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# Gospel

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NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

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**GROW  
OR DIE**

SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE 2

## Grow or Die – ISAIAH 49:1-6; ACTS 11:19-26

Thayer Salisbury

**I**t is a simple fact of nature; if we cease to reproduce cells, we are dying. I do not know if we can trust the University of California Santa Barbara, but their web site claims that in a healthy human body the process of cell reproduction goes on at a rate of hundreds of thousands per minute. Old cells die; new cells are formed, constantly. Thus, a body that is not growing is dying. And the church is such a body (1 Cor 12:12-13).

A church of 100 that is baptizing 10 new members per year might expect that in 10 years it will be a church of 200 (since 10 baptisms per year for 10 years would = 100 new members). But it does not work that way. The ten new Christians per year may be just enough to keep up with the death rate. If it is an older church, it may not be. Older members might die off even faster than new ones are added.

I am not a believer in trying to force or rush growth. Stretching children on the rack to make them taller is a very bad idea. Keep them healthy and they should grow naturally. The same is true with churches.

I have seen churches that talked about little other than evangelism; I have seen such churches suddenly collapse. They forced growth and neglected important aspects of health. This led to disaster. But we do need to be concerned about growth. Growth is an indicator of health, lack of growth an indicator of some kind of underlying health problem.

Many of our churches are in decline, serious decline. Part of that decline may have to do with the overall spiritual/moral/social climate in Western society; but to some extent I think that has become

an excuse. Yes, nearly all churches (not just churches of Christ) stopped growing some years ago, but that could be because nearly all churches were unhealthy. Perhaps most were self-focused. Perhaps most had lost sight of their mission and message. Whatever the causes, we have to find a way to turn things around or more than half of the churches in existence today will be closed ten to fifteen years from now.

Over the next four months I intend for us to examine some of the

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possible causes of our declining numbers. But in this introductory article, I want to consider some issues raised by the two scripture texts listed above.

### Hidden opportunities

I believe that these texts would call on us to look for opportunities within the very obstacles with which our culture confronts us.

We see this most clearly in the Acts 11 text. The Jerusalem church was scattered. The church was persecuted. Admittedly, persecution is never fun; but even persecution presents opportunities.

“Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus” (Acts 11:19-20, ESV).

Christians are no longer being ignored in Western society. We are targets for discrimination. But it is likely better that we be hated than

that we be simply unnoticed. As the first Christians took advantage of persecution, finding opportunities within the obstacles, so must we.

### Seek the Lord’s hand

These texts also remind us that we must seek the Lord’s hand, instead of thinking that success is within our power. When things were going well, it was easy to think that progress was within our grasp. Perhaps we have been too self-confident and self-reliant. It was “the hand of the Lord” that caused the great numbers to turn (Acts 11:21). It was not so much that these early believers had some sure-fire method.

We see this all through the Isaiah 49 passage as well. It is the heavenly action that turns the tide and enables his people to honor him (49:1, 2, 6).

### Out of our box

Lastly, these texts remind us that we must be willing to reach outside our cultural box. To put that in slightly different terms, we must be willing to see the outward appearance of the church change. I admit that this one bothers me. I know that it is biblical, but it bothers me.

It is biblical. We can see it clearly in the text from Acts 11. Those Jewish believers needed to share the message with Gentiles, even though doing so would radically transform the church. We see it also in the Isaiah 49 text. It is too light a thing that only one nation be raised up. God’s glory demands that his light go to all.

But it bothers me because I fear that too few within the church today have the biblical and spiritual maturity to make sound judgments as to what really matters. Some will refuse to allow anything to change.



Others will “throw out the baby with the bathwater” not seeing that the changes they tolerate fundamentally transform the message.

The choices are not always easy, but they must be made.

Which would we rather see in our communities twenty-five years from now? Would we want to see something secular, possibly a preschool or a movie theater or a quilt shop operating in what is currently the meeting place of the church? Or would we rather that there be a church that to all outward appearance looks a lot like us (middle class, middle aged, politically conservative)? But what if it is a church teaching some human-centered message? Would we not rather that there be a church that in outward appearance looks very different from our current congregation, possibly made up mostly of minorities, perhaps following a rather different order of worship, but teaching the fundamental biblical gospel?

Clearly the last is what we should choose, but how to make that ideal the reality is the difficulty.

### **Our best evangelistic tool**

As an undergraduate at Oklahoma Christian, I had occasion to hear Stafford North speak several times. I recall that one of his favorite themes was to recount what he called the most significant sermon preached on American soil. The preaching of Walter Scott had been the subject of North’s M.A. thesis at Louisiana State University. He believed that Scott’s sermon at New Lisbon, Ohio (now called simply Lisbon) on November 18, 1827 was that most significant sermon.

To that point in time virtually all frontier preaching was long on emotionalism while being short on both logic and scripture. Hyper-Calvinism was the order of the day.

People believed that they must have a violent emotional experience or they could not know if they were of those elected to salvation.

Scott preached a straight-forward recapitulation of Peter’s sermon at Pentecost and ended by inviting those who wished to be saved to do what Peter had said should be done (Acts 2:37-38). There was no need to get a case of the shivers, or to have a fainting fit, or to weep uncontrollably. One just needed to do what God had commanded and trust God for salvation. A respected citizen named William Amend responded to this sermon. Scott, and others,

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***We may plant and water, but the Lord alone will give the increase (1 Cor 3:6). Let us pray for that increase.***

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began to preach similar sermons, and the Restoration Movement began to really make progress.

I heard that story several times, but recently I was able to learn some additional details that are of significance.

A.S. Hayden, in his book *A History of the Disciples on the Western Reserve*, tells us that Scott had been trying to preach in a similar manner for two months or more, but had done so with no visible success. In the days leading up to the meeting at New Lisbon, Scott had given himself to prayer. He had asked for the Lord’s leading. Was his understanding of our response to the gospel correct? If so, he needed the Lord to open hearts to this new (old) message. So Walter Scott gave himself to prayer in a special way leading up to the preaching in New Lisbon.

In regard to that night at New Lisbon, Scott was long puzzled. Scott had not noticed Amend in the audience until near the end of the sermon. It seemed as if Amend might have responded to a sermon that he had not actually heard.

Eventually Scott wrote to Amend to raise this question. In reply Amend confirmed that he had arrived quite late. He had not heard very much of the sermon. But he responded because of the way the little bit he did hear touched upon a commitment he had made.

Amend, a prominent member of the Presbyterian Church, had long felt a conflict between what he read in scripture and the preaching he heard in his own church. One evening early in November, after reading Acts 2, Amend had told his wife that “the first man I meet who will preach the gospel thus, with him I will go.”

So when Amend arrived late at the Baptist meeting house, where Walter Scott was preaching, he was prepared to respond to what Scott was preaching. In a sense, William Amend was not responding so much to Scott’s preaching as to his praying. Scott had prayed that the Lord would prepare hearts to receive the message, and the heart of William Amend was prepared.

