

Journal Jottings:

Finding Everyday Blessings
Every Day in Everyday Life

Lionel Hartley

Journal Jottings: Finding Everyday
Blessings Every Day in Everyday Life

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Preface:

The journal entries in this publication, written over a period of more than 60 years, were never intended as a diary, and for this reason many entries have no specific date other than the year they were written.

For those entries whose specific date of writing is known, this information has been included in this compilation. My writing was rather scribbly during my childhood and some dates were a little obscure and I have tried to match them with other

circumstances.

These journal entries were intended as memory joggers for my personal use in the preparation of sermons, seminars, articles and other writings, and were recorded to refresh a memory which will inevitably fade over time, while the written page remains.

Entries prior to 1989 were re-written onto computer from dozens of notepads and hundreds of pieces of paper tucked into my diaries when I first got an 8088 IBM computer late in 1989.

At this time, without changing the details, I also corrected my childhood spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Since then I have been gradually adding to the journal as incidents worthy of recall are recorded.

A few journal entries have been edited to remove the names of people who may be offended if their names were made public in relation to these events.

And out of courtesy (and space) a massive number of journal entries of a private nature have not been included here.

Those I have selected for inclusion are entries where I had found everyday blessings every day in everyday life.

- Lionel Hartley
December 2022.

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1960

At school, I would rather read than participate in sporting activities. However at our school's annual sports carnival, running races are mandatory for all students. My teacher, Miss Pierre, realised that I would be unlikely to run competitively against my classmates who spent every opportunity at recess and lunchtime to run and play in the school playgrounds while I sat and read books.

So Miss Pierre took me to one side and said, 'Lionel, today for

your race I am giving you a handicap.'

'What's that?' I asked.

'It's a head start! When I start the race I will tell you to go first and then I will blow the whistle for the rest of the class to start running.'

Well, I still came in last in the race, but I will always remember that to have a handicap is to have a head start.



Mum was telling me about the fact that she had been hurt by someone's malicious gossiping, more so because the gossiping contained mostly untruths. Mum

quoted and suggested that I memorise a poem by Edward Wallis Hoch: "There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it hardly behooves any of us to talk about the rest of us".

Mum went on to say, "Those who gossip should be hung by the tongue and those who listen to gossip should be hung by the ear".



When things have a gloomy outlook, try a Heavenly uplook.



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1961

A rag-and-bone man (a collector and recycler of worn-out rags and other discards) came to our door.

He asked dad, "What do you do with your trousers when you wear them out?".

With a straight face dad answered, "Why, when I wear my trousers out I wear them home again."

A similar thing happened a few months ago when a rag collector came to our door and asked mum

what she did with old rags. She lifted her tatty apron, complete with two big nappy pins holding it together, and said, "What do I do with old rags? Why, I wear them!"



1962

I was watching my great-uncle John spraying the leaves of his rose bushes with a pump sprayer yesterday morning.

Ever curious I asked why he wasn't using a garden hose to water the plants. He explained that he used a hose to water the roots of roses and not the leaves and furthermore, the spray gun he was using didn't contain water, but oil.

He went on to explain that he made a mixture of neem oil and soap to create a white oil to rid

the plants of a disease called black spot. He went on to explain that black spot attacks the outside of the leaf but bores down into the centre of the leaf and the oil mixture prevents the fungal spores from getting inside.

Today, Sunday, I was preaching a sermon on the Holy Ghost. I used the illustration that the white oil of the God's Spirit cleanses us from the black spots of sin, mentioning that temptation comes from without but finds its residence within.

A daily walk with God is like a coating of oil to prevent temptation from taking root within.



"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

Reading this verse today has clarified a concern that I have had regarding wants and needs.

I had read in my children's Bible Philippians 4:19 that said, "And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus". (Mum's Authorised Version says, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus").

"Great," I had thought, "Now I have to figure out what are needs and what are wants."

Then I read this verse in Psalm 23 verse 1, and it said that I shall not want. Wonderful news. If I align myself with the Shepherd each day, my wants and needs will be His desires for me and I don't need to make a distinction.



1963

Our retiring Anglican minister (Fr Cecil Gault) said today in a sermon that after a lifetime as a priest, every imaginable sin had been confessed to him except one. Parishioners had confessed to lying, stealing, adultery, even one for murder, but no one had ever confessed the sin of gossip.

He said, "Gossip, it seems, is a sin that others commit, but we never do".



Today I read this for the first

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time: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:11-13).



Why did Jesus bother with parables if, as he said in Matthew 13:13, They seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand?

I love to do marathon walking, up to 50 miles (80 kilometres) a

day.

One evening I was walking at dusk, and just as I wondered if I was coming close to the next town, or whether I should rest on the side of the road until the morning, a motor vehicle drove past, headlights blazing, illuminating a reflective sign on the roadside ahead telling the distance to the next town (and it wasn't far away).

No, I hadn't seen the sign ahead in the darkness, but the reflected light from the vehicle was all that I needed for it to be visible.

Jesus' parables were like that sign in the dark. Truth couldn't be

seen until light was shed upon it. Truth was there, it just couldn't be seen. Jesus' parables are within our reading or hearing. We need the light of God's Spirit for us to be able to see them so that seeing we will see and hearing we will hear and understand.

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com
December 2011)



1964

For church I wear a waistcoat and pocket watch.

The other day I was given the gift of a mustard seed in a miniature gold and brass case to attach to the fob chain of my watch.

A few observant people have asked, "What's that?"

Telling them it was a mustard seed gave me an opportunity to relate a short parable of Jesus where He used a mustard seed to explain the God's Kingdom.

"And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it. And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciple." (Mark 4:30-34).



1965

I have discovered that the probability of someone watching us is proportional to the stupidity of our actions.



I was sitting on a bench in a playground eating my lunch when my attention was drawn to two boys having a verbal altercation immediately in front of me.

Verbal blows were exchanged thick and fast and I wondered how long this would last before sleeves were rolled up and fists were

bared. After a while one of the boys bent down and picked up a stick.

My immediate thought was that this verbal barrage would quickly escalate into violence and I braced myself to intervene to protect one or the other or both. I was surprised, however, when the one with the stick used it to scratch a line in the gravel separating him from his opponent.

Throwing the stick aside, he then, with defiant folded arms, threatened the other by saying, "I DARE you to cross this line onto my side!" The other, with equal defiance made an exaggerated display of raising his foot and dramatically stepping over the

line.

The boy with the folded arms immediately unfolded them and grabbed the other in a bear hug and declared, "Now you're on my side!"

They then jovially walked away, arm in arm, laughingly forgetting their previous argument.

A lesson for me in conflict resolution.



I think that finding God's will is working out what God works in.



Intercessory Prayer

One of my favourite verses in the Bible is found in Job 42:10. It reads, "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, When he prayed for his friends".

I am a great believer in the immense power of intercessory prayer both for the pray-er and the prayed-for.

Here is a list of things I choose to pray for each day. One item each day every day of the year (in addition to my list of individual person, praise items and needs):

Day 1. The aged

Day 2. The Church & other churches

Day 3. The dying

Day 4. Friends, friends away from

home

Day 5. Godchildren/Godparents

Day 6. Hospitals & those who
administer to the sick

Day 7. The lonely & sorrowful

Day 8. Daily blessings

Day 9. Missionaries & those who
spread His word

Day 10. Orphans

Day 11. Peace - for Christians &
non-Christians

Day 12. People in their daily
work & leisure

Day 13. The persecuted,
prisoners & those held
captive by persons,
circumstances or addictions

Day 14. Places of learning, study
& research

Day 15. The poor, needy &
hungry

- Day 16. Relatives, especially
parents
- Day 17. Praise and thanksgiving
- Day 18. Rulers & those in
authority
- Day 19. The sick in mind & body
- Day 20. Solo parents and their
children
- Day 21. Suffering & oppressed
animals
- Day 22. Those in mourning
- Day 23. Those influenced by
false prophecies & doctrines
- Day 24. Those who do not love
us
- Day 25. Those I seek to reach
for Christ
- Day 26. Those who seek God's
Word
- Day 27. Travellers
- Day 28. The unemployed &

homeless

Day 29. Women in labour

Day 30. Thanks for answered
prayers

Day 31. General praise



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1966

I was walking along an omnibus island* in Cathedral Square in Christchurch, New Zealand. This day I walked past an elderly lady who moved so gloomily, I immediately felt compassion on her.

As she caught my eye I gave her the broadest smile that I could muster.

I had hardly walked more than a few paces away from her when she turned and caught up to me and tapped me on the shoulder.

She thanked me for the smile, saying that it was the very gift that she needed to brighten her day.

She went on to explain that she had been contemplating ending her life and had decided that no-one cared even enough to smile at her. She asked me for a hug and as I gave her one she assured me that she had changed her mind about stepping under the next 'bus that came along.

Thank You God for using a smile to change a life.

**2022 ADDENDA*

An omnibus island was a small narrow strip of pavement where 'buses could stop, clear of other

traffic, for collecting or alighting passengers. This was back in 1966 and I don't know that they have them there any more.



14 February 1966

After reading Hebrews 10:25, I pondered the following question while authoring 'Moral Responsibility' (commissioned by Stereo Publications): "If you don't go to visit God in His house, why should He bother to visit you at yours?"

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the

more, as ye see the day
approaching" Hebrews 10:25.



3 April 1966

The Art of Marriage (Submitted to NZ
Women's Weekly)

A good marriage must be
CREATED.

In the art of marriage, the
LITTLE things are the BIG
things...

It is never being too old to hold
hands.

It is remembering to say "I
love you" often.

It is beauty of a loving
committed bond: emotional, social,
spiritual, physical oneness.

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.

It is standing together facing the world.

It is forming a circle that gathers in the whole family.

It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It is the capacity to forgive and to forget.

It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is the joy of knowing your God together.

It is not merely marrying the right person... it is BEING the right partner.



3 May 1966

Thinking of the certainty of John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life".

I imagine if John 3:16 was to read, "It is possible, even likely, that God so loved the world (or at least some of the world), that it appears that maybe there is a vague possibility perchance that perhaps he gave his only begotten Son, which presumably implies that possibly whosoever believeth in Him (it seems) might not perish, but, in all likelihood, may probably

have the most acceptable reward or something akin to it - perhaps, through chance, eternal life (although no explicit proclamation to this effect is available)"



October 1966

I am an active member of St Michael's Anglican Church.

A few months or so ago the priest approached me and another young person to join with him as he set up the church hall as a youth drop-in centre with youth activities on Sunday afternoons.

He booked the hall and purchased a large amount of equipment - table tennis tables,

card tables, dartboards, board games and all the paraphernalia that went with them and gave me a set of keys to the hall.

He then worked on an extensive advertising campaign within the church, the local schools and in the general community.

For a couple of months, every Sunday afternoon I would unlock the hall and turn on the hot water urn for refreshments.

Shortly thereafter the priest would join us in the hall, say a prayer with us and go out into the streets surrounding the church to round up young people to attend. Faithfully the other young fellow and I would boringly fill the time

playing table tennis or darts, activities that neither of us bookworms particularly enjoyed.

No one else ever came and now, eventually, the idea was abandoned and the equipment has been donated to the church school.

Lord, sometimes our plans are not Yours. We ask You to show us the way and when you say "This is the way" please help us to walk in it.



The only Bible worth having is the one that is read.



Old Testament Apologues

When I think of apologues (sometimes called parables, fables or allegories), I often think of those fantastic stories Jesus told to illustrate some special teaching about Himself and His ministry. Today I concluded a search to find some of the apologues recorded in the Old Testament (perhaps there are more; these are the ones that I found):

Ezekiel 17:3-10 spoken by
Ezekiel at Babylon concerning the
great eagles and the vine

Ezekiel 19:2-9 spoken by
Ezekiel at Babylon concerning a
lion's whelps

2 Samuel 14:1 spoken by a

woman of Tekoa at Jerusalem
concerning two brothers striving

2 Kings 14:9 spoken by
Jehoash, king of Israel at
Jerusalem concerning the thistle
and the cedar

Judges 14:14 spoken by Samson
at Timnath concerning sweetness
coming forth from the strong

1 Kings 20:35-49 spoken by one
of the sons of the prophets near
Samaria concerning the escaped
prisoner

Numbers 23:24 spoken by
Balaam at Mount Pisgah concerning
the Moabites and Israelites

2 Samuel 12:1-4 spoken by
Nathan to David at Jerusalem
concerning the poor man's ewe
lamb

Ezekiel 24:3-5 spoken by

Ezekiel at Babylon concerning the boiling pot.

I saiah 5:1-6 spoken by I saiah at Jerusalem concerning the vineyard yielding wild grapes

Judges 9:7-15 spoken by Jotham at Mount Gerizim concerning trees making a king



If the devil tries to tell you that you are not a Christian, tell him it is none of his business.



1967

I have found, by bracketting counselling sessions with prayer before and after, the Lord truly blesses with supernatural inspiration.

For example, I shared this today during a counselling session:

Love in the heart is a pacesetter

It sets the rhythm of daily life

Romance in the heart is a pacemaker

It re-energises the relationship especially if the rhythm is out of step



April 1967

I have just finished reading a book by Brother Lawrence entitled 'Practicing the Presence of God' and have been endeavouring to put this into practice.

When I awake in the morning I thank God for the day He has provided

When I dress in the morning I ask God to clothe me with His righteous character

When I wash my face I ask God to cleanse me of impure thoughts & desires

When I brush my teeth I ask
God to give me the desire to smile
at difficulties

When I part my hair I thank
God that I have hair to part

When I shave my chin I ask
God to scrape away any fuzziness
from my character

When I sweep the floors, I ask
God to clean the dark corners of
my mind

When I fetch in an armful of
firewood I ask God to be in his
arms if I am headed for the
hellfire

When I prepare the fire I ask
God to help me to be ready to
meet the trials of the day

When I stoke the fire I ask
God to kindle in me a desire for
Him

When I prepare the food I ask
God to daily provide

When I cook the food I ask
God to convert me into something
useful too

When I eat the food I thank
God for His daily provision and ask
how I can be a blessing to those
who have no food

When I wash the dishes I ask
God to make me sparkle for Him

When I dry & put the dishes
away I ask God what special place
he has for me today

When I wash the clothes, I
thank God for clothing and ask
God to wash my sins away

When I peg the clothes to dry
I thank God that my secret
thoughts aren't also on public
display

When I fold the clothes I ask
God to fold me in His loving care

When I iron the clothes I ask
God to take the wrinkles out of my
personality

When I travel to work I ask
God to travel with me

When I work at my desk I
thank God for the work He has
done for me

When I return home, I thank God for safe travel and that He has an eternal home prepared for me

When I lay down to rest I thank God he has a Sabbath rest prepared for me.

The thoughts behind this came from W. Hershel Ford, Simple Sermons for Special Days and Occasions, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956), p20: "A servant girl said that she prayed all the time. The preacher asked her how she did this. She answered, 'When I open my eyes in the morning, I ask God to open the eyes of my understanding. When I am dressing I ask God to clothe me with His righteousness. When I wash my face, I ask God to wash all my sins away. When I begin my work, I pray for strength equal to my tasks. When

I kindle the fire, I pray for God to revive the fires of my soul. When I sweep the house, I pray for God to cleanse my heart of all impurities. When I prepare a meal, I pray for God to feed me with the manna from heaven. When I am busy with the little children, I pray for God to give me the spirit of a little child.'

She had indeed learned how to 'pray without ceasing'."



Through scripture, I have discovered that there are certain conditions to answered Prayer:

We must pray in faith and sincerity - James 1:5-7 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men

liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."

We must confess and forsake sin - Proverbs 28:13 "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

We must persevere with God - Luke 18:1-8 "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared

not God, neither regarded man:
And there was a widow in that
city; and she came unto him,
saying, Avenge me of mine
adversary. And he would not for a
while: but afterward he said
within himself, Though I fear not
God, nor regard man; Yet because
this widow troubleth me, I will
avenge her, lest by her continual
coming she weary me. And the
Lord said, Hear what the unjust
judge saith. And shall not God
avenge his own elect, which cry
day and night unto him, though he
bear long with them? I tell you
that he will avenge them speedily.
Nevertheless when the Son of
man cometh, shall he find faith on
the earth?"

We must have a willingness to

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forgive others - Matthew 6:14,15
"For if ye forgive men their
trespasses, your heavenly Father
will also forgive you: But if ye
forgive not men their trespasses,
neither will your Father forgive
your trespasses."

We must pray for others -
Matthew 5:44 "But I say unto you,
Love your enemies, bless them
that curse you, do good to them
that hate you, and pray for them
which despitefully use you, and
persecute you."

We must pray without
selfishness or envy - James 4:3, 5
"Ye ask, and receive not, because
ye ask amiss, that ye may consume
it upon your lusts. Do ye think that
the scripture saith in vain, The

spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?"

We must pray according to God's will - Matthew 26:39, 42, 44 "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." 42) "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." 44) "And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words."

We must pray in Jesus' name - John 14:13,14 "And whatsoever ye

shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."



The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) contains all the elements of effective prayer, best remembered by using the acronym A.C.T.S.: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication.

The 'Lord's Prayer' was addressed to: 'Our Father which art in heaven' (Vs 9a)

Starts with our Adoration:
'Hallowed be thy name' (Vs 9b)

Followed by our supplication for

universal need: 'Thy kingdom
come' (Vs 10a)

Followed by our Thanksgiving:
'Thy will be done in earth, as it is
in heaven' (Vs 10b)

Followed by our supplication for
physical need: 'Give us this day
our daily bread' (Vs11)

Followed by our confession:
'Forgive us our debts, as we
forgive our debtors' (Vs 12)

Followed by our supplication for
spiritual need: 'Lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from
evil' (Vs 13a)

Finishes with our Adoration:
'For thine is the kingdom, and the
power, and the glory' (Vs 13b)

Finalised by our affirmation:
Amen (So be it!)

