

Gospel

*For the promotion of
NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY*

Herald

ISSN 0829 - 4666

Vol. 76, No. 1

TORONTO, ONTARIO

January 2011



For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

ROMANS 1:20

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Three Promises to Strengthen Us (ISAIAH 35)

Thayer Salisbury

The news is not good, so I try to avoid it. I don't listen to the radio any more and have not watched television for decades. But still, the news that slips through is discouraging.

The news was not good for Judah in Isaiah's time either. They would be punished—not with foreclosure on their homes but with deportation from their homeland. Yet, hope was held out to them as well. In Isaiah 35 we have a chapter of hope. This poetically expressed hope is beautiful, as you will find. I cannot recreate the beauty of its expression, but let us briefly review the fundamentals of the hope expressed here.

The Lord gives them three promises to strengthen them.

Hell

The first, surprisingly, is the promise of vengeance. Isaiah is told, "Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, 'Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you'" (Isa 35:3–4).

We don't think of hell as an encouraging doctrine, but it is. Without the belief that God will use eternity to right the wrongs of this world, we are left to either despair or vigilante justice. If God is not going to punish wrong, then justice demands that we will have to do so. What a burden it would be to have the responsibility of punishing every wrong! We should be thankful for the knowledge that God is going to take vengeance, and therefore, we do not have to do so.

Hell is a comforting doctrine. Faith in eternal punishment restrains the danger of extremism in our search for justice. We can leave the wrath

to God knowing that He has eternity in which to right every wrong (Rom 12:19). Without this understanding, there is a very real danger that those who care about justice will take matters into their own hands.

Healing

The next promise is the promise of healing. The text goes on to state, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert" (Isa 35:5–6).

Bodily healing, and even healing of the earth are included in this promise. These are primarily figures of speech for spiritual healing, but there is likely a literal element as well. Not all of our illness is directly traceable to sin, but a significant portion is. Stress takes its toll. Laziness takes its toll. Gluttony takes its toll. So there will be physical benefits to a correcting of our sins.

The text also seems to recognize that, ultimately, all of our problems, and all the earth's problems, are the result of human sin. These problems will be cured only when sin is cured. How have we missed the fact that the problems with the earth are the result of human sin? God created a perfect world. It was human sin that caused the earth's imperfections (Gen 3:17–19). The earth will never be fully healed until sin is fully defeated. As Paul says, "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom 8:20–21).

But let's not focus too much on the

physical and environmental benefits of being right with God. We need our spiritual sight more than our physical sight, our spiritual ears more than the physical ones (5). We need our ability of locomotion, and our ability to express joy more for spiritual reasons than for physical ones (6).

All the types of healing that are promised here are promised with a purpose. Not only will God come with vengeance to rid their land of evil, and to bless them with this healing, but he will do more. He heals them for a purpose. What good is healing if there is nothing to live for? What good are legs if there is nowhere to go? What good are lips if there is no one to praise?

Highway

The last promise is the promise of a highway. The text continues, "And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa 35:8–10).

We are told three things about this highway:

First, this highway will be clear. These days, we call every major road a highway. But a highway in that era was literally that, a "high way," a road raised on a causeway—clear and direct. Is the Bible clear on

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The March of Time

David Dunn

Introduction

I'm sure most of you have seen the advertisements for Brad Pitt's film, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. The movie is based on a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald (who also wrote *The Great Gatsby*). It's about a man who is 70 years old when he is born, and who, as the years pass, gradually becomes younger, until he becomes a baby and simply fades from existence. Fitzgerald said that he got the idea from a comment by Mark Twain, who said that all the good things in life come early and from then on, everything gets gradually worse. Well, what is this story really about? Fitzgerald himself said that it was about the relentless march of time—that no matter what you do, time always wins!

Of course this is the part of the year when we always think about the passing of time, as we look back over the old and anticipate the new. I guess the question for us is posed by this story—is time winning?

As we think about this for a few minutes, I would like to consider the question in light of a statement made by the writer of the letter to Jewish Christians. Hebrews 8:13 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." How does this impact on Fitzgerald's philosophy of life?

A. Time Obscures the Presence of Christ

So why did the writer of Hebrews need to say this about Jesus?

Let me suggest that at least one reason is the tendency of life to obscure the reality of Christ and the difference He makes to our lives and the onward march of time.

When this was written, Christians were facing a number of hardships. Jewish Christians, especially, were

sorely tempted to give up on their new religion as followers of the Messiah Jesus, and go back to their tried and tested lives as followers of Moses. This letter seems to have been written to show the superiority of Christ and His accomplishments, over the old system. In fact, Judaism was about to be destroyed when Roman armies, under Titus, would attack and destroy their temple once and for all.

It seemed the whole universe was about to fall apart—and Christians were suffering maybe more than most—so, was it worth it? To this the writer states, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." In other words, the Jesus who beat death and was raised

from the dead, is the same Jesus they follow during their time of suffering. He hasn't changed. He is still the same powerful, loving, forgiving, triumphant Saviour and Ruler.

As we look forward to a new year, it seems we also are in the middle of a universal upheaval. As we sit here tonight, the world still suffers under oppressions of many kinds. Wars are being fought, both physical and philosophical, all over the globe. The world's economy seems in danger of collapse; our ecosystem is being eroded and there are prophets of doom all around us. And in our very own neighbourhoods, people are unemployed; drugs and violence are on the

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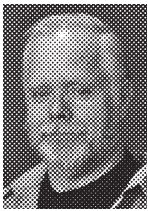
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A Compassionate People

Wayne Turner



In June, 2010, Christopher Hitchens, well-known author and militant atheist, announced that he had been diagnosed with esophageal cancer. In the months following, there has been a wide range of responses to his illness. In September, several religious leaders and their followers held a special day of prayer for his health and survival. Some even admitted praying for his ultimate salvation.

At the same time, there were those from within the religious community who openly prayed for his death and eternal destruction. In "Unanswerable Prayers," a column in *Vanity Fair* (October, 2010), Hitchens quoted an anonymous "believer" who called his illness, "God's revenge" for blasphemy. "He's going to writhe in agony and pain and wither away to nothing and then die a horrible agonizing death, and THEN comes the real fun, when he's sent to HELLFIRE forever to be tortured and set afire."

Such a harsh sentiment makes many of us cringe. The words sounds so heartless and callous, as if the writer enjoys the thought. However, they represent the attitude of a segment in the religious community who gain a disproportionate amount of attention by what the world deems a message of hate. We can all think of similar examples—the Kansas pastor who organizes anti-gay pickets at funerals, those who attack abortion clinics, those who celebrate at executions. It is sad that such attitudes and actions only seem to validate Hitchens' basic premise that "religion poisons everything."

Hitchens, at least, acknowledges the "kind intentions" of those who are praying for him, though he suggests that all, friends and enemies, save their breath (as he puts it, "not to trouble deaf heaven with your bootless cries"), unless it "makes you feel better." Though he admits the possibility that on his deathbed, he might "ditch" his unbelief, he considers such a last minute conversion a "hucksterish choice" and rejects a god who might reward him for this.