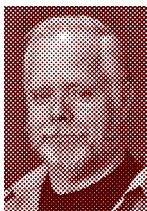
We need to use the best methods we can find; but ultimately we must recognize that the best method available to us is to cast ourselves upon the Lord. We are at best weak and flawed messengers, mere jars of clay (2 Cor 4:7f). The body of Christ on this earth has no comeliness to it that would attract outsiders (Isa 53:2). When we attempt to jazz up the church and elocutionize our preaching, we generally make fools of ourselves. The power is in the seed of the word (Lk 8:11). We must scatter that seed and pray that the Lord will prepare the soil of human hearts to receive it.

If the church does not grow it will die. But we cannot make it grow. We may plant and water, but the Lord alone will give the increase (1 Cor 3:6). Let us pray for that increase.

Toledo, Ohio

## When Idols Fall

Wayne Turner



**B**ack in the mid-1960's, a group of teens from a congregation in New York listened to a recording of a relatively new comedian. They laughed loudly at his material, especially his characterizations of the encounters between Noah and God and the instructions to build an ark and gather the pairs of animals. They roared with laughter when Noah became a little cheeky, and was asked, "Noah, how long can you tread water?" For decades since, that comedian became the standard for clean comedy and a wholesome image – appearing in an animated children's show, movies and television shows including an extremely popular, long running sit-com, and commercials for family-friendly products, like Jello. The Wikipedia article about him today calls Bill Cosby, a "stand-up comedian, actor, musician, author and convicted sex offender." It notes that "more than 60 women accused him" of a range of inappropriate assaults. He is now serving a sentence of three to ten years.

It was disappointing, if not even disillusioning for some, to see the fall of such a popular icon. We have seen many celebrities "crash and burn" from their inability to handle the wealth, fame and wide range of opportunities for misbehaviour. Yet, should we be surprised when the cult of stardom creates stars who are classed as "idols"—people to be followed and adored and given vast sums of money for providing the world with the diversion of entertainment, whether through acting, music or sports? In this context, the term "idol" has become an accepted and even desired description of status and popularity. Yet, few seem to survive the accolades. Many end up as suicides, over-doses,

accidents, or in alcohol or drug rehabilitation, not to mention divorce courts. These "idols" of our world are not examples to be emulated and adored. Yet, how many of those who profess to be Christians help support this system?

Perhaps we need to step back and remind ourselves of Paul's admonition in Romans 12, "Do not be conformed to this world..." or as Phillips puts it, "Don't let the world press you into its mold." Admittedly, we are designed and encouraged to appreciate beauty—the creation, the good that people can accomplish. We should focus our minds on those things that are good, lovely, excellent, beautiful...as Paul instructs. But does that include elevating the status of another human being to almost god-like stature? Are the "gods" of entertainment, sports, recreation and leisure leading God's people away from Him? Are they distracting and lessening the influence of Christians? Our culture creates and venerates idols. They may not be religious in the traditional sense. Yet, people adhere to them with the same adoration and loyalty as any deity. Certainly, fans can be fickle, rapidly exchanging one idol for another. But, they are all found in the same or a similar "temple" – theatre, arena, stadium...whatever.

The irony is, how many of these idols have come crashing down in scandal, personal failure,



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Send teaching articles to Wayne Turner, 45 Millfield Drive, Winnipeg, MB R2M 2N9

(204) 257-7926 E-mail: <editorial@gospelherald.org>

Send advertising and subscription information to

Max Craddock, PO Box 338 Clarksburg PO, Clarksburg, ON N0H 1C0

Phone: 416-706-5633 E-mail: maxc@strathmorecofc.ca

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injury only to be replaced by another? The general public does not learn that human beings are not worthy of veneration and worship. We cannot help but remember how the Old Testament prophets pointed to the folly of man-made idols, how a man might cut a piece of wood in half, burn one part in a fire to create heat and carve the other into an idol and worship it saying, "You have made me." Similarly, throughout the history of God's people, bowing down in worship to any mortal was abhorrent. Daniel's three friends were willing to face death in a fiery furnace as was Daniel in the lion's den rather than kneel before a man. Even part of the story in Esther was the unwillingness of her uncle to bow. Early Christians faced death rather than burn incense and proclaim, "Caesar is Lord!"

In the eighth and ninth century, a controversy raged in the religious world. The western church (Catholic) used and venerated objects, statues, etc. that were known as icons. The eastern churches (Orthodox) strongly opposed their use. This became known as the Iconoclastic Controversy. This became violent, as people opposed to statues attacked Catholic churches and broke the statues, giving rise to the term, "iconoclast" (breaker of statues). Much later, those favoring the use of icons would be called "iconolaters"—a blend of icon and idolater. Worship and adoration of either images or people is unacceptable.

The first command of the Decalogue was "You shall have no other Gods before me." God was to be honoured above all. His worship was to be unique, reserved only to Him. In the Shema, in Deuteronomy, this is framed in a positive way, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength." Jesus stressed this as the first and greatest command. Jesus put it in such a way it cannot be mistaken. After God, all other loves in our hearts appear as hate.

In the late 1700's William Cowper expressed it  
The dearest idol I have known,  
whate'er that idol be,  
help me to tear it from Thy throne  
and worship only Thee.

## COMMUNION SETS NEEDED

Santiago Molina, Spanish minister at Strathmore Blvd. Church of Christ in Toronto, is in need of communion sets for congregations in Central America. If your congregation has a set not being used that could be donated, please send them to:

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105 Wexford Blvd, Toronto, ON M1R 1L7  
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Help with this need is greatly appreciated.

## Coming in January 2019

### A One Quarter Bible Class Guide on the Book of Colossians

Written by: Thayer Salisbury  
Toledo, Ohio

Paul wrote the Church in Colossae to strengthen their resolve to stand against false teachers who might trouble them. Paul wanted them to understand the superiority of Jesus Christ over all human ideas, traditions and philosophies. He reminds them of the Preeminence of Christ, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" – Colossians 1:15-16 (ESV). Paul encourages the brethren to focus on heavenly rather than the earthly, which is a real danger as we live here on earth. Written from prison, this letter should have been an encouragement for Godly living to them and to us in the 21st Century.

We pray this resource can be used  
by congregations and individuals for  
congregational and individual study



## Lessons from the Sin of Nadab & Abihu

The events in the Old Testament have great value for us as we see what God expected of His people and how He dealt with their obedience and their disobedience. Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, were priests of God serving Him in the tabernacle. They had been “set apart” or “consecrated” for this work. Note what Moses wrote in Leviticus about preparing Aaron and his sons for service. “The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread. And assemble all the congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting.’” And Moses did as the LORD commanded him – Leviticus 8:1-4 (ESV). This was the beginning of the process of consecrating them for service.

