

# Gospel

# Herald

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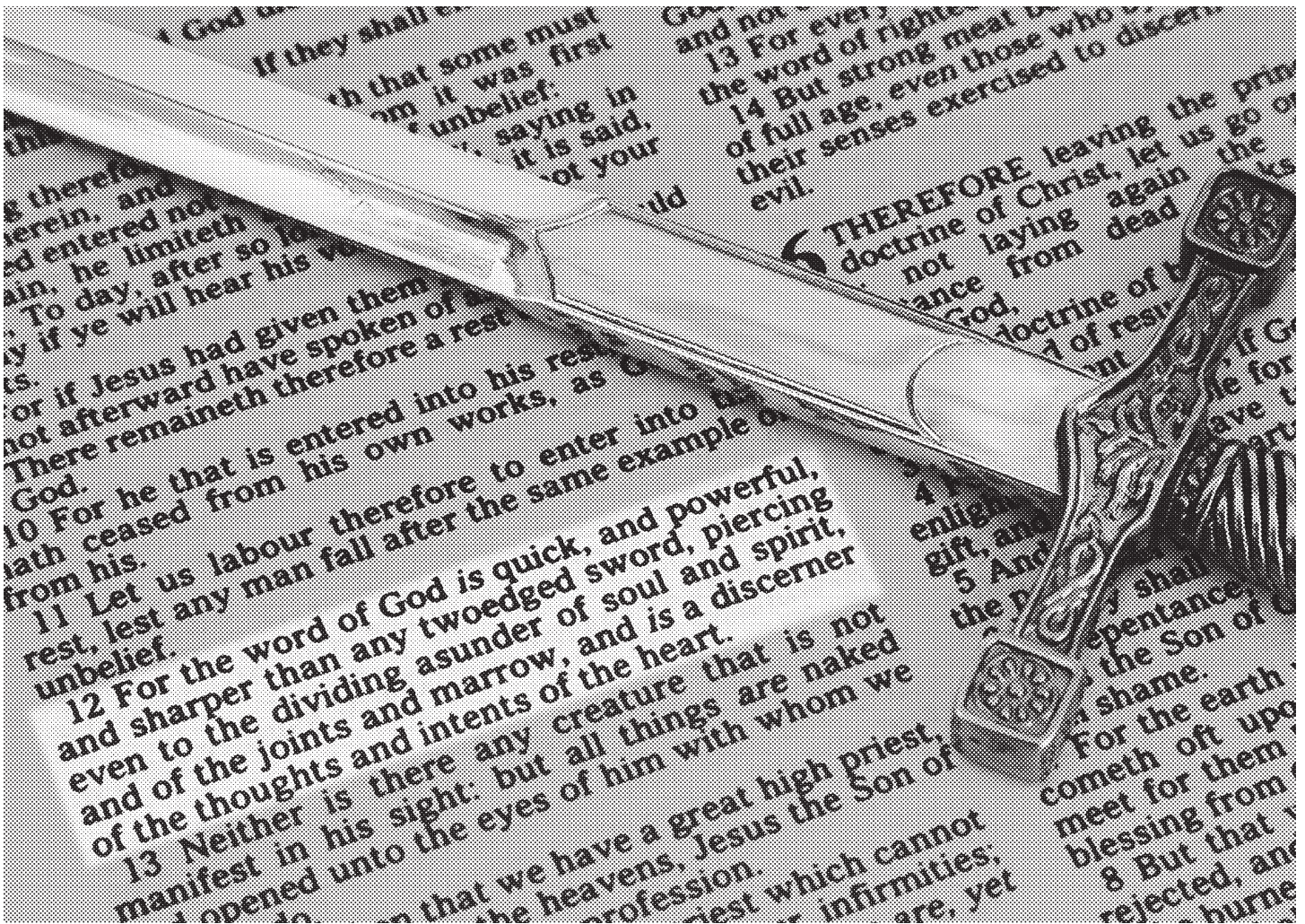
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# Why the Church Loses People

Drew Chapados

*(Editor's note: Drew did a series in the West Side Windsor, ON, bulletin on the theme of why the Church loses members. His thoughts on this subject are worthy of thoughtful consideration.)*

“Drew, I felt I owed it to call you to let you know that I will no longer be attending the church—I just can’t do it anymore, I have been struggling with this for awhile and I would really appreciate it if this were the last contact you tried to make with me.”

That was a phone call I received from the second person I had ever studied the Bible with (who was not of Church of Christ background) who accepted the gospel and was baptized into Jesus Christ. He had a real heart to study as much as he could. That phone call was probably the hardest one I had ever received as a minister up to that point.

What had caused him to decide he ‘couldn’t’ attend anymore? What had he been struggling with for quite some time?

He had come to the point that since his parents were not going to accept the gospel message the way he had accepted it—he could no longer struggle with the idea that his parents were not going to be among the saved. His solution was that if that were the case, it would be better to simply give up everything.

Sometimes the conversion to Christianity means that people who once were close to us will treat us horribly. That is a pain that is very difficult for people to cope with and the hope is that the church, the new family of God’s people that they are now a part of, can help and offer support. Other times it is the reverse—it isn’t that they mistreat us but somehow we now find a tension that didn’t exist before. (See Matthew 10:34-39)

Our logical minds begin to work overtime—if the gospel of Jesus is needed for salvation and I have accepted that—then

what was true and good for me is true and can be good for them. Why won’t they accept it? What does it mean if they don’t?

The struggle of our caring for loved ones who are lost can be a real powerful deterrent to church membership. How do we respond to those of our number who are feeling such difficulty? How do we continue strong in Jesus despite the growing tension?

1) A lot of reminding that Jesus is good news! Jesus often interacted with people who were mistreated or rejected for associating with him (See John 9:35)

2) Prayer is a needed practice! We need to be encouraged to never lose the feeling of praying for our loved ones and also praying for the needed encouragement to keep going. I remember one woman who never stopped praying for her husband and after 50 years of marriage he was baptized into Jesus just 3 years before he died.

3) Compassion for those in such a state! We may never identify with the struggle and we may not personally know their trial—but having compassion goes a long way. To be cold about those who may be lost will not be a feeling they will want to share in or be around.

The sad thing is that, at times, people leave the Church—one reason is the struggle they feel over the ‘lostness’ of loved ones. Let us all pray for God’s guidance to be able to assist all those who face such difficulties.

(btw—the end of the above story: 3 years later I was speaking out of town

and the same guy heard I was going to be there and decided to show up to tell me the worst decision he ever made was leaving the church and he was now back and had come to better terms with his family’s choices and his decision to follow Jesus).

Some have a major problem dealing with horrible past sins, the first big sin after baptism, or the inability to feel as morally good as other people seem to be. Perhaps you have experienced those concerns.

Truth be told, only the most arrogant would not have experience with the difficulty that come from all three of those and the real problem is that whenever we are going through the shame or self-loathing from any of them we can feel like we are unique in it. Let me get one thing straight—not everyone leaves the Church because they are rebellious, willingly sinful or uninterested in Jesus. Now, do they do the right thing by leaving the Church? Not at all, but there are so many choices people make that aren’t healthy or good for them because the reasons for doing so are from a misguided viewpoint and not just an evil viewpoint!

Here is the problem with what we’re talking about today: the Love of God is seen as a wonderful thing to have. To just be loved by the Creator of the world and Father of Jesus Christ is a dream for so many. The Love of God, however, can become something that is seen as a wage to be earned rather than a gift to be received. We want to be loved by God but feel we must somehow measure up to a standard to be worthy to receive it. The reasons for such views can be many,

but one of the main reasons would be this: the person has come to realize that every other relationship they have had has been a conditional love and never an unconditional love. So, because the sweet love of God is something to be earned and not freely received, the person begins to believe the lie that because of sin they really

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## NOTICE

All materials for publication must be in the hands of the editors by the tenth (10) day of the month preceding the date of issue. Date of issue is the first of each month.

# Three Key Truths (ISAIAH 66:7-24)

*Thayer Salisbury*

The final chapter of Isaiah revisits the main themes covered in the book as a whole. Throughout the book, Isaiah's task has been to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Isaiah's task is to remind people of their purpose, to comfort those afflicted with a sense of failure, and to afflict those who are refusing their task. This is still his task here at the end.

