

THE Gospel News

"To all nations"



Editorial | To Understand Each Other

Constructive, functional relationships, building up each other in love, is intended to be the parade example of true Christianity. By such love and unity we could convert the world; so the Lord taught in John 17. But we see broken down relationships and failed dialogue on every hand amongst us as believers. Sadly, this is how it has always been amongst the body of God's people. On one level, the speeches of the book of Job are a worked example of how dialogue and relationships break down between believers. It could be argued that the Bible is full of examples of failure, so that we might learn to do better. I suggest that the "sons of God" we read of in Job were the believers of the time who gathered together; they included Job, the friends and the 'satan' adversary, a fellow worshipper who doubted Job's integrity. He thought probably Job only believed because God had materially blessed him. And so God gives Job into the power of this satan but He sets clear parameters. Job is "perfect" before Him, a "man of integrity", and although all can be taken from him, God promises that his life will not be taken away. Job begins perfect and ends perfect, in God's eyes. The whole drama is for the sake of the friends, and that Job through suffering for them might finally save them. The righteous suffered as representative of the sinful worshippers, and thus became the prototype for the "suffering servant", the Lord Jesus, of Isaiah's prophecies. The friends came to "comfort" Job over his calamities; but after sitting in silence with him for seven days, they ended up getting angry with him, and finally the relationship between them and Job breaks down completely, and they end up in silence again at the end of Job's last speech. What went wrong? In the New European Commentary on Job, I've given actual chapters and verses for the following summary.

Straw man images

The friends were convinced Job was suffering because he had sinned. They therefore created a straw man image of Job as a big time, secret sinner who had now been caught out by Divine judgment and unless he admitted that, he was going to die. They developed an image of 'Job' in their minds as a self righteous, impenitent hypocrite and their dialogue with him was controlled by that image. So convinced were they that their image was correct that they twisted his every word to confirm to that image. They 'felt' things about what he was saying which were untrue. Thus: *"Why are we counted as animals, which have become unclean in your sight?"* (18:3). Job has not treated them as animals. They have themselves proclaimed all men as 'unclean' by birth (15:14), and yet they decide Job has called them unclean and they object to it. They transfer their feelings about themselves back onto him. They may posit that all men are unclean, including themselves; but if Job is even supposed to have said this then he is to be condemned. This again is an example to us of what happens when dialogue goes wrong. The dialogues begin and end with Job and the friends in silence. The implication is that all that was said had been better not said.



They decide Job must have committed various sins; and what began in their minds as suspicion became for them absolute truth about him. They insist he must have refused help to the poor,

which was the opposite of how Job had been (29:12 cp. 20:19). Job engages with what Bildad says about this and denies it (29:12; 31:17). Their obsession with their straw man image of Job leads them to keep droning on about things like the greatness of God, which Job is not at all in disagreement with. And so their arguments contribute nothing to actual understanding of each other. We see the same today. One party goes on at length about a position which their opponent agrees with, because they are failing to understand 'the other', but are arguing against a straw man position.

Not engaging with what's been said

As the speeches of the friends continue, they engage less and less with Job's actual words; although he does with theirs. They argue against their perceptions of his position, ignoring him as a person and the actual words he says, and dealing in vague generalities. This again is typical of the breakdown in meaningful dialogue which we see all around us, whereby the participants become confirmed in their positions and build up an image of their opponent in their mind which gets progressively awful and also the more confirmed as true in their view.

In Job 18, Bildad doesn't even engage with Job's words, but rather just vents his anger in this speech, threatening Job with all manner of condemnation; and the longer he rants on, the more convinced he becomes that Job is 'wicked' and doesn't know God (:5,21). This is the problem when we don't engage with the words and arguments of another, or pay mere lip service to doing so; we can fall headlong into a feeding frenzy of angry accusation, resulting in doing what God condemns - condemning our brother, imputing sin rather than righteousness to a person we have created in our own minds, who merely bears the name of the one who began merely with a theological difference with us. Hence Elihu laments that the friends hadn't answered Job's words (32:12). Job begs to be listened to and engaged with: "*Listen... Hear me... After I have spoken, mock on*" (21:2,3). Let us not catch ourselves thinking "I know what you think, because... you're from the X ecclesia, you're a white man, I remember many years ago you saying you believed Y".

This lack of engagement with each other leads to both Job and the friends repeating themselves. In Job 25, Bildad is merely using the previous arguments of Eliphaz. This is another sign that dialogue has failed - when one side starts quoting the words and arguments of their own side, rather than engaging with the actual words of the other side. These dialogues are recorded to teach us how not to dialogue, and to see the extreme consequence of refusing to even want to understand each other.

Misquotation

Their desire to be 'right' led the friends to misrepresent Job's words (22:15-20) to fit their own agenda and straw man image of Job. Job has said that he felt as if God were tearing him apart like a wild beast (Job 16:9); but Bildad twists this in Job 18:4, or simply misremembers it, to Job saying that he was tearing himself apart. Elihu misquotes Job as saying he is more righteous than God (35:2). The friends became so certain they knew what Job thought that they put words in his mouth he never said; and then proceed to 'quote' them and demolish them (e.g. 22:13), often sarcastically. The descent into sarcasm is a sure sign that genuine dialogue is over.

Forgetting the parameters

The reasoning of the friends consistently departs from the parameters set for their relationship with Job by the prologue. Job was there declared righteous, not suffering for personal sins, and

his life would be preserved. His suffering was for their benefit as the observers. But they repeatedly claim the very opposite, straying from the original issues, and are sure he is about to be killed by God, because he is “wicked... Godless” (20:5). All our dialogue is to be framed within the parameters defined by the ties that bind; the ‘other’ is your brother, your mother, your husband, your fellow member of Christ’s body, esteemed as “better than ourselves to be”, with the love which seeks to believe good rather than evil and dialogue must not be conducted as if those parameters aren’t there. Those parameters cannot be ignored just because a pre-existing agenda has become the basis for so called dialogue, and the other party must be condemned at all costs. Elihu seems to suggest that unless Job makes use of Elihu’s offer of being a mediator/’interpreter’, then he is going to die the death of the condemned (33:6,23,24). But this again misses the point of the parameters set in the prologue. Job is not going to die as a result of his sufferings. Elihu is not going to prove Job’s saviour, nor shall our dialogues of themselves save ‘the other’.

Repeating the same arguments

We the audience become almost bored by the way the friends keep on claiming that ancient sage wisdom is the source of truth, and any new revelation must be wrong just because it is new. But this sense of weariness at their repetition is intentional. We are led to realize that indeed, dialogue cannot progress if the participants simply return to the same old arguments all the time and refuse to engage with the responses. This repetition of the same arguments leads to the friends dogmatically asserting what they had previously begun by surmising. This again is how relationships go wrong when there is no actual engagement with what the person really is saying and their actual location in reality.

Making men offenders for a word

Job did say wrong things; but he makes wonderful statements of faith too. In 19:25-29, Job declares his ecstatic joy at the prospect of his personal, future salvation, but Zophar is so proud and angry that all he can do is lash out at Job straight afterwards (20:1), totally ignoring Job’s faith, hope and appeal. God’s final judgment is that Job has spoken what was right about Him. We are stunned. For Job has shaken his fist at God at times. God overlooked all that, and looked to the essence. We need to do likewise, not paying attention to every word spoken, recognizing humanity in both ourselves and others. Which is how the story ends.

How it ended

At the end, God did engage with the words and arguments of Job and the friends; and Job’s response to Him constantly quotes God’s words. This is what restoration is about engagement, fellowship, and seeing each others’ face with joy, praying for and enabling each others’ salvation, as Job did for his friends. This is the final “end of the Lord” in the story of Job, and of our lives; but we can live the spirit of it now.

Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest, O Lord

Not only knowledge, but also every other gift, which we call the gifts of fortune, have power to puff up earth: afflictions only level these mole-hills of pride, plough the heart, and make it fit for wisdom to sow her seed, and for grace to bring forth her increase. Happy is that man, therefore, both in regard of heavenly and earthly wisdom, that is thus wounded to be cured, thus broken to be made straight; thus made acquainted with his own imperfections, that he may be perfected.

| **Francis Bacon**

Duncan Heaster

News from Africa

NEWS FROM CONGO



KINSHASA | Bro Marcus Losah

We are happy to announce to the Christadelphian community that from 25 – 28 October 2018 we were able to meet with the ecclesias of Nkana, Luvaka, Kwilu-ngongo, Maluku, Mbandaka et Kunzulu. The meeting went well and we were reunited by the Word of God and exhorted on the following themes: *'Satan and the Devil'* by Bro Kims, *'The Angels and their nature'* by Bro Oswald, *'Death'* by Bro Vincent, *'Jesus Christ and His nature'* by Bro Jadot, *'The Kingdom of God'* by Bro Zambrotta, *'The Resurrection'* by Bro Shako and *'The promise of God and the baptism'* by myself, Bro Losah. On the Sunday we were given words of exhortation by Bro Nzila Mosi from Kwilu-ngongo, and Bro Jean-Marie Balabala from Mbandaka led us in the breaking of bread. We shared the bread and cup of our Lord with brothers and sisters and in the presence of several friends.

This meeting permitted us to strengthen our faith and encouraged us to follow the way of our Lord Jesus-Christ, despite the many troubles of this current life. May God bless us and continue to support us.



NEWS FROM KENYA



AHERO | Bro Lawrence M K'owiti

I've not been in contact for quite some time due to case with box rental fees. It's nice once again to read from the brotherhood across the globe and to fellowship together with their causes. It's wonderful to see the word reach all corners of the world and many prayers of goodwill to the Carelinks for the tireless work in the mission. Bravo Brethren Duncan and Marcus together with the donors, may God bless you ALL.

If for any reason we can't meet up in Kenya, let's meet in the Lord's coming Kingdom.

BUNGOMA | Bro Alfred Wanjala

Truly brother you have revived my spirit again, since my mother died. I have suffered a lot, but through your prayer and the literature you sent me you have encouraged and strengthened and I have greater hope in our bond with Jesus who is giving me confidence and helping me in my life.



Right: Bro Alfred with his daughter Vashti



DODOMA | Bro Moses Boter and family

KAKUMA | Bro Isidore Mwibeleca

My wife Esperance become weak through pregnancy as any day she will deliver. She was at the hospital last week for pregnancy check. The Clinic officer told her that she has low blood HB 8 only.



Bro Isidore with his daughter

Three weeks ago there was an attack at Green Light and Kakuma secondary schools made by students from Nubian mixed with Darfourian tribes (Sudanese) and from Dinka tribe (South Sudanese) who are not studying because of lack of school fees - to attack students in class at school who are paying the school fees and teachers. They had machetes and sticks in their hands. They injured many students who were admitted in Kakuma hospital. Those with severe injuries were transferred to Nairobi hospital for leg surgery. One woman, a Kenyan teacher at Kakuma has died.

Bro Innocent Baruani and Lovis Mbongo, both of them from Kibera ecclesia in Nairobi, visited Kakuma. On the Saturday morning Bro Lovis Mbongo taught about *“Understanding the Psalms”* a book divided into five books – compared to the five books of Moses in the Old Testament. They provided a lunch and in the afternoon Bro Innocent Baruani taught about *“The four women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus”*. On the Sunday we started with a Breaking of Bread service, then after that Bro Innocent Baruani taught about *“The False Prophets”*, which finished at 4pm when we sung and closed the fraternal meeting with prayer thanking God. Many friends asked questions which were well answered.

We later received this letter from Bro Isidore:

Dear Bro Marcus,

I and my family also the brethren and sisters are healthy today. Yesterday evening at 5pm there was a conflict at the football ground in Kakuma 4 camp area during a match, which resulted in a clash between two clans of Nuer South Sudanese tribes. They came to the graveyard area where they battled and three people died. They had sticks, machetes and spears in their hands. We kept our children in our home until 7pm when the police and soldiers scattered the fighters. This morning we heard that the cause is not the football but the past hatred killing between the two Nuer clans.

