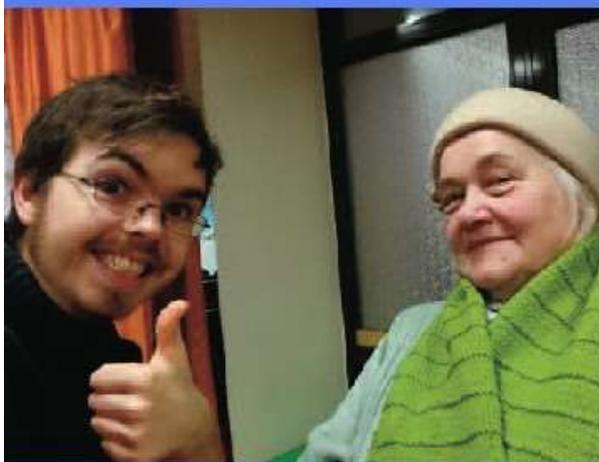


# THE Gospel News

*"To all nations"*



## Editorial | God in Search of Man

As cotton wool clouds drift across the sky and one day is more or less like yesterday and the day before that... and as so often our attempts to witness appear to hit the same brick walls... we can get the impression that God is somehow distant. There, but otherwise occupied; all set to meet us at judgment day, but meantime, leaving us to our own devices. This is absolutely not the case. God is in search of man. That's a phrase which rambles on my mind, and it leads me to another one, which you might perhaps misunderstand, at first blush: God is actually in need of man. He is passionate for us. He is not disinterested. The gift of His Son was evidence enough of that, for all time.

God's search for man is a repeated theme of the prophets. *"Like grapes in the wilderness, I found Israel. Like the first fruit on the fig tree, I saw your fathers"* (Hos. 9:10). *"He found him in a desert land... He encircled him, He cared for him, He kept him as the apple of his eye"* (Dt. 32:10). *"I have found David my servant"* (Ps. 89:20). *"I said, Here am I, here am I... I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people... I called, no one answered"* (Is. 50:2; 65:1,2; 66:4). Jeremiah speaks of running to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem, searching her squares on God's behalf, to see if he could find a single man who did justice and wasn't greedy (Jer. 5:1,5; 6:6,13; 8:10). God looked, and was deeply shocked that He found no man: *"He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His own arm brought salvation"* (Is. 59:16).

It's not simply so that men search for God and then find Him in Truth. He is in search for man. So it's not us as it were reaching out to God; He is fervently reaching out to us, and we have to come to realize that. We don't so much as find God, as realize that He already is earnestly with us. This explains how wonderful is the moment when both sides meet; all heaven rejoices when the woman finds her lost coin, or the shepherd His sheep. As the Yiddish proverb says, *"And going out to find Him, I met Him coming towards me"*. So how, then, does God search for man? God could as it were parachute His Truth right into the lap of people. But He always prefers to work through a mechanism. His "hand", His way of operation, is through His Son. And the Lord Jesus in turn has a "body", through whom He operates on earth. And so it is through us that the search is made. The Lord Jesus is as the owner of the vineyard who goes out looking for workers. And He gets so desperate that He lowers the bar as time goes on, and will take those whom nobody else has hired at harvest time. The lazy, handicapped, elderly, weak, those with a reputation as no good... and is willing to pay them a day's pay if they at least come and do something for Him. He is so desperate to have His harvest reaped, for otherwise it will spoil; there were a few days during which the right moisture content and weather meant that it was critical to make the harvest, and the parable is set during one of those days. Likewise the Lord Jesus is as the steward who goes out to find and compel men to come in to the marriage supper. As time goes on, He will take anyone. Such is the urgency and tragedy of the rejection of the Kingdom by those for whom it was primarily intended.

When we take the Gospel to people, we are part of God's desperate search for man. He is eagerly seeking to empower our witness, and willing there to be response. But He never forces against human freewill. Every rejection of our message is felt harder by Him than it is even by us. But He is with us, to the end of the world, as we make that witness, because we are searching on His behalf. Anyone who's done any amount of preaching work will testify to the simple truth - that we feel His presence so deeply with us. Even in the times of rejection of the message.

## God in Need of Man

God's need for man - as it were - is brought out by the parable of the lost coin. It's been suggested that the lost coin was one of the woman's dowry coins, and thus the story speaks of how every lost person is a personal and deeply felt loss to God. However, this view has been criticized in that a drachma, which had the same value as a silver denarius, was the wage paid to a worker for one day's field work (Mt. 20:1-16). It was far less than the dowry coins. It could be that instead we have here a reference to a desperately poor housewife - who certainly had no dowry money left. The poor were so poor in Palestine at the time of Christ that they were selling their land, and many had become landless labourers. They worked for money with which they bought food. The husband went far and wide searching for work; the Lord's parable pictures labourers waiting around for work. It's been calculated that on the basis of one denarius / day as wage, even if the worker worked 300 days / year, and had four children and a wife plus himself to support, this income would only enable them to buy enough bread to provide 1400 calories / family member / day (These calculations are made in W. Schottroff and W. Stegemann, *God Of The Lowly* pp. 129-135). This isn't enough to sustain a person's ability to do manual work. Therefore mothers and children faced malnutrition, and the women tried to grow crops on waste land and did anything for money in order to buy bread. The smiling, full cheeked, charming Mediterranean woman with dowry coins around her forehead (beloved of those Sunday School books about Bible background) - just wasn't the scene that the Lord had grown up in. The woman who'd lost her coin was searching desperately for it, because that was what she'd buy the kids food with. No coin = no food = whiny, hungry, sick kids. She needed, desperately needed, that coin; so that she could feed the hungry kids whom she loved and be the de facto domestic head which she was. And this is all a picture of God's need for the lost, His need for us, because He knows the feeding which that lost one can uniquely provide to His beloved family. And one wonders of course whether the Lord's parable wasn't drawn from real life incidents in His own childhood with Mary.

### **Our Part in the Search**

God is in search of man, and so is His Son. We surely all at times get depressed, feeling we are nothing and nobody, just used rather than needed. But just as we have our need to be needed, so does God, seeing we are made in His image and likeness. We see it all worked out visually when the Lord Jesus was starving hungry (Gk.), and saw a fig tree far away. He walked towards it, fixing His mind upon the tree. It wasn't the time for figs, but the tree had leaves, and He was so hungry, He'd have been prepared to eat the most immature, unripe figs (Mk. 11:12,13). This is an acted parable of His search for man, for fruit upon us. The same imagery of a fig tree bearing fruit is used by the Lord in Lk. 13:6 to speak of His hope of spiritual fruit from Israel. But when the Lord finally arrived at the leafy fig tree, He found no fruit at all, and so He cursed it, and it withered. The same word is used about the withering of those rejected at the last day by the Lord Jesus - they will be withered, and then gathered up and burnt (Jn. 15:6). So as the Lord Jesus strode the long way towards the fig tree, focused upon it with all the focus and hope of a hungry man, so eager and hopeful to find fruit... so He is striding towards us with the same hope in us, of finding at least something, however immature, however unripe. But at least something.

The good shepherd searches for the sheep until He finds it. John 10 is full of reference to Ezekiel 34, which describes God's people as perishing on the mountains, eaten by wolves.

But the Lord Jesus set Himself to do that which was impossible - to search until He found, even though He knew that some were already lost. Our attitude to those lost from the ecclesia and to those yet out in the world must be similar.

God is searching for us, longing for us, as the father watching for the prodigal's return. And it is this spirit / disposition of God which we are to have in our pleading outreach to humanity. We're extending the tragic and even desperate search of God for man. Our witness can certainly not be indifferent, take-it-or-leave-it, just a bald presentation of Biblical information... there must be some heart and soul and spirit to it, reflecting none less than the searching, longing heart of God Himself. Is our testimony to Jesus in this spirit of the prophets? With whom have you talked this week? To whom have you reached out, for whom have you prayed that they might return to their God? And how have you talked with them, with what spirit of appeal? As a dying man to dying men? Or as an impartial presenter of mere information? Why not make prayer lists of people whom we desperately wish would turn to God...? And when one does turn, this spirit will lead us to do all we can to ensure he never turns away again.

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Possibilities...

*... are determined by circumstances and capacity. Impossibilities will never be exacted by the supreme Judge.*

*What will be looked for and what must be cultivated, is the diligent accomplishment of that which is within our power. It may be very little, but lets do it continually, and with a good conscience, as in the sight and service of God and we shall be accepted.*

**Bro Robert Roberts ~ "The Ambassador" 1887**

*Duncan Heaster*

## News from Africa

### NEWS FROM BENIN



Brother Kossi Woudji is currently living in a refuge camp in Agame, Cotonou, Benin, West Africa.

Please pray for him and for others who are living in such difficult circumstances.

### NEWS FROM CAMEROON



#### **BAMENDA | Bro Akoso Peter**

We want to continue receiving *Gospel News* which is much appreciated, if possible could do with several copies. Our Ecclesia is small and is in need of more Bibles and any literature for preaching you can let us have.

#### **Bro Emmanuel Nanji**

The account in Gen. 44 tells us about Joseph and his re-meeting with his brethren in a foreign country after their sinful act of envy in which they had lied to their father that he was dead. We

see that their repeated lie about the whereabouts of Joseph had seemed so long ago that their lie seemed like truth to them.

As one sin leads to another so the brethren of Joseph told their brother, still unknown to them, their usual lie for fear of the man who had Pharaoh's authority to do as he wished. This is a type of Christ and us today.

Judah, one of Joseph's brethren is the spokesman for the brethren. He remarks in verses 19 and 20 of Gen. 44 to Joseph "*do not let your anger burn against your servant: for you are even like Pharaoh*". This is the type of appeal we are to be daily making to Jesus. Jesus is like God, just as Joseph was like Pharaoh. It was in the power of Joseph to do as he wished to his brethren. He would not revenge but went and wept for his brethren. In Gen. 45:57 Joseph comforts his brethren with the following words: "*do not grieve upon the sin of having sold me*" but that was God's way of deliverance and why Joseph was sent to Egypt. "*God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth.*"

## NEWS FROM CONGO



### MALUKU | Bro Marcus Losah

Bro Mukambilwa, president of the Kinshasa Ecclesia, and I recently assisted in the baptisms of two brothers, **Crispin** and **Toussaint** and two sisters, **Blandine** and **Jolie** from the ecclesia of Maluku, a distance of 123km from our own ecclesia of Kinshasa.

