I am Morris Assani, aged 40. I live in Mangochi, Malawi. I found out about Christadelphians from Beyard Malekesa, a friend, when I was an Anglican member.



Photo: Bro. Morris Assani

MIGOWI

I thank the Almighty God for the love He has shown to His people at Makina Christadelphian Church. He has called brothers and sisters from all the corners of the earth to join us to be one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:29). The number of brothers and sisters who assemble at Makina ecclesia has grown to over 200. May God, who brought these people into His wonderful light, be praised.

Bro. Symon Wanyekeya

MONKEY BAY

I was very glad to receive the calendar for 2006, it will help me in reading the Bible. So I write to request four other calendars so that fellow brethren and sisters can have their own. May I also request *Bible Basics*, as there is a shortage of these?

Bro. Langton Pasulani

MZIMBA

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you for the letter you wrote to me, which contains the information about the famine here in Southern Africa. We always thank you, brothers and sisters, who take part in our problems. The bag of food from the CBM which a brother or sister has received will be enough for a month. Thanks a lot for the pamphlet, "Useful relief of pain." This shows the love to the victim or compassion to one with a problem.

Bro Humphrey Banda

NENO

If possible send three Chichewa Bibles and *Bible Basics* in Chichewa. In my mind comes this statement, 'I cannot allow the wisdom of God to be buried with the material comforts of the world'. Lastly, please pray for us. We are on a journey to the Kingdom of God.

Bro. Edmond Store

NSANJE

I appreciate the material you have sent me several times. I would like to ask you to continue sending more gospel material and if possible one Bible. Be reminded that the message of God is supposed to be taught in truth because it is only the truth that sets people free.

Bro. Stuart Bingala

We are here for the task that God gave us and through our united efforts I believe people in Nsanje district will come back to the Bible. The calendars help a lot. Please send us some more. We are trying to extend more branches according to the efforts we are holding. Young people seem to come, but from December we experienced the rainy season, and evangelism becomes a bit difficult as our branches have no shelters, but still God is true to His Word.

Bro. M.P. M'ngundeni

NTAJA

Your letter drew my attention to those people who are sharing the word of our beloved Saviour. I heard of the terrorist attacks in England, that left a lot of lives of innocent people dead and many more severely hurt. I strongly agree with you that the Son of God is about to appear. We are serious members who are also eagerly waiting for the Bible literature that you send. I would like to thank you for the books you send me time and again. I know that they take a long time by sea mail from your homeland to that of mine. Let us join together in Christ even though we have never met before. One day our Lord will make it possible for you and me to meet. I was very glad when I received two books full of touching words entitled *Bible Basics* and *Gospel News*, I really appreciate that. Our beloved country is really called "The Warm Heart of Africa"; we are among the eight poorest countries of the world Malawi being number five. I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to you for sending me a Chichewa translation of *Bible Basics*. I would like to urge you to encourage brethren and sisters to pray for our nation; Malawi, as you are aware, has been declared a state of disaster. As I am writing 29 people have already died due to hunger related illnesses, one of the deceased being my relative.

Bro. Tholesi Nazombe



Photo: Bro. Tholesi Nazombe

TENGANI

I was baptised into Christ November 1997. I am very delighted to inform you that I have received with joy the Holy Bible, the Bible Reader's Calendar and a set of model answers to *Bible Basics* and your informative letter. I have seen with my own eyes that this is a very special, nice Bible with wide margins so that I can make notes in. I have 25 students who are studying and giving answers to *Bible Basics*. They brought their answers to me for marking. A set of model answers enables me to go into them in detail and mark each and every answer correctly. I am just a local farmer. Last year we didn't receive enough rainfall; all plants have dried up because of droughts, resulting in no harvesting. This means that Malawi as a country is going to have famine throughout the whole year. I am very grateful to inform you that I have written my articles and they will be sent to you for publication in *Gospel News*. Recently I have also received *Bible Basics* in Chichewa translation, but one book is not enough because Chichewa is in great demand here, so send more and more, if available, to distribute to other readers. As God's work is growing bigger and bigger we have formed a group called "Zambezi Christadelphian Youth Group", who have been going into different areas preaching the true Word of God. Here in Nsanje district we have established many Christadelphian ecclesias. Although this group is doing its best with preaching and establishing ecclesias it is also facing problems and one of

these problems is transportation. The simple transportation that we need is bicycles.

Bro. Venancion Malata Phiri

I am happy to receive *Gospel News* but I am sorry to say some of the other materials sent had been stolen and the copies of the Chichewa *Bible Basics* were missing.

Bro. Eleck Byala

THYOLO

The “World’s destiny revealed by Daniel” you enclosed in the envelope is reminding me that my faith in God which should grow every day in my life. Please continue to pray for us as we are still praying for you and let God guide you for ever. The Magazine you send to me is helping us and encourages us to know God’s way clearly.

Bro Smart Lombe.



Photo: Bro. Lombe and Bro. Maleso

ZOMBA

I am a Christadelphian in Malawi and have a question about Revelation 14:1-6 and Ecclesiastes 7:16-17. I have tried my best to understand this but get so confused, so I am asking for assistance, please help me.

Bro. Stephan Maseya John

Let me take this opportunity to inform you about the church: all is going well, we have renovated the building but the problem is that we have used very old iron sheets, which leak during the rainfall. This is so due to financial predicaments that we cannot afford new iron sheets since they are too expensive here. The church lacks doors and the walls are not painted at all. These are just to mention a few of the problems we are facing. However, God is serving us well.

Bro B. Ntala

news from nigeria

AKURE

My father died on July 3, 2005 and I am the eldest of the children, who totalled 11 (from three wives, two of whom are deceased); my mother is now aged 85 years and my father died aged 88 years. The onus of giving him a befitting burial fell on me. My father was an Anglican, but did not quarrel with me for being a Christadelphian, since in his opinion we all confess the Bible. Here we are heterogeneous – many languages but one nation. We sometimes misunderstand each other through misinterpreting the languages. In fact, some people do not fully understand the English language, which makes them shun the Christadelphians here because the mode of preaching is by the English language. So this is one of the disadvantages of striving to win some of these people. Another thing is poverty.

Bro. Sunday Awodumila

ALAYI

I still need *Gospel News* and other literature. About the Igbo translation of *Bible Basics*, I wish to have some copies of it. Igbo is our own language in Abia State. It will be of interest for the people to read about the gospel in their own familiar tongue. May God grant us strength, wisdom and knowledge to continue working in His field until the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bro. Okore Ekeoma

ENUGU

The book sent to me, *The Judgement to Come*, is a stirring soul-trigger, making one search the inner mind - very educative. My friends wanted to snatch the book from me, but I promised to write for some more. Please do not relent in sending any books for teaching others and myself. The days are numbered for us to welcome Jesus in Jerusalem for his promised breaking of bread with us (Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:18).

May our Lord continue to bless you and your efforts to preach the word.

Golden Onuoha.

IKWUANO

I was hoping it would have been possible for me to come to see you when I was visiting the UK; I came to Croydon twice, but my host did not make it possible for us to meet. We had a fraternal gathering in Eastern Nigeria and I was asked to present the opening address.

Bro. J.O. Uwasomba

KADUMA

I thank you very much for *Gospel News* which you have sent to me over the past years and hope I will continue enjoying the same in the years ahead, if Jesus remains away. I received the 2006 Bible Reader's Calendar. I pray that God will bless you and enable you to continue His work so that the believers may be well equipped in the knowledge of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ. I have heard about an Igbo language *Bible Basics*. May I know if there is a Yoruba translation? I would like you to send me one and I would also request the book *Elpis Israel* for my further studies.

Bro. Anthony Coker

news from rwanda

I must tell you I can only manage a little English; my main concern is being able to gather more information and to gain a good understanding. You cannot imagine the difficulties here in the RDC: there is no employment; it is really difficult to get into an English language school and which costs a lot (10 dollars a month). I do not have the means to pay this much. To close, I ask you to forgive me for replying to you in French.

Bro Theophile Mwagalwa (Bukavu ecclesia)

news from south africa



Photo: Candu Ecclesia S.A.



Photo: Candu hall nearing completion

IDUTYWA

We are happy to announce the baptism of Sis NOKUTULA MLIBALI who lives in a district with the unlikely name of Collywobbles. There is another Sister nearby, Andiswa Menge, who introduced her to us. They have been talking to others in the area and classes have been held there. She will officially be a member of the Candu meeting. One can see the Candu village from Collywobbles, but a round trip by road is more than 60km.

Work on our meeting room has progressed well and we hope to start meeting there in the near future. The Sisters in the ecclesia have also started a pre-school creche with 23 attending.

Bro Norman Durk

RANDBURG

My holiday ended last Sunday when I left the Eastern Cape Province of the Republic of South Africa where I went soon after attending the Summer Bible School in Kwazulu, Natal Province. The work there is so encouraging seeing the response of the people. We visited three areas and signed up about 180 new contacts for the correspondence course. We visited three other areas where we have contacts and conducted a series of seminars. I left Bro Norman Durk there until April when he returns to the UK for his trip to Georgia. I am very much moved by his work. God willing I am planning to go to Malawi very soon for a series of Seminars. I will feed you back upon my return.

Bro Emmanuel Mphambo.

news from tanzania

BARIADI

Beloved, we who ought to be the brothers of all Christadelphians in the world, let us love one another, for love is of God and he who loves is born of God and knows God (1 John 4:7). But if any one has the world's goods, and sets his heart against his brother, how does God's love abide in him? (1 John 3:17). If a brother or sister needs clothes and doesn't have enough to eat what good is there in your saying to them "God bless you! Keep warm and eat well!" if you don't give the necessities of love (James 2:15-16). Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back. (Luke 6:38). Let the thief no longer steal but rather let him labour, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need (Eph 4:32. Acts 4:34-35. Romans 15:26-27).

Bro. Joseph Isamla

DAR-ES-SALAAM

This end we are busy preaching the Gospel as well as praying for the Lord's second coming, which seems to be very near. The following are the highlights of his second coming as we have just learnt. Shall we share our findings?

He is soon coming – Rev. 22:7.

The return will be sudden – 1 Thess. 5:2.

He will soon come to deliver creation from the curse – Romans 8:22.

Then peace and righteousness will reign on earth – Isaiah 2:4.

The outcome of this move is prosperity on earth – Isaiah 65:22-25.

But some say that he is late in coming back - not quite, God is giving us time to repent and be saved – 2 Peter 3:9-10.

Dear brother/sister, shall we use this time of delay to repent and come back to our Creator? Yes indeed, it is the *right time* to do so.

Bro. Samuel Mushi

IFAKARA

“When the unclean spirit has gone out of the man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest; and finding none he says ‘I will return to my house from which I came’. And when he comes he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first” (Luke 11:24-26). Since God is one, and ours is *not* a world of spirits, the unclean spirit here must be the negative attributes in our nature as opposed to spirituality. These are things like selfishness, anger, greed, jealousy, covetousness, hatred etc. They are primitive and manifest in our ‘old man’! When we follow Christ. these are fought out by the spirit of Christ in us as we struggle to be obedient to ‘The Word’, they become ineffective, they pass through ‘waterless places’. But suppose for some reason, the believer falls out of grace and loses his faith. Such things will come to him saying, ‘I’ll return to my house from which I came’. The reason is that it’s a nice place for him again ‘swept and put in order’. Next, the spirit will attract other spirits more devastating. A man could be an adulterer. After conversion, we expect, he’ll forsake adultery. He may, after that, get offended by a brother/sister so much so that he breaks from the ecclesia and doesn’t attend the meetings or associate in ecclesial activities any more (doesn’t gather with Christ, v.23). The outcome being that he won’t remain strong in faith, and will, after some time, be a house swept and put in order for fleshly things. The spirit will soon fetch other unclean spirits to ‘enter (the man) and dwell there’; He may perhaps be given to drunkenness, slander, wrath, or even murder. His last state ‘becomes worse than the first’. The apostle Peter relates such a believer to a dog that ‘turns back to his own vomit’ and a pig that having been washed ‘wallows in mire’ (2 Peter 2:21,22).

Bro. Kim Mnzava



Photo: Bro. John Owen (UK) speaking and Bro. John Mnkande translating into Kiswahili, during CBM visit to Ifakara.



Photo: Bro. Alistair speaking and Bro. Kim Mnzava translating.

KASULU

I would like to send my thanks for your work in publishing *Gospel News*, which I receive frequently. Also I would like to tell you the news which has happened at Mtabila. Last year we had great joy to receive visitors from UK, Bre. John Owen and Alistair MacDonald, Benoit Mukendi from Arusha and Alinoti Samuel from Kigoma. We had some exhortations and the breaking of bread to remember our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank our Lord for the love in Christ, which we find in fellowship with brethren and sisters world-wide; may God bless them and strengthen all in our work to the Kingdom of peace.

Bro. Charles Hakizimana

LUGUFU 1

Our Heavenly Father is worthy to be praised in all. Everything is going well in our spiritual life. We are thankful for the nice time we had at our fraternal gathering last year at our ecclesial hall, attended by 40, around the subjects:

- 1) The God we hardly know Creator of all things (Bro Isidore E. Mwibeleca).
- 2) The Satan of the Bible (Bro. Amnobe Iyungu)
- 3) The Resurrection and the Judgement (Bro. Lwendo Buluma)
- 4) The Life in Christ (Bro. Rehani Pascal)

We do express our thanks to all the members of Lugufu 1 ecclesia for their contribution. We therefore hope that if Jesus Christ tarries we may, God willing, have another gathering. Bro. Anzulini Makutano has returned back into fellowship after satisfactory interview.

Bro. Isidore Mwibeleca

I had many problems in the camp. I was troubled because I preached the gospel to one pastor of the Society of Friends (the Quakers). I am firm in my faith and I take courage to continue in my preaching work and I pray God to give me the strength. Brethren and sisters, remember that when we are persecuted for what we believe life is very difficult and the first thing we must do is to pray. When we have burdens, we are instructed in the Scriptures to cast our burden upon the Lord, read Psalm 55:22. All through the Scriptures we read of the worthies of old who were persecuted for their belief and faith in the Lord God and without a doubt as we get closer to the return of Jesus the persecution will get worse. The ignorance and wickedness in the world concerning the Word of God is paramount and anyone who stands up for the things of God will see more apathy and experience persecution.

Bro. Amnobe Iyungu



Photo: A gathering at Muyovosi Ecclesia

MBOZI-MBEYA

I am in receipt of your letter concerning the Bible reader's calendar, the sample you sent is good and I am sure it will be useful for brothers and sisters. Please send us ten more for Igale and Mlowo ecclesias. Please enrol the newly baptised at Igale for receiving *Gospel News*: Bro. Mwile James, Bro. Gerald Mwashilindi and Sist. Rahel Mwamwezi

Bro Raphael Mkeya

MOROGONO

Brothers in Christ, let us all praise the Lord for his grace extended to us in all walks of our lives. When I think of this world and the way people work in the vineyard I feel very indebted to God, who created me. I work for a long number of hours each day, leaving me with few hours for rest and reading. I would like to confirm to you that I have been receiving *Gospel News*. I hope that in the very near future I will be among the main article contributors in *Gospel News* The editorial and articles written by different brothers and sisters from all over the world are so very educative, encouraging, pleasing and constructive that I can't stand missing them. Please, if you are able to, supply me with the book "*Where there is no Doctor*".

Bro. Nkonge Mwakatage



Photo: Kasulu Sunday School

MUSOMA

Musoma ecclesia is well and all are okay. We were visited by Bro. Michael Owen last year, two contacts interviewed but we came out without any baptisms, as it is good for them to know more of the Christadelphian beliefs. They were told to keep on learning, which they are busy doing at present with the help of their tutors. I praise the Lord, as they did not give up. Here in Musoma I was staying with a young girl, my cousin, who came from Kenya and stayed here with me. She was pregnant, that is why her Mum decided for her to come here and stay with me and after giving birth to go back home and continue with her schooling. This girl died while giving birth. It was a big loss which remains in my mind till now. This girl left me with a one-day-old baby girl, called Liz Marion, who is under my care. God giveth and God taketh. This sudden death caused a lot of disturbance. Because here in Musoma we didn't have any active brother at the time, I called the Mwanza brethren who helped me a lot. The infant is here with me. The girl, after giving birth, started to have a fit, convulsed twice and finally died on her third convulsion. Due to this shock I was unstable for some time. Now what can I do with this innocent infant who remains in my hands as the mother needed my help in her life?

Sis. Monica Achieng

NYARUGUSU

We would like to inform you that the clothing aid which you sent to the Sunday School children has been received. For that we thank you because you remind us of the advice of Paul, see Acts 20:28. In fact we are informing you that here at Nyarugusu Camp when it is the rainy season many Christians are not going to church because it is very cold and muddy. Nonetheless the materials of cold and mud are very important to us. We have not broken bread for some months, as we have no money to purchase wine; we do our best to buy wine and bread but today is

terrible.

