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The Journey of Life

As the year 2001 comes to its end and we look back at the tracks that we have left over the sands of time, what picture do we get? Has it been a good year? Has it been a disturbing year? Has it been a discouraging year? Perhaps some kind of a mix of the above has been the true picture.

It has been good because of family, blessings, opportunities, friends, growth and the hope that God has provided.

It has been disturbing because in it we have seen the depths to which evil men will stoop in the efforts of some to destroy the physical and material and of others to undermine the moral and spiritual fiber of society. Perhaps there have been personal disturbing episodes.

It has been discouraging because of mistakes, misdeeds and failures. We seem to have accomplished so little in the matters that really matter.



Picture Courtesy Nadine Hafner Photography, Kelowna, BC

What about our personal journey? It is unlikely that any of us left as even, steady and direct a showing of progress as that pictured on this page. Our journey towards eternity is, all too often, one of stops and starts, reversals and forwards, detours and straight stretches. As we look back on our footsteps in time, let us not be disturbed or discouraged. There is hope. God forgives, encourages and gives strength and peace. We can trust in Him.

The New Year provides a new clean terrain for the journey ahead. Let us resolve

to make tracks of steady progress in God's way so that others may safely and beneficially follow them. May our footsteps lead others in the right path.

"Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things" (Phil.3:13-15).

ecp

The Scandal of the Cross

Edwin Broadus

It was from firsthand experience in telling others about Christ in the synagogue and marketplace that Paul said, "Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles..." (1 Corinthians 1:22-23). "Stumbling block" is a translation of the Greek *skandalos*, from which we derive the English word, scandal. Our English term very aptly describes what the cross was to ancient Jewish religionists and Greek philosophers and what it is to many people today who are steeped in the relativism that pervades Western culture and thinking.

To understand the scandal of the cross in the ancient world we need to know something of its shame. Contemporary Christians, who glory in the cross and sometimes wear beautifully crafted gold or silver crosses, have understandably forgotten its shame. We think about its agonizing pain, but among other believers, at least, we are not at all embarrassed to have a Savior who was crucified on a cross. But interestingly, New Testament writers say almost nothing about the pain of the cross. When the writer of Hebrews refers to the crucifixion, he says Jesus "endured the cross, scorning its shame..." (Hebrews 12:2). Had we been writing, we likely would have said, "scorning its pain."

Perhaps a partial reason little is said about the pain of the cross is that it was unnecessary - people in the Roman world were all too familiar with the horrors of crucifixion. A Roman general crucified 2,000 Jews in Palestine in 4 B.C. Before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 Titus crucified so many fugitive Jews that space for crosses and crosses for victims could scarcely be found. Perhaps, too, in a world with almost no painkillers, people were more accepting of pain as something inevitable. But shame was very much a concern to them. Supposedly only the worst of criminals were crucified, and even then only slaves, foreigners and other non-persons. Few would want others to know about a relative who died on a cross.

The earliest surviving picture of the crucifixion of Christ is a graffito from the second century, a caricature showing a man with a donkey's head, stretched on a cross.

To the left another man has an arm raised in worship, and underneath are scribbled the words, "Alexaminos worships God." Only those who had been crucified to the world and to whom the world had been crucified could glory in a Savior who had been executed in so humiliating a way (see Galatians 6:14). Accepting this shame was almost too much for some early Christians. The writer of Hebrews had to encourage his readers, who likely lived among Jews who considered the cross a scandal, to "go to (Jesus) outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore" (13:13).

Is the cross a scandal today? Certainly not within the evangelical Christian ghetto where the cross is at the center of our faith. But when we go out into the world around us, the cross is an embarrassment to those who want to fit into their surroundings. Many Christians are faced with this reality

"To understand the scandal of the cross in the ancient world we need to know something of its shame".

in the workplace when they share their faith. A multicultural society like ours is made up of representatives of all the world's major religions, and not a few of its minor ones. More and more there is a view that all religions are valid ways of finding God, and to some the exclusivity of Christianity and the atonement on the cross are a scandal. After all, Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6-7). When Peter spoke of Jesus, he said, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

In a world where the only thing people seem sure of is that they cannot be sure of anything, these unequivocal words of Jesus and Peter come across as rank dogmatism. Unless we are crucified to these ideas of the world, the cross will be an embarrassment, a scandal, to us. If we think Christians collectively have not been caught up in the relativism of this age, we need only to ask why we have less and less concern for taking the message of the cross

to those of other religions.

The cross is also an intellectual scandal to many in today's world. As surely as Greek philosophers in New Testament times thought it foolish to say a person could die like a criminal on a Roman cross and bring salvation to the entire world, this message is foolishness to many today who consider themselves thinkers. A few years ago a feminist theologian said, "I don't think we need a theory of atonement at all. I don't think we need folks hanging on crosses and blood dripping and weird stuff." (Quoted S. Mark Heim in *Christian Century*, March 7, 2001, p.12).

Some theologians play down the message of the cross, and some more liberal Protestant churches practice what Mark Heim, in the article cited above, calls "silence, or discreet mumbling" on the subject of the atonement. He charges that in many congregations the Lord's Supper has become "a solemn ritual affirmation of the spiritual equality of the participants, their mutual commitment to one another, and their shared hope for a future society with a just distribution of resources." As far as the crucifixion is concerned, all that remains in some churches is "a moment of silence, as it were, for the untimely demise of our late brother" (p. 12).

The reality is that the cross is still a scandal to many people. We need to realize this and not be taken in by subtle promotion of views that strip the gospel of its very meaning in an effort to make Christ and the cross more "respectable" in the modern world. We have to be willing to be seen at times by others as "fools for Christ" (1 Corinthians 4:10).

But above all we need to be crucified to this world and its false values and to realize that though Christ crucified is a stumbling block or foolishness to some, he is for us "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:23-24). The power of divine love, supremely manifested on the cross, achieves what no human power could ever accomplish, and the wisdom of God's means of reconciling us to Him through the cross far outshines the world's wisdom which has never found God on its own. When we really understand and believe this, we will glory in the cross.

Burlington, Ontario

There is Good Reason to Hope

Claude Cox

Anne Giardini relates the following story.

"A few weeks ago, I was with my five-year old daughter at a local rink, waiting for her older brother to finish his hockey practice. 'Can I have a pop?' she badgered me over and over. 'You haven't a hope,' I said to her finally and firmly. Her eyes filled suddenly with tears. 'I have hope,' she wailed, striking me to the heart. It was one thing for me to deny her the object of her desire, quite another to take away her hope." (National Post, Nov. 23, 2000, B1)

There is much to despair of in our world. The events of September 11, 2001 have left us all saddened, certainly for the great loss of life, but also for what these events say about human beings and their capacity for harm. Friends struggle with life-threatening diseases; children die, after inadvertently locking themselves in a trunk; shrewd schemes seek out the elderly to take their money; ecological disasters demonstrate human shortcomings in the area of the environment. Yes, there is room for despair.

Christians take hope

At the same time, Christians remain hopeful. The Christian community is rooted in Jesus' resurrection, God's divine pledge that life overcomes death, good evil, hope despair. Christians gather to share a common meal ("communion") with a risen Lord, not a dead prophet, for his life is the centre of discipleship. The great apostles do not speak of Jesus' human life in his pre-ministry. Paul only says that Jesus was born of woman, under the Law. (Gal. 4:4) And Mark, in his gospel, almost universally held to be the earliest of the four Gospels, begins his account with John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism at John's hands.

But, when Matthew and Luke later fill out Mark's account, then the theme of incarnation joins the resurrection as the other pole of the gospel story. Matthew shows us that Jesus' birth was a matter of the fulfilment of Scripture, and with the opening genealogy-maybe not our way to begin a book!-demonstrates that Jesus was

born a king. For his part, Luke wants to show us that Jesus was born as a world figure, whose birth can be spoken of alongside names like that of Augustus Caesar. Later still, John emphasizes that "the word" that had always been with God, took on human flesh and "tented" (1:14) among us for a period of time. And so it is that Christian theology comes to have these two poles: incarnation and resurrection.