Following the baptisms we broke bread and shared wine with our new brothers and sisters.

We pray that God may be with them and support them.

The baptisms took place in the Congo River and pictured above from left to right are: Bro Atutuna Crispin; Sis Mato Blandine; Bro Mukambilwa (Kinshasa Ecclesia); Sis Jolie Wanga and Bro Emongo Toussaint.

## NEWS FROM KENYA



### NAKURU | Bro Samuel Wanga

The omnipotent God urges us to choose life rather than anything else. Human life is very precious: one can use his or her last penny seeking for treatment to save their life to just get well and possibly live a bit longer. But the God of Abraham is giving us eternal life at a very low price – the most expensive part of it, was paid as it were by His only begotten Son, on Calvary's cross (2 Corinthians 5:1,2; 2 Timothy 4:18).

Some die whilst undergoing treatment, while some recover but still remain mortal and eventually die. However the true believer has to just "*Do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*" to be granted eternal life.

The current global crises, like power wrangles, famine, earthquakes, wars, tsunamis etc, etc, are all indications that the Son of God is about to return to Earth and establish the Kingdom of God

here for the righteous – a world free from all the tribulations that we are experiencing at the moment.

### **LUUYA | Bro Alfred Wanjala Wanyonyi**

I am very glad that you still remember me from that very long time ago, and seeing that the work of God is going on well. To be quiet since 2011 was not my will, but we had a problem with the previous address. Thank you for helping me with the books – *The Real Christ*, and *The Real Devil*. I am now in Luuya Ecclesia with my family because Nalondo was far from where we live, but Luuya is near – I can go on foot.

### **SINDO | Bro John Owalo Onani**

I appreciate your spiritual support, and that of the contributions in *Gospel News*. This magazine must be supported because through the magazine we are able to feel confidence of a brotherhood worldwide.

Today my contribution to the magazine is about the word **“Seek”** (Matthew 7:7, Matthew 6:33, Isaiah 55:6, Ezra 7:10.)

*“Seek, and you will find ... and he that seeks, finds.”* (Matt.7:7,8)

### **May we all ‘Seek the Lord while He may be found.’**

So ...

*“Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you.”* (Matt.6:33)

*“Seek Yahweh while He may be found. Call you on Him while He is near.”* (Isa. 55:6)

*“For Ezra had set his heart to seek the Law of Yahweh and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances.”* (Ezra 7:10)

### **TANGAREN**

I asked Brother Francis how he used his time and he explained how he worked in an orphanage and spent a lot of time preaching. He kindly sent these pictures of the orphanage. Alas throughout the world are hundreds, if not thousands, of children’s orphanages and many are not even able, because of the shortages of resources, to care for the children as these are. They have clothes and some even shoes which care for their feet and prevent them getting some diseases. They have food, which is mainly a kind of porridge, together with a little relish which you will notice on the sides of the plates, often a kind of herbs. Of course they sit on the ground and eat with their fingers.

Many of us live comfortably whilst millions don’t have enough. Perhaps not the best way of help, but we have sent each child a packet of Rowntrees fruit pastels and for the helpers some literature that could help them gain eternal life. However the only positive solution is for Jesus to return, for which we daily pray.

## NEWS FROM MALAWI



### SALIMA | Bro Austin Nyirenda

I always find the *Gospel News* an inspiring spiritual booster.

We have been very saddened by the falling asleep of our Sister Emi after a long illness and our condolences are with our Brother George Mayimba Nkhoma, who alas is also not well these days, we long to meet our Sister at the second coming of Jesus.

Owing to the high cost of fares I have not been able to visit the group up country that are showing interest in the Truth.

### BOLERO | Bro Luke Chawinga

We are very pleased to announce the baptism of **Sis Loveners Zgambo**, pictured, witnessed by fifteen brethren and sisters from the surrounding Ecclesias. We are trying hard to maintain the standards of the Truth in spite of the difficulties of the way in these very difficult times.

## NEWS FROM NIGERIA



### ABA | Bro Elijah Eze

I have been appreciating and reading *Gospel News* for a long time which strengthens me.

### EBEM | Bro Gaius Egwu

At Nmuri River in Ebem Ohafia, last year a new-born soul was added to the family of Christ. We baptised **Bro Olugu Egwu Kalu**, having spent time with Bro Olugu interviewing and discussing with him the Gospel message.

The baptised brother is a senior brother to Bro Gaius Egwu: his testimony is that he has been studying and reading the life of his younger brother and his books more than any other, and that led him to conclude that there must be difference between Christadelphian and Pentecostal Churches. He started giving more attention to my preaching, teaching, and spent time reading *Bible Basics*, which finally opened his eyes to the gospel Truth.

We are so pleased and thankful to welcome him into the family of Christ. We pray that God will use him to open the eyes of his family.

The family were members of the Mennonite Church when I was pastor there, but the Church was closed down after I found the Truth and left the Mennonites.

Please continue your preaching efforts, for they will be rewarded at Christ's coming. I strongly appeal once more for your kindness to send us more *Bible Basics*, *The Real Christ*, and *The Real Devil*. We also really need more NEV Bibles, and the comments there are helping many people to understand the true teaching of the Bible.

### IBADAN | Bro Timothy Temilola

I appreciate receiving the latest issue of *The Gospel News (To All Nations)* Magazine yesterday afternoon. I am most grateful to you for all the uplifting and edifying and instructive articles contained in every page. Please kindly keep it coming even as the Hope of the Lord's return draws nearer and closer to its grand climax of end time events.

May the Lord continue to bless and prosper the global mission work of Carelinks Christadelphian Ministries and the Christadelphian Advanced Trust. May His mercies and compassion continually rest with you, Bro Duncan, Sis Cindy and all the many volunteer representatives, brothers and sisters working tirelessly behind the scenes for the furtherance of the Gospel of God.

#### **UWANI | Bro Goddy Mwosu**

Many attended the Eastern Ecclesia's Fraternal held at the Azumini Ecclesia in November and there were two baptisms there. Our own meeting was blessed with the baptism of **Sis Goodnews Ugwunter** amidst great rejoicing of us all as well as the angels in heaven.

#### **NEWS FROM TANZANIA**



#### **MBOZI-SONGWE | Bro Raphael Mukya**

We have been saddened by several falling asleep in Christ at ours and the other local Ecclesia Igale. We look forward to being again with them in the Kingdom when Jesus returns.

We particularly found the latest *Gospel News* very interesting and do hope our lack of Bibles will one day be solved.

#### **MBEYA | Bro James Mwangomo**

We very much appreciate all you do for us at CAT and Carelinks in producing *Gospel News* and the other publications you send us. They help us to understand more deeply the Word of God. We still would like other literature to improve upon our understanding.

Our Ecclesia at Iloma has been closed by the authorities because it does not have a good latrine, at the moment the CBM are unable to help us with this.

#### **TUNDURU | Bro Billy Mataka**

Thank you so much for the books, especially for the booklet "*When Will Jesus Return to the Earth*" which I found very encouraging and enlightening, to prepare me for Jesus soon return. I would like a copy of the Bible with brief commentary if it is possible. I am the only Christadelphian in this district; God has been really great in enlightening me with the truth. I used to receive the CIL lectures and exhortations, but alas do not get them these days.

#### **NEWS FROM UGANDA**



#### **KISINGA**

Sister Elizabeth Bura seems to have lost contact with Christadelphians and would love to hear from others to strength her faith. She alas has stomach ulcers and makes frequent visits to the

hospital. Her husband has anaemia which, together with striving to bring up their children, means they find things difficult to cope with and appeal for your prayers which she prays, together with theirs, will result in some relief.

Sister Elizabeth's address is Niabirongo 2nd Village, Kisinga, via Kasese, Uganda.

## NEWS FROM ZAMBIA



### DAPHAN

#### LUSAKA | Bro Francis Mukabe

I am very grateful for the booklet “*When Will Jesus Return to the Earth*” which I have found very useful in learning about Jesus return, better than what I knew before – it has a lot of information. We can always do with more literature to help us take care of ourselves in this untoward generation.

#### MUFULIRA | Bro Fred Mumba

Here in Zambia the Postal authorities will not accept the Post Paid envelopes you have sent us, and our postal rates are so expensive that few can afford to send letters abroad. In the photo I am inspecting the new door to our CBM Meeting Hall. We especially thank the CBM brethren and sisters who have enabled us to replace the broken down doors with these nice french doors, pictured right. *A photo of the Mufulira Ecclesia is on the front cover.*

## NEWS FROM ZIMBABWE



### BANKET | Bro Kennedy Zonzi

I am a newly baptised brother with the Banket Ecclesia. I was baptised in September, and wondered if you could possibly send me a NEV Bible please.

The forty Bible lessons that are required for a Bible student to study I have completed, with the help of my tutor Bro David Yelulani. At present I am doing the 14 lessons that are done after baptism, and I find them very interesting.

#### BULAWAYO | Bro Ambrose Tanyepana

Many thanks for the Bible Message Calendar what a gem of a calendar that has pictures and messages concerning the splendour and glory of God.

We are all in good health and the rains are falling, but it's too late because most of the crops are a complete write off.

I and my fellow brothers are fine. I am still roaming about in my area preaching the Gospel to tell people about the Word of God, the Bible – to repent and be baptised.

God created the heavens and earth, and us human beings, but we do not always understand or alas follow His laws as we should, because we have Adam's dying, sinful nature. We are like crabs that walk sideways and backwards. God said “*All souls are mine, as the soul of the father,*

also the soul of the son is mine.” God said, “The soul who sins, he shall die.” Ezekiel chapter 18:4. God said, “Whether you are rich, poor or clever, you will return to the dust because you are children of men.” Psalm 90:3.

Let us read the Bible every day and teach the people the truth, so that by God’s grace and mercy we will have eternal life in the Kingdom.

## News from the Americas

### NEWS FROM GUYANA



#### Sis Janet Williams

We enjoy *Gospel News* and share it with others. The booklet “*When Will Jesus return to the earth*” is really interesting and would like some more to share with those in the Truth and out of it.