Moses goes on in this chapter to discuss the preparing of animals for sacrifice and the purifying of the items of worship. He then writes, “Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and of the blood that was on the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron and his garments, and also on his sons and his sons’ garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments, and his sons and his sons’ garments with him” – Leviticus 8:30 (ESV). So Aaron and his sons are set apart, consecrated, made holy, to do the work of priests of God.

*The matter of holiness is very important in the life of the servant of God.* Those appointed to take control of the spiritual life of the Jewish people were to be holy in their conduct and life. In talking about this idea of holy or holiness, Vine’s

Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words offers this comment, “In one sense the word describes an object or place or day to be “holy” with the meaning of “devoted” or “dedicated”. God has dedicated Israel as His people. They are to be “holy” in their relationship to the “holy” God. God’s intent was to use this “holy nation” as a “holy and royal priesthood” among the nations. Based on the very intimate nature of this relationship, God expected His people

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***Don’t be fooled into thinking that it does not matter as long as some effort is made.***

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to live up to His “holy” expectations and, thus, to demonstrate that they a “holy nation”: “You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine” - Leviticus 20:26 (ESV). The priests needed to be shining examples of this holy and obedient lifestyle. Since we who are Christians are priests of God, “As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” – 1 Peter 2:4-5 (ESV), should we not take the lesson that if God expected holiness in the life of His priests under an imperfect law He will now expect us living under the perfect law, to live lives of holiness?

In Leviticus chapter 9, Aaron and his sons begin their service. In the early part of that chapter, under the guidance of Aaron the High Priest, they prepared themselves and the

sacrifice and offered them to God. Everything went well. At the end of the chapter we read, “Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces” – Leviticus 9:22-24 (ESV). Had the story ended there, it would have been wonderful.

It was a joyful time for the people of God and God was honoured by the faithful obedience of Aaron to the command of God. However, it was not to last. The sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, were next to perform spiritual duties for the people of Israel. However, God was not honoured as they did not follow the instructions given as concerning their service. Leviticus 10:1-2 gives the details: “Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD” (ESV). The word “unauthorized” is used in the NIV as well. The NKJV uses the word “profane” and the RSV the word “unholy” to describe the fire they used. They offered strange, unauthorized fire to the Lord.

\*Based upon Scripture, it probably means that they took the fiery coals from some fire burning nearby, some convenient fire. This was wrong, for God had insisted that the fiery coals come from the altar of Burnt Offering, never from any other source, “And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, and he shall bring it inside the veil and put the



incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony, so that he does not die” – Leviticus 16:12-13 (ESV). *\*Preacher’s Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary*

Why such strong punishment for failing to use the authorized fire? Can it really matter that much? It wasn’t that they did not “worship” by burning the incense. with a different fire source, did it? Since worship implies that one is being given honour and respect, is it really worship when one fails to follow the specific instructions for worshipping they have been given?

Notice what Moses says about it, Then Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the LORD has said: ‘Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.’” And Aaron held his peace” – Leviticus 10:3 (ESV).

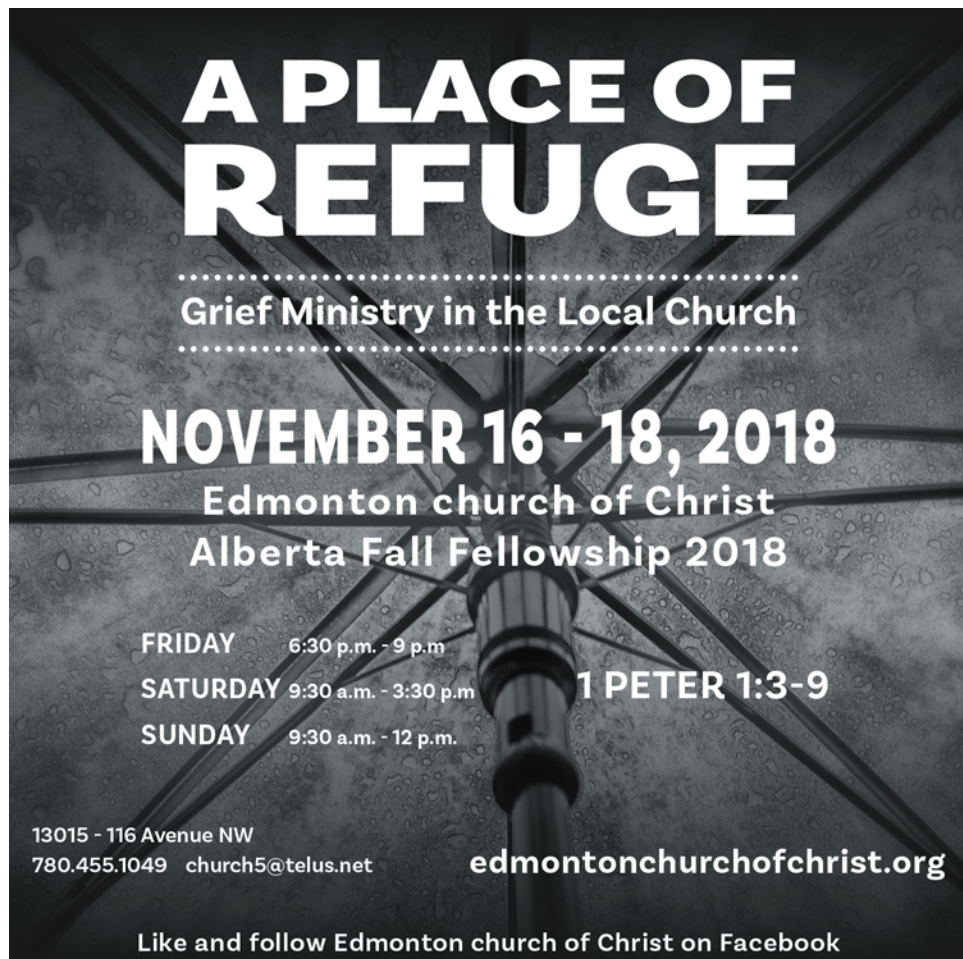
Clearly, God had not been sanctified (set apart, honoured, respected) and not glorified by the disobedience of these two. God can only be glorified by humble obedience to His expressed will. It seems to me that this story is even more tragic because these were the individuals who had responsibility to lead the people to the throne of God in their worship.

Sadly, there are many like Nadab and Abihu in the world today. Supposedly, these religious leaders are helping their followers draw closer to God. However, they are not following the sound doctrine of Christ by being committed to doing Bible things in Bible ways. They are teaching what people want to hear and are not preaching the Gospel of Christ truthfully.

While we do not see people burned alive by God for failing to honour and glorify Him by failing to teach and do the “whole will of God”. Don’t

be fooled into thinking that it does not matter as long as some effort is made. God has called us to be holy and that can only be accomplished by walking as He has directed in His word. Each of us is responsible to God to walk in the light of His word which brings daily blessings, “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” – 1 John 1:7 (ESV). What a wonderful ongoing promise.