(Matthew 6:9-13 KJV) After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10) Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11) Give us this day our daily bread. 12) And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.



1968

Wednesday 17 April 1968

Once upon a time

Love was feeling poorly,

So he went to the Doctor

On Monday, bright and early

To see what alchemy would

cure the pain

And light up the love in his life
again.

In order to have a healthy love,

A love that's warm and close,

The doctor prescribed the

giving of love.

And if it doesn't work:

Double the dose.

Submitted for publication in Tiger's
Journal, Christchurch



Friday 29 November 1968

It has been a valuable nine months or so as I have been taught the art of piano tuning from Mr Edgeware, who today kindly donated all of his piano tuning tools to me because he has officially retired and is going into a nursing home. I have learnt much from him, but one of the most valuable lessons was when he told me "The art of piano tuning is to listen for absolute pitch and then emulate it in the piano strings".

Jesus said, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do

as I have done" (John 13:15).



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1969

3 January 1969

I saw a bumper sticker today that read, "Don't drive faster than your guardian angel can fly."

My thoughts on this: "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65:24).



Anger is our chosen response to provocation. We have a right to be angry, in fact, the Bible in

Ephesians 4 gives us licence us to be angry but follows that with an immediate warning: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26,27).

This passage tells us at least four things:

1. It is okay to be angry.
2. Do not allow these feelings to affect your relationship with God (compare Ecclesiastes. 5:6).
3. Do not allow these feelings to affect your health or your relationship with others.
4. Do not allow these feelings to invite a relationship with Satan.

Anger is a normal part of living. Let us then use this anger to motivate us to be better citizens in our Dominion and subjects in God's Kingdom.



I don't remember what brought the topic up, but when Mum told me that I was circumcised when I was eight days old, Dad added that it must have hurt, because I couldn't walk for a year, and I must have been awfully embarrassed by it because at the time I couldn't talk about either.



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1970

In my own words, my lesson for today is: Don't change your lifestyle in order to change your mind on something.

Change your mind first and your lifestyle change will follow automatically and effortlessly.



Monday 11 May 1970

During the question time following a grief seminar that I presented tonight here in Christchurch, a woman asked what

wording would be appropriate for a sympathy card. Before giving an answer, and believing that she was attending because she had been widowed, I asked the reason for the question.

She shared with me a home-made card that had been sent to her. She didn't dare call it a sympathy card, for the wording was far from sympathetic. The creative writer had selected a snippet from Shakespeare and appended a poetic line or two from antiquity.

The sum of these was the last thing this grieving widow wanted to read:

"Parting is such sweet sorrow, /

Here today, and gone tomorrow. /
You'll get over it soon!"



Wednesday 5 August 1970

My first motor vehicle is a Humber Super Snipe limousine that I have had for several years before actually driving it, as I preferred bicycling and my brothers continued to make good use of it and my generosity in paying a monthly account at the local service station.

Today my brother William was using it and it would not start.

He called the Automobile Association to get it started or simply to give him some advice. He

was told that the starter motor was faulty, so he took out the starter and brought it to me to be fixed.

When I looked inside the open end I saw that the tiny Bendix spring (the one that throws the cog at the end of the armature against a gear wheel to start the car) had broken and a replacement could be sought for only a few shillings.

I obtained a replacement and, after installing the spring, handed the starter motor back to William to put it back on the car.

Ironically that a tiny spring, costing only a few coins, was able to stop a huge 2-ton vehicle from

moving.

I wonder if tiny misdeeds are all it takes to stall us in moving toward the Kingdom.

For example, "The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth" (James 3:5)!

I also wonder what value we place on things that are considered of little value to us but are nevertheless important to God. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many

sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31).

And again, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Luke 12:6,7).



A neighbour told me that after the death of her child's father, her little girl knelt at the accustomed time to thank God for the mercies of the day, and pray for His care through the coming night.

Then as usual came the "God

bless mummy and ..." But the prayer was stilled, the little hands unclasped, and a look of sadness and wonder met her mother's eye, as the words of helpless sorrow came from the lips of the kneeling child, "I cannot pray for daddy anymore."

The mother told me that ever since her little lips had been able to form the words, she had prayed for a blessing upon her father. It had followed close after her mother's name. But now he was dead.

The mother waited for some moments, and then urged her to go on.

Her pleading eyes met her

mother's, and with a voice that faltered, she said: "Oh, mummy, I cannot leave him all out; let me say, 'Thank God that I had a dear daddy once'; so I can still go on and keep him in my prayers."

And so she still continues to do so, and the mother told me that her own heart learned a lesson from the loving ingenuity of her little child.

"... and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6).



1971

While shopping at a Hardware Store, I heard the customer in front of me at the cash register asking for a 6-foot length of 4 by 2 timber.

Immediately the cashier went into a philippic tirade regarding the government change to the system of measurement from imperial measurements to the metric system.

He went on to insist that from now on the store will only converse in metrics, therefore a 4 inch by 2 inch would now be referred to as

10cm by 5cm and the 6 foot length would now be described as 183 centimetres in length.

The customer sighed heavily and the cashier spoke into an intercom with a message for the storeman out the back of the store to fetch the required timber: "Peter, bring me one 'four by two' six foot long, please".

The astonished customer turned to me and muttered, "If God had intended for people to use the metric system, Jesus would have only had ten disciples".

Matthew 10:1-2, 5; Mark 3:14



August 1971

Worry is having indigestion today for a meal that you may possibly eat tomorrow.

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28) And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I

say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith (Matthew 6:25-30)?



1972

As a member of the Christ-church Amateur Movie Club I was invited to a special event to be held on a farm just beyond the Harewood Golf Club last night. The program was to start at 9pm and go through until 11pm.

My instructions to get there were as follows: "Drive to the very end of Harewood Road and immediately after the tar-seal finished turn left onto a dirt road. Then at the fork in the road turn right and go through the gate at the end of the road. Keep driving

until you get to the farmhouse."

Well, I followed the instructions meticulously only to find out today that the instructions given to me were different to the others in the group.

Theirs had said turn right then left, whereas mine said turn left then right. Unlike the others who got to the event, I missed out.

Did I turn Left at the end of the tar sealed road? Yes. Did I turn right when I met a fork in the road? Yes. Did I come to a gate and drive on through? Yes. But once through the gate the dirt road suddenly became a huge paved area.

By now it was very dark and yet there were rows and rows of small lights all around me. It was then that a security vehicle with flashing amber lights raced across the paved area toward me.

Thinking I may have accidentally driven onto some sort of military training facility, I stopped the car and waited for them to come to me.

A brief discussion revealed that I had driven along a privately owned back road and by coming through an unlocked gate I had landed myself on the end of the main runway of the Christchurch International Airport!

Frustratingly, I couldn't just

turn around and go back, I must follow the security vehicle though to the terminal so that air traffic could resume. I was then required to go through a customs check while one of the security personnel took my car through another gate to the terminal car park.

As it was after midnight when I finally got back in my car, I simply drove home, missing the meeting entirely.

On the way home, I pondered the issue of having a set of instructions that obviously was wrong (I found out today that this was the case).

I thank God that the Holy Bible

gives us accurate instructions with
no fear of missing our destination.



Monday 1 May 1972

From Matthew 6:9-13

Our Father,

*the most understanding of
parents*

Which art in heaven,

but neglects not Thy earth,

Hallowed be Thy name,

and let me not take it in vain.

Thy Kingdom come,

and let me be subject to Thee

Thy will be done.

Please show me what I can do

On earth

as you prepare me for Heaven.

Give us this day

(let me not fret over the next)
Our daily bread
for our bodies, our souls and
our minds,
And forgive us
with the same willingness
that we forgive others!
Lead us not into temptation
(and chide us when we lead
ourselves)
But deliver us from evil
through the leading of Your
word and through our daily
commitment to talk with you.
For Thine is the Kingdom
in my life and through eternity
And the power and the glory
are to be ascribed to you alone
forever
(beginning NOW)!
Amen.



Thursday 6 July 1972

Guiding principles for reading or television viewing: "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me (Psalm 101:3).

And "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his

waters shall be sure (I saiah
33:15-16).



1973

My 4-A method to problem solving:

1. Accept that God is able.
"With God all things are possible".
"But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26) .

2. Accept God's wisdom to face your problem. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

3. Accept counsel from Christian friends. "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14).

And 4. Act. Believing that God is able, accepting His wisdom, and good counsel, choose a course of action and act in faith. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8).



Wednesday 4 April 1973

As a keen young man of promise

I progressed rapidly in a certain manufacturing company from an after-school delivery boy with a weekly pay packet of coins and one solitary banknote to the manager of a busy warehouse with staff under my care and a very generous \$17,000-a-year executives salary with equally generous 'fringe benefits' including two tailor-made suits a year and twice-weekly dining vouchers.

In order to commit to a life of service to others, I have chosen to leave all of this to train as a community health nurse with the prospect of less than \$5,000-a-year after graduation.

The company's Managing Director Pat Butler argued long

for me to stay, offering me an increase in my annual salary to \$20,000 and he dangled the carrot of extra benefits including free golf-club membership and less hours work.

I turned it all down, explaining that the money was certainly great enough, the fiscal benefits were generous enough, the prestige was big enough, the social-connections were grand enough, the extra leisure time was inviting enough, the material rewards were large enough, but the job itself was too small.



Tuesday 6 November 1973

I went into a patient's room today to do a procedure and found the patient on her knees praying quietly. I waited until I had finished, and as she looked up I said softly, "That was nice."

She responded by saying that she had fallen out of bed and seeing that she was on her knees already she might just as well have a talk with her Maker.

She was unhurt and when I helped her back into bed for the procedure, I praised her for her creativity.

"And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord, he

arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel..." (1 Kings 8:54, 55).



Monday 3 December 1973

While working at the Christchurch Public Hospital I had occasion today to visit the mortuary during an autopsy. The attendant was apologising for the smell that emanated from an open bottle that he was carrying. He explained that it contained alcohol, "a chemical that preserves the dead but kills the living".

Self-control is exchanging harmful things for better things. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1).



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1974

Thursday 1 August 1974

While counselling a couple last week, the wife used an expression that I had not heard before. She shouted a statement aimed at her husband and added, 'Read my lips!'

Since then I have heard the expression several times and, in fact, today I found out that the Government has produced pamphlets on child abuse and domestic violence which both use that same expression, 'Read my lips!'

I was re-reading the story of Joseph a few days ago and was interested to observe Joseph using the same expression when talking to his brothers.

A literal translation of the Hebrew of Genesis 45:12 (in part) reads, 'Your eyes see ... that my mouth speaks.' (The King James Authorised Translation reads, 'And, behold, your eyes see ... that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.').

Moses used the expression, 'Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgements which I Speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them (Deuteronomy 5:10).

Job said (13:17), 'Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.'

The expression to 'have ears and hear not' is found in Psalms 115:6, 135:17, Jeremiah 5:21 and Ezekiel 12:2.

The New Testament picks up the refrain, 'If any man have ears to hear, let him hear' (Matthew 11:15, 13:9, 13:43, Mark 4:9, 4:23, 7:16, Luke 8:8, 14:35) and 'He that hath an ear, let him hear' (Rev 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22, 13:9).

Something tells me that there is a great difference between hearing and listening with understanding.

I confess that many times what I hear emulates the behaviour of a worm in a cornfield, which 'goes in one ear and out another'.

If God is speaking to me today, I must read His lips.



1975

Matthew 25:21 has recorded these words of comfort: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant". I'm not sure who wrote the following observation on this text, but I found it quite by accident on a scrap of paper while tidying up a box of papers I had stored for later reading.

A railway gatekeeper, who one cold night required every passenger to show his ticket before passing through to the train, and was rewarded with considerable grumbling and

protesting, was told: "You are a very unpopular man tonight."

"I only care to be popular with one man," was the reply, "and that is the superintendent."

He might have pleased the passengers, disobeyed orders, and lost his position. He was too wise for that; his business was to please one man—the man who hired him, gave him his orders, and rewarded him for faithfulness, and who would discharge him for disobedience.

The servant of Christ has many opportunities to make himself unpopular. There are multitudes who would be glad to have him relax the strictness of his rules.

If he is their servant, they demand that he should consult their wishes. But if he serves them, he cannot serve the Lord. "No man can serve two masters."

He who tries to be popular with the world, will lose his popularity with the Lord. He will make friends, but he will lose the one Friend who is above all others. He will win plaudits, but he will not hear the gracious words: "Well done!"



Saturday 4 January 1975

I was working today as fill-in charge nurse on the surgical ward at Burwood Hospital, and a certain

patient was particularly distressed. He was due to have surgery for prolapsed haemorrhoids and the patient in the neighbouring bed had told him fictional horror tales of pain and trauma.

I tried to reassure the patient that anaesthetics would minimise pain and we had excellent surgeons and skilled nursing staff, but it did not abate his anxiety.

In the mid morning I was escorting his assigned surgeon around the ward as he met with each patient. I had taken the time to advise the surgeon in advance of this particular patient's concerns.

When he met the patient, he introduced himself like this: "Hi. I'm Dr Blake. I'm the resident dental surgeon. I'll be doing your haemorrhoidectomy this afternoon."

The blank stare from the patient was quickly replaced with laughter when he saw that the surgeon was only joking.

As they laughed together the surgeon explained that he was in fact a very experienced and skilled proctologist and the patient had nothing to be concerned about. Result: Anxiety relieved.

"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his

stature"(Matthew 6:27)?

"And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit" (Luke 12:25)?



Thursday 6 February 1975

Today when I had finished my shift I decided to spend some quality one-on-one time with some of the patients.

After I had changed out of my uniform, I returned to the ward and spent time visiting tête-à-tête with those who seemed particularly lonely.

One particular elderly man confided that his biggest concern

was the fact that he could no longer shave himself as he had limited mobility in his arms. Rather than commiserate I decided to act. The next morning is started by work on the ward by bandaging an electric razor to a wooden spoon handle and inviting him to shave himself if he chose.

This tiny act paid off as every person that came past his bed that day, from other nurses, the tea lady, the cleaner, the doctors and even an orderly was told, "This morning I shaved myself!"

Thank You Lord for putting the idea into my head and giving me the bravado to carry it out.



Wednesday 15 May 1975

In a counselling session the topic of 'touch' came up. I remember my client saying that the only skin she really loved to touch was the leather of her husband's wallet.



Thursday 29 May 1975

Today I developed this self-test to determine how someone rates as a communicator?

1. Are you free to express yourself spontaneously to each other?
2. Are you able to confide in each other as best friends or are

there difficulties?

3. Do you hear what she is really saying?

4. Do you understand what he is really feeling?

5. Do you share your ideas, thoughts, and feelings, or do you just talk about practical necessities?

6. Is your communication on practical matters clear enough for things to go smoothly?

7. When you have communication problems, do you keep trying until meaningful communication occurs again,

or do you give up, yell, get

angry, or retreat into silence?

8. When you feel rejected do you retaliate by rejecting your partner?



Wednesday 24 September
1975

I am working in a psychiatric hospital at present and I am responsible for co-ordinating Alcoholics Anonymous meetings for recovering alcoholics.

Because I have never personally experienced alcohol use or abuse I find it a challenge identifying personally with the attendees'

addictions. One recovering alcoholic sensed this and he handed me a hand-written scrap of paper with these words on it:

"We drank for happiness and became unhappy.

We drank for joy and became miserable.

We drank for sociability and became argumentative.

We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious.

We drank for friendship and made enemies.

We drank for sleep and awakened without rest.

We drank for strength and felt

weak.

We drank with the excuse that it was medicinal and acquired health problems.

We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.

We drank for bravery and became afraid.

We drank for confidence and became doubtful.

We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech.

We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like hell.

We drank to forget and were forever haunted.

We drank for freedom and became slaves.

We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply.

We drank to cope with life and invited death."

Thank You Lord that you care, even for those addicted to alcohol.



Friday 12 December 1975

Mum and I were travelling from Christchurch to Kaikoura and my brother William was following in his car.

I had the roof of the

convertible down and just as we were about to reach Amberley there was a sudden very heavy downpour of rain.

I kept driving and the rain seemed not to come into the car (I assume an aerodynamic cushion of air was preventing it). Without slowing down I pulled into a service station and stopped abruptly under the awning.

William parked across the road and came over to us, assuming we would be sitting in a car half-full of water. He got soaked with the rain while crossing the road.

We, however, were perfectly dry, save one solitary drop of water on Mum's glasses and a few

spots on the back seat. Thank You,
Lord.



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1976

Mission or Commission Mythtakes

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

In order to do our personal witnessing more effectively, I would like to share with you seven of what I call Mission or Commission Mythtakes. These are myth-conceptions that may hinder us in reaching our our neighbours, acquaintances, friends, fellow students, work colleagues, and strangers, etc..

Mission Mythtake #1 We are

called to be soul-winners. I challenge this because we are called to be seed sowers with the Holy Spirit doing the winning.

It is not our responsibility to convert people. We are only responsible for what we can do, not what others do.

Our responsibility is simply to share our personal gospel testimony in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God.

We don't have to push, in fact, there is only one way to push a person, and that is away. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).

Mission Mythtake #2 We don't need words to witness.

