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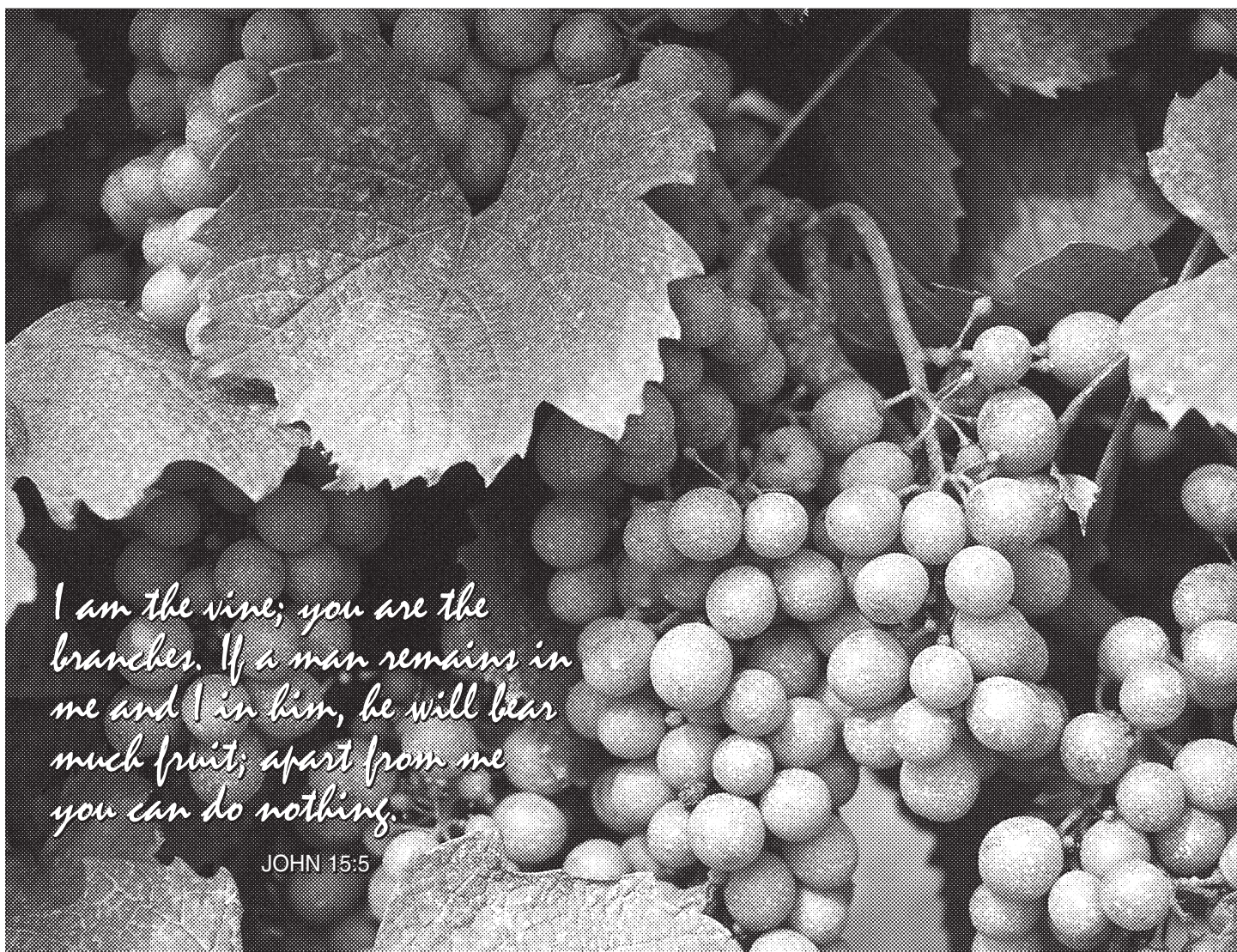
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*I am the vine; you are the
branches. If a man remains in
me and I in him, he will bear
much fruit; apart from me
you can do nothing.*

JOHN 15:5

An issue that continues to raise its head in the church is that of music in the worship. Beginning on page two is an article by Thayer Salisbury that addresses this issue in a fresh and thoughtful way. The editors pray this article will be helpful to all.

Music in Christian Worship

Thayer Salisbury

I have no desire to take the place of God and say that one's music choices will, by themselves, determine one's eternal destiny. But there are a number of issues related to the use of music in the church that are being unfairly ignored. Our worship decisions have serious theological implications. Yet many, especially among the younger generation in the church, are completely unaware of what is involved. They are being told that our choice of music in the church is a matter of personal preference or "tradition." Personal preference is involved, but it is far from the whole story.

God-Centred

Singing is the form of music God has commanded under the New Covenant, and we honour best when we honour someone according to their expressed wishes.

A friend of mine recently visited Washington, D.C. While in Washington, he visited the graves of John and Robert Kennedy. The tour guide said that Robert had specifically asked that he be buried on family land rather than in a public cemetery. Evidently those who buried Robert Kennedy, if they were aware of this request, chose to ignore it. Their focus, I suspect, was on the convenience of the masses rather than on the desire of the deceased. It is, no doubt, handy for the people wanting to visit the grave that it was placed in a public cemetery. Whether it is truly respectful of Senator Kennedy is another question. How Robert Kennedy would react, if he could react, to this disregarding of this wishes, we will never know.

The Bible contains an instance of God's people attempting to honour him by means that he did not authorize, and we are aware of his reaction. In the days of David the people of Israel were thankful for their deliverance from Philistine oppression, and they desired to honour God by bringing the ark of the covenant to a suitable, central location. The story of their first attempt to move the ark is told in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13. This first attempt ends tragically.

Uzzah, one of the priests helping with the transport, is struck dead when he touches the ark.

We normally tell this story from 2 Samuel (if we tell it at all). We then place our own interpretation on it, since none is given in 2 Samuel. But in 1 Chronicles an explanation of what happened is given. After reflecting on the event for some time, David comes to the conclusion that Uzzah's death was not merely the result of his instinctive reaction when the ark seemed to be in danger of falling, but indirectly the result of their failure to do things as God had instructed. They had tried to carry the ark on a cart, whereas God had instructed that it be carried by hand

There are a number of issues related to the use of music in the church that are being unfairly ignored.

with the use of poles. David states his conclusion in this way, "Because you did not carry it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not seek him according to the rule." (1 Chron. 15:13)

There were rules for honouring God in regard to the ark. They disregarded the rule regarding the moving of the ark. Their choice of transport led to the incident that cost Uzzah his life. It was not just Uzzah's reaction that was to blame. It was the decision of the group to use an unauthorized means of transport that put Uzzah in this situation.

I do not claim that his story is an exact parallel to the music situation in the church today. But these words were recorded for our learning. What is it that we are to learn from them? If we are not to learn that it is important to keep to what God has commanded when claiming to honour him, then I cannot

see that we are learning anything from this passage.

When we attempt to honour someone according to our wishes the focus, unconsciously, becomes us rather than the one we are supposedly honouring. That is what happened in regard to the ark. That is also what is happening in regard to music. Even without instruments, our preferences are often put ahead of God's word. Instruments are one example of this, but hardly the only example of it. It seems that most conversations about worship today very quickly end up on what we want, what we like, and what we think will attract others. THAT IS WRONG. Our likes and dislikes, and even the likes and dislikes of those we are trying to attract, are secondary (at best). The main question is what God has ordained as the means of honouring him under the New Covenant. Everything must first pass that test before even being considered.

God had never said, "do not carry the ark on a cart." He did say "carry it on your shoulders." Uzzah and his associates disregarded this and Uzzah paid with his life. I like to think that Uzzah did not die in vain. I like to think that his death accomplished something worthwhile. I like to think that he died so that future generations would learn to honour God as God instructed, but, when I look at the church today, I wonder.

What is at stake is our honouring God by limiting ourselves to what he has commanded, as opposed to honouring ourselves above him by introducing what we enjoy.

In Keeping with the Purpose

Singing is the form of music God commanded under the New Covenant, and that fits with his insistence on words rather than images throughout scripture.