I don’t know about you but I want to be remembered in how I live my life by living in a way that what was said about Jesus by Luke can be said about me, “In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach...” – Acts 1:1 (ESV). With the help of the Lord we too can be His followers who not only teach truth but also followers who do it. May God bless your daily walk with Him.



# A PLACE OF REFUGE

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Grief Ministry in the Local Church  
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**GREG PARKS**  
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Ministering to those in grief from the loss of a loved one is one of the most difficult and most important tasks of the local church. As with all ministry work, the way we address a situation is directly related to what we believe God is doing within it. Thus, having effective grief programs is only one part of a healthy grief ministry; we also need a robust and Biblical grief theology in our preaching and teaching to accompany it. When churches have both of these elements, they are poised to be a place of refuge for those seeking hope, understanding, and peace in the midst of their grief.

# THROUGH A WOMAN'S EYES

Articles for this page or reactions to it should be sent to:  
GHbywomen4women@aol.com  
Virginia Hipwell, Editor



## Good Grief!

One of my favourite passages of Scripture is Romans 12. After a rather deep theological dissertation in the first eleven chapters of his letter, Paul gives some here's-how-all-that-should-play-out-in-your-life application in chapter 12. I like this chapter because in a few short verses, we are given concise, easy to understand instructions which cover many aspects of our relationship to God and to one another. However, applying the principles laid down in Romans 12 isn't always easy. One of the areas where we often come up short is verse 15. *"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn"* (NIV 1984).

Unless we are struggling with envy or jealousy, we likely do well in regard to rejoicing with those who rejoice, but we frequently miss the mark when it comes to mourning with those who mourn. It isn't that we do not wish to do so, but we may not know how to best go about it.

One of the reasons we have difficulty with this is that when those we care about are hurting, we would like to fix whatever is wrong and make the hurt go away. We cannot do that with grief and in attempting to do so we very often do the opposite and make it more difficult for them to work through their grief. Our words may hurt rather than help to heal. This is true of many of the platitudes commonly expressed to one grieving the loss of a loved one. Many also give the wrong impression of God. These can push someone away from God at a time when they desperately need Him.

When tragedy strikes, it is natural for people to try to fix blame or find a reason for what has happened. More often than not there are no answers or anyone to blame and so we say such things as "God needed another angel", "God took him/her", "God does things for a reason". While there are people who believe the dead become angels, we know from Scripture that such is not the case. Statements like these imply (1) that God did not have the foresight to create a sufficient number of angels, (2) that He

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### *To be able to effectively mourn with those who mourn we need to understand grief.*

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randomly snatches individuals away from their loved ones for unexplained reasons. These statements do not create a mental image of a very loving God. Death, which is the result of Adam and Eve's sin, takes our loved ones. If they were faithful to Christ, then God will receive them when death steals them from us.

We seem to feel that if we can somehow explain the death a person's grief will go away. It won't, so don't try. It is far better to keep our words few when trying to comfort the mourning. Express your love and your own heartache at their pain but do not offer trite platitudes which misrepresent God. To truly be a comfort to the mourning say little or nothing and just be there. Give hugs. Hold hands. Cry with them. Saying nothing is better than saying the wrong thing.

Another reason we may have problems mourning with those that are mourning is that grief makes us uncomfortable. What do you say or do when someone is crying? Do you try to stem the flow of tears or do you cry

with them or hold them while they cry? What if they talk of nothing but the deceased for weeks on end? Do you avoid them or change the subject? Do you continue to mourn with them or once the funeral is over do you forget all about it? Do you say things which show you do not want them grieving in your presence or imply that they should be finished grieving by this time?

We may say or do the wrong things because we do not know what to do. As in all areas of life, we need to follow Jesus' example. In John 11:35 we have the very brief statement, "Jesus wept". Those who saw this event misunderstood. They thought Jesus was weeping because of His own grief at losing a friend, but it was seeing those He loved weeping which brought on His tears. He was, as Paul instructed, weeping with those who weep.

We need to realize that grief is a gift from God. "Grieving is as natural as crying when you are hurt, sleeping when you are tired, eating when you are hungry or sneezing when your nose itches. It is nature's way of healing a broken heart."<sup>1</sup> To be able to effectively mourn with those who mourn we need to understand grief.

"Grief is a major wound. It does not heal overnight. You must have the time and the crutches until you heal. No one knows how long this should take. There is no timetable. You will heal in your own way and on your own timetable. To get over grief in a hurry does not mean you are superior. To take a long time does not mean you are weak. Quick recovery does not mean you did not love. Long recovery does not mean you did love. You will react to grief and recover from grief just like you react to all other things in life... Grieving is the natural way of working through the loss of a love. Grieving is not weakness nor absence of faith.... Grief is not an enemy—it is a friend."<sup>2</sup>

We can suppress someone's grief and make their grieving more dif-





difficult by our attitudes, our words or our neglect. Following are some suggestions which come from those who have walked through grief.

\*Pray with the person not just for them. It is wonderful to know that people are praying for you but even more comforting to actually hear the petitions that are being made to God on your behalf.

\*Be slow to speak and quick to listen (James 1:19). Don't avoid talking about the one who has died. Don't try to change the subject when the one left behind starts talking about their loved one. Share your own stories of that person if you have them. Hearing such stories is a wonderful source of comfort.

\*Don't forget as soon as the funeral is over. The one grieving hasn't! Some of their loneliest and most difficult days will come later. Special days may be especially hard.

\*Allow tears! Allow time! Don't try to stop or shorten their weeping and don't imply by your words or attitude that they "should be over this by now".

\*Come with cookies. A grieving person needs some time alone but they also need friends. Their world has just undergone a major upheaval. They may not know which way to turn or what to do with themselves,

especially if the one they lost was someone they spent much of their time with. So the gift of companionship is a great help and comfort.

There is a growing trend in Canada and the United States in recent years which makes it more difficult to mourn with those who mourn. This is the tendency to do nothing when a loved one dies. No visitation. No funeral. No memorial of any sort. Often this is done at the request of the one who has passed away and typically the decision was based on the

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***Grieving people need people. They need to be ministered to and comforted by friends and family.***

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mistaken view that it will make it easier on those left behind. Sadly, it does just the opposite. It cripples the grieving process.

Grieving people need people. They need to be ministered to and comforted by friends and family. If there is no form of open gathering the grieving one is cheated out of the support they desperately need. There may be a few who will come to the aid of one who has just lost a loved one but nothing near the outpouring of love and sympathy which comes when there is an announced gathering.

People also need the chance to say good-bye in their own way. They

need to be able to show how much their loved one meant to them and they need the freedom to do that in whatever way feels right to them. A funeral or memorial gathering allows them to do those things and affords an opportunity for others to "mourn with those who mourn". If you truly wish to make things easier for your loved one(s) be prepared for the inevitable.