Given his determined unbelief, one might wonder why a Christian would waste concern and prayer for him. In fact, Hitchens states his concern that if he did survive cancer and as a result a "pious faction contentedly claimed that their prayers had been answered," he would be irritated. (Obviously, in case of what might seem to be a miraculous healing, he is unwilling to

even consider the possibility of God.) His rejection of God is, in his thinking, absolute. So why pray for him and others like him? Or should we be like those who want God's wrath to descend and wipe him off the face of the earth?

First, we should consider what we are communicating not only to Hitchens but also to the rest of the world. As those called to be light and salt, our good deeds are to be examples that lead people to, not keep them from, God. At best, Hitchens may be only amused by prayerful concern. He may be annoyed by what appears to him as wasted activity. However, the harsh judgmentalism and obvious malevolence of those wishing him ill only validates his unbelief. Many people are reading and listening to Hitchens' message. As a result, they are watching believers, carefully. Of the anonymous note mentioned earlier, Hitchens asks a very thought provoking question—would the writer "want his views read by my unoffending children, who are also being given a hard time along the way...?"

Second, if we are to love and do good to all, and to pray for our enemies and those who despitefully use us, our actions are not determined by how, or even if, our "enemy" responds. We show kindness and compassion to all because we are God's people. It should be part of our Christ-like nature. Many of the objections Hitchens raises to religion are based on the poor behaviour of some of its proponents over the centuries.

Hitchens points out that if one assumes that God "awards the appropriate cancers, you must also account for the numbers of infants who contract leukemia."

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GOSPEL HERALD

Published Monthly by the Gospel Herald Foundation, a non profit corporation, for the Promotion of New Testament Christianity
— FOUNDED BY ROBERT SINCLAIR, 1936 —
CO-EDITORS

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The inclusion of articles, advertisements and church directory listings does not in every case imply complete endorsement by the Editors of either source or content.

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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.

Canadian Subscription \$16; \$28 for 2 years.; Widows & Gifts, \$15
U.S. And Foreign Subscriptions \$23.00 CND per year to cover higher postage
"Publications Mail Agreement Number 4000 5401"
Indexed by Restoration Serials Index

Return Undeliverable Address Blocks to: 5 Lankin Blvd., Toronto, ON M4J 4W7



Articles for this page or reactions to it should be sent to
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The Lord IS MY Shepherd

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake..." I likely do not need to write out the 23rd Psalm as it is a very well-known passage among God's people. It is a profound claim of relationship with the Lord and the confidence that it brings to the believer. The "presence" of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, give joy, confidence and the peace that passes understanding to the child of God.

When I was a child we sometimes sang a song entitled, "An All Seeing Eye Watching You". There were times that song did not bring real comfort since I was not always sure I wanted God to see what I was doing! As I grew older and my relationship with God grew stronger, the song came to be an encouragement rather than a menace. In case you do not know this song, written by R.E. Winsett, consider the words:

"An All Seeing Eye Watching You"

Verse 1 talks of God watching our journey in life:

"All along on the road to the soul's true abode, There's an Eye watching you; Every step that you take this great Eye is awake, There's an Eye watching you."

Verse 2 gives warning to make right choices

"As you make life's great flight, keep the pathway of right, There's an Eye watching you; God will warn not to

go in the path of the foe, There's an Eye watching you."

Verse 3 speaks of the goal of home with God

"Fix your mind on the goal, that sweet home of the soul, There's an Eye watching you; Never turn from the way to the kingdom of day, There's an Eye watching you."

Chorus:

"Watching you, watching you, Every day mind the course you pursue; Watching you, watching you, There's an all-seeing Eye watching you."

The presence of God with us is not simply for companionship but also for strength. When David was visiting his brothers and Goliath was making

his challenge to the army of Israel, David had no doubt about his ability to win the battle against the enemy of God's people, in spite of the fact that his brothers and King Saul were not so sure. David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!" (1 Samuel 17:37). Not all had the same kind of confidence that David had in God giving them the victory.

For those of us living today, we can and should have the confidence of David as we fight against the enemies of God and His will today. The wonderful news announced by the angels in Luke 2:8-11 should give us confidence in the Christian battle. "And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for

behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." His coming provided for complete redemption with the promise of the presence of the Holy Spirit to give us comfort, strength and as a guarantee of our relationship with Him and the Father. Just before His death He gives this wonderful promise, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:15-17). This gives the confidence spoken of in Hebrews 10:19-23,



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UNITY – UNITY – UNITY

UNITY – UNITY

Ed Van Alstine

The title seems to refer to an old steam engine pulling a long train of cars up a steep incline. Huffing and puffing “unity, unity, unity” as it slowly makes its way up the mountain. Instead the title refers to Bible passages strongly urging unity among brothers and sisters. Unfortunately unity sometimes becomes disunity when brothers and sisters attempt to push their ideas and opinions on others.

(1) In Paul’s letter to the Philippians he encourages the church to love their brothers and sisters in Christ, “then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose” (Phil.2:2). Two chapters later Paul urges two prominent women in the church at Philippi (4:3) who are in disagreement and leading two opposing factions in the church to “be like-minded”. It seems that to be “like-minded” was difficult for the church in the 1st century. To be “like-minded” is repeated in Rom. 15:5; 1 Cor.1:10; 2 Cor.13:11–13; Phil.3:15,16; 4:2; 1 Peter3:8. Scriptures don’t say whether the disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche (Phil.4:2) is doctrinal or a matter of someone wanting to get their own way. Question: does being like-minded mean people have the same wants, goals, desires, opinions, friends, drive and the same understanding of Scriptures? Or are differences OK when they are worked through and people come to a Bible based answer without pushing matters of opinion on others?

In Gal.2:11 Paul and Peter have a disagreement. Paul shows Peter to be a hypocrite when Peter had withdrawn and separated himself from the Gentiles. Paul and Peter reconcile their differences and their relationship is again united in Christ. In Acts 15:7 at Jerusalem, the question is raised whether the Gentiles need first to come through the Law

of Moses. Peter got up and reminded them of his own experiences with the Holy Spirit and Gentiles. Peter’s words back up Paul and the council at Jerusalem made a judgment that they should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God (Acts 15:19). Peter has come full circle from withdrawing from Gentiles to fully supporting them (Acts 15:7).

Our dictionaries tell us “a hypocrite says one thing and does another.” Would it be hypocritical of me when teaching or leading in a class if I were to say that we should all spend more time in prayer – and then I go home and I don’t spend more time in prayer? Would it be hypocritical of me if when I pray, I ask that we be more helpful to others, more friendly, more encouraging, that we use our time and money more wisely – then go home and nothing changes? Being more prayerful of our brothers and sisters promotes unity.

–I wonder why God preserved this record for us?