Bro. Bawili Ilangyi, Chairman, Bro. Akulu Mmandama, Sec, Bro. Mboko Asumani, Treasurer.

news from uganda

BUGIRI

How are you this lovely spring morning? What sunshine God is blessing us all with. I was very happy to receive your letter. It made me glad to receive the literature, which I have never seen since I was born. It encourages me to read the Bible daily.

David Wafula

BUTACHO

Indeed I was so privileged and delighted to receive your letter, books, Bible reading calendar and the book, the *Death of the Cross*, which I am finding so interesting and educative and I hope for more such support. I am also reminding you that I would like to receive my own personal copy of *Gospel News*. I also request you to send a copy of *'Where There Is No Doctor'* for our Butacho ecclesia. Concerning the issue of drought crops, there are various cassava, also maize, brought to us by NSARWU, but they need to be used on fertile land or the use of fertiliser; this programme is going on in Uganda, but they will help if people form groups and register.

Bro. Mayende Erisania Sifuna



Photo: **LWAKHAKHA** Ecclesia is 'led' by Bro Francis Makosia. Really enthusiastic Ecclesia helped by Mt Elgon area and Kenya

KABERAMAIDO

Thank God for His wonderful protection of us during our terrible situation and through your prayers. We are now back home struggling to rebuild homes, which were burnt down by the rebels. So pray for us continually that God will bring an end to this war. Unfortunately some books which were given to help our ecclesia grow, have been burnt inside houses. We are therefore kindly requesting you to send us books for Bible study and for our preaching work, also *'Where There Is No Doctor'* and *'How to Grow a Balanced Diet'*. We are very thankful for printed papers and our *Gospel News* magazine which strengthens our faith. We are still weak in getting our homes built and very busy farming the land; we also have children with us facing problems of health – measles, malaria etc. May Almighty God bless you all so much for the struggle you are constantly making to provide Christadelphians world wide with God's inspired words of life.

Bre. Selestino Ejom and Opio Bosco

KIGANDALO

Here at Kilolmayuge all God's work is well, especially Bible study. In Northern Uganda there are wars, but I pray that all will be well after you have put us in your prayers. I send my warm thanks for *Gospel News*. I am happy to inform you that we enjoyed some baptisms when seven students were converted to our Faith. So we thank God for the wonderful work He is doing. I request your prayers for us all.

Bro. Samuel Onyango

MABALE

We in the Mt. Elgon area are delighted to announce the baptisms at the end of last year of 12 Brothers and Sisters: 3 (one Brother and two Sisters) for Surme ecclesia; 4 (two Brothers and two Sisters) for Mt. Elgon and 5 (four Brothers and one Sister) for the Small Lwakhakha ecclesia. (The latter is a temporary name, but will be approved during the next AGM.) Let us all pray for these Brothers and Sisters that they will grow, and remain strong, in faith.

Bro. Francis Maweli

MBARARA

Thanks for the *Gospel News* which i received sometime back, may the good Lord bless you as we wait for His coming. I read many messages in that magazine and I saw it as very important especially for us youth. I promise to send my article in due course. I am going to the Youth Camp at Jinja at Easter, God willing.

Bro. Moses Sunday

news from zambia

CHIPATA

Greetings to you all in our Master's Name, our Lord Jesus Christ, for whom we are waiting patiently to bring peace on this evil and violent world. We hope He comes very soon. My family and I are okay, just looking forward and hoping that maybe this year the rain will do us fine. I am just writing this letter to let you know that I have brothers who would be very happy to start receiving the *Gospel News* and to ask if you have got the audio tape cassettes containing preaching.

Bro. Alfred Bwalya

KABOMPO

I was a New Apostolic member and was chosen as a section leader who was given eight churches. After knowing the truth I was baptised and stopped being a member of the N.A. church. When all the leaders of the church heard this they were telling stories about me which were not true. My wife, who has also now been baptised, was not happy with me stopping being a leader and following a church, which had only six brothers and no sister at that time. Her reason was that the N.A. minister was helping us with our daily bread, since I do not work. But I did not mind to having the truth, the true food. After a good number of months we started getting on better than we were during the leadership season. Brother John and Sister Sally Palmer came to Kabompo and they brought local language Bibles for our wives. It gave me the time to start teaching my wife the true gospel. Thanks be to the Lord that on 23rd October 2005 my wife was baptised by Brother Nelson Bwalya from Kitwe. As the eunuch went rejoicing after being baptised by Philip (Acts 8:39), it was the same after the baptism, we went home rejoicing with my wife. When we reached home everyone of my earthly family was very happy to hear that my wife was baptised. It came to my mind that if people on earth can be happy with what has taken place, how much more the thousands of angels in heaven? There was great joy. My wife has now learnt that life in Christ is easier than in the world. Read Matthew 11:28-30.

Bro. Charles and Sis Cecilia Muhupu



Photo: Brother Charles and Sister Cecilia Muhupu and their children, Titus Soueka Muhupu and baby girl Ethel Muhupu.

KABWE

From the bottom of my heart I must say, I find the magazine so informative, really there is no magazine that compares to *Gospel News*. Please, brother, keep up the good work. I feel the article, 'Can we be His disciples?' by Duncan, was wholesome. It brings out many facts which mankind cannot run away from. I am glad to inform you that I wrote my last Diploma paper on 2nd December. I was told I won't be able to get my results until I settle the fees I am owing the college.

Bro. Lapulani Malata

KAFUE

Is it necessary to partake of the memorial emblems in order to be covered by Jesus' sacrifice and receive everlasting life on earth in the kingdom? No. Nothing in the Bible suggests that such God-fearing people as Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Joseph, Moses and David ever partook of these emblems. Yet they and all others desiring endless life on the earth will have exercised faith in God and Christ in provision of Jesus' ransom sacrifice (John 3:36; 14:1). For everlasting life we too must exercise such faith. Our presence at the weekly observance of Christ's death serves as a reminder of that great sacrifice and should deepen your gratitude for it. The apostle John emphasised the importance of Jesus' sacrifice when he said: "I am writing you (fellow anointed ones) these things that you may not commit a sin. And yet, if anyone does commit a sin, we have a helper with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. And he is a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, yet not for ours only but also for the whole world's" (1 John 2:1,2). Anointed ones can say that Jesus' sacrifice is a propitiatory cover for their sins, making everlasting life possible for obedient mankind.

Bro Lotson Kayuni

KASAMA

We are very grateful for all the arrangements you made to make life smooth and enjoyable. Please continue with this spirit of love and dedication for the work of the Lord. We have nothing to give you, but you know that the Lord will give the reward to his faithful servants on that day when he gathers them to him.

Bro. Joshua Mushili

Receive our heartfelt greetings in our Lord's Name. I am pleased to inform you that I was baptised in 2002 at Mlowo Ecclesia by Bro. Simon Mwakalinga of Isango Ecclesia in Mbeya, Tanzania, after eight years of serious search and study of the faith, doctrines and beliefs. I left the Catholic church in 1990 and remained without faith until 1995 when I came across your study course through Bro. Mwamasika, whom I met in 1996 for the first time. By 2001 I had studied the course and completed it more than four times and knew much through the books and pamphlets. I finally decided to be interviewed and baptised after the search which brought about a full conviction in me by exposing me to the Light of Truth. Thank God for you all. I thank

you once more concerning your spiritual encouragement about the second coming of our Lord and Saviour and for your hopeful prayer that the Lord will arrange for me to have some help. In my prayers everyday these have been the exact feelings I have had.

Bro. Boniface Simpanzye

KAZEMBE

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone 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 and aim in the right direction, looking unto Jesus, who is able to redeem us.

Bro. John Kasanda



Photo: Bro Nelson Bwalya baptising Bro Vincent Mwense with Bro Darkwell's help.

Below: Bro Nelson interviewing Vincent for baptism with Bro Darkwell as witness.



KITWE

I would very much like to explore the possibility of spreading the gospel in Sakania and Mokambo, in the Congo. I am contacting our brethren of Lubumbashi to discuss with them, but would need some financial support to achieve this. I am still waiting the arrival of Bible Basics which you sent by sea mail.

Bro. Robert M. Miwele

Early this year you were producing a book with practical lessons on learning to read English by reading the Bible based on the Gospel of Mark. Do you have these books? Would you please send me a couple of these?

Bro Elvin Muntemba

LIVINGSTONE

I want to thank God for the love he has shown in my life. I am saying so because since I started lessons I have seen my spiritual growth; I have come to learn a lot of things which I could not known have without them. During my study of the 40 lessons I used to receive the Glad Tidings also, which helped me a lot. After finishing the 40 lessons I started receiving the New Life in Christ which I have just completed. At the beginning of this year I got into contact with other brothers in town. This was after I received a programme from our linkman, Brother Walker, about his visit to Zambia. This made me read some books and literature provided by brothers. All this and the lessons I had from 2001 to this time contributed much to my desire to learn more. So when Bro. Andrew Walker came he found that I was ready to be baptised, which also he did with love on 17th August 2005. He baptised three of us on the same day. To me this is a turning point in my life; I used to attend the Church of God but now I am with the Christadelphians. The

brothers who were baptised with me on the same day are Bro. L. Ilishebo and Bro. Cephas Sikanyika. After my baptism a brother gave me *Gospel News*. After reading through it I could not believe that Christadelphians were such a big family. Several of us would like some Bible tapes to listen to and deepen our understanding of the Truth.

Bro John Kakinga

LUSAKA

I was baptised on 10/2/2002 and ever since I have been receiving *Gospel News* and I am a very interested reader of the magazine, so I don't want to miss it. I have *Bible Basics*, *Why are we Here?* and now I am reading *Exploring the Bible*. My tutor is very keen and sends me some books.

Bro. Davies S. Nthara

Warm greetings, and hopefully, God willing, this letter will find you in good health, spiritually and physically. As for me, I am well but am so sorry for my long silence, I am now able to write again. I received a parcel of *Bible Basics* and have put some in the main Lusaka library and given some to people who are interested in our doctrines and God's truth. I am requesting some more *Bible Basics*. I am also asking someone to send me a KJV, Bible –with a *Bible Companion*.

Bro. Charles Daka



Photo: Bro Charles Daka with Sunday School Children

Vashti was the queen of King Xerxes and there is much to learn from her story. She reminds us of those who after being called out of darkness, are disobedient to the words and ways of God. Vashti was so proud of herself because of her beauty (Esther 1:11). The inspired word of God tells us not to be proud lest we lose what the Sovereign Lord has blessed us with (Daniel 5:20, 4:30, Esther 1:19). Esther, on the other hand, is someone to emulate. She was a person who obeyed Mordecai's instructions continuously through her life (Esther 2:20), and eventually through that, she was crowned queen (Esther 2:17) instead of Vashti. Brothers and sisters, as believers of God's way and His promises, we are called out of darkness into His marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9). Since we know that what we are called we must pay more careful attention, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away and forfeit the grace that could be ours (Jonah 2:8). We need to know that God first loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Remember Vashti: God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble (Proverbs 3:34). Let us have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. Vashti was disallowed to enter the presence of the king Xerxes (Esther 1:19). Those who disobey God (the wicked) will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10). We were bought with a price, not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus. Therefore let us set our minds on things above, not on earthly things (Col.3:2). Just as we received Jesus at our baptism let us continue to live in him (Col.2:6) by obeying his commands (John14:15,21) and when he comes he will allow us into his Kingdom. (1 Thess.4:16-18). Let us deny all forms of ungodliness (Titus 2:12-14). May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of God's power be with us all.

Bro. Paul Chembe



Photo: Bro Nelson Bwalya presenting literature to advanced Bible students

MUFULIRA

Quite a lot has happened recently. We've been hearing of wars and so many confusions in many nations, as to who will lead the countries and such like. Finally, we've seen that the new President in Liberia is now a woman, and many women in various areas are now aiming for the same position. Elections here in Zambia will be conducted next year, if the Lord still remains away, which will be Tripartite, that is, Presidential, Parliamentary and Local government. We've seen so far, so many political parties coming into view. This is just not of any importance for us, as we are seeking the Lord's Kingdom to come – may it be soon! Mufulira Ecclesial Youth Group has resumed meetings every Sunday after the memorial service, with the total number (so far) of 23, out of which only five are baptised. We pray that more will come to know the Word of the Lord and so respond to His calling. We hope to have our 'Revelation Study', to be presented by Bro. Nelson Bwalya. He is doing well at the moment. We pray his health continues like it is, as it was so sad to see him sick. I am having very poor sight these days, so I had to see an optician here in Mufulira who prescribed the type of glasses I should be using for my eyes. Well, had Nelson not provided the frame for the lenses, I would have been able to afford them. Unfortunately, Bro. Nelson didn't have that type of lens. So I had to pay k70,000 (about 10 pounds) for fixing the lenses. The type is quite big for me, but I like them because they cover the whole eyes, and are 'SP Colourmatic', so I can use them for both reading and to provide shade when in the sun.

Thank you for the books you enclosed, by the Lord's grace. Earlier on I received a letter from Bro./Sister Bob Webb of Horley Ecclesia; it was so good to hear from them. The Sunday School is doing very well, and the U.K. team that visited us, brought some material we needed, especially books for colouring for the infants. They are now enjoying their lessons, as they learn fast by seeing the pictures of what is being taught them. We'll see how far the books will take us. I've just knocked off from school and I enjoyed the topic we started looking at yesterday, which is the 'Braking System'. Motor mechanics is one field I never thought could be valuable and interesting, as many people take it, but I am finding it just super! It's one field that can allow self-employment – which I just want to do. We are being introduced to Entrepreneurship Studies, which we have every Wednesday; and tomorrow, God willing, will just be another day. I am enjoying the lessons in this area as well. For the past years, since the institution was established, not any group undertook Entrepreneurship as we are. It is really nice to be trained for self-employment isn't it? God willing, I plan to take up a driving course – as soon as I have sufficient funds.

Bro. Silas K. Chishimba



Photo: Mufulira Sisters at work. Catharine, Grace, Loveness, Rodah, Nwale, Elizabeth & Jane

MUZOKA

A man can never be lonely if he is working or thinking. Read Prov.17:22. A contented mind, a cheerful spirit is health to the body and health to the soul. We need to keep up good work till the end and I have seen that personal evangelism can win more souls than pulpit evangelism. So let's put our hands together in doing this for a wonderful reward and the grace of God shall be with us continuously.

Bro. Wilfred Chibomba

NDOLA

Thanks be to the Lord for what CAT is doing in my life and I pray for the furtherance of the work. Also if the Lord God permits, I and Bro. Nelson Bwalya of Kitwe Ecclesia and Bro. Joseph Lumuna of Mufulira Ecclesia will visit North Western Province to see Maheba Refugee Camp, Solwezi, Kabompo and Mufumbwe (Chizela Basic School).

Bro. Harris N. Mulongesha



Photo: Sister Maureen Kombe, Brother Harris Mulongesha and Sister Deophister Kazembe

Over here, we, as a body of Christ, at Ndola Ecclesia, are doing relatively well except for a few minor health problems here and there. Thank you very much for your continued support with your regular informative Gospel News which has been spiritually edifying and I would like to continue being on your mailing list next year and beyond. No amount of words would be enough to express my innermost gratitude on the services you have personally rendered to me starting in 1987, during which period you actively gave me the necessary spiritual food leading to my putting on the Saving Name of our Master in August 1990. Winifridah joins me in wishing you continued good health in the Lord's vineyard.

Bro. Dennis C. Kombe

May our living God abundantly bless you for the wonderful work you are doing, therefore do not throw away your confidence which has a great reward (Hebrews 10:35-39). For you have need of endurance, so that when you have the will of God you may receive what is promised, but the righteous one shall live by faith and if we shrink back and are destroyed, we cannot blame anybody because we have all the necessary materials to read. Bibles are being sent to us, different kinds of magazines for us to read, therefore it is important to copy our Lord Jesus Christ. Though Son of God, he was the same as ourselves, tempted in all points as we are, (Hebrews 2:14). therefore we too may be accounted worthy to be with him in that day, none is worthy in his own right, may he soon come, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. (Heb. 12:2). Our God hates pride. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, but he that does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15-17). We should have a faith tried by fire to prove it's worth. (1 Peter 1:7). Abraham believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. It is through the sufferings of Jesus that God can become our Father. We must believe now if we are to enjoy a part in future blessings, but we must pay just as much attention to what God expects of His children now and appreciate the blessings now of being members of the divine family. Let us heed the lessons written for our learning in order to be

children in whom God is well pleased. We should behave as children of light, as members of ecclesias. In Paul's letter, he encourages us to be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

Bro. James Mwanza



Photo: SOLWEZI - Bro. Joseph Kapimpa on the Telex

news from zimbabwe

BANKET

We ask for God's intervention, We have tried to live in a different ways but failed. Everyone is crying day and night; we have tried all the way, all actions, but nothing fruitful comes out. Right now we have the same thinking that you have, only God's intervention will bring the happiness we are dreaming of. The time is up. Believe me, we are now living in the last days. Up to date, all the signs of Christ's coming have been fulfilled.