First and foremost, be prepared to meet the Lord because we do not grieve as those who have no hope (I Thessalonians 4:13). Secondly, as much as is possible be prepared financially because something will need to be done with the body you leave behind and there will be cost involved in that. And, thirdly, be testate. Make sure the one who will be left with the responsibility of handling your affairs knows where all the pertinent information is located. These things will make it easier to deal with all the business which comes with the death of a close family member. However, the only thing which helps to make grieving easier is for us to follow Paul's instructions to "rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn".

1 *Don't Take My Grief Away*  
by Doug Manning; Harper & Row,  
San Francisco, 1979. p. 60.

2 *Ibid.* pp. 65-67.

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Adapted by **Ed Monk** from the story by **Charles Dickens**

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# NEWS

## -EAST-

by Harold Bruggen  
Church of Christ, Box 416  
Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0  
Email: Harold Bruggen at  
hbruggen@gmail.com

### NEW YORK

**La Salle (Niagara Falls):** Sunday, September 30 was filled with prayer, praise, songs and fellowship. We were honored to host the area-wide fifth Sunday singing and had approximately 50 souls in attendance (and boy, did we eat cookies). Additionally, we spent the Sunday worship time praising God for the privilege to be involved with the Potter Children's Home and Family Ministries. We spent time asking God to use us to protect and serve the children but

also to become like them (as Jesus calls His followers to be).

### ONTARIO

**Barrie:** We had a fine gospel meeting with Shawn Redding preaching, September 29 - 30. The church has been blessed with many interested community people and studies are progressing with them. We would appreciate your prayers for the work here. Several of our older members reached milestones: Hank Kavanaugh is now 90 years old, Bob and Margie Baylis celebrated their 65th anniversary and Fred and Marlene Hampshire their 56th. Our ladies are busy planning their October 20 Ladies Day entitled "Gone with the Wind." Monthly men's breakfasts have resumed, each followed by a Bible study. Come and be with us if you're in the area. →

**Fenwick:** Ruth Zimmerman reported on her work in PNG on the evening of September 23. Thirteen members from Fenwick attended the GLCC/GLBC Partnership Dinner at which Ruth was honoured for her missionary work.

**Toronto (Bayview Ave):** Bayview's Congregational History has been completed by Bonnie Porter, Althea Branker and Gail Baddeley on the occasion of our 75th anniversary. Steve Gill from Strathmore is helping us with the necessary preparation for printing. Chad Comfort led the Bible class and preached on Sunday, September 30. As an introduction to the Ten Commandments, he dealt with covetousness, a good lesson for us all. Afterwards 30 people gathered for our 5th Sunday potluck →



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in the lower auditorium and enjoyed food and fellowship.

**Toronto (Strathmore Boulevard):** Since early June we have been dealing with the unannounced closing of the company hosting our websites. After leading us on for some weeks, they simply disappeared. Work is proceeding on rebuilding the sites for Strathmore Blvd, Key To The Kingdom and the Strathmore Spanish. Also rebuilding of the Gospel Herald, Canadian Church of Christ Historical Society and Three Fishes Christian School are under construction. A successful Ladies Day (it seems most Ladies Days go well...perhaps we men could learn a lesson from our Sisters?) was held on September 8 with Joy Tabieros, a sister at Strathmore, leading the studies on the theme, "Becoming A Woman of Influence". A good number attended, and all reports were that it was a wonderfully upbuilding day. Juan, Kyle and Kathlean Douag were baptized at Ice Lake during at trip to a Manitoulin Island with a group of our Philippine brethren. Gloria Echeverry was also baptized recently as a part of the Spanish congregation. Key To The Kingdom was filmed at Grimsby and Omagh on September 22. Then on October 13, filming was done at Port Colborne and Fenwick. Thus far in 2018 there have been 226 requests for the Correspondence Bible studies and 165 requests for the Bible study DVDs. Santiago Molina attended the annual Iberoamerican Encounter in Bolivia. Jean and Marie Volcy travelled to Fonds-Parisien in Haiti to work with the church and orphanage there on October 19. They plan to return to Canada on November 12.

**Windsor – (West Side):** We are offering ESL classes on Thursdays at 7:00 pm. It is in a coffee club and conversation format. October 7 through the 10 we attended DownRiver Life Enrichment Series. This is an annual event, this year hosted by the Allen Park Church of Christ. Dan Chambers was the guest speaker. On October 14 we began a new series which will go through November entitled Prayers From A Prison Cell. The apostle Paul wrote some of our New Testament books while under arrest and in prison; in these books he mentioned prayers he had for those young churches. We will look at application lessons on what drove the prisoner of God on his knees.



by Marion Waugh  
#7, 420 Hunters Green  
Edmonton, AB T6R 2X3  
Phone: (780) 637-0867  
Email: [waughr1@shaw.ca](mailto:waughr1@shaw.ca)

(BC news supplied by Barbara Lewis)

## ALBERTA

**Edmonton (Northside):** Katelyn Boland was baptized.

**Edmonton (Southside):** We held a Ladies Day and the theme was "Made by God for God: Becoming the Women We Are Created to Be". There were three lessons (Created on Purpose for a Purpose; Created for the Family of God; Created for Eternity).

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Delta:** Jim Hawkins "Got It Right" when his first October Sermon considered how Habakkuk "Got It Right". In the story

starting in chapter 2, verses 1-4. We noted there was a total of seven October birthdays and/or anniversaries just in our little congregation. It was felt that we could help with the expenses of the Dogan's last trip to Israel this month.

**Oakridge (Vancouver):** We were complimented by visitors the Sunday our children gave their special fall program, commenting to Milton that "we had everything so well organized". Milton told them that he felt "the children and teachers had brought something beautiful to our attention in their perfect presentation". We were grateful to have Brother Jeff Winters back to preach for us again on Sept. 16. (Grandsons are helpful to us as they are a big incentive for frequent visits).

**Salmon Arm:** Even with an ailing husband to tend to, not to mention the bulletin, mail, etc., it is amazing that Morris's wife can still find a few moments to read a book! (See last month's report). She also manages to be a constant encourager to all who read her weekly bulletin. Both of our elders are conducting life groups during the week, as well as a Ladies Bible study every week. There is regular news from Dane Bengaard, former preacher in Kamloops. He has found a place where he is very effective working in the prison ministry in Arizona with his brother.

**Surrey:** We nearly set a new attendance record for 2018 on Sept. 16 when we had 103 present for our morning service and a contribution record of \$1,720.50. This figure assured us that our \$1500 budget was still in line with our capability!

## MANITOBA

**Winnipeg:** The Mountain Men Workshop was held October 26-27. The workshop was an opportunity to discuss pertinent matters of faith and spiritual growth relevant to Christian men. The theme was "From Distraction to Devotion: Psalm 24:3-4". Facilitator was Jay Manimtim. Edvige (Edie) Forest, Jensen Lock, Tiara Lock, and Jordon Knutson were all baptized. "Daniel Plan" for the ladies is a 6 week journey to learn God's plans to help us grow spiritually, mentally and physically fit. A special collection was taken to support the work of the Dunns in Ireland.