(2) When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, after the bread and the cup had been taken, the disciples began to argue over who (Luke 22:24) is the greatest. This was a big issue for the disciples. Jesus then taught the disciples (vs.26) “servant leadership” which was a concept as uncommon 2000 years ago as it is today. Years later, in 1 Cor.1:10–13; 4:6,18,19; 8:1, 13:4 a similar problem occurs. In Corinthians it is called “puffed-up”. Paul is saying there are blowhards or self-elevated Christians in Corinth. They considered themselves better than their brothers and sisters in the church. Being proud and haughty is not Christlike and does not promote unity.

–I wonder why God preserved this record for us?

(3) In 1 Cor.1:10–13 Paul stresses

unity of doctrine as well as spiritual unity. In vs. 10 Paul tells them to be “perfectly united in mind and thought.” The church at Corinth was arguing and bickering and this divided them up into parties of “Paul”, “Apollos”, “Cephas” or “Christ”.

When issues come up in the church we need to have intelligent, Bible based discussions which come from the heart. Keep in mind that disagreement does show that one person is not dominant. The answer to many of our issues are usually staring out at us from Scripture. If it isn’t doctrinal, maybe we need to learn that some things aren’t worth arguing over. Does it really matter what colour we choose for the new auditorium carpet, should we purchase or not purchase an overhead projector, should we project pictures on the screen while the sermon is presented, etc.?

Paul addressed the serious matter of divisions in the church (1 Cor.1:12). There were four divisions and they called themselves of “Paul”, “Apollos”, “Cephas” or “Christ”. Each of the four parties had their own leaders and each party had their followers. These four parties caused disunity and they displayed arrogance as members would stand up and identify themselves as “I am of Paul”, “I am of ‘Apollos”, “I am of Cephas” or “I am of Christ” (1 Cor. 1:12). Paul explains in vs. 13 that no human leader should be given the loyalty that only belongs to the Lord. Christ’s shed blood is the perfect sacrifice for Christians and his shed blood purchased His church. Christians are the redeemed property of God (Eph.1:13–14). Jesus purchased the church of God with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

Paul covers bickering over small matters in Romans 14:5–9. Paul pretty much tells us that we shouldn’t be judging one another over question-

able things. He tells us we shouldn't be questioning our brothers and sisters over doubtful matters, or imposing our will on them. Paul further says in vs.13 that we shouldn't put stumbling blocks or obstacles in our brother's way. Would we do that?

-I wonder why God preserved this record of arguing over doctrine for us?

Ways to restore unity would be for brothers and sisters to take the time to pray for brothers and sisters and our minister. Approximately thirty years ago a brother told me about a sister in the church who each day would take out the church directory for her congregation and pray for each family listed in the directory. We need to pray more for families in our congregations. We need to listen and be guided by the Holy Spirit speaking through Scripture. To handle our feelings we need to learn to control our thinking like Paul suggested to the citizens of Philippi. In Phil. 2:5 Paul says, "Your attitude should be

the same as that of Jesus Christ."

Josh McDowell, p.232, wrote the following (I am unable to source the book this quote came from) "One of the signs of apostasy (falling from the truth) in the Christian Church is the bickering and disunity among Christians. Jesus said that the world would know that we were His disciples by the love that we have for one another (John 13:35). In Col. 3:14, it says that love is the perfect bond of unity. The New Testament speaks about us being unified in Christ" (Eph. 4:5).

I haven't the answers for how the church can overcome disunity, grumbling, disagreements, hard feelings, avoidance of one another and dislikes. As for me, starting this Sunday and each Sunday thereafter, I plan to go through my church directory, family by family and pray for each family by name, and pray that we can all be united in Christ.

Hamilton, ON

Editorial... continued from page 4

Inadvertently, he reminds us about the nature of suffering and illness. Cancer (or suffering of any kind) is not an evidence of God's disfavour. Neither do wealth and health demonstrate his approval and love. As the writer of Ecclesiastes says, "the race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favour to the learned, but time and chance happen to them all" (9:11). Suffering and adversity offer opportunities for people to show compassion.

This is a good time for us, as Christians and congregations, to ask ourselves what we have demonstrated to the world. Is it the harsh judgmentalism that seems to happily consign unbelievers to eternal condemnation? Or is it the Christ-like compassion that gives of self for all? Would you pray for Christopher Hutchins?



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God's Spiritual Butterfly

Dale R. Morgan

This past summer, my wife, Connie, and I were on our way home from the meeting of the saints in Adrian, Michigan. It is thirty miles from our house to the meeting house in Adrian. Sitting at the last traffic light on the way out of town Connie ask, "Is that a butterfly on the windshield wiper?" Looking at it from my point of view, I replied, "I think it is a leaf."

Driving out of town, we picked up speed to the legal limit of fifty-five miles per hour. The leaf or butterfly depending on where you were sitting began to flap in the wind. When we slowed down going through Jasper, the object had turned where I could see the body of the bug. I said to Connie, "It is either a moth or a butterfly, but it is surely dead after the beating it took in the wind."

As we picked up speed again, the wings began to flap violently in the wind once again. I expected that at any moment it would break free and be blown over the car and out of sight. Amazingly, after being battered by the wind for fifteen miles or so, the butterfly was still attached to the wiper. I commented to Connie, "It is holding on for dear life, but I cannot figure out what is holding it on." At the intersection of Ohio 109 and US 20, we stopped and to my surprise, I saw the legs and antennae moving. While intrigued by this I reasoned that anything as frail as a butterfly would never be able to fly again or live for very long after the punishment it had endured.

I had now decided that it was a butterfly rather than a moth. If memory

serves me correctly, when at rest the butterfly wings were held together straight up as the moth was flat and spread out. Crossing the intersection, we once again picked up speed for the next fifteen miles into Wauseon. Slowing down as we entered the city, the wild flapping of the wings stopped and the butterfly was motionless. I was certain that it had succumbed to the horrific force of the wind. It was surprising that somehow it was still attached to the windshield wiper.

Stopping at the curb, I got out of the car and proceeded to remove the butterfly from its perch. It seemed to be stuck with some sticky goop. As I scraped that away, the butterfly flapped its wings, flew upward past my head, and went on its merry way.

I said to my wife, "There is probably a lesson in this somewhere, or maybe more than one." Connie

replied, "Maybe each person who reads about it will have their own lesson."

Matthew 6:28-29, "Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or weave for clothes. I tell you, even Solomon, with all his beautiful clothes, was not dressed as well as one of these flowers."

The Lord gave strength to that butterfly to endure the great ordeal. How much more will He give strength to his children to endure the storms of this life? Ps 27:1, "The Lord is my light and my salvation. Who is there to fear? The Lord is my life's fortress. Who is there to be afraid of?" 2 Thess 3:3, "But the Lord is faithful and will strengthen you and protect you against the evil one."