## God's People at Peace

Isaiah tells God's people they will be at peace (vv 7-14). After decades of decline, and 70 years of exile, the Lord will quickly restore the nation. Earlier they had failed at bringing forth new life (26:17-18). But now, the promise of children for the barren nation will come true quickly (7-9). The difference being that earlier they had attempted to bring forth life on their own. Now, reduced to hopelessness by the exile, they will depend on the Lord. We rely too much on ourselves. We have too little trust in the power of God. We are troubled and sinful, but our situation is not as desperate as theirs. As the Lord offered peace to the Jews returning from exile, so he offers it to us as we return from our spiritual exile and turn to Him.

The Lord still offers us peace (Jn 14:27); not an absence of conflict but peace in the midst of conflict. We need to trust him more, and ourselves less. We need confidence in God. It is not by our power or goodness that we will succeed, but by the power of God. As John reminds us, "Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

## God Glorified

The end goal is not just that Jerusalem be restored, or that

Judah, or the church, enjoys an era of prosperity and comfort, but that the Lord be glorified in all the earth (18-19). According to these verses, the nations were to be taught so that they could give glory to the Lord. This is made even more clear in the New Testament (Mt 28:19), but somehow we have not taken it to heart.

Somehow God's people seem to have lost their sense of purpose. It is not just about being saved from hell, it is about being fitted for heaven. We exist to "glorify God and enjoy him forever." That is what we will be doing in eternity and that is what we ought to be doing here. Isaiah has been clear about the glory of God (Isa 6:3) and the purpose of his people (Isa 43:21). The New Testament confirms this purpose repeatedly (Eph 1:11-12).

The question of purpose is the great question of life. What are we for? What is our purpose? Why do we exist? If Christians do not have a clear answer to this question, who will? We need to live to the glory of God and to urge others to live to his glory. That means evangelism, for anyone who is not praising him must be taught to do so. It also means edification, for anyone praising him must be learning to do so better.

## The Unrepentant Lost.

God will restore his people and they will glorify him; but there is a terrible alternative (14-17, 24). The universe will not end a gray, tepid, lifeless, wasteland. It will end in fire - consuming, purifying fire (2 Peter 3:10). Jesus did not coin the terrible phrase about their worm not dying, Isaiah was the first to use it (24). But Jesus did affirm that concept (Mk 9:47-48), and we must do likewise. Taking the concept of hell out of the Lord's teaching is like taking the darkness out of a Rembrandt.

## What is really left?

Life would be pretty insipid if it was all going to end in a yawn. But it is not going to end that way. It is going to end in heaven or hell, eternal life or eternal death. The choice is as stark and dramatic as it can be. We do wrong when we downplay it. No matter what we have done, no matter how long we have been in exile, it can end in heaven for us. He can bring life, he can bring peace, he can restore. No matter what we do, no matter how hard we try, if we go on relying on ourselves, it will end in hell for us.

The book of Isaiah is not about us; it is not about Judah, it is not about Assyria or Babylon. First and foremost it is about the glorious God who can give beauty for ashes, hope in despair, life in the midst of death. When his plan reaches its fulfillment God's people will be at peace; God will be glorified; and those who have opposed him, those who have sought their own way instead of his, will be destroyed.

Toledo, OH

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## Either...Or

Wayne Turner



**M**any decisions in our lives are presented to us as “either...or” choices. Do you want coffee or tea? Cake or pie? Commercials argue whether a product should be eaten with a fork or a spoon. The basic framework of such a choice is the implication that the two choices are mutually exclusive—a person must choose one or the other, not both.

Sometimes, a decision must be made between two logical opposites. For example, we cannot choose to go both North and South at the same time. Yet there are times when a choice may be presented as “either...or” when both might be possible at the same time. (How many times have you heard someone answer whether they would like cake or pie say, “Yes, please” indicating they would like both.)

Churches sometimes make “either...or” decisions. For example, in more recent times, some, responding to the reports about generational differences between boomers, busters, gen-xers, millennials, etc. have chosen to totally reshape the church to target one specific age-group, typically young people. By creating an atmosphere that attracts a younger generation, they have tended to exclude people of other age groups, including older people who may have previously been long-term members of that church. More typically, over the past fifty or so years, churches have established youth ministries with personnel, resources, programmes and activities which are focused on young people. Youth programmes have proved invaluable for providing age and need specific teaching as well as building strong peer-group relationships. However, these groups have sometimes functioned so independently from the rest of the congregation, there may be little contact between them. Young people may feel little or no connection or loyalty to anything other than their youth group.

The extent to which this may be true is suggested by some startling statistics, released in 2009 and reported in Leadership, about what happens in the religious community at large as teenagers move into their 20's and 30's. Rainer Research suggested that, in the U.S., by the time young people reach the age of 22, about 70 percent have left the church. Barna added that by age 30, 80% were gone. Southern Baptists, long one of the fastest growing religious bodies, have found themselves unable to keep up with the birth rate. These figures suggest a need for a careful re-evaluation of “age-segmented” youth ministry. Among other possibilities, it appears that the fun and excitement of ministry tailored to the

young does little to prepare and connect them for living, working and worshipping in the greater community of the church. What will?

There are too many positives to totally abandon age-specific ministries completely. There is a need for young people to have positive peer-group relationships. They need to be able to share and discuss their experiences and problems with other young people. We need not see youth ministry as an “either...or”—have it or not. But, there needs to be something more.

Kara Powell, executive director of Fuller Youth Institute at Fuller Theological Seminary believes “the future of youth ministry is intergenerational youth ministry.” Powell suggests that 40 to 50% of teens struggle spiritually right after graduation because they have not connected with the rest of the church. Youth programmes need to make teens active parts of the ministry of the congregation not just the targets of it. Involvement in practical activity with others in the congregation can make a major difference for teens in their later lives. This might include participating in service projects, teaching younger children, leading in worship, etc. Powell observes, “a church needs to be committed to being a hub where 16 year olds can have real relationships not just with peers but with 35 year olds and 66 year olds.” Through intergenerational activities, young and old can get to know each other and begin to develop mutual respect and love. They can engage in conversations and build relationships. Young people feel welcomed and accepted, as older people no longer fear them, and older people feel more appreciated.

Building intergenerational relationships takes conscious effort. Many are afraid of rejection. Powell observes that people need to start small—a basic work project, even just a donut and a simple conversation.

Ministering to the various generations of our day

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### GOSPEL HERALD

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## Complacency

“Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel comes! Pass over to Calneh, and see, and from there go to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their territory greater than your territory, O you who put far away the day of disaster and bring near the seat of violence? ‘Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves out on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall, who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp and like David invent for themselves instruments of music, who drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! Therefore they shall now be the first of those who go into exile, and the revelry of those who stretch themselves out shall pass away.’” (Amos 6:1-7 ESV).

In the days of Amos, the people of God had become complacent toward God’s will and Amos warns them of the judgment that hung over their heads. They saw themselves as the “first of nations” (the foremost nation NIV) and had a false confidence for several reasons. (Their geography, situated in the mountains, their prosperity, perhaps their government and military strength.) False confidence, based on material resources, that ignores the spiritual dimension of life, is sure to lead to shameful defeat and/or a terrible eternity.

Complacency is a subtle sin, based on lies, motivated by pride, and causes one to trust in things and situations rather than in God.

The end of this kind of thinking is loss and destruction, separation from God for eternity. “At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts, ‘The Lord, will not do good, nor will he do ill’” (Zephaniah 1:12 ESV). Consider some of the members of the church in Laodicea (Revelation 3:17) as an example of the danger of complacency.

There are lessons to be learned from the people of Amos’ time. Learn them or suffer the sad consequences. A very important lesson to be learned is that the Christian life is never a life of total ease. We know that the Christian will always be opposed by evil and Satan and his servants will do all they can to overcome the Christian’s best efforts. There is daily “peer” pressure to conform to the ways of the world and to lessen our standards in every area of life.