We are told that people today are multimedia oriented and that we need to give them the truth in the medium they are used to. This idea contains a grain of truth, but there is a difference between containing truth and being

Early copy, please! The due date for copy for the January issue will be **December 10**. Our printer will be closing from Dec. 24 to Jan 3 and we must have copy to him early.
Thank you. The Editors

true. The most dangerous errors are those that are twisted or overextended truths.

It is true that God desires that everyone hear the Gospel in their own language. Acts chapter two makes that clear enough. Paul's methodological statement in 1 Corinthians 9 (v. 19-23) states what Acts 2 shows by example. God wants us to speak to people in terms that they understand. To an extent, we need to be "receptor oriented." That is, to the extent that we can do so while being true to God, we need to think from the receptor's point of view rather than from our own. Yet the choice of media depends more on the nature of the message needing to be conveyed than on the customs or tastes of the people receiving the message. People in Moses' day were accustomed to graphic images of their gods. But the Lord did not give them ten pictures or ten statues. He evidently did not believe that a picture is worth a thousand words. In fact he forbade pictures. He wants to communicate by familiar means (Acts 2 and 1 Cor. 9), but sometimes the nature of certain media may be incompatible with the nature of the message being conveyed. In such a case being "receptor oriented" is a mistake.

Images and sounds are powerful for creating moods, but they are useless for conveying specific information. Evidently God wanted to convey specific information, for he gave us a book, not a sound track. He gave his people sermons, not statues.

Within the New Testament, God commanded singing rather than "music," perhaps because our worship of him is supposed to be from the mind – it is supposed to have identifiable intellectual content. Those who would reduce Christian worship to feelings need to find – in fact are finding – a different god than the God of the Bible. There is nothing wrong with seeking

a vaguely spiritual atmosphere in our homes, or in our places of work. The right kind of background music and decoration will contribute to that. But Christian worship is supposed to carry a much clearer, more specific message. It is impossible for musical instruments to do that.

There is no denying that instruments played a part in temple worship, but they played a part there because they were specifically commanded (2 Chron. 29:25). Teaching was not the central activity of the temple as it was of the synagogue and the church. So perhaps mood music was more appropriate there.

There is no denying that instruments will play a part in heavenly worship. Teaching will not be a central activity of heaven, praise will be our all in all, and there will be no danger of misunderstanding, false doctrine or anthropocentrism. Here, we are to praise, but our praising is to be carried out so as to fulfill a teaching function. It is supposed

to be intelligible (1 Cor. 14: esp v. 16). In heaven our praise will be just praise, with no need for instruction.

Participatory

Singing is commanded to the church, and we ought to use songs in which most of God's people can join.

One of the major differences between New Testament worship and pre-Reformation Roman Catholic worship was in the area of participation. At the eve of the Reformation, worship had become something the priest and the choir did while the majority watched. Returning to the "priesthood of all believers" was a major goal of the reformers. Within our fellowship we managed to achieve this participation to an extent unimaginable in many Protestant churches. But are we losing our emphasis on the priesthood of all believers?

I recently participated in (or perhaps I should say witnessed) a worship service that well represents the difficulty.

I witnessed the service rather than participating in it because the music chosen was entirely new to me and was of such a difficult nature that I could not catch on to the tune. I am not a great singer, but neither am I a musical moron. Until last year I had never experienced a service like this. I had always been able to catch on to the tunes of new songs in the past. But recently I have frequently been in services where I could hardly sing a note (and where a sizeable percentage of the gathering, both young and old, were not able to sing). Have we collectively lost our ear for music?

The problem has to do with the kind of music now being written. Prior to the invention of the high fidelity phonograph (and the rise of Elvis), sheet music sales were greater than the sale of recorded music, even in secular music. Most music, certainly most Christian

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Where is the Line?

Wayne Turner



Do you ever stop to ask yourself, “Why am I doing this?” The story is told of a newly married young woman who, every time she cooked a ham, would first cut off its end. Her husband was puzzled by what seemed to be an unusual practice. He asked her why she did it. “I don’t know,” she replied. “My mother did it.

Let’s ask her.” A few days later, the young woman asked her mother, who answered, “I don’t know. My mother always cut the end off of her ham.” Sometime later, while visiting at her grandmother’s, the young woman asked, “Grandmother, why do you always cut the end off your ham?” The older woman answered, “Because the ham was too long for my pan.”

It is human nature to continue a practice long after the reason for doing it has been forgotten. Often, we refer to such practices as customs or traditions. Over time, they take on an authority for being continued on their own. Being effective in life, business, even church leadership, means examining and understanding the reasons for what we do. Blind repetition of an action without any reason is meaningless. Whatever we do, we need to know the purpose for doing it.

For example, why do congregations have a Bible School program? Some places seem to have little more purpose than to keep the kids occupied while the adults try to have a Bible study. Or, perhaps the reason is little more than the fact that “we have always had one.” Congregations with effective Bible Schools have a purpose of bringing children and adults to faith by teaching them to know God, His word and how it applies to their lives.

Why do (or in some cases did) congregations have an invitation? Is it routine? Tradition? A signal for people that it is time to put on their coats? Or, is it to encourage people, based upon what has been just taught from the Bible, to take a serious look at their lives and their need to be in the right relationship with God?

One might even wonder how much more effective each congregation would be if each elder, deacon, preacher, teacher, worker, member knew and understood the purpose of each activity or program.

In the same way, publications like the Gospel Herald need to look at what they are doing and ask, “What are we trying to accomplish? Why are we doing this?” We are now faced with such a time. The reason for publishing the paper is evident – those of us who are involved as co-editors, associates, feature editors, writers and board members are all committed to the concept, as our masthead boldly proclaims, “For the promotion of NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY.” Through our articles, features and editorials, we seek to encourage and prod our readers to steer a straight course with God’s Word. The other features, especially the news, share different ways that people and congregations are serving God.

What needs to be asked is, “Why do we have a directory of congregations near the end of almost every issue?” Does it have a purpose? Is it to “officially recognize” the “true churches” – to identify which congregations are in or not in fellowship with God? Is it simply a matter of custom that has been done for many years?

Is it to satisfy some people’s curiosity about how “we” are doing across the country? Why is it there?

To be honest, none of those involved with the Gospel Herald (GH) believe they have or want the responsibility of determining whether or not a congregation’s candlestick is still standing before the Lord or if it should be taken away. We are not the guardians of the Lamb’s Book of Life. Neither do we wish to be “paper popes” or to assume any authority or oversight over Christ’s Church across Canada. While we are all part of the body of Christ and serve in various roles in different congregations across the country, we at the GH are not the church nor do we have any right or authority over it. Like the Christian schools in Canada, the GH is a privately owned publication. Each congregation across the country is fully autonomous, making its own decisions and determining its own actions and direction. We must respect that. Because of this respect, among those we serve there is a diversity of views. We have tried to maintain positive relationships with all and have intentionally avoided unnecessary controversy and refrained from publishing articles that we felt to be too abrasive or divisive.

At the same time, we are people of faith, conviction and conscience. We believe that there are certain Biblical principles, lying at the bedrock of our faith, which we have historically shared together and continue to share. Among these is the conviction that Scripture represents the word and authority of Christ and therefore should direct and shape our faith and practice. However, in recent years, a greater diversity of thought has come into some congregations. Some of our distinctive convictions have been challenged and rejected. The question we have to ask ourselves is, “Where is the line?” Should we continue to list congregations which differ markedly from other congregations? While we may have been uncomfortable at times, we have accepted significant diversity. We have tried to avoid being a party or agent of division. We believe that division is evil, and that those who create division in the church will especially face God’s wrath. (The plural “you” in 1 Corinthians 3:16,17 shows that it refers to destroying the unity in the church). But where’s the line? At what point do we recognize that a congregation no longer shares the same convictions

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What Do You Desire?

What one desires has a great deal to do with what is accomplished in his/her life. When David was gathering the materials together for the building of the temple by his son, Solomon, he was thankful for the generous spirit of the people. In 1 Chronicles 29 he prays a prayer of thanksgiving to God. He says, *"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. O Lord our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. O Lord, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you"* (14-18). David understood how important it was for people to have the desire to please God in their heart. If the desire was there then there was good reason to expect a proper response to follow.