Moreover, when freed, the faithful will spread their wings, fly upward and gather with Him in the heavens. 1 Thess 4:15-17, "We who are still alive when the Lord comes will not go ahead of those who have already died. The Lord will come from heaven with a command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God. First, the dead who believed in Christ will come back to life. Then, together with them, we who are still alive will be taken in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. In this way we will always be with the Lord."

1 Peter 1:24-25, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers and its flower falls. But the word of the Lord endures forever."

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everything? No, but the fundamental way of salvation certainly is clear.

Jesus revealed it to His apostles. He said, "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15).

The Spirit then reminded them of what He taught them so that they could record it. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26).

When they recorded what was revealed to them, their understanding is clear to the reader. As Paul told the Ephesians, "When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph 3:4-5).

That does not mean that the Bible is perfectly understandable to the unbeliever. The Bible does not claim, as we sometimes claim for it, that it will convert the heathen without the intervention of a believer to evangelize. The Bible is to be studied in community with fellow believers (Acts 8:30-31). When it is studied in such a context it is fairly clear. When we attempt to study and interpret it in isolation from the context of a faithful learning community (the church) we get into trouble.

Next, we note that this highway will be the way of holiness. "The unclean will not travel it" (8). Where did we get the idea that we could drive drunk on the highway of God? Spiritual sobriety is required to travel the highway of God. Grace does not mean that we do not have to repent. Real grace leads us to repent. As Paul tells Titus, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly

passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age" (Titus 2:11-12). Repentance is demanded (Lk 13:3), holiness is necessary (1 Cor 6:9-10; Heb 12:14).

Last, we note that this highway will be safe. "No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there" (9). Sometimes we have been so afraid of the extremes of Calvinism that we have not been willing to present the real safety that is promised. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John 10:27-29). His most oft repeated negative statement is "Fear not" (Matt 10:28; Mat 28:5; Luke 8:50;

12:7; 12:32; John 12:15; Acts 27:24; Rev 1:17). Yes, we might have to die for Christ. That is a possibility. But there is complete safety in following him. Paradoxical, but true.

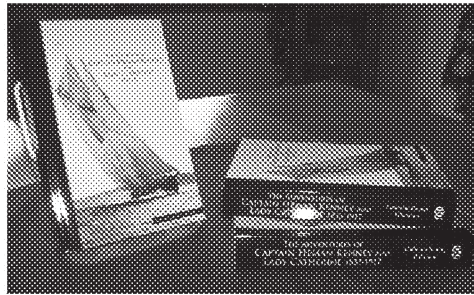
The text presents us with three promises: vengeance (hell), healing, and a highway. The promise of vengeance reminds us that, while we should seek justice, the pressure is off, we don't have to right every wrong in the world. God will deal with it, we can set aside vengeance.

The promise of healing tells us that we are hopelessly marred by sin only if we try to deal with sin by ourselves. If we will accept His healing, we can and will be healed.

The promise of a highway gives us purpose. We are not healed to sit still and do nothing, but to travel His clear, safe, holy highway. We are healed to live lives that glorify the one who has healed us.

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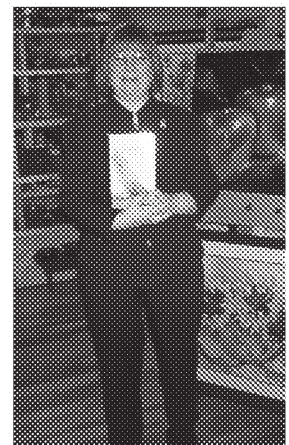
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Catherine Kenney Wilcoxson, was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Cathy is an alumna of GLCC. She is now living in Covington, Indiana working with the church with her husband, Paul. She says: "You're going to love this story."



by Walter R. Straker
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Note: This is the last issue to be edited by Walter Straker. New editors of NewsEast (as of the February 2011 issue) will be Don Hipwell and Harold Bruggen of the Church of Christ in Fenwick, Ontario. From now on, please send all news via email to hbruggen@gmail.com, or regular mail to **Church of Christ, PO Box 416, Fenwick, ON, LOS 1C0.**

Reminder: To be published in the following month's Gospel Herald, each congregation's information should be sent to Fenwick 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." When reporting an event, state the specific date (month/day/year) of that event. Also, please note that editors forward to NewsEast only the information received from congregations; they do not check each congregation's website.

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John: Shawn LeBlanc reports that he has been there just over a year now. The men were happy to see that 75% to 90% of the congregation giving (weekly offerings) is used for outreach. The church there has been saving up for the purchase of its own building and, after only three months, they have \$528.25 put aside. Currently, the congregation has 12 baptized believers and four children. One member, Elaine Bottcher, recently moved to South Carolina. With the addition of a French speaking family, Denis (another man) and Jacqueline Tarko, the congregation is doing well. Shawn thanks fellow Christians in various congregations for their support and asks that individuals and churches continue in this good work. He says: "It didn't just start with us. You were there every step of the way. Thank you so much

for being there for us (the LeBlancs) and this little congregation.

ONTARIO

Beamsville: The 2011 budget was presented on December 5, 2010. The congregation hosted a Christmas Eve service in the community. Operation Christmas Child boxes were prepared and sent.

Bramalea: Matilda Ducreay asked for prayers on November 7. A surprise 75th birthday party and pot luck meal was held for Shirley Straker on November 14 and was a complete success. The ladies held a pot luck and planning session for 2011 activities on Sunday afternoon, November 21, 2010. Mary Broome, formerly of Newmarket, celebrated her 90th birthday on November 28. Max Craddock, Strathmore minister, was guest speaker for the Bramalea congregation on December 12, 2010. The congregation plans to begin a 13-week financial planning series of workshops on January 23, 2011, presented by Dave Ramsay of the Financial Peace University. The 2011 Good Friday, Training for Service, will be held at Cawthra Secondary School in Mississauga on April 22, 2011, with the Bramalea church in charge.

Brantford: Recent worship speakers were Curtis Thompson, Greg Toohey, Will Maddeaux and Wayne Whitfield. The ladies of the congregation met at Swiss Chalet for dinner and followed up with a time of crafting, fellowship and dessert. A pot luck lunch, followed by a time of hymn singing, was held November 28, 2010.

Hamilton (Fennell Ave.): On November 28, the congregation was blessed as members of the North Hamilton congregation shared a pot luck meal, a period of singing and an update of happenings at North Hamilton. Members of the Fennell Avenue congregation participated in a shoe box gift program for students at Parkview High School in Hamilton. They also purchased and delivered two gifts to local children of men in prison as a part of Angel Tree Christmas, a program of Prison Fellowship Canada, and helped some of the congregation's members with food for the holiday period.

Fenwick: Don Hipwell and Jeremiah Cisco, of St. Catharines, exchanged

pulpits on November 14. The congregation entered a float in the Fenwick Christmas parade and handed out invitations to an evening of celebrating Christ's birth in song. The ladies once again prepared Christmas baskets for the elderly and shut-ins. The men delivered the baskets and sang to the recipients.