The police tried to scatter them and have jailed some of them. This past night the police and soldiers patrolled and nothing bad happened, we slept and awoke well this morning. But the situation is not good as those who lost their people in the battle want revenge.

Please continue remembering us in your prayers to our Heavenly Father.

KITALE



Bible Study in April at Kitale

SINDO | Bro John Owalo Onani

There is a great need for us as God’s family through baptism to live according to God’s way of life. The book of Deuteronomy reveals God’s love to the children of Israel and how difficult to learn and observe the journey towards the Kingdom of God and salvation promised. The command of love is the greatest and requires a completely contrite, devout heart to obey and be humble towards our salvation. Deuteronomy 6:5: *“And you shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might.”* See also Mark 12:30,31.

The love must be in action. You loved me so much since 1999. Nineteen years of spiritual nourishment. You have maintained your first love. I have also made a serious effort to play my part. Through your prayer and spiritual guidance two of my sons were baptized into the Christadelphian faith.

Through God's grace in 2008 I met your son Duncan in Nairobi, Kenya on his way to an African country. Therefore Brother Marcus may the God of our fathers take care of us for the year 2019 in being strong witnesses to the Truth. John 15:12: *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."* Let us continue in doing the work of the Gospel News until he comes to reward us with eternal life and inheritance on the earth.

TANGAREN



Bibles gratefully received by Bro Francis Wafula

TURBO



The Turbo Ecclesia

NEWS FROM MAURITIUS



CUEPIPE | Bro Guy Jhureea

I want to let you know that I have received your parcel safely, including Bible Lessons and a letter that you have sent to Kisham Banjeej. He has received his parcel safely, also, with all the books which you sent him. He has been very happy for this spiritual gift. I help him to understand these lessons. Thank you very much for helping us to know more about the Word of God in order to direct us towards the Kingdom, which will come soon.

At the moment I see that many prophecies are accomplished each day, and we must be prepared for the return of Christ soon, when we will have no diseases, no death nor all the troublesome problems which we have in the world.

During this last two weeks my health has not been so good: I have suffered some inflammation inside my body, perhaps due to an allergy. I don't know exactly, God knows my problem. I have prayed very much about it. We have some great examples in the Bible for prayer, like our Lord Jesus Christ, David, Daniel and all the Apostles, etc.



Bro Francois Sylvio Remy

NEWS FROM NIGERIA



EBEM | Bro Gaius Egwu

I am so grateful for the materials that you send to us, thank you so much. There is much work for us here to do, because many here have a zeal for God's word but not according to the truth. So we are trying to reach them with truth to save them before Jesus comes back to be our King here on earth. Our prayer is to baptize as many as possible. Bro Olugu who was just baptized is doing well, only he is passing through some health problem so we ask for your prayers.

It always inspires me whenever I read the works of Carelinks. I am on my knees for the love of our heavenly Father to always see you through. Seeing as some migrants come from Christadelphian families, our prayer is highly needed and the value of family worship comes in much. We really pray and ask for your continued support in reaching the unreached people at our end.

Those who want to make a name for themselves want to climb to heaven like Christendom (tower of Babel). But we, the children of the Kingdom, look for the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. God Himself will be our God and we shall reign on the earth and then we shall see His face and be like Him. That is our comfort.



Fraternal gathering at Port Harcourt in 2016

MBAISE | Bro Blessing Nwigwe

The news tells us that the coming of the Son of Man is near for this earth. We will not know the exact day or hour, as Christ said in Matthew 24:36 and it is recorded in Acts 1:7 – *“of that day or hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”* So nobody knows the day – both man, angels, prophets, even Christ himself doesn't know the time, except his Father only. Peter gave more indications on it, and his followers, as the Old Testament reveals that we are in the last days. Jesus gave us signs of his coming, recorded in Matthew 24 and Luke 21:

1| There would be false prophets claiming to be 'Christ'. **2|** War and violence would be on the earth. **3|** There would be famines, pestilences and earthquakes. **4|** Many people would hate Jesus' followers and deliver them to death, persecution or imprisonment. **5|** There would be signs in the sky, sun, moon, stars and sea. Heaven would be shaken, day will be darkened etc., showing the coming of the Son of Man.

And in Revelation 22:7-12 it is recorded that God will send his Angels as servants; behold, I am coming soon to repay everyone for what he has done. He will come as a 'thief in the night.' If anyone rejects him he rejects his life. 'I am knocking at the door,' the righteous will open it to allow believers to come in.

The problems stated in Matthew 24 and Luke 21 can refer to AIDS, Ebola, Lassa Fever etc., such diseases kill people everywhere. Wars will occur in many countries, as will earthquakes.

In Nigeria there is Boko Haram, kidnapping, war as carried out in some states like Benue State, between Fulani herdsmen and the people of the State killing innocent people daily. Lassa Fever and war between Christians and Moslems in the North. Pray for us.

NEWS FROM SOUTH AFRICA



Sis Leonie and Bro Paul Verster

We have just returned from Gaborone and were blessed to witness the birth into God's family of **Lucille Sambo**, a very bright 19 yearold Zimbabwean. She completed her Cambridge A levels with 3 distinctions in History, English literature, English general paper and a B in Divinity. She had been in Botswana visiting her mother and Sis Refilwe, her mother's neighbour, diligently taught Lucille the truth, spending time with her almost every day. Lucille was very quick at grasping the true gospel and completed both *Introducing Bible Basics* and *Bible Basics*.



It was a joy to listen to her confession of faith and see her baptised. She has been chosen to be an exchange student in Germany and God willing will be going next year some time. We pray she will be close to an ecclesia.

Lucille and Refilwe are going to the Summer School God Willing. I put Lucille in touch with Sis Precious from Soweto ecclesia via What's App and they seem to be forming a little bond.

We also were able to meet up with a Brother from Zimbabwe who has moved to a village close to Gaborone. He attended the Breaking of Bread and baptised Lucille. Such are the wonderful ways of providence.



top left, Sis Refilwe with Lucille and our Bro from Zimbabwe, seated Bro Paul Verster with his wife, Sis Leonie standing behind

NEWS FROM TANZANIA



MUSOMA | Bro Jokta Rufano

Thank you for sending to me several books and leaflets for our Ecclesia and others. I distributed them at a CBM Assembly which took place for three days in Musoma. In fact many members from other places enjoyed them.



Above: Members of Seminar at Musoma which took place for three days, with Sunday School from Usagara, Mwanza, Musoma and Geita Ecclesias



Brothers getting breakfast on the second day of the Assembly at Musoma

TUNDUKU | Bro Billy Mataka

Travelling Light - is the title of a song by Cliff Richard who was born 78 years ago, like myself.

The spectrum of this 'travelling light' was allowed to shine around my home, by then, around Mtwara Region in Tanzania, and the bearers of this light were Brothers Chris and Philip Munday. These Brothers came all the way from U.K. to counsel us for two days! Incidentally, by then Mtwara Region was cut off from the rest of Tanzania for six months of the rain season, therefore these Brothers had to come by air from D'Salaam!

The product of what they planted is myself, as current C.B.M. Brother for 29 years. However, my friend Stephen, who was my fellow student, is a product of God's Word – Luke viii:7 and myself

Luke viii:8. For those who have visited Tanzania, Tunduru District is populated by 95% Moslems! Hence my residence in Tunduru is a point of no return for my 'Travelling Light.' People around me are ready to admit that they have never come across a Christian who BELIEVES IN ONE GOD!

USAGARA | Bro Jokta Rufano

Nowadays I'm free as I am retired from public employment (as a teacher), but I am not "tired" of working, especially preaching the gospel. Also I'm dealing with environmental reserve such as distributing several types of tree and educating students and pupils how to keep the environment clean.

Lastly I plead with you if possible to reprint the Agano Jipya in Swahili as we have enthusiastic members that cannot understand English and so without Swahili literature it is difficult for them to grow in the Truth. It is also difficult to preach in the villages where English is not generally spoken.

Note: We have reprinted Agano Jipya three times in Swahili and appreciate it would be a great help to many in several parts of Africa. Alas we have so many other urgent printing needs that we are not in a position to reprint it at the moment - the cost would be in the region of £2,000 for a thousand copies. MH



Above | Usagara Ecclesia members a while back



| Brethren preparing to clean the ecclesial hall - seen in the background



|The Secretary of this active Ecclesia, Bro Jokta Rugano

NEWS FROM UGANDA



DOKOLO | Bro Paskweli Odur

In spite of personal difficulties, we thank the Almighty for His help, and we thank CAT for their effort and patience, as well as the hard work you are doing for the spread of the Good News world-wide, which is changing the lives of many people.

As we embark towards the end of the year 2018, we have the vision and call of a greater challenge than we have ever faced before. The call is to be diligent and work the work of God while it is still day, and to finish the work the Lord calls us to do. Not of division, selfishness, despising of God's Word. As Jesus said, *'My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me, and finish the work.'* (John 4:27) The sea and the waves are roaring, and we pray earnestly that the number of those elected will be made up, and the Father will send Jesus to put this wicked, sad world to rights.

We look forward to seeing you in that day in the Kingdom, when we can all sit at the feet of Jesus and those worthies of old, manifesting God's Name in the earth. We pray, *'Come quickly Lord Jesus.'* Our love and prayers are also with you in the hope we share.



Above | Bro Paskweli and Bro Alfred Okullo & family

NEWS FROM ZAMBIA



KAPIRI-MPOSHI | Bro Chosa Osting

With much sadness Bro Osting reports the falling asleep of our aged Brother Austin Mwaka, who suffered much from eye problems and then some nasty heart problems for which sadly finance was not available for an urgent operation. He and his wife Sister Mwangala had to travel a long way to the meeting to which they were very committed over the years. We express our comfort and condolence to our Sister in this sad loss until Jesus comes.



| Bro Costa Kanembe preparing for the long journey to examine an advanced student, Oliver Munsanje



| Bro Oliver Munsanje



The home of Bro and Sis Austin Mwaka

MUFULIRA

Many thanks Bro Fred Mumba for the following Baptismal pictures from your Ecclesia and also the Copperbelt Fraternal at Kitwe of members from Chingiola, Kitwe, Mufulira and Ndola.



Brethren and Sisters at the joint Copperbelt Fraternal at Kitwe



Bro Musanda Mbewe baptising student Annie Kunda



Bro Musanda with Sisters Rhodah Kasongo, Annie Kunda and Grace Kaoma, in the green Zamian National Flag T/Shirt



Bro Fred Mumba giving Sister Annie the right hand of fellowship with two Sisters singing hymns from the Zambia Hymn book.



Mulfulira Ecclesia

NALUWAMA | Bro Dick Phiri

This book the Bible NEV I have in my hand, it is above all books. Jesus is about to come, let us read the Bible and pray for our sins to be forgiven. Read Romans chapter 6 verses 3 and 5. Please follow the Bible.

NEWS FROM ZIMBABWE



CHIPADZE | Bro Joseph Mucheri

The Creation Calendar is really helpful with notes on readings and the amazing wonders of God's creation which encourages the daily reading. I am on behalf of the Ecclesia requesting you to produce it for future years if the Lord remains away.

CHISAPE | Bro Lamiel Mazvaramhaka

The rains were more than enough giving us enough to eat. Now more rains kill the maize, because the rains now are more and rough. Lightning is striking people around us. So far more than five have been killed. We thank God for everything as we all walk towards the Kingdom.



Brother Joseph, Sister Joyce and Lee Roy

MAGUNGE | Bro Joseph Ndoromazasi

God is very merciful as Peter tells us: *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promises as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* 2 Peter 3:9, African edition.

News from Europe / Eurasia

NEWS FROM UNITED KINGDOM 

DORCHESTER | Bro Peter Woodall

Thank you for the three boxes of Bibles that arrived this week. We are hoping for a good response from our advertisement in the Diary which comes out next month. There has been quite a good take up of the Bibles both Wednesday and Sunday, when the hall is open for a car boot sale.