Bro. Pindurai Banda

The mind is the part of our nature that deals with knowledge. It is our rational part that absorbs data, stores information, links various bits to each other and makes decisions. If you want to build up knowledge about anything you tuck away information about it in your mind, then use it as and when you want it. Knowing God is different. You know Him with your heart. You can absorb masses of facts and ideas about Him in your mind, but it is with your heart that you know Him as a person. God promised that the exiles in Babylon would learn to know Him in a new way after they had repented, humbled themselves and sought His pardon. They would come to new knowledge of Him as a result of a change of heart, a deep self-examination and a new hunger for Him. If you have a hard or bitter heart, or one that is bent on evil you will never know God. If you harbour resentment, nurse a grudge or secretly engage in something totally contrary to God's will, then your heart is set elsewhere than on knowing God. You can only know Him when you put Him first in everything. Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mk. 12:30). That is the way to know God. Do we love Him with all our hearts?

Bro David Yelulani

God is in charge of events and everything depends on His will. People tend to respond to this truth in one of two ways: they say either, Then you can't blame me, I am not responsible, or, There's nothing I can do about it so I will not bother. The heart of the matter is not, Is God really in control? but, what kind of God is He? If He is merciful and gracious, then there's no better place to be than in His hands. What Paul teaches in Rom. 9:18-20 had been clearly promised in the Jews' own Scriptures, and confirm two points: right from the start God intended to include Gentiles in His family and, second, the true believers in God had always been a minority. In Israel, the Jews who responded to Paul's preaching of Jesus were that remnant. Far from being puppets on a string, we are called to put our trust freely in Jesus. The Jews had become proud

of their law and of their ability to obey it; they decided they could satisfy God's demands by their own effort. The Gentiles, who had nothing to hope for, had eagerly responded to the Good News that they could be saved simply by putting their trust in Jesus Christ (Rom. 9:30-32). Lord, please especially bless all those men and women who are making a special effort to share the Gospel that was first preached to Jewish people.

Bro. Fibion Ngozi

Let us all believe that God hears our prayers. He may not answer them immediately nor in the way we would like – maybe not at all, because He knows what is best for us. I have been unwell and the medications have not worked, but I pray to God for help. The account of Hezekiah's illness (2 Kings 20) reminds us that our time, naturally speaking, may be up, but, through prayer, our lives may be extended, in God's mercy. Jesus told us that such signs as war, earthquakes, famines etc. would come when his coming was near. It is necessary that we prepare ourselves for this event and love and help our fellow servants. Whilst we do not know the day nor the hour, we know that Jesus will come suddenly, like a thief in the night, at a time when he is least expected.

Bro John Masumba

Note: Alas Bro John Masumba fell asleep in Christ last year, his faith was strong to the end.



Photo: Baptism at Barket



Photo: Banket Sunday School

BINDURA

May God bless you in spreading His Word, and you should keep up with the ministry to enrich and encourage brethren and sisters to grow spiritually. I felt very excited when I saw my articles published in *Gospel News*. It was a dream come true and I had to show it to my colleagues etc. World events sound sour 'bitter' i.e. the signs of the times. These are the last days; we find famine, war, the uprising of tribes etc. and starvation is a problem in our country and all over the world.

Bro. Joseph Mucheri

BULAWAYO

Thank you for the 10 *Bible Basics*, 12 *Do Christians Need Prophets Today?* and a copy of *The Death of the Cross*. Many thanks for your help.

Ambrose Tanyepana

CHEGUTU

I thank you for my article being in *Gospel News*. Another article that excited me was your comment on smoking and drinking; it was something I really appreciated. I had been

discussing these topics with some of our newly baptised brothers. There has been an outbreak of cholera out here and it has claimed many human lives. It looks as though more people may die if the issue is not addressed with urgency. In our town there is poor drainage and sewage is everywhere. Despite all these problems, we keep strong and hope and pray that the coming of Jesus is near.

Bro. Richard Phiri

Gospel News is a very interesting magazine. It is one of the best magazines as it brings news from all over the world. It helps some of us spiritually because when we read it we hear of encouraging news. When I was at school my teacher used to say, "When the jacaranda tree sheds its leaves know that the end of year exams are behind the corner. When the clouds gather for rain it's year end. Farmers and all those who have land start to prepare to plough so as to plant. So if you don't read your books you will fail the year end exams. If you don't prepare your land for planting nothing will come out. All the wages are at the end". The Lord Jesus said that we must be ready all the time. Let us be found doing what the gospel says. It is said you reap what you sow. Let us all work towards the goal and get the reward at the end. The prophet Haggai 1:5-7 "Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much but have harvested little. You earn wages only to put them in a purse with holes in it. You expected much but see it turned out to be little. Why? says the Lord,

Because of my house which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house". So let us work towards the goal with great care. Some of us will not receive our wages at last because we at times are found too lazy to work for our Lord. He is loving, caring and merciful to those who know Him spiritually. So let us all get prepared for our Lord as the signs of his coming show he is at the door.

Bro Farai Phiri

Even though separated by distance, the sure hope of Israel binds us together. Things have been difficult and still are, but we rejoice in the hope of salvation which we hope will be delayed no longer. The words of Heb. 13:5-6 offer strength to us as a family of believers.

On a sad note, Sister Legina Mbewe, the wife of our late Brother Tom Chisika Bandare, has fallen asleep in Christ and we held a night service at her brother's house where she was living since the falling asleep of her husband; he leaves two young daughters. We also conducted a graveside service during her burial. We hope we shall be with our Sister when the dead in Christ arise at his second coming. Away from sadness, Chegutu ecclesia continues to blossom; attendance is pleasing.

Bro. Itai Petro Tembo



Photo: Sis Legina arising to newness of life after her baptism.

Below: from left to right, top row Bre Tom Masimba, Student, Elisha Smoke, Innocent, Itai, Sis Hlwzip, Bro Farai. Middle row, Bro Tapera, Sis Legina, Sis Esnath, two students, Bro Tafara, Bottom row Sis Amina and students.



CHIVI

Brother, my heart feels lost if I am far away from the house of God. I am now at my rural home tilling the land for three months and I hope to return back to Bulawayo, God willing in March. While I am at Chivi I will be at Masvingo for the meeting once a month. I had to write this letter to let you know my address. Thank you for the book to help me grow better crops you sent me, it helps a lot, but there are many others that can help people who are in Africa like "Growing Root Plants With Weather in Mind." That book is published by the same organisation.

Bro. Dzingai Sumburera

GURUVE

I am waiting for the programme of learning English and practical lessons on learning to read English, you mentioned in your letter. Brother, I will enjoy the book to read and the English lesson.

Sis. Loveness Ngunga

GUTU

As I am writing this letter to you it is raining outside my room. The rains have come rather late but it is promising to be a better season so we are working heavily on our fields. It has never stopped since it came a couple of weeks ago. Did I tell you that on 2nd October I travelled to Bulawayo where I was invited for a monthly meeting with them? I enjoyed it very much as I shared the same fellowship with them, the event I have been missing for a long time. Also on 7th October I travelled from Gutu to Masvingo where I met Bro. John and Sis. Helen Butler and Bro. and Sis. Denis Woodgate. It was a good time being together as we had a very remarkable Bible discussion. Unfortunately I missed the fraternal gathering that was held in Bulawayo as my wife wasn't feeling well.

Bro. Tarirai Raphael Nyandoro

HARARE

Let us remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. (Peter 3:3), "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires. These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt, snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear – hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh" (Jude 19-23). My last words are from Philippians 4:4-6 "Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything; by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Bro. Israel Mutunduwe

KADOMA

Thank you for the *Gospel News*. I just want to let you know that my employers have now left for Australia. They left me to serve the people who bought the house so I am still at the same place, carry on sending me the *Gospel News*, thank you. I will visit Rusape in two months time, God willing. I am fine and am working for the people who bought the house from my previous employer. Thank you very much for the book, *How To Grow a Balanced Diet*, I love it, I am using

it now. God is looking after me. As we read in the Bible “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

Sis. Alice Mlambo

KAMATIVI

We are saddened to learn that our Sis Miriam Ncube collapsed and fell asleep in Christ on 19 January at Harare and now awaits the soon coming of our Saviour when the living and dead servants of the Lord, by his grace, will be transformed into glorious immortal beings.

KARIBA

I praise God through the Lord Jesus, our Redeemer. If we endure the present situation in the world then we shall see him when he comes with his Kingdom; this is our prayer and unshakeable hope. I thank you also for the Bible Reading Calendars for our ecclesia, but we still need four more if possible. We have started a door-to-door public encouragement to people - students and non-students. Since people have the same attitude as Paul found (Acts 17:18-21), we are strengthened. We have a good number of students and hope, God willing, some will be added to our ecclesia. May God bless us all that we may not fall back from the truth. Let us hold fast till the Lord Jesus appears with his Kingdom.

Bro. David Mhondiwa

KAROI

In one of your letters to me you asked me if I feel you should continue to write on health issues. Yes please, it is more helpful to us in poor countries where we are short of hospitals and doctors and most of the time there are no drugs at the hospitals. Articles in this direction are of paramount importance. Let us all keep doing the work of the Lord till he comes, for a good reward awaits such servants.

Bro. Marison Tafirenyika

MASVINGO

May God bless all included and forward prayers to Jesus so that this work continues and has impact to all nations. I would rather not use “pen and ink” but talk face to face, as the apostle John said (3 John 13-14). “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and he who loves is born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7-8). God showed love to us through giving His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and also through giving men to have dominion over all creatures. “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God.” (1 John 3:1). When asked which one is the greatest commandment, Jesus, in Mark 12:29-31, replied, “Love your God with all your heart, with all your soul, mind and strength.” The commandments of God show what God is and what love is. True love is putting God first and doing His will. Our life becomes worthy of God if God is the centre of all acts. Life is like a bicycle wheel and God is the hub. Don’t waste time worshipping other things, but take time to worship God because of His love.

Bro. Simon Mudavose

MUTARE

I thank you very much for the second hand hearing aids you posted me. I gave them to other children who are in need of them. Due to the poverty most parents find it difficult to buy aids for their children since they are very expensive here in Zimbabwe. We need more of the aids if you get access to them. Here is a card/snap of some of the children at the centre who are deaf and dumb. Norest is using his aid so that he can get used to wearing it. Second term he passed his examination. He got position 2 out of 35. This third term he was number 1 out of 35 I can put all

these things in God's hands because He gave me this boy for a purpose.

Bro. Stanford Masika

MVURWI

Here it is time for rain. People are busy planting their crops such as maize, sorghum, tobacco, cotton etc. The Word of God is powerful. I would like to ask you to please keep on sending me Gospel News. God will soon make war to cease everywhere when He sets up His Kingdom. All will honour Him. God will provide a covering for our sin if we seek Him in time. Salvation involves the forgiveness of sins. Righteousness can be obtained only by the grace of God and our faith in Christ.

Bro Nobert Kachasu

RIMBI

If the Master delays his return, on 12th February 2006 I will be accompanied by Bro. Admire Museba of Masvingo Rural ecclesia. Bro. Admire is showing interest in sowing the seeds of the gospel into Mozambique as well. All the Bible Basics you have sent are being put to good use. With great sorrow we report the falling asleep on 20th October 2005 of our beloved Sister Joyce Dhlakama. She now awaits the call to everlasting joy. She had been in the truth for 11 months. Joyce is my firstborn daughter. I found comfort in the word of Job, "And naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not."

Bro. Moses Dhlakama

ZUMBA

We do thank you so much for the *Bible Basics* and *Gospel News* which we receive smoothly. Our ecclesia has four brothers and two sisters and we are looking for more fruits from the regular contacts. We are now preparing the fields for the coming season. We hope that things are going to improve this season so that we get adequate food. Till we meet either in this life or in Jesus' Kingdom, may God bless you.

Bro. Moses Ajiweka

News from Europe / Eurasia

news from belarus

BARANOVICHI

I remain in contact with the prisoners I am corresponding with. Some of them have really genuine needs and it worries me as to whether we should do more for such people, or whether it is a waste of time to help materially. I pray fervently for them and for you all.

Bro. Leonid

I feel very great gratitude for your support as I know Sis Irina and her children do. At least we feel we are not alone in this world, there is a true spiritual family that really exists for us.

Sis. Larisa

TERESHKI

I am facing so many problems as I become weaker each year. The village is losing its population, lonely old people die and even there is nobody who bothers to bury them. We were cut off for some time because of the snow, and even people were taking wood from deserted houses and burning it because of the cold. I pray for you all, thinking that surely there are others in worse situations even than mine.

Sis. Anna

VITEBSK Obl.

This Winter is hard for us not just because of the cold but because my wheelchair is broken, also I am getting rashes breaking out, each of which takes 2 or 3 weeks to heal. Also it is so hard for us to wash in the Winter. In Summer we collect rain water for this, but it is so hard in Winter. I am reading the Bible using the *Companion* although some days it isn't possible because of my health. I stand with you all.

Bro. Valerij

VYAZMICH

We suffer here so much from the cold weather. I am wearing my overcoat even around the house. It is just so hard to keep warm. I valued very much the clothes sent to me. Know that we are with you.

Sis Nina

news from iran

We are fine here, thinking of you, and praying that Jesus returns in 2006.

Bros. Edvard & Khosro

news from israel**BEER SHEVA**

We feel so old now, always wanting Jesus to return every day and every day praying for you and just grateful that we have known Him.

Sis. Nina & Bro. Viktor

news from kazakhstan**ALMATY**

I am out of hospital but things are so very hard for us this Winter. We are grateful for clothes provided and any others that can be. We pray for you and love you all who believe in the same Lord we do.

Sis. Lena

news from latvia

AIZKRAUKLE

I am hoping that Jesus will return in 2006 and I send my love to all who share this hope.

Sis. Irena

I know you were probably too busy to even think of the New Year when it came, but I think of you, and pray yet more will be added to Jesus this year.

Sis. Marija

BALVI

Bro. Marcus, I can translate from English to Russian; don't hesitate to send me booklets. I have good news for you: I said before that I was very ill. Now I'm in good health. I would like to thank God and the doctor who cured me. This doctor helps me sometimes with food and fruits. I pray every day and ask God to help me bless me and the doctor who helps me. A Brother 'John' from Australia wrote me a letter, but I lost his address when I was in hospital.

Bro Alexander

DAUGAVPILS

As you know I have no relatives, I was an orphan and have no wife, so truly you are my family. I am not sure that you realize how much you mean to me. I love God for all He has done for me. Life here is so hard. In the great cold I couldn't even go out to get fresh air because I don't have shoes strong enough to keep my feet warm enough. I have been writing some poems [in Russian] about how I feel towards God.

Bro Andrej

KUBULI

Things do not go in life as I would like as I am still unemployed. Life is just too hard. All the money we get goes on buying the medicines to keep my grandmother alive. I am glad however to hear of the success of the preaching you are doing and especially it is good about the Bible Schools that are possible.

Bro. Alex

MADONA

This long winter I have the blessing of some spare time, as there is not so much work to do on our land. I have read many books. I got so much wiser reading Islip Collyer. Also I made a study of Brother Allfree's booklet about passages misused by trinitarians. The explanations are so good and I so wish I had known them earlier in my life. I respect you all so much for your Bible study and zeal to spread the truth, I too am trying to do my part but with less results.

Sis Sarmite

VILANI

The winter here has been the harshest we have ever known. It seems to have made worse all my health problems. I felt even my teeth aching from the great cold, and it was hard for me to breathe when outside. As I say every time, my only hope now is for the Kingdom of God.

Bro. Fyodjor

news from moldova**CHISINAU**

Our situation here is desperate. The house we live in is shared by other people who are just wicked, they have no fear of God, and would use even our own children, as they even do their

own children, for anything they lust for. We have little heating and we can't even leave the children alone here for fear of the neighbours, but we have nowhere else to go to live. Please pray for us. We do pray, we believe, we hope and try to understand God's will for us, but still we have to survive each day.

Sis. Roza

news from norway

I am thinking of the Kiev Bible School and would like to visit again myself, as I was once there. Thanks so very much for *Gospel News*, I get it regularly and am very glad to read it. I'm fine and my family is also fine. My daughter started kindergarten and likes it very much; she's almost four years old now. I'm very happy to have a job and work four days a week. At Christmas we all went to Latvia to visit my relatives.

Sis. Helena

news from pakistan

The Karachi ecclesia in Pakistan has received threats from an Islamic activist and has had to temporarily avoid use of their office and meeting place. A Brother and Sister who live in the facility have also had to move to a 'safe house' and the leaders of the ecclesia have had to implement strict security precautions as a result of the threats.