Mississauga: The ladies of the congregation participated in a ladies' day away entitled: "A Sweet Smelling Fragrance," taken from Ephesians 5:2. Thursday Bible classes are held weekly in various members' homes. On Visitors' Sunday, the first Sunday of every month, worship is followed by a fellowship pot luck.

Selkirk: Michael Toby, who ministers with this congregation, was featured at the St. Catharines Museum on Saturday, November 20, 2010, in a musical presentation about the Underground Railroad.

Tintern: The congregation's 13th annual "Church in the Park" was held Sunday, September 5, 2010, at Charles Daley Park. The weather cooperated and it was a wonderful time of worshipping God outside. It was a combined service with Beamsville this year. Three hundred people were in attendance, including several guests. Sunday, October 3, was the congregation's "Celebration of Thanks." Kids' Night Out started up again with 23 children attending—several from the community. EPIC enjoyed a night out with friends at Howl's Pumpkin Farm. TRUTH held its 30-Hour Famine Relief lock in and is still collecting funds.

Toronto (Strathmore Blvd): The congregation rejoiced with Victoria Carlos at the arrival of her husband, Ricky and daughters, Rica Mae and Rose Anne from the Philippines. We also welcomed Chona Dollesin to our family here.

Waterloo: A Young Adult Rally is planned for January 14-16. The theme is "We're Not in Kansas anymore—Reimagining Engagement with a post-Christian Society." It deals with dealing with the world and staying biblically based. Noel Walker will be the speaker. Great Lakes Bible College will be presenting two winter term classes on campus and via e-learning, beginning in January. They can be

continued on page 13



by Marion Waugh
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E-mail: waughr1@shaw.ca

(BC news supplied by Barbara Lewis)

ALBERTA

North Edmonton: John W. Smith was guest speaker in November. The theme for the weekend was "The Mind of Christ". Two classes have begun in The Edmonton School of Evangelism: Historical Christian Evidences class has 6 students. There are 7 students in The Minor Prophets class.

South Edmonton: (reported by Tim Johnson) The last four months have seen progress, and we're grateful to the Lord. During our September 10-12 gospel meeting, 107 people attended that Sunday—a record for us. Gerry Bibaud moved to the north-side congregation in November to become their full-time preacher. We've laid some ambitious plans for the New Year. Studies continue with several families interested in the Good News.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Central Valley (Abbotsford): The Weir family suffered another tragedy when a nephew of Norm's was accidentally killed during a hunting accident in November, leaving a wife expecting a third child in February. Norm and Jen

flew to Hamilton, MI, to join relatives going to the funeral in Rochester. They then traveled with other family members to Thessalon, ON, to attend worship there and a service the following day in the cemetery, where most of the Weirs of past generations are buried. Norm and Jen delivered Christian DVD's to Danielle Edgars when they visited her in Elkford, near the Alberta border, in November. They reported that she is earnestly teaching her four children about the Christian life as she continues to learn herself.

Burnaby: Kirk and Lori Ruch returned in mid-November from their three weeks as guest teachers in the Donetsk Bible Institute in Ukraine. President Jay Don & Mary Lee Rogers followed soon after for their winter break, and spoke at the morning service on Dec. 5, giving a slide review of the work that they have most recently been doing in that part of Europe.

Oakridge (Vancouver): Giovanni Morales received news that his daughter, Swani, was baptized in December at the church she attends in Atlanta, GA. Our children presented a special program after the Christmas dinner on Dec. 19. Milton Diaz, our preacher, frequently uses current events for the Wednesday night messages he sends over the internet. With our world in a super-stew over the damage or good caused by the Wikileaks, the last two months of the year, by changing the spelling a little, Milton devoted the one on Dec. 1 to "Wicked Leaks", quoting the passage from Proverbs 29:20, which chastises any person as worse than a fool if he speaks in haste, i.e. without thinking first. WIKI -WIKI, as in "Wikileaks",

means "QUICK" in Hawaiian. "Almost everyone has said things we wish we had never said, injuring others" Milton wrote the old adage, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me"—Not true. Words have the power to create and destroy. With words we create relationships and with words we can destroy these relationships as well. And a life of regret will never be enough to heal the injury inflicted by our careless words. Wicked leaks clearly endanger lives, particularly the life of the one who leaks, he pointed out, closing the devotional by quoting Winston Churchill: "We are masters of the unsaid words, but slaves of those we let slip out." And "I have never developed indigestion from eating my words." "Angry Words" was the suggested song: "Angry words! O let them never, From the tongue unbridled slip, May the heart's best impulse ever, Check them ere they soil the lip. Love is much too pure and holy, Friendship is too sacred far, For a moment's reckless folly, Thus to desolate and mar. Refrain: Angry words are lightly spoken, Bitterest thoughts are rashly stirred, Brightest links of life are broken, By a single angry word." PRAYER: "Heavenly Father, to you who spoke the world into existence, we pray. Help us, O Lord, to speak words of love, encouragement, hope and life, and when this is not possible, to keep silent instead.. In the Name of the One who is Logos (The Word) Himself we pray, Amen!"

MANITOBA

Winnipeg (Central): The Kids' club did some baking for the senior's hampers.

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INDIA: “Years ago, our team began conducting Bible seminars developed to convert denominational preachers in India. Many of the preachers on our team were converted from these backgrounds, and they have a passion for reaching those still trapped in traditions of religious error. As an “escapee” from denominationalism myself, I realize the lure & control that denominations can have. Then there are social pressures and family bonds that are strained when someone leaves the chosen religion of his family and friends. But after these men begin to compare man-made denominations to the church of the Bible, they realize they must “obey God rather than men.” Although many are self-supporting, and have no problem in regard to the loss of support, they quickly begin teaching their former church members, family and friends. Regardless of the number of congregations they worked with, over a period of time they usually convert a large percentage from their former church affiliation. But for those supported by a denomination, giving up error is a much more traumatic transition for them and their family. In addition to regular salary, they may be provided with a house, motorcycle or scooter, housekeeper, medical care and, for some, a type of retirement fund. Once converted, they are encouraged to attend one of our training schools for 13 weeks to help them sort out details and get answers to questions they may have. These men go to work for Christ with more dedication and Bible knowledge than ever before, plus insight into the false doctrines which enable them to convince more from man-made groups. They are also highly effective in reaching those who worship false gods. At seminars planned especially for them, Bible classes are designed to open their eyes to the clear truths of the inspired Word of God as opposed to the glaring

contradictions to the Bible taught by their former denomination. Basic lessons on the authority of the Scriptures, the blood atonement of Christ, the purpose of baptism, the acts of worship and the unique characteristics of the Lord’s church are covered. Bible charts which helped me to learn the Truth have been translated into Telugu, Marathi, Kannada and Hindi. Copies are made to give to the men to take home for further review and study. Indian brethren plan, set up and carry out all the details of these seminars, teaching many of the classes themselves, as well as doing the follow-up work. Guest speakers reinforce and expand on what has already been taught. It is not unusual to have 15 to 20 denominational preachers baptized at one meeting. During the follow-up phase, more are baptized. Necessary costs include a rented hall, chairs, P.A. system, printed materials, transportation and food for all the students, which is, by far, the biggest expense. But since these men come with some Bible knowledge and skills already, there is no limit to the number of souls they may reach in their lifetimes. — (From a report from Ben Renegar, Fayetteville, TN)

ALSO IN INDIA: Karen Clayton, who has been there the past six months, has received so many requests from women who must earn a living for their families, as well as preachers who are professional tailors to support their families, that she is making a plea for funds with which to buy more sewing machines. The Claytons established sewing schools for many years, but have so many other details to take care of that the decision was made not to start any more. However, many of the requests like these mentioned are heart-breaking and Karen is asking for help in supplying as many as possible.