## Understanding Baptism

We can now understand better the description of baptism as “*the answer of good conscience towards God.*” (1 Peter 3:21). Jesus himself was baptised and said, “*Thus it becomes us (is fitting for us) to fulfil all righteousness.*” (Matthew 3:15). “*He that believes and is baptised shall be saved.*” (Mark 16:16). Baptism can only be real when a person knows about the Gospel and believes that by accepting the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ there is forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

Baptism is both a birth and a death. When a person is completely “buried” in water it is a symbol of being buried with Christ. By his death and resurrection Jesus destroyed the power of death. When the person comes up out of the water a new life commences. It is like a new birth into the family of God. The new life is now linked to the life of the risen Lord Jesus. At the second coming of Jesus, God promises to give eternal life to faithful members of His family (John 3:5, Acts 8:35, Romans 6:3-9).

*Bro David and Sis Jacklyne Wanjala (Chwele, Kenya)*

## Look for the Good Things

As each year draws to a close it seems natural to look back and to reflect on what has taken place over the past twelve months and even further back. In many cases, these occurrences play a significant role in your attitude towards the unknown future, and as a result your attitude and your actions could well be governed or influenced by past experiences. There is often a

tendency to dwell on adverse circumstances and this can seriously affect your outlook on life to the detriment of yourself and others close to, or dependent upon you.

Looking back over the events that have taken place, lay the emphasis on all the good things that have happened. By all means learn from past mistakes, but do not become burdened by failures so that you lose sight of God's graciousness in your life. As you recall the many good aspects of your life during this past year you cannot but see and be thankful for the presence of the Living Christ with you in all circumstances. Just as He has protected and provided for you in the past, so will Jesus be your constant companion in the future. *he grass may be greener on the other side, but it still has to be mowed.* **“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Hebrews 13:5 KJV**

*Bro David B Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)*

### **God has Spoken Through His Writing**

*“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation, for prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but the man spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21).*

One of the greatest works of the Holy Spirit has been the giving of God's truth to people through the prophets. This simply means God's prophetic message, as written in the Scriptures. The prophets not only spoke from God, they also wrote from God. What they prophesied was not their own “interpretation”, it was not their personal opinion or guess-work about truth. True prophecy never came from human will, it came from God Himself as his Spirit moved them to tell them just what He planned.

The Holy Spirit did not have to change the prophets into machines to do this, they still wrote in the language and the manner of their time. We can see in their writing what kind of person the writer was. The Holy Spirit used all of these – the place, the time, the language and the person himself – to write exactly what God wanted. This is why Paul could be so confident in describing all Scripture in this way: *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).*

Therefore, are you looking for “teaching” that is truly from God? Go to Scripture. Do you need “training” in righteousness? Go to Scripture. If you have strayed and need “correcting,” go to Scripture. There God Himself guides you so that you can return to Him. In fact, Scripture is so dependable in every part that all of it is useful. It completely and thoroughly prepares us for every good work.

God used 40 different writers to pen down these 66 books during a period of 1500 years, yet all these writings agree. They tell one story – the greatest theme of all history. Yes, this book is breathed or inspired by the one true God Himself. Have a copy of your own and enjoy reading the Word of God every day.

*Bro Gift Lungu (Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe)*

## **Walk With God | Psalm 25:8-10**

It is beyond all doubt that the best way to live is God's way. He created life, but gave to man the power to choose the path along which he wishes to walk. This power of choice is decisive, for it leads to constructive achievement or frustration and failure. God gave you life, but what you do with it is your responsibility.

***“All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies” Psalm 25:10***

To live successfully you must have a standard of values that is greater than your natural inclinations, and a goal towards which you can work. God has supplied the standard in the teachings of the living Christ and the goal of every disciple should be to grow like Him and do the Father's will. As you adopt Christian standards and accept that doing the Father's will is obligatory for every disciple, you enter into a meaningful relationship with God. The awareness of the Divine presence becomes a reality and you are conscious of a guiding hand in your affairs, for the Father does lead when you are striving to walk in His way. With His leadership you gain a fresh appreciation of the beauties of life, and you can assess more clearly what you can become in the power of your living Christ. Walk with God and you will be taught the meaning of true living.

*Bro David B Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)*

**“... It is more blessed to give than to receive”**

***The example of God HIMSELF The example of the Lord Jesus Christ The example among the Believers***

These precious words Paul gave to the Ephesians in Acts 20:33 appear as a reported saying of the Lord Himself - so powerful in their import! They challenge every Believer and are contrary or opposed to our human nature. The ultimate example is Jesus who, in His lifetime, “Gave **all** and took **nothing**.”

Here are two basic paraphrases taken from the Apostle Paul:

***“To work for the benefit of others as well as your own needs”***

***“To be careful not to covet the things of others”***

These two ideals are fundamental to our daily life and if practiced, will take us part way to following the Lord.

Our thoughts then are now being directed to the joy of giving! Not “*shutting up those inner feelings of human compassion.*”

We need to see ‘giving’ as an investment, to the Glory of God - not as a personal cost!

***Abundantly - another wonderful word about giving***

We might explain this simply as being generous, over-supply, overflowing, unrestricted and without limits.

We **look first** to the very example of God Himself! Everything we see in both the natural and spiritual world is given “in abundance” and to all. Jesus draws attention to this unrestrained quality of our Father in Heaven who **first** gives His sunshine and His rain to all, to meet their needs, regardless of their responses! (Matt 6:45) **then** in spiritual needs, in the matter of faith, we read, “*He gives generously and graciously to all.*” (James 1:5). Eternal Life itself is to come, as Jesus says, ‘**more abundantly**’ as only Heaven can provide (John 10:10).

### ***We can become children of our Father!***

The family likeness begins in Exodus 34:6, ‘*He is full of compassion, pity and shows great love*’ from the beginning! It continues in ‘full strength’ in the like example of the Lord Jesus Christ on a daily basis. On more than one occasion we read, of the Lord’s motive, “*He was moved with compassion...when he saw...*”

### ***Compassion – the one acceptable motive***

Here we must face self-examination. The world ‘gives’ sometimes with mixed motivations and other reasons. The Believer can only be driven by a pure, God-like motive. “*To give - not expecting return,*” is the **one way!**

### ***Timing is all important***

James has another appropriate comment. “*What good is there in you saying....God bless you, if you don’t give them the necessities of life?*” Here, now is the key to successful giving. I like the adverb, ‘spontaneously’ when gifting. Remember, Exodus 35:5. Here Moses calls to the nation for ‘a wide range gifts’ to go into the tabernacle.

The response was immediate – Israel gave abundantly. Who didn’t, who couldn’t? Who were empty? ... Why, those who had earlier given of their possessions, ‘gold’ to Aaron for the wrong motive and reason. Their gold was simply destroyed and blown away! (Daniel 2:35 too). The same spirit was shown by the nation when David called for gifts for the temple that Solomon would build. The details – 1 Chronicles 29:6-7

### ***The Test of the True Believer***

Jesus outlined the test of genuineness, He applies to His followers – by one sign only (John 13:34) “*...by this will all men know that you are **my** disciples, in that you have love one for another.*” The Christian Believer should, and must stand out in this world by love applied and practised. By showing, compassion, pity, love and forgiveness within – that it might attract others, ‘to the Lord’s side’ and to become more ‘like Him’.

*Bro Neil Todd (New Zealand)*

### ***The Inspiration of the Bible***

There is a familiar saying that you can tell what a man is by the company he keeps, and what is true of men is also true of books. The character of a book can be judged by the kind of person who reads it, and the influence it exerts upon its readers. The good man reads a good book, the man of low and vicious disposition reads books which suit his depraved tastes. Judged by this standard, the Bible holds a unique and unchallenged position. The great and good men who have loved the Bible are legion; a few names come to mind, such as Milton, Priestley, Sir Isaac

Newton, Davy, Faraday, Kelvin, and Gladstone and, among women, Queen Victoria and Miss Nightingale. In the night clubs, the gaming houses, or in the homes of the thief or the prostitute, the Bible finds no place. Where vice, drunkenness and improvidence abound not a single Bible will be in use. There is in the Bible that which no other book possesses to a similar extent, a spirit which pervades it and which can influence men and women towards higher and better things.

Whence came that spirit? The answer is supplied by the Bible itself, where we read that God “*at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets*”. The good spirit, then, is of God, who has inbreathed it into a book, from which it goes forth again to the world.

No other book has, or ever has had, such a wonderful record as the Bible. No other book has been published, broadcast in so many millions; no other book has been translated into so many languages; no other book has had so great an influence on the lives of men, or on the destiny of nations. The Bible has withstood the assaults of infidels and survived them all; it has been banned, destroyed and publicly burned, but has arisen triumphantly over all its foes because it is of God.

### **The Good Shepherd**

*Our Good Shepherd provides the following:-*

1. PERFECT PROTECTION The Lord is my Shepherd
2. PERFECT SATISFACTION I shall not want
3. PERFECT REST He maketh me to lie down
4. PERFECT NOURISHMENT in green pastures (pastures of tender grass)
5. PERFECT GUIDANCE He leadeth me
6. PERFECT PEACE Beside the still waters (waters of rest or quiet)
7. PERFECT RESTORATION He restoreth my soul
8. PERFECT WALK the paths of righteousness
9. PERFECT CONFIDENCE I will fear no evil
10. PERFECT COMPANIONSHIP Thou art with me
11. PERFECT DISCIPLINE Thy rod
12. PERFECT SUPPORT Thy staff
13. PERFECT CONSOLATION They comfort me
14. PERFECT FELLOWSHIP Thou preparest a table before me
15. PERFECT TRIUMPH In the presence of my enemies
16. PERFECT STRENGTH Thou anointest my head with oil

17. PERFECT JOY My cup runneth over

18. PERFECT LOVE Goodness and mercy shall follow me

19. PERFECT HABITATION I will dwell in the house of the Lord

*Bro Gaius Egwu (Haifa Ecclesia, Nigeria)*

## **Mercy**

... is an essential quality of God

The sacrifice of His Son to be our Redeemer shows clearly the outpouring of His love in mercy. In the Old Testament history of God's relationship with His chosen people Israel, mercy characterized His dealing and His covenant. That mercy can be understood as the interaction of God's strength, steadfastness and love. Mercy and covenant are mentioned together in various times, showing God's steadfast love for His people. Psalm 25:10 shows the right response of God's people to His mercy. *"All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies."*

## **God's Gracious Gift**

How frequently we hear the expressions, "they earned," or "they deserve," or "they are entitled". We seem to be living in a calculating age in which most things carry a price of some sort. Employees seek bonuses while employers seek service. Trade Unions threaten strike action if workers' demands are not met. Favours done are remembered and, at some times or another, are expected to be repaid. How fortunate we are that God does not deal with us in a similar manner. How blessed we are that our Lord does not apportion His love according to what we have done for Him, or how we have lived our lives. The love of our Lord is a most gracious act on the part of a loving Saviour who, as Paul puts it, *"died for us while we were still sinners"*. As Christians, having been the recipients of such a blessing, it is our duty to share this Christ-like love with everyone with whom we come in contact. In so doing we shall be glorifying God, which is our duty and our privilege.