Our lifestyle is a witness whether we like it or not. However, simply observing someone's lifestyle doesn't bring about a conviction.

By definition a witness is "one who testifies." What if all the "witnesses" in a court trial only answered in a game of charades?

Although our lifestyle needs to be consistent with the words we say, our lifestyle is not a substitute for saying convicting words.

Mission Mythtake #3 People aren't interested

Many people are tired of shallow conversations and the rules of political correctness that make it taboo to talk about God.

Matthew 9:38,39 and repeated in Luke 10:2) reads, "Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

Mission Mythtake #4 I must have all the answers

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty

speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

Mission Mythtake #5 I must have a close, long-term relationship with a person before I can share the Gospel with them. While this helps, the gospel's inherent power is not bound by our personal connections.

God may bring people across our path for even a brief time by

His sovereign design in order that we would share the message of Christ with them.

A biblical example is the account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch as recorded in Acts 8:26-24)

Sharing the gospel is a supernatural endeavour that requires supernatural power.

That's why the disciples were told to wait for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to be God's witnesses. That power is now available to every believer.

Mission Mythtake #6 I must wait for people to come to me, ask why my lifestyle is different and ask me to tell them about Christ.

Joe is a fisherman who has caught nothing yet. He sits on his verandah day after day waiting for a fish to jump out of the pond several blocks away, flap all the way up to his house and ask, "Hey Joe, where's your fishing rod? I want to get on your line and hook right now."

Fishing for men requires initiative on the fisherman's part, not the fish's! Sharing the gospel with others is an active endeavour, not a passive one.

And lastly (though there are undoubtedly more), Mission Mythtake #7 I must tell everything I know about God in every situation.

Not every opportunity to share the message is going to be equal. In some cases you'll have just a few minutes to talk, ask a question, share an idea, or simply listen. Make the most of it and relax. Colossians 4:5 says, "Be wise [and] make the most of every opportunity".

Try to discern how much a person is ready to hear. Jesus Himself said "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear" (John 16:12).

Even with His disciples he did not feel compelled to unload everything at once.

Published as an article, Mythtakes of the Mouth, in The Anglo-Catholic Leader (magazine), January 1976, Pp 11,12



Thursday 1 April 1976

As secretary/treasurer of the South Island Branch of the New Zealand Student Nurses Association I have been asked by the executive to visit every hospital in the South Island and talk with members of the Association regarding their wishes, as plans were underway to amalgamate our Association with the Registered Nurses Association.

This involves a lot of road travel and as the association is not particularly wealthy, I have chosen to bear the cost myself.

When I went from Christchurch to the West Coast of the South Island I arrived only to find that there was a tanker-truck driver's strike on and all the petrol stations on the West Coast had run out of fuel.

Assuming that the Automobile Association would have an emergency supply, after praying for guidance, I continued to drive, even though the fuel gauge said the tank was almost empty.

In fact for four days I drove and then back to Christchurch. As I drove in my gate at home, the car spluttered to a stop. There was not a single drop of fuel in the tank, carburettor, filter or float gauge.

Thank you God that I drove over six hundred and fifty miles (almost a thousand kilometres) that week on a mere 4 gallons (18 litres) of fuel.

"And Abraham said, My son, God will provide ..." (Genesis 22:8a)



Thursday 15 April 1976

When I am working as solo night nurse at Burwood Hospital, I carry a torch in the breast pocket of my uniform with the beam pointing downwards.

As the head of the torch is within the pocket of my white uniform, the light emits a soft

warm glow, sufficient to safely check on my patients during the frequent night rounds without disturbing them.

A few nights ago a student nurse appeared at the ward nurse's station just before I was about to do another round.

I asked why she was there and she explained that she had been sent from another ward to observe what a solo nurse does on a night round.

I switched on my torch, put it in my pocket and invited her to follow me into the darkened ward that was illuminated only by night-lights along the skirting boards.

Embarrassingly, I inadvertently

put my torch in my pocket upside-down and the light was shining upwards.

As I walked into the ward I turned and looked back to see if the student nurse was following me. As I turned, she began screaming in terror.

I immediately spun her around and led her back into the well-lit nurse's station to settle her down and seek an explanation.

When she had sufficiently recovered, she explained that the light shining on my face in the darkened ward gave my countenance a terrifying appearance with my eyes appearing to be darkened, the

shadow of my nose moving grotesquely across my face and the shadow of my head on the ceiling above making my appearance like that of a caricature monster.

Needless to say, the torch was returned to its correct position, we resumed our responsibilities and a check on the patients revealed that none of them had woken up despite the loud screaming.

Thank You Lord that You encourage us with these words, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:7)



Thursday 24 June 1976

My Morris Minor convertible sports car had a pull-starter knob mounted in the middle of the dashboard.

The starter switch is concealed behind the dashboard and a knob fastened to the switch by a length of wire protruded from the dashboard to start the engine.

The other day the wire broke, and I looked in the shed for a replacement. The only thing that I could find was a short length of chain with a porcelain handle on the end with the word 'PULL' written on it.

This handle and chain came originally from one of those old-

fashioned overhead toilet cisterns of the late-Victorian era. The handle and chain worked fine and it will do as a temporary fix.

When I took the car for its six-monthly rego inspection the inspector asked how to start the car as there was no knob visible on the dashboard.

I told him to reach down below the dashboard and 'pull the chain'.

He tried it and the car started, but the novelty of it prompted him to stop and start the car several times.

Amid laughter, he called a fellow inspector and the both of them spent the next several minutes laughing, starting and

stopping the engine. Finally they were laughing too much to do an inspection and simply handed me the paperwork approved, signed and rubber-stamped.

I'm sure that God has a sense of humour too.



Sunday 11 December 1976

As I am leaving New Zealand shores soon to do study overseas, Sydenham church gave me a farewell party last night.

It is well known that I have my Morris Minor convertible sports car for sale. In order to tease me about its little worth, Pastor Chambers told the congregation

the following fabrication: "As he cannot take his car with him to Australia, Lionel put an advert in the local paper offering to give it away. The advert read, 'Free Morris Minor, parked in Huxley Street, keys in the ignition, papers in the glove box. Please take it away as soon as possible, no questions asked.'"

The next day Lionel went out to the street and as far as they eye could see was a long line of Morris Minors each with their keys in the ignition and papers in their glove boxes."

"Ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:31).



1977

Salvation comes through
gratitude

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

"You cannot persuade a person to conversion by instilling a feeling of guilt.

No one ever made a permanent commitment based on guilt.

If all it took to be saved was feeling guilty, then everyone would be saved, for we have all experienced guilt at one time or another.

No, salvation comes through gratitude, recognising and acknowledging the sacrifice that was paid by Christ to take away not only the guilt, but the sin which caused it."



Written Communication hazards

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

There are times when even written communication is fraught with hidden hazards:

I am doing an extensive course of study at the moment. The mother of Mary, a fellow student, went on a business trip to Japan.

When the mother returned, Mary asked what hotel she had stayed at. She said that she didn't know the name of it as her employer had handled the bookings. However she had written down the name on a piece of paper.

The only problem was that neither of them could decipher the Japanese pictographic writing.

Mary brought the piece of paper to class for another student, who was fluent in Japanese, to translate.

The Japanese student asked Mary where her mother had read the sign.

"On the front door of the

hotel," was the reply.

"Well that would explain why the hotel is called 'PUSH.' (Pusshu)"



When I was contemplating joining the Adventist Church, I attended a Wednesday evening prayer meeting in a member's home.

I sat among a group of Christians who looked so gloomy I even wondered if they were all ill.

Then a latecomer arrived - a young girl absolutely bubbling with exuberance and joy.

Throughout the evening she

still radiated enthusiasm and excitement and so when the evening was over I asked her what was the cause of her exuberant cheerfulness.

She replied "I know where I'm going!"

The following week we sang a hymn that helped me to understand Philippians 3:14 as we sang about 'the Blessed Hope that buoyed our spirits up'.



Saturday 22 January 1977

Today I decided to take Mum on a drive to Dunedin and stay overnight.

As we were leaving Christchurch and I pulled onto the motorway, I had a very strong impression to stop the car.

I pulled to the curb and sat there wondering why I had felt compelled to stop.

I got out of the car and checked all around and the vehicle seemed intact.

I looked along the road ahead and saw no discernable obstacles, so I started the car again.

Almost immediately I had that strong impression again to stop the car.

For a second time, I pulled to the kerb. Mum asked why we had

stopped a second time and I felt a little foolish telling her I didn't know.

This time I examined the car a little more thoroughly and found a four-inch nail protruding from the tread on the front left-hand tyre.

Certainly, had I driven any further it would have punctured the tyre and if it happened along the motorway driving at speed, we may well have had a nasty or even fatal accident.

When I got back into the car, nail in hand, we prayed together a prayer of gratitude for God's watch care



Well, I do declare, the opposite of choco-late is, naturally, non-choco-early



The beatitude of gratitude is an attitude. Gratitude consists of more than the commonplace, hence gratitude is no platitude. Gratitude seeks all strata of society and there for is no platitude in servitude.

Gratitude is a deliberate act of precision, an exactitude in giving. Gratitude builds relationships to prevent solitude.

In summary then, the primary beatitude is an attitude of gratitude, which is no platitude in

servitude, but an exactitude,
which prevents solitude.



Christian Certainty Vs choice

'Deciding to live for Christ is like boarding a train as our destination is certain yet we still have to decide which carriage to enter and onto which seat to sit.'



Marriage counselling advice:

The essence of spending time together is making the time.

Couples who spend a lot of time alone grow lonely.

Couples who spend a lot of time

apart grow apart.

Couples who spend a lot of time together grow together.

Couples who spend a lot of time giving grow great.

Couples who spend a lot of quantity time grow in quality.

Couples who spend a only a little quality time together become stunted in their growth by the clock



3 December 1977

I am working in Burwood Hospital as the charge nurse on a ward (embarrassingly, they call us

Sisters!).

Today a patient asked to see me, as he wanted to know what the nurses had been told about him prior to each shift.

As he had a right to know, I fetched his file and read how he was in for observation because he had fallen off a ladder and landed on his spine.

He asked if it said anything about his occupation because it seemed that at the beginning of every shift the new nurses would come up to him and ask, What were you doing on a ladder?

He said, "I am sick and tired of having to explain why! If only it said in the report that I am a

painter by trade, I wouldn't have to keep explaining why!"

"And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation ..." (Genesis 47:3)?

"... What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou" (Jonah 1:8)?



1978

I am a student at Avondale College and I have been bed-bound for a number of days with blood poisoning from an allergy to the histamine in mosquito bites.

Yesterday afternoon (Friday), Joy, the college nurse, sought special permission to visit me in my room in our male-only dormitory.

After checking on my physical health and saying a prayer with me, she left as a gift a single rosebud in a glass jar on the desk where I would be able to see it

and remember her prayer.

This morning (Sabbath) my health is no better, but my spirits were revived when I saw in a shaft of sunlight that the rosebud had opened out into a beautiful colourful full-blossomed rose.



Sabbath 20 May 1978

Last Tuesday I was engaged to be married to Rosemary and today we were out for a walk along the banks of Dora Creek.

As we walked hand-in-hand, I had a sudden sinking feeling, as the riverbank gave way underneath me and I slowly slid down the muddy embankment.

Just as I was thinking, 'Thank goodness I haven't got wet', I blurted a bible verse out of my mouth. I didn't remember the reference but I clearly remembered having memorised the words. "... the waters have come up to my neck, I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters."

I looked up at my fiancée Rosemary who, fortunately, had let go of my hand, and could see that she didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

As it was imperative that one of us saves the situation, although my 3-piece suit was ruined and I had a muddy climb ahead of me to get out of the water, I began to

laugh.

This eased the tension considerably and I'm sure that we will in future be able to look back at this episode with a smile.

Tonight I looked up the reference and the Bible verse I impulsively uttered was Psalms 69:1 and 2.



1979

For all of us, certain memories, sounds, smells, sights, colours, words, phrases and feelings, etc. trigger feelings and other reactions.

For some people these may be bad feelings and negative reactions.

I have compiled a list to help others think about and possibly recognise what their particular triggers are and subsequently help them find more positive ways of reacting to these triggers.

The possible trauma triggers are. Memories, Sounds, Smells, Sights, Colours, Words, Phrases, Feelings (emotions), Thoughts, Places, Types of touch and Times, etc.



It was a hot day today. I checked the temperature outside at lunchtime. It was two degrees.

Yes, I did write that it was a hot day and it was two degrees.

They were 29 Celsius and 84 Fahrenheit!



1980

Tuesday 20 May 1980

I have been asked by the editorial team of the University of Canterbury's Response Magazine of July 1980 if I could write a single answer that could be used to answer any question.

Here is what I submitted for publication in the September 1980 issue:

"Here is my politically correct standard home-grown generic off-the-shelf domestic answer:
'Personally, I absolutely definitely

feel that maybe it could possibly be the considered opinion that, taking everything into account, and weighing up all the pro's and con's, there is a general consensus that, as far as can be known, there is no conclusive answer to this question, as yet. Tentatively speaking of course, although I would like to stress that this is only my opinion and I'm not claiming this is the be all and end all as it's an interesting question that, at least, should stimulate debate.'"



Thursday 11 September 1980

Earlier this year I was approached after church by an

elderly church member affectionately named Granny Saunders. She asked if I knew her grand-daughter Genevieve who was now overseas but had been working as a nurse in the same hospital as me.

Yes, I did know her, quite well, in fact, as we had worked together quite a number of times over an extended period of time.

Granny explained that Miss Genevieve was working overseas at a mission hospital but had caused quite a deal of disruption by insisting that things be done her way.

Granny also knew that although I had left nursing, I was at that

time I was running a counselling practice at the same hospital. And so she asked if I could write to Genevieve as a concerned friend and encourage her to change her approach.

I agreed and said that I would send an immediate telegram with an appropriate Bible reference and follow it with a lengthy letter of explanation.

So I duly sent the telegram which read: AMOS 3:1-3 LETTER FOLLOWING. And I did follow it with a letter of explanation.

Amos 3:1-3 -says: Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I

brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Unfortunately I later found out that the telegraph operator had left off the first three letters of the name of the Bible book Amos. So the telegram that she received read, S 3:1-3 LETTER FOLLOWING.

Now Miss Genevieve is an intelligent girl and she figured out that it was a Bible reference in the message and to expect a letter from me in the mail.

But what book of the Bible

starts with S? It couldn't be Psalms as that starts with a letter P. It couldn't be Samuel as that starts with a 1 or 2. It could only be the Solomon's Song of Songs.

Embarrassingly, Song of Songs 3:1-3 reads: By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?

And this was a message from Lionel and it said that a letter was following.

Well Genevieve was sufficiently moved by this and so she wrote me a very passionate love letter responding to her perception of what I had said.

Our letters obviously have crossed in the mail and today, over a week later, I received another letter in which she profusely apologised for the misunderstanding.

Thank You God that our hope in you is neither false nor ever dashed.



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1981

The Difference Between Men and Women

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

A fellow named Egbert is attracted to a woman named Maggie. He asks her out to dinner; she accepts; they have a pretty good time. A few nights later he asks her out to a carols-by-candlelight program, and again they enjoy themselves.

They continue to see each other regularly, and after a while neither one of them is seeing

anybody else.

And then, one evening when they're driving home, a thought occurs to Maggie, and without really thinking, she says it aloud:

"Do you realise that, as of tonight, we've been seeing each other for exactly six months?"

And then there is silence in the car.

To Maggie, it seems like a very loud silence. She thinks to herself: O dear, I wonder if it bothers him that I said that. Maybe he's been feeling confined by our relationship; maybe he thinks I'm trying to push him into some kind of obligation that he doesn't want, or isn't sure of.

And Egbert is thinking: Wow.
Six months.

And Maggie is thinking: But, hey, I'm not so sure I want this kind of relationship either. Sometimes I wish I had a little more space, so I'd have time to think about whether I really want us to keep going the way we are, moving steadily toward... I mean, where are we going? Are we just going to keep seeing each other at this level of intimacy? Are we heading toward marriage? Toward children? Toward a lifetime together? Am I ready for that level of commitment? Do I really even know this person?

And Egbert is thinking... so that means it was... let's see...

December when we started going out, which was right after I had the car at the dealer's, which means... let me check the odometer... Whoa! I am way overdue for an oil change here!

And Maggie is thinking: He's upset. I can see it on his face. Maybe I'm reading this completely wrong. Maybe he wants more from our relationship, more intimacy, more commitment; maybe he has sensed even before I sensed it - that I was feeling some reservations. Yes, I bet that's it. That's why he's so reluctant to say anything about his own feelings. He's afraid of being rejected.

And Egbert is thinking: And

I'm going have them look at the transmission again. I don't care what those morons say, it's still not shifting right. And they better not try to blame it on the cold weather this time. What cold weather? It might be June, but it's 27 degrees out, and this thing is shifting like garbage truck, and I paid those incompetent thieves \$600.

And Maggie is thinking: He's angry. And I don't blame him. I'd be angry, too. I feel so guilty, putting him through this, but I can't help the way I feel. I'm just not sure.

And Egbert is thinking: They'll probably say it's only a 90-day warranty. Scumballs.

And Maggie is thinking: Maybe I'm just too idealistic, waiting for a knight to come riding up on his white horse, when I'm sitting right next to a perfectly good person, a person I enjoy being with, a person I truly do care about, a person who seems to truly care about me, a person who is in pain because of my self-centred, schoolgirl romantic fantasy.