The incarnation as a source of hope

The incarnation represents God's "yes" to the world. The world that Jesus came into was not the same world that he left, that is, the world was a different sort of place after the resurrection. The "yes" was given to a world as it was, as it stood, not that everything now was alright, no, but that God loved the world as it was and was reaching out to that world, as it was.

It was only natural that Christians

would come to celebrate God's "yes" in Christ's birth. Clement of Alexandria suggested May 20 as a date for its celebration, but eventually Dec. 25 was chosen, to set the celebration of Jesus' birth against the pagan festival to the Invincible Sun. Now Clement died about 215!-that is, before the canon of Scripture was established; before the christological controversies were settled; before or about the same time as Christians began constructing buildings dedicated to worship, very early. It's important to remember that this was an arbitrarily chosen date. Our predecessors in the faith knew that was not the actual date, which no one knows. It is also important to remember that the choice of Dec. 25 represented an act of religious and cultural confrontation. Who now remembers the festival to the Sun? No one: the Christian faith triumphed.

Certainly the contemporary celebration of Christmas owes much to later traditions: Christmas trees (Martin Luther, Germany); gift-giving (Charles Dickens). At its most basic this holiday represents a time of family gathering; and most much more-the triumph of Christianity over paganism.

In remembering the birth of Christ, we can take hope. We can take hope because

his appearance on earth represents the revelation in human form of God's love for the world: the world, we learn, was worth dying for, according to the divine mind. Further, this world, this material world is good, not to be sloughed off or denigrated. "The flesh," which includes our bodies, food and drink, is good: it is good to be a human being. Finally, the God whom we worship is one who knows our estate, knows what it is like to be a human being, because his own son was here.

And so it is that when we think of Jesus' birth we take hope. It is not the whole story, but it is a wonderful beginning.

Barrie, ON

"The incarnation represents God's 'yes' to the world"



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December Meditation

Wayne Turner



No one could fault Mary for having any fears or concerns at Gabriel's announcement that she would conceive and have a baby. Up to this point, her life had been very quiet and simple. Betrothed to Joseph, the carpenter, she was looking forward to a very normal future in Nazareth. Gabriel's appearance changed everything. Young (likely in her teens) and unmarried, the pregnancy would create many difficulties for her - with Joseph, her family and the community. Gabriel's assurances that she had found favour with God and that the son she would bear would be great, would be called the "Son of the Most High" and would reign forever over the house of Jacob revealed little of what lay ahead, leaving more questions and uncertainty than answers.

Mary's first question was very practical, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" She looked for an answer in the normal, ordinary dimensions of life. Gabriel answered that this would happen by the power of God. To reassure Mary, Gabriel told her that her aged relative Elizabeth was also expecting a son. "For nothing is impossible with God."

In an act of total trust, Mary yielded control of her life, saying, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." Little did she understand the hardship this would involve. She could not have known that she would give birth to her son in a stable, flee from the wrath of King Herod, see that son rejected by his hometown, ridiculed by his brothers, and betrayed, arrested, mocked, beaten, tried and, finally, executed.

People do not give up control of their lives easily. They want to know what is happening. Why? What it means to them and how they can influence the process and change the outcome to result in something favourable to them. They have education plans, family plans, business plans, career plans, retirement plans and even funeral plans (and "perpetual upkeep" plans). It is not surprising that, when it comes to God, many people also want to plan and control Him.

Consider the person who knows the gospel and intends to become a Christian someday, but not today. It isn't the right time. In the same manner, some Christians put off becoming actively involved in their congregation because they have "other plans." Some individuals pray, demanding an immediate response from God, especially for wealth or material things. Some try to recruit God or the Bible to support their own position in an argument, while others try to control their congregations to make them suit personal pref-

erences and tastes or to keep them comfortable and convenient. The question that needs to be asked is "Who's in charge here?" Are we really carrying out God's will or are we wanting God to rubberstamp ours? We need to keep in mind that part of God's will is to keep unity in the church, to love and respect one another, to be responsive to the needs and consciences of others, and to be selfless.

Jesus offered discipleship on some very uncomfortable terms. He said, "If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me." Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "When Jesus calls a man, he calls him to come and die." There is no way we can do this without surrendering total control to Him.

Throughout the Bible, the great people of faith, like Mary, surrendered their lives and put their trust in God. They lived with inconvenience, adversity, opposition, suffering even rejection, loneliness and "failure" because they followed God's control, not their own. From a human standpoint, Jeremiah was a failure. After years of preaching, he was unable to persuade the kings and people of Judah to forsake their idolatry and serve the one, true God. Being controlled by God does not mean finding our own way to what we call success. It means fulfilling God's commission and allowing Him to determine what the outcome will be. As Paul wrote, "I planted, Apollos watered and God gave the increase." Both Jeremiah and Paul served under God's control. Both yielded control of their lives and wills to Him. Both were faithful.

This month, we will hear much about the story of Christ's birth. Each time we hear it, may we think about the young woman who trusted God enough to yield herself completely. May each of us renew our surrender to His call. "May it be done to me as you have said."

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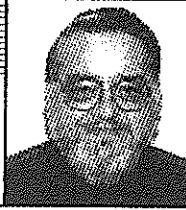
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when they would seek to have a king. They were to be sure to choose the one that God wanted. They were to choose from their own people, not a foreigner. Then Moses says, "He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray." (Deut. 17:17) The history of Israel attests to the truth of this message. Solomon proved the truth of these words as his leadership of the nation was influenced by his many wives. While, under Solomon, the nation fared well as far as material things were concerned, the stage was set for the dividing and destruction of the nation in generations to come. In scripture there is a vivid portrayal of the evils of the polygamous situation such as jealousies between the wives as compared to the peacefulness and unity of single mate marriages as intended by God.

It is no accident that the relationship of his people to God in the Old Testament and that of the church to Jesus Christ in the New Testament is spoken of as one of marriage while failure to honour this relationship is spoken of as adultery. The book of Hosea illustrates this idea as Hosea, the faithful husband, deals with the unfaithful wife. This is an illustration of the relationship of God's people to himself.

An appreciation of the purpose of God in marriage along with a respect for the will of God regarding divorce is absolutely necessary if one would honour God in this whole matter of marriage, divorce and remarriage. There are difficult questions to be answered as one looks at some of the things God allowed in the Old Testament. In Malachi chapter 2 and verse 16, we read of God's true attitude toward divorce. "I hate divorce, Says the Lord God of Israel"... Yet, divorce was allowed!

Next time consideration will be given to divorce in the Old Testament in an attempt to grow in knowledge and understanding of what God would have his people do in this matter to show commitment and respect to him. May God bless our efforts to know and do his will.

Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage - (2)

Max Craddock

Few subjects evoke more emotion than divorce. Over the years people have been seen to struggle with this subject when they, a family member or someone else they love experiences the stress of a marriage that is not going well. Of course, most every couple has stress in the marriage relationship, as they try to live in this world. However, when relationships finally break down - for whatever reasons - the stress reaches a new level.

It is sad indeed that anyone has to go through a marriage breakdown. The end result is often a struggle with one's faith in obtaining happiness for daily life while obeying God's will in human relationships. Since it is true that God wants his people to enjoy life and have a full measure of joy and peace it is easy to begin to doubt the strictness of God's rules for marriage relationship.

It is important to remember that, at its beginning in Eden, God had a purpose for the marriage relationship. In discussing the creation of man and woman, Moses gives further details in Genesis 2. "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'...But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man...For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (vs. 18, 20b - 22, 24). In chapter 1 God had said, "...Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (vs. 28)

There is, in the above references, a lot of insight into the mind of God concerning mankind and marriage. God intended a

man and woman to marry and become one. In this relationship there would be companionship, fulfillment of sexual desires and producing of offspring to populate the earth. Created in the image of God, mankind would rule over the earth and the earth would provide the things needed by mankind for life. It was not long, however, until man began to tamper with the plan of God. One wonders why God allowed and tolerated some of the attacks against his design for marriage and home.