It should never be a surprise to us that these pressures come. There are many warning in the scriptures that such will be the case. However, we are also reminded that the good shepherd will walk with us and protect us. (Psalm 23; John 10:11). God, in His greatness, is able to make things, even the difficult and stressful times, work out to be blessings in making us stronger in our Christian walk. (Romans 8:28) James tells us “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12 ESV).

It is sad that, because of the hardship which often comes to the Christian, some are not willing to endure. (Even though we are promised that we will be given strength to

overcome.) Some, because they are faint-hearted, others, because they love this present world, drift away because of neglect of duty. They appear to forget the price that was paid for their redemption thereby counting it as unimportant. The desires of the flesh and their fulfillment take first place over pleasing God. Their unwillingness to endure costs them heaven! Sad beyond words!

As scripture tells us, many are called but few are chosen. Many begin but fail to endure when the trials come. We need to set our minds to do God’s will and never, NEVER, let anything or anyone turn us from Him who loves us and died for us on the cross.

Let us not be guilty of underestimating the strength of the opposition. Satan is smart enough and strong enough to lead us away from our first love. However, he is not stronger than we are because God has provided us the protection we need if we will put on the armour He provides. “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm” (Eph. 6:10-13 ESV).

To win the Christian crown one must keep on keeping on. “But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls” (Hebrews 10:39 ESV). “Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act” (Psalm 37:3-5 ESV).

The true Christian is the one who

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## Give It Away

**A**t a time of year where I witnessed great generosity I also witnessed selfishness, sometimes even within myself. Selfishness is putting ourselves, our wants, our needs and our rights first. I wonder if selfishness is so difficult to defeat because we refuse to see it's ugliness in our lives. Unless we have made ourselves perfect we must recognize and confess the selfishness in our lives.

We may speak of "protecting our rights" or "getting what we need from the others in our lives." We may say that we are protecting our self-interests and that just must be different than selfishness. Yet this stands in stark contrast to Jesus example of dying for a world that would never deserve it. Can we protect our self-interests while at the same time dying with Christ (Romans 6:1-10)?

We wonder if there must surely be limits to our generosity. If there are limits they are not to be found in the Bible. The Bible speaks of giving all that we have. Jesus recognizes the poor widow in Mark 12:41-44 as an example of generosity, while the others may have given larger amounts they gave a small part of their wealth. The widow, being poor, gave from her poverty and gave everything that she had. Jesus clearly did not put limits on generosity.

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-6 Paul writes of the example of the Macedonian churches and how even though they were in poverty, they gave generously. He says that they gave beyond their ability to give. I am not exactly sure what that means, but I think it means that they gave so much that they could no longer maintain their

lifestyle. We might call it sacrificial giving because they gave so much that they had to radically change their lifestyle. Their generosity is an example to us.

How do we defeat selfishness? Study the scriptures with an open mind, do not seek to justify your present lifestyle but follow where the scriptures lead.

Do not wait until you feel generous. God gives us good feelings as a reward for doing the right thing not as a guide to doing the right thing.

Do not wait until you have conquered selfishness to be more generous. You can defeat selfishness by being more and more generous.

Do not do good for the appreciation, praise or the recognition of others. Too many have given up in discouragement because they were not appreciated or recognized. At the extreme other end of the spectrum are those who will never do any good if they think there is even a chance of someone finding out about it. Their good works are hindered by a lack of anonymity. We are not to seek the appreciation, praise or recognition of others for the good that we do, but there may be good reasons for our good deeds to be known. Your good deeds are a positive example to others, generosity is contagious and your good works will inspire others to serve as you have. It is not wrong to be appreciated for the good you have done, it is wrong to do good for that reason only.

You may find it helpful to work with a team as you seek to be more and more generous. Working with a team will help you keep on track. When you get discouraged you will have teammates who can encourage

you. When others are discouraged you can encourage them. You can learn from others on your team as you seek to be more and more generous.

There are many opportunities to be generous, in fact, so many that the needs aren't all being met. Look for opportunities where you can get outside yourself and involved with something bigger than yourself. There are great opportunities where you go to church where you can give and serve and learn and grow. In a few short months our summer camps will be up and running again, soon those leading in these camps will be recruiting individuals who will seek to give of themselves and serve at Camp. There are a host of community based organizations that serve the needs of many in the community. There is a wonderful side benefit to serving in these areas—we make wonderful friends. Some of the closest friends I have on this earth are those I have served with—it hardly seems like sacrificing and serving when we are serving with such wonderful people.

Look in your neighbourhood for those with needs that you can meet. You may find a single mother who desperately needs a baby sitter that she really can't afford. You may find someone so lonely that their heart is broken. Just sitting down with them every couple of days and having a coffee will help heal their hurts. You may find an older person that needs help with shovelling the snow or cutting the grass. You may find a family that needs a box of groceries or some clothes etc...

Do not let the rejections discourage you but remember that often those who need help the most are the first to reject it. Humbly and kindly offer your help and respect their answer.

Generosity is contagious and it is a thrill to see it passed on to others. Karoline is 5 years old and a frequent visitor in our home. She was visiting for lunch one day and as she was getting ready to go out to

wait on the school bus she noticed a bowl of her favourite candies on the kitchen table. She asked if she could take some to eat on the school bus, BonnieLee told her how many she could take and she sought to bargain the number up a little and headed out the door with a couple of candies in her mouth and some in her pocket. As she waited with her friends for the school bus to pick them up she proceeded to open her pocket and

share her treasured candies with her friends and we watched from our porch as three little girls chewed and smiled from ear to ear.

Karoline showed up at the store heartbroken one day because she had to have yet another needle-shot and she is terrified of needle-shots. BonnieLee had told her that I would get her a treat at the store, she looked and looked and looked and was having a hard time deciding

what she wanted until she saw a package of sugar cookies, a favourite Christmas treat for her. She asked if she could get them and I said sure and reminded her that she didn't need to eat the entire package in one day. She brought her treasured cookies back to the Medical Clinic where her father worked and proceeded to share her precious cookies with all she found there. Generosity is contagious!

*Editorial... continued from page 4*

need not be based on an "either...or" decision. Rather, it should be seen as "both...and"—including rather than segregating. A congregation should not have to choose between old or young. In God's design, the church is intergenerational, old and young working and worshipping together. Both old and young are to be examples to one another. They are to love and respect each other as fellow members of the body, for this is how the world will identify Christ's disciples.

For older Christians, Powell reminds us of the large family gatherings where the adults sat at one table and the kids at the other. More than anything else, those at the children's table looked forward to the day when they would be able to sit at the adult table. "I remember what a privilege it was to be invited to the adult table. Adults underestimate how much kids want to be with us. Kids are far more interested in talking to caring, trustworthy adults than we think they are."

Perhaps the starting point is that we no longer call our teens the church of tomorrow and welcome them to the adult table as part of the church today.



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# The Minority

Kevin Cleary

In Numbers chapter thirteen, the people of Israel come to Kadesh and from there Moses is told to send spies into the Land of Canaan and evaluate it. When the spies return, ten out of twelve give a bad report and convince the people that they should not attempt to take the Land. Many times in our Christian life we can feel like Joshua and Caleb (the two dissenting spies) knowing what should be done and wanting to do it, but it seems that everyone else is against us. A Christian today is going to find him or herself at odds with those around them on a number of important issues. Moral judgements, religious practices, natural sciences and philosophy are all areas where a Christian will be holding the minority position.

It is never easy to be the odd man out, to think and act differently from our peers. Although it may not seem like it at the time, this is very often exactly where we should want to be.

Consider the example of Elijah on Mount Carmel. Elijah shows up at the famous showdown in 1Kings 18 to face 450 prophets of Baal. Not only is he greatly outnumbered but they

have the backing of the queen. As it turns out, God is with Elijah and the prophets of Baal are destroyed. In hindsight we can all agree that the minority position was by far, the better one to hold.

This does not mean that it is easy. In the next chapter we see Elijah feeling the pressure of loneliness. He is crippled by it, "I alone am left and they seek my life as well". God has to remind Elijah that there is important work for him to do and he is not alone in this world, "There are seven thousand who have not bowed a knee to Baal". Elijah needed to learn that he was not alone, that God was with him and there were others who were faithful. We must remember the same thing.