*Bro David B Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)*

## **Where are you? | Genesis 3:9**

You could probably give an easy answer to this question, which would describe your exact geographical location. That information would be useful to someone who was looking for you.

God asked the question of Adam after he disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. God knew, of course, exactly where Adam was. There was more to the question than geography. Like the one the Pharisees asked Jesus, it is one of the deep questions of the Bible.

Asked at one level, it has much deeper significance at other levels. Adam was hiding from God, covering his shame and guilt. He was hoping that God would not find him. He was actually lost in a very deep sense. He had moved into the domain of sin, and out of fellowship with God.

God poses the same question to us at any time, and at all times. He asks, not because He doesn't know, but because we need to answer it. To do so we have to look at ourselves, ask where we have got to, and where we think we are going. You may have got to a dead end, spiritually speaking. You may be drifting away from Jesus. You might be completely lost, bent on getting as far away from God as you can. You could be so confused that you don't know where you are, but facing up to the question might at least help you to acknowledge your lack of direction. You could be successful in your professional or business career, but "*where are you?*" in the sense that really matters?

*Bro David B Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)*

### **Be Patient**

The times in which we are living could be referred to as the "instant Age." Pre-cooked meals are available, so too are instant drinks. Few kitchens are without a microwave oven which responds in a matter of minutes. Electronic equipment has revolutionized the world of accounting and communication at the touch of a button, so much can be achieved almost instantaneously. It is an unfortunate state of affairs that, in many instances, there are those who adopt the same attitude towards prayer. They present their prayers to God and expect instant results. So often, when these are not forthcoming, they doubt the efficacy of prayer, leading to a weakening of their faith in a God of love and compassion. Paul reminds us of the fact that "in all things God works for good with those who love Him, those whom He has called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28). For this reason the Lord's timing is perfect according to your needs, which are well-known to Him. Be patient in prayer and wait on the Lord. He will answer in your best interests.

*Bro David B Yelulani (Banket, Zimbabwe)*

### **The River of Living Water**

Key verse: Psalm 46:4 "*There is a river the streams of which make the city of God glad – the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.*" The three Korah Psalms are thought to refer to Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem when they obtained water from Hezekiah's tunnel; this has a greater latter day fulfilment.

These are in the future, as Ezekiel saw in vision, a literal river of water flowing from the Temple through the desert to the Dead Sea, bringing healing and life wherever it went. So the new Jerusalem has its river of life that produces fruits to the glory of Yahweh. That is the basis of the figure now before us here, applied to symbolic new Jerusalem (II Chron. 6:6; Psalm 48:1, Isa. 60:14, Heb. 12:22).

Christ is the altar (Heb.13:10) and from Him will proceed the doctrine of life represented as the stream of living water (John 4:14, 3739). This will fructify the aridness of men's minds and will heal the Dead Sea of Nations (Isa. 57:20-21).

The water of the streams mentioned in Psalms is unpolluted and health-giving, because v.9 says, "*He makes war to cease to the end of the earth, He breaks bows, shatters the spears, He burns the chariot in the fire,*" meaning that this will be in the future Kingdom when Christ reigns on Mount Zion, and with His redeemed in glory. Let us put ourselves in remembrance of these promises as we are waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Bro Alfred Wanyonyi (Luuya, Kenya)*

### **Dependable**

We must earnestly desire God's personal companionship. We must not be content or happy without it. It must be a constant yearning and feeling of need. Sad and bitter experience in this life greatly strengthens desire. That is one of the reasons it is needed and beneficial. Only God is dependable. Only God understands. In God's mercy and wisdom, there can be much comfort and support from other human beings, but we cannot make our happiness dependent on them, or build upon them, or build on them as our foundation. All flesh is grass - in God alone is safety and security.

*"Search me, O God"*

*Bro G Growcott*

### **Christadelphian Eastern States Fraternal Gathering**

17-19 November at Azumini, Abia State

Azumini in Abia State is the homestead of our beloved late brother, Edwin Nwaboso. There is no gainsaying the fact, that brother Edwin Nwaboso would be much delighted at the resurrection morn, to see that the lamp stand he lighted during his mortal life is still glowing while in the dust of the earth. No doubt, Azumini Ecclesia has always been on the good news, particularly the erection of a permanent Ecclesia Hall nearing completion.

Historically, the Eastern, Western and Northern States have been conducting the Fraternal Gathering separately, but common understanding came up some years back where these groups came together and the fraternal gatherings were conducted every two years vis-à-vis, the Christadelphian Youth Circle. Last year, Asaba hosted the entire All Nigerian Christadelphian

Youth Circle during the April period which saw our two overseas brethren, Dffyd Jenkins and Philip Oram, in attendance. It is noteworthy to state that these brethren have been good emissaries to Nigerian brethren. However, it has been the thinking of many across all borders (Eastern, Western and Northern) that these two years hiatus is a big lacuna in the affairs of those who crave for daily and regular spiritual milk. Consequently, on November 17, 2017 (the commencement date), brethren from the Eastern States who have been eager for the resuscitation of this agenda, poured in myriads, closing their shops, businesses, while government workers took advance excuse duties to be part of the show and grace this wonderful occasion.

It is pertinent to note therefore that this year the Eastern States Committee, who superintended the affairs of this gathering, has once more set a blueprint to trek, if our Father delays the emergence of His Son now and beyond; and no doubt the kick-starting of the programme is well commended as the event was refreshing, reawakening, entertaining, brotherly, peaceful and eventful!

To this end, the following brethren, but not limited to were on hand for lectures, among others; Peter Kalu, Emmanuel Eze on Family Life and Fellowship which drew much questions and contributions. Furthermore, Youths from different Ecclesias gave dramas and various interesting presentations. Also, at this auspicious and august occasion baptisms were recorded successfully.

*Bro Ik Ugu (Asabi Ecclesia)*

### **Lessons from Joseph's Life**

The lesson of Joseph's life is unmistakable - God works when His hand is not apparent, and often when it would seem as if He must be taking no notice, and by means that seem to exclude the possibility of His being at work.

The conclusion is comforting to those who commit their way to God. It may seem to them that God is not only working with them, but actually working against them. Let them remember the agony of Joseph in the pit, in slavery, in false imprisonment, and learn that the darkest paths in their life may be the ways appointed for them to reach liberty and life, wealth and honour - yea, a throne in the kingdom of God. Jesus himself had to tread the dark and tearful valley of humiliation, and who in the day of his glory, will introduce all his brethren, amongst many bright stars, to the most interesting of Jacob's sons.

*Bro Robert Roberts - "The Ways of Providence"*

### **The Meaning of the Breaking of Bread**

The Breaking of Bread is a meeting for the sustenance, not of the body, but of the heart and soul. It is a meal for the soul. *"Take, eat, this is my body."* *"Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood."* After all, the body is not the only part of man needing sustenance. There is the mind, which is fed by education, observation and reflection. And there is the spirit, which, if it is to be

worth anything, is to be fed on the best food. On at least one occasion Jesus led his hearers' thoughts from ordinary to spiritual food. The miracle of the five thousand drew crowds, but their motive was open to question: "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat the loaves". And then Jesus taught them the great lesson that whereas food for the body is of passing value, there is a food for the spirit leading to Eternal Life. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you ... I am the bread of life". This discourse in the sixth chapter of John was delivered long before the last supper, but there is little doubt that it expresses a fundamental truth of which the solemn breaking of bread and drinking of wine is a most vivid, particular embodiment.

In simple terms, when at the Judgement a man's heart is laid bare, it will be seen to be mostly Christ, or mostly of sin. If sin, then the man has been feeding on selfishness, lust, sloth or indifference to his God. If Christ, then he thought a great deal about Christ during his probation. He fed his heart on the words of Christ, read them, let them sink in and move him not only to Christ-born thoughts but to Christ-born deeds. In the solemn Breaking of Bread, such a Christian is not only intimately reminded of who and what his most precious food is, but of how it became such by that Life and that Death.

*Bro J B Norris - "The First Century Ecclesia"*

### **Times of Fear**

We live in the days that immediately precede the return of Jesus back to this earth. Many people are edgy and anxious about the future, and troubles abound. Talk to the people around you. You will find that no matter what the media has to say, they can't believe that the Banks would fail. They aren't sure that they will have a job tomorrow, they may even be afraid to walk down the streets of their city for fear of being mugged.

For in our world today, men of great prestige and political power have fears. They must appear to be courageous and decisive no matter the type of crisis they face. We can't go away and escape the trouble, living in a world that is not as it should be. However bad political, economic, or moral conditions are with us, but we who trust in God have a peace that the world cannot understand, in which God will not fail us in these troubled times – to show that God is not dead but living. Such times have been prophesied in the gospel of Luke 21:26, "that men's hearts will fail them for fear, as they look at those things which are coming on the earth." As in Nigeria every year we hear of disease problems, as of last month "monkey pus virus" disease has killed many people in some States. We are praying to God that we may not be affected, as we are remembering Him in our prayers to save us from this.