A person who had the right desire in his heart was Ezra. After 70 years the exiled people of Israel began to return and rebuild the temple and city of Jerusalem. Among those who came was Ezra, who was *"...a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the Lord, the God of Israel, had given..."* (Ezra 7:6) We are given insight into his character in verse 10, *"For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law*

of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel." What a wonderful and noble three-part desire! There could be no higher desire for God's people of all ages.

Ezra had "devoted" himself to the study of God's law. It was important to him and he gave his earnest effort in seeking to know the will of God. Ezra understood the truth of David's words in Psalm 119:105, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."* The text also indicates that he understood that knowing God's will required a devotion to study. Is not one of the reasons for problems in the church often the fact that people are not really "students" of the word? Far too many are not able to give a reason for their hope in Christ.

Jesus told his hearers in John 8:32, *"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* Freedom from sin and its consequences comes through knowledge of the truth. This knowledge comes ONLY as a result of devotion to learning the truth. Paul reminds us to *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15). What a blessing it would be for the cause of Christ today if every Christian truly had a heart devoted to study of the word.

As important as having the desire to know God's law is, if it ends there it is useless. Note that Ezra also devoted himself to the observance of the law. Far too many people in the world can quote the word of God but do not apply it to their daily life. Of course, there is the need to be devoted to following the law of God as completely as possible. Surely a part of the vision of the Restoration Movement is to apply the will of God to daily Christian living.

A reoccurring theme in the examples

of conversion in the book of Acts is that the people responded immediately to the message to become Christians. This goes along with the idea in James 1:22, *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."* However, it must be remembered that the need to obey does not stop with those first steps. The Hebrew writer says, *"We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away... how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?"* (Hebrews 2:1, 3a) May the desire of every believer's heart be to hear AND obey.

Finally, the desire of Ezra was not only to know and do the law of God but also to *"teaching its decrees and laws in Israel"* (Ezra 2:10) The desire of Ezra reflects the desire of God, that people know and do his will. *"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance"* (1 Peter 3:9). Christians are the "agents" through whom the world is to know of God's desire for them. Christians must never be selfish and keep the good news of Jesus to themselves nor can they be idle in sharing the message with those who need to hear.

When the church began in Jerusalem on Pentecost, it was a time of great rejoicing for those who became Christians. In fact, their newfound relationship with God through Jesus was a wonderful thing as they fellowshipped and studied together. It took the persecution to get some to leave Jerusalem and go back to their homes. The important thing is, of course, what they did then. Luke tells us in Acts 8:4, *"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."* Since it is only the word of God that can save, the desire of every Christian needs to be like that of Ezra to teach the decrees of God to others.

What do you desire? May it be to know, do, and share the laws and decrees of God daily with those you meet.

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Are You Planning to be Together for a Lifetime?

The romantic notion that a man and women can catch each other's eye across a crowded room and fall madly in love and stay together for a lifetime, is just that, a romantic notion. True love, love that will last a lifetime is a decision that we act upon. Marriages that last a lifetime don't just happen; marriages that last a lifetime take work, commitment, and planning. How do we plan to be together for a lifetime?

(1) First we must understand what God intends for each of our marriages. What God joins together in marriage must never be separated by any man (Matthew 19:1-12). We discuss marriage, divorce and remarriage so much that we can lose sight of the simple truth that it is God's will that marriage should last a lifetime. Shouldn't we be planning to do God's will?

(2) Date long enough! How long is long enough? Date long enough that you have developed a close friendship,

long enough to really know each other, long enough to see each other's faults as well as good points. Date long enough to have developed a relationship with each other's families. How long might all this take? We cannot give you a specific time frame because it will vary for each of us, we are all different. Be patient and invest the time and you will be happy that you did.

(3) Talk about important life issues before you get married. You cannot discuss each and every eventuality, but try to at least discuss the major ones. Topics for discussion would include:

- Where you plan to live after you are married.
- Do you plan to have children and how many you would like to have?
- Will mother continue to work after children are born or will she remain home with the children?
- Will mom continue to work while Dad remains home with the children?

• Will daycare be employed to care for the children and to what extent will it be employed?

• How will money be handled, will you each have your own accounts, or will the money be pooled into a joint account?

• Who will handle paying the bills and managing the finances?

• What volunteer involvement or church involvement are you planning for?

• What recreational pursuits would you like to maintain when you are married?

• Discuss ways of ensuring that your marriage will last as long as you both live.

(4) Participate in marriage preparation classes or premarriage counseling or both. If the one officiating at your ceremony has not offered you this opportunity ask him about them. Ask at the church you attend to see if something might be available there. These classes will benefit you greatly as you prepare for marriage.

(5) Throughout your engagement spend more time preparing for your life together than you spend on preparing for your wedding day. Your wedding day will be a special day to be sure, but it is still only one day, while the rest of your life will be many happy years together, if you plan for them.

(6) Spend time together in prayer and study. Pray that God will bless your life together. Listen to what God says in His Word about marriage, commitment, and the family. Spend time reading some good books on building a good marriage, there are some great resources out there.

(7) Plan for your marriage to last a lifetime. No escape clauses, no "I would leave if this occurred". Just two people committed to one another for a lifetime no matter what.

Marriages that last a lifetime don't just happen; marriages that last a lifetime take work, commitment and planning. Make the commitment, plan carefully and do the work and God will bless you with a wonderful lifelong marriage and many years of happiness together.

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FOR WOMEN BY WOMEN

Articles for publication and/or reactions to this page should be sent to Linda Hammett, 1350 Brackenridge Road, Vincent, OH 45784.
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Campaign for Christ

(Editor's Note: I would like to give credit for the idea of this article to Jason Steckel, Youth Minister at the Belpre Church of Christ, Belpre, Ohio. I would also like to invite any woman reader to submit articles for this page. I know there are a lot of talented speakers and Bible teachers who could share a wealth of information with us. Submit items to the addresses above. lch)

We, in the United States, have just gone through a presidential election that seems to have dragged on and on. I am typically not interested in politics, but it was hard to avoid knowledge of what was going on because of the constant bombardment of the media, beginning months and months ago.

I do not wish to discuss politics at this time – whether or not the right person won, etc. – but I would like to draw an analogy between this election and our campaign for Christ.

First, let's look at the financial ramifications of this election. It has been estimated by experts that approximately \$4 billion – yes, that's billion with a "b" – were spent on this presidential campaign. How can anyone justify spending that amount of money on something like that when there are people starving in this country and people living on the streets, where there are so many other places that amount of money could have been used to improve life for many people is beyond me. But, the point is that this particular election was important enough to a lot of people that they were willing to give of their funds to help promote their cause. My question is, are we willing to give financially to help promote the cause of Christ? When the plate is passed on Sunday or when an opportunity arises to give to a missionary or campaign, are we able to give freely and cheerfully? Can you imagine what would happen if Christians gave that much to spread the Word all over the world!

During the past 30 days, you could

not drive down the street or highway without seeing political signs everywhere bearing the names of the candidates for whom you should vote. The parties also launched a strong phone campaign during the last few weeks before the election. The callers would herald the good points of their candidates and, in some instances, the negative qualities of the opponent. There were lots of discussion among friends and foe alike about who should be the next president. Few people hesitated to voice their opinions on this subject. How many of us are willing to be so vocal about Christ? Are we willing to talk to people about His love and what He has done for us, to try to lead them to salvation? Is that not much more important than the outcome of a political election? How many of us would be willing to put a sign in our yards stating that we believe in God? Most people are very loyal to their party – are we as loyal to God? Do we openly admit that we are Christians? The same people who so easily engage in door-knocking to convince people to vote for a certain candidate suddenly become close-mouthed and bashful when it comes to trying to convince someone to follow Jesus.

The candidates as well as their supporters and helpers spent hours and hours and hours of time during the presidential campaign. It is likely that the very dedicated workers operated on limited sleep for weeks leading into the election. How much sleep have we lost because we were spreading the Word? How much time have we dedicated to that cause? Some of us can barely find

time to attend the worship services of the church each week much less extra time to speak to others about God.