As early as Genesis 4 there is reference to an attack against the ideal when, in verse 19, the action of Lamech is recorded: "Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah." In reading the Old Testament one will be struck by the fact that polygamy, not given the specific blessing of God, was widely practiced. This was true even among those who might be considered for membership in the "Hebrew Hall of Fame"! While this practice of polygamy, like divorce, appears to have been "permitted" by God in Old Testament times there is nothing to indicate that he desired it.

It is worth noticing that in the beginning God did not make two or more wives for Adam. If it was his, God's, desire to populate the earth it would seem to make sense that he might have given Adam several wives so the job could have been accomplished more quickly. (Perhaps some women would suggest that God could have given man the ability to have babies as well, so he could enjoy the pain of child bearing along with her, and accomplished the same result?) At any rate, God did not do either. The person who might be considered the "second" father of mankind, Noah, also had but one wife.

The problem of polygamy was seen in the warning given by Moses to the people concerning having a king in the future. Deuteronomy records the words of God to Israel through Moses concerning the time

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The Christmas Envelope

It's just a small, white envelope stuck among the branches of our Christmas tree. No name, no identification, no inscription. It has peeked through the branches of our tree for the past 10 years or so. It all began because my husband Mike hated Christmas, oh not the true meaning of Christmas, but the commercial aspects of it, overspending, the frantic running around at the last minute to get a tie for Uncle Harry and the dusting powder for Grandma, the gifts given in desperation because you couldn't think of anything else.

Knowing he felt this way, I decided one year to bypass the usual shirts, sweaters, ties and so forth. I reached for something special just for Mike. The inspiration came in an unusual way.

Our son Kevin, who was 12 that year, was wrestling at the junior level at the school he attended; and shortly before Christmas, there was a non-league match against a team sponsored by an inner-city church, mostly black. These youngsters, dressed in sneakers so ragged that shoestrings seemed to be the only thing holding them together, presented a sharp contrast to our boys in their spiffy blue and gold uniforms and sparkling new wrestling shoes.

As the match began, I was alarmed to see that the other team was wrestling without headgear, a kind of light helmet designed to protect a wrestler's ears. It was a luxury the ragtag team obviously could not afford. Well, we ended up walloping them. We took every weight class. And as each of their boys got up from the mat, he swaggered around in his tatters with false bravado, a kind of street pride that couldn't acknowledge defeat. Mike, seated beside me, shook his head sadly, "I wish just one of them could have won," he said. "They have a lot of potential, but losing like this could take the heart right out of them."

Mike loved kids, all kids, and he knew them, having coached little league football, baseball and lacrosse. That's when the idea for his present came. That afternoon, I

went to a local sporting goods store and bought an assortment of wrestling headgear and shoes and sent them anonymously to the inner-city church. On Christmas Eve, I placed the envelope on the tree, the note inside telling Mike what I had done and that this was his gift from me. His smile was the brightest thing about Christmas that year and in succeeding years.

For each Christmas, I followed the tradition, one year sending a group of mentally handicapped youngsters to a hockey game, another year a check to a pair of elderly brothers whose home had burned to the ground the week before Christmas, and on and on. The envelope became the highlight of our Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning and our children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad lifted the envelope from the tree to reveal its contents.

As the children grew, the toys gave way to more practical presents, but the envelope never lost its allure. The story doesn't end there. You see we lost Mike last year due to dreaded cancer. When Christmas rolled around, I was still so wrapped in grief that I barely got the tree up. But Christmas Eve found me placing an envelope on the tree, and in the morning, it was joined by three more.

Each of our children, unbeknownst to the others, had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad. The tradition has grown and someday will expand even further with our grandchildren standing around the tree with wide-eyed anticipation watching as their fathers take down the envelope. Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us.

May we all remember the Christmas spirit this year and always.

Author Unknown

The Spirit of Christmas:

"The Lord Jesus himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Last year we sent out the above article on an email devotional list that we were operating. We were so encouraged by the response that the article received. Many reported forwarding it to all their family and friends, some printed off copies to hand out to friends, one individual photocopied the article to give to everyone at his church. I understand that the article was also shared publicly in some Bible classes and Worship assemblies.

We were even more encouraged to hear how some have begun to put the example seen in "The Christmas Envelope" into practice. Some families have chosen to dramatically alter their gift exchanges. Rather than purchasing gifts for each other they pool their resources (all the money that they would have spent on gifts for each other) for an agreed upon purpose. Some families have chosen to use these funds to provide Christmas (gifts, meals and treats) for a family in need. Some families have chosen to present these funds to a charitable foundation or institution that is near and dear to their hearts. Young couples have chosen to give to help those less fortunate rather than purchase gifts for each other. Was there any less joy in the hearts and homes of the individuals and families that chose this alternative to the traditional Christmas celebration? From my vantage point I saw more joy. Some have shared, with tears rolling down their cheeks, that they had the best Christmas ever.

Somewhere along the way Christmas became commercialized. It became less about the Light of Life coming into the world and more about hanging Christmas lights. It became more about trying to outdo one another in our gift giving than about celebrating the gift that we have in Jesus. It became less about families gathering together and just enjoying being together and more about what are we going to buy for Aunt Sally when she has everything. Nothing will suck the spirit out of Christmas like a few hours at a crowded shopping mall where perfectly sane people become raving lunatics as they search for uniquely wonderful presents for people that have everything.

With the spirit of Christ living in you, suggest to your family a change in your Christmas. I know that we all love to purchase gifts for the children and that we all enjoy seeing their eyes light up as they open their presents on Christmas morning.

(continued page 7)

The God Who Sings - Part 1

Richard Kruse

The LORD your God is with you ... he will rejoice over you with singing." (Zeph 3:17)

Poetry is meant to convey an impact far beyond the words alone, to inspire imagination, touch feelings and bring back memories. The mental pictures created with the words of a poem can produce a greater emotional impact than simple prose. Poetry expresses the heart of the poet, the depth of feeling not normally revealed. Poets, painting a word picture of reality, invite participation. Their goal is not simply to give more information, but to provide a means to emotionally experience the event. For example, the statement "he will rejoice over you with singing." is emotionally stronger than, "God is interested in you. The statement "... the morning stars sang together" (Job 38:7) speaks at a deeper level than the simple observation that the stars "twinkle". Therefore, it is not wise to read or interpret one of the Psalms (poetry) in the same way we interpret Paul's letters.

There are two general ways of praising another: directly, by focusing on that individual, or indirectly by speaking positively or complimenting something or someone closely associated with that person. For example, one might directly praise a friend for his fine artistic taste or indirectly by complimenting his selection of the beautiful painting on the wall of his room. One might remark about a person's intelligence, or praise the book she has written. This is also true of praise of God. The Israelites praised God directly for who he was. They also praised him by singing of that which was identified with Him - Creation, an act of God; Zion, the city of God; the Temple, the house of God; the Law, the Word of God.

The English poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote, "Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush aflame with God; but only those who see take off their shoes, the rest sit round it and pluck blackberries". (Of course, those who are less poetic in nature and more literal minded, might pluck the berries and be thankful, praising God for his producing and providing the berries to eat and enjoy.) For most people poetic expression produces images and suggestions in the sub-conscious mind. The sound of words in music engages the feelings beyond the words alone. The famous ballerina, Anna Pavlova was asked, "Anna, when you danced, what

were you saying." Pavlova replied, "If I could tell you, I wouldn't need to dance". If people could always simply say what is in their hearts, they wouldn't need the imagery, the poetry and sound of the songs.

Poetry played an important role in the lives of nomadic peoples who were usually illiterate. Communication was through the spoken word because few "books" were available. Also, people found it was easier to learn and remember information presented in poetical style.

English poetry has been largely based on rhyme and metre. Fortunately, Hebrew poetry is different from English and Arabic poetry. Hebrew poetry is not based on

"Poetry expresses the heart of the poet"

rhyming verses. Some might not consider it as pleasing without the beauty of rhyme, but it has one great advantage over English and Arabic poetry. Hebrew poetry does not suffer poetic loss in translation because the double, and sometimes triple, way of saying the same truth can be faithfully translated into any language. (Muslims must memorize the Qur'an in Arabic. Any "translation" into another language is called a "commentary" and is not recognized as authoritative.)