*Bro Blessing Nwigwe (Mbaise, Nigeria)*

### **Quiz: "All Creatures Great and Small"**

*Of which creatures does the Bible say?*

- 1. Hath no understanding?*
- 2. Makes the deep to boil like a pot?*

3. *Is chief of the ways of God?*
4. *Was more subtle than any beast of the field?*
5. *Prepares its meat in the summer?*
6. *Turns not away for any?*
7. *Has two daughters, crying, Give, and give?*
8. *Bearers her young on her wings?*
9. *Covered the camp (in places three feet deep)?*
10. *John the Baptist wore clothes of its hair?*
11. *The Philistines made five golden images of it?*

Choose from: **ant, behemoth (elephant), camel, eagle, horseleech, leviathan (whale), lion, mouse, mule, quail, and snake.**

References: **Psalm 32:9; Job 41:31; 40:19; Genesis 3:1; Proverbs 30:25; 30:30; 30:15; Deuteronomy 32:11; Numbers 11:31; Mark 1:6; I Samuel 6:4.**

### **“Our Citizenship is in Heaven”**

The central issue is one of loyalty. We do not fight for the kingdoms of this world because they are not our homeland. We are born in various societies and countries, and do have some of the privileges and responsibilities which rest upon citizens of those countries, but this is not our pre-eminent citizenship. It is our citizenship of another country – Christ’s Kingdom – which dictates that we cannot fight in the armed forces of the present, as well as the loyalty we have to the commandments of Christ. *“Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour.”* (Philip. 3:20). Our stand is part of the same issue as that which dictates that we do not vote, or take part in the politics of this world. The question of whether we should take part in civil defence, trade unions and jury service also revolve around this issue of citizenship.

Some Judges who presided over Second World War tribunals understood the logic of this position. Judge Withered was reported to have had great respect for Christadelphians, and others who believed in the second coming, for *“none of them claimed total right of British Citizenship.”* At the same time, he and others looked for consistency in applying this principle in the lives of those who came before them for judgement. The need for this consistency is a constant theme. These comments are to remind a new generation of the stand that has been taken by the Brotherhood over the past 150 years, as an Ecclesia may need reminders in the present day.

*Bro Charles Daka (Mufulira, Zambia)*

### **The Fruit of Patience**

*“Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” James 1:4*

We live in a society based on demanding and getting what we want immediately. We thrive on the fast track of convenience. The results? The number of road-rage incidents has tripled in the

past two years. People are all in a hurry to get to somewhere without slowing down long enough to exercise common driving courtesies.

Modern lifestyles have left little room for patience. Yet there are some things in life and in our walk with God that simply can't be rushed. Someone once said, *"Do not sacrifice the permanent on the altar of the immediate."* When we try to rush things ahead of God and His timing, we settle for a fast food meal of short term satisfaction, rather than the nutritious and slow-cooked meal He would like to serve us. There is such a thing as spiritual malnutrition - in time it could do permanent damage to our souls.

It's not without examples and reasons - God's word lists patience as one of the fruits of the Spirit. In a self-serving world, we could take a refresher course in the art of patience and long-suffering. We want instant answers, even from God, yet we see by example that God's chosen vessels have always gone through a process of testing and timing. Joseph endured rejection from his own family and was left for dead. There were no instant answers for him. Trusting God was all he had left. In time, God raised him, honoured him, and even gave him the compassion to help the very family who had abandoned and betrayed him.

God always has a permanent plan for your life – and He will go to great lengths to make sure you don't sacrifice that plan on the altar of immediate solutions. Trust God's timing as He works patience in your heart.

*Bro Gift Lungu (Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe)*

### **Begin with a Forgiving Heart**

Faith will not work when there is 'no forgiveness' about us. Notice that Jesus said, *"And when ye stand praying, forgive."* (Mark 11:25.) If there is no spirit, nor an air of forgiveness about us, then our faith will not work and our prayers will not be heard. This is the only hindrance to faith Jesus ever mentioned.

We should try not to permit anything evil to come into our mind about anyone, nor to think anything evil or resentful about anyone - no matter what they do to us, or what they say about us. We should not permit this to affect us: perhaps we think we can't forgive someone, but remember Jesus never asked us to do something we could not do. If so, he would be unjust.

We are commanded in the Word of the Lord to *"let nothing destroy your faith and good works."* We are instructed to *"shape your lives"* by the words of John the messenger of the Covenant brings to us. For these words spoken by John the Baptist describe the Lord's will for us, and *"our mission is one of love and deliverance."* (Mark 1:2-4). For *"the way is prepared that mankind may walk therein and be saved."* Now the decrees of God are Unalterable and therefore cannot be changed.

*To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover the prisoner was YOU.*

**"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:14-15 KJV**

*Sis Gertrude Simiyo (Turbo, Kenya)*

### **“Lead us not into Temptation”**

There is one petition in the Lord’s Prayer which has often caused difficulty, it is this: *“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”* James says, *“Let no man say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted of God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempted he any man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts and enticed.”*

It must be borne in mind that this word “temptation” means trial; for in other parts of God’s word we find God does lead his servants through trial, and it is by faith under trial that we are perfected. Then how can we ask God not to lead us into trial? The two expressions *“Lead us not into trial”* and *“deliver us from evil”* should not be separated. The thought in the mind of Jesus seems to have been the need for faith, for whilst God in his wisdom may lead us through trial, we must pray (and have faith in His guidance), that He will not lead us into any trial which would result in evil for us, or, in other words, that He will not lead us into circumstances so difficult that they are beyond our strength, and we fall.

If we pray this prayer in complete faith in the power and willingness of God to hear, then the effect of it will be that we shall go through our daily lives unafraid and undisturbed by trouble, knowing he will not bring upon us any trial which is harder than we can bear. In circumstances of happiness and contentment there is no need of faith or patience, but in conditions of hardship, or when in the company of people who naturally tend to irritate or exasperate us, it is then our faith is tried; there arises a need for endurance. We have to learn to exercise restraint, to control not only our words, but the way we use them, and even their tone. This way lays the training of the mind and the mind of Christ is developed, so that instead of an angry retort we may give the soft answer that turns away wrath.

Supposing instead of worries or trials, we had no sad experiences, and our lives were hedged about by God in a miraculous way! What would our adversaries say? *“Do these fear God for nought? Thou hast made a hedge about them, on every side, about their homes and all they have. Their substance is increased in the land.”* The way for brethren and sisters is the way Christ went, through trials and difficulties; but faith in God makes all the difference – His ways are always best for us. He will lead us through our wilderness to the Promised Land. Faith is counted to us for righteousness. The Apostle Paul says, *“There hath no temptation (trial) taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tried above that ye are able; but will with the trial make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”*

*Sis Millie Trueman*

### **He is Coming**

*It may be in the evening,  
It may be in the night,  
Just when the cock is crowing,  
Or in the morning light.*

*What will He find us doing?  
Will our hands be on the latch?  
To open at His coming,  
Alert and on the watch?*

*Or will He find us sleeping  
As children in the night,  
Whose life is nought but darkness,  
Who know not Truth or Right?*

*Let all be up and doing  
As children of the Day  
Who wish to please the Master  
Who bids us watch and pray.*

*The signs are in the heavens,  
He standeth at the door.  
Go forth ye saints to greet him  
And live for evermore.*

*MH*

## **For Your Good**

In many ways, when we look at the commandments of God, we tend to develop a negative attitude. This has been the experience in my life, but also in the lives of many people. This you see more clearly if you talk about it. Though it is clear that to be in relationship with a non-believer is against the Lord, many people are against, or not willing to live with that. It is something sour to swallow. So what must be our attitude towards the commandments of God, especially the one of relationship? If we are to answer this question, we need to listen to what God says of this commandment. Listen then, to what the word of God says:-

*“But am I the one they are provoking?” declares the Lord. “Are they not rather harming themselves, to their own shame?” (Jer. 7:19).*

Is it not amazing how God puts this before our eyes? Think about it, my brother or sister, to disobey God is to do harm to yourself. As much as we express our love to God by obeying His commandments, God expresses His love to us by giving us His commandments. He knows this life very well, He created it, so He well knows better than we the way we should live it. He is always concerned about us as His children. This calls us to trust God with our lives. However, this is one of the difficult things in the Christian life, to trust God fully with your life.

*“Your wickedness will punish (correct) you, your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the Lord your God...” (Jer. 2:19)*

Yes, you will be corrected by your wickedness and that will not be a good experience. God always protects us by giving us commandments, and we are well assured of His love.

*Bro Gift Lungu (Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe)*

## My Blind Friend

How long have you been in that state? To be blind is indeed an unbearable burden. If we are blind, we shouldn't lose heart, because with God there is a purpose.

On one occasion the disciples of Jesus asked him regarding the man who was born blind, as to who sinned, himself or his parents? In reply, Jesus said that the man was in that state so that the works of God should be revealed in him.

In the Bible there is a record for us of the man who was blind, known by the name of Bartimaeus, who was the son of Timaeus, who again was always on the roadside begging for his daily living. One day he heard news of Jesus – that he was passing by where he was. I am sure that Bartimaeus had heard much of the great physician Jesus, who was at that time passing near where he was. And so he did not waste much time, but straightway cried for help – “*Son of David, have mercy on me.*” My blind friend, do you know that Jesus is still very powerful today as before. For all authority in heaven and in earth is invested in him by his Heavenly Father. This is the man who is able to help us all, who are blind physically and spiritually.

Let us cry for help like the son of Timaeus did, for he did it not once, but continuously until he was heard by Jesus. Of course, our faith in him must play a great part. May I ask you all – friends who may wish to read this article - to consider our ways. *God bless you.*

*Bro Sylvester Tembo (Mzuzu, Malawi)*

## Carelinks | Australia

Whilst in Australia, Duncan and Cindy went to Brisbane to meet brother Jafaari's wonderful family; he and sister Beatrice have 14 children. Duncan first met Jafaari in a refugee camp in Malawi, Africa 25 years ago. Jafaari had fled violence in his native Congo. Over that period, Marcus mailed him *Bible Basics*, *Gospel News magazine* etc; as he and his growing family moved around southern Africa, finally in a camp in Namibia from where they managed to get acceptance in Australia. They were resettled in a large house in a small town in Queensland.

His commitment has remained, and it was a joy to baptize four of the children: brothers **Fataki** and **Mfaume**, and sisters **Liene** and **Kashindi**. They remain very African, some still wearing their traditional African clothing, and the mother and older daughters carrying the little ones wrapped on their backs. They only have one car, and small town Australia is built on the assumption of private car ownership, so it was quite a job to ferry them all to the beach! But there in a creek off Runaway Bay, Queensland, Australia the Lord's wonderful work with this family continued, which He began so long ago in Africa. The family greeted the newly baptized with flowers, woops of joy and hugs... you can catch some of the great joy in the video at: <https://tinyurl.com/australia-baptism>

## Carelinks | Belgium

We've been in touch with an Iranian Christian woman who was part of an underground church in Iran, but they were infiltrated and her husband collapsed under the pressure, returned to Islam and divorced her - and got the religious Police onto her. She fled with her young child to Belgium where she lives with a relative. We were able to meet with her and baptize her into the Lord Jesus. She is really in a very uncertain position, not helped by Belgium taking so long in deciding asylum cases. And meanwhile she and her young daughter must live with such great uncertainty and nervous pressure. Please do pray for her.