This causes us to wonder what would happen if Christians decided to put as much effort (time, energy, finances) into spreading the message of Jesus as the United States has recently spent on promoting the candidates for this election. Many people were willing to put signs in their front yards, wear buttons, or put bumper stickers on their cars promoting their favorite candidate. But how many of us are willing to talk to our friends about Jesus? Many were willing to debate anyone about why their candidate should win. But how many of us are willing to share with others that Jesus is the right one?

We are told in Matthew 5:13-16 that we are "the salt of the earth... the light of the world." It also says that we should not hide our light under a basket but should let it shine for all to see so that they will praise God.

We need to ask ourselves if we are being salt and light. Are we making a difference in the Kingdom of God? We only have to endure the presidential election once every four years, but we are faced with eternity every day.

As we approach the beginning of another year, the challenge is before us to launch a campaign for Christ that will lead many souls to Him. Let's put our energies and talents to use as salt and light in this dark world and live so that God is always glorified.

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Presumption

Mike McCabe

Have you ever presumed anything? When I was a child I presumed that my father would like it if I scraped the ice off the hood of his nice black car. I found the ice came off great with the clawed end of the snowbrush. However, when he found out what I did for him I didn't get the reaction that I expected.

We need to watch that we don't fall into sin because of wrong presumptions. To presume means to take for granted something as being true in the absence of proof to the contrary. In the Bible there are examples of people who can be accused of false presumption, usually with costly consequences.

For example, the nation of Israel in Numbers 14:39-45. "...the Amalekites and Canaanites will face you there. Because you have turned away from the LORD, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword." Nevertheless, in their presumption they went up toward the high hill country"

God had already told the nation that they would have to wait forty years before they could inherit the promised land because they doubted God's promise. Yet they tried to go into the land and conquer it presuming that God would be with them. They presumed wrong.

Another example is King Uzziah who presumed that as king he would be able to burn incense to the Lord in the temple. Uzziah presumed wrong. In his arrogance he overreached his authority and disobeyed God by trying to perform a service that only the priests were allowed to do. Therefore God afflicted him with leprosy. 2 Chronicles 26:16-20.

What are some ways can we be presumptuous today?

1) We can be presumptuous in our use of scripture to justify our actions.

The subject of drinking: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit" Ephesians 5:18. Therefore, I can go to the bar to drink or drink at home just as long as I don't get drunk. This is the type of thinking that wants to get as close to worldly living as possible without actually "sinning". This is the type of thinking that doesn't like verses such as 1 Thessalonians 5:22 that tells us to abstain from every form of evil. As Christians we should want to draw closer to God and experience the blessings he has waiting for us instead of trying to get as close to the world as we can.

Judging one another. "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure

you use, it will be measured to you..." Matthew 7:1-5. After reading this verse some people say that no one can judge them, therefore, concluding that no one can say anything to them about what they do or how they act. They say you can't make judgments because you are also imperfect. Does this mean one has no right to say anything when a brother is in error?

According to 1 Corinthians 5:11 - 13, Christians have a responsibility to hold each other accountable. "But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. Expel the wicked man from among you."

We cannot make condemning judgements about people but we do have the right and responsibility to point out and encourage repentance in the brother who is not living according to the word of God.

2) We can be presumptuous with the time we have.

How many times do we as people plan months or years ahead without any thought of our mortality? James 4:13-16 "Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow..."

Here James is referring to our presumptuous attitudes of how we're going to spend the coming years of our lives. How we're going to retire and where we're going to spend that retirement, how we're going to buy that boat when the house is paid off. James tells us that we're but a mist

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that appears for a time and then vanishes and that such behavior towards our future is considered arrogant boasting. What do we know about tomorrow? We don't know what tomorrow has in store for each of us. This doesn't mean that we live our lives in constant fear but with a lifestyle that understands that God holds every breath one takes in the palm of his hand and if it is his will I will live and do this or that. We should still plan for a long life but also be ready for a short one.

3) In our opportunities.

Many of us are great at putting off until tomorrow what we should be doing today. For example, forgiving others. How long do we hold on to grudges, forgetting that God's forgiveness of us depends on our forgiveness of others. Since we don't know what is in store for the future we need to forgive people while we have the opportunity. (Matthew 6:14, 15)

How about relationship with God? James says, *"Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."* James 4:8-10

Are we living double lives outside of the church believing we will have plenty of time to become faithful to God in later life? We may be presuming too much! If this describes you then, in the words of James, you need to make your return to faithfulness today without presuming that you will have another opportunity because you may not.

For those who may be reading this who do not know Jesus and have not made him Lord of your life, you should consider very carefully your plans concerning Jesus. Many may be in the position of Felix, the Governor. *"Several days later Felix came with*

his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, 'That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you'" Acts 24:24-26 As far as we know, he never found a convenient time. The same might happen to those who are delaying today.

Tomorrow is not guaranteed to any of us. As humans we seem to think that we will die in our eighties on a bed of white fluffy sheets surrounded by our loved ones. Someone told me once that they would deal with God on their deathbed but what makes us think that we're going to have a deathbed? I had a relative die of a massive heart attack when he was walking into work at the age of 37. When I was assistant foreman at the Bruce nuclear station I had a young lady working in my crew who was killed in a car accident on her way to work. The driver of the van that hit her said she was stooped over in the car like she was trying to pick up something up when she swerved over into his lane. Tomorrow is not guaranteed to any of us. When I was putting together this lesson I was reminded of the hymn, **Almost Persuaded:**

*"Almost persuaded now to believe,
almost persuaded Christ to receive;*

Seems now some soul to say "Go Spirit,

*go thy way
Some more convenient day on thee
I'll call"*

*"Almost persuaded come, come today,
almost persuaded turn not away;
Jesus invites you here, Angels are lingering near*

*Prayers rise from hearts so dear,
O wanderer come."*

*"Almost persuaded" harvest is past,
Almost persuaded doom comes at last!*

Almost cannot avail, Almost is but to fail!

*Sad, sad, that bitter wail
- "Almost -
BUT LOST!"*

You may live into your 80's, you may die in a bed of white fluffy sheets surrounded by loved ones, but you may not. Your last breath may come on a cold slab of pavement on some street or perish in an unfortunate accident. You may presume to have another opportunity to be saved down the road but one thing is for certain - once you are dead there are no second chances. Once you're in hell you're never coming back.

Do not take God for granted. We know God is a forgiving God but he is also a God that destroyed the world with the flood, who reduced Sodom and Gomorrah to a smoldering sulfur pit. Therefore, do not test God by looking for loopholes in scripture to justify ungodly conduct or to live halfhearted lives for Jesus while claiming to be his. Do not hold God at arm's length and say - "I know you want me to surrender every area of my life to you but I'm not willing to do so right now. Later when it is convenient ". We don't know what tomorrow may bring; so do not presume that we have plenty of time and opportunity to get right with God. Always be wise with the time and opportunities we have and not live foolishly presumptuous lives.

Hamilton, ON

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Ramadan Through the Eye's of an ex-Muslim

Aziz Sarah

(Aziz Sarah is the Evangelist with the Church of Christ in Jerusalem, Israel. In this article he contrasts the legalism of Islam with the Grace of God in Christ and describes why he chose the latter.)

Muslims around the world started the month of fasting on the 14th or 15th of October (different date in different countries). The month of Ramadan lasts 29 to 30 days. Ramadan is important in Islam because it is said that the Qu'ran itself was revealed during this month, the high-point of revelation somewhere in the last ten days of the month called the "night of power", where Muslims stay up, pray, remember God, and read the Qu'ran until daybreak (Surah 2:185). This is the holiest month of the year. Muslims are supposed to fast in the day and eat and drink at night. One may eat and drink at any time during the night until you can plainly distinguish a white thread from a black thread by the daylight: then keep the fast until night.

I remember growing up as a Muslim. Even though we were not very religious we all fasted the month of Ramadan. We started to pray the 5 times a day. We tried to be good Muslims. I have good memories as all my family would get together to break the fast. We had big feasts at night and sometimes

up to 100 people would meet for the break of the fast at sunset. Muslims believe that on the 27th of the month the Heavens will be open and God will answer many prayers. I remember going that night and praying for hours and then wondered why my prayers are not answered yet.