The Hebrew poets used parallelism in their poetry to present their thoughts. Parallelism is two or three lines that have a relationship to each other; equal to each other in structure and sense. The poet is sometimes comparing, contrasting or simply saying the same thing twice using different words. The second line can also add detail which reinforces or carries the thought forward. This can be seen in reading Psalm 105:5-11. Read the first lines of each verse. The passage makes sense and the meaning is clear without the second line. Then read the verses again and see that indented second lines carry the thought forward, enriching the words, giving beauty and power to the first line.

HEBREW POETIC FORMS

It will be good to briefly consider the following examples of Hebrew poetic forms:

1. The simplest form is seen in Job 4:17.
 - (a) Can a mortal be more righteous than God?
 - (b) Can a man be more pure than his

Maker?

2. A double couplet is seen in Psalm 127:1.

- (a) Unless the LORD builds the house,
- (b) its builders labor in vain.

(a) Unless the LORD watches over the city,
(b) the watchmen stand guard in vain.

3. A double triplet is seen in Matt 7:7-8.

- (a) Ask and it will be given to you;
- (b) seek and you will find;
- (c) knock and the door will be opened to you.

(a) For everyone who asks receives;

(b) he who seeks finds;

(c) and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

4. An inverted or reversed parallelism is seen in Matt 6:24.

(a) No one can serve two masters.

(b) Either he will hate the one

(c) and love the other,

(c) or he will be devoted to the one

(b) and despise the other.

(a) You cannot serve both God and Money.

5. An antithetic couplet where the opposite is said in the second line is seen in Psalm 1:6.

(a) For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,

(b) but the way of the wicked will perish.

Toronto, Ontario

(continued from page 6)

I seek not to deprive you of that joy. However, might I suggest that for those of us who have a few Christmases under our belts (and spilling over our belts) that we agree in our families to pool the money that we would normally spend on presents for each other and embark on a family project to help those who are less fortunate or to simply give the funds to a charitable institution that is near and dear to our hearts.

This is a win win proposition! You may not be able to avoid the shopping malls altogether, but you can certainly limit the time you spend in them. You will not have to find room to store all the items people give you that you don't really need and most importantly you will be giving to those in need and you will learn again the truth of Jesus statement, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Brian Cox, Wunnumin Lake

“With one Accord”

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There have been many attempts to restore the church to the New Testament ideal as seen in the teachings and example of those who sat at Jesus' feet and walked with Him. Such "back to the Bible" emphases will, ideally, produce similar results. Sometimes this has proven to be the case. Such movements, over the centuries and in widely scattered geographical locations, have found and embraced each other in loving brotherhood. Brethren have found others of "like precious faith" and rejoiced together.

Sometimes the plea for restoration falls on deaf ears. This is usually because of loyalty to a leader, a name or a tradition, which prevents complete objectivity. Where the desire is to exalt Christ and be loyal only to Him, progress has been made.

Some such efforts have emphasized doctrine and church organization. The book of Acts, along with the epistles, enlighten the searcher as to what was taught and practiced. Salvation followed the baptism (immersion in water) of adult, penitent believers. The Lord's Supper was observed weekly. Congregations were independent of one another and in time were overseen by elders and served by deacons.

In other cases, although doctrine may not have been ignored, the stress was on purity of life. Christians were to be light and salt. Those who saw them were to be influenced to glorify God because of His obvious work in their lives. The fruit of the spirit, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, godliness and self control" were to be evident (Gal. 5:22,23). A similar list adds, "knowledge" and "perseverance" (II Peter 1:5-7). Such characteristics and resulting behaviours would cause observers to ask, "the reason for the hope that you have" (See I Peter 3:15, Col.4:6).

Neither doctrine and organization nor Christian living should be emphasized to the neglect of the other. Both need to be restored to the Biblical model.

Restoration efforts should always be concerned with what is found to be the Lord's will. What is pleasing to God? What does God want? The answers should be

from the word of God. Too often, departing from objectivity, brethren have managed to convince themselves that God wants what they want. As a result they have led divisions with the conviction that such was God's will even though they provide little or nothing from the Bible to support the claim. Resulting multiplied divisions have weakened us and frustrated the desire of Jesus for His people to be one.

Surely unity should have a high place among the items considered in any effort to restore New Testament Christianity. As Jesus anticipated His departure, he prayed for His disciples and those who believed on Him through their word that they might be one (Jno.17:21). Another item, prominent in the mind of Jesus as He was leaving, was a commission to make disciples throughout the world. These two go together. Jesus wants the world to believe. We want the world to believe. The unity for which Christ prayed was, "that the world may believe". Despite this, some have claimed that division would enable them to evangelize!!!!

The U.S. government was known for and weakened by divisiveness and infighting until September 11. The events of that day brought an unprecedented unity and a resulting strength and resolution. The recognition of an evil and formidable common enemy brought decisive and unified

action. When will the Lord's people come to realize that we are in a similar situation? What will it take? Satan is bringing people down one by one and in groups, while we, weakened by division and wasted by strife, fail to rise to the occasion. We have a common enemy and a common cause. A strong, united front is required to meet the challenge. Our failure in this contributes to further opportunity and success for the enemy - further casualties.

The above title is the translation, in some earlier versions, of a Greek word used several times to describe early Christians. Other meanings of the word are, "with one mind" or "unanimously". Unfortunately, some more recent translations give the meaning of being assemble together rather than being together in purpose and effort.

Paul's prayer, "May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom.15:6). In this verse, this Greek word is translated "with one accord" (ASV) but the NIV expands it into, "a spirit of unity among yourselves . . . with one heart". Let's make this our prayer for God's people today. The threat is real and the challenge is immense.

ecp

Full-Time Evangelist Position

The Lloydminster Church of Christ is seeking a full-time evangelist to work with a congregation of 30-40 people. Lloydminster is a growing community of approximately 20,000 people, located on the border between the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, and approximately halfway between Saskatoon and Edmonton on the Yellowhead Highway.

This congregation is seeking an evangelist with experience in sharing God's word through preaching, teaching, home studies and visitation. Applicants should

- (i) Have some full-time experience as an evangelist.
- (ii) Have demonstrated abilities in working with young people.
- (iii) Be evangelistic and growth oriented.

Financial support is in place to assist an evangelist with the purchase of a home. A monthly working fund is available to support outreach activities.

Please address your inquiries or send your resume to:

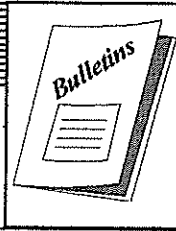
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FROM THE BULLETINS



Short articles for this page are selected from church bulletins. Such should be sent to the editor at 45 Millfred Drive, Winnipeg, MB R2M 2N9; email: wpgwayne@aol.com

Self-Absorption

Max Craddock

The progression of life in the 80's resulted in turning the idealistic hippie types of the 60's and 70's into materialistic yuppies. The philosophy of humanism, which elevates the human to the preeminence that ought to belong to God, results in the self-absorption that turns people into selfish and unthankful people. In the late 70's a book by Robert Ringer entitled "Looking Out For Number One" was a best seller for 46 weeks. This preoccupation with self results in vanity, arrogance, greed, stubbornness and disregard for the law of God.

This problem began way back in Eden when Satan tempted Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil since it would "make her like God" (Gen. 3:1-6). Even though this was in direct opposition to the stated law of God, Eve gave in to self and self desire. If one takes the word of God seriously, the rejection of that law because of self will is a deplorable thing. Self-absorption is destructive in several ways. Consider some of these results.

The very nature of this attitude puts an idol into the place that belongs only to the Creator. Paul wrote, "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry". (Col. 3:5) The terrible nature of self absorption is outlined by Paul in Romans 1:18 - 25 where he talks of God's wrath against mankind because of sin. Consider the number of things noted in that passage, which center around self and perversion of relationships toward God and mankind.