Note: After much effort they have been allowed to display our Bibles and other books on a literature table in some of Dorset's Churches (pictured right), in addition to the regular display in the market. MH



News from the Americas

NEWS FROM TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



Bro George Constantine

It's sad that the Privy Council has put our fate in the hands of politicians - the senior members of the Advisory Committee on the Power of Pardon (Mercy Committee). The Privy Council's judgement in the Lifers' case was given since July, but up to now no one has been called to face the Mercy Committee. But God is in control, and I will keep my faith in Him.

I am now 58 and I have spent 26 years in prison, and although God has not yet released me from here, I still have a lot to be thankful for.

God brought me into the Truth 20 years ago through *Bible Basics*. He has kept me strong in faith. I am very thankful for you, and my other brethren and sisters in the Truth worldwide, for your love, prayers, friendship, spiritual guidance and literature, visits and support, which have helped me in spiritual growth, and to have what's necessary for me to survive in here as comfortable as is possible in these circumstances.

I am praying for you all every day, let's keep ready for our Lord's return. God bless you.

News from Asia

NEWS FROM INDIA



KERALA | Bro Thomas Thambi



Sis Nimisha George was baptised by her father Bro T P George. Sis Nimisha is studying for 1st year commerce graduation. After baptism Bro M A Joykutty gave an exhortation.

NEWS FROM NEPAL



Bro Santosh Sharma

The wonderful Calendar has created quite a bit of interest and my son Samyog, who was only 10 when Duncan visited us is now 21 and has taken it to College where he is an undergraduate. In my work I often make visits to remote and backward areas and always take the NEV New Testament and *Bible Basics* and explain to them the Truth.

The picture shows me telling them the gospel message and holding them up to a group of people in Ilam in Eastern Nepal.



**** More calendars and Bibles have been sent to Bro Sharma for those showing exceptional interest, it is an area where much literature would be very useful. MH*

NEWS FROM PHILIPPINES



BIBLE EDUCATION CENTRE, VALENCIA CITY | Courtesy of the BEC Philippines Team

To cater for the increased number of visitors and Brothers and Sisters, and with the intention of furthering the promotion of the Bible Education Centre's (BEC) preaching work in Valencia City, the BEC shop in central Mindanao has been relocated last September to a better and more strategically located site, situated in one of the main roads of the city. The increased space afforded can comfortably accommodate the regular Bible classes and preaching seminars as well as the individual discussions with friends. It also enables us to better display the extensive library of books, leaflets and Bible study aids available to our visitors and encourage them to stay for a discussion over a cup of coffee.



The members of Mailag Ecclesia actively support the BEC work and hope that through our Heavenly Father's blessing yet more may come to accept the call of the gospel and the good news of the Kingdom of God and name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

The local young people enthusiastically volunteered to assist Bro Michael Alesna in transferring to the new location, giving their time to the tasks of cleaning, painting and setting up the new facility.

The Mailag and Kalilangan young people have also collaborated to promote the work of the BEC by distributing flyers in the city as well as informing all current and former students of the new BEC shop location.

To train and further enhance the ability of the young brethren in leading studies, a roster of speakers has been prepared for the BEC shop schedule.

The new location has already proven effective, enticing new students from the passing traffic to visit. One-on-one Bible discussions are the major task of our volunteers and young people manning the shop.



“But he that does the will of my Father..”

There are no more important words in this world than those spoken by Jesus Himself. They have the authority of God and the power of truth. We could look hard at ourselves in the light of this one challenging statement.

In full it reads, “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of God. But he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*” (Matt 7:21-22). The prospect of a heavenly selection process, excluding some is not popular!

It was written before of the Christ, “*Lo (see, behold) I come to do Thy will, O God.*” (Psalm 40:7/Hebrews 10:7).

This is the singular mindset of our Lord. The record of Jesus’ life (the little we have of it) is of His 100% attention to this goal. It could be suggested that His motivation was one of ‘a slave-like obedience’ - true as He was ‘the servant’ spoken of in Isaiah’s prophecy. However, this NOT the case! Christ was pleased to reach out, to rejoice and to smile as He went about doing good!

Psalm 40:8 goes on to add (or predict) that it would be a much greater, more superior motive that would drive Messiah.

“*I delight to do Thy will, O God.*” It is the difference between ‘I MUST do’ or ‘I WANT to’ the heart’s desire. Jesus set the highest of motives for our own Christian service... twin ideals of desire and urgency. Can we make the upgrade from merely, ‘doing’ to one of ‘truly delighting’ in our daily service to the Lord, our Lord?

Sadly organised religion has a habit of reducing Divine directives to strict ritual - not “*the Way of the Lord*”!

If this sort of compliance attitude is what our Heavenly Father ‘expects/desires’ then He would not have made His Word so clear to the prophet (Micah 6:6-8). “*Do I want thousands of rams, rivers of oil, even one’s firstborn?*” He seeks, desires to see, actions revealing higher motives - so asks for faithful men and women now “*To do justly, love mercy and to walk humbly with (Me) THY God.*” This expression, “*THY God*” provides a lovely conclusion.

God wants us to take full ownership, a partnership with Himself. A personal, jealous association with, “*the God of all the earth*”. It’s this ‘bond of perfection’ that held Jesus so tightly to His Father, despite the awful things requested of Him. It will work well for us too.

Bro Neil Todd (New Zealand)

The Upper Room

Passages of Scripture can be read many times without realizing that hidden beneath the surface is a wealth of interest.

Such is the case with the record of our Lord when He instituted the first breaking of bread service. It is probably read each time we partake of the feast of remembrance.

That Jesus himself had already started making preparation for the Passover can be seen in his reply to Peter and to John when they asked him, *“where shall we prepare the Passover? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?”* (Luke 22:10-12). Jesus must have started making arrangements in advance and then handed the final details over to the disciples who prepared the Passover under the guidance of the Lord.

When all was ready for Jesus and the twelve to partake, and when they were all seated Jesus said, *“With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.”*

Jesus knew that his end was near, but having spent three years with his disciples, why does he appear to treat this occasion with such urgency? The language our Lord uses is strong. One translator puts it this way: *“How I have longed to eat this Passover with you”*. Another translator says this: *“With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you”*. The Son of God desires, longs for, is passionate for this; not only to eat the Passover, but to do so with his disciples, regardless of the fact that He knew one of them would betray him and another deny him and we know that later He would be abandoned.

I believe that by engaging in this feast our Lord wanted to impress upon the disciples the main part of His teaching over the past three years and if we look at the records we shall see how He demonstrated this. Jesus tell them that one of them will betray him and Matthew tells us that they were exceeding sorrowful and began every one of them to say unto Him, *“Lord, is it I?”*

In John 13 Peter asks Jesus who it is. Verse 26 gives the answer: *“Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the Son of Simon”*.

Several commentators suggest that usually the giving of the sop first as is suggested here, was to give it by the host to someone of importance who would be sitting next to the host. If Judas was sitting next to our Lord and partook of the sop first, could it be a sign that Jesus would forgive Judas of this forthcoming betrayal thereby practising what He had preached to the disciples and followers that we have to forgive?

Going on a little further to when our Lord was crucified, scripture records that He cried to his Father, *“Forgive them for they know not what they do.”* If our Lord did not forgive Judas in the upper room, his forgiveness might have been included in the *“Forgive them”* spoken on the cross. This is a debateable point and fortunately not a doctrinal issue, and we shall all have to draw our own conclusion for we are not told what happened!



Returning to Christ's desire to meet with his disciples in this way, He wanted so far as it was possible to strengthen them for what lay ahead. He had been their guide for three years, and shortly they would be on their own. In John chapter 13 and verses 14-15 we have the record of Jesus washing his disciples' feet. A protest was made by Peter but on an occasion like this it was necessary for Jesus to do it. The situation is explained in verse 14: *"If I then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you"*. Jesus was demonstrating humility through which he showed his love for them, thus fulfilling the words of scripture, *"What doth the Lord require of thee but to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God."*

In John chapter 13 and verses 34-35, he records the words of Jesus showing the importance of Love: *"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another"*.

During his ministry Jesus had demonstrated on many occasions the need for forgiveness. An instance is recorded in Luke chapter 6 verse 37: *"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:"*, so at this feast Jesus stressed the importance of Serving, Humility, Love and Forgiveness, but of great importance was the partaking of the Bread and the Wine when our Lord asked them and us to *"do this in remembrance of me"*. Not just once, but a continual and regular partaking of these emblems in memory of our Lord.

Jesus was to demonstrate love in the great sacrifice that he made and we read of this in John chapter 15 verse 13: *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"*. We see at this first feast of remembrance our Lord demonstrating the attributes that we should have as his disciples.

Brother John Roberts in his thoughts on the Breaking of Bread says this: *"When on Sundays we see the table spread, it signifies the altar and reminds us that our Lord Jesus offered himself without spot, but it signifies also the power and true wealth of our Great Host. We are reminded that we of all people, have been graciously invited to His house and offered peace and fellowship with Him. What an honour and privilege is the table of the Lord"*.

Bro Roy Soffe (Portsmouth, U.K.)

“Comfort ye my people”

There is a comfort now in prospect of the substantial comfort that God will bestow in the blessing and exaltation of His chosen in the day of Christ. All the groanings of the saints that the spirit has preserved in the Word are mingled with this comfort; and by the same comfort may we comfort our hearts in the present time of waiting and patience.

God is observant of all our ways; and God never forgets. Christ’s eye is over all the ecclesias, searching the hearts, trying the reins, that every man may receive according to his ways.

Therefore our tears and our sighs at our present desolation are not lost, though unseen of men. Our troubles, in this respect, are pleasing to him. In due time he will wipe away the tears and fill our mouth with laughter. In this respect we learn to rejoice even in tribulation.

Bro Robert Roberts

Christ’s Resurrection - an historical fact

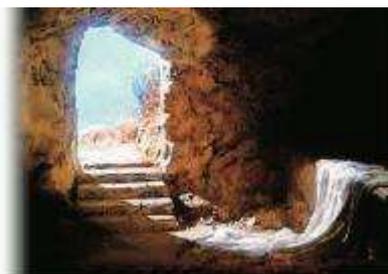
Tacitus, the Roman historian, was born AD 55 only just over 20 years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. In his ‘Annals of the Empire’, he wrote:

“Christus, from whom the name Christians is derived, was executed by order of the governor Pontius Pilate in the reign of the Emperor Tiberius. Checked for the moment, the pernicious superstition again broke out, not only in Judea, the source of the evil, but even in Rome.”

In the first century, in a restless Palestine there arose a succession of false prophets who claimed supernatural powers and collected bands of followers. But when the Romans caught the leader and put them to death, their followers scattered and nothing more was heard of them. Gamaliel in Acts 5:36-37 referred to two of them, namely Theudas and Judas of Galilee, and in each case, after the leader was slain, the band dispersed.

It was not so with Christus, says Tacitus; although “the pernicious superstition” was checked when he was executed, it broke out again and spread as far as Rome.

The reason, of course, was that unlike the impostors, Christ was raised from the dead by God and this fact changed “a frightened powerless group of Galileans” into a confident and well-organised band of preachers. Their words recorded in The Acts of the Apostles show that the truth of the resurrection was the power which spear-headed their message. It was an undeniable historical occurrence, well-attested by witnesses, many of whom, says Paul, were still living and therefore available for cross-examination (see 1 Cor. 15:5-8). History confutes the modern doubters!



Living the Truth

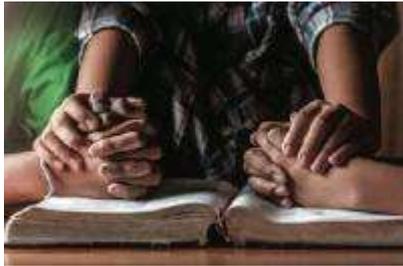
When the apostles first began to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God, led by Peter at Jerusalem after the ascension of Jesus, there was a tremendous response. Some 3,000 were baptized in one day, and they were all imbued with a wonderful spirit: *“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people”* (Acts 2:44-47).