Just like the seven thousand in Israel in Elijah's day, there are always those who remain faithful to God. This truth is expressed throughout the Old Testament in the phrase "righteous remnant". In Isaiah 10:20-22, God points out that although it will be bad for Judah when Assyria comes, they will not be completely destroyed but a remnant will be left. Amos 3:12 makes the same point about the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The remains of them will be like the small portion of a sheep that the shepherd could snatch from the Lion. In Israel it was not the many but the few who were faithful and would be preserved.

This concept is used in Isaiah 11 of those who would come to the righteous branch, the Messiah. Just as in times past in the Christian age it is the few who will be saved, not the many. Jesus makes this point in the Sermon on the Mount when he says in Matthew 7:13-14 "enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few." Following the crowd is always going

to be the easiest but not always the best. Columbus's idea that the world was round was not popular in his day, nor was Galileo's idea that the earth orbited the sun. It would have been much easier for these men and others throughout history to just give in to the majority. Christians today are going to increasingly find themselves in a similar situation but we must remember that the easy way is not always the best.

It's not easy on the road that leads to life. There will be struggles, not the least of these, that you will be chided by those who are in the majority. Not many will be on the right path. That means don't worry if you don't think or believe as most people do. You don't want to be on the same path as them anyway. As Christians, we are to be like Christ and remember the reception He was given by the majority.

Remember back to those spies from Numbers thirteen. If we look ahead to the book of Joshua we find that of the twelve spies they were the only ones allowed to enter the Promised Land. It turns out being in the minority was a good thing. Today as we are accosted with the world's view of everything from Gay marriage to Abortion to the value of material success, it's much easier to go with the flow and try to fit in with the majority. As we face pressure from the broader Christian world, and even from our brethren, to give up the truths of scripture taught and practiced in churches of Christ. I hope that we have learned though that being in the minority, although a little tougher, is really the place that we want to be. It will be hard, but I leave you with the words Jesus gave the apostles after telling them how hard they would have it. "In the world you will have trouble but fear not I have overcome the world" John 16:33.

Meaford, ON



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*Why The Church Loses People... continued from page 2*

are worth nothing and so the temptation comes on stronger and stronger making one believe the worst about themselves, so they withdraw from church.

**What can the church do?**

1) There will be some, no matter how hard we try, who will not be convinced that they are the object of God's love. They will simply go on believing they could never be.

2) We must, however, never give the impression that someone is, in fact, less 'deserving' than the rest of us are. The simple fact of the matter is that all have sinned and fall short (Romans 3:23) so none have any reason to feel superior to others, not needing God's grace.

3) We must continue to preach a message of solid grace! Sin is wrong—the church cannot pretend that it isn't. But where sin is, forgiveness is available! God's forgiveness will cover our sins because Jesus' blood has cleansing power for all who obey. We need to do our best to preach to people a message of righteousness, mercy, compassion and healing!

It is hard for many to believe that there exists in the world today a love that says I choose to love you, not because you have displayed something worthy of my love, not because you have met my needs, not because you have served me in some exceptional way, but simply because I choose to love you freely so you might feel my love, feel accepted, feel secure and feel that you belong forever with me. "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" Romans 5:8.

Windsor, ON

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# *Be Missional...*



Andrea works with *Let's Start Talking Canada*, a non-profit organization which trains volunteers to help international people in Canada and overseas improve their conversational English skills using the Bible.

*"When I was a student at Western Christian College, I had the chance to go on my first mission trip. I learned a lot on that trip because of the mentoring of a college professor and his family who accompanied us. My life has been changed forever because I had the opportunity to go and share my faith. Sharing the story of Jesus is now my life's mission."*

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**Reminder:** To be published in the following month's Gospel Herald, each congregation's information should be sent to Walter Straker by the 10th of the month preceding the date of issue, which is the first of each month. Please clearly mark the email or the envelope: "NewsEast."

### ONTARIO

**Beamsville:** A clothing collection for Community Care was held on December 13, 2009, and a special financial offering for "Wells of Hope" on Sunday, December 20, 2009. This organization, built on Christian principles, is committed to responding to the cry of the poor, and to help them attain for themselves the basic necessities of clean water, education, and basic health care in the mountainous regions of Guatemala. Students from Senator Gibson School enjoyed fellowship with the congregation at breakfasts on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. A total of 20 students had registered by Sunday, December 6.

**Bramalea:** The annual New Year's Eve celebration was attended by 29 individuals who welcomed in 2010 with games, food and prayers. The ladies held a planning dinner on January 19, 2010, to decide how God wants them to put their talents to work. A meeting to plan for a 2010, summer vacation Bible school was held January 17. Kevin Hunter began a 3-month series on "2010 Renewal," in which each of his Sunday lessons will be studied in four adult Bible classes the following Sunday. The plan is to develop a closer relationship to God by making our lives better reflect the life of our Lord Jesus. The Thursday p.m. girls' class and their teachers knitted and sent 40 scarves to Neskantaga via Brian and BonnieLee Cox.

**Brantford:** Preachers for the congregation in December were Jim Holston, Brian Boden, Wayne Whitfield and Guy Stoppard. The congregation continues to deposit spare change in the "Change Box for Food" as well as donate hats, mitts and scarves to Central Public School. Several in the congregation met on New Year's Eve to play games and have snacks to welcome in 2010.

**Cambridge:** Greg Whitfield reports: An adult who drops in to drink coffee and chat with us, recently asked: "What I want to know is, do you get to bring your stuff to the next life or do you have to start all over?" "That is exactly what the Bible talks about!" I exclaimed, while turning to 1 Timothy 6, and thinking this was the first time in my life where verse 7 had not been taken as a matter of fact. We explored together what laying up your treasure in heaven means. He asked if it is okay to go after both God and wealth at the same time. Again, this is exactly what the Bible addresses in Matthew 6. We talked about money not being the root of evil, but the love of money. Without using words like "kingdom, righteousness, godliness, and spiritual," how would you describe the pursuit of God's kingdom and righteousness

and storing up spiritual treasures? Jesse is the 17-year-old who committed to Christ a few weeks ago and has been studying the Bible with us weekly. One week he asked how you follow Jesus' teaching when guys are coming after you who are known for beating people with baseball bats. What would you say? "Turn the other cheek"? "Run for your life"? "Tell the teacher"? "Stick up for yourself, gather some friends and think of a weapon that can outmatch baseball bats?" We explored each option and its consequence: "Turn your cheek and get beaten to death; run slower than them and get beaten to death; tell the teacher and get beaten to death; stick up for yourself"... you get the point. Jesse calmly said, "This is one of the reasons I want to go to Great Lakes." We even explored how he got into this mess which sounded like he was pretty innocent in the matter. Later that day, Micah (Jones) and I met him after school to walk him to another Bible study. Our girls' group is technically a YFC/Youth Unlimited program but it is run by Cambridge Church of Christ women, with weekly help coming from Waterloo Church of Christ. Thank you, Dene Morgan, Marg Sandiford and Brianna Wall. Ashley Hibbard is doing an amazing

job at leading the girl's group. If human relationships are a route that people get to know God, then God is on His way to being known through these women. Visit our website—it has a new look! [www.cambridgecofc.ca](http://www.cambridgecofc.ca)

**Fennell Avenue (Hamilton):** The congregation rang in the New Year on December 31, 2009. Gifts were provided for two families whose Christmas may have been dismal without help. Also gifts were donated for two children whose father was in jail this year. The congregation assisted the children in Neskantaga with birthday presents. On December 20 a special program was presented with the topic: "Separating Christmas Truths and Myths." On January 17 "Singing in the Evening" was held, followed by refreshments. The congregation was encouraged to begin a Daily Bible Reading Plan for 2010.