## Carelinks | China

Our wonderful brother Donald reports: *"I baptized brother Zhu in the swimming pool. He is a Shift Line Leader in an electrical company and first knew Jesus from youku.com same as youtube in western countries). Brother Zhu was impressed by the video about Jesus as the bread of life. After that he spent a lot of time viewing the videos and got very excited. Then he applied for our free Bible literature, as there are few groups offering truly free Bible literature in Chinese. We sent Chinese Bible Basics to him and then I went to baptize him.*

*I used my annual leave preaching in the villages near to Hefei. Rural villages here in China are all nearly the same. The land is rented to them by agricultural companies. Most people living there are elders and women, more than 70% of the male labour force in villages go out to work in the fields. People living here have nothing to do when they are free apart from to play cards, fishing, grow vegetables. So I took two cartons of the Chinese Bible Basics you sent me, just waiting on the village streets for people to come and take them. Several teenagers came and asked for the books, one of them told me her grandparents were believers and took me to their home and I had lunch with them. We spent a long time in conversation. They were in their 70s, illiterate and with a simple, strong but almost blind faith. I talked about the lack of Trinity etc., but they didn't really understand things at that depth, all they cared about is believing in Jesus and eternal life. I comforted myself that at least they have Jesus in their heart. I distributed in that village about 30 copies of Bible Basics to the people. I pray to God that the seeds we sow will grow to big trees and that Jesus comes soon."*

## Carelinks | Ethiopia

Brother John Aldersley from Carelinks New Zealand and his team have visited and baptized folks in Ethiopia and are engaging in a lot of ongoing preaching work there, distributing Bibles, *Bible Basics* and other literature, and succeeding in encouraging local brethren to follow up and baptize people in this large and fascinating land.

Here are a few snippets from email exchanges:

This is reflective of the witness of a group of young sisters who are university students: *"Our 'Bahia Faith' friend, Hirut, willing to join us. This is a very top news for both Martha and me and we have got a great lesson on the power of prayer. As you suggested we reading together book*

*with our friends and the interest of reading the book increases. The students are interested to read the book and Bibles, if possible please make them ready. We have read together, but it consumes our study time, and also difficult to read with men because we are girls. If possible please ready books and Bibles to my university friends and also to Hirut a Bible.”*

**Later:**

*“Hi brother, as you gave me permission to us baptized Hirut, she baptized just now. The same place I and Martha baptized. She is very happy. I am excited now that she no more Bahai faith. Thanks to God. John we need to help her growth.”*

**From a woman called Hibist:**

*“Hi, from your teachings, I understand that the concept of the trinity is a false idea made by man. I understand we need to define scripture by scripture not analogies like water, ice and vapour.*

*From biblical baptism book I understand an act of baptism has two main symbolic purposes: 1. Our sins us washed out because of sacrifice of Jesus in the cross 2. It is a symbol of death and resurrection of Christ.*

*I understand that the doctrine baptism for infants and sprinkle by water is false doctrine. I understand that baptism by proxy or baptism for the dead is false doctrine.*

*I understand that the doctrine Satan as real being is man made not biblical. I need baptism because it is a commandment of Christ, shows our obedience and brings us to new life. So now I am ready to repent and to be baptized. Thanks, Hibist”*

**From newly baptized brother Lemma, a former Muslim:**

*“Hi John, I want to express special thanks to all who contributed, your efforts, knowledge and fund, to get eternal life. Today immediately after baptism, I feel all my sins are washed and run away. Today is my birthday, it is a very new day to start a journey to the kingdom of God through baptism. My baptism today is unforgettable and the joy continues **The Truth is going forth in Ethiopia very powerfully and we pray for continued blessing and leading in that work** through the whole of my life. Now there is no spirit Muslim in me. When I got baptized today and immediately after coming out the water I feel strong and there was much power inside my soul. I know there will be difficulty in my life but I am ready for this. Now I see a change in my life. I feel my life has a meaning. Thanks, Lemma”*

**From a pastor who is grasping the Truth of the Kingdom:**

*“My question: many pastors and preachers have always made people believe that we shall go to heaven. How can I change people from this trust and belief? I have a church that I pastor with 70 members. Please I need your help, how will I teach them to change into this new message?”*

**Carelinks | France**

A visit was made to France to baptize a British man, **Mark**. Mark has no family in the UK and grew up very tough, spending a few years sleeping in a boiler room as a late teenager. He always had a sense of God and Jesus and vowed not to drink or smoke when he was quite young. He attended a Pentecostal church but was asked not to attend after he couldn't pay tithes any more and saw through the claims to perform miracles. This disillusioned him with “church”. He met a French woman and moved to France, where they had three children and now he is alone.

Despite the terribly difficult domestic situation, he just counts himself happy to see his children. He read the Bible and figured out that the Trinity is not right; he tried to attend church again but was asked to leave after speaking out against the Trinity. He takes solace in educating himself online; he has built up a phenomenal knowledge of British history and is homesick for the UK, but he doesn't want to leave his children. He really wanted someone to explain the Bible to him, but he says he found everyone insistent he attend their church and he had had enough of this. So he searched online and found us, and was delighted to get the NEV Bible with explanations and commentary. He was very desirous of baptism. He wanted not only theological truth but above all to be connected to the Lord Jesus. Many would have turned to drugs and alcohol in his situation, but he is a very clean living man who knows that is not the way.

A truer convert to the Lord Jesus in spirit and truth it would be hard to imagine. We assured Mark we'd be there for him if he feels like returning to the UK, or his domestic situation forces him to. He grew up in London and knew well the suburb Duncan grew up in. It was truly "of God" that these two Londoners were to meet all these years later in a small town in France. He is keen to spread the Gospel by distributing tracts.

## Carelinks | Latvia

We would like to say a huge thank you to Bro Daniel Aldersley from New Zealand, pictured below, far left, who ran the teaching at the Bible Center for three months last winter, not to mention entertaining our brothers and sisters with his musical talents! Thanks also to Bro Sam Brown, also from New Zealand, who helped Bro Daniel with the teaching for some of the time. Bro Jim Barton has put together an appeal for support and an explanation of what goes on at the Riga Bible Center; you can watch it at:

<https://tinyurl.com/riga-bible-center>

Jim & Anne, Daniel and Jesse did a great job putting on a special New Year's treat meal for the ecclesia and visitors in Riga. They also distributed a large number of scarves lovingly knitted by various brothers and sisters in the Midlands of the UK, representing thousands of hours of work, for which we are all so grateful! Turn to the back cover to see the happy group from the ecclesia wearing their new scarves!

The work is truly wonderful, with us providing genuinely needed food and warmth for dozens of mainly older folks, many of them now baptized. We provide one hour of Bible teaching before the feeding - five days a week. It's a great mesh of humanitarian provision and the preaching of the Gospel. Please do support or encourage others to support as far as you can. Witnessing two baptisms got **Sarah Kohlman** thinking... she was an unbaptized volunteer who was working in the kitchen with Jim and Anne and was raised in the Truth in an ecclesia in Canada. She asked Jim and Anne to baptize her, and they asked her to call her parents, and take some time to think it over. After she'd done that, it was with great joy that she was baptized and returned to her ecclesia in Canada a baptized sister. The collateral blessings of this work are huge. Please do prayerfully support it and get involved as you can. Pictured at the bottom of page 24, you can

see Sarah with her hair wet from baptism, with Daniel, far left, Anne, sister Ieva on the far right, and Jim and Jesse Andrews, top right.

In January, during Rob and Debs' stint in the kitchen, it was a great joy to baptize **Inessa**, pictured right, who speaks some English and gave a short testimony. Typical of many people in the former USSR she was raised a Communist atheist, and then started looking for God. But she was soon disillusioned with the Russian Orthodox church and began a long search for God and His Son in spirit and in truth. She heard about us from a friend and started attending, and was so impressed to see young people, still teenagers like Daniel and Sarah, working so hard to care for and teach people. So with quite some joy she was baptized; you can see a video of it at:

<https://tinyurl.com/latvia-inessa>

In early February we had a really wonderful talk about the Gospel from bro David Corbin of Brooklyn ecclesia, USA (who was also our speaker at the Ukraine Bible School) which elicited a quite spontaneous ovation from the 100 or so people present! We were so happy to then baptize **Roman**, a totally homeless man not even in the night shelter system. He has searched for the real Lord Jesus Christ for 26 years, passing through various groups on his journey, and is now convinced he has found Him in spirit and truth. His body is largely covered in boils and skin disease issues, but in the white baptismal gown, he looked rather like representations of the Lord Jesus seen in movies. Here truly was a man coming to Jesus Christ and entering into Him, a brother in Christ in truth. Below you can see our new bro Roman talking with bro Vladimir, left, Daniel centre and in the background you can see sis Davian Corbin of the Brooklyn, New York ecclesia.

On the 28th February special group prayers were made during the UK Conference for the work in Latvia and on the next day they began to have a wonderful answer. A total of five of our visitors came forward to be baptized. It was with great joy that we witnessed the baptisms of **Artem, Aleksei, Erik, Yuri** and **Vladimir**.

Sisters Hilary Knight and Jackie Sprigg demonstrated what older folks can do, labouring so hard in the kitchen for two weeks - and if you too feel inspired to help, then do let us know. They were especially overjoyed at the baptisms.