And Egbert is thinking: Warranty? They want a warranty? I'll give them a warranty. I'll take their warranty and...

"Egbert," Maggie says aloud.

"What?" says Egbert, startled.

"Please don't torture yourself like this," she says, her eyes

beginning to brim with tears.

"Maybe I should never have...Oh dear, I feel so..." (She breaks down, sobbing.)

"What?" says Egbert.

"I'm such a fool," Maggie sobs. "I mean, I know there's no knight. I really know that. It's silly. There's no knight, and there's no horse."

"There's no horse?" says Egbert.

"You think I'm a fool, don't you?" Maggie says.

"No!" says Egbert, glad to finally know the correct answer.

"It's just that...it's that I...I

need some time," Maggie says.

(There is a 15 second pause while Egbert, thinking as fast as he can, tries to come up with a safe response. Finally he comes up with one that he thinks might work.) "Yes," he says.

(Maggie, deeply moved, touches his hand.) "Oh, Egbert, do you really feel that way?" she says.

"What way?" says Egbert.

"That way about time," says Maggie.

"Oh that," says Egbert. "Yes."

(Maggie turns to face him and gazes deeply into his eyes, causing him to become very nervous about

what she might say next, especially if it involves a horse. At last she speaks.) "Thank you, Egbert," she says.

"Thank you," says Egbert.

Then he takes her home, and she lies on her bed, a conflicted, tortured soul, and weeps until dawn, whereas when Egbert gets back to his place, he opens a bag of corn chips, turns on the TV, and immediately becomes deeply involved in a rerun of a tennis match between two Czechoslovakians he never heard of. A tiny voice in the far recesses of his mind tells him that something major was going on back there in the car, but he is pretty sure there is no way he would ever

understand what, and so he figures it's better if he doesn't think about it.

The next day Maggie will call her closest friend, or perhaps two of them, and they will talk about this situation for six straight hours. In painstaking detail, they will analyse everything she said and everything he said, going over it time and time again, exploring every word, expression, and gesture for nuances of meaning, considering every possible ramification.

They will continue to discuss this subject, off and on, for weeks, maybe months, never reaching any definite conclusions, but never getting bored with it,

either.

Meanwhile, Egbert, while playing tennis one day with a mutual friend of his and Maggie's, will pause just before serving, frown, and say: "Norm, did Maggie ever own a horse?"

And that's the difference between men and women.



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1982

We are residents of the Avondale student accommodation units and Rosemary and I became motivated to start a toddler's play group for the local community.

I had already built some playground equipment (train cubbie, a 2-story cubby shaped like a truck with a slide down from the upper level and a swing set, etc.).

We had toys and a storage cupboard donated and I made some low chairs and tables for craft activities. What we lacked

before we could start was suitable fencing as there no fencing around the units.

I enquired about the possibility of us erecting our own, but was told that we could only put up a fence if it was completely free-standing.

About that time I was asked to help an elderly lady with a maintenance issue at a Dora Creek Farm. When I had completed the job, she asked if I could further help her by taking twenty-four large galvanised netting fence panels that were stacked up in one of her paddocks and dump the lot, as it was becoming a nuisance because of weeds growing through them.

I asked if we could use them ourselves, and she not only said a resounding yes, she was astonished that we had a need for them at that very time.

I took the fencing panels home, made free-standing bases out of cement-filled tyres and erected a sturdy safety fence around our playground.

The playgroup was well attended and I consider that it was a great success due to the Lord's leading and provision.



Today I was again helping out an elderly lady at Dora Creek tidying up her yard. Just before

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sunset I went to the rubbish tip to dispose of some rusty old roofing iron. As I backed up our car to the tip site, I got two punctured tyres at once. I have noticed that sometimes trouble comes in batches. Life can go on smoothly for a while and then all of sudden things go wrong - not just one thing, but several things at once. And we wonder what hit us.

I had changed one wheel with my only spare and was stretching my back when I spied a discarded car wheel on top of a pile of rubbish. I checked it out: it was the right size, had plenty of tread

and was fully inflated. So I believe that the Good Lord helped me out of what could have been an awkward predicament. Thank You, God.



1983

December 1983

Rosemary and I work as volunteers for a church organization and we received a stipend of \$35 each a week. As this is our total income to support a family of five, we are very cautious when it comes to spending money.

The other day, as we were looking in a second-hand shop for a certain item, I happened to pick up a large battery-operated torch (flashlight) and absentmindedly switched it on.

To my surprise it worked,

although 1.) it was priced at only 50 cents, and 2.) it felt far too light to have batteries in it.

Being compulsively curious I looked inside to find six rechargeable D-size batteries. At that time these very lightweight batteries retailed for about \$15.00 each.

As my mind calculated the value of this 50-cent treasure, another customer asked if I was going to buy the torch, as he was interested in it if I didn't buy it.

I explained that I was really only interested in the batteries inside and was contemplating suggesting we share the cost (as 50¢ was all I had), but I felt a

twinge of conscience.

I remembered Jesus' story of the treasure hid in a field (Matthew 13:44) and recalled that the point of the story was Jesus teaching what the Kingdom of Heaven is like, certainly not about a man diddling his neighbour out of a field worth more than it's surface value.

I suggested that the other customer come with me to the shopkeeper and perhaps we could work something out.

I explained to the shopkeeper that the torch was really valued at over \$100 dollars but he said that as it was priced at 50¢, whichever of us purchased it could have it

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for that price.

The other customer then whispered to me, "seeing you saw it first, if you buy it for 50¢ and remove the batteries for yourself, I will buy it from you for \$1.00."

It was then I saw the meaning of Jesus' parable. God has a treasure for us. Its value is more than we can possibly imagine.

It will cost us everything to get it, yet we will gain everything — and more — by accepting it. I invite you to re-read Jesus' parable and follow His advice today.

I purchased the torch with my last 50¢ - everything I had at the time - and thanked God for six free re-chargeable batteries and a doubling of the contents of my purse.



1984

When we took over caretakership of a church property at Eraring we had been warned about our closest neighbour.

All sorts of horrific stories were shared by several people about what a horrible person she was and to stay clear of her at all costs.

Rosemary and I prayerfully decided that we would deliberately forget all we had heard about her, and find out for ourselves.

Soon after arriving, we knocked on her door, introduced ourselves and said that we hoped that we could become good neighbours.

She kept to herself most of the time and we rarely saw her, however, one day when the children were sick, she noticed that they weren't playing outdoors as they did everyday (we had no technology to keep them indoors).

She came around to visit and to see if the children were all right and to ask if there was anything she could do to help.

Then on Christmas day she brought us a sprig of *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* (New

South Wales Christmas bush) and wished us a happy Christmas.

All in all we couldn't have asked for a nicer neighbour.

No wonder Jesus said "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1).



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1985

Toward the end of last year, my physician told me I should be on a Disability Pension due to limitations in mobility and activity due to degenerative bone disease. In fact, she said, I should have been on a pension years ago.

I explained that we are volunteers for a church organisation and receive a \$35 a week (each) stipend to cover our living expenses and, with God's blessing, we manage on that.

Nevertheless she filed an application on our behalf and we

now have a pension plus (and I'm not sure what the doctor told them) the Government has given us a very generous lump-sum back payment.

We prayerfully sought guidance as to how we could use this extra money for the Lord's work.

We believed that the opportunity existed for Christian Bookstores to hire videos that encouraged healthy moral and family values, so we set about developing a criterion defining what was acceptable and what was not.

We then found it almost impossible to obtain videos that matched our criterion. So we used

the extra money to purchase equipment in order for us to make our own and (under licence) to transfer Christian movie films to video.

As usual, the Lord blessed abundantly and throughout this year, through a chain of branch libraries and a library subsidy scheme, we have been instrumental in establishing Christian Video Libraries in Christian Bookstores across Australia and New Zealand, and also one each in Suva (Fiji) and Malawi (South Africa).

"Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).



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1986

The process of baking a cake:

"You Beat, Heat, & Eat the
Treat."



Ten Stages of Deadly Depression

1. Disturbance - Need for readjustment and reconsideration
2. Disappointment - Need for reappointment and reconsecration
3. Discouragement - Need for reaffirmation and rediscovery

4. Disillusionment - Need for realignment and redetermination

5. Deflation - Need for re-inflation, recrudescence and rejuvenation

6. Despair - Need for reason, reconfirmation and renewal

7. Doomsaying - Need for reappraisal and redefinition

8. Desperation - Need for rescue and reconstruction

9. Derangement - Need for reclamation, recuperation, rehabilitation and reconditioning

10. Death - Need for resurrection (Divine intervention)



Creating a Positive Pleasing Personality.

To get the most out of life, we will need to be able to get along with people. This means that others will like us and want to do things for us.

Our personality is our attitude in action.

When we get along with people it is because they find our personality positive and pleasing. How can we create a positive personality? Here are a few tips that I will share in my next seminar:

1. To make and keep a friend,

Be a friend; be friendly.

2. Think what type of person you would like to have as a friend - how you would like to be treated, then be that type of person yourself for others.

3. People need to feel wanted, loved, needed, so help create these feelings in others.

4. Be kind to others - You may not feel you can love them, but at least you can be kind.

5. Learn to love yourself because others will often treat to you the way they see you treating yourself.

6. Let others impress you rather than trying to impress

them.

7. Honesty often hurts, often makes us vulnerable, but honesty always wins in the end.

8. Deliberately do and/or say things to make others feel important: Praise, encouragement, support, co-operation, courtesy (please & thank-you).

9. Be enthusiastic - it is contagious, it motivates others as well as you, it builds bonds within relationships.

10. Call others by name, repeat it often in conversation.

11. Learn to listen. People are warmed more by how you listen than what you say.

12. Be positive, as positive attitudes are attractive to others. We like to be around positive people - negative people repel us (if we are negative, we repel others).

13. Be cheerful & pleasant. Smile often - smile with your eyes as well as your mouth.

14. Before you choose to argue, stop and place a value on your friendship.

15. Help others to like themselves. Remind them that you like yourself better when you are with them.

16. Show a genuine interest in others, listen as you invite them to talk about themselves. Seek

their opinions, ideas, viewpoints.

17. If you can't say something good about a person, keep silent.

18. Allow the other person to be "right" sometimes.

19. If you really must poke fun at someone, be sure it is you.



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1987

January 1987

I received the following letter in response to an article that I wrote for the August 1986 issue of Australian Singles Magazine.

Dear Dr Hartley,

I am writing to thank you for your article in the current issue of the Australian Singles Magazine, which has helped me immensely.

I am also writing to share an experience I went through last year (when I was 19 years old) and I hope you will choose to share it

with others that they too may learn as I did - sin has devastating consequences that can affect everyone around you.

One of my closest friends met the "man she was going to marry" a couple of years ago and really fell hard for this guy. He also told her that he loved her and she thought it was the "real thing".

Thinking she was going to marry him anyway, she gave in to him and slept with him even though she was a Christian and knew it was wrong.

Her boyfriend was also a Christian. This relationship continued for several months, until he broke it off, and refused

to even speak to her, saying, "You're no longer the girl I fell in love with" losing all respect for her because she'd slept with him.

She was understandably devastated and went into deep depression, crying for hours each night. She had given herself to this guy, thinking she was going to marry her, and now she felt used, betrayed and worthless.

She also knew she was out of fellowship with God and she was too ashamed to go back to Him. She felt she was too low for even God's forgiveness.

Several months later my friend was dead. She'd swallowed 80 sleeping tablets after hearing

that her ex-boyfriend had gotten a girl pregnant.

Realising he was having sex with someone else now and that what she'd given him wasn't precious to him obviously pushed her over the edge.

She left me a letter and in it she states, "to die will resolve me from the hold (he) has on me."

I cannot put into words what I went through after her suicide, and I was not alone. I'm sure her mother suffered deeply and her other close friends hit the skids as I did.

I jumped into many of the "mud-holes" of life trying to fill the void she'd left, and escape my

feelings.

These included alcohol addiction, bulimia, anger at God, deep depression and even thoughts of suicide itself.

After reading your article, finally I realised it was her decision and I shouldn't be ruining my life because she couldn't cope with hers.

So I turned back to God and both me and her closest friend are trying to put our lives back together. I don't know how her ex-boyfriend reacted. I just hope he woke up to the dangers of premarital sex.

This sin that seemed so private at the beginning ended up

devastating many lives. I would never under any circumstances give up my virginity before marriage now, and I have seen first hand what it can do.

God gave us these rules to protect ourselves - no only physically from disease, but also emotionally.

I hope that something good can come from her death by being a warning to others, to keep their pants on, and in the words of Christian group "DC Talk", "The innocence that's spent is gonna hurt you."

Thank you once again, Dr. Hartley and your reference to Dr. Dobson's book which I have read

(I am writing to him too.)

Your article and the book have been a big help to me in making right decisions how to get my life back on track, and set my goals in the right places.

Yours sincerely,

(Keeping the writer's name anonymous)



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1988

Old Noah knew
There was only two
But if he was really wise
He would have taken
Off his shoe
And swatted one of those flies!



God Speaks to Man in a Variety
of Ways (Outline only)

Asaph the Psalmist: The
Sanctuary - Psalm 73:17; Signs
and Wonders - Psalm 77:14-20

Balam: Donkey - Num. 22:28-
30

David the Psalmist: Creation -
Psalm 145:10-12; Outer Space -
Psalm 19:1; Children - Psalm 8:2

Disciples and contemporaries of
Jesus: Jesus in person - Matthew
5:2

Ethan the Ezrahite: Creation &
God's past leading - Psalm 89:8-14

Gad the prophet: Message - 2
Sam. 24:11

Gideon: Fleece - Jud. 6:36-40

Isaiah: Vision - Isa. 6:1-13

Jerusalem Council: Baptism of
the Spirit - Acts 11:1-18

John the Revelator: Angel - Rev
1:1

Joshua: Army Commander -
Josh. 5:13-15

Magi: Star - Matt. 2:1-10

Manoah and his wife
(Sampson's Parents): Angel - Jud.
13:20,21

Mary the mother of Jesus:
Angel - Luke 1:26-38

Moses: Burning Bush - Ex. 3:1-6

Moses: Face-to-face - Ex. 33:11

Nebuchadnezzar: Dream -
Dan.2:1-28

People of Isaiah's time:
Mountains, Hills and Trees -
Isaiah 55:12

Samuel: Voice - 1 Sam 3:4-14

The wise: Proverbs - Proverbs
1:5,6; By Fearing God - Vs 2; By
Heeding Parents - Vs 8

The Writer of the book of
Hebrews: Witnesses of Faith -
Hebrews 11:1 - 12:1

Unnamed Psalmist: The Law -
Psalm 119

You and I : God's Word -
Revelation 1:3

You and I : Holy Spirit - John
16:13

You and I : The witness of
Jesus - Hebrews 1:1, 1 Peter 2:21



What is okay?

Modern society says
"If it feels okay do it,
If it looks okay take it
If it sounds okay believe it
If it ridicules what is okay join
it
If it stands up for what is okay
disown it
If it appears okay grab it
If it burns okay smoke it
If it thrills okay inject it
If it smells okay sniff it
If it sounds okay believe it
If it tastes okay eat it
If it fizzes okay drink it
If it moves okay follow it
If it may be okay try it
If it is okay criticise it
If it isn't okay challenge it
If it can't be okay question it
If it fits okay spoil it

If it grows okay stifle it
If it said to be okay ignore it
If it might be okay leap at it
If it swears okay listen to it
If it lies okay heed it
If it lusts okay copy it
If it works okay break it
If it breaks okay destroy it
If it destroys okay lie about it
What is okay? - What does God
say ?



When I die, I want to be run over by a truckload of dirt while sitting in a taxi reading a funny book. The truckload of soil is to save having to bury me, the taxi is so that someone else foots the bill, and the funny book is so that I die laughing.

Seriously though, I intend to die young -- as late in life as possible!



July 1988

I posted the following advertisement in the Morisset Market Day News in June 1988. This was a genuine advertisement, and the vehicle sold the same day the newspaper was distributed.

Toyota Corolla Sedan for sale.

Genuine fully operational horseless carriage - one owner (currently) - rego (NTM 222) until circa Anno Domini 1989 - waterproof inner-tubes in all tyres - all seats face forwards -

revolutionary circular aneroid
tachometer - super deluxe
scratches on paint-work -
colourless (white light) electric
lighting at the front end and
colourful (red light) the other end
- all four corners are strategically
fitted with orange light winking
devices which are able to flash in
sync with the blinking control
inside the vehicle - all-weather
interior - special see-through
windows - ultra-supreme comfort
(if you don't cross your legs while
driving) - genuine accumulated
Aussie dust on floor (100%
Australian) - additional rear-view
mirrors for backward drivers -
economical as all tyres use nothing
but air - extremely versatile
braking mechanism for stationary

non-motoring at zero kilometres-per-hour: can be operated by the tootsies with or without gumboots (foot-brake), by hand with or without mittens (hand-brake), or by the mouth with or without sauce (lunch-break) - multi-speed gearbox: slow, faster, fast, and too fast; also capable of motoring hind-wards - fully automatic windows operate simply by winding a handle - precision engineered dents in ergonomically strategic places - vinyl roof, non-vinyl elsewheres and definitely-non-vinyl bottom-side - no artificial additives, sweeteners colours, or flavours in engine oil - audible noise-creating horn located close to pedestrians with posh push-button control switch located

close to driver - vehicle fully supported by no less than four inflatable pneumatic tyres (with at least one for each wheel) - steering wheel conveniently located IN FRONT of driver's seat - seat-belts installed for all front and back-seat drivers excepting for any drivers riding in the boot or on the roof - radiator guaranteed not to contain any dry water: only the wettest water available in Australia has been harnessed for use in the cooling system - fully air-conditioned EXTERIOR - five doors (including boot, bonnet, and glove compartment - all wheels capable of rotating forwards and backwards - refillable petrol tank which contains absolutely NO

cream cheese - low mileage,
depending on how far you travel -
glove compartment conveniently
located INSIDE the vehicle - fully
equipped with an infernal
combustion engine discretely
brown-stain packaged under the
bonnet - comes complete with junk
and jack in the boot. \$850.00
Telephone 73 1233, evenings.