**Toronto (Scarborough):** A prayer meeting is held every third Sunday at 6 p.m. Mid-week

*continued on page 14*

## Celebrate the Renewal of Spring

*We at the Riverview Park Church of Christ in Ottawa are organizing a*

*Ladies weekend of renewal*

*May 7 and 8*

*Mark it on your calendar now... make it something to look forward to!*

*More information later [ottawaladies@gmail.com](mailto:ottawaladies@gmail.com)*





by Marion Waugh  
3427-82 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6K 0G7  
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(BC news supplied by Barbara Lewis)

### ALBERTA

**Edmonton North:** Barb Jacques has begun teaching a Titus 2 Women's Marriage Class. It will be held for approximately 10 weeks. A Bible school potluck/workshop was held to prepare visual aids for the next few quarters of the Children's Bible School Lessons. Garth and Kris Johnson organized the preparation of the visual aids and Darrell Struth provided instruction on the multimedia equipment, e.g. Net book and projector. A parent/teen potluck and meeting was held and featured the First Sunday Kids Club. The meeting was focused on involvement and direction of the club. Garth Johnson has begun a class on "Christ in History" for the junior high and teens. They will learn that thirty-nine ancient extra Biblical sources mentioned more than 100 details about the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. The New Testament is by far the most authenticated ancient document. "What do you think of the Christ? Who's son is he?" (Matthew 22:42) They will become the jury and they will consider the evidence that God revealed in ancient history for all to see. Colin Jacques, Brian Salter and Henri Bouchard of the North congregation and Bob Norris of the South congregation delivered the December weekly gospel messages. Colin Jacques has begun teaching the Sunday Morning Bible Classes with an "Old Testament History Survey".

### BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Abbotsford (Central Valley):** With unfavourable weather conditions and distracting activities in December, the Weirs devoted the month to lessons for the Central Valley congregation. Norm spoke on "Jesus, the Messiah and the Fulfillment of Prophecy" based on John 5:39 the Sunday before Christmas" and used Luke 22-37 to show how "Jesus Is... the Fulfillment of Prophecy" the following Lord's Day. The church hosted a surprise 50th Anniversary dinner in honour of Rudy

and Yvonne Dela Rambelje on Dec. 13. As these people from Holland do not care to have attention called to themselves, they were amazed when neighbours and friends from the highrise where they live walked in. Our chief baker, Gloria Morris, had made a special cake to go with decorations and candles placed in the auditorium right after our service. Several also attended a 60th Anniversary celebration for John and Margaret Forman in Chilliwack. The Weirs planned to start their 2010 "Missions-At-Large" travels on Jan. 10 with a trip to visit the house church meeting in the home of Charlie and Lynn McKnight in Kelowna. From there, they expected to go to Midway where two families are studying the Bible with Brother McKnight, who baptized a 15-year old daughter of one of the families last fall. If they become Christians, they would be included in the Weir's traveling circuit when they meet with the house church in Creston. They will also be able to visit Danyelle Edgars again, who has moved with her family from Fort St. John to Elkford, BC.

**Burnaby:** The year ended on a high note when a couple and their daughter from Texas, a family from Manila, and nine related people from Ghana placed membership the last Sunday in December. The mother of two Albanian families who have been a part of the church here for several years, has also come to Canada on a permanent basis.


**Oakridge:** We ended 2009 with our eighth baptism of the year. Kim Abella was

brought into fellowship with Christ and the church when she was immersed on Dec. 13.

**Salmon Arm:** Sue Krogsgaard from the Regina congregation brought our ladies news from Africa, as well as the HIV project that we have supported for the past several years, when they celebrated their first birthday brunch of the year in January. As a group they also renewed their commitment to be actively involved in the ladies' program called "Hearts and Hands". One of the first projects was the annual "Bailing Party", in which clothing from the Salmon Arm Thrift Store was sorted and packed to be sent to places in need.

### MANITOBA

**Winnipeg (Central):** December 31 the New Year's Eve Party was held. Games were played until 11:30 and then there was a devotional until midnight. One year Bible reading schedules are being provided for the congregation to read through the Bible in 2010. This regular reading enriches and empowers our spiritual life with God. The annual youth ski retreat "Mountains of Fun on the Prairies Ski Retreat" is February 5-7. Guest speaker is John Smith of Red Deer, AB. The Winter fest youth rally is February 17-22. Charity Birston will be working as a youth mentor for the teen girls and young women. This part of our ongoing internship program provides a service opportunity for young people within our congregation. Charity's duties will include teaching, role modeling, helping with children and youth activities, and some office work.



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# MISSION NEWS

Barbara Lewis  
4920 N. Penn Ave.  
Spokane, WA 99206-4475  
e-mail: ray-bjl@comcast.net



**U.S.A.:** The World Bible Translation Centre in Ft. Worth, TX completed the translation of four Bibles in 2009: Arabic, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Thai. In addition, the Russian translation was completely revised. Last year 4.6 billion people could have read the Scriptures, either the New Testament or entire Bible, in their own language through over 30 translations now available through the work of the WBTC. In spite of the fact that only 15% of this number can read, those who are given the chance to learn not only discover Christianity, but find all other areas of their life are improved. In India, a middle-aged woman said that after she learned to read, she discovered that the bill collector for her electricity had been cheating her for years. She was so grateful to the lady who had been teaching her that she cried when she thanked her during the next class. "But why do you do this for free?" she wanted to know. The lady replied that she "was a disciple of Jesus and He wanted her to help her village." This response prompted the woman to be determined to find out who this Jesus was by using the reading skills she had acquired in the primary-school reading level of her Easy-to-Read Bible. In 2009 "Literacy Centres" were established in India to teach people through these translations now in

several of the many Indian dialects. The "Centres" are no more than four wooden poles holding up a thin thatched roof covering to provide shade, but people from the ages of 8 to 80 are congregating to learn how to read through lessons presented with a piece of chalk on a board painted black. There are now over 150 in cities and villages of the five states where only one-half of the population is literate: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and Karnataka. The Indian government has instituted a policy of "Each-One-Teach-One" which is being followed by every learning centre. As the lack of the ability to read of so much of the population is the biggest deterrent to the progress of India as a world power, it is hoped that 2,500 teaching locations can be placed within the next six months..

**Arabic Nations:** The Arabic Bible was released in special ceremonies in Amman, Jordan, and Cairo, Egypt, in May of 2009. A group of Christians met in Ft. Worth, TX on May 18 to pray for the success of the Bible in stopping the conflict between the Arabic and Western worlds, along with the safety of Dale Randolph, pioneer of the WBTC, and Eric Fellman, current president and CEO, who went to Amman for the ceremony. When they arrived, they found that the meeting place and date had been changed for security reasons. While setting up for the event, several workers noticed the announcement banner and the Bibles on the table. They talked to each other in Arabic for awhile, but finally came up to the director and asked what the books were. The director told them it was the story of Jesus and gave each a Bible, although he felt some anxiety about what they might do with them. The release ceremony in Cairo was attended by church leaders and seminary professors. The editor of the American Easy-to-Read Bible was also present, but remained anonymous to prevent having his name attached to the version. An Arabic Old Testament scholar was asked to comment on the translation. He was concerned about the "common" language used not being "sacred" enough. However, after the ceremony, he asked for another copy to take to his 12-year-old son! On July 20 the Arabic Bible was released in the U. S. John 1:1-5 was read in six of the "Big Seven" languages of the world: English, Chinese, Hindi, Bengali, Arabic, Spanish and Russian. Dale Randolph related how he felt God had called for the Arabic Bible many years ago. He and his wife, Eileen, had gone to Ammon in 1967 as missionaries. Six months later, war broke out between Jordan and Israel and they were forced to leave. Now he has had a hand in presenting these people with a Bible that will have far more impact than

they could have had. "Doesn't that prove that God's plans are always better than ours?" Dale concluded.

**Zimbabwe:** In a progress report sent for the month of November, Velaphi and Stella Mangeni were rejoicing over the baptism of a lady born on Jan. 1, 1921. Although they could not understand her language, they were impressed by her wonderful expression of joy as she came up out of the waters of baptism singing. Fifteen others were also baptized during the month. The World Bible School office record showed that 85 people visited in November, three completed all of the courses, and 122 lessons were sent out to new students. Twenty-five certificates were presented to Junior Students. The radio station broadcasts continue with a discussion format conducted by a medical doctor who is also an elder and a graduate of the Mutare School of Preaching, the Managing Director of CSC, also an elder, a preacher, and Velaphi, who produces the program. An invitation to enroll in the free WBS correspondence course is always given, and has brought excellent results.