In Pakistan it is not uncommon for police or security guards to protect Christian places of worship during meeting times, and I have frequently seen armed police or military personnel standing guard outside churches. The Government initiated these security measures after attacks on some Christian places. However, we don't want to see this happen to the Christadelphian meetings in Pakistan and we would rather see our meetings go 'underground' than have armed guards protecting our people.

This latest threat is a reminder once again of the extreme difficulties facing our brethren in Islamic countries and we ask for your prayers at this time. It is amazing that despite this opposition we had 96 baptisms in Pakistan in the past year and hundreds more are doing courses and preparing for baptism. This gives me an insight into what was happening in the early church when hundreds were being added to the church daily as the persecution intensified.

The most important thing one can do right now is to pray for God's protection for our Brothers and Sisters in Pakistan. There will obviously be considerable costs with relocating our office and meeting place to a new home.

news from romania

Many greetings and thanks for your mail. I will be happy to receive *Gospel News* and any other literature about the Bible. Many thanks for all and I will be very happy to keep in touch with you.

Bro. Lazarovici Mihai



Cebu ecclesia outside their hall.



Cebu ecclesia after the baptism of three new Sisters.

news from russia

We're delighted to report the baptisms of VERA and TATYANA, an elderly contact. We're sorry to report that Sis Tatyana fell asleep in the Lord a few days after her baptism due to complications from the extremely cold weather this winter. We await the day of resurrection.

ARMAVIR

Please pray for us. Galina is sleeping with three jumpers and her coat on, it is impossible to keep the house warm here. Also both of us are invalids, and also Galina's husband left her and went off to live with his former wife. We believe in your prayers.

Bro. Vitaly & Sis. Galina

IZHEVSK

I received the invitation to the Winter Bible School late, but I hope to come all the same although it is so far from here. I am totally with you all.

Bro. Andrej

KAZAN

Along with Brother Anatoly, I am about to leave for the Winter Bible School. We are so very grateful for this opportunity to meet with other brothers and sisters knowing how hard it is to arrange resources so that this is possible, but without such meetings our fellowship collapses.

Bro. Viktor

I have come here to live from Armavir. I am trying to gather together with the local brothers and sisters. I have many difficulties and need your prayers very much.

Bro. Alexei

I am writing to inform you of the death of my dear father, our Brother Viktor, he died unexpectedly at the age of 58. I am very grateful that Brother Duncan baptized him some years ago. My father truly loved both God and people around him. Meeting with death like this unexpectedly has brought me closer to God and to see the importance of all that we believe about Him.

Sis. Larisa & Sis. Asija

RZHEV

I continue to preach here but I am disturbed to tell you of the death of Sister Tatyana. I now await the coming of the Kingdom of God with greater desire.

Bro. Aleksandr

STAVROPOL

I send greetings to you all. I read the whole of 1 Peter recently. I saw it through new eyes, thinking of all my unknown Brothers and Sisters in the world for whom now I feel great love as we all pass through our tribulations.

Sis. Ludmila

ST. PETERSBURG

I was thinking to myself, how very much good you have done by going around teaching and baptizing people. People like me have been given the hope of eternal life. It has changed our lives. I can only say I am very grateful to you and to our Father even more.

Bro. Valerij

ZELENODOLSK

We are very much with you and hope Brother Duncan can come soon to give us some exhortation. We are now meeting every Sunday for the breaking of bread and we have a very loving spirit amongst us here which is a great encouragement.

Bro. Viktor

news from serbia

SUBOTICA

I distributed *Bible Basics* and the *What Is The Gospel?* booklet to a person, I pray for a blessing on our work.

Bro. William

news from spain

My niece is in great problems and I ask for your prayers, as I am in prayer for you.

Sis. Gela

news from turkey

I'm sorry I didn't write to you . I worked on some English documents translating them to Spanish. I visited Saint Petersburg city for one week. Last year a man wrote some mails to me and I shared our doctrine with him . He recently wrote me a mail, and he wants to get baptised. Last year, he wasn't sure, but now he is sure about baptism. I want to visit there and I will do the baptism if he is ready.

Bro. Scotty

IZMIR

Last week we had 19 people come to our meeting! I was very happy about this, and we look forward to the visit of Brother Duncan to strengthen us.

Bro. Hussein

news from ukraine

KHARKOV

I am amazed at how you keep going in the work of leading people like me to Jesus and caring for us, despite all opposition. I am simply very grateful and pray for God's blessing upon you.

Bro. Anton

We very much wish that Jesus will return soon and our entire family send greetings to you all.

Bro. Vasilij, Sasha & Sis Lena

news from uzbekistan

Please pray for us here in our country. I only pray God will give me the health and strength to be able to serve others as you have set me the example.

Bro. Viktor

News from the Americas

news from canada

QUEBEC

Many thanks for your letter and *Gospel News*, also the interesting notes on Signs of the Times. Regarding a Christadelphian meeting nearer to me, there are none nearer with whom I can fellowship. I now receive exhortations from the Christadelphian Isolation League and some Bible readings from a Brother Mike Parry from Montreal.

Bro. Charles Hakizimana

Note: I am sending you the addresses you requested of two other Brethren from the Refugee Camp in Tanzania who are also in total isolation in Canada; it would be good if you could contact them. *MH*

news from guyana

Greetings of love in Our Saviour's Precious Name. A very blessed 2006 to you and yours and the hope that our Lord's return to Jerusalem will be soon.

Thank you very much for the parcel of books. I received them safely just before Christmas and brethren have taken them all to read. Please do not forget us during this New Year if you come across any books you would like to share with us.

We in Guyana are trying to keep our focus on the return of the Lord and not to be distracted by the daily doses of disasters, mayhem and politics with which we are bombarded. Until our Lord returns or we are called aside to await his coming,

Sis Lynette Jenita Williams

Thank you for the Bible Reader's calendar; I kept one for myself and shared the others out. It will surely be useful. Thanks also for *Gospel News* which I want to continue receiving; it has been a

source of encouragement and entertainment in my walk. Even though work and school have kept me busy, I still find time to do reading. At present the Demerara ecclesias are taking part in a quiz competition which is run by Bro. Sydney Enebeli of St. Lucia. Next Saturday is the semi-finals, of which I am a participant. Then the following Sunday is the finals. The winning team will be given a trophy and second and third place a present each. So far it has been a challenge, testing our ability and knowledge of the Bible.

Sis Elizabeth Europe

I report that last year Sister Olive Ramsay fell asleep due to a clot in her heart; she was in the N/A Hospital. We are therefore asking you to remember us because we need a lot of help. This letter is coming from her granddaughter

Sis. Carol Ramsay

Thanks for the calendar. I would certainly be happy if I could have more as I could give them to people I speak to as a way of encouraging them to read the Bible. While waiting for the next *Gospel News* I re-read the old ones as it keeps my mind on God, which is so necessary in these last days. I usually read the news first as I get all the information of my Brethren and Sisters, then I read the editorial and noticed the article about arthritis relief. I have it in both my knees so I only go to the memorial meeting, as a Sister comes for me. I would be happy to receive a copper bracelet and also any publications on health would be interesting. I would like to receive a copy of *Bible Basics* and any other uplifting literature from time to time. Our prayers are always with the Brothers and Sisters who are spreading the good news of the coming Kingdom which we all know must be soon as we see the signs told by Jesus fulfilling in our day.

Sis. Janet Williams

Warmest greetings from sunny Guyana. It was so lovely to receive your letter, with all the good news of the continuous spreading of the Gospel message in those far off lands.

Now a very special favour, could you please. send a copy of Jan-March Gospel News to a very dear friend of mine. Bro Roland and Sis May Smith; they are very special indeed. Bro. Roland came to British Guiana in 1950, taught me the Truth and baptised me in 1951. Ever since then Bro. Roland has been greatly interested in every aspect of the Truth in Guyana and he would love the Abedi story. I have just received my copy today and am so very thankful that Bro. Abedi and his family are so very happy to be amongst us. Unfortunately, since travelling to Kilcoy with the family I have only been in contact with them through telephone. But the news is good. The Brother is teaching French at a private school and the children are all attending school and obviously loving it. I can see that you are making good use of the photos I send so that urges me to keep you supplied! Thank you for the interesting copy of Present Day Events No.458. Exciting indeed.

Sis Lorraine Mitchell.

I keep up to date through *Gospel News*, where the Good News has germinated to full fellowship. Look what is happening with Bro. Constantine! plus familiar and strange-sounding names of countries! Keep up the good work, especially among the refugees. I welcome any literature and especially a Bible dictionary. May God's blessings be showered on the team that produces *Gospel News*. Spare no effort to preach the word, God will give the increase.

Sis. Enid D'Anjou.



Photo: Sunday School Concert - Georgetown

news from jamaica

PORT MARIA

Thank you very much for the calendars, we really do appreciate them. Some of the members were unable to have one; however, they will certainly be beneficial to us all.

Sis. Dorothy Isaacs

TREASURE BEACH

I do appreciate hearing from you and was so glad to have the 2006 calendar, which will help. However, I could distribute even 100 to people who are interested in reading the Bible. Whatever booklets you have I will be able to give to young and old. Also, my daughter would like to have a copy of *Bible Basics*.

Sis. Icilda Logan

news from st lucia

For the past years I have been so happy reading our Christadelphian literature, it means so much to me. Please continue sending me this wonderful reading material. We in St. Lucia have a very small church, but we love to be with each other.

Bro Michael Joseph



Photo: St. Lucia Special Effort

news from trinidad

We have not commented upon our Bro. George Constantine's position for some time. Now and then it looks as though the situation will be resolved and his sentence to death repealed; then things go the other way and look very gloomy. Under the Divine providence, Bro. Sam and Bro. & Sis. Colin Badger have negotiated for an experienced lawyer to defend our Brother in legal matters. For George, it is very much a 'cat and mouse' situation, but in spite of the difficulties and frustration, his faith is strong. He writes, "...so I will just have to be patient for a while longer, maybe a long while, keeping my trust in our Father above".

The Authorities are faced with a high number of violent crime and murder cases and believe this could be reduced by the enforcement of the death penalty. The country also has severe economic problems resulting in lack of prison staff. George does not complain, indeed he speaks highly of the staff in their most difficult circumstances: "I have been keeping okay, thanks to our Heavenly Father. Our prison is somewhat tense; recently an officer (guard) discovered some bathroom vent bars cut in one death-row division, showing that an escape had been planned. Subsequent searches found a length of rope in another division, knives in a third and then a prisoner in the general population section slashed an officer in his face with a razor blade. These incidents have caused life to be somewhat uncomfortable for the rest of us, as they have been carrying out daily searches of the cells, sometimes twice daily. Some inmates have been shifted around, and we are not being let outside in the yard. Also, many times one officer worked alone instead of the required two in each death-row division, to facilitate us, due to the prison being short-staffed. But realising that an officer would very likely have been assaulted if an escape had been attempted, they are no longer taking chances working alone, so our bathing time has been reduced".

As well as remembering George in our prayers, let us not forget to pray for the prison staff that they will handle him gently in spite of their difficult and potentially hazardous duties. *MH*

News from Asia

news from india

MUMBAI

We still remember Bro. D. Lameonster's visit to Mumbai many years back. We are only a small group of five baptised Christadelphians in Mumbai now; two Brothers have gone for better prospects. We all are fine and keep in good health by the grace of God. We would like to continue receiving *Gospel News* and other magazines and literature, God willing. May the Lord help your efforts to encourage people like us in spiritual growth.

Bro. M.K. Abraham

TAMIL NADU

Thank you for *Gospel News* which gives me interesting reading and also the notes on the signs of the times, all of which things are bound to happen in these last days prior to our Lord's return to the earth. At the time of writing my State of Tamil Nadu is undergoing incessant rainfall resulting in heavy losses in men and materials. The newspapers are full of stories of disruption of roads and washed away houses filled with water, with people having to flee to safer places. There is a fear of an epidemic breaking out. We are able to witness what the Bible predicts as chaos of intolerable troubles beyond man's control, prior to our Lord's return to this earth. Last year alone three major devastations took place: Tsunami in S.E. Asia, severe earthquake in North Pakistan and Katrina in the USA. These catastrophes will be more frequent in years to come, but our Lord's warnings are not heeded by this present wicked world. I thank God for His mercy in keeping me in the fellowship of Bible truth believers. May God bless you as you bring more people to the Truth of the Bible. Hearing Aids. I note you are collecting surplus aids to help African brethren. Please register my name also, for I am losing my hearing, in fact I have lost

40% so that I can't catch properly the talk at the Bible Truth Camps and Sunday exhortations. I hope you will be able to oblige me. Please pray for us.

Bro. J. Barra I. Barnabas

MANIPUR

It is a joy to be able to write to you. I am a young man of 32 years. I hold B. Th. Degree in the year 2001 and continued my study for B.D. Degree, but I was not allowed to sit in the final examination for not clearing the Course fees and other due amount on my account. Since then, I started studying the Christadelphian faith and beliefs. I came to Christadelphians by listening to 'Bible Truth' broadcast aired every Wednesday and Saturday morning via Radio Sri Lanka. Since then I have become deeply rooted in the Christadelphian beliefs and practices. I had completed many Christadelphian Bible Correspondence Courses via Bangalore and Hyderabad Christadelphians, plus the 'Bible Basics' course. I am actually the first Christadelphian in Imphal and have never found any meeting or ecclesia here. I wish to ultimately open a Christadelphian ecclesia for believers in Manipur. I have invested many prayers regarding my needs. We need Bibles and other Christadelphian reference materials. Sow your seed in the ground of Manipur so that many brothers and sisters may grow in the Christadelphian garden in Imphal.

Bro Hembra Thiyam

news from nepal

I am talking to another man about Jesus and he even said he is interested in baptism. Like me he is not living in Nepal because of problems. Thank you for taking care for me in so many ways.

Bro. Ram

news from philippines

BANGUI

When a child is in Sunday School, prayerfully there is progress towards, and into, the ecclesia. Our teachers are co-workers with God. May we all, in God's mercy, be together in the Kingdom – with our children.

Bro. Cerinio Lorenzo

news from vietnam

The world-wide distribution of *Bible Basics* in 56 different Languages continues. One area that has generated a lot of interest and a number of converts is placing *it* in local Public Libraries. Recently we placed one hundred copies of the Vietnamese translation in the Public Libraries of Vietnam; it seems there is a growing interest there in Christianity. The following is one of the letters of thanks:

"We have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of Bible Basics. This book will be treated professionally and will go into public service in the shortest time. It will be certainly welcomed by our readers.

We hope that our Library will always have your support in the future. Thank you and warm regards for your effective co-operation”.

We are happy to give copies of *Bible Basics* to any than can place them in Public Libraries or to accept donations towards doing this.

News from Oceania

news from cook islands

RAROTONGA

I will tell you about idol carving (Tiki = statue, Tangaron = god). When the first missionaries arrived in Rarotonga in 1823 Rev John William of England and Papehia of Tahiti from the LMS (London Missionary Society), the Island’s Chief and the people burned their idol god (Tiki Tangaron). The carvers brought this tiki back again to make money, and a lot of them, big and small, are in the craft shops today. It is an icon to them, even though no one worships idols today.

Bro. Mata Remuera

news from solomon islands

I am very much thanking you for the two 2006 Bible Reader’s calendars. I must also thank you for sending me GOSPEL NEWS over the previous years, I received them all; please continue sending them so I do not miss out, also other literature. These help me so much to keep the truth of the word of God. Also I know that I have Brethren and Sisters other than in my own country.

Bro. Reuben Limah

Brother Thomas

Introduction

This exhortation is about our brother Thomas. There is little we know about him, because not very much is written about him. It is true that he is generally known outside our own circles, in the world at large, but that is based largely on an undeserved reputation. Yet what little we know about him does give us a clear enough picture, if only we are prepared to take the trouble to see it. I am not of course referring to the Brother Thomas of the 19th century, whom we generally view as the founder of our movement; I am referring to our brother of the 1st century, who was one of the chosen twelve who were privileged to walk with our Lord. Most of us are familiar with apostles like Peter, or John, or Paul. But Thomas? Thomas...?

The usual opinion about him: In your language, as in mine, he is known as ‘doubting Thomas’, a byword of unbelief. Commentators tend to describe him as a hypochondriac and a notorious pessimist. A textbook case of how *not* to be a Christian in fact. But is that correct? Let us see.

What do we know about him? In the Bible we find the following list of references:

1. He is mentioned in the synoptic gospels in the lists of the 12 selected apostles.
2. He is mentioned again in the list of the 11 remaining apostles in Acts 1.
3. He occurs in a short list of 7 apostles in Galilee, in John 21.
4. There are three specific places in the gospel of John where he plays a part.