Some forty years later, however, the picture was very different. Paul, writing to Timothy, not only told him that *“Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world”* (2 Tim. 4:10), but complained of opposition: *“Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil”* (:14). There were also problems in relation to belief, as is demonstrated by Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Paul wrote to them: *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel”* (1:6). It seems that it was being taught that it was necessary for believers to keep the Law of Moses, an idea which Paul vehemently opposed.

James, however, in his letter, was more concerned about the conduct of the brethren and sisters. As we read his letter we see a great contrast between the situation in the ecclesias at the time when he wrote and that in Jerusalem perhaps forty years earlier, when they *“had all things common”*. Now, it seems, there were both rich and poor brethren and sisters in the ecclesias. Seeking to console the poor, James exhorted them: *“Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: but the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away”* (1:9,10). The poor can rejoice in the riches of the Truth and all its blessing, but the riches of the rich will do them no good; they “pass away”. It seems that the rich trusted in their riches, respected those that were wealthy, and despised the poor. This is the theme of chapter 2 of the letter, and James pointed out that such conduct meant that they were failing to fulfill the royal law: *“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”* (:8).

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thess. 5:16-18

We also have to realise that there is no guarantee in riches, and that the future is completely uncertain for all of us. As James warned: *“Go to now, ye that say, to day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away”* (4:13,14). Of course, we today live in a world where the rich prosper; and this seems to have been the case also when James was writing, since he went on to speak against rich men in general: *“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you... ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton”* (5:1,5). This is, I think, a condemnation of all the rich, not merely the rich brethren and sisters in the ecclesias.



It can, of course, be very disturbing to watch the wicked prosper, and making themselves rich, but what one needs to do is to bring to mind their ultimate destiny, and compare this with the glorious future that lies ahead for the faithful children of God. James recognised this, exhorting us to patience: *“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord”* (:7). Psalm 37 also takes up this theme: *“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb”* (:1,2). By contrast, *“the meek shall inherit the earth”* (:11). So we should not be upset at what we see around us: it will all come to an end. As the Psalmist says: *“I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not”* (:35,36).

The letter of James is full of practical advice concerning our day-to-day life in the Truth, as indeed are all the letters of the apostles. Most of this advice is very clear and easy to understand. We can all appreciate, and should heed, the warning to keep our tongue, to seek peace with one another; but there is one aspect of his advice which we may find rather difficult, and that is his advice concerning prayer.

James adopted a very positive approach to prayer, asserting that *“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”*. In support of that statement he quoted the example of Elijah, who was *“a man subject to like passions as we are”* (5:16,17). God listened to Elijah, and his example shows that He will also listen to us; but this does not mean that every request we make will be granted. Whilst James says, *“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”*, and we know that the Apostle Paul was a righteous man, yet when he prayed to God, God refused to grant his request. So he says *“...there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness”* (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

We are not privileged, as Paul was, to have a direct, Divinely spoken, response to our prayer, but the principle remains. God most certainly listens to His children, but He does not always relieve them of the problems that face them. These problems have their place and their purpose. James, for instance, exhorts us: *“count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [or trials]”*. Why? *“The trying of your faith worketh patience”* (1:2,3). This we see above all in Jesus himself, of whom it was written that he *“learned obedience”* (Heb. 5:8).

We have to learn to trust in our heavenly Father. We have to believe that He is ever watching over us and caring for us - day and night. What is more, He will never put on us a burden that we cannot bear, and we must believe that. As Paul wrote: *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”* (1 Cor. 10:13).

So, despite the fact that our prayers are heard, we may yet be beset with many trials and difficulties. We have many examples of this in the Word, but perhaps it is Job, the example given by James, who stands out above all the rest. When he was in great trouble his wife said to him: *“curse God, and die”*. Job answered her: *“Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?”* (Job 2:9,10). Job, as the record shows, was not tried above that which he was able to bear, and neither shall we be.

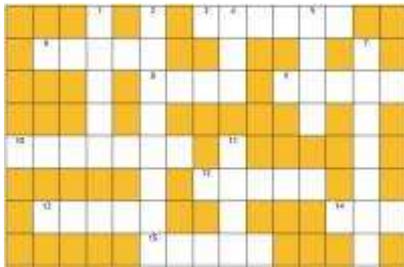
(The late) Bro Ernest A Stallworthy

“Jeshuran waxed fat and kicked”

It is not for us to know the measure of the sacrifices we may be called upon to endure. In our time we have seen religious persecution in other lands. Who can say, *“WE shall never see it”*? On the other hand we have the paradox that we face greater danger in the absence of persecution. We all remember that striking and easily remembered phrase in Moses’ song: *“Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.”* This quaintly expresses a fundamental principle of human behaviour. Remember Israel’s history under the Judges ... a continuous alternation of repentance and apostasy. While we are not forgetful that there are many heavy crosses borne among us today and the struggle with human nature is the same ... still ecclesial life is soft and easy. We have an abundance of temporal provisions. It is no sacrifice to join the ecclesia today. On the contrary, there is considerable social attractiveness in joining, and this is dangerous to our basic strength of character and purpose. Brethren and sisters, if the need arises, are we prepared to go through the crucible of affliction? The need is ever present to **prepare our defences**. All in every age find shelter in the same Rock in the time of crisis (Psa. 31:2-3). And we find Stephen echoing the Psalmist’s words of verse 5: *“Into Thy hand I commit my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth.”*

R.W.C.

Birds and Beasts of the Bible



Clues Across

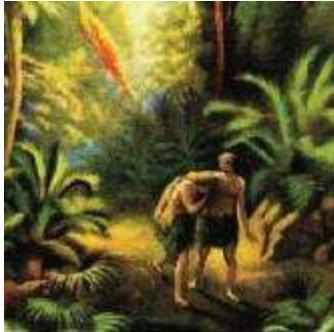
3. Abraham's servant took ten of these when he went to Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac. (Genesis 24:10)
6. Jesus said one should not cast his pearls before them. (Matthew 7:6)
8. (and 2 down) King Solomon's navy carried both of these as part of the cargo. (1 Kings 10:22)
9. Samson tied the tails of three hundred of these in pairs. (Judges 15:4-5)
10. Were not two of these sold for a farthing? asked Jesus. (Matthew 10:29)
12. (and 15 down) Jesus told a parable about separating these two sorts of animals from each other. (Matthew 25:31-46)
13. In a vision Zechariah saw two women with wings like this bird. (Zechariah 5:9)
14. Solomon shows us this insect as an example of industry and wisdom. (Proverbs 6:6-8)

Clues Down

1. Paul was bitten by one when he was shipwrecked on the Island of Melita. (Acts 28:3)
2. (and 8 across) King Solomon's navy carried both of these as part of the cargo. (1 Kings 10:22)
4. Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on one. (Matthew 21:5)
5. Samson slayed one with his bare hands. (Judges 14:5-6)
7. It tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. (Genesis 3:13)
11. It brought back an olive leaf to the ark. (Genesis 8:11)
15. (and 12 across) Jesus told a parable about separating these two sorts of animals from each other. (Matthew 25:31-46)

God Proves You

A careful study of the Scriptures reveals that God created man as a special part of His creation. He desires people in eternity who serve Him because they want to. They believe that He is the sovereign God, a God of truth, love and justice.



From the beginning, man was under a test to determine whether or not he would choose to obey God without question. God placed Adam under the restriction of one simple command. He was not to eat of the fruit of one particular tree. If he did he would die. In man's opinion, eating of the tree was a very minor infraction. We would be inclined to ask, "Why all the fuss over such a small thing?" No doubt Eve thought that. What was the issue? It was the same as any disobedience on our part today. The issue is that God is God, not man. We look at such things as man thinks. But God sees them altogether differently. He sees His holiness and sovereignty despised in every act of disobedience.



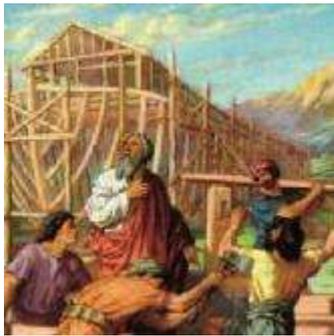
After God delivered His people from Egypt they murmured against Moses because they found themselves in the wilderness, or desert, (Exodus 16) and thought they would starve there. God spoke to them through Moses *"Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no"* (Exodus 16:4). But the people had their own ideas (:27-28). This was very serious to God.

In Numbers 15:32 a man was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day, which had been forbidden by God. This again would seem like a very little thing. They ask God what should be done, and He said, *"The man shall surely be put to death..."*

The Old Testament, under the law of Moses, gives nineteen such laws for which God required the death penalty. *"...the law was our school master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"* (Gal. 3:24). *"Be ye holy; for I am holy"* (1 Pet. 1:16). With God it is not a matter of how big, or little; or important or unimportant a matter is to us. If it is disobedience it is all the same. The principle is that when we disobey an authority whom God has set over us, we despise God's holy name and character.

There is no sin in heaven. God requires that it be that way with His people on earth. Throughout the whole Bible God is God. His words are to be obeyed. In Ephesians 6 we are commanded to obey. When we choose to disobey, deciding that this or that is not so important, we bring God's disfavour upon us. *"And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not."* (Exodus 20:20). *"And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no... Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;"* (Deu. 8:2,16). *"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."* (1 Thess. 5:21). *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"* (2 Cor. 13:5). Reprobates are unapproved, rejected, or worthless.

The book of Hebrews gives solemn warning. *"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"* (Heb. 10:28-29). This tells us plainly how God evaluates every disobedience. Only if men repent of their disobedience and turn from it, do the mercy of God and the blood of Christ become effective.



We are without excuse in the light of the warning and example God has given us in His word. These include Achan, King Saul, Uzzah and Ananias and Sapphira. God is proving His people today. Does He find us faithful or wanting? Will we hear the welcome call, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy lord."* (Mat. 25:21). May we always remember that *"many are called, but few are chosen"* (Mat. 22:14).

Jesus also said, *"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."* (Mat. 24:37-39). Because these people did not repent and obey his message from God, they were not saved and knew not, though they had heard it repeatedly from Noah's preaching. They knew not, because they reasoned that what he said was unreasonable. *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."* (1 Cor. 1:21).

In these last days many such like people trust their own reasoning rather than to obey God (see Matthew 25:44). *"But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that*

fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.” (Psalm 103:17-18).

Bro Gaius Egwu (Ohafia Nigeria)

Holiness

The focal point of our calling is holiness – without which, says Paul, no man shall see the Lord. Holiness is a very comprehensive and expressive term. Its basic meaning is “*set apart or separated.*” James expresses this separateness as keeping ourselves “*unspotted from the world.*” Now John says that “**All** that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” Holiness, then, is a state of cleanness, and a state of cleanness is accomplished by obedience to God’s commandments. There is no other standard. They **must** be kept in daily remembrance, and they **must** be kept.

We have been called with an holy calling – called to glory and virtue – called to be sons of God. When Jesus appears in his Kingdom, they that will be with him will not only be called, but they will be chosen and **faithful**.

Oh, may these thoughts possess each breast, Where'er we rove, where'er we rest; And since Thou dost Thy children see, May we be holy like to Thee.

The Sincerity of Love



In this article, first published in March 1947, we are challenged to examine ourselves as to whether we are truly motivated by what God has done for us to live lives of loving and obedient service.

Actions rather than professions are the true measure of our love for Christ. Though our tongue, as the Apostle James reminds us, “*is a little member, it boasteth great things*” (Jas. 3:5) and may deceive us more easily than it does our friends. Professions of love and allegiance, if they are unsupported by authoritative works, if they fail to take the strains of everyday living, are easy, ignoble and disastrous.