**Japan (Sendai):** Gaku, a new Christian, is an encouragement by his growth and desire to go deeper as a disciple. Please pray that Gaku will keep taking steps towards Jesus. Sasha Ingle, an intern has made big steps in her experience and preparation for longer term ministry. Halfway through her two-year apprenticeship, she has taken big strides in language study and has joined Joel in several areas of ministry. Twelve individuals—six from Sendai and six from Hitachi—participated in a weekend in Sendai focused on practising times of prayer. Guests from Ibaraki arrived on Saturday afternoon and everyone from cell groups stayed in the team house. It was perhaps the coldest weekend so far in the year so everyone had several layers of blankets on their beds and hot water bottles to stay warm. One of the girls said it was the first time she had spent so much time in conversation with God, and the first time she had experienced listening to God in prayer rather than just talking to Him. Joel asks prayer for these groups to grow spiritually. This year the all-ministers' Tokyo meeting was hosted by the Tachikawa church – just days after the national church planting conference. The Mito church, which Joel and Sasha visited, held a special time of blessing for the children in the church. Joel spoke to the children about Jesus feeding the 5000. For reports on the Japanese work, please contact: Ben Berry: benberry@gmail.com; Joel Osborne: joelosborne4@yahoo.com; Jonathan Straker: jonathan@strakerhouse.com; or Bramalea church of Christ: mail@bramaleacofc.ca.

## Moncton, NB

Preacher/evangelist needed for the Riverview Church of Christ in Moncton, New Brunswick. Congregation is small but we have our own building. We can help a bit with support. Moncton is a booming town, full of souls to save. We pray that God will bless us with who He deems we need. For information contact:  
Roger Leger (506) 852-4143 or  
Christian Maillet (506) 860-6177

# Report on Haiti Mission

**The Children**—As reported before, every week some of our young brethren in Fonds-Parisien, Haiti, gathered about 50 children from the community whose parents are not able to send to school, and taught them how to read, to write, etc. They also taught the kids about God, the Bible and the church. Once a week (on Wednesdays), they gave the kids something to eat. As the children are of different age groups, and at different learning levels, the brethren had to divide the kids into different classes; so, as you can imagine, the level of noise, and distraction in the sole room, while trying to teach 4-5 different classes at the same time, made it quite a challenge; but we did what we had to do. Lately, however, things have changed a little. Some other schools (or should I say some real schools) with some subsidy, have been opened in the community, and seem to have made it more or less affordable for the children to attend. That is great news, as we were not really in position to provide real schooling for these kids.

However, the opening of these schools would take away the church's influence on these children's lives, as we would no longer have access to them, to be able to teach the word of God to them. So what we did, we opened a Saturday Christian Camp. This camp gives us access not only to the children that we previously had access to, but to even more children, regardless of which school they attend during the week. While we're happy to have access to a lot more children with this approach, we are now faced with a greater challenge of having to provide

refreshments for a lot more children than we used to (except that it is now on Saturday instead of Wednesday). Thus, we have a good problem, and pray that God will open doors for us as our ministries continue. So, if you have been supporting the Haiti Mission in any way, we thank you for your support, and pray that you will continue, because we really need your support!

**Next Mission**—Our 6th Mission Trip to Haiti will be from April 23 to May 5, 2010. As reported before, the church in Fonds-Parisien, Haiti, now owns a piece of land on the main road (Route Nationale #4), which links Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, with the Dominican Republic. On the land there is already a small unfinished block house. And 2 of our Canadian brethren are currently designing the place of worship to go on top of this existing house. This will save us a lot, as we will use

the existing foundation, and only use necessary support to reinforce the structure of the small house in order to support the load on top of it. Please pray for these brethren, as they donate their time and expertise to help with the Lord's work in Haiti. While it would be good if everyone who came could stay for the duration of the trip (April 23-May 5), that may not be practical. So if someone can only come for one week, instead of the 12 days, that would be fine too. We will gladly receive whatever we're given.

**How you can help**—We would like to be able to ship by mid-February, several barrels of food and clothing to be distributed to the church down there when we arrive in April. Also, we will need to ship lots of bottles of water and juice and some snacks to be used by the workers to use as we work on the construction. We will want to make sure that all is

in place before we arrive in April. All the building materials will have to be purchased beforehand as well. As usual, we will work during the day, and hold gospel meetings in the evening. So, you can help us by your prayers or by helping with the purchase of the building materials or food, etc; or by helping pay for some workers who might be willing to come, but cannot afford the pay their way to come. If you would like to help, we encouraged you to please send your contribution to Strathmore Church of Christ, ATT: Haiti Mission.

For further information, please contact any of the Elders at Strathmore or Max.

In his service,  
Jean Volcy



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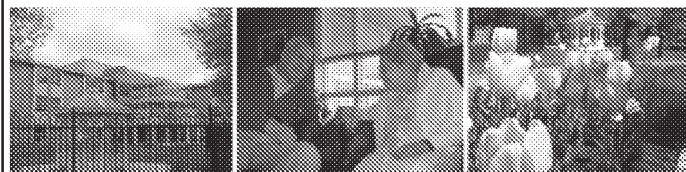
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News East... continued from page 10

Bible study is on the book of Revelation. The Authentic Ethnic Fellowship was combined with the congregation's End of Year Fellowship on New Year's Eve, December 31, with everyone bringing an ethnic meal. Phillip Brown preached for the Mississauga church of Christ in January 2010.

**Toronto (Strathmore Blvd):** The congregation enjoyed their annual New Year's Eve fellowship and devotional. This is an event that provides for reflection on the past year and a "jump start" for the new. The theme for 2010 is, "Walking in the Light." There was rejoicing the first Sunday of the New Year at the baptism of Rebecca Etienne by her father, Ike. Looking to the future, 26 men of the congregation gathered with the 4 elders to discuss how to best prepare for serving. One result of that meeting is to have a men's Bible (training) class, followed by a business meeting the last Saturday of each month. Strathmore is receiving and sending funds to help the brethren in Haiti through our contacts there. Any who wish to send funds can send cheques made to "Strathmore Blvd Church of Christ" with "Haiti Relief" on the memo line.

**St. Catharines:** The Ontario Street congregation in St. Catharines experienced

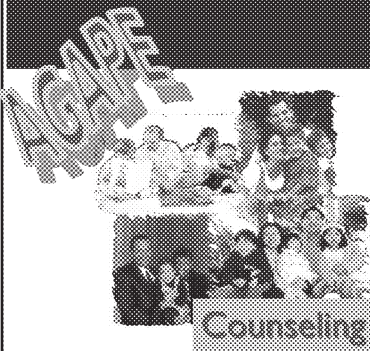
great joy as the old year drew to a close. During December three were added to the church as they confessed their faith in Jesus Christ and were baptized into Him. Suzanne Pierre and Geoffrey Watt are students at Brock University and Robert Travers is retired from retail business. Pray with us for their continued growth in and commitment to their Lord. We were pleased to have Geoff's family visit the Sunday he was baptized. We also joyfully welcomed several who have expressed their desire to work with us by placing membership with the congregation. Among them is David Hallett who returned to his "home congregation" after many years of work in India, especially with the tribal people in the northeastern states, and more recently in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia. He quickly showed his worth as a teacher, preacher, song leader and in any other capacity he is able to fill. He is greatly loved by the congregation, many of whom have known him for many years. It is a blessing to have him back "home." The New Year also began with blessings. Attendance at the first midweek service of 2010 was the highest it has been in several years (We hope that this was the result of many New Year's resolutions which will continue to be fulfilled!) Several of our older mem-

bers have gone south for the winter but regular visitors from the community have helped to keep Lord's Day attendance steady. Every 5th Sunday during this year is planned to be observed as a "Missions Sunday," with special collections to benefit the works we are blessed to help with, in Japan (where one of our own young men, Joel Osborne, continues to work); Haiti; Indonesia; Quebec province; and Great Lakes Bible College. These contributions will be in addition to the planned budget. The first such "Missions Sunday" will be marked on January 31 with the preceding worship service planned and led by four of our men who have worked for the church abroad: David Hallett, Dave Carruthers, Barclay Osborne and Roy Merritt. The women's monthly Bible study class recently collected funds among themselves to help Ruth Zimmerman return to her work in Papua New Guinea, and were able to give Ruth approximately \$1,000. Ruth spoke to the class at their December meeting.