The places mentioned in 1-3: The lists of the synoptics only mention his name, Thomas, without any further details - he was only one of the twelve. *Only* one of the twelve? All twelve had been chosen by Jesus! after a full night spent in prayer, as you well know (Luke 6:12). All twelve (with the possible exception of Judas) must have been men of exceptional qualities. If we call him unworthy we are criticising Jesus, or in reality God Himself.

His name is Aramaic for ‘twin’. Where was his brother? Was he no longer alive, or was he just not of a similar mind to Thomas? In any case Thomas was not just anybody. Acts 1:13 confirms that, with the exception of Judas, all to a man were still there, Thomas included. And the short list in John 21:2 shows him as one of the smaller circle of seven in Galilee, around Peter, waiting for Jesus.

The occurrences in the gospel of John: There are three passages in John’s gospel which give us an insight into the character of Thomas. In the first and third John gives us the translation of his name as Didymus (twin). Does he do that to lift him out of the relative obscurity of being just a name in a list? Or does he want to stress the fact that he had a twin brother who was nevertheless not selected? Is this a subtle echo of the principle that, even of seemingly identical pairs, only ‘the one shall be taken and the other left’? He is mentioned by name on three different occasions, although in the first two of these cases there seems to be no specific reason for doing so. Given the fact that nothing in the Bible is there without a reason, this must mean that John wants to draw our attention to something: watch this man. It is an open invitation to compare these three passages. So let’s do just that.

Thomas in John 11: In John 11 Jesus tells his disciples that he wants to visit Bethany because of Lazarus. The twelve (*all* twelve!) protest: it is too dangerous. Then Thomas is mentioned separately, by name: “Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples: ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’” The emphasis is usually laid on the second half of his sentence to argue his ‘inborn pessimism’. But is this correct? It really *was* not safe; *all* twelve had said so (vs. 8). They point out the earlier attempts to stone Jesus (John 10:31, 39). And after Lazarus’ resurrection Jesus does indeed withdraw again, apparently for reasons of safety (John 11:54). In fact the authorities did not even hesitate to plan the murder of Lazarus, a man that God had brought back from death! They were prepared to fight God Himself. So the conclusion must be that it really was not safe and that on that account Thomas was not a pessimist, but a realist.

Next, note what he does *not* say. He does not say: ‘If He wants to go, He can go alone; I will not join Him’. What he does say is: ‘Let us go with Him and die with Him’. What does he mean by that?

An aside: Peter too was prepared to die with Jesus. He said so at the last supper (Matt. 26:31-35). But all were speaking like that; only Peter is singled out and mentioned by name. Why? Obviously because of what was going to happen later (his denial). Mentioning him here by name prepares us for what we are going to be told later. Likewise when John mentions Thomas by name, it prepares us for what he will show us later.

But there is more that may be said about Peter. Jesus tells Peter in the upper room that his faith will be put to the test, and that he has yet to come to repentance (Luke 22:31-32). Yet in the first instance Peter lives up to his words: against a complete cohort of Roman soldiers (500-600 men!) he draws a sword and starts fighting. He is really prepared to die, fighting for his Lord. But maybe this was only his usual impulsive reaction; maybe he had not considered the situation realistically? Later that night he could not resist the temptation to avoid an inconvenient problem by being a little 'flexible' with the truth: "I know not what thou sayest". But once you have started on such a way, you cannot very easily go back (like "well in fact on second thoughts I do seem to remember him somewhat, as a matter of fact, after all"). And so the order of events is: 1) deny 2) deny with an oath and finally 3) deny with cursing and swearing (Matt. 26:69-74). Once he had chosen this road he was, not by accident of course, forced to follow it further only to realise the true nature of his choice. He did not mean to go that way when he made his first denial, but got into difficulties when 'circumstances' forced him to face the consequences of that initial choice. And by the time he realised where he had gone wrong it was too late. And the result was bitter remorse, but also the repentance that Jesus had announced, and as a consequence his return to his master; unlike e.g. Judas who, after a wrong choice, opted to depart and to accept the final consequences of that decision.

Back to Thomas: In the reactions given in John 11 Thomas too is 'singled out'. Is this a similar case? No, or at least not fully so. For he does not propose to die fighting; he just wants to die when Jesus dies. Nor is this an impulsive reaction on the spur of the moment. What then does he mean? May I make the following suggestion? Thomas is fully convinced that life without Jesus is without purpose or hope. Without Him there is no way out of the death-trap of sin: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." In Isaiah (22:13) this sentence was an expression of the people's lack of trust in their God. But for Paul (1 Cor. 15:32) it is the inevitable consequence of a rock hard reality: without the resurrection (i.e. without the Redemption) life is indeed without hope. So in that respect Thomas was fully right again; in that case you might just as well die today. He may not yet have seen the necessity for Jesus' sacrificial death, or the unavoidable necessity of His resurrection, but his perception of the necessity of Jesus' involvement in this Redemption was fully accurate. Maybe it was still too hazy to have a clear view, but his radar operated faultlessly: he could make an unflinching approach to the only correct reconnaissance buoy (for those of you who do not know what a reconnaissance buoy is: it is the first buoy you have to locate, when coming from sea, to navigate your way safely into the harbour). So he was not a born pessimist at all; he was a hard realist, who was perfectly right!

Which poses the question: Do we have such an absolute perception of the necessity of Jesus' presence? And if not, why not? In that case we'd better take a leaf out of Thomas' navigation handbook.

In the upper room, John 14: In John's account of the discussions in the upper room, Jesus tries to comfort his disciples: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). And He adds: "And whither I go ye

know, and the way ye know” (vs. 4). With the knowledge we now have about Thomas we can perhaps better understand his reaction: “Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” (vs. 5). Jesus’ words unsettle him; he does not like what he hears. Is Jesus really going to leave them behind after all? Note that Jesus does not rebuke him even mildly (in contrast to e.g. Philip, in the very next incident: “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?). He must have appreciated Thomas’ attitude, although Thomas had yet more to learn. Thomas is still navigating in a fog, and now his radar image seems to disappear from his radar screen. But his appreciation of the importance of Jesus’ involvement is still undiminished. Again that is a lesson for us.

In the upper room again, John 20: In chapter 20 of his gospel John relates the early appearances of Jesus after His resurrection. At His first appearance to His disciples in the upper room Thomas had not been present (John 20:24-25). Why not? Apparently as he was the only one of the eleven missing. May I make another suggestion? He may have been the only one who fully appreciated the ‘disaster’ to its full extent: without Jesus they simply were ‘having no hope, and without God in the world’ (Eph. 2:12). The others were looking for support and comfort from each other in the loss of one exceptionally beloved, but Thomas seems to have realised that there was much more the matter than that. Maybe he felt that he had found insufficient appreciation of that view from the others. Anyway, he had decided to try and get to terms with his loss in isolation.

Seen in that context he refuses to be comforted at his return by what he sees to be a collective hallucination of the others; there is far too much at stake. He reacts like Ahithophel, who realised as clear as daylight that he had in fact rebelled against God and that without God there is no hope. Like Judas, Ahithophel stepped out. But where Judas acted out of desperation, Ahithophel acted with a full realisation of the situation, making all necessary arrangements for his house, and then drawing the inevitable consequences. Thomas seems to have had the same degree of realisation. But where Ahithophel had caused his own problem, Thomas was faced with a disaster beyond his own control, though with no less drastic consequences. Jesus had been ‘God (elohim) walking in their midst’. That was now an irrecoverable past, as it had been for Adam when he had been expelled from the Garden. What remained was: ‘dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return’.

And then suddenly, the next week, he is confronted with his Redeemer! When we realise the full extent of this situation we will also see the real meaning of his answer: “My Lord (adonai, the one to follow) and my God (elohim, the mediator between God and himself).” This is not the mathematical conclusion in the sense of Jesus = God, that some theologians want to see in it; this is the shout of joy by a man who sees his only hope in this life, the Jesus on whom it all depended, alive again. It proclaims his joy at the victory that had been won after all. He had not believed in what he had regarded as vain hope, but now he is convinced. Seeing was believing. John himself had come to believe when he had seen the empty grave, with the empty linen clothes (John 20:8). Thomas had to see Jesus Himself; but when that happened he actually had no further need to touch Him, as he had earlier proclaimed to be his condition for believing. When there had still been that fog, his radar had served him faultlessly; after the fog had lifted he had left it too late to switch back to visual navigation. But now he had made that switch nothing could shake his faith any more. All the time there had been nothing wrong with his perception of Jesus, and hence with his faith *in that*. His only possible ‘shortcoming’ had been that he had been late in switching back from his ‘radar’ to navigation on visual observation.

In passing it is significant that the three synoptic gospels all include Peter's 'confession', shortly before Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain. In John's gospel it is lacking. Are we to assume that Thomas' confession in chapter 20 is supposed to take its place?

The lesson: Jesus' reply to Thomas' reaction is, in my opinion, one of the outstanding statements of the New Testament: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (vs. 29). That is a declaration that concerns (amongst others) *us*. We are among those that are asked to believe without seeing, to show a faith that is even greater than that of Thomas. So the lesson of the three incidents in John's gospel involving Thomas is: take for an example the faith of Thomas in Jesus' power to save, and add the testimony of John himself to convince us of the reality of his resurrection ('the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Thomas'). Then Thomas' radar will be our radar, and *his* faith will stand there as a towering lighthouse for *our* navigation, so that *we* do not have to navigate in a fog. Then we will be able to take our bearing on the understanding he had before Jesus' death, and upon his belief in the reality of His resurrection after that had occurred.

Thomas a hypochondriac? A born pessimist? A doubter and unbeliever? No way! Quite the contrary, a shining example to us all!

Bro Rudolf Rijkeboer, (The Netherlands)

What Is This All About?

Do not be deceived by the labels on the bottles, they are filled with sweet Nigerian honey. When I was once in Nigeria I brought some home and it is far, far sweeter than English honey. Bro Friday Enyiopgu is an Apiculturist (Bee-keeper) in Ikwueke, Nigeria.? This is one of the self help methods that may be used towards making a living. I guess

I'd be scared of being stung, but in the right situation, with the right equipment it can be a valuable contribution to providing a healthy balanced diet, and also help pollinate the crops. Some farmers will even allow you to put a hive, free of charge, on their land.MH



Bird Flu - Problem and Resolution

Even if bird flu does not mutate to become a serious infectious human flu virus, it can have serious consequences for Africa; already it is widespread in poultry flocks in Asia, Egypt, India and Nigeria. The United Nations Food Organisation warns it can have a devastating impact upon millions of people. In many cases in Africa, poultry are a vital source of protein – they supply

nearly 50% of protein in Egypt. The severe reduction of poultry in African rural areas could have dire nutritional consequences.

Apart from being spread by wild birds migrating from country to country, the virus is also spread by the movement of poultry and poultry products and even by mud on vehicles and on people's shoes and the use of poultry and bird manure as a fertiliser.

The flu virus can pass from poultry to humans, but so far as is known not from humans to humans; if it did, it could cause a flu pandemic killing millions of people. According to the *Economist* magazine (Feb 25, 2006), "the virus is certainly mutating – genetic changes have already affected its biological behaviour, although apparently not yet its transmission between humans".



Photo: Bro and Sis Posiyano at Milambe ecclesia standing at the goat-house built for the project. The goats were away roaming for food

. As a precautionary measure, Christadelphian Carelink Ministries have suspended its successful chicken-rearing project for the time being. How can we help resolve the potential loss of the nourishing proteins so necessary to healthy living the loss of poultry can cause? For many, the loss of poultry meat could be replaced by breeding rabbits; they can be fed on freely available local food. They need hutches/cages which might be constructed from local surplus materials so that the main initial cost would be the providing of a few rabbits. They need to come from a good meat-producing stock from an established breeder. They breed freely and some of the larger breeds can be eaten at 12 weeks old.

Another suggestion is the rearing of goats, but they need more attention. Goats are hardy, drought and disease resistant animals and breed well, not only producing meat but a regular supply of nourishing protein-giving milk which can also be used to make cheese, soap etc. They also turn weeds, and scrub into valuable manure to fertilise the garden.



Photo: Bro Jonas Ngwanda (standing), George (squatting) holding one of the goats, helped by another son at Chinguluwm ecclesias goat-house.

Goats require a house and tethering when out feeding. We have conducted small experiments in two African countries supplying in all 36 goats. The locals have first constructed a goat house and then we have sponsored the provision of a few goats, making it a joint effort.

We are keen on developing this rabbit/goat project but need more information and ideas on how to operate and administer it and also how to resolve any problems that could be encountered. So we invite our readers to tell us how they see the possibilities of such a project working so that

we can consider helping those who are willing and capable of helping themselves. We are not just interested in providing protein, but in finding out how such a plan could generate an income to provide for other things. Our endeavour is to generate self-help, self-financing long-term, sustainable schemes. MH

Some “Goodies” to Consider

The Bible says some amazingly remarkable things about some of the great men and women but I cannot write about all of them because they are many. I am only interested in the best of what they did and what the Bible tells us about them. A lot of us already know the weaknesses and failings of them, except Jesus Christ who committed no sin. Putting all of the “Goodies” together make for a happy and complete Christian life.

1. **ABEL** – The Lord looked with favour on him and his offering and he accepted him (Genesis 4:4,7).
2. **NOAH** – A righteous man blameless among the people of his time, a man who walked with God (Genesis 6:9).
3. **JOB** – A man who shunned evil, was blameless, upright and God-fearing.
4. **MOSES** – A very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3).
5. **ABRAHAM** – He was called God’s friend for his outstanding faith (James 2:21-23; Genesis 22:1-18).
6. **DAVID** – A man after God’s own heart. For some remarkable things about him and what he did check 1 Samuel 15:28; 18:8; 16:12,13; 19:1,10,11; 23:7,8,23; 24:1-15; 25:42; 26:7-16; 27:1-4.
7. **HEZEKIAH** – A man God allowed to live fifteen more years because he walked before God faithfully and with wholehearted devotion; he had also done what was good in God’s eyes (2 Kings 20:2-6).
8. **EZRA AND NEHEMIAH** – These two men who firmly stood against intermarriage (Ezra chs 9 and 10; Nehemiah 13:23-31).
9. **ESTHER AND MORDECAI** – God-fearing cousins (Jews) who worked hand-in-hand for their own good and for the good of their people, fellow Jews.
10. **DANIEL, HANANIAH, MISHAEL AND AZARIAH** - They were without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well-informed, quick to understand and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. God gave them knowledge and understanding; they were also humble and bold (Daniel 1; 3:16-18).
11. **THE DISCIPLE TABITHA (DORCAS)** – who was always doing good and helping *the poor* (Acts 9:36-42).
12. **CORNELIUS** – He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly (Acts 10:2,28).

13. **PAUL** - A man whose way of life was totally changed from that of a persecutor to a preacher and proclaimer of the Gospel. The book of Acts from chapter 9 through to chapter 28 tells us of his conversion, his travels and troubles and the many other things he did. The epistles show us how he spiritually helped many ecclesias exhorting, encouraging, warning and instructing them. He was a bold and powerful preacher. He fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7).

14. **JESUS CHRIST** – The only begotten and beloved Son of God who was the child of the blessed woman Mary. He was perfect and full of love, a man of prayer and our coming King.

15. **LOIS, EUNICE AND TIMOTHY** – They had a sincere faith which lived in them (2 Timothy 1:5).

Sis Bevelyn Tembo (Lusaka, Kenya)

Signs Within

In his book “Studies in the Gospels” Bro Harry Whitaker made the comment that

“The Lord’s faithful remnant have eagerly strained their spiritual sight, peering into outer darkness for signs that He is near, when one of the best signs is within their own community.”

Bro Harry made these comments in the context of the unfaithful steward parable in Matthew 24:

*“But if that **wicked** servant says to himself, My master is delayed, and he then begins to **beat** his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the **drunkards**, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the **hypocrites**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

The word “beat” in this parable means to thump by repeated blows. It is a very sad thing when we do this to our own brethren as Jesus warned would happen. Perhaps one of the most worrying trends in these last days is to use the bread and wine - the symbols of our fellowship and participation in Christ’s death - as a weapon against our brothers and sisters with which we beat them. This is never what Jesus intended. Even though it was the night he was betrayed by Judas, Jesus still broke bread and washed his feet.

The parable in Matthew also talks of another worrying trend, those who do the beating of their fellow servants are caught up in a group it describes as the *drunkards*. There is quite a theme running through scripture of the drunkards... and it’s not talking of literal drunkards but spiritual. They are the ones who get together in groups and become intoxicated, but the wine is symbolic, they are drunk with their own wisdom and call evil good and good evil as in Is 5 v 20-23

“Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. Woe to

those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent”.

In scripture, spiritual drunkards and *hypocrites* seem to go hand in hand as in these verses in Isaiah and Matthew 24.