Relationships with others are destroyed by emphasis on self and self love. 1 John 4:7-11 reminds mankind to love one another. Perhaps nowhere is this "disease" of self absorption being seen more than in the home. Couples are fighting and going their own way in selfishness and children are at war with their parents because of selfishness. The result of this, -- broken homes, abuse, and unhappiness.

What a different world it would be if all would "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3,4). It is in learning from the example of Jesus (Phil. 2:5 - 9; John 13:14, 15) that true self respect comes. This is the impli-

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Swimming With The Sharks

Roger Lansdell

This week in the news there have been several reports about large groups of sharks being spotted close to the shore along the coast of Florida. It seems that these sharks have been attracted close to shore to feed in areas where there are plentiful fish populations. Really it has been quite a spectacular sight. Sharks are being observed and filmed just a few feet off shore in water that is little more than a foot deep. The problem is that these areas where the fish are plentiful and thus attracting the sharks, also are areas of the Florida coast where surfing is quite popular. In fact in one of the areas where these groups of sharks have been spotted was the venue of a major surfing competition this past week. The authorities have been warning people about the danger of venturing into the water. However, there have been those who have ignored the danger and the warnings. As a result some have become the "victims" of shark bites. Are they really victims or are they just experiencing the consequences of their choices? Certainly I hate to see anyone suffering from anything, especially from something as painful as a shark bite must be.

However I was amazed to see groups of people arguing with beach patrol authorities about going into the water despite the obvious danger. It was even more unbelievable to see that there were some who just ignored the danger and went into the water anyway. If these people are attacked by feeding sharks are they really victims? It seems to me that if you chose to swim with feeding sharks that you shouldn't be surprised when you get bit and the results are not pleasant.

As I watched this story unfold in the news I began to realize that this was also a commentary about our lives many times. Many times as we stand along the shores of our lives we look out across the waters of our future and we anticipate swimming out there. In many ways it's inviting and we are excited about how refreshing it will be. We must always be cautious when venturing out. There are always some dangers and

risks that we must be aware of. However at times there are circumstances that make it foolish to venture out. It may be in regards to who you marry or regarding how you will raise your children. It may be in regards to the occupation or the life style you chose. However one thing is certain -- the sharks are feeding. We are warned about the dangers. We are encouraged not to venture out but we ignore the warnings. "We'll be okay ... It'll be different for us... I'll be careful ... Others may experience trouble but not us," is our defense.

But then, when trouble bites us and we are in real danger, are we victims or just experiencing the consequences of our choices? If we are honest, we know the answer. Even though we try to blame others and claim victim status, we really have no one else to blame but ourselves.

How can we avoid these situations in our lives? In the gospel of John there are a number of passages descriptive of Jesus that I call the "I am" passages. I believe they hold the answer.

"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35) "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12) "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me." (John 10:14) "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11:25) "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am." (John 13:13) "I am the way and the truth and the life." (John 14:6) "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Maybe if we would really begin to understand who Jesus is, then we would see that his warnings, advice and counsel are worth heeding in order that we might avoid the dangers of feeding sharks.

Pinehill Messenger, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

FOR WOMEN BY WOMEN

Articles for publication and/or reactions to this page should be sent to Linda Hammett Rt. 4, Box 164, Vincent, OH 45784.
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Challenges to the Family in the New Millennium, Part 2

LaVonne Roberts

The Challenges

Busyness-There are several forces that create busyness. Make our families our priority and our business; do not let busyness rob us of our relationships. This is a constant battle for me because it is so easy to become so involved; it is expected that you will be "all things to all people". Ever felt that pressure? In our jobs, in our churches, and in our homes we can become so busy that we neglect to nurture the very thing that God has gifted us with-our faith and our families. I believe that God will not accept this as an excuse from us. We have the choice to discern our activities and make wise choices. There is only so much time in the day. I wish I had more hours in the day. We must learn to say yes to our families and no to outside forces that pull us into believing that we are doing while we forget about being!

The key to this issue is asking God to help us balance our roles instead of-1. trying to do everything; 2. trying to prove we are capable women to everybody; and 3. seeking fulfillment everywhere but where God intended us to search for fulfillment!

What is wrong with us? Don't we get it? A wise woman once reminded me that when God becomes your central focal point, the beginning to every day, the challenge of balance becomes simple as He leads you to accomplish the things that need to have your attention and to filter out the things that pull you from His purpose. We need to enjoy the balance of God's grace and power in our lives. Proverbs 16:11 reads, "A just weight and balance are the Lord's, all the weights of the bag are His work."

More is accomplished by two knees bowed in prayer than by two legs frantic in busyness! A woman must first believe in the need for balance in order to protect the time it takes to obtain it. If prayer is our

tool to achieving balance, God blesses us with success in accomplishing balance! Lord, help us to be the kind of women who are loved and appreciated for who we are and not for what we do! Lord, help us to do the best we can and trust you with the rest. Lord give us wisdom to see that the work of our hands is profitable and the needs of our family are at the top of our "to do" list. Lord, give us wisdom to build up our households, give us understanding to establish our family firmly, and give us knowledge to fill our memories with rare and beautiful treasures.

Society influences-The second stumbling block to individual families and the church family as a whole is the cultural society influences that permeate our lives and filter into our churches.

1. Our culture reflects very little concern for traditional, ethical and moral values. We are given the message that, if it is right for you, it is right.

2. Personal entitlement has become a credo of the young; there is a sense of deserving rather than earning.

3. The end justifies the means for many. Process and procedure take a back seat to shortcuts, instant responses and self-gratification.

4. There is a general indifference to cheating, sexual irresponsibilities, and violence.

5. Anti-social conduct such as gross rudeness, flippant and open vulgarity and disrespect are accepted.

6. People, seeing the AIDS epidemic, global environmental disasters and burdensome and questionable futures with no security, are uncertain.

7. Peer pressure has overruled parental pressure. I want to share a quote from one of the issues of Unplugged that I used for some of my research: "Christian communities desperately need to help our young

people peel back the corners of the popular culture in search of what is real and authentic and intended by God. We need to teach them that being a Christian is not just a matter of saying yes to a creed. It involves all of life and demands the alignment of their lives with God's will!

"We need diligence and effort to make and develop young men and women in the church who are not of the world, but effectively in the world, bringing salt to preserve it and light to dispel its darkness." Read Romans 12:1, 2; I John 2:15-17; and Matthew 5:13-16.

Fix Up Time!

WRENCH yourself away from harmful habits and friends.

SHOVEL your heart full of love, compassion and acceptance.

SWEEP away anger, bitterness and desire to revenge.

TIGHTEN up your values.

HAMMER away at your weaknesses.

TURN ON the light of God's Word and keep Jesus bright and shining in your life.

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cation of Jesus' words in Matthew 20:25 - 28, "...You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Make no mistake about it. When mankind becomes preoccupied with self and quits serving others the very foundation on which self-respect is built is attacked. Don't let self-absorption take away the self-respect that is so needed to live a happy, fulfilled life.

Strathmore Searchlight, Toronto, Ont.

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ONTARIO

Ajax: Funeral: Connie Entwistle's funeral was on Thursday, October 25.

Beamsville: The congregation has been putting boxes together for Operation Christmas Child to be sent to Central and South America, West Africa, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Bramalea: On November 3, four teams, two adult, one teen and one junior, were entered in Bible Bowl. Our Junior Team won the trophy. The adult and teen trophies were won by Strathmore Blvd. The next Bible Bowl will be over the book of Genesis (NIV) and will be held on May 4, 2002 in Bramalea. Shirley Straker will teach a GLBC short course on Creative Writing, December 17-21 in Waterloo.

Brantford, North Park: Jill Stewart has been diagnosed with cancer; please pray for her.

Fenwick: The church hosted a weekend meeting with Mark Dailey of Horseheads, New York, November 4-6, on "Affirmative Living: Dealing with Life's Problems".

Grimsby: Don Rose was guest speaker on October 28. November 10 was the scheduled third Grimsby Youth Rally. Doreen Johnston's family held an open house celebrating her 80th birthday on Sunday, October 28.