Although the experience became the starting point of a stronger loyalty, Peter discovered this in the most tragic circumstances. In all the Scriptures it would be difficult to find nobler assurances than those which Peter gave his Lord: *“Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death”* (Luke 22:33). Yet what can be weaker than his pitiful blustering a few hours later: *“Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man”* (Matt. 26:74) ? We have a happy contrast in the example of a woman who loved her Lord with all the intensity of her soul, but who did not confess it. Her confession was hidden in her actions as she symbolically prepared Christ for his burial, and it was Jesus who declared to men both her love and her comprehension.

Jesus warns us

On so many occasions, sometimes directly, sometimes obliquely, Jesus warns us of the danger of mere profession. His great criticism of the scribes and Pharisees was that they had inherited the fault of their fathers, who drew nigh to God with their mouth and honoured Him with their lips, but their heart was far from Him (Matt. 15:7,8).

His great discourse on the mount concludes with sober words of warning. For a moment he lifts the veil of the future and discloses the judgement seat. There are those who are still protesting with the greatest emphasis that they have loved and worked; they have *“prophesied”*, they have *“cast out devils”*, they have *“done many wonderful works”*. But the thoughts and intents of their hearts are known to him and, however they may plead their loyalty, the evidence of their profession is lacking: *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord.... But he that doeth the will of my Father”* (7:21). Professions of love and allegiance may sound strong and brave now, they may even allow us to enjoy the pale light of men’s approval, but if they are only supported by idle, unprofitable lives the day will come when their hollow vanity will be disclosed, and the end will be shame and contempt.

The word *“many”* in Matthew 7:22 is disturbing. It will not be one here and there who will vainly protest. Most of us will discover in that little word a challenge to search carefully into our own hearts. We shall be stirred to demand whether our actions are rising to the standard of our professions. There is a world of difference between active and lethargic religion, between those who accept only the obligations of service that come their way and those who spend their lives creating opportunities of service. If our service to God in its practical field, our relation with man, is uninspired and inactive, there is a very real danger that our allegiance has degenerated into the mere acknowledgement of our lips.

In the graphic language of the writer to the Hebrews, we are *“compassed about with (a) great ... cloud of witnesses”* (12:1), and the more searching our penetration into their lives, the greater our conviction that their works were a natural reflection of their faith; their election was a vigorous incentive to service. They were *“workers together with (God)”* (2 Cor. 6:1).

Yet our self-examination must not end with the determination of whether our service is active or lethargic. In an active and even a brilliant service which appears to be directed towards the glory of God and the edification of men, there may lurk a motive of self-satisfaction rather than of self-surrender. There are many subtle yet grimly real obstacles which may cast shadows across our actions: *“all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do”* (Heb. 4:13). He discerns, but we must examine and discover our true motives, however worthy our actions may appear.

Our incentive

What is the secret of this active, vigorous discipleship that is nothing less than a transformation? What is the source from which it flows? Whence come its incentive and its power? Paul's answer is that it lies in an appreciation of the mercies of God. In his Epistle to the Romans he gives a vivid portrayal of the drama of salvation. He speaks of the hopelessness of both Jew and Gentile, of righteousness, sanctification and final redemption. We follow him through his exposition of the grace of God, and meet his exhortation: *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service”* (Rom. 12:1).

This is the process throughout the Scriptures; a revelation of God's purpose with its inescapable emphasis upon the love of God, and then an exhortation to walk in the light and power of that love. The *“manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God”* (1 John 3:1) must have a powerful transforming effect upon every sincere believer, and evoke an active and loving response reflected in our thoughts, words and actions. This is the only source of true service. Thus, in his epistle, John speaks of our lifelong struggles in simple words: *“Hereby,”* he says, *“know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”* (1 John 3:16 RV).

Our faith therefore must be a *“faith which worketh by love”* (Gal. 5:6). Our zeal must be the zeal of a responsive gratitude in our hearts. It has its source in a deep and abiding consciousness that we were strangers afar off, and we have been brought near to God through the life and sacrifice of Christ. If we truly feel this release from sin and this adoption into the family of God we shall show it in our actions. Our service will have in it both the humility of repentance and the *“imperturbable patience of faith”*. We are conscious, as we rise from the waters of baptism, of wider horizons; a prospect of unlimited spiritual progress with Divine resources to strengthen us and the perfect example and precepts of the Son of God to guide us. If a strong and abiding sense of God's love, and a steady faith in His redemptive purpose, are the foundation upon which our life is built, there will be no danger of insincerity; we shall not serve God with our eyes fixed upon the opinions and censures of men; our public actions will be a true reflection of our private devotions. In short, we shall not love in word and tongue but in deed and truth. The love of God, which was manifested in every word and action of our Master, will flow on deep, and strong in our lives, and nothing will be able to separate us from it, because in all the varied circumstances of life we shall be *“more than conquerors through him that loved us.”* (Romans 8:37).

Bro Melva Purkis

Thy Servant's House (2 Samuel 7)

*“Desirest thou to build an house for me
Of quarried stones and wood of cedar tree
When years amongst you tented I have been
And dwelt with you the cherubim between?”*

*Thus spake the Lord to David when he thought
To build God's House with gold and silver fraught,
“Not thou”, said God, “but I will build for thee
A kingly house, a royal dynasty”.*

*“When thou art dead and resting in thy tomb
Thy greater Son I'll send to fill thy room,
His Father I will be and he, My Son,
And thou shalt see him reign, My Holy One”.*

*So David saw with clear, prophetic eyes
The glorious Sun of Righteousness arise,
And knew that, when this greater Son should come,
He'd find with him an everlasting home.*

N.P.H.

A Stronghold

The Lord is good, good in Himself essentially and independently, eternally and unchangeably. He is good to His own people. Let us praise Him as good in the most emphatic and unlimited sense: *“There is none good but One, that is, God”* (Matt. 19:17). He is *“a stronghold in the day of trouble”* - The day of trouble when the trial is special, and the day of trouble which is temporary but yet long enough to last through our life unless the Lord prevent it: the day of trouble when within, without, around, there seem to be only care, and fear, and want, and grief. Even in the midst of chaos *“God is good”*. In our troubled day it is comforting to be able to rely on One Who never changes. We place our trust in Him, and can do no better; we can find no firmer stronghold, no stronger foundation.

Bro Claud Lamb

Of Riches

I cannot call riches better than the baggage of virtue; the Roman word is better - *impedimenta*; for as baggage is to an army, so is riches to virtue - it cannot be spared nor left behind, but it hindereth the march; yea, and the care of it sometimes loseth or disturbeth the victory.

Bro Francis Bacon

Pressing Towards the Mark

Progress is a popular goal in the world today. People are hungry for technological progress, social progress, economic progress, educational progress and on and on. I recently read this statement in an article about digital storage, *“No one knows for sure what will be, but with certainty I can say the best is yet to come.”*

As Christians we also are interested in progress, but the progress which interests us is quite different from that of the world. Paul spoke of pressing towards the mark. But what mark? Did he have a goal of making a certain number of tents per year? Or was he working on a new and improved design? No, that was not his point at all. The mark he was pressing for was a spiritual mark:

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:13-14).

Why did Paul need to keep pressing toward the mark? He was a great pillar in the early church. Through his efforts the kingdom of God experienced great progress. Surely he was just about as perfect as one can get. But no, Paul realized that he still had not attained to perfection. He knew that there was higher ground to be reached.

The same is true for each of us. If we ever feel that we have arrived at the point where we no longer need to press forward, we have come to a dangerous place indeed! *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”* (1 Cor. 10:12). What are some helps to avoid shifting into neutral? I am sure I cannot supply all the answers, but here are some things that come to my mind.

- 1 . Develop personal convictions. Do not consider yourself safe just because you are not doing anything that your Ecclesia specifically forbids. Church standards were never intended to take the place of your conscience. As soon as church standards become the only guide in your life you have begun to coast. You need to obey them, of course, but it should also go deeper than that. You should also understand the biblical principles behind them.
- 2 . Do not expect to coast along on the older generations’ momentum. They will pass off the scene before you know it. Today’s young people are tomorrow’s older generation. Young people need to learn to be spiritually alert today if they are going to be safe leaders tomorrow.
- 3 . Do not be satisfied with generation gaps. Remember that in only a few generations, small steps add up to create big leaps. In only a few generations, the church could lose what our forefathers worked so hard for.
- 4 . Set your personal focus on growth rather than on maintenance. If Paul needed to press forward, how much more do you need it?
- 5 . And last, but not least, keep God’s word absolutely central in your life. Without this all effort will be vain. And through it all, let us remember why we are pressing onward. We want to win that prize that awaits us - eternal life (2 Corinthians 4:17). Truly, Christians can say, the best is yet to come or is coming.

The world wants your best but God wants your all.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”

Matthew 22:37 KJV

Bro Gaius Egwu (Ohafia, Nigeria)

The Seeds of Eternal Life



Let those who would enjoy a good future waste none of their present

In Kenya we have a higher education institution by the name of Egerton University, formerly Egerton College. A colonialist by the name Lord Egerton of Tatton donated a portion of his land, then the agricultural college was built. At the moment the University publishes a few pages in one of the local newspapers by the name “*Nation Daily*”. Their articles talk of the “*Seeds of Gold*”. They talk of a big variety of seeds, animals, agriculture and related topics of the agribusiness. It really helps farmers, students and the public in general.

The real seeds of eternal life

The Holy Bible, which was written by over 40 prophets of the Almighty God, is the only source of eternal life. It has the seeds that lead to eternal life, which is very expensive and difficult to acquire (Mark 4:1-20).

Jesus Christ the son of the living God spread the gospel (planted the seeds of eternal life) to mankind, so that we might be saved and have a share in the promised Kingdom (John 3:16). Gold cannot be compared to eternal life since gold will either vanish or the proprietor will have to die in the long run.

The Bible also teaches us to be generous and to welcome whoever knocks on our door, because we might even welcome angels to our homes (Acts 17:25; Heb. 12:9; Eze. 18:20; John 3:5). God is love, that’s why he extended an olive branch to mankind after the fall of Adam in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-23).

People with wisdom choose life

The omniscient God urges us to choose life rather than any other thing. Human life is very dear. One can use his or her last penny seeking for treatment to save their lives. Like in Kenya, the ‘well off’ travel as far as South Africa, India, U.S.A., U.K., Germany and many other places just to get well and live longer. But the God of Abraham is giving us eternal life at a very cheap price, the most expensive part of it was paid by His only begotten son, Jesus of Nazareth, on Calvary (2 Cor. 5:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:18). Some die while undergoing treatment, while some recover but still remain mortal and die eventually through a different cause.

The Bible reveals the great human problem and it's solution

It's true that man's life on earth comes from God (Acts 17:25, Heb. 12:9). Children are a gift from God (Psalms 127:6). In summary let's hear the gospel, spread it and put it into use. We should practice it, as the saying goes, "*Salvation is not the destination it's a journey,*" that has ups and downs and numerous challenges. When I was young I wanted to enjoy life. I wanted to live nicely, get whatever I wanted and then also have hope in the coming Kingdom. It couldn't work. My Dad was a rail worker and could not afford the luxuries of life for all the family. Also the gospel requires that we don't love money, but serve God. If we do His will then he provides whatever we might need in our daily lives (Deut. 7:9-10; 1 Pet. 4:19; Luke 19:11-12).

The current global crises' like power wrangles, famine, earthquakes, wars, tsunamis etc. are all an indication that the son of God is about to return to earth and establish the Kingdom of God on earth for the righteous; a world free from all the tribulations that we are experiencing at the moment.

Bro Samuel Wanga (Nakuru, Kenya)

Dogs under the table

A very fine cameo is given in Mark 7:24-30, where Jesus talks to the Syrophenician woman. She pleads with him to heal her daughter, but he answers: "*Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs*". She says to him, "*Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs*". The word for "dogs" in both cases, and also in the equivalent passages in Matthew 15:26,27, is the Greek *kunarium*, which means a little dog, a pet house-dog (see Young's Concordance).