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1989

GROWTH:

G - Go to God in prayer daily
John 15:7

R - Read God's Word daily Acts
17:11

O - Obey God moment by
moment John 14:21

W - Witness for Christ daily by
your life and words Matthew 4:19;
John 15:8

T - Trust God in every detail of
your life 1 Peter 5:7

H - allow the Holy Spirit to
control and empower your daily
life and witness Galatians 5:16,17;
Acts 1:8



February 1989

"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me" (Psalm 101:3).

A friend of mine has just had his first novel published and he showed me a copy "fresh off the press".

"What do you think of this?" he asked.

I glanced at the covers and opened the book at random and read these words from the bottom of a page: "Mrs. Jones could be seen on Monday afternoon in her garden taking her

clothes off ..."

I promptly returned the book and said, "No, thank you. It's not for me."

"Why ever not?", he asked, "You've only glanced at one page!"

As I handed him the book, still open, I pointed to the paragraph at the bottom of the page.

"Oh, but you haven't read all of it. Turn over the page and read the whole sentence."

I did and it read, "Mrs. Jones could be seen on Monday afternoon in her garden taking her clothes off the rickety old clothesline."

It doesn't pay to jump to conclusions.



1990

I remember the problem with not being chosen first when I observed one of my sons on his school sports day today. The students were the process of choosing up teams.

The children would stand in the middle of the playing-field and be chosen by the team captain one at a time until there were two unfortunates who were chosen last.

Well, they weren't really chosen, they were distributed. I watched the expression on the

faces of those chosen last, and it was not a happy one.

Some young men are worried about being chosen (or not chosen) by girls. When I was a teenager, a male had less of a problem, because back then the rules were that a male should ask for a date.

That happily let me off the hook so I could concentrate on my studies and my reading instead of partying.

I'm not sure what the rules are now, if there are any.



The Mini-skirt Craze

A good friend of mine related

the following true story to me.

She said, "In the 1970s when mini-skirts were a fashion craze, I was a young 'independent' girl, wanting to keep up with the latest fashion and wear a mini-skirt.

My mother, concerned for the maintenance of modesty, had other ideas.

She verbalised it this way, 'Pamela, That's not a skirt — it's nothing more than a Velcro valance! If you insist on wearing a pelmet for your panties, then it's curtains for you!'" (A pelmet or valance is a narrow decorative heading to conceal curtain fixtures at the top of a window casing)



May 1990

Rosemary teasingly asked how much I loved her, and I responded by saying, "More than yesterday and less than tomorrow".

God's love is like that. Nay, rather, God's love is better than that!



1991

Friday 22 November 1991

A week ago on Thursday 14 November 1991, a fire destroyed our uninsured house, the adjacent television production facility and my counselling clinic in Morisset NSW.

The building overlooks the Hillview Seventh-day Adventist church and later in the day on the smoke-stained glass of the only extant window, I wrote (in mirror writing on the inside of the glass, so that church attendees could read it), "GOD STILL CARES".

Just a week before, the Hillview SDA church members had been praying that there would be a family in the community that they could help.

Little did they know then that the family would be their own church members living right next door. During the day and over this past week we have been gratefully swamped with offers of help.

Yes, God still cares.



1992

Thursday May 21 1992

Last week I was travelling overnight between Glen Innes and Lake Macquarie in our Hiace Van and around midnight I stopped at a rest area for a brief nap.

As I wriggled into a sleeping bag, the van began to rock side-to-side violently.

I got out and looked around, however silence and the bright moonlight revealed that no-one or animal was anywhere near the van.

I got back into the sleeping bag and almost immediately the rocking resumed.

Assuming that it was God telling me to move on, I drove to the next rest area and had a peaceful nap.

On my return journey the next night, I checked out the area to see if anything such as a bushfire had made the rest area unsafe, but I saw no such evidence.

I have later found out that there was a fatal accident on that stretch of road just after midnight and the highway was blocked in both directions for several hours.

Again thanks to God for His

care and concern.



I asked my daughter Norreen (age 8) the following question, 'What do I get if I obey God's commandments?'

She replied, 'You get "loveness" in your heart.'



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1993

Saturday 6 March 1993

They looked a lovely couple
As they trod the aisle that day.
"A fairy-tale wedding,
A dream come true"
Mother was heard to say.

For three long years they'd
dated
And done a lot of talking
That's how to get acquainted
When Christians are a-courting.

And now the weddings over
Why, there's no need to talk.

It's all been done beforehand,
Like "Crawl before you walk."

And so through years of
marriage

They hardly ever spoke
(Except when he got desperate
or when the frypan broke!)

But now there's a major crisis
Time to seek out one to care
But since the talking had long
since ceased,
She found he wasn't there!

Now listen, fellow Christian
(I talk to me, as well)
Is your wedding with the
Saviour
A story I can tell?
Is daily prayer (that's

"talking")

A thing we used to do?
Or do we only remember
To pray for a season, or two?

We know he'll never leave us,
We are assured of that.
But if in silence we walk away,
His tears cry to our back!

So turn now, fellow Christian
And reaffirm with me
To listen and talk
To daily walk
Now and eternally.



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1994

Be dishonourable' Vs 'bed is honourable'

Hebrews 13:4 - Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

In a commentary that I wrote on this verse instead of saying that the 'bed is honourable' the text was accidentally printed without spaces and so it read, 'bedishonourable'.

The computer proof-reader program placed a space after the

first letter 'e' and so it read, 'be dishonourable' instead of 'bed is honourable'.



8 May 1994 (Mother's Day)
A Mother's Love

A mother's love is from above
A gift from Him whose love is
true

It goes beyond the skies above
And reaches out to me and you
A mother's love is for her child
A mother's love is free
For mothers are a gift from
God

A gift to you and me

Chorus:
This love from God

A mother's treasure
and such a pleasure and long
It shall forevermore endure
The sons' and daughters' song
This love from God is greater
far
Than tongue or pen can ever
say
It goes beyond the furthest
star
And reaches to the lowest way
This love so sure shall still
endure
All measureless and strong
An erring child is reconciled
And pardoned from his wrong

(Chorus)

If I were asked to weigh the
love
That from a mother's heart
springs free,

All scales would break and not
contain

The gift she gives to you and
me.

How can I weigh so great a
love?

There is only one thing to say
"This love is less than my
tomorrow,

And more than my yesterday."

(Chorus)



1995

It was Saturday, and my neighbour Bob had toothache. We lived 20klm from the nearest town but the aching forced him to drive into town to seek some aid.

As the dentist was closed for the weekend, Bob went to the dental department at the hospital. It too was closed, however the dentist was there and was sorting through some records.

Bob presented his dilemma and was asked if he had an "Health Care Card". He replied no, but was willing to pay, if only the dentist

would remove his aching tooth.

To Bob's dismay, he was told that even money could not persuade the dentist into action without the necessary "Health Care Card".

Sadly, Bob returned home to wait until Monday when he could see a 'regular' dentist.

Through the afternoon the pain got steadily worse, until, in desperation, Bob went into his shed and grabbed a pair of pliers. With the aid of a mirror, Bob struggled and finally removed a large tooth from his jaw.

The tooth came out, but the pain seemed to remain.

Bob figured that the pain would subside with time so he swigged a cup of tea and waited.

Throughout Sunday the pain appeared worse and early Monday morning Bob eagerly waited at the dentist's door.

When the dentist looked in Bob's mouth he asked what Bob had been doing to himself. As Bob explained, the dentist interrupted by asking, 'Did you think to sterilise the pliers?'

Bob's negative reply explained in part the continued pain. Bob not only had an infection in the gum, he had pulled out the wrong tooth!

Now, I'm not suggesting we are all as impatient as Bob, but we all,

at times, want to do things our own way and on our own. The man who claims to be a self-made man has a fool for a maker. When you and I try and do our own things (on our own), we are liable to end up like aching Bob.

I choose to claim and prayerfully follow through with the following promise from Philippians 4:13 -- "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"



September 1995

There was this fellow who commuted from Brisbane to Kalangur each day to attend the

South Queensland SDA Camp Meeting.

Amongst other meetings, I ran a course on interpersonal relationships this year.

He attended this course and decided to mend his ways to become more appreciative of his non-Christian wife who hadn't come to any of the meetings.

When I next spoke to him, he related (I'm sure he was exaggerating) what later happened because on the way home from the Camp Meeting he bought a big heart-shaped box of chocolates and a huge bunch of roses.

When he melodramatically presented them to her she burst

into tears.

After considerable efforts at consoling her she blubbered, "It's been such a terrible week - the fridge broke down, the dog twice sicked up on the carpet, the car got a flat tyre, our five-year-old flushed the car keys down the toilet, I broke my favourite teapot, and now you come home drunk!"



December 1995

Earlier this year I sought a valuation on the house we have for sale at Red Range in the Brother Mountains.

Unfortunately, when I went to

the house (A six to eight hour trip) and waited for the agent to arrive at the designated time, he failed to show up.

A telephone call to his office the next day confirmed an alternative time and I waited at the house another day for him. He failed to show up again.

I returned to town and telephoned again, but his secretary insisted that I come in personally to discuss it with him.

Having just driven all night, I chose to telephone a different Real Estate and requested an appraisal (as they were not in a position to provide a full valuation).

A time was confirmed and I returned to the house and waited. He also failed to show up. When I contacted him by telephone from the village in the mountains and bemoaned the fact that I had made a special trip, he shrugged it off by claiming that he was no longer interested in domestic properties as he had more than enough rural properties to keep him busy.

I returned to town again and contacted yet another Real Estate Agent (part of a large franchise chain).

The agent was not available when I called (twice) and did not return my calls.

I located his website on the Internet and requested an appraisal by email. To this also he failed to reply.

I asked the local Real Estate under the same franchise in our town to organise an appraisal by this third illusive Real Estate, and they telephoned him and asked him to contact me, which he did not.

I then sent an email via the Internet to the Real Estate Franchise Head Office and complained.

They sent me a reply saying my email would be forwarded to the said Real Estate Agent. I still have not heard back from either

of them.

I finally contacted a tiny one-man Real Estate Agency and was given a date for an appraisal. I again went to the house and waited for the agent to arrive at the designated time. (I even telephoned him again in the morning to make sure he had not forgotten).

He was to arrive at 4:00pm. At 6:00pm I telephoned him again and he apologised, saying he had been delayed at a rural property some considerable distance away. He assured me that he would be there "first thing in the morning, before he opened his office".

By 11:00am he still had not

arrived and I once again telephoned. He apologised, saying he had forgotten, but would be there later in the day.

He came at around 1:30pm, only four months after my first frustrating attempt at moving Real Estate Agents.

Although I have waited impatiently for the Agent's coming and have been disappointed repeatedly, I know that when Jesus says that He is coming, I don't have to spend \$100 on petrol and drive up to the mountains to meet Him.

I don't have to wait impatiently with my watch in my hand, wondering if He will show up or

not.

In fact, He has promised to return (and I believe Him), and He has been courteous enough not to frustrate me with a schedule. He simply said 'soon', and 'occupy until I come'.

This sure takes the pressure off my waiting. And even though I want His 'soon' to be sooner, if I am ready, I won't be frustrated or disappointed.



1996

Friday 9 August 1996

On 1 August 1996 in the late evening, a suspicious fire razed Glen Innes SDA Church.

At the time I was in the Pastor's car with him as I was returning to Murwillumbah after I had missed a train (my own fault).

Today I had a visit from the police as an anonymous person had filed a report with the Glen Innes Police claiming that I had lit the fire as he or she had seen me in the town earlier that week.

Evidence was also produced that suggested that, years before, I was the last person to preach in the old Kanwall church at Tuggarah Lakes a week before it was attacked by an arsonist.

Unfortunately for the investigation, but fortunately for me (and for the pastor) we both had a 198-mile (319-kilometre) alibi. Providentially, neither of us could be accused. Thank You, Lord.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).



1997

Sabbath and Healing

S Sign of sanctification
(holiness)

A Activity ceases

B Build relationship with God

B Build relationship with other
believers

A Active worship

T Time: past (Creation),
present (re-creation), future
(throughout eternity)

H Healing - spiritual, social,
mental, and physical



Selected Journal Jottings 1960-2022

Lionel Hartley

(p255)

Tuesday 22 July 1997
The Leaven of the Spirit

Lord, You are the bread of life.
Make me, Lord, a slice of thee;
May life for me be Spirit
filled-
The leaven swelling up in me.

The silent unseen working
Transforming lazy flour
Into holy-air filled bubbling
life;
Risen, baked, and given power!

So life no longer is a loaf
Of wasted energy.
Lord, may the crumbs I leave
behind,
Draw other souls to thee.



1998

Jottings for a filler magazine article:

The Law of Liberty

James 2:10-12 "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. / For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. / So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."

At the commencement of a

certain examination at Cambridge University one day, a particularly adroit young student stood up and asked the proctor to bring him cakes and ale. The following dialog ensued:

Proctor: I beg your pardon?

Student: Sir, I request that you bring me cakes and ale.

Proctor: Sorry, no.

Student: Sir, I really must insist. I request and require that you bring me cakes and ale.

At this point, the student produced a copy of the four hundred year old Laws of Cambridge, written in Latin and still nominally in effect, and

pointed to the section which read (roughly translated): "Gentlemen sitting examinations may request and require cakes and ale."

Pepsi and hamburgers were judged the modern equivalent, and the student sat there, writing his examination and happily munching and slurping away.

Three weeks later, the student was fined five pounds under the same Laws of Cambridge for not wearing a sword to the examination.

When Moses brought the Ten Commandments down from the mountain the second time, do you imagine him saying to the people, 'I worked a trade-off: "Adultery",

"Stealing" and "Working six days" stays in but we can have every Sabbath-day off as an holiday! Or perhaps he said, 'We get to keep the "Thou shalt nots", so we can forget the mushy "Love your neighbour" stuff God gave to our forefathers.

James says we shall be 'be judged by a law he calls the law of liberty'. Does that sound like something to be used by us to manipulate God and others into our way of thinking? Or perhaps, just maybe, James is reminding us that God gave us His law to prevent us from destroying ourselves.

As this world hinges again on the brink of another major war,

let us remember the Divine
Lawgiver, Who's perfect law of
liberty not only sets us free, but
reminds us to apply the same
freedom law to our neighbour.

"Seeing ye have purified your
souls in obeying the truth through
the Spirit unto unfeigned love of
the brethren, see that ye love one
another with a pure heart
fervently" (1 Peter 1:22).



In God's House. (An expansion
of an anonymous poem)

Some go to church to take a
walk,
Some go there to laugh and

talk.

Some go there to meet their
friends,

Some go there their time to
spend.

Some through habit go there
weekly,

Others go more often, seeking
variety.

Some go there to hear the
preaching,

Some go there to question the
teaching.

Some go there to meet each
other,

Some go there a fault to cover.

Some go to church to court a
lover,

Others go to chide a brother.

Some go there to strike a
bargain,

Some go there to seek for
pardon.

Some go there to take their
children,

Some go there to escape their
children!

Some go there 'cause they feel
proud,

Some go there to sing out loud.

Some go there to rest from
labour,

Some go just to impress a
neighbour.

Some go there to doze and nod,
The Wise go there to worship
God!



Prayer Thought: The First Time
"Pray" is used in the Bible

I find it very interesting that the very first time the word "pray" is used in the Bible is when someone who has been wronged is going to pray for the person who has wronged them!

Genesis 20 Verse 3 says. "But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman."

And then verse 7 says, "Now return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live." I trust that when someone wrongs me I may have the grace to pray for them that they may live!

The first time that the words "prayed" and "prayer" are used in the Bible. Interestingly, both have the same positive outcome.

The word "prayed" is first used in Genesis 20:17, "Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again,"

The word "prayer" is first used in Genesis 25:21, "I saac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant."

To me this is encouraging. No matter what the circumstances, God can choose to answer prayer!



Don't mistake busy-ness for business

- Lionel Hartley, Rotary Luncheon, Brisbane, 1998

<http://www.rotary.org.au/>

Note: Although accurately recorded in Rotary's transcript, this was misquoted in the press as: 'Don't mistake activity for efficiency' which probably sounds better but cannot be attributed to me.



Tuesday 31 March 1998

A Sponge Knoweth No
Discrimination

"The frog - he had a problem.

His pond was far too green.
Another's pond was bluer (he
heard the birds had seen).

But Froggie had an answer:
he'd suck up all the green, and so
he bought a bath sponge - the
biggest ever seen!

Well, sponges have no manners.
They suck up good and bad.
And very soon an empty pond
was all that poor frog had.

A sponge does no deciding -
only you can choose.
Expose your mind to evil and
you will surely lose.

By choosing what you see and
hear; what you eat and do, then

you control the input and you
won't get sucked in too!"



Tuesday 28 April 1998

Friendship

Friends are neither made nor
bought

We find them when we're
feeling glum

When we've waited lonely years
Then friendship's found, when
friendship's sought

Through a comrade, a pal, a
buddy or a chum

To still the deepest fears and
tears.