The same word that is used in Matthew for beating our fellow servants is used in Acts 23 v 2-3 when Paul was struck by the high priest, and Paul also connected the beating that he was getting with the hypocrisy of the one doing it.

“At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, ‘God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!’”

Paul was showing that the one doing the beating was a hypocrite. Those in the parable in Matthew. who beat their fellow servants and were caught up with their brethren in an intoxicating spirit, were also condemned as hypocrites.

Matthew. 15 v 7-15 also talks of the hypocrites - those who worship God in vain and teach as doctrine the precepts of men:

“You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain, their teaching are but rules taught by men.”

In the parable in Matthew 24 the beating of the fellow servant is interrupted by the return of the Master... they “begin” to beat their fellow servants and then the Master returns unexpectedly. I wonder how long before God will say “Enough” and send His Son back. As I see the continuation of disfellowships and defamatory things said on Christadelphian websites and in chat rooms I wonder if Brother Whitaker is right and the clearest sign of Christ’s return is the behaviour from within our own community.

Sis Robin Jones (Sydney, Australia)

Seven Links to Christ

(1) LOOKING AT CHRIST is to realise our sinfulness, as did Peter: (Luke 5:8; Rom 7:18-25) our need for forgiveness of sin (Heb 12:1). We strip off our sin and have our eyes fixed on Jesus as our Saviour from sin (John 1:29) and as our Lord and Master (Col 3:22).

(2) LEANING ON CHRIST it is trusting Christ for everything, in old age, times of depression, against ravages of war, safe and secure from all alarms, leaning on the everlasting arms, resting on the only foundation (1 Cor 3:11).

(3) LISTENING TO CHRIST is learning of Christ for daily direction and guidance (2 Tim 2:15; Ps 119:105).

(4) LOVING LIKE CHRIST walking in love (Eph 5:2) and leading lives of love, and having the compassion of Christ for others (John 13:34,35).

(5) LIVING AS CHRIST John tells us that he who calls himself a Christian “ought to be living as Christ lived” **(1 John 2:6)**. Christ must be our example in humility, in self denial, in helping each other, in suffering wrongfully, in serving each other **(Phil 2:5-8; Rom 15:2; 1 John 3:14-17; 1 Peter 2:21-23; John 13:15)**.

(6) LABOURING WITH CHRIST Everything we do should be done with enthusiasm as unto the Lord. Much spiritual barrenness is due to spiritual laziness.

(7) LONGING FOR CHRIST We are waiting for Christ. He is coming soon; but while we are waiting we must be working not sleeping (Phil 3:20; 1 Thes 4:11; 1 Cor 4:12; Eph 4:28).

Bro Sibangi Maka (Zuishavane, Zimbabwe)

What Is Faith? ...

It is not just credulity.

God is a reasonable God. He does not expect us to believe without any evidence. We today can see that God has acted in the past: we have absolute proof from prophecies amazingly fulfilled. Therefore Bible faith is faith for a reason. We can truly say, 'God has done this, this and this; therefore I believe (have faith) that God will do this, this and this in the future'. Faith builds on reason.

The cases of both Abraham and David conform to this rough rule, as do all cases, when we think about them. Abraham had miraculous visitations from God, by vision or angels, on which to base his faith. David had the wonderful history of his nation (eg their miraculous deliverance from Egypt by the ten plagues) plus some of his own experiences (he was helped to oppose a lion and a bear to save his sheep) on which to build his faith, before his supreme act of faith in taking on Goliath!

Abraham's faith is described by Paul in these words, and this is an exercise to us – Rom 4:18-20 – *this is what real faith is like*: "Who against hope believed in hope ... and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about 100 years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief: but was strong in faith, *giving glory to God*".

That is one reason why we need to show faith – it gives glory to God. Jesus did many miracles, which his disciples saw with their very own eyes! On one occasion Jesus criticised them, because they thought he was worried about not having enough bread to eat. He said to them, in effect, 'You saw what I did in feeding the 5,000, so why are you now so faithless?' (Matthew 16:6-11). When God gives us reasons, He expects faith. It is only reasonable!

Romans 10:17 tells us how we obtain faith: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing *by the word of God*". Once we are convinced (by the many lines of evidence, including the resurrection of Christ from the dead on the third day) that the Bible is indeed the Word of God: and we read it with joy, then we develop stronger and stronger faith in God and His purposes with us and the earth.

Today we have the whole history of the Jewish race (their blessings, punishments, scattering and recent regathering) as reasons for our faith, plus many other lines of reasoning. So Hebrews 11:1 sums up for us (NIV): "FAITH is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see". Hebrew 11 lists many of the great men and women who showed faith, some of whom died for their faith. Verse 35 tells us that their HOPE was in a future resurrection from the dead – "that they might gain a better resurrection".

Life is a brief, fleeting affair. Total extinction is not a pleasant thought though most people seem to prefer it. Our only hope of being saved is to please God by having faith in Him, and letting our faith lead us to action and obedience. “Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back into perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb 10:38,39).

Sorry we have mislaid the name of the African Contributor

Disobedience

Dictionary definition of disobedience is “lack of obedience, neglect or refusal to obey”.

The ‘Book of *all* Books’ (The Bible) introduced us to the beginning of the creation in the Garden of Eden. After God had completed the planting and decoration of the garden, (Gen. 2:8-9,15) He handed it over to the man, Adam, “to dress and keep it” with one command and a penalty if he disobeyed it: “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou *shalt not eat of it*; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die” (Gen. 2:16-17). We all know very well what went on between the man, the woman and the serpent; how the serpent deceived them and encouraged them to disobey their Creator (Gen.2 & 3).

Our Maker pronounced all the creation as “Very good” (Gen. 1:31). All was ruined by our first parents, who refused to keep the command He gave them. The conditions the human race find themselves in, are as the result of disobedience. What a joyful place this earth would have been if man had kept the commandment his Creator gave him (Gen. 1:28-29; 2:8,9).

The generation of Noah was destroyed by flood as a result of wickedness and evil (Gen. 6,7,8).

Naaman would have been cured instantly had he obeyed the words of prophet Elisha, though he later did after persuasions from his servants (2 Kings 5: 1-14).

The kingship was taken away from Saul because, firstly, he hurriedly offered a burnt offering meant for Samuel to offer on behalf of the nation thereby disobeying God’s commandment which later brought him death (1 Sam. 10:8; 13: 8-14, I Chron. 10:13). He also refused to destroy the Amalekites utterly as God instructed him through Samuel (I Samuel 15).

Achan perished with all his family and everything he had as a result of his disobedience in coveting the accursed thing (Joshua 7).

The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for forty years as a result of their refusal to keep the commandments of God through Moses. This could have been a journey of four days from Egypt to the promised Land. (Canaan).

Pharaoh and his army all perished in the Red sea for his refusal to honour God’s call and allow the Israelites to go (Exodus 14).

God commanded the Israelites saying, “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them (idols of the nations) nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children...of them that hate me” Ex. 20:5-6. “And shewing mercy unto

thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments” Ex. 20:6. These scriptures speak of both the curses and blessings depending on disobedience and obedience respectively.

This truth followed Israel wherever they went or whatever they did, either in their fatherland or in the Land of their captivity. They were facing these curses (troubles) not because of what they did in the present time but also for the disobedience of their fathers centuries ago.

Are we today to follow the daily desires of the flesh and perish as did the fathers or are we to listen to the words of advice as we read them in this everyday life “encyclopeadia” and amend our lives and live to His glory ?

Disobedience brought about disagreements in the family, children refusing to listen to their parents (2 Tim. 3:2; Rom. 1:30); even today telling their parents and seniors that they must tolerate their views for they are best. The evils and sufferings in the present dispensation are the result of disobedience. The works of the flesh as we know are a result of disobedient (Gal. 5:19-21). But we thank our Father that without looking on our sinfulness and disobedience to His words, “He commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

Fellow brethren and sisters, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and *keep His commandments*; for this is the whole duty of man.”

(Eccl. 12:13).

Bro James Ogbah (Aba, Nigeria)

Sin and Its Consequences

Adam and Eve were instructed that they could eat of any fruit tree they wished apart from just one, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By the very act of eating of that tree, Adam and Eve learned what evil was. God had clearly told Adam what the consequences of eating would be: “But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat the fruit of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). God did not want them to serve Him slavishly, but gave them free will to choose to obey or not to obey, to fulfil the reason for their creation or not to do so. The result of Adam and Eve choosing the path of disobedience was that the consequences followed.

No matter where people live they are bound by laws. The reason for law is to maintain order in society and regulate the behaviour of individuals within society. These laws are at times just or unjust. Whatever individuals may think of laws, they know that breaking them brings the consequent punishment.

Human laws are, however, imperfect, often benefiting one branch of society over another. Further, who is to decide what is right or wrong, since perceptions of justice, and what is acceptable or unacceptable, varies according to society or culture. To me there is no consistency in the world regarding what is right or wrong and no perfect means of declaring ‘guilty’ or ‘not guilty’ of a crime. As a result, miscarriages of justice can occur. So why does society have rules and laws? Because without law, society degenerates into anarchy. That is why society accepts laws, despite their imperfections.

God is our Creator and as such He demands that human beings fulfil the purpose for which they were created. God does have a purpose with His creation, and has decreed laws for man to live a true life. Disobedience of God's laws is what the Bible terms sin, and the consequence of sin is punishment. The laws and commandments of God are impartial and without favouritism. They are equally applied to all individuals no matter what society they live in.

Bro Moses Dhlakama (Beira, Mozambique)

The Gospel of Christ

The word 'gospel' means good news "glad tidings". "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Romans 10:14-15). As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!". It was first preached in promise and then as fact. The gospel has power to save all who believe and obey it. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

Lest another gospel be preached, the apostle Paul warned, "Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you...let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:7-9). But it might be reasoned, Surely a person would not dare preach another gospel? Well, many have and many continue to do so. There is the 'gospel' of faith only, the 'gospel' of many churches, the 'gospel' of worship as you please, the 'gospel' of grace only and the 'gospel' of prosperity and many other – but all of these are false gospels. There is only one true gospel: "And he said unto them, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

Later, Paul warned that the Lord would eventually come and take vengeance on all of those who do not obey the gospel. He said: "and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). But how can one obey the gospel? That is something we are going to find out.

First, let us consider the facts of the gospel. They are the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. We read, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Now everything else is based on these facts. This is the foundation of Christianity, and of hope. Naturally, those facts must be believed.

Secondly, there are commands of the gospel that must be obeyed. The Bible teaches that each one must hear the truth: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"

(Romans 10:17). One must believe it or have faith in it. We read further, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). After faith, one must repent of his sins, or turn away from them. Christ said: “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). Again, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). Then what? The confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is necessary. Christ himself said, “ Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven”. (Matthew 10:32,33).

At a later time, the eunuch said that he believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and straightway Philip baptized him (Acts 8:37,38). The last command to be obeyed is the act of baptism: Peter told the people on the day of Pentecost, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). And Christ said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that beliveth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). By obeying these commands, one obeys the gospel of Christ, is to the ‘church’ and can be saved (Acts 2:47). There is just one way to be saved, and that is the way Christ has ordained it in God’s word: “If ye love me, keep my commandments”. (John 14:15). “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was” (James 1:22-24).

Thirdly, through belief of the gospel we receive forgiveness of our past sins. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Peter also said: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you” (Acts 3:19). “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth”.

Truly, without obedience and faithfulness, man has nothing. So this is the gospel of Christ with facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be received. The Lord is gracious to those who love his will and who strive to obey it. He has invited all to come and obey him. It is now man’s responsibility to take advantage of what the Lord has to offer.

As servants of the Lord, let us all hold fast until the day of our Lord’s coming by preaching the true gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may receive a good reward on judgement day.



Photo: Shama Ecclesia, Ghana

Bro Joseph Oppong (Shama Junction, Ghana)

Good News 18 Years Later

"The Truth comes to different countries in unusual ways, and on each occasion God is in control.

He uses those who are useful to him. In 1987 the first contact was made with people in Nepal about the Truth. There was one man who played an active part. His name was Rajendra Rai. When I was in Kathmandu he, knowing I was there somewhere, searched many of the hundreds of hotels till he found me. He then took me by the hand to meet his friends. Five years later in 1992 his friends were baptised but Rajendra was not. God is never in a hurry. In December 2005, he gave a good confession of his faith and was immersed into the Saving Name of the Lord Jesus.

He writes about his baptism in the following manner:

Brother Peter,

I have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit on 17th December, 2005. This is a piece of news of great importance in my life so I e-mailed you today. Please transfer this rejoicing message to brothers Ivan, Joseph since I have no e-mail address of them. I will do it to Brother Elvin myself and his family as his mail address is already available to me.

I now have a feeling of peace in my heart after my baptism which is, incredibly incomprehensible indeed. I have never had an experience like this before for many people explained and described regarding the peace. But it was a wonderful moment God offered me to be experienced on my own. In Jesus word in John 14: 27 not a worldly peace, he gives us then definitely a heavenly one. No other more words of explanation can explain my joy and peace at this time

Your brother in Jesus

Bro Rajendra Rai

Bro Peter Fry (Wales)

Some Principles of Prayer

In our Bibles we read about God's people who had some powerful beliefs in their prayers, people like Elijah, but I am sure that they followed the laid down principles from which God was ready to answer their requests.

1) *You must have faith.* "Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith" (Matthew 21:22). It means one must believe that God is able to do what you ask Him to do. Without faith it is impossible to please Him. "For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

2) *You must be thankful.* "Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Phil.4:6). Thanksgiving is a worship state of mind which is as important as believing in God's power to help.

3) *You must be at one with God*, says Jesus Christ: “If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7). There is the same meaning in the Psalm: “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open unto their cry” (Psalm 34:15). Thus identification with God’s righteous purpose is very important.

4) *You must be resigned to His will*. “And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything, according to his will he hears us” (1 John 5:14). “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt ... Thy will be done” (Mat 26:39-42). Therefore it is reasonable to yield to His will before you pray.

5) *You must be patient*. As David said: “I waited patiently for the Lord and he inclined unto me and heard my cry” (Psalm 40:1). “Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart” (Ps.27:14). If all prayers were answered immediately under the urgency of our pleading, we would probably be sadly disillusioned. Our vision is so limited that it is always wisest to wait for God to answer as and when His wisdom may deem best.

6) *You must cherish no sinful desire*. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Psalm 66:18). This does not mean that a person has to be perfect before he can pray over and over again; God invites sinners to call upon Him. But you must be sorry for your sins, and be willing to be free from every evil thought, word and deed for your prayers to be effective, and you must pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Jesus said, “Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it that the Father may be glorified in the Son(John14:13). God has given us opportunities to come to know him, talk to him, and to grow into his likeness through prayer. Let us keep on praying without ceasing as our Lord Jesus did.

Bro James Mwangomo (Mbeya, Tanzania)

The Defeat of Aids

AIDS differs from some other epidemics in one important respect: it is preventable. If individuals are prepared to adhere to basic Bible principles, they can in many, perhaps all, cases avoid contamination. The Bible’s moral standards are clear:

- Those not married should abstain from sexual intercourse (1 Corinthians 6:18)
- Married people should be faithful to their partner, and not commit adultery (Hebrews 13:4)

Those who are already infected can find great joy and comfort through learning about the disease-free world promised by God for the near future, and then through conforming to God’s requirements. The Bible assures us that in due course all mankind’s woes, including disease, will come to an end. This promise is made in the book of Revelation: “I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: ‘Look! The tent of God is with mankind and He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be any more. The former things are passed away’” (Rev 21:3-4).

The assurance is not just for those who can afford costly medication. The prophetic promise of Revelation chapter 21 is confirmed in Isaiah 33:24: “No resident will say ‘I am sick’”. Then all

living on the earth will abide by God's laws and will enjoy perfect health. Thus, the deadly march of AIDS and all other diseases will be halted for ever.

Bro David Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)

The Body Cries Because the Parts Quarrel

We are all one body - head, eyes, nose, mouth, heart, hands and all parts. But what happens if, instead of sharing ideas in common, they begin to disagree.

First, the legs complain: "We carry the whole weight of the body and even keep you out of danger by running fast".

The arms were very angry with what the legs said and replied, "You carry us along, even to work on the farm but we are the ones who weed, till the soil, do the harvesting, carry the food to the house and even cook for you. How can you think we do nothing?"

When the eyes saw this, they said to the arms and legs, "Remember us: if we did not exist to show you the direction of all the places you visit, would you find your way to the farm, streams or market? Without us, you could not sort out ripe or unripe fruit".

The mouth was not happy and said to the legs, arms and eyes: "If I close up and refuse to eat, you will all die. Am I not important?"

The nose said, "If I close up my nostrils for even a few minutes, you will die because you need oxygen to keep you alive, and I am the only one who takes in oxygen".