There is another Greek word for 'dog', used in Matthew 7:6: "*Give not that which is holy unto dogs*"; and Luke 16:21: "*moreover the dogs came and licked his sores*"; this word is *kuōn*, which means a wild pariah dog of the streets. However, Jesus does not use this word when speaking to the Syrophenician woman but, in compassion, the more gentle word, *a little dog*, thus showing that in time all Gentiles would be granted the opportunity of eating from the children's table. She had very great insight into the growth and wonder of the true gospel.

A.H.

Test Your Knowledge

An alphabet of Bible places

- A . for the place where believers were first called Christians (*Acts 11*)
- B . for the pool in Jerusalem (*John 5*)
- C . for the mountain where Elijah triumphed (*1 Kings 18*)
- D . for the place Saul was going when Jesus appeared to him (*Acts 9*)
- E . for the garden God made (*Genesis 2*)
- F . for the place Paul was blown to (*Acts 27*)
- G . for the lake where Jesus walked on the water (*Mark 6*)
- H . for the mountain where the dew descends (*Psalms 133*)
- I . for the land that God chooses (*Isaiah 14*)
- J . for the place where the walls fell down (*Joshua 6*)
- K . for the valley/brook outside Jerusalem (*2 Samuel 15*)
- L . for the place where cedars grow (*Psalms 92*)
- M . for the place where Ruth came from (*Ruth 1*)
- N . for the place where Jesus lived (*Matt. 2*)
- O . for the place where gold comes from (*1 Kings 10*)
- P . for the land where Goliath came from (*1 Samuel 17*)
- Q . for the dangerous place near the island of Clauda (*Acts 27*)
- R . for the water which divided (*Exodus 14*)
- S . for the place where the ten commandments were given (*Exodus 19*)
- T . for the city that is now under the sea (*Ezekiel 26*)
- U . for the place where Abram started from (*Genesis 11*)
- V . as in the V..... of Megiddo (*Zech. 12*)
- W . where the children of Israel wandered for 40 years
- Z . for the future throne of Jesus Christ (*Psalms 2*)

The Family of God

The phrase 'family of God' describes human and heavenly relationships of life and love. It is not only a 'beloved' family, but also a 'royal' family. Christ is not only our Redeemer, Brother, but also our Royal Brother – the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We were born not only into the family of God, but into his kingdom as well. In God's 'family' we will have life, in God's 'Kingdom' we will have power and authority.

The church of Jesus Christ includes the concept of both 'family and kingdom.' Christ is the royal Son of God; His life and His authority will be expressed through us as we become 'one' with Him. The Apostle Paul teaches us that by one spirit we were all baptised into one body – whether Jew or non-Jews. (1 Cor. 12:13). The term baptise means to be placed into, or become one with Christ. We truly become members of his body, and that body is the church. (Col.1:18).

The first time we find the word 'church' is in the New Testament – it is from the lips of Jesus himself. Peter has just spoken out and confessed Jesus as '*the Christ, the Son of the living God.*' Jesus tells him that the Father has blessed him with that revelation. Then calling Peter by name, Jesus goes on to say, that '*upon this Rock, (the revelation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God,) I will build my church, and the gates (defences) of hell will not be able to withstand victorious assault of the church against it. I will give you the keys (authority) of the Kingdom of Heaven.*' (Matt. 16:13-19).

Bro Paskweli Odur (Dokolo, Uganda)

Key to Israel's Survival



Jerusalem

With all its problems, Israel has one commanding advantage - a sense of purpose: to survive. It has come back. It has confounded persecution and outlived exile to become the only nation in the world that is governing itself in the same territory, under the same name, and with the same religion and same language as it did 3,000 years ago. It is conscious of fulfilling destiny. It knows it must not go under now, that it must endure.

Sis Barbara W Tuchman

Worship

Worshipping God is a duty to be performed individually and collectively. It is a thing that other people standing afar off can see and observe.

Individually - by hearing the word of God, by believing and by having faith in the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jesus said that whosoever believes and is baptized will be saved. So a belief, followed by baptism is an individual acceptance and act in worshipping God. A man has accepted to be washed of his sins and to start a new way of living, different from the old one. Before baptism we were doing things for our own pleasure, not pleasing God. Now we are to show that we have changed. We should never be like a dog that returns to its own vomit or like a fool who repeats his folly (Prov. 26:11; 2 Pet. 2:22).

This is what man is like and we are being warned that if we return to our own vomit or go back to the mire, we will be away from the Kingdom of God. We got rid of what was not suitable for our body, we rejected it. We were washed of our sins at baptism and we should never return to that sinful way of life.

We have to examine ourselves on our own individual performance; self-examination by reading the Bible (Gal. 5:19-21). This chapter is a self-measuring stick. Really it is a tape measure of our daily behaviour. It will be our behaviour that pleases God; faith will grant us, by grace, a place in the Kingdom. However, if we look back, as Lot's wife did, then we are lost for ever, unless we repent.

God sees all that we do. *"Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men)"* (1 Kings 8:39). *"... But the Lord looketh on the heart"* (1 Sam 16:7). *"I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings"* (Jer. 17:10). *"... knowest the hearts of all men"* (Acts 1:24). *"Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work"* (Ps. 62:12). *"Search me and know my heart; and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting"* (Ps. 139:23-24).



We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give — Winston Churchill

There is much more on the individual basis, the way we can examine ourselves and how we should know that we are being watched. Each one of us is on daily test whether we do good or not. We have to check for ourselves by reading the word of God our 'tape measure' and wherein we fail, we must repent and pray for forgiveness.

Breaking bread and drinking wine is both an individual and a collective act of worship. *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity"* (Ps. 133:1). *"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren"* (Gen. 13:8). Our unity is also a way of worship. We should never quarrel, because we are brothers and sisters in Christ. If we avoid quarrelling

then we are worshipping God. Abraham avoided quarrelling because he and Lot were brothers. *“Let brotherly love continue”* (Heb. 13:1).

Collectively - Jesus and the disciples were together and ate and drank wine together (Mt. 26:26-30). And wherever possible, when we gather together, we should do this (1 Cor. 11:23-26). By being together and breaking bread we preach the Gospel until he comes and thereby are worshipping. We should also examine ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28). Wherever we are we should observe all things whatsoever he commanded us (Mt. 28:20). We should be separate from worldly activities and let God alone sanctify us, for his word is the truth (Jn. 17:17).

Our daily way of life and behaviour will show the world that we worship God. The thing is that God sees the heart, there is nothing hidden from him. The way we think and our personal conviction determine our faith. This is a duty that all men should perform, it is what God requires of us (Eccl. 12:13).

Bro AD Liwawa (Neno, Malawi)

Carelinks | Australia



In October, whilst we were feeding folks in Europe, Phil and Miri Worsnop were feeding the Congolese migrants in Queensland, Australia, pictured right - many of whom have now been baptized.

We have also heard that local brothers and sisters in Indonesia are likewise reaching out to migrants where they are too, so the passion for outreach is clearly spreading worldwide.



Phil and Miri, Katie, Helena and their team in Queensland made a big witness at the Jacaranda Festival in October, working very hard. Sis Miri reports:

“Over the two and a half days we had about 42 persons wanting and willing to take the small NEV Bibles and about the same in calendars and the booklet 'When will Jesus Return', and two who asked for the large copy Bible Basics, as well as two police officers who wanted Bibles Basics and the complete NEV Bible. They fitted nicely in their uniform trouser pockets.

We had to submit a request to have a stand there, this had to include everything that we were promoting or selling or giving away as well as 'Copy of Liability Insurance' including 'Certificate of Currency' before approval was issued; which we had with our business.

The festival went for three days from Friday 4pm to Sunday 2pm 26-28 October. We hired a stand tent for the occasion, which included putting up and taking down. Our stand promoted (1) The NEV Bibles; 2019 Calendars; Bible Basics; 'When will Jesus Return to the Earth' booklet., and other Bible helps etc. As it was multicultural we also had Bibles in Swahili and Sudanese as samples. (2) The Loanialu Health Clinic in Vanuatu. (3) A small area on the outside of the tent promoting our business.

I had been able to create some posters etc. from the online Vistaprint. On the Friday and Saturday we had grouped together items as 'Free Bible Packs'. There seemed to be some people hesitant about getting material, but we still had approximately 30 persons taking a variety of different materials... We had two people come especially to ask for a large copy of the Bible Basics study manual. We also had young people coming and asking for a free Bible. On the Sunday, as we were next to the 'Show Bag' van, we made a different sign and advertised our same 'Bible Packs' as 'Free Bible Show Bags'. Although we were showing, displaying and giving out the same materials, there was a greater interest.

We are thankful to all Brothers and Sisters who willingly gave up their time to help with the display. (We didn't have to personally ask anyone – they freely volunteered – which in itself was great; one brother travelling about 50km to unexpectedly help us out). We were able to talk to many people - the ones that stand out were the two Police liaison officers, one from Sudan and the other from Samoa. The former wanted a complete NEV Bible, not just the small NEV New Testament. The evenings of the show finished at 10pm., the area had security people and some stand holders slept on site. Our recommendations to anyone wanting to try something like this:

- *Make the display as attractive but as simple as possible.*
- *We did have some pull up signs, but could only use these on days with no wind.*
- *Modify the stand to see what works most effectively.*
- *State positively what we believe about the coming Kingdom of God.*
- *Just have a go. People are interested.*



Although we did not promote our business... (as it was a self-managed display) in the week following the show we had firm orders three times the set up cost of the show.”



Bro Phil and Sis Miri also report the baptism of **Christina**, a Congolese migrant, and you can see a video of the baptism at <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-aust-baptism>

Sis. Miri writes: “Saturday morning, 27 November, at 5.30am we were awakened by Bro Jafari outside. Sis Beatrice’s sister-in-law, Christina, and brother, had come to visit them from Sydney during that week and Christina wanted to be baptised prior to returning to Sydney on Sunday morning. Jafari said she knew the truth and she wished to be baptised and be able to meet with the Bros and Sisters in an ecclesia in Sydney. Jafari’s family has print-out copies of preparing for baptism and Q&A in both English and Swahili. That morning Miri managed the stand by herself, from 8am to 3pm, which left Phil and Jafari able to get things ready for the baptism which was to be in the afternoon between 3-6pm. It was wonderful that Sis Katie, Sis Helena, Bro Darryl came during this time. The baptism was conducted in the presence of about eight brothers and sisters followed by a memorial meeting and giving Christina the right hand of fellowship (as pictured).”



Carelinks | Canada



Bro George Kachmar is regularly out on the streets around the Hamilton old bus station in Ontario offering counselling, NEV Bibles, Bible Basics etc. to the homeless. Please get involved, pray for Bro George and support him if you can.

Bro Jim Barton reports as follows: *“It's so exciting that the NEV Bibles are getting so much distribution, the word of God getting into real hands! Anne and I walked up and down Princess Street in Kingston, Ontario on a sunny summer afternoon, to preach with an offer of ‘Free Bibles’. The Bibles were New Testament NEVs (New European Versions) that include a commentary to aid understanding. Also tucked into the Bibles were inserts explaining to the recipient the value and power of this book to change their life forever and explain the need to be forgiven their sins through baptism into Jesus Christ. The insert also included contact information and a New Testament reading schedule, based on the Bible Reading Companion we use everyday, to help ease them into a reading routine. I wore a high-visibility vest and cap that clearly stated ‘Free Bibles’ on both. This seems to help our approach as it comes across as a clearly organized and professional effort to offer something of value for free. I stayed on public walkways and kept on the move so as not to upset any business owners or their customers.*

The cross section of people was quite interesting as we met everyone from tourists, shoppers, business executive-types and some beggars. I brought along a bag holding 20 Bibles. Not surprisingly, most people politely refused the Bibles. None were hostile about it and a number of them declined because they told us how they already had one or more Bibles at home. In the hour long walkabout, we gave away all 20 Bibles after asking an estimated 200 people if they would like one. So I'm guesstimating a reception rate of about 1 in 10. Sometimes you get a dry spell where it seems no one is very interested, then suddenly 2-3 go quickly in sequence. The best reception came from the people sitting on the sidewalk begging some coins from passers-by. Surely those with the last hope in this world are more inclined to grasp the hope of the world to come in Christ's Kingdom.”