However the fasting includes, other than fasting from food; smoking and sexual relations are also forbidden during fasting (Surah 2:187). The good that is acquired through the fast can be destroyed by things such as the telling of a lie, slander, denouncing someone behind his back, a false oath, greed or coveting. Fasting is one of the 5 pillars of Islam which are Announcement of Faith, Salaat (praying 5 times a day), Zakaat (the right of the poor on the wealth of the financially able), Fasting during the month of Ramadan, and Hajj (once a life time pilgrimage to Kaaba). The main reason for this month as seems to be stated in Islam are:

1. The Jews and Christians were commanded to Fast so Muslims should fast as well. [2:183] "O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil)."

2. ALHADITH Mohammad said, "(Allah said), 'Every good deed of Adam's son is for him except fasting; it is for Me. and I shall reward (the fasting person) for it.' Verily, the smell of the mouth of a fasting person is better to Allah than the smell of musk."

3. Fasting helps keep one from doing evil. Fasting is one of the ways that Islam suggest for singles to fight impurity. Fasting is one way to understand those who are hungry. Fasting is for humility before God. Fasting is an act of worship. Fasting is to teach self control. Islam Claims restoration of Judaism and Christianity.

One of the things that I realized when I became a Christian is that Islam took many of its ideas and beliefs from the Bible and the Jewish or Christian traditions. Sometimes it changed some details but used the stories or characters

mentioned in the Bible and claimed it to be its core inspiration. There are many examples of this but I want to focus on the ones about fasting and Ramadan.

1- The first reason for Muslims to fast was that the Jews and Christians did, so Muslims should fast as well. Below is another example of how much Judaism had an effect on Islam. Mohammad claimed that Judaism and Christianity are from God, and that Moses and Jesus were prophets. However, he said that Christians and Jews changed the content of the Bible and lived as they wanted to live not by what was originally written, so he claimed that the Qu'ran brought back the real teachings of the Bible (Narrated Ibn 'Abbas). The Prophet came to Medina and saw the Jews fasting on the day of Ashura. He asked them about that. They replied, "This is a good day, the day on which Allah rescued Bani Israel from their enemy. So, Moses fasted this day." The Prophet said, "We have more claim over Moses than you." So, the Prophet fasted on that day and ordered (the Muslims) to fast (on that day).

2- In the night of the 27th of Ramadan Muslims believe that this is when God determines the course of the world for the following year, and that the Heavens are open for prayers to go up to God. Many Jews traditionally hold the same beliefs about Yom Kippur. This is an example of how Islam was influenced by the Jewish traditions.

3- Mohammad in the first few Years of his message focused a lot on spreading his message to the Jews. He would use examples from the OT so that Jews might relate to his teachings, He even asked people to pray looking toward Jerusalem (holiest place for Jews). however, later on when the Jews would not accept his teaching he started spreading his message to the pagan world and to do so he asked people to pray toward Mecca, since that was the holiest place for the pagans.

Allah's Apostle said, "The most beloved fasting to Allah was the fasting

continued on page 15

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E-mail: bramaleacofc@bellnet.ca

NOTE: News for the January 2005 issue needs to be in early because of holidays at the printer. For the January issue the deadline is December 10, 2004. Send material to Walter Straker by that date, clearly marked "News East".

NEW BRUNSWICK

Moncton: The brethren recently purchased a VCR and DVD for their building so they could bring in special guests that way. Royal Maillet is still taking care of the Wednesday and Sunday Bible classes, and the Sunday preaching. A ladies' day was planned for December 11 in Kentville, Nova Scotia.

ONTARIO

Ajax: Joel Bojarski has moved to work with the congregation with very limited support. Please keep him and the Ajax work in your prayers.

Beamsville: A special collection for Haiti relief totalled \$3,430. With the addition of some from the congregation's benevolence budget, a cheque for \$3,750 was sent to Strathmore Blvd. for Haiti. Added to this was a special collection from Great Lakes Christian College students. Geoff Taylor delivered the cheques as well as a van full of clothing to Strathmore for shipment to Haiti. "Operation Christmas Child," a worldwide outreach program to share God's love with children, was begun. The annual

WAVES "Winter Wonderland" crafts and baked goods sale was held November 26-27 to raise funds for GLCC.

Bramalea: Her husband, Ian Meyer, baptized Kathy Meyer into Christ on October 15. Kevin Hunter began as the congregation's pulpit minister on November 1. He and his wife, Wendy, and their children, Josh and Shanna, were honoured at a potluck dinner on November 7. Teresa Lipari and her daughter, Liana, placed membership with the congregation on November 7. An international dinner celebrating Bramalea's multicultural congregation was enjoyed November 14.

Brantford: Jamie Azzoparde, Brantford preacher for the last three years, with his wife, Bianca, will move at the end of December to begin work as campus minister with the Waterloo congregation. The youth night is still going well at 7 p.m. every Friday. Doreen Ellis was guest speaker at a ladies' luncheon on November 6. On November 14 the men were scheduled for a dinner and Bible study at the building.

Cornwall: For some interesting information on Halloween, write for a copy of their October 24 bulletin. Their email is churchofchrist@cogeco.ca; their website is <http://home.cogeco.ca/~abojarski>.

Grimby: While looking for a preacher, they have had guest speakers such as Bill Schwarz, Joel Lock, Greg Whitfield, and Noel Walker.

Fenwick: On October 23 an open house was held at Tintern Church of Christ in honour of Grace Cook's 90th birthday.

Hamilton (West): Charles Ridjab was baptized on October 17. Averil Keoughan is home for a short visit from her mission work in Ghana, West Africa.

Milton: The Camp Omagh annual meeting and dinner was held October 23 at Johnstone Hall, Omagh Bible Camp.

Newmarket: The congregation collected food and gifts for young mothers via the Rose of

Sharon. The GLCC chorus sang at Newmarket in November.

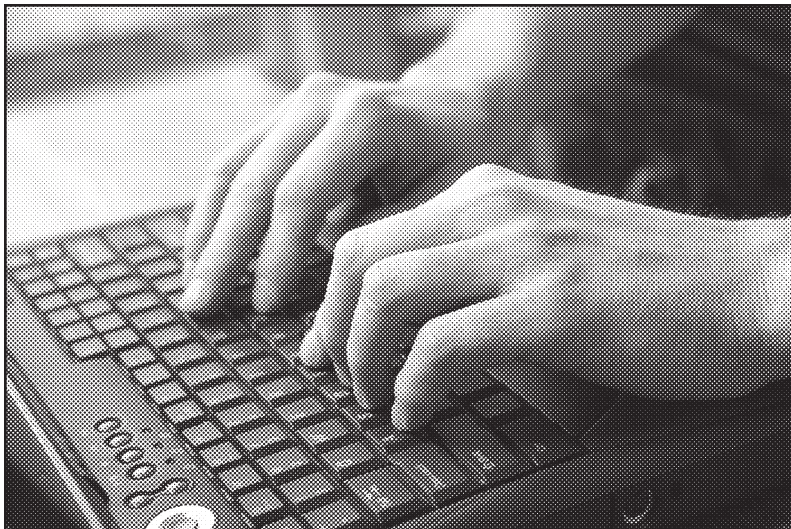
Sarnia: "Leadership" was the Wednesday evening study in October, looking toward appointing elders early in the New Year. Their present ministries have enabled more people to be involved in the local church work. Laura Doherty passed away on October 14. She was immersed into Christ in 1999 at the age of 83. In November, Randy and Sandy Jones moved from Edmonton to Sarnia.

Waterloo: "Life in a Fantasy World," GLBC's youth rally, was held November 20 with Michael Mazzalongo as guest speaker. On November 14 Frank Luri was scheduled to report on his trip to Uganda. The GLCC chorus was to sing for the congregation on November 21. A gospel meeting entitled: "Will & Grace: A True Story," with Drew Chapados as guest speaker, was planned for November 26-28. A "Bring Your Neighbour Day" was held October 24.