HAITI: Two young women, formerly from the Vancouver area, are in Haiti helping with the effort to take care of the patients suffering from cholera. One is Stephany Hawks, daughter of Tony Hawks, former preacher in Coquitlam, who became a nurse practitioner. She had been working in another third world country since her graduation before answering the call to Port au Prince. The other is the daughter of Dan and Jennie Keeren, Phoebe, who

worked in Calgary for several years. Stephany frequently details her day’s work. Quoted here is an unusual experience in November: “I have been working primarily in the children’s tents. There are so many beautiful children that were brought to the clinic lifeless and, within a matter of hours of hydration, were sitting up laughing and smiling. The little girls are often dressed in their best, tattered but fancy, dresses. Many of the parents caring for their patients take shifts and the dads are there at night. It is so precious to see



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these fathers care so tenderly for their children. One evening I walked into tent 5 and observed a girl about 2 years old in her fancy pink dress edged with lace sitting up and laughing as she patted her dad's face. He had a big smile on his face, enjoying the moment. His love and adoration for her reminded me of our Father's amazing love and mercy for these Haitian people even in the midst of such a crisis." And then, the following evening: "It was unsettling going to work last night. Everyone was on edge. During the first few hours of the shift I was feeling faint. People were loud and walking around rather than staying at the bedsides. Something wasn't right. Then suddenly the dad of one of my patients began to scream and run on his hands and feet like an animal through the camp knocking over patients and IV poles. At the same time, on the other side of the camp the beating drums of a voodoo ceremony were heard. Patients in one of the tents sat up and began chanting as they beat the air with their fists. Animals were awake, dogs barking and roosters crowing. We were in the midst of a spiritual battle. There were 10 of us working the 180 bed hospital that night...so few of us. We gathered together, realizing we needed to pray. In 2 Kings 6:16 one of the prophets encouraged the people by saying 'Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' We prayed asking in the name of Jesus to overcome this stronghold. Moments after the prayer the camp became quiet, patients lay down and we heard one woman's soft voice singing a praise song to Jesus...there is power in His name." (Ed. Note: Last year, the "Mission Lazarus" and "RAPHA" organizations joined "Healing Hands International" with headquarters in Memphis, TN. Narcotic anaesthesia and antibiotics for major surgeries were made to Haiti shortly before the earthquake hit. In early December, in addition to antibiotics needed to fight the cholera outbreak, enough rehydration salts for 6,000 patients was delivered. As cholera victims can lose from 2½ to 5 gallons of body fluid a day, the salts can save their lives while the antibiotics destroy the germs. This report from

Healing Hands says that 1,000 more nurses are needed, as well as 100 doctors, as there were 200,000 cases reported in just the first three months of the outbreak.)

JAPAN: Sasha Ingle is requesting prayers for her future work in Japan. Her sponsoring/supporting congregation has decided that, though they will continue to sponsor her, they can no longer support her work. Sasha has been invited by the Mito Church of Christ in Japan to continue to work with them, but she will need to raise support to do this. If you or your congregation can help, please contact her. Jonathan and Michiko Straker announce the birth of their third child, baby boy Shiori Elimelek on November 29, 2011. He joins 4-year-old big brother, Hijiri Gideon, and big sister, 2-year-old Minori Kaitlyn. If you wish more information about the Japan mission work, contact Joel Osborne at joelosborne4@yahoo.com; Jon and Michiko Straker at jonathan@strakerhouse.com; Sasha Ingle at sashainsendai@yahoo.com; Ben and Erica Berry at bencherry@gmail.com; or the Bramalea church of Christ at mail@bramaleacofc.ca.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Ruth Zimmerman reports: "...at Malahang we anticipated meeting in a classroom in the school but actually met in a newly cleared field with a small tarped structure, and spent the entire time inventing creative ways to avoid severe sunburn while participating in the worship service!" In her December report she asks for prayers for Helen, a sister in Christ in Lae, who is currently awaiting major surgery. For several years various congregations in and around Lae have meet every three months or so for what is commonly called "Lae City Combined." There are 14 congregations in this area and 12 of them were present on a recent Sunday, along with visiting members from Wau and Indagen in Morobe Province and Dumun in Chimbu Province. Six hundred and fifty people attended for an encouraging time of fellowship, followed by a fellowship meal together. Please pray for the congregations in Lae. If you'd like to receive Ruth's monthly reports, contact her ruthzimm@gmail.com.

News East... continued from page 10

taken for credit or audit. "The Book of Acts," with Dave Knutson, is being presented on Mondays, January 10 – May 2, 2011, from 6–9 p.m. "Samuel to Kings," with Jim Holston on Tuesdays, January 11 – May 3, 2011, from 6–9 p.m. For more information, visit www.greatlakesbiblecollege.ca, or call (519) 342-3040.

Windsor (West Side): Wednesday night Bible class in November had first, an introductory lesson discussing the importance of having and reading the word of God. Then the group looked at the great struggle and sacrifice by which the English Bible was brought to Christians. The December sermons went through a series entitled "Like a Bridge" and talked about the great ways the coming of Jesus really does act like a bridge over troubled waters.

NOTE from Walter Straker

It is with regret—and also relief—to turn over the "NewsEast" reporting to Don Hipwell and Harold Bruggen of the Fenwick congregation, beginning in January as they prepare for the February, 2011, issue. My first month was September, 1993, Volume 58, #9 and this issue is January, 2011, Volume 76, #01. Over the last 17 years I found it very interesting to read the reports and bulletins of the various congregations, and I encourage more congregations to send in their reports. May God bless you all in the future. Walter R. Straker, Bramalea church of Christ.

FROM the Editors:

We wish to thank Walter and Shirley, who did much of the compiling, for their 17 years of service to the Gospel Herald and the brotherhood, in editing the News East pages for the Herald. It is sometimes hard to know what to include in these News pages, however, we believe it is very important to have news from East and West, along with the Mission news as a regular part of the Herald. We are encouraged as we read of the positive activities of congregations in fulfilling the commission of Christ in our land and around the world. We say "Thank You" to Walter and Shirley for their service and "Welcome" to Don and Harold as they take on the editing of News East.