**Waterloo:** The congregation held a "20s Weekend" January 15-17, 2009, entitled: "The Perfect Fit."

**West Ottawa:** This congregation celebrated its second year of service recently. This is a new congregation in the nation's capital where Mike Mazzalongo preaches

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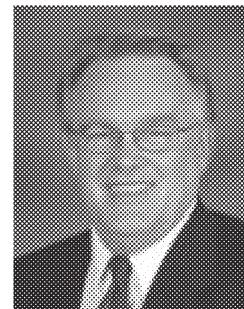
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Ken Wilson, Ph.D.  
ACC President

and teaches there once each month. They recently moved to a new location in a community center and are persevering in the Lord despite not having a full-time minister.

**Windsor (West Side):** On December 20, 2009, Lamarr Mathews of the Flat Rock church of Christ spoke and led the Bible class. A special song service and devotional was held on the evening of December 27. A "New Beginner's Celebration" was held on January 31, 2009. The high school/university class hosted a holiday party for the Sunday school children at the end of 2009. The "Giveaway" in 2010 will mark the congregation's 10th annual Giveaway. The project has grown tremendously over the years as the needs in the community have increased. The plan is to collect throughout the year on special drop off dates, and to have work days as needed. On the church's Facebook group page, Drew Chapados issued a 100-day challenge to the congregation to read their Bibles. It is scheduled to begin on February 1, 2010.

#### QUEBEC

**Montreal:** 2009 Year End Report: COCO and Friends, the congregation's children's program, drew 60 children (with parents) to the building for the puppet show, draw-

ing contest and special appearances by Mr. Mystery. Twenty people served as puppeteers, greeters, backstage workers, etc. A follow-up of guest cards was done after Christmas. One of the bigger education projects completed in the last quarter of 2009 was the 10-part series on the family entitled "Sacred Families." The series can be watched online or on your iPhone. The congregation's preaching intern, Glen Robins, arrived in November, and has been put to work with a regular class, office work, visitation schedule and preaching rotation. The 2009 activity calendar had 52 activities scheduled – everything from pot lucks to seminars to prayer and fasting weekends. The ministers believe this is the best way to bring together the many different cultures and language groups (18 at last count) that make up the congregation. Anyone can visit our worship services "live" every Sunday at 10 a.m. (EST) by going to the website [vecoc.org](http://vecoc.org). All sermons and bulletins are archived. Lise and Mike Mazzalongo will be leaving Montreal in early 2010 to move back to work with their sponsoring congregation, the Choctaw Church of Christ in Oklahoma City. Mike says: "Our original goal was to help reorganize

and grow this congregation. These twin objectives have been reached and I have recruited a young minister to replace me." Two ministers – Roger Saumur and Glen Robins will carry on the work. Mike asks that those supporting him continue their present support until the end of April to enable them to make the transition from Montreal to Oklahoma.

**Deaths:** S.F. Timmerman, formerly of Beamsville and lately living in Searcy, Arkansas, with his wife, Maxine, passed away at the age of 91. Brother Timmerman was a missionary to Belgium and an evangelist in Montreal, among many other places. His family included Lorna Whitfield, Fanny Amy, and Carol Adams. (from the Beamsville bulletin.)

### NOTICE

All materials for publication must be in the hands of the editors **by the tenth (10) day of the month** preceding the date of issue. Date of issue is the first of each month.

# Key To The Kingdom Day, MAY 2, 2010



#### On the Vision Network

Friday at 8:30 AM (ET)  
(Check local listing for channel #)  
Star Choice – 394 • Bell ExpressVu – 65 (new #)

#### Grace TV

Thursday at 7:30 AM (ET)  
Rogers Digital Channel – 396 or 241  
Star Choice – 399, Telus 158 & MTS TV 21

#### CHNU JOYTV

Friday at 8:00 AM  
Channel 10 covering Vancouver, Victoria and the Fraser Valley • also on Rogers Digital Channel – 173

#### Now also on CJRL Radio

Sunday at 7:30 AM in Kenora, ON

Your support of the Key To The Kingdom ministry is needed daily in 2010

- **Pray** daily for this outreach...
- **Advertise** the programme to your family, friends and community...
- **Support** the ministry financially in your personal and church budgets...

On **May 3** we invite congregations to focus their worship service on evangelism in Canada and the Key To The Kingdom ministry in particular by:

Having **special prayers** offered in support of this work...

Taking a **special contribution** to help with the financial requirements of the ministry...

Please contact the Strathmore leadership with any questions concerning the Key Ministry at:

Strathmore Blvd Church of Christ, 346 Strathmore Blvd., Toronto, ON M4C 1N3 • Phone: 416-461-7406 Email: [maxc@strathmorecofc.ca](mailto:maxc@strathmorecofc.ca)

Please send donations to: Strathmore Blvd. Church of Christ, 346 Strathmore Blvd., Toronto, ON M4C 1N3

**Because of bank requirements, please make cheques payable to Strathmore Blvd. Church of Christ and Key To The Kingdom on the memo line.**

## Built In Obsolescence

Michael D. Greene

When a thing becomes obsolete it is no longer useful for one reason or another. The other day I was meandering through an antique store and I saw an eight track tape player. Some of our young folks will not know what that is. But you remember, eight track tapes were the first tapes made to be used in a car or conveniently at home. Before that it was a "reel to reel" tape recorder! It wasn't long, however, until cassette tapes made eight tracks obsolete. Now CD's have made cassettes obsolete. It is only a matter of time until something makes CD's obsolete. We have a bunch of cassettes we can no longer play in the car because our cars now have only a CD player! Whatever happened to 45 rpm records? For what it is worth I still have some of those, too.

That is the way of the things of the world it seems. I have heard that engineers and manufactures build in obsolescence to guarantee a market for their products. If that is true, your automobile is a fine example of built in obsolescence. It is built to last so long. The manufacturers want to sell you another one. They know that a nice shiny new car will eventually wear out, become obsolete. They also use clever advertising to cultivate in all of us the desire for a new car which makes our old one that might run fine, seem obsolete, at least in our own mind.

Is there anything that will not grow obsolete in time? I think I can safely say that there is nothing of this physical world that will not, in time, become obsolete. Everything made by the hand of man is subject to decay and will be no longer useful for one reason or another. But there are some things that ought never to become obsolete for any reason.

Politeness and good manners ought never to become obsolete. The use of titles of respect such as "sir" and "ma'am," and words of kindness such as "please" and "thank you" ought never become so old fashioned as to be obsolete. Moses wrote: "You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:32). It is good and right to respect one another and use good manners.

Living by the Golden Rule ought not to become obsolete. "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matthew 7:12). Treating others as you wish to be treated is a way of life that should never become obsolete. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32-5:1). Kindness as well as these other qualities of life should not become obsolete due to non-use.

Honesty and integrity also ought not to become obsolete. Someone once said "Honesty is the best policy." In reality it is the only policy. It is certainly consistent with the Biblical message (Ephesians 4:25).

All of these, good manners, the Golden Rule, kindness, honesty and integrity, seem to have fallen into disuse in our society for one reason or another. But they are not obsolete. They are useful and they will serve us well, just as they have served other generations well. They will never be as the eight track tape player or an old worn out car. They will continue to function as a lubricant for relationships as long as man continues to live among other men.

(Lehman Avenue Church of Christ,  
Bowling Green, KY)

Max's Musings... continued from page 5

has come to believe and trust in God, and as he experiences the blessings of God daily, believes even more in the truth of the statement we just noted from Psalm 37. The Christian has to come to the point that he builds his hopes on things that are changeless and eternal. He believes that God is indeed his Heavenly Father and on God's being and character the future is built.