The head laughed and said, "You legs, arms, eyes, mouth and nose do not reason before you talk. Do you not know that I am the one who directs your activities? I am the one who asks the legs to run from danger, and ask the arms to work for us while directing the eyes to see and the mouth to eat".

The ears were not so happy: "We are the ones who hear all the sounds about danger, and love, yet you try to ignore us", they complained.

The heart heard all these and was very sad and angry: "You are making a lot of noise for nothing. I have never rested since I was born. I tick day in and day out, year in and year out. If I stop ticking, you will all die".

In conclusion, the head said "I have seen that none of us can exist without the others. We must live together and love our whole self, protect each other from diseases, hunger, harsh weather and poverty". After the long quarrel, the head said, "Dear brothers and sisters, let us unite and work together for a better tomorrow. Unity is love, strength is understanding. The greatest is love (1Cor.13:13).

We have written simply to come to an understanding that the parts of the body were quarrelling over who was the most important. God is so kind to us, that we are equal. Just as when Jesus was with his disciples and they were asking, "Who shall be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" He then brought a child and declared to them, "If you make yourselves like this little child, the Kingdom of God is for you".

Jesus is our Head, and we are all just parts, incapable of functioning without each other (Matthew 18:1-6 and 2 Corinthians 8:15).

Bro George Kum and Sis Quinta Ngah (Limbe, Cameroon)

18 Reasons That Jesus Was Not God

- 1) When Jesus had been baptized, he immediately rose from the water and a voice was heard from the heavens, which said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Who is who? God speaks from heaven to God standing on the ground?
- 2) God cannot be tempted with evil (James 1:13). Jesus was tempted by evil (Matt. 4:1-11). If Jesus was God, how could Jesus be tempted by evil?
- 3) Jesus worshipped God (John 20:17, Mark. 12:29-30, Matt. 4:10). How can Jesus worship God if Jesus is himself God? Does God worship Himself?
- 4) Jesus cried out, when hanging on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). If Jesus was God, then God had forsaken God! How can that be? How can God forsake God?
- 5) God cannot die! (1 Tim. 6:16). Jesus died. If Jesus was God, then how could he die?
- 6) Who ran the universe during the three days that Jesus was dead in the grave? Was God dead for three days? Did the universe vanish for three days?
- 7) God raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 5:30). How could God raise Himself when He was dead?
- 8) Jesus is a messenger between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). How can a messenger (middle man) be the same being he is the messenger for?
- 9) Jesus said "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36). If Jesus is God, then how is it Jesus does not know what God knows?
- 10) If Jesus is God, then how can he stand next to God? (Acts 7:56).
- 11) If Jesus is God, then who was he praying to in Gethsemane? (Matt. 26:39).
- 12) How can Jesus receive "honour and glory" from God when he is himself God? (2 Pet. 1:17).
- 13) The Bible says about Jesus: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;" (Heb. 5:8) Why would God need to learn obedience?
- 14) Jesus "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). How can God sit down with Himself?
- 15) Jesus himself will be subject to God (1 Cor. 15:28). How can God subject Himself to God?
- 16) How could Jesus, if he was God, go to God? (John 14:28)
- 17) How can Jesus, who was "sent" by God, be God who sent him? (John 3:34; 17:3)

18) How could Jesus ascend to God when he was himself God? (John 20:17)

Bro. Mikael (Denmark)

A Generation of Deaf Ears (Jer. 25:3)

Parents complain that their children will not listen to them. Teachers have the same lament. Sometimes politicians and journalists wage an endless battle to get people with power to change their policies, but are just 'voices crying in the wilderness'.

Jeremiah, too, was a lone voice, warning, pleading, denouncing and prophesying for years while no one took a scrap of notice, as he spoke God's word. It was God they refused to hear and heed.

That is the lot all too frequently of the preacher, the evangelist and the missionary. A fire burns in their bones, the word God sends, but no one will listen. Some spend a lifetime pleading with their hearers to repent, to obey God, to accept Jesus, to forsake their evil ways, to be born again - but to no avail. Many come to the end of their lives wondering if all the sacrifice was worthwhile, why all the patient pleading was in vain and querying whether they were really called by God in the first place.

The present generation is no different: the word is spoken faithfully, clearly and strongly. The gospel is preached and the good news is announced, but all too often it goes unheeded, falling on deaf ears, and the murder, the adultery, the futility, despair and emptiness go on. What will those people, who have not listened, do when Jesus comes?

Bro. David Banda Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)

Two Tabernacles

The scriptures are quite specific with reference to: (1) The Tabernacle of the wilderness and (2) The Tabernacle of the Body – "this tabernacle of flesh." So clearly related and integrated are these that one is the spiritual reflection of the other.

Unless the Israelite in his wilderness worship could visualise two tabernacles and their significance, his service to God was valueless. Unless the discerning mind could look beyond natural and material things to spiritual realities (where the tabernacle of the flesh was a living reality, a spiritual replica of sanctification and consecration divinely demonstrated in the wilderness tabernacle), the Israelite worshipped God but in vain.

God was rightly insistent that His people "begotten unto a lively hope" should mould their lives according to the pattern demonstrated before them.

In the Hebrew the word 'tabernacle' is rendered "dwelling place" – and each was designed as a house in which God would dwell.

FIRSTLY, the wilderness tabernacle was a reflection of divine power, diffused into spiritual majesty as the 'shechinah glory' which shined forth above the mercy seat and between the cherubim – a glorious portrayal of the visible majesty of the divine presence.

SECONDLY, the tabernacle of the flesh was to evidence the principles of righteousness sponsored by enlightened behaviour in accord with the divine injunction to shine forth as “the Light of the World”.

In the first century this manifestation was not found in the splendour of Herod's temple but in the Lord Jesus Christ. God, in His infinite wisdom, disdained to reveal Himself any longer in curtains, gold and silver or costly array – but in flesh – “A BODY PREPARED”.

John 1:14 records, “the word was made flesh and dwelt (tabernacled RV) among us and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and Truth”. It was through Christ that God chose to tabernacle with men.

In the Mosaic dispensation, when the discerning Jew looked upon the High Priest resplendent in his robes of office and performing the will of God in sacrifice and worship, he beheld his ideal, the various garments and appurtenances representing godly characteristics and spiritual qualities; but more than these, he beheld the symbol of God manifested in the flesh.

When Jesus came in the fullness of his work of sacrifice and worship, he needed not to wear outwardly these characteristics of God in symbol as garments - he was “all glorious within”, being clothed in humility and righteousness – perfect qualities of love and obedience. Thus Jesus rightly could say, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”. He was, indeed, “God manifested in the flesh”.

Each tabernacle – the wilderness dwelling and the body – was created specifically to show forth “the praises and goodness of him who has called us to his kingdom and glory”. Each tabernacle was a radiant lightstand verifying that God is the author of light and truth.

With each tabernacle, and justly so, the accent was on holiness; and anything that tended to defile was cast out – the basis of divine acceptance being “worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness”.

Each was sojourning as in a strange land – a weary pilgrimage to Zion – “no continuing city” – a wandering in the wilderness.

Each tabernacle was to be constructed to the divine specifications by instruction and guidance to a preconceived pattern, emphasis being that there was no permanency in this existence – it was but a probationary experience.

The tabernacle moved forward by divine counsel; and the Israelites journeyed with it in progress physical and spiritual to the promised land, the natural corollary being that there is not, nor can there be, any standing still in spiritual progress.

All that came out of Egypt, the tabernacle MATERIALS and the people, had to be changed in character. The Egyptian image had to be hidden from view, as that state related to sin and ignorance – an ignorance that God formerly winked at, but now a transformation was required on a divinely-accepted basis of knowledge and spiritual reform. So today the requirements of God are the same; we, as His creatures, must transform ourselves in harmony with the great transformation which is soon to take place on the earth; we must become new creatures.

Finally, the FURNISHINGS of the tabernacle were few and simple, nevertheless wholly adequate to the spiritual needs of worship. There was no lack – it was “thoroughly furnished”; furthermore there was not the unsightliness and impracticability which comes from being over-furnished – crowded and cluttered.

Paul reminds us of the bare essentials of the fundamental furnishings of mind and body: “Be ye thoroughly furnished unto all good works” – those basic qualities with which Jesus was furnished. “Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness” – “for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”. These qualities enumerated above are essential elements of the godly character.

In Psalm 118:15 we read, “Salvation is *in the tabernacle of the righteous*”.

The lesson of the two tabernacles, with its scriptural eloquence, teaches us that to constitute the true Israel of God, we must live “righteously, soberly and godly in this present life”. Let us therefore “present our *bodies* a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1).

Bro. Andrew Lucas (Australia)

One of the Causes of Human Failure - “this one thing I do” Philippians 3:13

It is easy to make excuses for our failures and to blame our heritage, lack of opportunity, difficulties and other things, but other people with similar disadvantages have triumphed over them. Why should some people fail while others succeed?

On closer examination, in many cases the person who failed never really expected to succeed. He lacked the inspiration that comes from possessing a single objective. To see our worthy goal, and to keep that vision clear and bright, even in moments of doubt and discouragement, enables us to break through to success. If we vacillate and keep changing our ultimate objective, the power of inspiration can never be fully released into our life and affairs.

We cannot succeed without a goal in our life. The goal is not easily realized, and for a time it may seem as if we cannot find our true vocation for we move from one thing to another. This is understandable, even excusable, if we realize that our aim in life is to find our true goal. When we feel we have found our vocation, hold fast and pray for the grace of perseverance. Too many people are quick to surrender their visions at the first breath of opposition. I refuse to allow past failure or dilatoriness to rob me of my spiritual progress and power. Keep a clear vision of your goal, work towards it and it will become a reality.

Bro Stanford Khuuza (Magungi, Zimbabwe)

Humanism or Christianity

“What man of you if his son ask bread will give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish will give him a serpent” (Mat7:9-10). “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts” (Mat 15:19-20). “I say unto you, swear not at all” (Mat 5:34). “Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you Nay: but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:4,5). For the humanist, man is essentially good; for the humanist, sin is a quaint archaism which he prefers to translate into modern idiom as anti-social behaviour. Social good and ill become the criteria of right and wrong.

Jesus on the other hand “needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man” (John 2:25). To the founder of Christianity, however, there is something pathetically ridiculous in man’s high-sounding oaths. With withering realism he calls attention to man’s impotence to change the colour of one of his own hairs. For the humanist, man is good; maladjusted perhaps, but essentially in control, and on his way to Utopia. For Jesus, man is evil, sinning from his heart against God, woefully weak and assigned to destruction unless he repents. Here are two philosophies opposed to each other. We must choose between them; we cannot have both. Our needs cannot be met if we refuse to acknowledge their opposition.

The early church fathers, ignoring Christ’s warning that “we shall all likewise perish” attempted a compromise with Platonism and welcomed into the church the totally unchristian doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Since then, humanism has narrowed its platform. This is not to deny beauty and greatness too much of man’s achievements nor assert that man is incapable of any good whatsoever; that would be unbalanced and unnecessarily severe. Jesus, we must remember, had a heart of compassion: he knows how to give good things to his children. But he insists that man is a broken reed as far as his own salvation and corporate weal are concerned. Paul says “When they knew God, they glorified him not as God...Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools...who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature instead of the Creator; who is blessed for ever” (Romans 1:21-25).

The Psalmist says: “They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him ... that he should still live for ever and not see corruption” (Psalm 49:6,7,9). “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness... For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent... and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base thing of the world and things which are despised, has God chosen, yea, and the things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Corinthians 1:18,19,27-29). “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

Bro Isaac Kapa (Tongaren, Kenya)

Five Tips to Make Life Easy

1. Love is patient and kind, it’s not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but happy with the truth; love never gives up and faith, hope and love never fail.

2. The world is near to being consumed and the danger is almost here. Let us stop doing things that belong to the dark. Let us take “weapons” to fight in the light and stop paying attention to our sinful natures and satisfying their desires.
3. None of us should be proud of one person and despise another. So we should not pass judgement on anyone before the right time comes. Final judgement must wait until the Lord comes; He will bring to light the dark secrets, and expose the hidden purposes of people’s minds.
4. When we are persecuted, we endure; when we are insulted, we respond kindly. We are not better than this world’s garbage.
5. In every thing we are doing, we should remember that we are in this world: runners do not always win the race and the brave do not always win the battle; wise men do not always earn a living; intelligent men do not always get rich and capable men do not always rise to high positions. Like birds suddenly caught in a net, we can be trapped at some evil moment when we least expect it. And it is better to listen to the quiet words of a wise man, than to the shouts of a ruler at a council of fools.

Bro Amos Odali Minjo (Gisambai, Kenya)

Naboth’s Vineyard (1 Kings 21)

Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which was beside king Ahab’s palace. Ahab eagerly requested the vineyard for money or exchange for another vineyard. Naboth refused, saying that the Lord did not allow him to sell his father’s inheritance.

King Ahab could not eat or drink because of his anger, but became bedridden with the refusal. Jezebel, Ahab’s wife, made a plan. She wrote a letter with Ahab’s name on it, to the elders and nobles. In this missive, they were told to accuse Naboth of cursing God and the king; therefore he was taken outside the city and stoned to death. As soon as Jezebel was told of Naboth’s death, Ahab was told to occupy the vineyard.

What do we learn from this incident? God was very much upset by the king’s behaviour as shown by his prophet Elijah, (1 Kings 21:17-19). Murder is a grave sin; we are exhorted not to kill (Exodus 20:13), it was one of the commandments God gave to rule Israelite society.

Another commandment given by God was not to covet his or her neighbour’s house or property (Exodus 20:17). Covetousness leads to theft and possible destruction of life – hated by God.

The ten commandments were designed for Israelites, so that they could live at peace with one another and with God. Jesus showed us the type of life we should follow. Killing, stealing, covetousness and such like, were things Jesus never committed. As long as we are in Christ and have invited him to take full control of our lives, we should follow his example.

We must serve the Lord whose life was peaceful. In contrast, Ahab failed to please God and his punishment awaited him (1 Kings 21:19-23).

Are there still possibilities of entering the kingdom, after we have sinned? Ahab the king gives us a good example. Having heard the trouble that God intended to impose on him, Ahab tore his

clothes, put on sackcloth, fasted and went about dejectedly (unhappily). These were tokens of humility. Here we learn that God wants us to be humble people. We find God withdrawing His punishment at that juncture and the punishment would not be faced by Ahab, but would be imposed in his son's days (1 Kings 21:27-29).

Acts 17:30,31 challenges us to trust in God our Heavenly Father who forgives and gives us the opportunity to make a fresh start, or turn over a new leaf, today not tomorrow. God has set a day to judge the obdurate who do not obey His word. Let us remember His special plans in which He gave His beloved Son so that we might have eternal life through the blood of the sinless Christ who died for us. Let us think deeply over this as we partake of the bread and the wine before us, as tokens of the Christ.

Bre Moses Ajiweka & Chakumanda Kondowe (Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe)

The Righteousness of God

Anyone who clearly understands the Bible's message and obeys its command to be baptized into Christ has, in the mercy of God, the hope of eternal life upon this earth when Jesus, returns. This is provided we, in this present life of probation, strive to live according to Bible teaching (2 Timothy 3:16).

We need to understand the purpose of the Bible, which teaches us of God's plan of salvation through the gospel. Scripture tells us that very few will accept that gospel but that it is high time for those called to spread the gospel to every living creature. For there is one God and none other God but He. We should worship Him in spirit, and love Him with all the heart, understanding, soul and strength.

God has many attributes and capabilities which are beyond our comprehension. The scriptures describe God in the form of man. Our part in the wilderness journey is for faith and truth so that we walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We must attain spiritual attributes, remembering that God is just and righteous: His work is perfect: He is a God of truth and without iniquity. He is to be worshipped through obedience and praise: "To obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:2).

The scriptures say that righteousness is the gift of God. "Lead me in thy truth and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation and on thee do I wait all day." "Teach me thy way." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all things ye ask shall be given unto thee" (Matthew 6:23).

"The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets" (Romans 3:19-21). How can we be righteous? Only from God and His son, Jesus Christ. The scriptures say "To declare I say, his righteousness that he may be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Let him glory in the Lord." "For evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth" (Psalms 37:9,11,15-17). May God bless you all in sharing the truth.

Bro Joseph Nvani (Maralal, Kenya)

Exploring the Heart's Motives

Jeremiah faced a watershed decision in his life. He expressed it in this way “O Lord, you induced me, and I was persuaded. Then I said, ‘I will not make mention of Him, not speak any more in His name’ ... But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones: I was weary of holding it back and I could not ... (Jeremiah 20; 7,9).

In proclaiming God’s message Jeremiah was met with great rejection and personal discomfort. He wanted to stop speaking! But he just could not! The ‘message’ he had been given by God was too crucial – both to God’s people and the surrounding people in the world. He simply could not limit the message to himself. God’s word, in him, in his heart, was like a burning fire, and he could not hold it in or keep silent. He just had to share it with others.