Carelinks | Finland

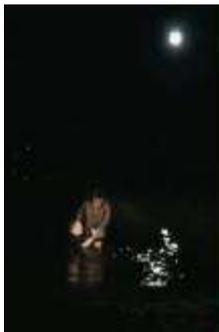


We have a wonderful brother in Finland called Tommi. He not only knows all doctrines of the Truth, but has really come to the Lord Jesus in spirit and truth. And to have the spirit of Christ is

what's so important, without that we "are none of His" despite all purity of doctrine. We had some wonderful exchanges before his baptism, things like: *"I have already started to do my best to change as a person, I am now more aware what I watch and how I act and what I let out of my mouth. I am beginning to understand how much my mind has been corrupted by the media and bad influences. Now the thought of becoming closer to Jesus, trying to do my best to be like him and praise God in my daily life sounds just wonderful to me. It's just quite hard to believe that I have received another chance, I have failed as a Christian and failed as a person so badly and so many times that sometimes it's hard to understand how one could be forgiven after sinning so much."*

On meeting Tommi, he was indeed as good as he sounded. He had told his whole family about his baptism, his sister, niece, mother and step father. They came and watched the baptism, at -5C in a frozen river which winds through their small town in rural Finland. He explains in the video how he wanted to do this to feel something of the sufferings and death of Jesus as he united himself with Him, and also to show his family that he was serious and was no longer as he put it, an "on/off Christian". So we drove to the riverbank, warmed the car up and left the engine running so we could get back inside it straight away after coming out of the water. It was truly a cold northern night, with an unusually clear moon that appeared to be shining directly upon us in blessing. And so Tommi was baptized into the Lord Jesus. We warmed up and dried off and then went to a pizza place for something to eat. We recorded a wonderful testimony from Tommi as to how he came to the truth, having left the Lutherans and then the Jehovahs Witnessess. He found our belief in the human nature of the Lord Jesus particularly attractive; it beckons us towards identity with Jesus, knowing He had our nature. You can view the quite amazing baptism and Tommi's wonderful testimony at: <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-finland>

He wrote afterwards: *"Greetings my new brother. Yesterday was honestly the best day of my life".* And he comments on the video: *"I get cold again just by watching this. That water was freezing! Still, it was the best decision of my life and I could not be any happier"*. Tommi is working on translating our material into Finnish so his mum can also understand the truth and be baptized.



Carelinks | Italy

For over a year now we've been sending lots of *Bible Basics* and NEV Bibles to various African contacts in a mountainous area of Italy. They eventually responded and we were able to spend a wonderful time with them in August. They are the usual collection of Africans in Italy, some long settled there with their documents in order and established employment, others in the camps

or on the street now their camps have closed, having gone through rape and all manner of abuse in Libya and the Sahara desert, with the usual stories of seeing people drowning around them on the sea crossing. But these stories can too easily become 'the same old'. These people went through awful things, things which no human being should go through and now struggle with the temptations which arise from trying to survive in an alien environment with no employment and with no help from the Government, for the most part. They can't be deported, but they aren't welcome. It's little wonder that the true Gospel has such an appeal.



The Africans took their baptisms very seriously and wanted it done in the open air, but the sea was very far away, and so there were quite some logistic issues in gathering together the group and taking them to a suitable river. A minibus was rented, which ended up being a huge coach, but it picked up around 20 of our folks and journeyed as near as possible to the baptism location. In scenes more reminiscent of the African bush than Europe, our group forded a shallow river to get to the deeper river, which was very fast flowing with quite a risk of sweeping some of them away.

So it took three of us to baptize them. We welcome our new brothers and sisters in Christ: **Richard, John, Blessing, Florence, Igbine- dion, Osato, Success, Godspower, Queen, Courage, Efe, Benjamin, Lovette, Charity, Ejili** and **Emmanuel**.

You'll notice some have changed their names to English names, or translated their African names to English, whilst others retain their African names.

Afterwards we forded the river back to shore with them singing loudly and very happy. We then prayed with each of them individually [as well as collectively]. Who could doubt from those private chats and prayers that these were men and women who, through much suffering, had come to the Lord Jesus in spirit and truth. All the fruit of lots of phone calls, messages, their browsing of websites and reading the Bible with the commentary and *Bible Basics*, emails, answering questions... and an elderly man on his knees in a South London suburb in the UK wrapping up endless parcels of literature, sent out with your donations paying the hefty postal bill.



The baptism talk about crossing the Red Sea as a type of baptism, crossing the desert sustained by God and finally reaching the real promised land (which they all now know is not Italy or Europe)... had so much meaning for those who had crossed the Sahara, seeing people falling off the trucks or crushed beneath the bodies packed on board, or randomly thrown off and left to die in the desert if a tyre got flat and the traffickers wanted less weight...

They had already been given Bibles, but those who had good contacts they hoped to persuade of God's truth were given another copy, for we emphasized that part of our calling is in order to share the Gospel with others.

It was hard packing them all back onto the coach to take them back to their hard lives in low life suburbs or on the streets of hostile, racist cities. You can see a video of it all via the link below. Please do pray for them and for our wisdom in the great work of pastoral follow up.

<https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-italy-baptisms>



In July we baptized brother Francis, another poor homeless migrant in Italy with no documents. We took food to the derelict building where he was living, and words cannot describe the place. It had been gutted with fire, the plastic cladding on the walls and handrails all melted and peeling. It had become a drug den for Italian drug addicts and is a very scary place. Nine Africans sleep on the upper floor, but only go there to sleep late at night, as the downstairs is used by addicts and criminals in the day time and they are at risk of attack from right wing neo-Fascist thugs as well.



We found Francis living in a room with a small chair in it, on which he placed his NEV Bible. On his door he had painted a cross and the word "Jesus".

Most of the other Africans were Muslims, and he just lives there in fear of his life at night. But he is very positive. "Have you got water?". "Oh yes!" he beams, "We take it from over the road, from a pipe". There's obviously no electricity or toilet. We took food up there, including late at night. Into the very darkest of places, the light of God's love and the good news of His Son must enter, and it did. All this is even worse when you hear the tragic story of Francis; how he was trafficked by the smuggling gangs in Libya, who sold him on to other gangs, who tortured him to get him to phone back to Ghana and get money sent to them. Those like him who couldn't raise the money were then sold on cheaply to other gangs, who also tried to extort money by even worse torture, killing many in the group to scare the others to, by any means, find someone to send money to

the traffickers. Francis has a wife and two children back in Ghana, and can't return because he has no documents. His testimony is at: <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-italy-francis>.



Bro Peter, pictured above right, and Sis Dae Ventresca from Canada spent a very useful three weeks in Italy during October, holding multiple pastoral follow up meetings and Bible studies etc., with the African brethren baptized there and also distributing leaflets in English and Italian. Always great to see spiritual growth in those baptized.

Carelinks | Latvia

In Latvia in early December temperatures were down to -15C, i.e. 15 degrees below freezing. This is no fun for those living on the street, or the elderly folks in night shelters. They have to be out by 8am and are only allowed back in at 8pm. Most night shelters don't allow them to leave anything there, so in the day time they must trudge the streets with their bag of belongings. We provide several hours where they can come in to the warm, have unlimited coffee, and have a Bible teaching session followed by a nutritious meal. We really appreciate your ongoing support which allows this to happen. The majority of those attending are now already baptized and there are always new people getting interested. They gather outside the hall well before opening time, and no words can quite describe the feeling when we open the doors and they all flood in to the warm. This is really a very, very hard life and we are, with God's help, making a huge material and spiritual difference. We made a short video, taken from the outside of the hall and then from the inside as the doors open, to try to give you an idea. Please view the link: <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-riga>



Many of these folks have worked, but because they are ethnic Russians they receive no pension nor medical support. Family life was largely destroyed in the Soviet years, with the idea that the state would always provide. But that has all ended. They had no pension system in those years, and so now if they have no family to live with, they are on the streets. All these people have different stories.

Sister **Inara** was baptized at the end of November. She explains in her baptism video how she grew up as an atheist in Soviet times. She got married and then became very ill but recovered. She turned to God at this time, and began reading the New Testament. She has read it through many times and can quote it fluently. Her husband began gambling, and gambled away their flat and ran up huge debts in her name and then died of a heart attack. So she was left homeless and bankrupt. She heard there were free meals at our hall and attended, and was pleasantly surprised to find we were a church. She hadn't read the Old Testament and was enthralled with our daily talks about the Bible, often going through Old Testament stories and bringing out the practical and doctrinal lessons from them. It all made sense, and so she decided for baptism and testifies that her life has really changed within and she can sleep well at night. We marvel at the way God works to bring His chosen to His Son. You can see Sis Inara's baptism and her testimony at <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-riga-baptism1>.



We were so sorry to have dear Bro Daniel Aldersley, pictured above playing the guitar, return to New Zealand after nearly three months wonderful service with us. From cleaning the toilets after soup kitchen [the highest value work in God's sight] to leading meetings and doing singing, Daniel has been such a huge help. We hope more will come forward like he did.

In December we were delighted to baptize **Igor**. In running a soup kitchen there are always going to be a few drug addicts and alcoholics who come in, and we don't turn them away if they are sober. Igor was one of a group of heroin addicts who started dropping in last year. But then he started coming on his own, without the group and he started changing. Recently he came in with a brand new warm tracksuit and trainers. He'd spent his wages not on drugs but on buying these things in his new passion for exercise. It's been a long long road from heroin addiction to the truth of Jesus Christ, but Igor says we were the ones who helped him read the Bible, pray and really come to God, realizing that temptation is from within us, not the popular 'devil', and being spiritually-minded is the essence of true Christianity.



Carelinks | Mayotte

The Gospel is to spread into all the earth, and then shall the Lord come. “The isles of the gentiles” are certainly responding and the true Gospel is getting into every nook and cranny of the earth. In May we were contacted by a Congolese refugee who attended a Christadelphian ecclesia in a refugee camp in Africa and there read *Bible Basics* in French. The camp was a dead end, and so he joined other desperate refugees who made the very dangerous voyage from the coast of Africa to the tiny island of Mayotte. This island belongs to France and is in fact a Departement of France, using the euro and under French law and control. It’s a tiny island situated in the Indian ocean.



Suzanna, Diane and Nicholas with Duncan before their baptisms

We spoke to David extensively by telephone, via WhatsApp and Skype, and it became clear that he understood the basic doctrines of the Gospel and wished to be baptized, along with others there on Mayotte. To this end, trips have taken place and we have been able to baptise **David, Paul, Selemani, Saveri, Bileale, Nicholas, Suzanna** and **Diane**.

We did the baptisms on the beach near to where they had arrived after a perilous journey by dugout canoe from the Comoros Islands, where they had arrived by boat from Tanzania. Hearing their confessions of faith and praying with them afterwards was a deeply spiritual experience where surely was the presence of the Lord Jesus. We reflected upon God’s grace and His special purpose with them. Bodies of those who drown when the canoes capsize regularly wash up on the very beach where we did the baptisms, to be put in body bags and taken away by the authorities.

They continue in good spirits spiritually, reading the Bible daily and breaking bread weekly, with an exhortation provided by Bro Phil Martin from the UK. They are very committed to Bible doctrine and absolutely genuine in their love of the Truth.