Windsor (West Side): Keenagers meet on Thursday mornings to study I Kings. Their annual community-clothing giveaway is to take place on December 2, 3 and 4.

QUEBEC

Verdun: Mike Mazzalongo was recently in Winnipeg for a youth rally. The congregation has a new website: www.verduncofc.org. Sunday afternoons the brethren have a puppet show, "Coco and His Friends," in which 25 members participate to present the program to their children and those of the Verdun community. "Mr. Mystery," Roger Saumur, who used to be a professional magician, is a great draw in the neighbourhood, not only to the children but also their mothers, grandmothers, aunts and neighbours, who are curious to see him. Michael and Roger and two other young men from the congregation attended the annual Bible lectureship at GLCC in Beamsville.



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MISSION NEWS

Barbara Lewis
1478 Mary Hill Lane
Port Coquitlam, BC V3C 4C3
E-mail: rayel@lightspeed.ca

U.S. Arlington, TX.: Mission Printing is celebrating 25 years of dedication to "World Evangelism By The Printed Page" on Dec. 18 with a potluck lunch followed by a time of sharing. Guy and Jessie Lee Caskey began this work upon their return from foreign work in Africa and Jamaica to fill a great need in these countries for the written word. Mission Printing was started in the basement of the North Davis building with a few volunteers. With ever-increasing demands from countries all over the world, after a few years it outgrew the space available, and with the help of several Arlington churches and individuals, was able to purchase and renovate its own facility. Still manned entirely with volunteer labour from churches in Northeast Texas, the volume of tracts and other reading material printed, packaged, and mailed each week now exceeds several tons.

Papua New Guinea: Velma Forman, a nurse from Abbotsford, BC, who has been working in Lae for the past 10 years, spoke to some two hundred women at the PNG Kibung in mid September. Over 600 walked eight kilometres from the Highlands Highway to Laswara for this annual event. Sessions on the theme "Jesus, The Last Man", took

place over a five-day period. Eleven people made the decision to become Christians, and were baptized in a nearby creek. A native Christian, Benray, has been hosting a Monday night fellowship in his home for up to 30 people. As a result, two women have been baptized, and he has been asked to speak at the Lutheran church's home studies.

India: In India the sisters prepare flat bread (chappati) for the Lord's Supper. It is always homemade, which is how the bread had to be prepared for the Passover feast. Karen Clayton writes, "How wonderful it would be if we had women in the church everywhere who cared enough to take the time to make the communion bread from scratch! I would like to think that I would never have to pick up a tiny nibblet or break a piece of cracker intended for a Jewish worship service in order to commemorate the death of our dear Saviour."

Ethiopia: AC International, a Danish organization that works with children in several nations, selected two of our brethren to come to a special seminar recently conducted in Denmark to tell them what the church is doing in Ethiopia. They were especially interested in our work with the deaf, the survival drip irrigation projects, and our well drilling program. This organization has provided assistance for the deaf work for several years, underwriting a project that helps the families of deaf children to be better able to communicate and relate to them. Curt King, our well driller, left Seattle on Oct. 7 to start the drilling of 50 new wells in the Badewatcho-Kambatta areas of Ethiopia. It took several weeks to move his equipment to the new area about 150 miles from where the last wells were completed, but now the drilling has begun. These will provide healthy water to some 200,000 people in an area where the church is very strong.

Thailand: Deborah Wilson, RN, spent three weeks with her daughter and son-in-law, Chris and Heather Carroll, who are working near the Laotian border. While there she had the opportunity to do much more teaching than before. Using material ladies in her home congregation in Ft. Smith, AR. had used from the book of Esther, she taught a weekly class of girls from the university. On the last night's study, she made small pastries to symbolize Haman's pockets, a treat that is used by Jews today who celebrate Purim. They also used noisemakers to make disrespectful noises when Haman's name was mentioned, which is another of the traditions used during Purim. On the last night, she gave the girls cheap cardboard crowns to decorate. As they were doing their artwork, Deborah talked with

them about being princesses when we are in Christ, because we are children of the King of Kings. Near the end of her visit, a ladies' day at Watcharapon gave her the opportunity to speak first about spiritual nutrition, from John 6 where Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life. Then Heather did a physical nutrition talk to some 40 women of all ages. Chris and Heather are trying to get visas to go into Laos to work in January. He has interviewed several English schools in the capital of Vientienne in search of a teaching position.

Sendai, Japan: After three busy months, the team returned to Japan at the end of October. They praise God for the safety of their furlough travels and for the many opportunities they had to report on the Sendai work in North America. They also thank the Christians in North America for their care and concern for the team during their furlough. Sendai news: Osamu Suzuki was baptized November 7. He is the first man to be converted in Sendai since the team arrived there 2 1/2 years ago. Please remember him in your prayers. "Offering," the team's singing group, sang at Shokei College's Annual Gospel Meeting on November 11. Pam Keese, former LST intern in Sendai, was able to fly over to participate in the event. Upcoming: The York College Chorus plans to fly to Sendai to perform next spring; and fifteen Christians from York, Nebraska, plan to fly to Sendai next summer to assist with the work. Above all, please remember to pray for: i. God's glorification in the Sendai work. ii. New Christians, and the contacts made through LST and other efforts. iii. Paul & Mitsuyo Mawatari, as they retire as full-time preacher and wife, at the end of December and begin fund raising for the new Christian school at Mt. Zao. iv. Sendai's church leaders. v. Prospective team members, David Moon, Lydia Fukushima, and Pam Keese, as they fundraise in North America.

Through caring Christian brothers and sisters, God blessed Jon & Michiko Straker, Joel Osborne, and the rest of the team with funds to meet their needs during the last two years. As you are able, please continue this support for their next 3-year term. (See pledge form included in Gospel Herald.) If you have questions about the Sendai work, please contact the Bramalea Church of Christ at 905-792-2297 or at bramaleacofc@bellnet.ca. You may also email Joel Osborne at joelosborne@yahoo.com or Jonathan and Michiko Straker at jstrake@yahoo.com. Or view the team's website at www.sendaimissions.com.

Walter Straker

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Music... continued from page 3

music, was written to be performed by amateurs.

Today, music (including Christian music) is written to be performed by highly skilled professionals supported with expensive equipment. It is often beyond the skill of a large number of Christian worshippers. As we import these songs into our services, we are in danger of creating spectator services where a few worship while the others observe. While I am not completely opposed to occasional use of difficult songs (ancient or modern), there is a theological difficulty with their regular use. To paraphrase Everett Ferguson, "Songs sung by someone else cannot be something that I offer to God." (87) The regular use of difficult music is an obstacle to worship for many today.

Conclusion

Decisions about music in the church are not just a matter of personal preference. The nature of biblical revelation says something about what kinds of music are acceptable. The fact that we are all called on to worship says something about the kinds of songs that should be chosen. The fact that we have been given instruction as to how to honour God must be considered.

I am not the judge of those who use instruments, or the judge of those who sing solos while the congregation listens. I am, however, the judge of what I will do in worship of God. What I will do is what he has commanded: I will sing with the spirit and with the understanding. I will not engage in music (whether vocal or instrumental) that appeals to the moods but fails to convey understandable content. I will not lead songs that leave out a sizeable portion of the assembled worshippers.

Uzzah and his friends substituted a method of moving the ark learned from the Philistines for the one God had commanded. That choice led to a crisis in which Uzzah touched the ark and died. The current emphasis on what appeals to humans (whether "seekers" or current members), is leading us away from the God-Centredness which is the hallmark of Christian worship. The current emphasis on creating the right mood is putting us at the mercy of our moods, and leaving the youth of the church shockingly ignorant of basic biblical teaching. Our current tendency to follow the world of professional entertainers is making it difficult for many to participate. These are issues with serious theological implications. We need to face that fact and quit hiding behind the claim that it is all about personal preference.