– Wayne and Max

OBITUARIES

Langeman, Betty Margaret

Betty Langeman, a resident of Leisureworld Vaughan, formerly of Maple, ON, passed away peacefully at the Toronto General Hospital on Friday, November 19, 2010 in her 84rd year.

Betty was born in Peterborough, ON, on April 28, 1927, the daughter of the late Thomas Alexander and Annie Agnes (Sams) McGregor. She was married to Edward Langeman on August 27, 1949, and they spent their 61 years of married life in the Toronto area with Edward working for the Canadian National Railway.

Betty will be sadly missed by her sons, Edward 'Ted' (Marion) of Brampton, ON, and David (Marjorie) of St Thomas, ON. She was predeceased by her son, Neal, in 1995. She will be lovingly remembered by her grandchildren Aaron (Rhiz) of the Philippines; Andrew of Brampton, ON; Beth (Daniel) Zamfir of Phoenix, AZ; Katie (Aaron) Burch of Lisbon, OH; and Sandi of St Thomas, ON. She was the proud great grandmother of Ayva, Peter and Emily Zamfir and Esther Burch. She is also mourned by her in-laws in Swift Current, SK, and Kelowna, BC, and by nieces and nephews throughout Canada.

Betty was a member of the Church of Christ, formerly of Concord, ON. She was baptized in 1974 by Bert Atkinson. She worshipped with the church at Concord and also at Newmarket.

Betty was a mother to foster children for many years, sewed doll clothes at home for a major manufacturer and worked at the former Maple Library. She loved music, cooking, gardening, photography, crafts and needlework. Many were encouraged by the notes she sent and the telephone calls she made.

A private family service was held on Saturday November 20, 2010, at the Marshall Funeral Home, Richmond Hill, ON, followed by interment at the Elgin Mills Cemetery.

If so desired, memorial donations may be made to Strathmore Blvd. Church of Christ in Toronto for Key To The Kingdom Canada.

—David Langeman

Oleniuk, Norma Mary Wallace

Norma Oleniuk, of Victor New York, died suddenly Wednesday, November 10, 2010, at age 75, in her home.

She was predeceased by her husband, Oliver, in 2008. She is survived by her children, Cheryl (Brian) VanMierlo of Brockville, ON; Patricia (Christian) Riegle of Victor, NY; Michael (Carol) of Sheds, NY; and Peter (Summerlee) of Victor, NY. Also mourning the loss are her grandchildren, Ben and Stephen VanMierlo; Kevin, Andrew, Trevor and Justin Riegel; William and Melissa Oleniuk; Drew Comerford; Dayna (Steve) Drury; Alicia Dewild; Madison Robinette.

Norma was born and raised in St. Catharines, ON, the only child of Loney and Edna Wallace. She attended the Niagara and Manning Street church in St. Catharines until her marriage to Ollie in 1959. Following their marriage, the couple moved to London, ON, where Ollie worked for the C.N.R. They opened their home for Bible studies, working with Ralph and Joyce Perry in London.

Norma was a devoted wife, moving when Ollie's employment demanded, caring for him during his illness until his death, a proud, loving mother and grandmother. She is missed.

The funeral service was from the Lucey-VanHoorhis Funeral Home in Victor on Saturday, November 13. David Owens and Bill Perkins, elders and ministers of the Wetzell Road church of Christ in Liverpool, NY, conducted the service. Son Peter and son-in-law Brian delivered eulogies and granddaughter Melissa read a poem dedicated to her grandmother.

—Submitted by

Elaine (Oleniuk) Robinson.

Max's Musings... continued from page 5

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful." This confidence allows us to face the forces of evil, knowing we have support every step of the way.

We have this confidence and support only as long as we keep our relationship alive with Him. John comforts us as he reminds us the provision God makes for our daily cleansing. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7-9). If we do this, the promise is, "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are faithful and can be trusted to give the believer what is promised. David could fight and win against his enemy and the enemy of God's people Israel, because he walked with God and trusted God to give him victory over the enemy. The same trust and commitment to God will bring victory today.

One of the responsibilities of the shepherd is to give protection to the flock. You can truly say, "The Lord is MY shepherd" and receive His protection and deliverance if you trust and act on that trust as David did.

increase; entertainment and fun seem to be the measure of life's worth; families are falling apart; and our children are being abused.

So, time and events tend to crowd out the reality of Christ. We are so captivated by what we can see and feel, that we lose sight of the fact that He is still the same today as He was all those years ago—and will be the same tomorrow.

B. Jesus' Presence Changes the March of Time

Paul said something which suggests that there is another reality at work in the world and in spite of time's inevitable passing. In 2 Cor.4:16, he said, "Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day."

It seems that in spite of the physical reality of this world and its decline with each passing year, we are called to believe that there is another reality at work which is the exact opposite. In other words, through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the reversal that

F. Scott Fitzgerald hopelessly tried to achieve in the life of Benjamin Button is in fact a reality for those who follow Jesus. His death and resurrection become a pattern for each of us who put their trust in Him. To use biblical terminology, we are "born again."

So, what is time doing to us? It all depends in which reality we live. If this world is all we have—then time wins, but if we live in the reality of Christ, something else is happening. Just a little earlier in this letter to the Corinthians (3:18), Paul said, "But we, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

In essence, Paul is saying that whereas a mirror normally reflects what we are, this mirror shows us what we are becoming. And for the Christian, this is the likeness of Jesus. We have escaped the slavery of time and have found freedom to be what God meant us to be. Time has lost. To quote the writer to the Hebrews again (2:14-15), Jesus became human so that by His death and resurrection, "He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Conclusion

We are entering January, the first month of the New Year, and named after the Roman god Janus.

Janus was always pictured as a man with two faces, one looking back, and one looking forward. He was known as the keeper of gates and doors, of beginnings and endings (hence our word "janitor"). He is supposed to have received from the god Saturn the gift to see both the past and the future. So he was the god of time, of change, transi-

tions; and progression. In his right hand he holds a key, presumably, the key of time itself.

Janus represented, for the Romans, many of the same things Fitzgerald, and for that matter, all of us long for—the answer to the meaning of life; and more particularly, escape from the downward spiral of time. This search has become a reality for those who know Jesus Christ. He is the one who rules above time itself, and who entered into it to redeem it for every one of us. He is the one who holds the key. As he himself said to John in the Revelation (1:17-18), "I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive ever forever. And I have the keys of Hades and Death."

So, despite the fact that we enter another year older, with the world's troubles increasing, with our own aches and pains reminding us about the march of time, yet we are confident of another reality—one that has already begun in Jesus and is alive in every one who follows him. As Paul said, "Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day." Something Benjamin Button, despite his remarkableness, was unable to achieve.

Waterloo, ON

EVANGELIST WANTED

The congregation in **Prince Rupert BC**

is seeking a full-time evangelist. Must be a capable preacher, teacher and personal worker.

The congregation is stable with no real problems. We have a new building in a prime location (that is paid for) and are seeking a family that is willing to make a long term commitment. Our current evangelist has been with us for 20 years.