Oct.21: "In the last three weeks I have witnessed seven people come to Christ and be born again." Jeff Cobb

Ice Lake: Emily, daughter of Wanda and Ian Whittington, was baptized on July 21 by her father. Ian's sister in law, Joan Sheppard, was baptized at the same time.

Meaford: On August 14, the ladies closed their secret sister program with a salad supper. Some of the ladies have been involved in knitting mittens for the Ukraine. Earl Greene from Newark, New York was the featured speaker at the Georgian Bay fellowship, on Saturday, September 15. For eight weeks, starting September 19, men and women were divided for midweek Bible studies. The ladies were considering different matters relating to hospitality and the men were considering the topic of Steps to Spiritual Empowerment." Bessie Davison passed away on September 21. A more effective congregation-elder relationship was implemented through regular periodic visitation. Irma Bunstead passed away and her funeral was Monday, October 8 at the church building. Ted Murray was restored after some time of absence. The congregation hosted a fish fry

for the seniors October 12 and another for the "not-so-seniors" October 19. At the suppers a film was shown informing them of the work of the church in Santiago, Cuba. \$1120.00 was collected to be taken to Cuba by Doug and Joyce Franklin. Ron Knight organized a car rally on October 20. Claire Elizabeth McCullough was born August 21. The annual youth rally is planned for the weekend of February 22 - 24.

Newmarket: Keith and Marie Thompson had an open house for their 50th anniversary. The congregation was saddened by the death of John Moore on October 11.

Niagara Falls: On October the 19th, Brad and Heidi Boland became the parents of a baby girl, Keara Jill. Grades 4-8 enjoyed a Mystery Dinner and games night at the home of Bruce and Marni Boland. The Singles had a barbecue and games night at the building; and the church family participated in a Bible Quiz from the book of James in which the children "shone like stars" - commendation to the parents.

In November a Marriage Seminar was held at the Super 8 Motel with Paul and Patsy Shero from San Angelo, Texas. The Singles had a Pizza and "I Love Lucy" movie night at the home of Esther Matthews. Henry Boland preached for the Fennel Ave. congregation one Sunday. Darrin Douglas spoke at the Grimsby Youth Rally and the G.L. Lectureship.

Repairs were made to the leaking flat top roof; craters in the parking lot were filled in and the forty year old 'Beast' in the basement (furnace) fitted with a new valve to hopefully keep us warm for another winter!!!

St. Catharines (Ontario St.): On November 4, designated as purpose Sunday, everyone was encouraged to hand in a pledge card for their 2002 offering. The brethren have an in-depth study of the gospel of John on Mondays at 12:30. Guest speakers were Joel Osborne giving the sermon and Jonathan Straker teaching the Bible class on November 4. Sunday, November 18, was "Bring a Bag of Groceries" day to replenish the pantry.

Stratford: An adult team participated in the "Acts" Bible Bowl. Ladies Bible class meets Tuesdays. On October 13 the congregation had a seminar on Abuse, at their building. Speakers were Marilyn Kippax of Stratford, Barbara Smith of Beamsville and Tammy McKnight from Waterloo. On October 17, members sang at the Anne Hathaway residence.

Tintern: A Marriage Workshop, entitled "Home Improvement", featuring Dr. Ed Gray, Professor of Counselling was hosted by the congregation on November 3-4. Debbie West's father, visiting from the Sundridge area, was baptized on the fourth.

Toronto (Bayview Ave.): Bonnie Porter led the first women's class of the fall with thirteen present.

Laure Wong, with her three sons, recently

moved to Toronto from Timmins. Michael Peddle has recently moved to Montreal. Spiritual Renewal Weekend, October 19-21, with Jim Hawkins was especially enjoyed by all those who attended. The subject was prayer. The new preacher, Dan Napier arrived with his family, Karly and Rebecca, in October. Dan is working on an advanced degree at one of the local universities.

Wilma Whitfield, wife of Don, mother of Julie (Walter) Cromwell and Jim (Heidi), and grandmother of four, passed away on Sunday morning, October 28. The funeral was Wednesday on October 31 in Beamsville.

Toronto (Strathmore Blvd.): The adult and teen teams won their divisions in the November Bible Bowl at Bramalea. A Friend Speak seminar from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 17 is to be taught by Shirley Straker with Jon Straker and Joel Osborne assisting.

Grace Yu was baptized on September 30, Kathleen Bonner on October 6 and Louis Ignacio Perez Huerfano on the 17th.

Waterloo: Geoff Ellis gave an illustrated report of his visit to several countries in Southern Africa on September 9. Santiago Guardado from El Salvador arrived in Canada on August 22. He has been a Christian in El Salvador for four years. Arrangements are being made for his wife and child to come. Adam Vasquez, who was baptized in Waterloo in February 2000, left for El Salvador on October 6. The "Does God Exist" seminar by John Clayton, October 26-28, was very well attended with approximately 40 people signing up for his correspondence course. Forty six teens and 24 adults attended the college rally featuring John Clayton on October 27.

Windsor (West Side): Fellowship groups met the evening of October 28. On November 4, Art Ford of Great Lakes Christian College taught the morning Bible class and was the guest speaker. A new Bible class, for the one to three year old children, during the sermon hour, has been added to that already provided for the four to six year olds.

NEW BRUNSWICK

Moncton: Veronick Roy obeyed the gospel on Sunday night, October 7. After sending out several thousand copies of our last evangelistic pamphlet we have enjoyed several Sunday visitors from the community. Our fall meeting, October 26 -28, with guest speaker, Drew Chapados, was very well attended. Three of the men attended the Nova Scotia men's retreat October 18-20, where Brian Garnett was guest speaker. Tim and Diana Johnson took a quick trip to Kentucky, September 27 - October 2.

NEW YORK

North Buffalo: The congregation is collecting new unwrapped gift toys for kids. Duane

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NEWS - FAR WEST -



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BRITISH COLUMBIA

Abbotsford: The Central Valley church lost four families this fall in moves either out of the vicinity or to other congregations: Russ and Cassandra Hall, Howard and Gladys Waite, Kurt and Eroca Wedler, and Al and Lisa Krystupa and their three children. A farewell potluck dinner for the last three was on November 18th. A prayer meeting is held every Tuesday evening in the home of the Ray Fillions.

Several participated in a "Making Abortion Unthinkable" fund-raising dinner held in Abbotsford on November 9th. The granddaughter of Hugh and Dorothy Minor has received a mechanical heart valve that is working well so far. We had a "Bring A Friend Day" followed by a potluck luncheon on Dec. 9th.

Burnaby: In October, Kirk Ruch began a "Grass Roots" Class for newcomers covering an introduction to the church and Bible basics. Joan Paul Quina, who is originally from the Phillipines, was baptized on the 14th. Mike Parker, youth director, returned to Burnaby from a successful and encouraging six weeks in Northeastern India on November 19th and gave exciting reports of the work that the seven-member team accomplished while there.

A baby shower to welcome Ethan Patrick Dunn, born to Lyle and Monica on September 28th, was given after the evening service on October 21st. Bev McClure is the new social convener after Chelli Morris had to resign because of health problems. Kalahan KucKob, who came to Canada from Sudan, East Africa, via Cairo, has placed first in two 10K races this fall, and came in second in a third one. The young peoples' group participated in an Entertainment luncheon at the Surrey congregation on Dec. 2nd to explain and promote their spring youth rally.

Deep Cove: Don Grice, who was cut off of WCB benefits, went back to work on the Lions Gate Bridge toward the end of October. As he was told it wasn't safe for him to do iron working, he was assigned to "lighter duties". His surgeon has said he may require further surgery. Don's wife, Marcelle, has been able to hire some church members from Deep Cove to help her when she has more work than she can handle, which in turn helps these families out. Their son, Ryan, is working two part-time jobs while attending UBC. Their other son, Michael, was released from detention in October, but was in need of drug rehab. Robyn Muir is doing

day-care for children. Her husband, Bruce, is an artist. Anyone interested in his fine prints or wanting an original or commissioned painting may call him at 604 433-5721 or by e-mail: mgrice@home.com. Prayers are asked for Lisa Miller, who has family in Bethlehem. They are being terrorized by the Muslims there.