But life for them on this tiny island is very hard. They will not be deported as they have no documents, but neither can they work there, so they are stranded. They get no support from the Government and resources are at a premium. Everything is very expensive as it has to be flown in and there is very little land. This is but an outcrop of black rock in the ocean with no soil much for agriculture, no natural resources and little housing. Many people are just living on the streets or behind a piece of corrugated iron which they call their ‘door’. We are renting a room for them which at least has a roof. They spend their days trying to do odd jobs, but there is huge discrimination and racism against them. The status of Mayotte is still unclear, as it only recently became part of France. The pressure on resources is so heavy and life so unpleasant there, that many ‘French French’ are simply going to France. It’s hard to get staff to run the local administration, and the only hospital sometimes shuts down simply due to a lack of staff. They have been promised residency permits, which theoretically will allow them to get to France proper [‘France metropole’]. But it’s so very difficult to work out their legal status with this. We had three meetings with the immigration police in both Mayotte and in Paris. Sisters Sarah and Sonia have been a huge help with phoning and trying to find information. It does seem that

medium term our brothers and sisters have a good chance, humanly speaking, let alone with the power of prayer, to get off this awful island. They are hungry... grateful to find a banana on a tree to eat. There are clothes provided by various organizations, but basic food for survival is a huge issue.



They have a baby amongst them. Diane was raped on the Comoros Islands before the group fled. She isn't lactating so they need baby milk. She was so grateful for the baby milk which has been sent by brothers and sisters and has recorded a very touching message of thanks to all who are supporting them in various ways. It's in French, and you can hear it by following the link below.

We tried to brighten up the room we rent for them with a 2019 Creation Calendar, open at the page with the penguin on it, seeing it is so hot there, over 40 degrees at that time. But it is a very depressive and hard, hard existence for them from day to day and truly only through patience and comfort of the Scriptures do they have hope.

* * * *

It's always a joy when converts preach and then baptize contacts themselves, and in December our brothers and sisters were able to baptize **Andala**, pictured below, and hope to baptize some more soon Lord willing.



<https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-mayotte>



UPDATE

It is with great joy that we report that bro Nicolas has managed to leave Mayotte and is now in Lille, France. We hope and pray that the others will soon follow.

Carelinks | Ukraine

A wonderful trip to Ukraine resulted in the baptism of **Sergej** and his grandmother **Lidia**. Sergej had gone from being a trainee Orthodox priest, then to the JW's... and then to searching the Bible independently, at which point he came upon us online. He has carefully studied all our material and is thoroughly persuaded of all our doctrinal points. The result of all this is that he has been rejected by his family and become very close to his grandmother Lidia; and he has shared all he learned with her. He has little money and all he has really is his phone. He goes to where there is free WIFI and downloads our material and then plays it back to his grandmother. This is the way things are done in this digital age.

The baptism of Lidia is really the story of an incredible woman. Having worked all her life on the Russian railways, but now living in Ukraine, she doesn't receive her pension. She is 83 and in poor health. She is in an awful situation, living in a high rise block comprised of single rooms with a toilet on each floor; and no lift. All she has is her bed and a few clothes. The walls are damp, and she is bedridden much of the time. She has no lock on her door as she has nothing to steal. Her grandson brings her food, she has no means of cooking for herself nor the ability or money to get out and buy food. It is awful to have worked all your life and then be stuck in a situation like this, trapped up several flights of stairs, unable to really care for herself... all because of a political situation. But she is very mentally alert and has followed her grandson's spiritual journey with keen interest. She is very spiritually-minded.



So having learned the true Gospel from Sergej, she decided that she wanted to be baptized. She has no running water in her room and there is no bath tub in the block. So she made what for her was a brave missionary journey to baptism in our hotel room in central Odessa. She had not been off the floor she lives on for some years and she has major heart problems. The first thing was that she wanted to wear a head covering for the journey and the service; and Sergej put this on for her. Next was the painfully slow journey down the stairs (she had to be pretty much carried back up); and thence to the taxi we arranged. She had a pleasant smile and was so determined to do the baptism. We finally arrived at the hotel, with another brother, Sergej Chernysh, being a great help all through; he's now living in Odessa and plans to meet with Sergej and Lidia regularly to break bread. We had lengthy discussions and Sergej Ch. and Duncan both gave a baptismal talk. Lidia answered and asked questions and offered extra comments. She has a very sharp mind despite her failed health. We were all concerned she might have a heart attack during the baptism, but with great difficulty we got her into the bath and achieved baptism by immersion as she so wished. She was so very happy.

She recited the Lord's prayer and encouraged us in our work of taking the Gospel to others. We then had a very emotional breaking of bread in the hotel room. She particularly had asked to do this, and so we had a silver cup and made it as memorable as possible. Of such is the Kingdom of God. The poor in this world, truly rich in faith.

Please do pray for this lovely brother and our incredible sister, with that Mona Lisa smile from the joy of being now secure in Christ. She has hardly any clothes, nothing at all in this world. We provided what help we could.

We made a video of it all, although it's in Russian you will enter into the spirit of everything: <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-ukraine-baptism> And specifically that wonderful breaking of bread (again in Russian only) at <https://tinyurl.com/carelinks-ukraine-bofb>



In December we were able to make a visit to the Ukraine to give some Winter welfare and also to baptize **Sergej**. He lives in a really remote spot in western Ukraine where he is a subsistence farmer. He has many problems at the moment as his cows are not giving any milk. He is paid only 5 Ukrainian Grivna for one litre of milk, which makes 1 Euro for every six litres of milk. But his cows aren't giving milk at the moment, also one of his wells has dried up and the other has frozen up, so he's really in a bad way materially, which is so sad as he is such a hard worker.

Sergej's baptism involved one of those incredible journeys. He left home at 4am to walk the 7km to the nearest bus stop in order to come in to Kiev for his baptism. The ice was so slippery, as no salt is ever scattered there, that he just couldn't walk fast enough to get to the bus stop in time. He hung around and got another bus, that bus broke down, the passengers then got lifts on other passing buses... until he got to Kiev. But being a country man and having hardly ever travelled to Kiev in his 36 years, he got out at the first stop in Kiev, which was on the very edge of this large city of 3 million people. Thank the Lord for cell phones...

Our brother first heard of the Bible from a JW who came to the village and preached, and then came across our material and left involvement with them. In all the difficulties and set backs on the day of his baptism, his faith was sore tested that it is God, not a cosmic evil being, truly in control. We did the baptism in a sauna with literally freezing water. Please pray for him in his lonely, hard and difficult life.

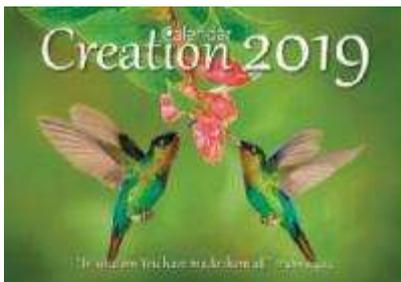


Carelinks | United Kingdom / USA



In July we had a great weekend with members of the Waterside ecclesia in Bournemouth UK giving out New Testaments at the beach, during an absolute heatwave.

We had lots of good conversations over two days, with some people asking about meetings. We got some good contacts whom we hope will attend their meetings - their hall is right on the sea front so that is a great attraction. If you live anywhere where there are masses of people... do wear the 'Free Bibles' vests and engage with people, they'll just come up to you and ask you once they see the vests. We left some vests with the ecclesia and will get more New Testaments to them as they want to repeat this. It's a great way to actually engage with people.



The response for calendars from the UK prisons has been incredible. At least 10 of those 50 contacted replied wanting significant numbers. The chaplain of Gloucester Prison phoned up wanting lots of them. He explained that he works in a short sentence prison, which releases about 200-250 prisoners per month. He gives each released prisoner a package when they leave and he would like to put our calendar in the package. The calendar includes a quite lengthy statement of our beliefs and also offers the NEV Bible. Other chaplains do the same thing and have asked for significant numbers likewise. Several hundred calendars have been mailed out to the chaplains. Calendars have also been sent to prisons in New Zealand and Australia. We seem to have hit a hole in the market here; and prisoners leaving prison having ended their sentence would seem a really good group to target, in our aim to take Jesus Christ to secular, searching people in society. This is a really exciting situation and possibility which we seem to have 'stumbled upon', naturally under Divine guidance and the desire of the Lord Jesus to work with those who seek to serve Him. So please do pray for a harvest.

Sample letters:

"Thank you for your recent letter and 'sample' calendar. HMP [] is an open prison and so many men are pleased to pick up a calendar that is particularly colourful - but with a message! I can easily foresee at least 50-70 being taken, so if that is possible please send them to the address below. Thank you for your support"

"Thank you for the calendars, they were 'snapped up'! I can easily see another 100/150 being used, if you still have some to spare. We are an open prison, so men are in and out of the Chapel all the time, and it certainly gets the message into their rooms! Thank you for this service."

Those who have taken to the streets with NEV Bibles and calendars to hand out report the following:



Sis Martha DeLorenzo (Springfield, Vermont, USA):

"Our New Testament and calendar distribution went very well (pictured above), in spite of below freezing temperatures. Many folks in Springfield were gathered together for a tree lighting and caroling ceremony, so we figured it was a good time to do this. Thanks for this opportunity to reach others with God's truth. The 100 calendars you sent have almost all found homes, and the few remaining will be gone soon."



Sam Abel and Bro Andy Downton

Bro Charles Abel (UK) and others have also been out on the streets with good response.

Charles writes: *“Oh, we of little faith! Headed to Crawley today to hand out free Bibles and Creation Calendars with Julie, Sam, Andrew Downton, Margaret Quaife and Dawn Skinner - fearful the rain would dampen our efforts. How wrong we were! God, in His wisdom, ensured nearly every shopper walked right by us along the one covered walkway beside Queen’s Square. Amazing how many people were interested and willing to take a copy we ran out of Bibles and Calendars in under an hour! Bit too wet for lots of pics though. Same again next Saturday, in Worthing, God willing...”*

In Worthing the following week ...: *“We gave out 250 calendars, all with literature flyers inside, and a number of complete Bibles, and had a number of short conversations with people and some street praying too. It was a really joyous afternoon, so uplifting, and all completed in little over an hour, which just shows what is possible. We’re planning to do more in Horsham and maybe Horley next weekend.”*



Daniel giving out NTs in Croydon

Personal Testimony



My name is Marco, I am Italian and I would like to witness my joy in knowing the ministry of Carelinks. This is my testimony of a change, through the way God uses these brothers and sisters.

I met this ministry via the Internet many years ago, when I started to read and understand the Christadelphian doctrines. It was a difficult period of my life because I was living my life my way, without cultivating hope. My religious past was characterized by restlessness and dissatisfaction because I did not know the true Jesus, and therefore the true way of being Christian. The contact with Bro Duncan helped me to understand many things about myself in the life of faith.

I was looking for a religious identity but I was thus weakening my faith, because being brothers in Christ/Christadelphians, is much more than an identity, being most importantly a way of living the message of life and hope contained in the Holy Scriptures, which does not exalt the flesh but strengthens the spirit (Gal. 5:16).

I have finally found a Christian way of life that makes me say with joy: *"I know whom I have believed"* (2 Tim. 1:12). Jesus said that the Truth will make us free (John 8:32), but the price of such freedom is unpopularity. Those who take seriously the biblical message will not conform to what people say about God and Christ, but will want to adhere to every teaching of the Holy Scriptures, moved by a fullness of life that no religion or theology can arouse.

I have now understood many biblical teachings in the right light, and rediscovered the joy of believing. My Christian path is more alive and steadfast. The prayers, spiritual sharing and books I receive from Carelinks brothers are a blessing to me. I understand that there is nothing secondary in the Bible, but that the whole Word of God involves the believer so that he is faithful in everything (Luke 16:10; 2 Corin. 2:9). But true fidelity presupposes the correct knowledge of the things of God.

The ministry of Carelinks made me aware of the importance of Christian baptism and the experience of baptism has changed me, because I did not adhere to a 'religion' but I have cemented my trust in God and my desire to follow Christ. A baptized person is therefore a full-time disciple who has the heart to follow in the footsteps of the Master of Nazareth.

My prayer is that every person who benefits from the fruits of this Ministry, to the glory of God, be motivated to be a disciple with joy and steadfastness. It is important, really important to live the Gospel in the right way, giving a testimony of light and truth to dispel the darkness of lies that undermine so many sincere people. May the Lord bless us all by strengthening our love of the scriptures and the desire to walk in Christ.

Bro Marco Soranno (Italy)