### Carelinks | New Zealand

We have over the years mentioned the case of our sister, a New Zealander baptized by us in prison in Japan some years ago, after coming across and studying *Bible Basics*. Sister Helen Pyper has done a huge amount for her over the years she's been serving a long prison sentence in Japan. Soon after entering prison she gave birth to a child, who was taken to New Zealand and has grown up there. Now we are delighted to report that our sister has been released and returned to New Zealand. As you can imagine, the raft of issues and emotions facing this young sister (only 18 and pregnant when she was jailed in Japan) are absolutely huge. **Please, do pray for her.**

## Carelinks | Turkey

Our bro R continues faithful in Turkey, and here are clips from his emails - where he laments being alone, and then a while later, has found response to his quiet preaching and baptized a man. A wonderful testament to the hand of providence, which 'provides' indeed:

*"I am here with my belief on Jesus. It is hard to protect this fire without any contact with community. There is nobody to talk on, there is no service..."*

*One month later: "I was giving information about Jesus to one of my friend from school. After years, last week he came and said that he accepted Jesus' identity as written in Bible. So he wants to have baptise. This Saturday I will perform like the other one (at a garden, inside a pool)... We know each other for 15 years, from high school. Actually nothing happen directly, miraculous like a dream, a feeling etc. This made me more happy, because I saw the process of God, I witnessed how God showed his way to him by using daily life's principles for years (like it is written at John 6:44). He was saying to me that "I will never be baptized", but God was working. For example he has really important problems with his father, and he never felt father love on him. When he started to study Bible, he realised how important to call God as Father. He is very determined. I am really happy. I wrote you that I was very alone here, one month before. God did this! :) He will hide this baptism for a while (you know the situations). Please pray for him".*

## Carelinks | United Kingdom

We enjoyed a very stimulating Carelinks Conference in Croydon on 24 February with visitors from throughout the UK. The playlist for all the talks is at: <https://tinyurl.com/ukconference-2018>

We've been blessed with several hundred replies from throughout the UK in response to our advert offering free Bibles in the Daily Mail, a reminder that there is significant interest in our message in the UK. In the afternoon we wrote letters to these folks and stuffed envelopes with the Bibles. Let's pray for all those hundreds of people as they receive their Bibles. This work and following it up is obviously expensive - we're really open to your donations so that we can continue getting the word out there to so many all over the world. And do come along to such conferences; they are a very upbuilding and "live" experience of the Father and Son at work amongst people.

Perhaps the highlight for many was the talk by Bro Chris Sparkes explaining how doctrine by doctrine, he arrived at the same doctrinal positions which we hold. It's how it should be - that truth is arrived at by different paths. The talk is lengthy but really a wonderful witness to the power of God's word to explain itself to a thoughtful seeker after truth. Chris's talk is at <https://tinyurl.com/ukconference-chris>

Amongst the other talks was one by Bro Norman Stock about the work of the Riga Bible Center and feeding program which he recently visited. Norman's talk is at: <https://tinyurl.com/ukconference-norman>

In our group prayers we prayed for the work in Riga - and those prayers were answered in a wonderful way over the next few days (*please see the Latvia report*).

## Carelinks | Ukraine

The Winter Bible School was held in January and we were pleased to record a very good attendance of over 60 brothers and sisters, including some from Russia, Belarus and Moldova. These schools work out expensive but are the only way many of these dear brothers and sisters get any fellowship with each other. But Ukraine is rapidly becoming a basket case economically. The heating was very low in the accommodation we stayed in, with many wearing fur coats both in bed and at the talks; and no hot water for most of the school. With temperatures down to -16 this made things most uncomfortable. The war continues in the east, with transport between the east and the rest of Ukraine very difficult. Sister Tamara (in her 70s) made a special effort to come, having to travel nearly two days through Russia to avoid the border area. She was made to stand for five hours in the freezing cold waiting to be fingerprinted by the Russian side. She eventually arrived, and had a cardiac arrest; she struggled on but then had another one, whilst being far from her home in Lugansk region (in the Russian occupied zone). She told us of the awful situation there, with the economy in the hands of the Russian mafia, a mass exodus of professionals to Russia or the west, hospitals with no doctors, young people leaving in droves, many homes just abandoned. Pensions remain very low in Ukraine, although prices have shot up with the collapse of the currency, and health care now has to be paid for even if you paid your health contributions for decades. We were able to give help for operations and medical issues to several and there is understandably an increasing number turning to alternative and herbal medicines and therapy. It's very difficult for ordinary people to cross the border from Russia to Ukraine and back, as both sides suspect anyone doing so of being a spy, as there are constant rumours of a full blown Russian invasion of the rest of Ukraine. Sister Iya and her child and her aunty set off from Russia to Ukraine but her aunty was turned back at the border, and our sister bravely continued the journey in very low temperatures with her child - no fun travelling with a young child for a day over 1300 km, let alone in such cold weather after being roughed up at the border.

Bro David Corbin and his daughter, Sis Davian, came over from the Brooklyn ecclesia in New York, USA. David gave us many good studies about Jonah and Bible prophecy, and he was impressed at how folks took careful notes, eagerly discussed the talks afterwards and even disagreed about things with him. Some of these brothers and sisters were first given a Bible by us over 20 years ago as they emerged from Soviet atheism; to see them so fluent with the scriptures is a wonderful testament to the Lord's continual working through our efforts to bring the Bible and Bible teaching to those who seriously want to hear it. We thank you for all your prayers and donations which have enabled the distribution of so much literature over the years.

We were very pleased to baptize **Marina** from Kharkov. Our new sister had had her passport stolen, and you can't travel on trains without a passport. She decided at the last minute that she would come anyway, and hitchhiked (in those very low temperatures) the 500 km from Kharkov to Kiev to be baptized, arriving on the Sunday morning when the school was coming to an end. It was really a pleasure to baptize her in a bath tub there.

Bro David Corbin writes of his experiences at the Ukraine Bible School:

*"My daughter Davian and I were among the first few to reach the venue around 5:15 pm on the 24th of January. The local taxi operators were very friendly and helpful at the airport and assisted*

*us in getting to where the Bible school was held. While the taxi operators were warm and friendly the same could not be said for the Siberian type weather. Once inside the facility we only got a modest reprieve from the onslaught of the very cold weather because of the poorly heated building. We tried to keep as warm as possible with our clothing and the blankets we were given. I would just say that the food was designed to make you lose weight and live a long healthy life without any cholesterol problems and leave it at that!*

*We ended up with about 65 in all that attended, though not all in one sitting as some who came earlier had to leave to make the long trip back home using an unreliable transportation system not to mention the bitter cold and at least 8"-10" of snow on the ground. One courageous and faithful elder sister who braved all these adversities to make it to the school just collapsed with heart problems as soon as she entered the building. Such endeavors and situations really brings tears to your eyes. Bro Duncan rushed to her assistance after turning over the first class to me and my translator.*

*The classes, four on "Jonah", one on "Esau and his choice", "The last days" and "Samson's life" were well received. It was interesting working with our two brothers who translated because I realized throughout my talks that some English words don't have a word for them in Russian and others have a completely different meaning, so at times I had to put my mental thesaurus to work quickly. On Saturday night we had a program of singing in Russian and recitals and reading some words of inspiration which was a great joy to see as many of these brethren live in isolation. My daughter Davian was brave enough to sing the "Wedding banquet" chorus in English, to which some were humming along too, not knowing the words.*

*On Sunday we had our last class and were surprised with a baptism after frantically trying to find enough warm water and tub large enough to facilitate the baptism. I understand it took the candidate two days to make it to the venue hitchhiking. Please remember this new sister in your prayers, for she is now one of the household of faith, no longer alienated from the commonwealth of Israel. She will need all our prayers because she starts this journey with many more obstacles than we see before brethren and sisters in the West. She does not have the support of an ecclesia of 30-50 members like so many of us (which, by the way, many don't appreciate enough). This is a country where life is very hard economically for the average citizen, which can put a lot of pressure on ones ability to serve faithfully and remain obedient to your heavenly calling. So may The LORD bless her, and keep her and make his face shine upon her, and be gracious unto her, The LORD lift up his countenance upon her, and give her peace in his Kingdom.*

*Please also remember the Zbarazhsky family in the Ukraine who are faithfully proclaiming the gospel and showing hospitality to all they come into contact with. I am glad I was able meet them and spend some time together after the days events, discussing issues concerning the name of Jesus and the things of his Kingdom. We are also grateful to Bro Vladimir who got us some local remedies for colds and coughs and volunteered to take us to the airport, refusing to accept any form of compensation. Truly these brethren in the Ukraine are the most loving, caring and warm you can find anywhere. Brethren that would hazard their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the saints - Acts 15:26. These are indeed the Timothy(s) and Epaphroditus of our times. These are brethren who are willing to be expended for the Lord indeed and not only in words. I feel that I was blessed more than they were because their zeal and enthusiasm for the work of the Lord is inspiring and motivating.*

*To all those who have and are contributing to the Carelinks Outreach Ministry please know and be assured that your contributions are well appreciated by these brethren in Eastern Europe. So much is being done with these funds that it is almost unbelievable. I also have to note that it's time and money well spent for the numbers of lost souls that are turning and embracing Jesus and the saving message of Jesus. Please continue to donate and pray fervently for these worthy causes and the brethren involved in these labours of love in missionary work all over Europe and Asia.*

*Your fellow laborer and brother in Christ  
David”*

*So again, our warmest thanks to all who donated to make these gatherings possible. If you'd like to visit or speak at a future school, please let us know.*

### **Carelinks | USA**

A man called **Pedro** from Cuba, but now living in Florida, USA was attracted to our material about satan, or the lack thereof, in the traditional sense. He studied further and desired baptism, and our local brother Josh was able to baptize him, with the following glowing report:

*“It was a blessing for me to have gotten a chance to spend time with Pedro. Pedro is certainly a man who is strong in his faith and definately in his understanding of the truth. It has been a tough year as his wife left him at the same time that he lost some of his toes to diabetes. There were points where some tears came to the eye, yet his resolve in his faith would quickly come back. He certainly knew that his objective was to be baptised. I picked him up to head out to the beach and he merely wanted to go to the nearest point of water even though we were not that far from some beautiful beaches. He relayed to me his story of how he came to read ‘The Real Devil’ along with speaking with the gentleman overseas. He certainly did not care for being given a hundred point questionnaire on whether or not he understood the faith, however he was not bitter about it. Truthfully he said there wasn't enough space for him to answer the questions and he still answered them all and replied back.*