We need neither explanation
nor reason -

A glance, a look, a sigh.

A clasp of the hand can clasp
the heart.

No matter what the season
When a friend comes by
There are bonds that time can
never part.

For once you have a true friend
Whose touch reaches to your
need

And with gracious patience, an
ear that bends -

The words of Jesus will then
blend

With those your friend will
plead,

"Henceforth not servants; I

have called you friends!"

God grants our friendship grow
With his grace to impart
A greater measure of his love -
So that we may truly know
The warmth that fills our heart
Is given from above.



Tuesday 21 July 1998

The only problem with getting
on like a house of fire is that
someone is likely to get burnt!



Wednesday 26 November 1998

Behaviourally-contracted AIDS

Our daughter Norreen asked me for my comment on behaviourally-contracted AIDS. This is what I wrote for her:

It's not the things one thinks
That keeps one safe from
AIDS;
It's not the things one knows
Or even what one says;
The thing that keeps one safe
from AIDS
Is how that one behaves.

Blood transfusions and accident scenes
Are minor risks
By comparison -
To abusing the things God
created for good.
Sharing a needle for abuse of

the mind

Sharing a body for the abuse
of mankind

No comparison!

Against some diseases we can
be protected

By the impregnation of an
innoculation

Or isolation, solitation,
castigation or separation

Or by injection, ingestion,
impression or implantation,

But not so AIDS - that's next -

For simple is the prescription
for total protection:

Stay off drugs/wait 'til
marriage for sex!



1999

The Four Tests of a Prophet

How can we tell if someone is fatidical (gifted with prophetic power)?

There are only two types of prophets: true or false. The Scriptures abound with stories of false prophets - from the false prophets on Mt Carmel (I Kings 18) to the foolish 'wise' men of Babylon (Dan 4:7,18:).

We are told in Malachi 3:18 that we can 'discern between the righteous and the wicked, between

him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.' Here are four tests we can apply:

1. Lifestyle

Look at the prophet's life. It certainly will not be perfect but, in general, the prophet will be a spiritual, God-fearing person.

Moses, for example, had two failures recorded against him, but the majority of his life, the record tells, as he lived in accordance with God's Word.

(Deut 34:10 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face.)

2. Biblical Harmony

The things the prophet says will harmonise with what the Bible says. Scripture clearly teaches that if the message is contrary to the Bible the speaker is not a true prophet.

(Isaiah 8:20 KJV - To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.)

The fact that a prophecy is (or is not) written down, is not a test. The Bible gives examples of both:

Written: Matthew 13:14, Acts 2:16, II Peter 1:20, Revelation 22:10, etc.

Oral: Acts 11:27, 15:32, 21:9, I Corinthians 14:3, etc.

3. Accuracy

Do the prophecies come true? This question must be answered in regard to what the prophecy says, whether or not it is conditional.

For example Jonah's prophecy against Nineveh (Jonah 3:4 KJV - And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.) was not fulfilled because the people of Nineveh repented and turned to God.

However Moses threats against Pharaoh (Exodus 5:1, 17:17, etc. - And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let

my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. / Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. Etc.) came true because Pharaoh did not let God's people go.

In general, if the prophecy is not a threat with a promise for leniency (in the actual words (eg. Moses) or in the context (eg. Jonah), then the prophet can be identified by the fact that the prophecies come true.

4. Reflectors of Christ

Finally, the fourth test of a

prophet is a check on whether or not their lives glorify & emulate Jesus.

Philippians 2: 5-9 - Let this mind* be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: / Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: / But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: / And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. / Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.

*To have the mind of Jesus is to reflect God's attitude:

(Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.)



January 1999

We own the old general store in Red Range, NSW, and as part of the heritage restoration I have rebuilt the old blacksmith's shop alongside the building.

Elderly neighbours had told me that the original forge was made from an old disk ploughshare and so I set about reconstructing it.

Fortuitously, the long-since abandoned rubbish tip on the

village common provided lots of scrap iron, including a large circular disk ploughshare and a length of railway iron from which to make an anvil. I used the newly-made forge to reconstruct some hand-made tools to go with it.

To test it out, I put a rusty, cold, dull piece of iron into the fire, and, after awhile, I took out that identical piece of iron out of the fire, but now it was bright and glowing and I could give it a new life and fashion it into something useful.

My study this morning led me to Philippians 3:20-21 which says, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall change our vile body,
that it may be fashioned like unto
his glorious body, according to the
working whereby he is able even
to subdue all things unto himself."

When we die our bodies are
consigned to the grave like junk on
a rubbish tip, dead, lifeless and
valueless. But the resurrection
assures us that, in the fullness of
time, the master Blacksmith will
convert this lifeless trash into
something bright and glowing and
give it a new life.

This reminds me of 1
Thessalonians 4:13-18 "But I would
not have you to be ignorant,
brethren, concerning them which
are asleep, that ye sorrow not,
even as others which have no

hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we, which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."



Saturday 11 December 1999

The Cave and the Sun (A Fable)

Once there was a dingy Cave,
Hidden beneath the soil.
Her life was one of misery,
hardship and of toil.

But one day through a little
crack
A voice was heard to say,
"Come into the Sunshine, out
into the light,
Out of utter darkness, out of
bitter night,
Come into the open air and into
glorious day!"

But Cave was quite a sceptic.
She'd never seen the light.
"What is the Sunshine of which

you speak? It sounds too good for me.

But nevertheless I'll venture out, for this I've got to see!"

And see, she did, with awe-filled eyes that blinked in wonderment

At all the brilliant colours bright, a new world to behold,
She had to tell the Sunlight about her past life - dark and cold.

Yet Mr Sun had never known what darkness was,
Or damp or dull, or cold
And so he too was a sceptic and would not find his peace
Until he ventured underground to find the dark beneath.

But unlike cave, who found the
light when she ventured into day,
The sun shone bright through
caverns deep, and to his sheer
dismay

The damp walls sparkled in His
light, the shadows ran away
And in the once-dark chasms
there shone the light of day.

"Where is the gloomy
darkness? All I can see is light!
For where the Sun shines
brightly there is no cold or night.

The lesson's plain, we need to
be a light for all around
For where there is the Light of
the World
No darkness can be found.



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2000

Thoughts for a sermon on joy:

When I was a youngster we lived for many years in Christchurch New Zealand at the foot of the Cashmere Hills. Up in the hills, about an hour's walk from our home, was a place called Glenelg Spur.

We, however, called it the Sledging Place because between some caves on the hillside was a huge sloped and grassed area that was ideal and freely available for young children to slide down. When we were first told of the

place my two elder brothers and I took a large cardboard box to slide down on.

However we felt it wasn't very safe for my two younger sisters to join us - that is until I found the plans in a Popular Mechanics Magazine for a sturdy wooden sled with metal runners. I was about eight years old at the time.

We had a policy in our household that when each of us six children reached our sixth birthday we would receive a wooden tool chest that our father had made and it would be filled with real tools - hammer, screwdrivers, sandpaper, hand-drill, a saw, chisels, adjustable spanner, files, and a supply of

used and labelled tobacco tins filled with nails, screws and small bolts. Over the following year our father would then spend time one-on-one with us teaching us how to safely use them, and he would supply us with additional materials, as we required them.

So I set to and built, sanded and shellacked a wooden sled with metal runners according to the plans.

For the information of the younger generation, shellac was a glossy home-made varnish made by dissolving shellac flakes in clear methylated spirits. Shellac flakes were sold in round tins and had been manufactured from the resin trails left behind by swarms of

female lac bugs in a variety of trees found only in India and Southern Asia.

Now because I owned the sled, I dictated a certain condition for letting my brothers and sisters ride on it, and that was that we all took turns carrying it up the hills rather than me having to carry it on my own.

This worked out well and we spent many hours during school holidays laughing and enjoying the fun of doing life together.

Even though I would rather sit and read a book, I did ride the sled a few times and, although not thrilling, I somehow enjoyed it.

But I received the most

pleasure seeing the pure fun, pure delight, pure joy, and pure happiness as my siblings laughed all the way down the hill with the wind in their faces, their hearts in their throats, and their gratitude-filled smiles and laughter as they sped past me.

They even continued to laugh while gleefully discussing whose turn it was next and while toting the sled back up to the top of the rise for the next ride down.

I know that I would have had no fun sledding down on my own, seeking that illusive thrill that really only comes through doing life with others.

It was the shared experience

that brought me the most joy and that is why, I believe, that God designed us for community, because when we live and love in community it brings joy to God.



"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7).

Nowhere does the Bible say that the spirit, or soul, is immortal - that it does not die. In fact, the Bible tells us that God is the only one who is immortal. (See 1 Timothy 6:15, 16)

Psalm 146:4 says that when a

man dies "his thoughts perish."
(See also Psalm 115:17)

Ecclesiastes 9:5 says that "The dead know not any thing." (See also Verses 6 and 10)

Job 14:21 says that a dead man's sons "come to honour, and he knoweth it not." (See also Job 7:21)

Dead people do not even remember God and give him thanks. Psalm 6:5 says, "In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (See also Acts 7:60; John 11:11, 14)



January 2000

Selected Journal Jottings 1960-2022

Lionel Hartley

(p293)

In answer to a question from my son Michael, I said, "The best way to make a friend is to be one.

Some people come into our lives and quickly go.

Some people become friends and stay awhile, leaving beautiful footprints on our hearts.

And we are never quite the same because we have made a friend.

So be a friend and you will make one."



Saturday 1 April 2000

What is Character?

Character is not what the
Church folk see

It is what we are at home;
Character is not what our
neighbours see

For they never see us alone.
For the measure of character
is not by man
who the outward behaviour
sees,

For while we may be saints
abroad

While we're at home, our God
will measure

The development of our
character treasure

(Under the shadow of His
blood)

For the real test of what will
please

Is how I behave when I think

no-one sees.

So although only God can
measure my character

I KNOW I'm going home

Because although my character
I'm taking with me

And leaving all else behind,

It is not my character that
makes me worthy,

Not my character that makes
me "mind"

Not my character that makes
me kind

But accepting and believing in
God's only Son

Who has already paid for your
life and mine!



July 2000

It seems these days that you take your life in your hands just to purchase some flowers.

I was in a shop the other day, purchasing a bunch of roses for Rosemary, when an elderly lady (whom I presume to have been short-sighted) came alongside me at the flower display.

Unaware of my presence she dramatically withdrew a large bunch of flowers from one of the buckets on the display and promptly emptied most of the water from the bucket down the leg of my trousers and into my shoe.

I bent forward and glared into her back, perhaps grateful that

she couldn't see the manner in which my face registered how I felt.

Still unaware that I existed, she realised that the bunch of flowers she had selected was dripping water and she proceeded to shake it in the air behind her back.

My grimacing face collected an assortment of petals, decaying leaf matter and a further supply of cold water.

Having imagined that she was purchasing the flowers to benefit someone, the last thing I could possibly do, would be to ruin her day, so I quietly sloshed away.

(It just goes to show that even

purchasing flowers can be a dangerous affair!)

Thank you God for helping me to hold my peace.



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2001

May 2001

This morning I heard a sermon from a well-meaning preacher who emphasised the pagan roots of the Easter season. He dwelt upon the origin of Easter eggs and the Easter bunny as pagan fertility symbols, hot-cross buns as "cakes to the queen of heaven" (Jeremiah 7:18), etc.

I heard a similar sermon from different preacher last Christmas down-crying the use of Christmas Trees (Jeremiah 10:3,4), and Yule Logs (Isaiah 44:15-17), etc.

Sometimes I can get a little too pedantic about avoiding things with a non-Christian origin.

If I stop and think about it there are many words and expressions we use every day, which have pagan roots.

Our language would lose considerable richness if these were eliminated.

Take for example, the noun 'disaster' (appearing as an adjective 'disastrous' or an adverb 'disastrously'). This word originally referred to an 'unfavourable aspect of a star': from the French '*desastre*' or Italian '*disastro*' (as dis-, astro from Latin '*astrum*' 'star').

Does this mean we should avoid using the word because of its occultic origin?

Do we choose instead the word 'catastrophe' simply because the 'astro' in 'catastrophe' (downturn in events) has nothing to do with stars — the word comes from the Greek '*cata*' (down) and '*strepho*' (turn)?

I do believe that I can become so absorbed in avoiding the pagan that I fail to live the Christian.

Satan would be delighted if we separated ourselves from our neighbours at any time of year because they observe customs different from ours.

Rather than expound our

"knowledge" of the questionable origin of society-accepted behaviours and customs, I have chosen to show by my life a 'knowledge' of the loving God whose origin antedates all festivals, religions and practices.



September 2001

Yesterday I was sitting quietly in a physician's waiting room when I met a certain young man under interesting circumstances.

Eager to be helpful by watering the flowers in the waiting room, he ran into the room with a large bucket of water in his hands at a time when he thought the waiting

room would be empty.

As he came around the corner in haste he ran straight into me, emptying the entire bucket of cold water into my lap. At that same instant, the receptionist called my name to say that the physician was ready to see me.

As I tried to stand up, dripping water everywhere, I again met the young man as he and a nurse collided in front of me while both trying to mop up the water with towels.

I felt somewhat relieved to be ushered into the surgery away from the seeming chaos in the waiting room.

Sometimes our silence is

shattered by minor crises, yet for many of us the intrusions into our peace are crises of a more major nature.

By comparison, grief, loss, pain, anxiety, death, and disease made my uncomfortably wet lap seem so trivial. The water quickly dried and I (and my clothing) fared none the worse for the experience.

However we have a promise in Isaiah 54 that the Lord will hasten to be with us during all our trials, major and minor. He promises we will not be forsaken.

If the Lord is allowing a trial in my life just now, I must remember that He is not choosing that I should have to bear it alone.

Again I call upon him now. He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).



Friday 14 Sept 2001

Jottings for this month's Freezine Editorial

Praying for Terrorists

I was asked this week if we should be praying for the September 11 terrorists the way that David prayed for his and God's enemies (Psalm 6:10 Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly / Psalm 18:40 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me /

Psalm 54:5 He shall reward evil
unto mine enemies: cut them off in
thy truth / Psalm 59:10b God shall
let me see my desire upon mine
enemies / Psalm 60:12 Through
God we shall do valiantly: for he it
is that shall tread down our
enemies / Psalm 68:21 But God
shall wound the head of his
enemies, and the hairy scalp of
such an one as goeth on still in his
trespasses / Psalm 72:9b and his
enemies shall lick the dust. /
Psalm 92:11 Mine eye also shall see
my desire on mine enemies, and
mine ears shall hear my desire of
the wicked that rise up against
me. / Psalm 139:21,22 Do not I
hate them, O Lord, that hate
thee? and am not I grieved with
those that rise up against thee? /

I hate them with perfect hatred:
I count them mine enemies. /
Psalm 143:12 And of thy mercy cut
off mine enemies, and destroy all
them that afflict my soul)

In response, I would rather suggest that we consider our enemies in the same manner in which the writer of Psalms considered his enemies, and that is to let God deal with them as He sees fit: Psalm 108:13 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies. / Proverbs 16:7 When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. / 24:17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth / 25:21 If thine

enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.

Jesus gives us the supreme example of how to regard our enemies: Matthew 5:43-45 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. / But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; / That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. / Luke 6:27,28, 35-37 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do

good to them which hate you, /
Bless them that curse you, and
pray for them which despitefully
use you. / But love ye your
enemies, and do good, and lend,
hoping for nothing again; and your
reward shall be great, and ye shall
be the children of the Highest:
for he is kind unto the unthankful
and to the evil. / Be ye therefore
merciful, as your Father also is
merciful. / Judge not, and ye shall
not be judged: condemn not, and
ye shall not be condemned:
forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.
Jesus says we should pray
(Matthew 6:12) forgive us ... as we
forgive and then admonishes us:
(Matthew 6:14,15) For if ye
forgive men their trespasses, your
heavenly Father will also forgive

you: / But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Compare Mark 11: 25,26)

These were not idle words of Jesus. He demonstrated his love for his enemies as they persecuted Him, and even made excuses for them to His father: Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Consider the example of Paul quoting Proverbs 25:21: Romans 12:20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. And in I I Thessalonians 3:14,15 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with

him, that he may be ashamed. /
Yet count him not as an enemy,
but admonish him as a brother.

To return to the words of the
Psalmist, we should let our
enemies drive us closer to God
rather than further from them:
Psalm 27:11 Teach me thy way, O
LORD, and lead me in a plain path,
because of mine enemies.



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2002

Some Thoughts on a Different Aspect of the Sanctuary.

When we think of the Old Testament Sanctuary, we possibly think of blood sacrifices, atonement, incense, different apartments, priests etc. So, without diminishing the importance of these, I would like to share some thoughts on a different aspect of the sanctuary.

The Sanctuary is a 3-dimensional painting of the eternal plan of salvation. It points us to the Lamb of God and the great

masterminded plan for our eternal redemption.

But have you considered the application of the picture of the Sanctuary for our day-to-day practical Christianity?

2 Chronicles 20: 9 says, "If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgement, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help."

The clause translated 'we stand before this house' in the original Hebrew is '*paw-neem zeh bah'-yith*' - literally to turn your face towards any house.

Bah'-yith can mean a house in the greatest variety of applications, including a family home, courtyard, dungeon, winter house, palace, in fact, any place.

However, the phrase 'for thy name is in this house', or more accurately 'your name IS this house', makes it clear that we are talking primarily about the Sanctuary (see also the surrounding verses), although there is room to include our God-filled family homes in this application.