## SASKATCHEWAN

**Weyburn:** Remheart Quenanola has been preaching and teaching as he helps serve the evacuees from the Philippine mudslide. He is getting requests for Bibles from people who are learning of God and Jesus, some for the first time. We have sent funds for him to purchase Bibles. The Annual Harvest Fellowship Keynote speaker was Jay Bailey of Bedford, Texas. Clearview Christian Camp annual general meeting was held Saturday during a noon meal. The theme for the weekend was "Family Resemblance: Attributes of God and His Children". Keynote addresses were: Living in Community, Peacemakers, Generosity and Preserving Grace, Elevated Conversations and Abounding in Love. Classes were: The God of Family (3 classes: The Basics, Hurting Families and Legacy Building) by Evan Burdan; The God of Compassion by Glen Knutson; The God of Design by Tim Lock; The God of Justice by Garth; Ladies – Ministering by Saying Yes by Loopie Williams and Teens – Finding Life by Paul Rasmussen.

# MISSION NEWS

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



**ETHIOPIA:** Located in southwest Ethiopia is an area populated heavily by people of the Muslim faith, making it one of the hardest places to find a reception of the Gospel message. The challenges found here are different from other parts of the country, which means we have to find new ways in which to introduce Jesus and His message to the inhabitants. As the majority of our students in our schools come from families that have never known any other faith, it means not only are there many teaching opportunities, but also being careful as to how we introduce this new-to-them concept of God and His Son. Brother Degu Mosissa has been a preacher for the Jimma congregation where we have had a kindergarten for many years and is still patiently serving the community even in times of unrest, although we have never been the subject of any hostility. He writes about

a Brother Mitidu Mekonnen who came from a charismatic church but is one of the ministers there after obeying the teaching given him by Brother Mosissa. Sent to Nekemte, he graduated from the School of Preaching with a zeal to reach the lost. Areb, a young man brought to the Jimma church to study, went with Mitiku to the Nekemte School of Preaching and they graduated together. Areb, though from a Muslim family, is a very courageous young man and is now working in a small town called "Seka", which is some 30 kms away from Jimma where Mitiku is working with Brother Degu.

**ALSO In Ethiopia:** "Our schools for the deaf began with twelve deaf children and one school. Now it has grown to five schools with more than 800 children which starts in October and doesn't finish until July. The Ethiopian school system has 11 years of school, dividing grades from beginners to grade six. Junior High is grades seven through eight, and high schools are nine and ten. Tenth grade graduates have a choice of either private trade schools or grades 11 and 12. Only a few of

## The Carman church of Christ is looking for a full time Evangelist.

Our congregation of approximately 85, is seeking a Godly man true to the word who is willing to work under the direction of the elders and interested in sharing the Gospel in this community. The candidate would be fully supported. Carman is a prosperous community located in southern Manitoba and within an hour of Winnipeg. Please submit an application to Wayne Taylor phone number 204-745-0290.

Email [wctoakview@gmail.com](mailto:wctoakview@gmail.com) or mailing address Carman church of Christ Box 955 Carman MB R0G0J0.

these graduates are able to go on to enter the schools available to the deaf in Addis Ababa.

**GUATEMALA:** Tim Archer and Bruno Valle were involved in a campaign held in the outskirts of Guatemala City by the Herald of Truth. Students from the Biblical Institute of Central America knocked doors during the day while five different congregations hosted preaching events each evening. On Sunday, four hundred and fifty came together for a joint service. There were forty-seven baptisms with numerous ongoing studies. One interesting note was that each of the preachers for the various congregations involved are vocational ministers, meaning that they all work in secular jobs to support their ministry.

## Guidelines for News Pages

The News Pages give fellow Christians a glimpse into other congregations and their good works along with the spreading of the Good News in their little corner of God's kingdom. When you help and encourage God's servants, you become a fellow worker with them in spreading the truth. The brotherhood faces a challenging moment. Twisted doctrines fly from congregation to congregation. Denominational and postmodern influences flow freely.

We, as a board of directors and editors of the Gospel Herald, seek to serve a brotherhood that sets Scripture as its infallible and only guide, that finds in the New Testament its pattern for work and worship and that depends upon the power of God's Spirit to function in the world in following our

Saviour. We also seek to highlight those congregations and saints who follow those convictions. It is a difficult task, one for which we are all too aware of our inadequacies.

Here are some guidelines we would like you to refer to when presenting news for the news pages.

- 1) Significant Birthdays 80 +
- 2) Significant Anniversaries 50 +
- 3) Baptisms
- 4) Deaths
- 5) Good news/Outreach that the congregation wants to share with others
- 6) Good works to share with others
- 7) Gospel Meetings
- 8) Special days (homecomings, friend days, etc.)
- 9) Results of your good works, gospel meetings, etc.

The **Thessalon**, ON Church of Christ is seeking applications for the position of **full time evangelist**.

Thessalon and area has a population of about 2,500 and is located on the north shore of Lake Huron, about one hour east of Sault Ste Marie.

Our congregation of about 70 members wants to work with an enthusiastic and dedicated individual in ministering to our Church family and community. A three bedroom house with a finished basement is included.

Email applications to **rpm186nlr@yahoo.ca** or phone Roger Mulligan at **705-842-2933** if you have any questions.

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Ralph Perry

# Are You Open to Marriage by God's Design?

Stephen K. Moore

**I**t's really sad how often we hear of someone separating, and eventually divorcing, who claims the name of Christ. If you have ever spoken to someone about the cause of these events, frequently the reasons given for the difficulty fall along the line of "we just don't love each other anymore."

Like many areas of life, in the area of marriage we have been influenced by our society's ideas of what a marriage is; and we need to get back to what God intended all along. If we have the moral courage to do so, we will find an incredible path of blessing. If we fail to return to what God intended, we will suffer.

## Binding Love Around Your Neck

When it comes to ideas of "falling" into or out of "love," we should consider the words of Solomon to his son:

*"Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart" (Pro. 3:3).*

According to many, love is something that just happens to you; you are just walking along, minding your own business, when suddenly – you fall into something called love. It is a marvelous, dizzying, uncontrollable and wonderful feeling.

If that were actually love, how would one follow the inspired admonitions of Solomon and somehow bind this feeling around your neck as something to possess? How could you possibly "write" this loopy feeling on your heart, if it is some ooey-goey emotion that just suddenly overcomes you?

You cannot, and you should not try. For what the world calls "love" is nothing more than infatuation, or even lust. It is a chemical-based response to the attractiveness we momentarily feel toward another.

Infatuation is a great feeling, and it is present at times in any good marriage. As one wise believing lady expressed to her husband, "I always *love* you, but today I really *like* you!" What she was expressing is biblically sound! For she had bound the covenantal requirement to love around her neck, but on this day she was *feeling* an intense and amorous passion toward her husband. That's a beautiful moment, and we should praise God for these!