Regina, SK

Those interested in a more detailed examination of these issues are referred to Everett Ferguson, *A Cappella Music in the Public Worship of the Church*. Abilene, Tx: Biblical Research Press, 1972, and his article on "Music" in the *Encyclopaedia of Early Christianity*, 1997. Also very helpful are the articles by the faculty of the Austin Graduate School of Theology published in *Christian Studies* Number 19, 2003. Similar concerns about the difficulty of modern music are also expressed in Iain H. Murray's "Praise! - A Concluding Assessment of the Discussion Raised by the New Hymn Book," published in *The Banner of Truth* issue 451, April 2001.

Please help the Sendai team in God's work to make

The Land of the Rising Sun A Land of the Risen Son

Joel Osborne and Jonathan Straker are still in need of support for the mission work in Sendai, Japan. If you would like to find out more about this work and how you can help, you can check out their website at www.sendaimissions.com or contact the

Bramalea church of Christ
750 Clark Blvd. / Brampton, ON L6T 3Y2
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Make cheques payable to the Bramalea church of Christ.

OBITUARIES

Bilak, Epi Stephan

Epi Stephan Bilak, 78, died on October 27, 2004, after a long battle with cancer. An evangelist, his radio program, "The Messenger of Truth," was heard throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union for more than 30 years. Within three months of the fall of the Iron Curtain (December 1989), Stephan and his wife, Reba, returned to Ukraine to investigate possibilities of planting a congregation in his beloved homeland. It wasn't long before a group of believers began meeting for worship. This group is now the Old Park Church of Christ in Ternopil, Ukraine.

Stephan was born May 13, 1926 in Kosmeryn, Ukraine, and was the first child of Dimitri and Anna Derkach Bilak. At the age of 15, the Nazis took him to work in forced labour camps in Germany.

Stephan and Reba (Denny) were married in 1954. They graduated from David Lipscomb in 1957. They did mission work in Canada and Plattsburg, New York. In 1959 they began to teach at Michigan Christian College (now Rochester College). In 1969 they moved to Lausanne, Switzerland, a neutral country during the Cold War, which allowed for easier access to correspondence with radio listeners. In addition to his mission work with the Slavic nations, he served as the preacher for the L'Eglise du Christ in Lausanne from 1972 to 1985. Reba passed away in February 1999.

In May 2001, Stephan married Carolyn Halbert Pletz in San Antonio, Texas. They travelled to Ukraine to encourage the Christians in Ternopil.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn, two daughters, Rebecca (Tim) Meixner, Stephanie (Brady) Smith, and son, Paul (Monica). One stepson, Randy (Debbie), one stepdaughter, Alison Boggs. Eight grandchildren, three step-grandchildren, one brother and one sister. His parents, wife, Reba and one son, James, predeceased him.

A funeral service was held in Lausanne on November 2, 2004. May God bless all those who mourn his passing.

*Adapted from Slavic World
for Christ Newsletter*

Doherty, Edith Eveleen

On October 19, 2004 Edie Doherty, the only surviving original member of the Strathmore Blvd. congregation, passed away in Kitchener, ON, at the age of 95 years. Edie was a part

of the congregation that moved from Main St. and began meeting at 346 Strathmore Blvd. in Toronto in 1924. She was an active member of the congregation until her health required that she move to live with her daughter, Joyce Cisecki, in Kitchener.

Her church family, for her devotion to service and her joyful spirit, will lovingly remember Edie. She will also be remembered for her poetry that brought a laugh and/or a tear as she wrote about the church family events and activities. She provided accommodation for many who came to the city for school or work and needed a place to live. The "renters" found that they were soon "family" and were blessed by this saintly woman's influence.

Edie was the wife of the late Robert Doherty. She is lovingly mourned by her children, Joyce (Wally) Cisecki, Maureen (Vic) Trozzi, Gloria (George) Stoll, Karen McKenna, and Debra (Roger) Toner. Daughters, Glenda Stoll and Sylvia Graham, predeceased her. Her grandchildren, family, many friends, and her church family also mourn her while rejoicing in their memories of her life spent in serving God.

The writer and Geoffrey Ellis conducted a service of thanksgiving for her life on October 22, 2004. We give thanks for her life lived in

club and had several medals for judging and showmanship.

His father raised purebred Shorthorn Cattle, and Gordon developed a keen interest in them that continued on for many years.

Summer fairs were an important part of their lives, as they trucked their cattle from place to place to enter competitions. Their success is evidenced by a quilt made entirely of prize ribbons.

In early years they drove with horses to Carman to Church each Sunday. (17 miles) In summer they'd take a picnic lunch and eat in the park. In winter they would eat at friends' homes before the long trip back to the farm. Gordon served as a deacon of the Church for most of his adult life.

In 1940 he married Anne Sinclair, daughter of D.A. Sinclair, who was the minister of the Church of Christ in Carman.

In the next few years Gordon and Anne had four daughters. He loved children and as their own family grew up they opened up their home to others. The Manitoba Children's Aid Society acknowledged their 30 years of caring for children. Three became permanent family. Amazingly, Dad was 62 when Michael, just an infant, came to their home.

Many, many times during the years of elementary schooling Dad would hitch up the team of horses to the sleigh and transport the girls a couple miles across the prairies to and from school. In keeping with his Godly values, he unselfishly sent his children to Western Christian College in Saskatchewan.

It seemed like every summer Dad's home became a vacation refuge for the scattered family and the many grandchildren can testify to a wonderful holiday on the farm. And to quote Dad, "I can't find my hammer!" In 1990 all the family gathered in honour of their 50th wedding anniversary. The celebration, a "come and go tea" took place in the Miami

Community Centre, followed by a dinner for family and close friends. Fireworks back on the farm brought an end to a lovely day.

At the age of 86, in 1994, Dad began a whole new chapter in his life. They subdivided off the house and yard and sold it to a young couple and bought a home on Mountain Ave, in Kelowna. Dad continued to farm a half section via a leased arrangement with his nephew Dennis Laycock. In 1989 the family farm named "Springbank", was acknowledged as a "Century Farm".

God blessed Dad with good physical health and clarity of mind. He continued to drive the car until he was 94. The last place he drove was to Church.

continued...

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service to God and pray that God will bless those who mourn.

Max Craddock

Laycock, Gordon

Gordon Laycock was born to Tom and Kate Laycock on March 1, 1908, in the home of his grandfather, John Laycock, Rosebank, Manitoba. He had two brothers, Lorne and Russell and two sisters, Helen and Alice.

At four years of age he started school at Ager, with his brother Lorne who was six years old but too shy to go alone. He took some high school in Rosebank and also had piano and violin lessons.

In his early teens he belonged to a calf

Obituaries continued...

In conclusion, Dad lived a long wonderful life. He trusted God and God blessed him. He died peacefully and left a great legacy of children, grand children, great-grandchildren and many, many memories. Yvonne Parker (Laycock)

Nyarkoh, Georgina Konadu

The death of a spouse is always difficult for the one left, and especially so, when a wife and mother dies suddenly, leaving behind an 18 month old daughter. Georgina Nyarkoh was born in Tema, Ghana, West Africa and came to Canada to be with her husband, Kofi, in 2002. She was admitted to hospital on October 5 and was diagnosed with a brain tumour. Georgina passed away suddenly on October 16, 2004.

Kofi met his future wife, a spiritually minded young lady, in December 1991 at a gospel meeting in Tema. They were married in July of 1993. In 1995 Kofi came to Toronto to prepare for a better life for them here in Canada. During the time of their separation, Georgina ran her own hairdressing saloon at Tema. Finally, early in 2002, she was able to join her husband in Toronto. In May of 2003 they were blessed with a daughter, Priscilla.

As well as her husband and daughter, Georgina leaves her parents, Paul Yeboah and Martha Okyere in Ghana, her many friends in Ghana and Canada, along with her Strathmore church family, to mourn her passing.

On November 6, 2004 friends and family gathered at the funeral home to pay their respects. There was a time of praise and thanksgiving in her memory conducted in the Ghanaian tradition, followed by a memorial service conducted by the writer. Moises Velasco, a deacon at Strathmore, led the singing. Many people attended the services from the Ghanaian community in Toronto and from as far away as Texas. There was also a group who came from the church in Lachine, QC to give their support to Kofi in this time of grief. May God bless those who mourn the passing of this young Christian wife and mother.