*The Lord was with us in the language barrier, however his English really wasn't that bad. We ended up pulling over the side of the road and I said a prayer before we walked in the water. He was so excited I started counting and he just fell right back and in and I pulled him out and said “You are baptised in Christ my brother!” We then looked around and a woman had shown up and was willing to take our picture and then another guy turned up and specifically asked us what we were doing. We proceeded to explain what baptism was and why we just did it. With a smile on his face Pedro turned to me and said “See we have witnesses to my baptism and we even were able to witness ourselves!” It was in that moment that his heart and desires once again came through. I then asked if he wanted to go break some bread together. So we hopped in the car and I went to the store to get some wine and bread. He took me to the best Cuban bread place in town :) We went back to his place and he showed me the room he stays in. Not much, but he was excited to show me his computer, Bible books, and English to Spanish dictionary. He also showed me some of his medicair that he likes to give to others in need. We read the Word and had communion together and then prayed together before parting ways. He was so strong in his understanding of the Word that I truly encouraged him to go out and preach*

*the good Word. He felt he needed to learn English more as well as get a better understanding of the Word. Truly the man could have lead his own church it was such a blessing to hear. I told him I would continue to stay in touch with him and help him in any way that I could."*

## **Initiatives**

Cindy shares with us one of her initiatives which could likely be repeated in many areas in order to gain local contacts:

*"If you would like to generate interest in your local area, please consider putting an advert for free Bibles on [freecycle.org](http://freecycle.org) or [gumtree.com](http://gumtree.com) in your local area. We'd be happy to post Bibles to them. I've had 3 requests in the last 24 hours from these sites — I'm sure there are people interested in the gospel near to you as well! On Freecycle and Gumtree people expect to be able to pick the item up, not get directed to a website. I've given away garden pavers etc before so I thought I could give away Bibles too! In the ad I just said 'Free new Bible' as a heading, then included two photos I had taken of the Bible, then said 'Free NEV Bible with commentary. I can post for free or you can collect it. Please email me. Thanks'. God bless, Cindy"*

In less than a day, Cindy had three people request a Bible be sent by mail, and one woman says she will drop by us to pick one up. Cindy just did the ad in the Croydon Gumtree zone. The ads are soon swallowed by more recent ads so one has to keep on with it to keep the ad visible.

**Download Cindy's Bible images at: <http://www.n-e-v.info/publicity/bible1.jpeg> and <http://www.n-e-v.info/publicity/bible2.jpeg>**

*Cindy Heaster*

## **Will God Save Nigeria?**

May I arrest your attention for a few moments to suggest some answers about why Nigeria/the World faces moral bankruptcy? Oh, that we would be awakened to the judgement upon evil! I speak primarily to Nigeria, but let all others listen and learn. *"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."* (Psalm 9:17). The alternative is Repent. We will experience either a moral and spiritual revival, or the judgement of Almighty God. God only knows whether the hour is already too late.

In contrast to God's dealings with the nations of antiquity under the old covenant, today God has no special relationship with any nation under the new covenant. (Acts 15:9; Romans 3:22; 10:12.) But some principles still hold true: one of these is *"Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."* (Proverbs 14:34.) The problem is sin, and sin is the transgression of God's holy laws. People sin not only when they steer jets into skyscrapers, but also when they love money, kill unborn babies, revel in drunkenness, take another man's wife, withhold workers' wages and so forth. It makes no difference which of God's holy laws mankind violates, sin is a reproach to that people. God may not preserve Nigeria as a nation – only He knows whether that will be a part of His all wise agenda. But that is not the point. We know that the final judgement will be based on personal accountability. The Bible says, *"So then every one*

*of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12). God will not compare Nigeria with South Africa, nor U.K. with America. Neither will a whole nation be saved or punished because of one man, or a particular group of men. Each person will give an account of himself to God. So that is where we must focus any attempt at adjustment. Individuals must repent before there will be any recovery. Therefore, rather than focus on the problem of government or others, we need to look at some basics in our own lives.*

A. **Honesty:** provide things honest in the sight of all men. A banker recently said that he does not expect most of his customers to tell the truth. Consider all the untold extortion, embezzlement and fraudulent misuse of government funds. We see that honesty has been lost. But people excuse themselves and say ‘everyone does it.’ True followers of Jesus do not cheat. An honest person will lose money, reputation, or life, rather than tell a lie.

B. **Work Ethics:** *“If any would not work, neither should he eat. Let every able-bodied man do an honest day’s labour for his pay. And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men.” (Colossians 3:23).* Many stumble at these Bible answers because they are so simple.

C. **Morals:** *“Keep thyself pure. Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”* Purity to many people is a joke. But the path of impurity leads to death. Venereal disease is only the beginning of God’s judgement on immorality today. Who can find a virtuous woman? Who goes to the marriage altar morally pure today? Whatever happened to modesty and propriety in dress and conduct? Where are the solid, happy marriage unions as God planned them to be? The true child of God can testify of great satisfaction, of an abundant, full life when he keeps himself from the filth of this world and takes God’s way. Satisfaction and fulfilment can be yours. God will have mercy upon you if you take His way. Parents, we must teach these and other basics in our home both by precept and example. How can we teach our children honesty if we cheat on our tax returns, or in our business dealings with our fellow man? How can we teach our children the work ethic if we have the philosophy, ‘Get as much money as you can for as little work as possible’? The word of God says *“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men.” (Col. 3:23).* Fathers, how shall we teach our sons moral purity if we are engaging in extra-marital affairs or obscene talk? How shall we keep our youths from drug and alcohol addiction if we ourselves are relying on cigarettes and beer to soothe our nerves? Mothers, you must teach your daughter the demoralizing effect that exposing her body will have on the opposite sex. Then, by God’s grace, show her how to properly clothe and conduct herself so that she encourages good behaviour and not evil. Teach her how to contribute to society by the expressions of a godly spirit. Then her influence will reach into eternity.

Oh, beloved and dear parents, wherever you are, go home, get on your knees with your family and cry to God for mercy. Remember, *“Neither is there salvation in any other.” (Acts 4:12).* *“Whoever accepts him, those who believe in His Name, to them he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12).* Fathers, Mothers and children, if you take your proper place in the family unit, you can build for God. Get back to Bible basics. God and His ways are the only hope for the salvation of ourselves, our families and Ecclesia. Will God save Nigeria? He only knows whether He does or does not. We can be saved, and you can help to save your family ... Noah did just that.

*Bro Gaius Egwu (Ohafia Nigeria)*

### **“Jesus Wept” (John xi. 35)**

When the Jews saw the grief of Jesus at the occasion of the death of Lazarus, they concluded that he sorrowed because he felt keenly the loss of a well-loved friend. This was a natural assumption; but in weighing up spiritual matters connected with the conduct of Jesus, it is not wise to be guided by the conclusions of those styled “the Jews” in the records. The Jews, as a class, had an almost complete lack of spiritual insight, which it is no place of ours to condemn, seeing that it served the purpose of helping to produce some living teachings on the part of Jesus, which can be to our advantage. The Jews were ever ready with their opinions and they were usually in need of correction.

Did Jesus give way to tears, because he was overcome by his personal sense of loss for the dear Lazarus, and the weeping of Martha and Mary? The record seems to provide another, rather more adequate reason. We do not suppose that Jesus was above human emotion, but he had always resisted personal feelings when of a selfish kind, even in the instance of his own mother and brethren. We should expect to find, in regard to Jesus, a deeper and more substantial cause, sufficient to move him to tears. Jesus had no misconceptions about death and he alone at that time had a full understanding of resurrection. He could look upon Abraham, Isaac and Jacob though dead, yet living by virtue of God’s power to raise them, *“God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”* Jesus also knew that in himself was placed the power to raise the dead.

It is clear that the whole incident related to Lazarus, was made known to the mind of Jesus beforehand, because he explained, (verse 4), that *“this sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God.”* Far from expressing sorrow at the news of Lazarus’ death, Jesus said that he was glad that he was not present to prevent it, in view of the forthcoming object lesson, designed to help the belief of the witnesses (verse 15). Martha and Mary were prepared to credit Jesus with the power to have prevented their brother’s death, *“Lord if thou had’st been here my brother had not died.”* When Jesus declared that Lazarus should rise again Martha, not unnaturally, thought this to be a reference to the resurrection at the last day. In correction, Jesus uttered some of the most thrilling words on record, *“I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”*

Something caused Jesus to weep when he saw the dejected mourners, and Mary with them; he was deeply moving, groaning within himself. At the cave, Martha raised an objection at the apparently futile opening of a tomb, four days after death had taken place. Jesus reminded her of his earlier words, that the sickness of Lazarus was not unto death, but would be a means of glorifying God. When Lazarus was led forth, alive from the dead, many believed. It was indeed a proof of the power of God manifested in Jesus; it shows, also, how difficult it was for believers, such as Martha and Mary, to exhibit a lively faith.

Martha was capable of believing in a resurrection in the vague future, but it was too much for her to believe, that beside her, stood one who was the resurrection and the life. It would have given great satisfaction to Jesus to have seen a ready faith on the part of his friends; its absence was the cause of his grief. The test of faith was not the correctness of a belief in future resurrection, but the capacity for a present and living conviction, which unhappily, was not in evidence in the behaviour of those in the presence of Jesus.

The present-day friends of Jesus have a dominant belief in his literal return. Is this belief a mental acceptance of a future event only, or is it the truth perceived therein, translated into present behaviour? *“Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone.”* (James ii.17)

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*“After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets; and have hope towards God, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both just and unjust.” Paul*

*Bro J T Murrell*

### **A Fire in My Bones**

*“For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the Word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of Him nor speak any more in His Name. But His Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer. 20:8-9).*

**To all** who sought to preach and teach the Word of God, there came times when the words of Jeremiah came home with telling force. We too, feel like quitting; feel that our labours are in vain, when the world turns away from hearing the Word of God, often with derision and contempt. Sometimes even the brethren do not seem to give heed to what we have to say to the extent we feel our efforts deserve.

**Even the** apostle Paul had moments of weakness when he felt that much of his labour was in vain, but he could not hesitate or slacken his efforts, as he said; *“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16).*

**The test** of a faithful preacher of the Gospel comes not when success appears to crown his every effort, but the test of a true soldier of Christ is when apparent failure marks all his efforts. It is then that it becomes clear whether the Truth is *“like a burning fire in his bones,”* or whether it is halfhearted interest which can only be kept alive under considerable encouragement; whether he feels that it is a choice to work or desist, or whether he feels the “necessity” of working all the harder.

**A valiant** soldier of Christ will, as any other good soldier, fight all the harder in defeat, and seek to train himself so that he can perform his work better and with more success.

*O.B*