Delta: A potluck to get acquainted with two elders from the church in Montgomery, Alabama, which sponsors Simon Hui in his work with the Chinese people in the Vancouver area, followed the service on November 11th. Darrel Williamson was installed as the new pulpit minister in a special service on Nov. 4th. As he is still attending UBC, he will be preaching three Sundays a month until he finishes his courses. Larry Hoff had a bad fall while skating with his grandchildren in Portland, injuring both hands and his shoulder. He has been unable to do anything, even use his computer, and doctors say only time can heal his injuries. Mae Garland had eye surgery in October, and was unable to drive for a couple of weeks.

Maple Ridge: Todd and Jamie Brunner from Decatur, Il., spent from Nov. 3rd through the 12th with us to get acquainted and consider becoming full-time workers with our congregation. They have had extensive experience in a number of foreign internships, including Mexico, Korea, Japan, Honduras, Uruguay, and the Bahamas. Andy and Sharon Aaron are conducting a Bible study in their home on Wednesday evenings. Sharon is now working at the Riverview Hospital where mentally ill people or people with special problems are cared for. Corrie-Anne Van Veen is hosting a Tuesday morning class for ladies in her home.

Vancouver: Fourteen B. C. preachers and one from Alberta met at the Sam Tumlinson's on Shuswap Lake near Salmon Arm on the evening of October 28th for a three-day retreat. The subject of "Church Growth and How To Accomplish It" was the main center of discussion.

ALBERTA

Calgary: New adult classes starting last month conclude on Dec. 12. They were Part 2 of "Alpha", with Troy Hodgson teaching, "Experiencing God" with Kevin Clark, and "Prayer", taught by Jack Ashby. The Fall Edition of "Cross Words", a publication written by elders, Staff members, and young people, came out in October. This quarter's theme was what the cross meant personally to each writer and a record of the baptisms since May. There were 10 baptisms during this time period and five babies born. The Hodgsons received word in early Oct. that a baby girl named Jovenica was awaiting them in Haiti. She was born on Feb. 17th, and the papers were all in order by October for them to be able to spend the three weeks in Haiti required to transfer her to their household. Youth Minister John Close, Mike Muirhead, and Greg Ashby took 19 teenagers to the Regina Youth Rally in October. The

Christmas Day Camp inaugurated last year was held at the building on Dec. 8th. This is a baby-sitting service offered to neighborhood mothers to provide a free day for them in which to do their Christmas shopping. Shibu and Claudia Lawrence and boys were able to visit their home in India for several weeks this fall.

Red Deer: The congregation will be moving to 68 Dunlevy Ave. in the Davenport subdivision. Completion of their new 9,000 sq. ft. building and move is slated for the second week in December after approximately 8 months construction. God has been very good to us and it's a real pleasure to continue to follow Him where He's leading us. This entire project continues to have a real positive impact on our community for the Kingdom. The official opening celebration is scheduled in the new year for the weekend of January 18-20 with Michael Tackett (Key to the Kingdom) as guest speaker.

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Cornish placed membership in September.

Buffalo (Linwood Ave.): The new building at 2523 Main Street was opened on October 21. The occasion also marked the dedication of their fellowship hall and library, as well as the 27th anniversary of John Smiley's work there. Brother Roosevelt Wells preached in a meeting, October 22-25.

Mission News:

Ethiopia

The well drilling rig and a 40-foot container filled with equipment, casing and supplies are on their way to Ethiopia. They should be arriving in Addis Ababa within the next three to four weeks. By the time everything is cleared through customs, the seasonal rains should be slowing down and the workers there can begin drilling wells very soon. This process, like others in the past, has been very slow, but without any unforeseen obstacles, many of our brethren and others in Ethiopia should soon be drinking good clean water.

The schools for the deaf are getting ready to open after their summer vacation. All of our teachers, along with other teachers of the deaf from government and private schools, are taking classes at our school in Addis Ababa during the break. Teacher training is offered each summer as a service to others. Our schools for the deaf are recognized by the Ministry of Education as "model" schools and are to be used by others as the example of how to set up a school and teach deaf children.

Switzerland

Stephan Bilak of Switzerland, who has been broadcasting the gospel into eastern Europe for many years and more recently by visiting the Ukraine, has malignant tumors on some of his vertebrae resulting from cancer in his prostate. Doctors have begun radiation on his back and will begin hormonal therapy.

Stephan Bilak

BOOK REVIEWS

Books to be reviewed in this column should be sent to **Keith Thompson**, Editor, 348 Dixon Blvd., Newmarket, ON L3Y 5C4 (Books may be ordered from the Gospel Herald) email:bookreviews@gospelherald.org



Jesus Christ, A Chronological Harmony of the Gospels, New Revised Standard Version, George W. Ware, Star Bible Publications, Inc. 233 pages, \$12.50 (US).

The author presents an extremely valuable harmony of the four Gospels. He makes it possible to read the Gospel story in order, thus simplifying the reading. This helpful work is prepared for the average reader. It will greatly assist us in understanding the life of our Lord. Any book that accomplishes this fantastic goal should be in every home or office.

Some might question the use of the New Revised Standard Version. I did so at first. But as the writer points out: "This revision is in contemporary language that accurately reflects the most ancient biblical texts available, while taking advantage of the latest archaeological dis-

coveries and important strides made in the understanding of ancient Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek." He believes that this translation is "a true, spiritually meaningful, and easily understood life and teachings of Jesus Christ in clear and natural English."

Although the author is an academic scientist and has taught at Ohio State University and the University of Arizona, he refers to this 15 year pursuit of Jesus' life as his magnificent obsession. He has been a teacher in churches of Christ for more than 40 years.

Stories That Astonish, The Parables of Jesus by Prentice Meador, Hillcrest Publishing, Abilene, Texas, 214 pages, \$9.95 (US).

The author of this book is an outstanding communicator. He has many years of fruitful experience as a preacher and teacher. Even if

you have studied the parables for years you will still find much valuable information in this book. The parables are ever fresh in their application to our lives. Preachers and teachers will find much valuable material in this terrific book. All readers will be strengthened by its message.

The Prayer of Jesus by Hank Hanegraaff, Word Publishing, Nashville, TN. 100 pages, \$16.50 (Cdn).

Due to the bestseller, *The Prayer of Jabez*, many have become extremely interested in prayer. Hanegraaff asks "What would Jesus say about the prayer of Jabez?" He sees the popularity of this book as an indication of the great interest people have in prayer. He suggests that we all need to reexamine our prayer lives. His book will encourage us to "take a closer look at prayer from the perspective of the Master Teacher, Jesus Christ." Unfortunately, as we have seen from his magazine, this author does not recognize the place of baptism in God's plan of salvation. He does, however, give a good discussion of prayer in the life of our Lord. Also, he urges us to get into the Bible and make prayer a priority in our lives.

Mission News continued

Donetsk, Ukraine

"Educational experiences!!" during our first two months include losing seven pieces of luggage, having NO hot water, being evicted, apartment hunting, buying meat at the meat market, visiting the hospitals, getting lost, and climbing 84 steps daily.

"First I want to thank each of you who have been so faithful in writing e-mails. They truly "make our day". It is such an uplift to get notes from home. "spaseba bahlshoi" BIG thank yous!!!

"The school is in full swing now and Jay Don is very busy. His hours are long as there is a lot to learn and to do. He started today REAL- LY on his own as former president Doug Reeves and his wife, Marge, left Donetsk Saturday evening for Keiv and flew to the States.

"Sunday was a neat day for us, though very emotional in some ways...We took a cab to a village where a former UBI student is the preacher with the help of two present students. They were having their first service in their OWN new building and were so very proud. They have a small auditorium, two class rooms and were in the process of finishing toilets and baptistry. They had asked Jay Don to preach and Yulia to translate. There were about 50 present. Several from the village came, though warned and persecuted by the Russian Orthodox Priest....The village is very run down and poor. Many of the people were dirty and

their clothes filthy, but they didn't seem to notice--they were there to praise God. We learned that the village was a former communal farm under Soviet times and they were given bare necessities plus housing that consisted of four walls, a roof and a coal stove--no running water or indoor toilets. The preacher and his wife have their bed and the baby's bed in the living room... you just want to give them everything you have!!!