Please reply by e-mail at **prchofch@citytel.net**

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

A Transformed Life

Max Craddock

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image** from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17, 18). Here Paul reminds us that we are being transformed into His (the Lord’s) image. The idea being that when a person becomes a Christian, he grows to reflect the image of the Master. Understand that being a Christian is not simply trying to “patch in” some “New Testament” living into one’s life, even if it were a good life based on the Old Law, or while holding onto the world. Rather, being truly Christian carries the idea of transformation. If from the Old Law, to the more perfect way of God, if from worldliness to godliness.

In support of this idea, Jesus said, “...No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins—and the wine is destroyed, and so are the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins.” (Mark 2:21, 22). In this passage Jesus is talking about the Law of Christ, the New Law, which would come to replace the Law given through Moses. This Law of grace could not simply be sewn into the Old Law. This would be like taking a piece of unshrunk cloth and sewing it into a garment. When it is washed and the new unshrunk cloth shrinks, it will tear the cloth, leaving a worse hole than in the beginning. The point being that if we are going to be Christian, it’s not simply a matter of putting a little bit of Jesus into our life. But rather understands that we must be transformed into the likeness of the Son of God.

A great example of transformation is the Monarch butterfly. The Monarch butterfly is a beautiful creature to behold, but it starts out as a worm and, in my opinion, there’s nothing pretty about a worm! The pre-butterfly worm is not a very attractive thing. But, as the process unfolds, as the worm goes into its cocoon and there goes through the process that’s involved to finally break out of that cocoon as a beautiful butterfly... that is transformation. It has been transformed from something that slithered around on the ground to something that can fly above it. From something with little beauty to something that has wonderful beauty.

As we think about this matter of transformation let us look at some of the things that are to be transformed or changed in our lives. “But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. **For we are the aroma of Christ** to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Corinthians 2:14–16). Here Christians are seen as an extension of the Gospel by carrying the very aroma of Christ to the world. Through the example (smell) of Christians, many will be led to Christ. Sadly, some see the lifestyle of Christ as negative rather than something to be adopted.

Secondly, Paul tells us that our motivation, the thing that makes us tick, is changed. “...So whether we are at home or away, **we make it our aim to please him**. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Corinthians 5:9, 10). People

are motivated these days by quick, tangible results. In serving Christ, tangible results may not be quickly seen. Satan seems to be there to inhibit us at every step of the way, and sometimes we may believe it’s not worth the effort, bringing discouragement and loss of focus on what is real.

The book of Hebrews was written to encourage Christians who were in that very situation. Christ-like living was hard because of persecution. The Hebrew letter was written to encourage them, to be motivated by their faith, to believe in the things that God had told them, the promises He had given them. The child of God is transformed from being motivated by what he can see, touch, taste, feel and smell to being motivated by what he believes in.

Finally, one’s purpose in living is transformed. “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might **no longer live for themselves but for him** who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15). These words of Paul go a long way toward explaining his own compulsion to serve Christ. If there is any person who lived the transformed life, Paul is it. His transformation in thought and life is seen in these words; “**Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ**, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

There is that need then for that transformation to take place that takes us from being a person who is concerned only about ourselves and our own needs to being concerned about sharing this saving message of Jesus with those we meet; our friends, our neighbours, our relatives and anyone, for that matter, that we have opportunity to influence.

“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, **perfecting holiness out of reverence for God**” (2 Corinthians 7:1). Now, in a real way, this is where the rubber meets the road. What does it mean to be transformed? It means to grow in holiness. What is holiness? Holiness is God likeness. It’s being like God in purity, in morals, in all of those things that have to do with how we react to people around us and how we react to God. It has to do with our goals and our goal must always be to honour God. Consider, “What is your most important goal in life?” There can be all kinds of goals but what is that over-shadowing goal? What is that goal above them all? I mean even in earning a living, what is our ultimate goal? Even in having a good career in some activity, whatever it is that’s a good and a proper activity, what is the over-riding goal? In family, what is the overriding goal? What is it that motivates us above everything else? What is our goal above all? For the true Christian, the goal is that God would be glorified in his life. For the Christian that’s what is important. The Christian wants to honour God in everything that he does, everything that he says, everything that he is.

Paul challenges us, “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. **Or do you not realize this about yourselves**, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!” (2 Corinthians 13:5). This is perhaps the crux of the whole lesson. If we would be the transformed people of God, we must examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. How do I do that? How am I going to figure out whether I’m in the faith or not? How am I going to figure out whether I’m acceptable to God or not? Is it simply a matter of saying, “I feel good about what I am doing, I feel like it’s the right thing to do, I feel like God is going to be satisfied with it because I feel good?”

God has given us the direction we need to be sure if we are pleasing Him. How does one know if he is in the faith? The requirements of saving faith are made known in the Bible. “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Jude is saying the requirements of living in the faith has been given

to us, once for all. Where is it? It’s in the Word of God. What you and I need to do to please God, what we need to do to be transformed is given to us in the Word of God. It’s a matter of our studying it, learning it, committing to it and allowing the Spirit of God to work in us to transform us into the people of God. Transformation takes complete surrender. May God bless us and give us a heart that can be transformed.
Toronto, ON



MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY FOR A **Female Residential Supervisor**

Sunday Evenings – Friday Afternoons

Great Lakes Christian High School in Beamsville, Ontario is seeking an individual to fill this position beginning **January 31, 2011**. The successful candidate will be responsible for the creation of a ‘home-away-from-home’ experience for female 5-day residential students. This position provides opportunity to spiritually nurture young girls while physically overseeing and supervising them during their formative years of high school. Though not necessary, counseling or social work experience would be an asset.

For more information or to submit a resume, please contact **Heather McGrath**, Residential Director
905-563-5374 ext. 225
or hmcgrath@glchs.on.ca



Key To The Kingdom Day, MAY 1, 2011



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 9:30 AM (PT)
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 2011

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

On **May 1** 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

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 please put Key on the memo line.

The Barrie Church of Christ

is seeking a full-time Gospel Preacher to be a part of our congregation and continue the Lord's work of teaching, preaching and bringing the good news of the gospel of Christ to our community. Our congregation was established in the mid 1960's and presently has 3 elders and 2 deacons. We are self-supporting and meet on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. for Bible studies; Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m. for worship services; Sunday evenings at 6:30; and Wednesday evenings for Bible study at 7:00 p.m. There is more information about us at www.barriechurch.ca.

Barrie is a city of over 125,000 people situated on Lake Simcoe at the southern edge of Ontario's "Cottage Country" about an hour north of Toronto. Our location means that we have a number of visitors at our services as they travel through the area.

We are seeking an individual concerned with preaching the Bible with the respect that God's word deserves; someone interested in personal work; and Bible studies not only with our own people but with members of the community as opportunities permit.

Please send your resume and references to the attention of:

The Elders
Barrie Church of Christ
345 Grove Street
Barrie, Ontario L4M 2R6