The Christian has learned that things which are seen are not lasting. They have a LOOK of being stable; however, these things will all pass. The things for which men strive and fight are only temporary. In Matthew 24:35, Jesus reminds us that "Heaven and earth will pass away." Material things will end but the years of God will go on forever. "And, 'You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end'" (Hebrews 1:10-12 ESV). The song writer has reminded us, "The earth will pass and with it common trifles, but God and I will go unendingly."

The value of this trust in God is seen in such people as Joseph, the son of Jacob. While young he was sold into slavery and when he tried to do the right things he often suffered. However, he was not complacent and unbelieving. He believed in God, remaining faithful to his commitment and became the saviour from death for many. God can and will use those men and women who trust in Him, believing His promises.

Trust God because He is the fount of every blessing and through His power will support us throughout our life here on earth. God is faithful in blessing those who are not complacent in their relationship to Him.

Trust and serve God and He will give strength for the day! By trusting Him and living for Him you will save yourself and will also be a blessing to all you meet in your life.



# Paradox of the Cross

Richard Kruse

A young girl drew a picture depicting the crucifixion of Jesus. In the simple drawing bright red blood was vividly shown as flowing from the nail holes in the hands and feet of Jesus as well as his pierced side, just as one might expect to see. However, she pictured in the sky the bright yellow sun shining brightly with the usual rays of light flowing out from it. On the ground she drew purple and blue flowers colourfully blooming among the green grass, which presented a quiet sense of beauty.

Perhaps unknowingly the child portrayed the paradox of the cross. The cross was a scandal, mystery and, at best, an unpleasant scene; while at the same time a sense of great spiritual beauty and awe must continually be present whenever we contemplate the eternal consequences of the cross.

## The Greatest Paradox

The cross was the most tragic ever in the history of the world, yet the most wonderful event that ever happened.

The cross was the saddest spectacle people ever beheld, yet out of it came forth the greatest joy.

The cross could be considered as Satan's greatest victory, yet it was the most stunning defeat he ever suffered.

The cross appeared to be Jesus' most humiliating defeat, yet it was the most glorious victory he ever won.

The cross was the greatest exhibition of divine justice in condemning sin, yet the most wonderful demonstration of divine mercy in pardoning sin.

The cross was God's greatest manifestation of hatred for sin, yet his supreme proof of love of the sinner.

The cross demonstrated God's justice in condemning sin, yet demonstrated his mercy for forgiving sin.

The cross was the darkest hour in world history, yet it was the time of greatest light for the world.

The cross was a time when the sun refused to shine and God hid his face from Jesus, yet it was the means by which Jesus fully became the "light" of the world.

The cross demonstrates the hatred some people had for Jesus, yet it shows Christ's love for all people.

The cross shows human vengeance as they cry for his blood, yet it demonstrates

the divine act of forgiveness through his blood (Luke 23:34).

The cross pictures the sinfulness of mankind, yet it portrays God's holiness.

The cross presents human weakness in the mob, yet divine strength through non-retaliation on the mob.

The cross portrays human foolishness, yet it portrays the divine wisdom of God.

The cross reveals that Jesus left the riches of heaven for poverty and suffering on earth, yet reveals that we might leave the poverty and suffering of earth for the riches in heaven.

## Responding To the Paradox

Paul wrote about the scandal for the crucifixion because it offends our sense of justice. The innocent should not suffer for what the guilty have done! Surely one should not die for the wrong doings of another. Must not everyone save himself or herself? As strange as it might seem, the way God chose to save the world was not according to human logic or sense of human justice. His way was the permitting of the innocent Jesus to die for guilty humans. The innocent dying for the guilty was God's most gracious will.

We are attracted to the sacrifice of the cross and at the same time repelled by it. Could it be that our sins are so great that the crucifixion was necessary? In our astonishment we might feel like Peter and cry out "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8)! We are ashamed. We feel guilty. We feel the weight of our sins. Yet, that is not the purpose of the cross. When considering the cross, we should rejoice that through Jesus' submission to God and through God's grace to us, we have been forgiven. We are not guilty. We are declared innocent, spiritually alive through the death of Jesus!

When we enter into the reality of the crucifixion as God's righteous act in Christ, we begin to discover the mystery of God clearing up. God's love is revealed to us. We know that God is not only just—but, more importantly, that He is in reality love (John 3:16; 1 John 4:16).

"So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is

from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. ...God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

Our response to the cross is also a paradox. If, through an obedient faith, we accept to receive the gift of grace provided in the death of Jesus on the cross, we have eternal life. Yet, if we reject this gift to choose the life the world has to offer, we have spiritual death.

Now, how do you see the crucifixion? What conclusions do you draw from it? How would you draw a picture of the cross? How would you picture the paradox of the greatest debt to God paid with the greatest love from God?

Toronto, ON

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## LISTINGS OF INTEREST

**Great Lakes Christian High School Alumni Association**  
4875 King Street  
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B6  
School: 905-563-5374  
Alumni contact:  
Jodie (Codling) Cook '90—  
905-563-9433  
Email: [alumni@glchs.on.ca](mailto:alumni@glchs.on.ca)

**For getting materials some sources are:**

**Gospel Advocate**, Nashville, TN  
[www.gospeladvocate.com](http://www.gospeladvocate.com)

**21st Century Christian**,  
Nashville, TN  
[www.21stcc.com](http://www.21stcc.com)

**Lambert Book House**,  
Florence, AL  
[www.lambertbookhouse.com](http://www.lambertbookhouse.com)

**The Bible House, Inc.**, Searcy, AR  
[www.biblehousesupply.com](http://www.biblehousesupply.com)

**Foundation Distributing, Inc.**  
Orono, ON  
Bibles, books, Standard Publishing  
Sunday School materials, communion  
cups, etc.  
Call Sarah at 1-877-368-3600-ext 255  
(To open an account a credit card is  
needed for first order)  
Website: [www.fdi.ca](http://www.fdi.ca)

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48th ANNUAL TRAINING FOR SERVICE  
April 2, 2010, 9:00 am–4:00 pm

# Anchored in the Word

## John 8:32–36

### SCHEDULE

9:00–10:00	Registration
9:30	Congregational Singing (Auditorium)
<b>10:00–11:00</b>	<b>Hindrances to Truth</b> – <i>Kevin Cleary</i> <b>Teen Class: Growing Up In A Truth Deprived World</b> – <i>Dexter Philip (Class during two morning lectures)</i>
11:00–11:20	Refreshment Break
<b>11:20–12:20</b>	<b>The Truth That Sets You Free</b> – <i>David Knutson</i>
12:20–1:30	Lunch
1:30–2:20	Congregational Singing & Announcements (Auditorium)
<b>2:30–3:30</b>	<b>To Win as Many as Possible</b> – <i>Jim Holston</i> <i>(*Children's Classes will be provided during the three lectures)</i>



Kevin Cleary



Dexter Philip



David Knutson



Jim Holston

**Kevin Cleary:** Currently preaching in Meaford Ontario. Married to Nancy for five years (6 in may). Originally from Port Dover Ontario. Graduated from East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions in Knoxville TN. Currently working on Masters in Biblical Studies from Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver.

**Dexter Philip:** A Christian of ten years and a member of the Strathmore Blvd COC, Dexter adopts the principle of saying "yes" to doing the Lord's work. Married six years and a proud dad, Dexter hopes he can inspire all to be active for Christ.

**David Knutson:** David is married to Patricia Adams of Athens Alabama, and has three children and three grandchildren. His master's degree was taken at Harding University Graduate School of Religion in Memphis Tennessee. David serves as the academic dean at Great Lakes Bible College in Waterloo Ontario, as an elder in the Waterloo congregation and preaches part-time for the Bayview Avenue church of Christ in Toronto.

**Jim Holston:** Jim Holston teaches at Great Lakes Bible College. Prior to coming to GLBC, he served in full-time preaching ministry in the U.S. and Canada. He is a graduate of Freed-Hardeman College, Harding College, and Harding Graduate School of Religion. He has also completed Doctor of Ministry course work at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He is married to Kathy and they have two grown children: James and Marianne.

**Location:** Cawthra Park Secondary School, 1305 Cawthra Road, Mississauga, ON (2 blocks south of the QEW)