"We are taking Russian lessons twice a week and it is very hard, but we are learning a lot of words and a few sentences. Our teacher is a doll, but after a 2-hour lesson we are saying enough!! I go to the outdoor market, the grocery store and to many of the stores on my own and am able to get what I need even though I do a lot of hand gestures!

from an earlier submission from Jay Don and Mary Lee Rogers

We are able to buy whatever we need from the open air marketers and have fun doing it, from picking out the article, by pointing, nodding or shaking our heads, to figuring out what they said the price was, but we manage... They really seem to like the fact that we are trying to speak their language and are always very pleasant.

"Natasha, a translator, and her husband who is a taxi driver, drove us to church at Artomsk, an hour away. They first wanted to show us their "new" building that someone in the States has just purchased for them. It had a nice kitchen plus two modern bathrooms, several rooms upstairs, office space and a deep, small

pool thing that is perfect for a baptistry. They were very proud of it. It was a great service. The school has three students who work there and the one who led the singing was just great. Of course, it was in Russian, but it was so peppy it just made you feel wonderful and it really pumped Jay Don up to preach. He and Natasha did a great job... This congregation is a great example of the good the school is doing. As soon as they graduate, two of them will start new churches and many more people will be taught. One of them will stay and continue to help the church at Artomsk. The school is really a wonderful tool for spreading the Gospel. It is doing a great job in training strong workers who will and can continue to do much good work for many years to come...

Brenda Swinford has just about completed a web page for the school that is excellent. It has a lot of information about the school and lots of pictures. I will try to let you know when it is up for sure on the Internet so you can look it up and see it. It is so neat to think you can go to your computer and find pictures of the school and even some of us when we are so very far away.... We are supposed to go to a children's hospital Tuesday and then on Thursday with our landlord to another hospital. I will have to build up my strength as it takes a lot out of you to see the conditions of their hospitals. I pray we can get some help for them when we are home."

more recently from the Rogers

From the Canadian Team in India

"After a night's rest we began on Friday at 8:30 AM with Golda as our guide to do two schools and an orphanage outside of Shillong.

The first school we went to was Pinebrook school in a beautiful country setting with 285 students K to class nine. Most of the students come from under-privileged, non-Christian homes. They range from two and a half years old to high school age. We were touched by their very disciplined behavior. As they came

into the school after having their morning worship time outside they filed in by two's with their right index finger over their lips in the sign of silence. We enjoyed our time with these students and especially enjoyed hearing about the work of the school from the staff over tea and light lunch.

**Great Lakes Bible College
Short Course**

"Creative Writing"

December 17-21, 2001

This course addresses ethical matters pertaining to the ownership of intellectual property while teaching proper use of current 'style manuals'. Attention will be given to grammar, punctuation, editing skills, research and publishing. This course is very practical, touching on the production of Bible school curriculum, bulletins, articles, newsletters, sermons, book reviews, letters, proposals, resumes and job descriptions.

Our instructor is **Shirley Straker** of Bramalea, Ontario. Shirley brings to the classroom many years of professional experience and a graduate degree specializing in this particular field of writing.



For more information:

519-884-4310

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www.glbc.on.ca

**Western Christian College
Job Opportunities**

If you:

- are a dedicated member of Churches of Christ committed to our faith and heritage;*
- have a proven record of Christian character and holy living;*
- are interested in training youth and adults for ministry and missions;*
- are flexible to change and adjusting to meet needs;*
- are committed to accomplishing tasks in unity;*
- are dedicated to viewing your work as a ministry;*
- are committed to loving people and especially youth;*
- are teachable and committed to lifelong learning;*

... then we may be interested in you and you may be interested in exploring one of the following areas to express your ministry.

Details of positions are available from the President's Office. Initial and continuous training may be provided. Salaries for these positions are dependant upon qualifications and experience.

Vice President

This position works closely with the President and includes two primary roles and some additional roles:

1. Administration of campus life, including hiring, supervision and evaluation of staff, development of mission and vision, building unity and morale, creating policies and updating handbooks, and some public relations.
2. Fundraising and enrollment services.
3. Possibly some teaching.
4. Training leadership and inspiring outreach.

Library Manager

This position must have or be willing to obtain a Master of Library Science degree or its equivalent. This position will administer all areas of the library, including organization, purchasing, supervision of library staff and supervision of students.

This person will work under the supervision of the Dean of the College and collaborate toward obtaining accreditation.

PREACHER / EVANGELIST WANTED

Evangelist sought for Bramalea Church of Christ, Brampton, Ontario, Canada. This well established multicultural congregation is situated near the Toronto Airport, in the Brampton/Mississauga area.

Primarily the candidate will fulfill the duties of pulpit preaching; he will also be part of a team effort of evangelistic outreach. Please send resume to the attention of the elders at 750 Clark Blvd., Brampton, ON L6T 3Y2; (905) 792-2297; Fax: (905) 792-8623; Email: stnf66@aol.com. References should indicate that the candidate demonstrates sound gospel preaching and teaching. A tape of typical sermons would be very helpful.

All applications will be reviewed in strictest confidence and only selected candidates will be contacted.

*If you have ever considered
attending Great Lakes Christian College
NOW is the time to check us out!*

OPEN HOUSE

February 12, 2002



Application deadline June 1, 2002

Contact Trish Pauls, Director of Admissions
4875 King Street Beamsville, ON LOR 1B6
905-563-5374 x 212 or study@glcc.on.ca
www.glcc.on.ca

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The second school we went to was operated by the Meghalaya State Electricity Board and was located next to the dam where most of the State's electricity is generated. Some of the students were writing exams so only a portion of them were able to participate in our program which was held outdoors in a beautiful setting overlooking the lake. The school has 600 students K to class ten. After our presentation we were provided a meal here by the State Electricity Board. We are indebted to Pochister Karkhongor for arranging the activities of these two days for us. Pochister used to work for the State Electricity Board but is now a Minister of Finance in the government of Meghalaya State. Our third stop for the day was at the Khasi/Jantia Orphanage which has 23 boys and 25 girls ages 2 to 16 years old."

(Note: This is a portion of a joint email from all, and was written by Sharon Parker)

The following was received from Mike Parker a few days later: "Our days were full with classes and then preaching services at night. We visited with many people. On Wednesday I had 3 meals and had tea on 8 separate occasions setting a new record of 11 in one day.

We came back from Lamka today arriving at 10 am and went straight to the bank. It took an hour for us to get our money exchanged. We have word that our permits will most likely be extended as we hoped but we won't know for sure until Monday or Tuesday.

Vancouver

The Hawkins family and Simon Hui are doing an impressive work with the new Canadians from China.

In our university campuses across the country of Canada, "Mission fields have come to us".

In our changing world, the church, at times, is slow to see challenging opportunity that knock at our doors.

New Believers in Muslim Worlds

There are 31 new brothers and sisters as the result of seeds sown in Albania this year. A few were also baptized in Prizren, Kosova, recently. Bujar and I studied the Gospel of John and it was so refreshing to watch him and experience his hunger and delight to learn and know more about Jesus. He is now a beloved brother and is active in teaching English, translating, and reaching out to his friends. He is a "gift" from God and an inspiration.

I know there are many "Bujars" out there in Kosova and Albania. Would you like to know more about how you, too can be blessed and learn and experience the Muslim world?

More workers and teachers needed for Kosova and Albania 2002. Ming Paul, Lee 2635 Island Hwy, Nanoose Bay, BC Canada V9P 9E5

Apology

50th Anniversary

David and Verna Hotchkiss

We accidentally omitted an invitation to the

Saturday, November 24th celebration of the above event.

We sincerely apologize for our error and take this means of encouraging those to whom it might apply to send best wishes to RR 1,

Gunn, AB T0K 1A0; Phone 780-404-6696;

E-mail: vhibbard@telusplanet.net.

ecp

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