The verse says that we 'cry unto thee in our affliction'. This is not talking about Gentiles here. This is talking about God's people -- about you and me.

The verse does not promise we will be free from trial, in fact the earlier part of the verse mentions specifically the evils of the sword, judgement, pestilence or disease, and famine or hunger.

And that word translated 'cry' is '*zaw-ak*' which means literally to shriek from anguish or danger.

But the verse does contain a promise. If we turn our face towards God's house (a modern rendering may be, 'if we come to fellowship with other Christians') and acknowledge that God is in this place then, the verse says, 'God will hear and help'.

The word 'hear' is translated from '*shaw-mah*', which means to

listen attentively and the word 'help' is translated from '*yaw-shah*', meaning to be free, safe, delivered, helped, preserved, rescued, have salvation or to get victory.

In other words, God helps us in the way that is best for us, with room for either a 'yes', a 'no' or a 'not yet' response.

Therefore I would like to suggest that next time we think about the Sanctuary, let us add to our comprehension the aspect of God's willingness to respond to our petitions.

This is taking our understanding of the sanctuary out of the realm of mere doctrine

and applying it to everyday living.

This verse, 2 Chronicles 20: 9 also contains an interesting chronological sequence of events.

It starts by talking about our daily trials. Then it lists -- note the specific order -- four 'if's':

- If we turn to face God - that's repentance.

- Then if we come into his presence - which can be at church, or it can be anywhere you are willing to let Him in.

- Then if we acknowledge His name - that's praising and worshipping Him

- And then if we cry unto Him - that's the asking part,

- Then He will respond to our best good.

God is so willing that we

commune with Him, that these conditions also become a model for prayer. A prayer that includes -- in order -- repentance or confession first, corporate or individual praise and worship next, then thanksgiving, and finally we present our petitions. We then can confidently wait for God to answer with His 'yes', 'no' or 'not yet' response.

So then 'If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgement, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help'.



January 2002

How To Be Lazy

I don't usually have time to be lazy. However, when I do feel lazy it's hard to enjoy it without feeling guilty.

Today I formulated some suggested ways of being lazy without the associated feelings of guilt (others may also enjoy this kind of laziness in us):

Smile, because it takes many more muscles to frown than to smile.

A gentle touch can save you many words.

Be too lazy to pout, fidget, or

be fussy.

Give your jaw a holiday and listen instead of talking.

Don't bother quarrelling or arguing.

Only eat what your body needs to survive.

Don't bust yourself chasing for a bargain if it takes more out of you than you save.

Be too lazy to worry about the inevitable.

If what you were about to say was unkind, untrue or unnecessary, then have a lazy tongue and leave it unsaid.

Don't be bothered smoking or

chewing tobacco.

Allow yourself to be too lazy to run hard, take a long walk instead.

Save time choosing what to wear by donating half of your wardrobe contents to charity.

Think before acting and speaking.

Follow the carpenter's maxim: 'measure twice then cut once'.

Don't bother to open a bottle of beverage when plain water will suffice.

Be too lazy to switch on a CD or record - sing instead.

And finally, "Don't worry, saying, What shall we eat? or,

drink? or, What shall we wear? ...
And don't worry about tomorrow:
for tomorrow shall have enough
problems of its own" (Matthew
6:31,34).



Thursday 4 April 2002

Jottings for a FreEzine editorial:

Recently I was reading a mid
1800s publication called 'Gleanings
of Past Years' by a Mr. Gladstone.

In Volume one, on page 26, he
says, 'The fierce light that beats
upon a throne is sometimes like
the heat of that furnace in which
only Daniel could walk unscathed,
too fierce for those whose place
it is to stand in its vicinity.'

When I read this, I wondered how the author could confuse Daniel with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abed-nego, and it to also escape the proof-reader's notice.

But then I was brought back to reality when I considered some of the errors that appeared in some of my early writings.

I was especially reminded of a Latin manuscript I very roughly translated into English for my own interest and an over-enthusiastic friend at the University Press published my rough translation with my name as translator. I was rather hoping my old School Latin Master would not see a copy.

I remember too, errors that

have slipped through my fingers in more recent years due to my occasional '*lapsus calami*', ignorance or assumption.

I thank God that He is forgiving, and I hope that we can be forgiving of each other when we make mistakes.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own

eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1-5).

US judge, Harold Medina said, 'Criticising others is a dangerous thing, not so much because you may make mistakes about them, but because you may be revealing the truth about yourself.'



November 2002

Editorial jottings:

Knowing How To Answer

'Let your speech be always with

grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man' (Colossians 4:6).

The other day I went to the local International Airport to meet someone arriving from overseas.

As I waited in the concourse area, I noticed that the gentleman sitting next to me was reading a book with the title, *Defending Your Faith*.

When he put the book and his spectacles down for a moment to rest his eyes, I asked him if his faith needed defending.

He looked closely at me, peered directly into my eyes, and waited for me to explain.

I went on to ask, 'What do you believe that warrants reading a book on how to defend it?'

An expression of panic coloured his countenance and he stammered, 'I don't believe anything except that I'm reading this book.'

With that, he replaced his glasses and resumed his reading with feigned intensity.

As we sat in silence, I pondered on what I would have said (on the spur of the moment) if he had asked me those same questions. What would you have said?

I remembered reading Peter's admonition, 'Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready

always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear' (1 Peter 3:15).

However, I also remembered the words of Jesus to his disciples, 'And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: / For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say' (Luke 12:11,12).

And again, 'They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. / And it shall

turn to you for a testimony. /
Settle it therefore in your hearts,
not to meditate before what ye
shall answer: / For I will give you a
mouth and wisdom, which all your
adversaries shall not be able to
gainsay nor resist' (Luke 21:12-
15).

There is no anomaly here: it is
not a matter of Peter saying 'Do
this' and Jesus saying, 'No need
to do this.' The balance between
Peter's words and those of Jesus
is in our choice to have such a
relationship with God that we are
willing to allow Him to speak
through us whenever the occasion
arises.

You don't need to be an
academic, as is not a matter of

'what' we know, but 'whom' we know. You don't need to have any special societal status, as it is not a matter of 'who' we are, but 'who's' we are.

You don't need to have any special training, as it is not a matter of what 'we prepare to say', but whether or not we 'allow God to say' His words through us (as a result of the relationship we have developed with Him).

Although salvation is a gift, we nurture that relationship by obedience, by prayer & through Bible Study.

This not only gives us hope, but also enables us to 'be ready always to give an answer to every

man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is in [us] with meekness and fear'.

May you have this hope.



December 2002

Editorial jottings:

Christmas Card Time

It is at this time of year that my wife Rosemary gets out our ever-growing Christmas Card List and commences to send out greetings to our loved-ones: friends and family. She makes a particular effort to select wording and illustrations appropriate to the recipient in an

effort to put out love into the giving.

When I was much younger, our family was privileged to have as an adopted aunt the famous ballerina Wakey (Lady Laura Wakefield - then in her sunset years and now deceased).

One year she was in a particular frenzy and sent a message for me to take her shopping to buy some wrapping paper and 150 tea-towels. She wanted them as gifts to send out to all the recipients of the Christmas cards she had mailed out a few days earlier.

I knew such extravagance was unusual considering her meagre

means, so I asked her, "Why?"

It seems that to make sure that everyone received the same card, she had bought several boxed packs of identical Christmas cards.

Her arthritic hands carefully wrote in shaky but beautiful cursive the names of each recipient and the simple salutation she always used, 'With love, Wakey'.

She carefully matched each card to an envelope that she had addressed and 'stamped' before the postal courier took them away for mailing.

The following day she sat and looked at the few remaining cards

and casually picked one up and read the printed inscription.

To her horror, it read, "Just a little note to say; That a gift is on it's way."

Wakey wanted the tea-towels to honour the message in the cards. The cost of not checking the message before sending out the cards.

In America a few years ago. A kindly 90-year-old grandmother found buying presents for family and friends a bit much at Christmas. So she wrote out cheques for all of them for her to put in their Christmas cards.

In each card she carefully wrote, "Buy your own present" and

then sent them off.

To her embarrassment, after the Christmas festivities were over, she found the cheques under a pile of papers on her desk!

Everyone on her gift list had received a beautiful Christmas card from her with "Buy your own present" written inside — without the cheque!

Recipients of cards from my wife and I do not include cheques or gifts. They do, however convey our love and the fact that the recipient has been remembered. They may even include a personal message and/or Bible verse.

Just in case you are not on our Christmas Card List, I wish to use

this column to extend to you our best wishes for a safe and happy Christmas season and prosperity for the New Year.



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2003

Editorial thoughts:

A New Commandment

The Apostle John in 1 John 2:7 says, 'Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.', yet in verse 8 he says, 'Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.'

In 2 John 1:5 he says, 'And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.'

Is John saying that there is no new commandment for our times? Or is he saying that there is?

I believe that the answer to this is found in the words of Jesus, who said that He did give us a new commandment (John 13:34), yet this commandment is different in only one respect.

Note that John said of both the old and new commandments that they are both that we 'love one another'. We don't even have

to go back to the Old Testament to find what the old commandment was, Jesus told us plainly (Matthew 22:35-40) and later asked a lawyer that very question just before He told the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:26-28 "[Jesus] said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

And he [the lawyer] answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And [Jesus] he said unto him [the lawyer], Thou hast answered right.)".

So the gist of the old commandment was to love God and

to love our neighbour. So what is different about the new commandment?

Just this: The old commandment required that we love our neighbour 'as ourselves' (frankly, many of us don't love ourselves, our bodies or our spiritual selves - Weight-loss Courses and the alarming suicide rate in this country proves that).

The new commandment (Jesus, himself, said) is for us to 'love one another; 'As I [Jesus] have loved you' ((John 13:34)!

Now, the way that Jesus loves us is vastly different from the way we love ourselves. And therein lies the difference between the

two commandments.

How has Jesus shown that He loves you?

May God grant that I (we) may love like that!



February 2003

Editorial Jottings:

Lowered Perspective, Raised Sights

Some of FreEzine readers will be aware that your editor is awaiting spinal surgery and because of difficulties in walking I am using a wheelchair much of the time. This puts me at a visually lower perspective of the world. It

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Lionel Hartley

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is interesting that many people put wheelchair users at a lower perspective in other domains as well.

For example just a few days ago while driving in the pouring rain I stopped my motor vehicle to offer a ride to a very wet and bedraggled lady. She was in the process of thanking me for stopping when she saw my wheelchair.

A look of horror came across her face and she screamed, 'I ain't riding in the same car as no cripple, no way!' And as she ran away, she yelled at me to 'go away, cripple!'

Last week, I had a discussion

with a shopkeeper who was outside her shop sweeping the footpath. I commented on the fact that as she had a set of steps up into her shop, the interior was inaccessible to wheelchair users.

'That's okay,' she explained, 'you retards can easily shop elsewhere. I'd just as well not have retards shopping in my shop anyway.'

In the only major shopping centre in the town where I live for most of the year, an elevator (lift) has been provided for wheelchair users because the ramp up to the second level is quite steep.

The supermarket on the upper level is open twenty-four hours, and while shopping there late one night I was concerned when I went to leave the shop to find that the elevator doors were locked.

I returned to the checkout counter and asked if there was a problem with the elevator. A security officer in the employ of the shopping centre curtly told me, 'You handicapped people shouldn't do your shopping at night. I lock the doors now to keep the likes of you away in the evenings!'

While shopping at a supermarket in a major shopping centre in South Queensland

recently, I discovered that only two (out of eight) check-out counters had pathways that were wide enough for a wheelchair, and neither counter was in operation.

When I asked at the enquiry counter if I could pay at that counter for the items I had selected for purchase and then leave via one of the unused wide check-out counters, I was bluntly told, 'Well, all right, but maybe next time you should come during the school holidays when we have the "pram aisles" open. We usually only cater for "normal" people.'

I thank God that the Bible has a different view of those with disabilities. We are told to regard the deaf and blind with respect in

Leviticus 19:14 Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind (KJV).

Apart from the restrictions regarding those who may make sacrifices in the Sanctuary (Leviticus 21:18-21), the Old Testament has some clear guidelines about how we should treat people with disabilities.

For example Job in his parable said, I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame (Job 29:15 KJV).

Compare also the way King David treated the youth Mephibosheth who was lame on both his feet (2 Sam 9). (See also

Isaiah 58:6-8)

The New Testament gives the example of Jesus - His deeds (Matthew 15:30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them), and His words (Luke 14:12-14 When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. / But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: / And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at

the resurrection of the just).

So if it is not within our power to heal people with disabilities, we should at least give them our respect.

I guess you could say that by my taking a lower perspective, I have raised my sights. May the Lord help me to be thus merciful.



April 2003

Thoughts for an editorial:

Tarnishing Tarshish

It is interesting how something ordinary can take on extraordinary significance, and yet this extra-ordinary significance can so

easily be sullied, making the thing again ordinary (or less than ordinary). In Old Testament times, the ships of Tarshish were regarded as a symbol of beauty, strength and lofty ideals. Even ships going to Tarshish took on this same significance.

The name Tarshish became also an epithet for any merchant vessel (as if for, to or from that Mediterranean Sea port - Tarshish ships were even made as far away as Eziongaber or Etsjon-Geber on the Red Sea - see (2 Chronicles 20:36).

Isaiah 2:16 even lists the ships of Tarshish in their symbolic beauty and loftiness along with one of the Seven Wonders of the

Ancient World, the Cedars of Lebanon.

2 Chronicles 9:21, Jeremiah 10:9, Ezekiel 27:12 and Isaiah 60:9 all refer to the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and other treasures. Ezekiel 27:25 and 38:13 even go so far as to suggest that praise from the merchants or ships of Tarshish is to be desired.

And yet, despite all this, Jonah, in a singular act of rebellion against God, changed this perception: 'But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto

Tarshish from the presence of the LORD' (Jonah 1:3).

God has given us an earth-full of wonderful gifts, treasures to have and behold, ideals with which to aspire and good news to share. However, in our rebellion we quickly tarnish Tarshish.

The word tarnish comes from the French word 'ternir' from the root 'terne', meaning 'dark' and often refers to oxidation of surfaces due to misuse.

Tarnish on many surfaces can be removed by polishing with denatured (methylated) spirit.

We all have rebelled and tarnished many of God's glorious gifts. But it is not too late.

We can still use God's Spirit to put a shine on these things and move us out of darkness into his marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9).



July 2003

The Fable of the Milk-jug

Last night I had a dream. As this is quite unusual for me (I usually do my dreaming in the daytime), this morning I made a point of writing down the things that I remembered from the dream.

In my dream there was a wise old miser living in a mountain cave behind a waterfall.

As he neared the end of his life, he sent word into the nearby town that whoever could carry a clean milk-milk-jug under the waterfall without getting water in it would have his milk-jug filled with gold.

The next day, many townsfolk lined up at the waterfall with their milk-jugs. Many carried them in bags, but as the miser could not see their milk-jugs as they came through the waterfall, they got no gold.

Others covered their jugs with covers, but a covered milk-jug can receive no gold either.

Still others carried their milk-jugs upside-down. But an upside-

down milk-jug cannot be filled.

One smart person had filled his milk-jug with water and frozen it overnight so that no water from the waterfall could get into the jug. But a milk-jug filled with frozen water could hold no gold either.

Another filled his milk-jug with axle-grease to prevent the water getting in, but then his milk-jug was no longer clean.

However, one person had filled his milk-jug with honey. When he came through the waterfall, no water could enter the milk-jug. When the miser poured in the gold, the clean sweet honey overflowed and was shared with

and enjoyed by the gathered townsfolk.

I awoke with an interpretation of the dream on my mind: 'When we are filled with sweetness there is no room for anything undesirable and as we share the sweetness it is replaced by a greater treasure'.



August 2003

Frank was a well-respected real estate agent in Glen Innes NSW, Australia. I say 'was', because Frank in his sunset years, died last month.

Although Bob, a neighbour of ours, had known Frank for over a

decade, at that time the news of Frank's death reached this neighbour too late for him to attend Frank's funeral and 'pay his last respects'.

The neighbour told me he was worried that, because he didn't go the funeral, he would be haunted by the spirit of the now deceased Frank. So much so, he dreamed about him that night, imagining that somehow Frank would give him a message 'from the other side'.

Sure enough, at about midnight he awoke to a strange knocking sound emanating from the kitchen.

He crept into the kitchen and switched on the light. No one was

there, but the knocking noise continued.

It appeared to come from the sink. Immediately this neighbour imagined that Frank was cursing him by attacking the plumbing.

Thoughts of the enormous cost of repairs flooded his worried mind. It was then that he noticed that he had left the hot-water tap running and this was causing a knocking noise in the pipe.

When I asked Bob if this relieved him of any anxiety about messages from heaven, he simply replied, 'Oh, I got the message from Frank, all right. And he's not in Heaven - in fact I know he's in the other place because he was

telling me that he's now "in hot water".'



September 2003

Sometimes we overhear something that causes our mind to take a step back and replay what we have heard and try to make sense of it.

This week I am a patient in hospital. Because I am in isolation due to a 'golden staph.' infection,

I see very few people yet overhear many conversations emanating from adjacent rooms. On one occasion I heard the 'tea lady' ask another patient what he would like to drink.

His reply, I guess, left us both wondering. He said, 'I like my coffee black, unsweetened, and piping hot with sugar and ice-cold milk please.'

On another occasion I overheard a doctor asking the nurse what she meant by a comment she had written in a patient's wound-treatment notes.