The apostle Paul felt this same ‘fire’ within him, and expressed it in this way “. It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). In sharing with the Christians in Corinth, Paul said “For the love of Christ compels us. Therefore, if anyone is Christ’s, he is a new Creation all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation now then, we are ambassadors for Christ as though God were pleading through us (2 Corinthians 5:14, 17, 18, 20).

Paul, like Jeremiah, had his heart radically touched and changed by God himself. For out of it, ‘the heart’, spring the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23).

Paul, therefore, diligently guarded his heart. It was in his heart that Jesus Christ, his Lord, had come to dwell (Ephesians 3:17) and therefore he was filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19). There was no way Paul could remain silent about the truth God had entrusted to him; Paul literally felt that he was a “debtor” to others (Romans 1:16) – he had to share Christ! The love of Christ, within him, compelled him to share. His fellow believers could then come to the measure of the fullness of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). So deep was this love of Christ that Paul could say “My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you” (Galatians 4:19).

Such “labour pains” for God’s people, comes from deep within, and they cannot be withheld. But Paul felt this for all who did not know his Lord, and so deep was this drive to share Christ, that he said about the unbeliever in Rome “I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have a great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh (Romans 9:1-3).

It is true that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Therefore, the deepest motivation to share comes from the heart, where Christ dwells and is living in us. With his word in our hearts, out of our hearts comes God’s word, to his people and to a lost world. Our motive? The love of Christ, from within “like fire”.

Bro George Maina Wabwile and Sis Metrine Maina (Bungoma, Kenya)

Godly Fear

The fear of the Lord

We need to fear God as long as we live, by endeavouring to keep his decrees. Fearing the Lord, simply means loving him, walking in His ways, not following other gods, but serving Him alone. God wants us to listen to Him, and learn to fear Him. He equally wants our children, who do not know Him and His law, to hear it and learn to fear Him, as long as they live, Deut.6:2.13; 10:12-13; 31:12-13.

Throughout the Bible, the fear of the Lord is the foundation of true godliness. It may appear strange that Christians are to fear and love the Lord, for fear and love seem like opposites. But when the Bible uses the word fear, it does not mean having a dread for God, so as to be driven away from Him. It simply means to stand in awe and reverence to Him. Therefore fearing God is pleasing Him in all our thinking, saying and deeds. We have to honour Him and value Him above anything else. Godly fear is simply not doing anything that might displease and grieve Him. Hence, it follows that, those who love God, will fear Him. The fear of God acts as fuel to a Christian's love for God, making it burn even more brightly.

Not fearing the Lord

Unbelievers are described differently in Romans 3:18. There is no fear of God before their eyes; vs. 9-17 illustrate the conduct of unbelievers. This happens when God is not served and obeyed. For instance God's name is ridiculed or blasphemed and misrepresented by unbelievers. Christians are grieved when God is not feared or honoured by others. For example, Paul in Athens, Acts 17:16, was distressed to see that the people were worshipping idols, instead of the one and only true God. As Christians, it should be our desire that everyone should fear and love God, worshipping only Him, above anything else.

Encouraging the fear of the Lord

We can encourage ourselves and others to fear the Lord by regularly reminding ourselves who God is and what He is like. God is great in power and majesty. We remind ourselves about God by carefully and prayerfully reading the Bible, which is God's word. God has made himself known to us through the Holy Scriptures. It is often good to think about God's character, as this encourages true and genuine godly fear.

Bro.Lalulani Malata, Kabwe, Zambia

What Hope Have You?

It might be difficult to express properly my hope concerning the future. However, the books of the Bible can give me the best answer. Moreover we may miss God's promise if we don't accept earnestly and sincerely the Bible hope.

1). Salvation depends upon our acceptance and permanent holding of the hope preached by the apostles:"We are saved by hope" (Romans 8:24)

"Whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3:6)"Continue in faith and do not be moved away from the hope of the gospel"

(Colossians 1:23) "The gospel ... is the power of God unto salvation for those who believeth" (Romans 1:16).

2). There is only one hope shown in apostolic teaching, and not several various or conflicting hopes "You are called in one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 4:4) "The hope of the gospel" (Colossians 1:23) "Looking for that blessed hope" (Titus 2:13; Colossians 1:5) "If any man preach any other gospel, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

3). This one hope is the hope of Israel, or the hope established in the Jewish nation, ages before Christ appeared, by the promises made to the fathers of

that nation: "For the hope of Israel, I (Paul) am bound with this chain" (Acts 28:20; 26:6) "Jesus Christ came to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Romans 9:4; 15:8) "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

4). Hope presents for faith the prospect of certain good things to come, to be hoped for on the strength of the promises of God, whom we honour by believing His word: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for" (Hebrews 11:1) "Hope to the end for the grace (or favour) that is to be brought into you at the revelation of Christ" (1 Peter 1:13) "We have here no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13:14; Romans 4:21).

5). Our hope includes the hope of eternal life, and inheritance of the kingdom of God: "In hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2) "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" (1 John 2:25) "Heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him" (James 2:5) "So an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour" (2 Peter 1:11) "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom" (Matthew 25:34).

6). Without a belief – a hearty and joyful belief – we cannot be saved: "He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16) "Without faith for things hoped for, it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6) "He that hath this hope purifieth himself" (1 John 3:3).

7). "We must hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope" (Hebrews 3:6). "We are saved by hope" (Romans 8:24)

God has given us His word for us to believe, and to do good so that we please Him; then we shall enjoy the benefits brought by Jesus Christ at his return. Stay close to the Bible's message, since other hopes are without foundation. Oh! God, guide us in our commitment to the Bible, to reach the kingdom.

Bro Geoffrey Wanyama (Chwele, Uganda)

Fight The Good Fight – Letter to Timonthy

This letter presents to us the picture of a young man called to the service of Christ and facing great difficulties in that service. He had to be God's man, God's representative in the world in which he lived among his fellow Christians and in every aspect of his personal behaviour.

Like the apostle Paul himself (1 Tim. 1:12) he was entrusted with the good news of Jesus Christ. He had that good news to preach and the glorious truths of Christ to teach to others. But he was

surrounded by the influences of non-Christian thinking and non-Christian beliefs and there were those even inside the Church who were giving wrong teaching, or who were emphasising things that didn't really matter at all. There were also those who thought of rules and regulations as being more important than the gospel. (1 Tim. 1:3-7). Timothy for years now had been nourished on the words of the faith and had followed 'the good doctrine'. (1 Tim.4:6). He had to make sure that he kept the faith, taught the faith and warned others not to depart from it. He had to be God's man, with God's word for the world.

Timothy's work was to continue what the apostle had done before him (1 Tim.1:3). Not only did he have to preach the gospel to the world; he had also to strengthen and help those who had become Christians. He had to be wise in all his dealings with every section of the Christian fellowship; towards men and women, young and old, he had to act as God's man (1 Tim.5:1-2). He had to advise concerning the choice of elders (1 Tim. 3:1-13), concerning the care of the poor and especially of widows (1 Tim. 5:3-16), concerning how slaves should behave (1 Tim. 6:1-2). He needed to know how to deal with accusations made against those in responsible positions in the Christian fellowship (1 Tim.5:19-20).

Prayer needed to be priority in his life (1 Tim.2:1) and in the lives of all Christian people, prayer for all men, prayer especially for leaders and rulers (1 Tim.2:1-4). Then he also had to give special advice concerning the conduct of public prayer, the place of men and of women in leadership, and the way that both should conduct themselves when they met together for worship (1 Tim.2:8-15).

Both preaching and teaching were Timothy's responsibilities and he had to use all the gifts that God had given him for these (1 Tim.4:13-14); but just as important was his own living as an example to others (1 Tim.4:12); his living as a man of God, faithfully persevering and constantly making progress in the Christian life (1 Tim.4:15). The letter is full of exhortations about these things. He, like all the other Christians around him, was living in a non-Christian world, and its standards and aims pressed hard on him to influence him. He, and those around him, faced the temptation to love money, to desire the favour of men, to get for himself rather than to give for himself (1 Tim.6:3-10). "Man of God," he was commanded, "shun all this, aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness." (1 Tim.6:11). He had to hold fast to the truth – in teaching and in living – but to do so in a loving way. Paul urged this on Timothy at the beginning of the letter – the one thing that matters supremely is love, "love that issues from a pure heart, and a good conscience and sincere faith." (1 Tim. 1:5). The whole letter is a call to the young Timothy to live as a man of God, to live a God centred life in faith and love and truth.

This letter does not contain great passages that teach of the glory of Christ, expounding God's plan of salvation in the way that Romans and Galatians, Ephesians and Colossians do. He does not show us how a young church faced its problems as 1 Corinthians does. But perhaps more than any other letter of the New Testament, it gives practical advice and counsel for a young man or woman trying to live in the world and among his fellow Christians as a "man of God". The age in which we live is very different from Timothy's; but many of the tasks and temptations and problems are not very different. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (power of God) we can find much in this letter to teach us, and to stir us up to live as men and women of God. Prayer – We praise thee, Lord, for thy word given to us in this letter. Give us also, we pray, the gift of Thy wisdom, that we may truly understand and carefully apply this word to ourselves; above all we ask that all we learn by Thy grace, we may obey and live out by Thy grace, and so live in the world as men and women of God, and servants of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Bro. Friday Umesi, Ikwueke, Nigeria

Progress Report Fom Salima (Malawi)

The work of the Lord here in Salima is moving, though at a snail's pace. We thank the Lord, who never fails, for giving us strength to cast the never-dying seed of His word. It is because of His empowering that we can see numbers growing. Our efforts fail at times and we sometimes feel discouraged, but God has always given us comfort and hope so that we do not despair – our work is to sow. But as human beings we tend to look back, calculate the time spent, and the area worked and compare it with the harvest. Oh, what a total failure and we pack up our spades and call it a day. That is, indeed what we do. However, when we grow to maturity, that situation does not, and should not, make us feel weak, or useless, or failures, or that we are not doing it right. The apostle Paul says in 1 Cor. 13:8, "I have learnt to think like a matured person, so that every situation becomes a learning tool, be it good or bad". This should help us examine carefully why the work is not progressing as expected, including self-examination. What sort of behaviour do we portray to those around our home, our work place, during festivities or during sad times? How honest are we? Do we boast at being more knowledgeable in the word of God? To count the number of years one has been working and compare them with what one has accumulated can be good to serve as a warning to either speed-up or apply brakes. With time, we learn to be patient which can bring much joy. For myself, I recall how I started alone, where there was not even a mention of 'Christadelphians' as a church. I knelt before the Lord and He gave me one to encourage me. Later on, my wife learnt of the way and made her decision to join us. Now we are a congregation composed of those who understand the teaching and embrace it. All this has taken time, and not only time, but perseverance. An interesting thing is that these trying times are interspersed with encouraging events: those who at first stood against us on matters of doctrine come to join us or invite us to their homes to share with them the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. An encouraging example is the wonderful ceremony we had on Sunday, 15th January, when we had five baptised by Bro. Jonas Ngwanda at Sengabay ecclesia in the fresh waters of Lake Malawi, they are our new Brethren: MPHATSO MAYIMBA, ROBERT PETANI, JOSEPH MAKHAMADZI and CHAWALA KUCHIPALA and Sister E. CHAWALA (the last two being husband and wife). I enclose photographs for the Magazine for the encouragement of our family of Christadelphians world wide. Lastly, may I encourage all of our dear fellow-labourers in the field of the Lord to work hard and act with sense of maturity as we patiently await his appearing.

Photo: Baptisms of Robert Petani, Sis E.Chawala & Bro Mphatso Mayimba



Photo: More Salima baptisms; Joseph Makhamadzi and Chawala Kuchipala



Bro. George E. Mayimba Nkhoma

Makhonge Ecclesia, Kenya



Photo: Brothers and Sisters outside the Makhonge Ecclesia Hall (Kenya)

Photos



Above: Riga Ecclesia (Latvia) which consists predominately of Sisters.

Below: Malawian Sisters at the special Sisters Health Seminar based on the book “Where Women Have No Doctor” available free to Ecclesias and Sisters in isolation from the CAT.



Christadelphian Farm, Berbice, Guyana. Above: Looking East from the main Farm House:

Below: Years of effort have failed to transform all the land to a modern farm, mainly because of lack of workers and funds. Though a few have really worked hard. On the other hand it has been a shining light for the Truth bringing forth much fruit.



Pictures from past Kenyan conferences



In My Father's House are Many Mansions (John 14:1)

“Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also!”

To understand this passage we must supply the answer to many questions –

1. Why were the disciples troubled?
2. Where is my Father's house?
3. If my Father's house meant heaven, then how did it come to get into a state of being unprepared?
4. If the souls of people went to heaven at death, then were the souls of all the millions of people who had died before Jesus was born all waiting at some sort of half-way stage, for thousands of years, for Jesus to be born, to die, to be raised again and then ascend into heaven and start preparing it for them? Or were those souls all living in an unprepared heaven?
5. What are the “mansions” Jesus spoke about?

The answer to the first question is easy enough. The latter portion of John ch.13 shows why the disciples were troubled. Jesus had been speaking about his approaching death and they did not understand the meaning of what he said. They asked him to explain. Jesus delayed his explanation while he dealt with Peter and then encouraged his disciples by telling them to “believe in God.” What he was about to do was part of God's plan of salvation. He had to die so as to make the way open into the Kingdom of God, bringing forgiveness of sins through his death.

I go to prepare a place for you. It must be obvious that Jesus was not going to prepare heaven. We know already that the Law of Moses gave no forgiveness of sins. Only the perfect sacrifice could do that and until the perfect sacrifice was made, there would be no way into the Kingdom of God. There would be no salvation for anyone. We have also learnt that by being crucified, Jesus also brought forgiveness of sins to those who had died long before he was born. We also know that if we, the Gentiles, are to have our part in the covenant of promise, we must associate ourselves with him in his death, and the only way we can do this, is to be baptised. *The only way of salvation* is through the death of Jesus, so until he died, the way was not *prepared*. By going to his death, Jesus would then prepare a place for us. What we have to find out now is where would the prepared place be?

“I will come again.” A clue as to where the prepared place would be, was given in this statement of Jesus. We would get that prepared place *when he comes again*. This shows that there must be a *second coming of Christ*. It is important to note that Jesus said that when he came again, he would receive us unto himself and added “that where I am, there ye may be also.” The gathering unto himself is to be wherever he is when he comes. If he comes to the earth again, and that is the only place to which he can come, we shall be received unto him there. That meant only one thing and that is that when he comes, the gathering to him will be *on the earth* in the Kingdom of God. This is consistent with the promises to Abraham and the covenant with David which formed such an important part of Christianity taught by the apostles. Jesus is the only way to salvation and that way was established through his death on the cross.

Bro. F.G. Nkomelah (Lilongwe, Malawi)

Recognising the Spirit of Truth

While waiting eagerly for our adoption as children of God, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and saviour Jesus Christ, I am greatly distressed to see that communities are still full of idols. I see that in every way men are very religious and going to proclaim the Lord’s atonement sacrifice until he comes (Romans 8:23,19; Titus 2:13; Acts 17:16,22,23; 1 Corinthians 11:26).

Do men make their own gods? Yes, but they are not gods.

Has a nation ever changed its gods? But my people have exchanged their glory for worthless idols. They have forgotten God’s living word, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator (Jeremiah 16:20; 2:11,13; Romans 1:25).

Jesus warned “Take heed that no one leads you astray. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Lo, I have told you beforehand”.

“Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? So, every sound tree bears good fruit. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. Thus you will know them by their fruits.”

“Not every one who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of Heaven when God’s will will be done on earth as it is in heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles’. Then I will tell them plainly ‘I never knew you. Away from me.’” (Matthew 24:4,24; 7:15-17; John 15:10; Matthew 7:21; 6:10; 7:22,23).

Beloved, do not believe every spirit. And if the prophet is en??? to utter a prophecy, I the Lord have entered that prophet and I will stretch out my hand against him. I also gave them over to statutes that were not good and laws they could not live by, for their hearts were devoted to their idols, therefore the Lord has poured into them a spirit of dizziness, and powerful delusion so

that they will believe the lie, and all will be condemned who have not believed the truth. Because they refused to love the truth, abandoning the faith and following deceiving spirits and things taught to demons, so now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of these prophets.

Test the spirits to see whether they are of God, for many false prophets have gone into the world (Ezekiel 14:9; 20:25,16; Isaiah 19:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:11,12; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Chronicles 8:21).

Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them, declares the Lord (Jeremiah 29:8,9).

This is how we recognise the spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood (1 John 4:6).

Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.

Love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love making disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (2 John 8,5,6; Matthew 28:19,20).

He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus' return (Philippians 1:6).

Bro Joshua Pakali (Kariba, Zimbabwe)