Those are fun times – but not everyday (and sometimes, not even every year) is filled with such emotionally fulfilling *feelings* of attraction. There are days, weeks, and sometimes perhaps years of marriage when we must fulfill our covenantal duty to love in spite of our feelings!

## The Central Premise of God's Design

When we speak of "commitment" in marriage, we are not speaking of God's design. This word is far too weak, because it speaks of a human agreement. I can say, "I am very committed to you" today, and say next week that I have changed my mind.

Yet when Malachi was speaking the word of God to Israel, he said this about marriage, speaking both of Israel's relationship with God as well as their daily relationships as husband and wife:

*"...The LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and wife by covenant" (Mal. 2:14).*

A biblical covenant is a situation in which God defines the terms of

something, and we voluntarily enter into agreement with His terms by means of a vow or oath. In the Hebrew understanding, the covenant was never *made*, it was instead *cut*; it was understood that it could only be broken under the pain of death.

Practically speaking, this means that each marriage is a three-person relationship, with God being an ever-present partner and witness to what goes on. Therefore, being that marriage is not a commitment between two people but rather is a solemn, sacred, and spiritual relationship between *three*; we must realize that our primary duty in marriage is *covenant-keeping!*

Neither do we children of the Wonderful One have to grope about in the dark wondering what love is. God made sure that he not only recorded what it was, but how to do it:

*"By this we know love, that He [Jesus] laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers" (1 Jn. 3:16).*

This is critical. John is telling us that we can know what love is by observing what Jesus did for us on the cross.

It is obvious that He did not go to the scourging and crucifixion filled with the aforementioned ooey-goey feelings of strong affection for us! He instead did what we needed the most when we deserved it the least, at great personal cost. He did so out of His love for the Father and a desire to do His will.

We are called, in our three-way covenantal marriages, to choose to do the same. Each day and in each moment, we are to prayerfully and with the strength which God supplies, choose to do what our spouse needs the most, when they deserve it the least, and at times - at great personal cost. →

When we do so, the unsaved around us will marvel. When they see husbands loving their wives “as Christ loved the church” (Eph. 5:25), we will have their attention. When we love someone who “... stumble[s] in many ways...” (Jas. 3:2), and they love a fellow sinner in return, the unsaved will wonder why anyone would do such a thing. If we are wise, we will share with them the reasons for our marital permanence.

The world considers the possession of a good relationship as an indicator of compatibility, marrying the right person, and just plain *luck*. *The world is wrong!*

A great marriage relationship begins with the *fear of the LORD* (Ps. 111:10). When we fear God, and we accept his terms for the marriage covenant through our marriage vow (Eccl. 5:4, 5), we then find ourselves in a place of blessing. With God presiding in our marriage, we have no choice but to love. Divorce is not an option. The strength of our commitment is irrelevant. The strength and sovereignty of God is all that matters.

Would I violate my vow with God simply because I feel unfulfilled? Never. Would I leave my covenantal spouse simply because I have received a better offer? *Unthinkable*. How could we in the sight of God do such a thing? How can we drag the name of Jesus into the mud because of our own selfish desires?

The covenant of marriage is God’s gift to us. It removes uncertainty and fear. Jesus is married to His church. Although His bride misbehaves at time, He has never, and will never, divorce Her! Praise God!

Finally, Jesus gives us His bride as a resource to help us through the difficult times which inevitably come when two selfish, arrogant and sinful people have troubles

in their marriage. We are called to “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2). When we have troubles, we must share them and work through them with our church family. It is a blessing not to be left alone to figure out the difficult challenges of life!

Dickson, Tennessee

## God’s Timing

Harold Bruggen

**G**od has His own timing that may not match or correspond with ours.

Mark, in his Gospel, records “Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured. Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: “See that you don’t tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.” Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere” (Mark 1:42-45 NIV).

Have you ever had a problem keeping a secret? Especially if that secret involves good news. There is a timing that is ideal for releasing information. Jesus understood the importance of timing. When He performed His first healing miracle He instructed the man He healed with leprosy to not tell anyone. That would be difficult, not to share being healed from leprosy with your friends who have known you and your condition. He could not keep the secret. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to Him from everywhere. Jesus desired to do more things in that city, but

because the man could not keep quiet, He could not do so.

How often has Jesus not been able to move in your situation because you have failed to honor the right timing of the situation? Perhaps you have moved ahead when you were not supposed to move. In the Old Testament, David was fighting the Philistines. He won the first battle, but they were coming against him again. He inquired of God and God said, “Do not go straight up, but circle round behind them and attack them in front of the balsam trees” (2 Samuel 5:23 NIV). There was a strategic timing associated with his actions. Solomon said, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1 NIV).

Isaiah said “Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!” (Isaiah 30:18 NIV). Have you ever noticed that God is not in a hurry? It took 40 years for Moses to receive his commission to lead the people out of Egypt. It took 17 years of preparation before Joseph was delivered from slavery and imprisonment. It took 20 years before Jacob was released from Laban’s control. Abraham and Sarah were in their old age when they finally received the son of promise, Isaac. So why isn’t God in a hurry?

God called each of these servants to accomplish a certain task in His Kingdom, yet He was in no hurry to bring their mission into fulfillment. First, He accomplished what He wanted in them. We are often more focused on outcome than the process that He is accomplishing in our lives each day. When we experience His presence daily, one day we wake up and realize that God has done something special in and through our lives. However, →



the accomplishment is no longer what excites us. Instead, what excites us is knowing Him. Through those times, we become more acquainted with His love, grace, and power in our lives. When this happens, we are no longer focused on the outcome because the outcome is a result of our walk with Him. It is not the goal of our walk, but the by-product. Therefore, when Joseph came to power in Egypt, he probably couldn't have cared less. He had come to a place of complete surrender so that he did not worry about tomorrow or his circumstances.

This is the lesson for us. We must wait for God's timing and accept wherever we are in the process. When we find contentment in that place, we begin to experience God in ways we never thought possible. The apostle Paul said, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Philippians 4:11 NIV).

Remember, "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6 NIV).

Port Colborne, Ontario

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## Why I Preach Romans 10:14-15

*Mark Tonkery*

**T**he new minister stood at the church door greeting the members as they left the Sunday morning service. Most of the people were very generous telling the new minister how much they liked his message, except for one man who said, "That was a very dull and boring sermon, preacher." A few minutes later, the same man again appeared in line and said, "I don't think you did much preparation for your message." Once again, the man appeared, this time muttering, "You really blew it. You didn't have a thing to say, preacher."

Finally, the minister could not stand it any longer. He went to one of the elders and inquired about the man. "Oh, don't let that guy bother you," said the elder. "He's a little slow. All he does is go around repeating whatever he hears other people saying."

I am sure we all have heard a lot of jokes about preachers. But have you ever asked yourself why preaching is so important? Why do we need preachers? Sometimes I have heard people refusing to go to a worship service, unless there was preaching.