Max Craddock

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of (the Prophet) David who used to fast on alternate days. And the most beloved prayer to Allah was the prayer of David who used to sleep for (the first) half of the night and pray for 1/3 of it and (again) sleep for a sixth of it."

Some radical Muslims still practice this kind of worship. I know some of my neighbors who used to fast three days a week all through the year. And several who woke up in the middle of the night consistently to pray. My dad did it for some time, and he would worship LOUDLY so he could get us to wake up and join him, which only had the opposite effect on us.

Why I'm not a Muslim anymore

One of the main problems with Islam as a religion is found clearly in Ramadan. I don't mean Ramadan itself, but some core beliefs of Islam are clearly stated in the teachings about fasting.

1. Fasting can be viewed as a punishment for sin which contradicts the concept of fasting as worship. "Allah does not call you to account for what is vain in your oaths, but He calls you to account for the making of deliberate oaths; so its expiation is the feeding of ten

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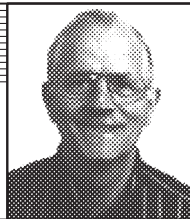
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BOOK REVIEWS

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



The Case for a Creator by Lee Strobel,
Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI. 341 pages,
\$20.99 (Cdn)

In this excellent book, Lee Strobel, minister, journalist, and former legal editor of the Chicago Tribune, uses his journalistic skills to interview nine scientists and philosophers, experts in their fields, who show that discoveries in cosmology, physics, astronomy, biochemistry, biology, and human consciousness point to God. Strobel, himself a former spiritual skeptic, presents the arguments that led him away from God and the arguments that brought him back again.

The author presents the intricate design of our universe as evidence for God. For instance, Strobel provides specific examples from physics and astronomy that reveal that the Earth and the universe are perfectly suited to sustain life, and that if they were not designed as they are, life would be impossible.

In another instance Strobel interviews biochemist Michael Behe, who demonstrates that certain things such as the incredible system for transporting proteins within the

cells and the process of blood clotting are “irreducibly complex” systems that could not have developed gradually over time as Darwinian evolution requires. He concludes that these systems are strong evidence for a purposeful, intentional design by a Creator.

This book confirms the faith of believers and presents arguments to convince unbelievers. It is not light reading, but is very thought provoking and inspiring.

You might also be interested in two of Strobel’s earlier books: *The Case for Christ* and *The Case for Faith*.

Reviewed by Jim Holston.

Think Biblically, Recovering a Christian Worldview, by John MacArthur with *The Master’s College Faculty*, 368 pages, \$19.99 (U.S.), Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois

John MacArthur is a conservative, evangelical preacher and teacher who has written many helpful books. Although we disagree on some topics like baptism and apostasy, we agree on such themes as the inspiration and

authority of the Bible.

He writes “The power of God is not found in some mystical, extra-biblical source of knowledge, the use of signs and wonders and ecstatic utterances, the insights of secular psychology and philosophy, or clever insights into people’s felt needs. But rather the power of God resides only in the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God. When believers read, study, obey and apply Scripture, they will realize it has sufficient power to deal with any situation in life.” He also sees Psalm 19 as the most concise and direct treatment of the sufficiency of Scripture in all the Bible.

MacArthur contends that only the Scripture can redeem, renew and illuminate the mind of man so it can become more Christlike. He ably refutes the atheistic beliefs of popular authors like Carl Sagan, Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Fredrick Nietzsche. He also says that evolution is degrading to humanity, hostile to reason and antithetical to the truth God has revealed.

Another chapter deals with “Coming To Grips With Sin.” Here he discusses Genesis 3 which he regards as one of most vitally important chapters in the Bible. Ezekiel 28 is seen as “the clearest account of Satan’s rebellion. But with great inconsistency he partially quotes Matthew’s and Mark’s records of the Great Commission and omits any reference to baptism! Apart from such flaws, this is a good introduction to thinking biblically.

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poor men out of the middling (food) you feed your families with, or their clothing, or the freeing of a neck; but whosoever cannot find (means) then fasting for three days; this is the expiation of your oaths when you swear; and guard your oaths. Thus does Allah make clear to you His communications, that you may be faithful.” Surah 5:89

This was one of the main reasons that got me to see that Islam is a legalistic religion devoid of grace. Sin should always be punished. When you do something wrong you have to do something else to get righteous again with God. However Jesus said that we can’t do any thing to get our sins forgiving and it is only because of Grace that we are forgiven. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a

sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood. (Romans 3: 23–25).

2. I have heard people say that in Islam and Judaism forgiveness comes from sacrificing animals. Concerning Islam that is WRONG. Islam does depend on sacrifice on some level but it depends way more on paying by your deeds and works. If you do something in which you sin, you should do something else to redeem yourself from your sin. Consider the following example (Narrated Abu Huraira). A person had sexual relation with his wife in the month of Ramadan (while he was fasting), and he came to Allah’s Apostle seeking his verdict concerning that action. The Prophet said (to him), “Can you afford to manumit a slave?” The man said, “No.” The Prophet said, “Can you fast for two successive months?” He said, “No.” The Prophet said, “Then feed sixty poor persons.” The man in this story was asked not just to repent but

to do something to free him from his sin. First was to free a slave. And if you can’t you should fast for 60 days without breaking one day for any reason. And only if you have a good enough reason of why you can’t then you have to feed 60 poor persons. These are all good acts, but can we get forgiveness by our good acts? There is no way to be able to see God’s grace through such a legalistic system. I remember thinking that I have no way to make it to heaven with all these rules. I had to decide whether I want to live in hypocrisy or be real and not live it at all. When I started studying the Bible it was a shock for me to see how much grace is there. I heard people say... it is hard to be a Christian, and I thought. “Man, you’re lucky you did not live as Muslim.” By living as a Christian, I am able to live with the understanding that God is Love and He is the God of Grace.

Jerusalem, Israel

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and shifted practice so far that they have moved into an entirely different constituency.

Let's put it another way. How much confidence and trust should our readers have in our directory? Why is this important? The answers lie in the purpose of the directory. It is intended to be a service for travellers who want to locate a nearby congregation with which they can associate and fellowship in good conscience. Our readers want to know that they can, with reasonable confidence, visit any congregation listed. The listings in the directory are advertisements paid for by the congregations. As a general policy, those responsible for the ads placed in the Gospel Herald do not accept anything that could be considered misleading or false. It is time to extend this policy to the directory.

A recent letter to the editors of the Gospel Herald and copied to the congregation involved proves the point. A Christian from the United States used the directory to locate a congregation where he was visiting. Depending on the listings in the GH, he visited that congregation. Imagine his disappointment to find himself in a situation on Sunday morning with a four-piece band, an audience that was "listening instead of singing," a woman speaking and a minister who is listed in the bulletin as the Senior Pastor! The copy of the bulletin/order of service he also sent described a regular Saturday night activity, "Jammin' for Jesus!" which included the line, "Bring your instruments, your voices, but most of all your enthusiasm and love for singing praises to Jesus!! ...We're here to

worship!" This brother's frustration was evident when he concluded, "I don't know why they choose to be deceptive and not advertise their true colors." We must accept part of the responsibility for that, since his visit was based on the listing in our directory. We will not continue to list that congregation in the directory. We owe that to our readers, to God and to our own consciences.

This should not be a surprise to those choosing to reject our belief in unaccompanied singing in worship. If they are, they have forgotten the division that occurred a century ago over this very same thing. Those congregations using instruments, in that decision, are choosing to follow the path associated with the Independent Christian Churches or the Disciples of Christ.

As said earlier, we have no desire to play judge. We have a responsibility to our readers to maintain the integrity and accuracy of our directory. We are not judging, only recognizing the judgment made by others to reject what they know to be our convictions and our conscience. While we do not intend to go on a "witch hunt", we hope that any congregation that chooses to reject our beliefs will have the integrity to voluntarily terminate its listing.

Some will criticize and condemn us for taking this stand. Based on the responses and concerns we are hearing from many Christians across the country, we believe most of our readers will support and approve. Ultimately, we must all follow our convictions and consciences, for we must all give an account to God.

The Editors