Paul reminds us, in Romans 10:14-15 why preaching is so important, he states, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

The primary way God has chosen to reach people is through people—people who preach and teach the gospel.

In answer to this question, I preach because God is a God who speaks. His words need to be proclaimed. As we open the pages of the Bible we see from the very beginning that God has always existed and that He spoke this world into existence (Genesis 1). God continued to speak. He spoke to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah and many others. Hebrews 1:1-2, states, "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds".

So, the Bible teaches that God

has spoken and now has spoken through His son Jesus Christ. So what did Jesus speak? Mark 1:38-39, "But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth. And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee and casting out demons".

Notice that while Jesus was on earth he preached. He states, "...for this purpose I have come forth." It was Jesus' goal to come to this earth and to preach the Good News of Salvation and of the Kingdom to the whole world.

Beginning in Galilee, Samaria and Judea Jesus preached, and taught His message of good news to all who would listen. He preached till He went to the cross: even after He was resurrected from the dead He continued to preach.

Jesus still speaks today through His word. Jesus tells us, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" – Matthew 24:35.

This being true, Jesus' words still need to be preached and shared with all people. Mark 16:19-20, "So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen." Jesus has left his ministering servants an example, that they should follow his steps, to strive to go into the world to every person and share the words that He has spoken.

1 Peter 4:11 reminds us, "...whoever speaks oracles of God; whoever serves...". This is why I preach, because I believe in a God who has spoken, and His words are still relevant, and people need to hear them today.

I preach because people need to hear the Gospel. A young minister in a college town was embarrassed by the thought of criticism from his cultured congregation. He sought counsel from his father, a wise old minister, saying, "Dad, I am handicapped in my ministry in the pulpit I am now serving. If I cite anything from geology, there is Prof. A, teacher of this science, right before me ready to correct me. If I use an illustration from Roman mythology, there is Prof. B ready to trip me up for any little inaccuracy. If I mention something in English grammar, I am covered by the presence of the learned man that teaches that branch. What shall I do?" The wise old man replied, "Do not be discouraged; preach the gospel. They probably know very little of that."

We live in a world that is very educated, very knowledgeable, and very aware of many things but many do not know the gospel of Christ. It is sad that very few people truly know the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We must understand the urgency to teaching those who are lost and do not know the Gos-

pel. Christianity is a taught religion, as illustrated by Jesus Christ and as taught in Scripture. Romans 10:17, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ". Remember what Paul has stated right before this in Romans 10:14-15, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Paul was so burdened to preach the Gospel he declared, in 1 Corinthians 9:16, "Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" We must have a burden for lost people, or nothing will happen in the way of effective evangelism. Does your heart ache for lost people? My heart does every time I go to a large stadium; I think about all the lost people that are there. Then the second thing I think about is how amazing it would be if I could just

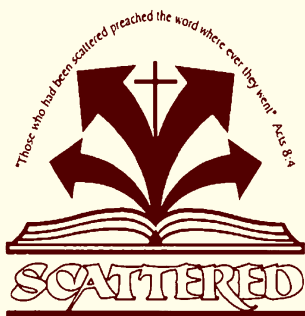
for 15 minutes speak to the whole crowd about their salvation.

How would our world be different if we looked at people not by the color of their skin or the type clothes they had on but as people needing a Savior? Mark, in Mark 16:15 gives us the Great Commission, "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.'" Jesus is telling each of us to go into all our world and preach the gospel—into our families, into our workplace, into our campus, into our sphere of influence, anywhere where Jesus is not and share the gospel.

His words were not merely addressed to preachers, teachers, evangelists, and missionaries. They are addressed to every follower of Jesus Christ. We cannot be disengaged from or disinterested in this subject because the literal eternal destinies of people hang in the balance.

Although it is true not all of us can or are even able to be public proclaimers of God's work, we each can do something to help others to come to Christ. The young salesman was disappointed about losing a big sale, and as he talked with his sales manager he lamented, "I guess it just proves you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." The manager replied, "Son, take my advice: your job is not to make him drink. Your job is to make him thirsty." So it is with evangelism. Our lives should be so filled with Christ that they create a thirst for the Gospel. (Preaching Nov-Dec, 1985). This is why I preach, because I want as many people as possible to know the Gospel of Christ and the salvation Christ offers everyone who will accept it.

Parkersburg, West Virginia



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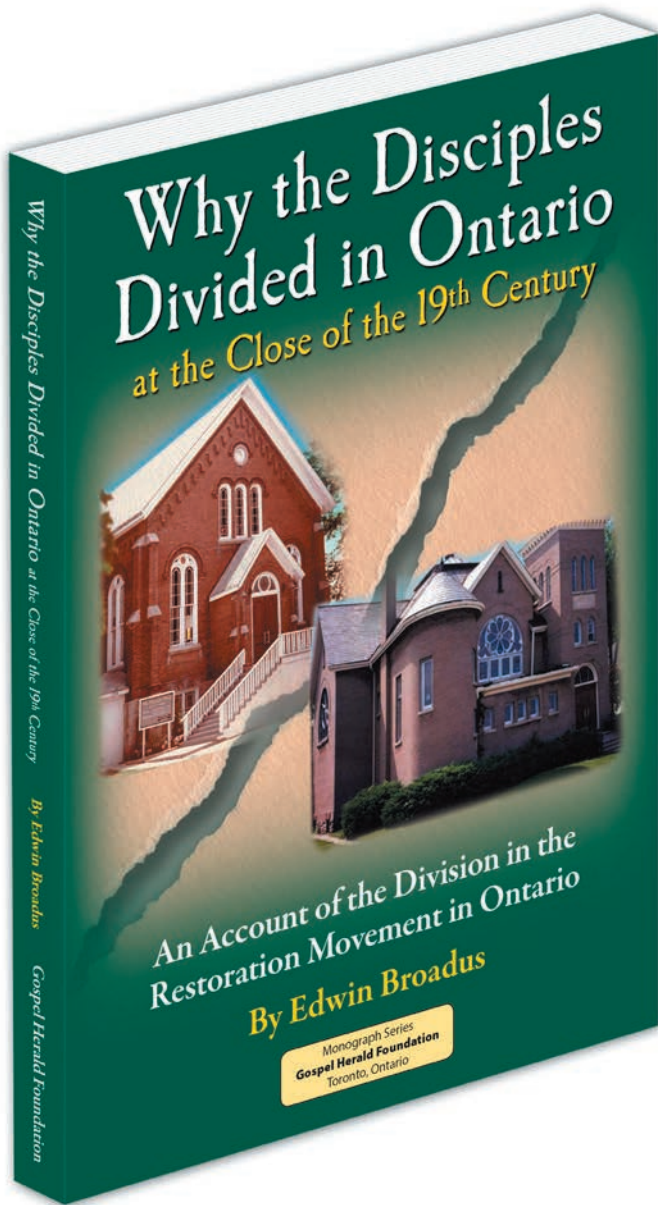
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