The comment was. 'The wound is healing in its own juices.' He bluntly told the nurse, 'You'll have to learn how to express yourself,' and, after a pause, added, 'and I don't mean breast milk!'

Eccl 5:2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before

God: for God is in heaven, and
thou upon earth: therefore let thy
words be few.

Eccl 5:3 For a dream cometh
through the multitude of business;
and a fool's voice is known by
multitude of words.



September 2003

Editorial jottings:

It was 3am and I was driving
home over a mountain range in
New South Wales, Australia a
decade ago today.

As I negotiated the narrow
tree-lined hairpin bends in the
road a thick blanket of fog

enveloped my vehicle like maple syrup on a corn dumpling.

The amber glow from the solitary fog lamp that I had installed on the front of the car only a week earlier seemed to strain in a weak attempt to force its light into the seemingly impenetrable wall of mist.

Inching along at a snail's pace, unable to see in any direction more than an arm's reach excepting through the pathetic puddle of light ahead of me, I fastened my gaze on the centre line painted on the road.

Although scarcely more than a metre was visible at any given time, this line, worn with traffic

and time, became a lifeline. I knew that my destination was ahead of me, although I could only see it in my imagination. I also knew that the thin line, nothing more than fragments of paint along the mountain road, would lead me out of the fog and into the sunrise.

As I write this, it is again about 3am. This time I am in hospital following spinal neuro-surgery. Once again there seems to be a fog around me.

But just ahead of me the amber glow of the Son of Righteousness, lighting my path. Sure, I can't see very far ahead, but it doesn't matter, as I only need to see enough to put my next footstep (so to speak).

He, like His word, 'is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path (Psalm 119:115). I don't need fret about the past nor worry about the future with Him guiding me through the present.

Thank you God.



Friday 5 September 2003

Editorial jotting:

Not Having A Clue

I was sitting in an aeroplane on an international flight a short while ago when the stewardess offered me a magazine to read.

It had been handed to her by another passenger and as she

apologised for it being a 'women's magazine', she quickly added, 'maybe you could just do the crossword puzzle?'

As I had finished reading the three books I had packed for my journey, I reluctantly accepted the proffered gift.

However, some previous reader had torn an article from an adjacent page and the clues to the crossword were missing. I sat there blank-faced. I didn't have a clue where to start. Thankfully, it was only a crossword puzzle.

My life also is sometimes a puzzle, but I thank God that He hasn't left me clue-less. The adjacent page is still intact as he

promises to those who trust him,
'I will instruct thee and teach
thee in the way which thou shalt
go: I will guide thee with mine
eye' (Psalm 32:8).

I choose to take a clue from
the Master today.



September 2003

For FreEzine Magazine

A grateful thank-you to all
those readers who have been
praying for me prior to, during and
following my recent surgery at the
Gold Coast Hospital in Queensland.

Although I am still weak, the
operation seems to have been a

success.

I am currently in convalescence at the Murwillumbah Hospital in New South Wales where I am writing this free ezine by hand, ready for transferring to computer upon my discharge.

The day after a certain pastor visited me here in hospital, he had two announcements to make to his local church before the divine service began.

The first was that he had been to see me (Lionel) in hospital and that 'Lionel is progressing well'. The second announcement was that Leon (A local identity known to many church members) had died last week and that the

funeral would be on Monday.

Unfortunately, he mixed up the names (Lionel and Leon), announcing that I (Lionel) had died and that Leon was progressing well.

After a few flustered moments, he corrected himself and apologised.

Perhaps it is just as well that my hospitalisation prevents me from attending the funeral, in case the error occurs again.



October 2003

Article jottings:

Exam Stress

Selected Journal Jottings 1960-2022

Lionel Hartley

(p371)

Next month many of our readers or their children will be sitting exams.

In order to manage exams well, we need to stay at peak functioning: too much or too little stress can spoil our performance. But we all need a certain amount of adrenalin in our bodies; how much will vary according to each individual.

Here are a few pointers you can use yourself or share:

- > Good breathing and relaxation

- > Avoid catastrophic thoughts like "I can't understand this author"; "I'm going to fail this paper"; "I'm going to fail my degree".

> Plan well: list achievable targets and tick them off when done

> Make time for fun but without alcohol or drugs because they can de-skill you.

> Avoid coffee, which may over-stimulate and increase feelings of anxiety.

> Use active learning techniques like mnemonics, summarising as you go along, and asking yourself questions as you read.

> Make sure you stay in touch with sympathetic friends and family: having someone to 'just

listen' helps.

> Going straight to bed after revision may cause difficulty sleeping as the thoughts rush around your brain.

> And, finally, Jesus said in John 14:26, 'The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost... (will) bring all things to your remembrance!' So my best advice is to study well first, then at exam time, ask for God's Spirit to simply 'bring all things to your remembrance'.



Deecember 2003

I was typing an article today

for the January issue of FreEzine Magazine entitled, 'Jesus is Real', when the automated computer Grammar Check (in Microsoft® Word) wanted to change the sentence, "His 6-year-old grandson Mikey had been hit by a car while fishing in Greentown" to read, "A car while fishing in Greentown had hit his 6-year-old grandson Mikey with his dad".

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2004

Article for FreEzine Magazine:

At one time, your editor had an unusual hobby, that of building reproduction barrel organs.

Although several have been sold over the years, he still has a couple of working organs and occasionally entertains with one of them.

He was doing just that recently when an observer commented that the winding of the handle on the organ looked like the turning of a roast on a barbecue, except that

the 'organ made a much better sound'.

This later prompted your editor to write the following nonsense poem, 'The Organ Grinder':

His first time at a barbecue,
The organ grinder watched in
awe

As his neighbour turned the
sizzling roast
Upon the spit
Above the glowing fire.

His arm in rhythmic motion
Emulated the grinder's trade
Yet the only sound
Was a hiss and a crackle
From the cast-iron box he

'played'.

The organ grinder, puzzled,
watched

And finally exclaims,

"I don't know what you're
playing,

But...

Your monkey's up in flames!"



April 2004

Editorial:

God's got attitude - what's
yours?

Recently I was reading
Philippians in a modern paraphrase,
and verse 5 of chapter 2 started
with this statement (God's got

attitude - what's yours?).

The 'good old' King James reads this way: 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (Who...) made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and ... he humbled himself, and became obedient' (Philippians 2:5-7). So I asked myself, 'What is God's attitude?'

I found the answer in two places:

Firstly when Jesus had told Peter that the disciple would deny Him (John 13:38), Jesus immediately shares the words we read in chapter 14: 1) Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in

God, believe also in me. / 2) In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. / 3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. / 16) And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; / 17) Even the Spirit of truth... / 18) I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. / 23) ...my Father will love (you), and we will come unto (you), and make our abode with (you). / 26) ... the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your

remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. / 27) Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

That's the mind of Jesus.
That's God's attitude.

Often the only attitude problem God has is mine, and the only problem that is too big for God to handle is the one I withhold from Him!

I found God's attitude also in the Old Testament in Jeremiah 29:11-14:

11) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not

of evil, to give you an expected end. / 12) Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. / 13) And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. / 14) And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

There are many things which hold us captive. There is an old saying, 'Walls do not a prison make.' It is my prayer that the things which hold us captive may

be loosed by the Lord working in our life. If we allow Him to take control we can have His attitude for ours. If God's really got attitude, I'd like to have some too, wouldn't you? He'll give it to us if we ask — though maybe not the way we expect!

When I asked God for strength he gave me some trials to make me grow strong.

And when I asked for a handout, God opened doors of opportunity.

When I asked Him for bravery, He gave me scary things to overcome.

Then when I asked for wealth, He gave me muscles and a mind to

work.

When I asked Him for understanding, He gave me a few problems to solve.

So I asked God for love and understanding, so He showed me people who needed me.

In all I asked of Him I didn't receive a thing that I wanted — and yet I lacked nothing I needed! And neither will you!



I was making a purchase in a local shop and the checkout girl was about to undercharge me 50¢. When I drew her attention to this she remarked that I was 'very honest'.

I responded by saying that there is no such thing as being very honest. Either a person is honest or they are dishonest.

There are no degrees of honesty, just as there is no such thing as a white lie or a black lie, as all lying is dishonest else we become colour-blind to lying.

She remarked that I could have just forgotten about the 50¢ and walked out of the shop.

"Oh no" I couldn't," I replied"
"If my God-given sense of honesty didn't stop me, my conscience would."



August 2004

From Chaos to Calm.

Psalm 29 reads, Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. (2) Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. (3) The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters. (4) The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. (5) The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. (6) He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. (7) The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire. (8) The voice of the LORD

shaketh the wilderness; the LORD
shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
(9) The voice of the LORD maketh
the hinds to calve, and
discovereth the forests: and in his
temple doth every one speak of
his glory. (10) The LORD sitteth
upon the flood; yea, the LORD
sitteth King for ever. (11) The
LORD will give strength unto his
people; the LORD will bless his
people with peace.

Having read the above, re-read
it, noting the picture David the
psalmist paints of God displayed in
the violence of a storm.

Note also that amid
destruction and death (vss 5-8,
David wants us to remember that
God is also a provider of life (vs

9). But the most important lesson the psalmist makes is in the closing line.

Having identified the power and might of the Almighty, he tells the readers that God will impart strength to them.

And, more glorious, having pictured a world of turmoil and upheaval, God blesses His people with peace. May you have a piece of that peace!



September 2004

Rosemary and I watched together a DVD of the movie, *The Doctor*, with actor John Hurt.

I was intrigued by the closing narrative: "There once was a farmer who used to rid his farm of birds by setting traps and laying poison.

One day he realised how cruel this was and went out into the field to welcome the birds instead.

All day he stood there with his arms outstretched welcoming the birds.

But the birds were frightened at what they thought was the farmer's new scarecrow."

Sometimes people just have to silently let their arms down and do nothing if they want to be accepted.



September 2004

Editorial thoughts:

Gender Stereotyping

My wife and I were setting up our caravan at a church campsite for one of the Camp Meetings that we attend each year. From a nearby site we overheard the following conversation:

'Hi, I 'm Steve.'

'I 'm Andrew. Say, You don't happen to have a broom that I could borrow?'

'A broom? Yeah, I 've got one of those. But I don't know how it works, You see, I bought it for

"the wife"!

When we had ceased giggling over the conversation of our unintentional eavesdropping, Rosemary and I soberly pondered over how we stereotype our gender roles.

2005

Editoria Jottings: Phosphorescent Guide

I am writing from Numinbah in Queensland where Rosemary and I are staying at the Log Cabin Campsite as volunteers for a couple of weeks while the regular caretakers are on holiday. This weekend we are hosts for a Ministers' Retreat.

Late last night we had a problem with the water supply (we use rainwater pumped from a bore, filtered and stored in a tank on the hillside in the overgrown rainforest above the campsite).

With the aid of a small torch, I climbed the hill through the dense forest to repair a fault in the waterline. It was easy to trace the meandering path while going uphill as the torch lit up the slope above me. However, I wondered how I would be able to easily find my way down again in the dark with only the weak torchlight to guide me.

Once I had repaired the fault, I turned to make my descent in the dark and was surprised to see that as I had earlier climbed uphill, where the torchlight had shone, it had fallen upon rows of tiny mushroom-like fungi that now glowed a phosphorescent path down the slope.

All I had to do was follow the row of tiny "lights".

As I returned to the campsite, I thanked the creator for His guidance, while remembering the words of the Psalmist, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" Psalm 119:105.



Tuesday 8 February 2005

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

Editorial thoughts:

Did God Create Sin?

Isaiah 45:7 reads, "I form the light and created darkness: I make peace and created evil: I the Lord do all these things."

Selected Journal Jottings 1960-2022

Lionel Hartley

(p395)

Did God create sin?

I understand that this verse, in its context is referring to Cyrus - a type in Scripture of the Devil (Satan) whom God did create!

So, did God create sin?

Perhaps this is best answered by asking, 'what is sin?'

In a perfect world sin would not exist.

This is because sin is a "nonentity reality" (a phrase I have coined). Now, before you label me an heretic, let me explain. (I do believe in sin!)

We know that God didn't create Dark, he created Light.

You can't make Dark. Dark is simply the absence of light. Take away the Light and you are left with Dark.

Now I would like to suggest that God didn't create Cold, he created the Sun (Heat).

You can't make Cold. Cold is simply the absence of heat. Even a refrigerator gets cold because you remove the heat, not because you make Cold. Take away the Heat and you are left with Cold.

God didn't create Vacuums. A Vacuum is simple the absence of matter (e.g. air). Take away the Air and you are left with a Vacuum.

God didn't create Silence. A

Silence is simple the absence of Sound. Take away the Sound and you are left with Silence.

There are many examples of this in nature.

In the same way God didn't create fear. (2 Timothy 1:7 - "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Fear is the absence of Love. (1 John 4:18 - There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.)

Now back to our discussion of Sin. Sin is the absence of God. God didn't create sin, but when He

gave man freedom of choice, man could then choose to live apart from God and His law.

This, then, is Sin — being apart from God and His Law. (1 Corinthians 15:56 "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." and 1 John 3:4 "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.")

Sin is separation from God (Romans 8:35, 39 " Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love

of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.")

Sin is so serious that it cost Jesus His life just to bring about a reconciliation between Man and God.



May 2005

Editorial jottings:

Just Fine, Thank You

I had just driven my son to a nearby city international airport. Outside the departure lounge was a drop-off zone for motorists. For some reason there were no signs specifying how long one could park in this area.

So I signalled a nearby gentleman who was wearing an official-looking uniform with a brightly coloured sash emblazoned with the words, 'Traffic Control'.

I asked him if it was fine for me to park there for a few minutes.

In a heavy Pacific Island accent he said, 'Very fine for you to park here.'

I said that I would be no more than five minutes, and asked again, just to make sure that it would be all right, '... is that okay?'

He smiled a big grin from ear to ear and said, 'Fine for you to park here. Five minutes will be two hundred dollar fine for you to

park here!'

I promptly thanked him and drove on.

Since then I have pondered on the word 'fine' which we so deceitfully use when people ask, 'How do you do?' (When we are really not 'fine' at all.)

'Fine' has many meanings - as an adjective it can mean such diverse things as refined, little, acute, thin, good, accomplished, okay and fancy. It can be used as a noun (e.g. penalty) or as a verb (e.g. penalise).

We also say that the weather is 'fine' when it's not raining and forget that we in this country (Australia) are in the midst of a

drought. For many, rainy weather would be just fine! There is really a fine line between what is fine and what is not fine.

And God has this dilemma when we pray for a fine day for a picnic, while our neighbour prays for some fine rain for his crops.

An Arabian proverb says, 'If God answered dogs' prayers, it would rain bones!' What's 'fine for dogs' is not necessarily what is 'fine for humans'; what's 'fine for me' is not necessarily what is 'fine for you'! No wonder the Bible says that we don't know how to pray (Romans 8:26)!

So next time I think it is fine to use that fine word, 'fine', I

hope I remember to be sure that
it is fine to use it.



[Name withheld] calls it the
"Benevolent Re-apportioning of
Fiscal Revenue" but I call it,
"Cheating on the Tax
Department".



2006

Response to a FreEzine question regarding the human contribution to the Bible:

To answer your question regarding the human contribution to the Bible, let us look at how and why the Apostle John wrote his portions of the Bible.

1. From his own experience and observation:

1 John 1:1-4 "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked

upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

2. As his memory was "moved by the Holy Ghost.":

John 14:25 "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you." (2 Peter 1:21

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.")

3. He used wisdom from God

Revelation 1:1 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." The Apostle Paul also wrote this way - 2 Peter 3:15 "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;"

4. He collected materials, choosing and selecting what to use and what not to use:

John 20:30-31 "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

5. He prioritised and selected material with his readers in mind:

1 John 1:4 "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." / 1 John 2:1 "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if

any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins" / 1 John 2:14 "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." / 1 John 2:21 "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth." / 1 John 2:26 "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." /

1 John 5:13 "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that

ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

6. He wrote in relation to his own life situation:

Revelation 1:4 "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne"



2007

Are we made in God's image?

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

Genesis 1:26 says, 'And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'

I would like to suggest that we are actually made in Adam's image. Adam was made in God's

image (Genesis 1:26) and at the Fall (Genesis 3:6) Sin (the image of Satan) entered Adam.

In Genesis 5:1 & 3 we read, 'This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him ... And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.' So by creation Adam was made in God's image and by procreation we have been made in Adam's image.

I would like to suggest the following formula to understand Adam's image. $GI + S = AI$ (God's image plus Sin equals Adam's image). This means that to restore

the image of God in His creation (man), sin needs to be removed. Adam's image less sin equals God's image.

However, because sin is part of our nature (Adam's image) we cannot, of ourselves, remove sin and become again like God's image.

Satan's great lie to Eve suggested that she was not already in God's image and that partaking of the fruit would make her like God.

In fact, the entering of sin did the opposite - it made her less God-like. In order for us to become God-like we need to be re-created, or born again. Something we cannot do for ourselves.

However, God is willing to take the sin part of our nature and, with our permission (and only with our permission) start us on the journey of his re-creating us anew. When we invite him to change our image we acknowledge that He has already made provision through His Son Jesus.

God does this in several stages. When we confess our sinfulness he regards us as if we had been created and not procreated. He gives us a clean slate to work from (we call this Justification).

We are born again, as if procreated as a newborn infant without sin.

But as procreated beings, we

still bear the image of Adam and so we are still inclined toward sin.

So God continues to nurture us on to wholeness in Him for the remainder of our earthly life (we call this Sanctification).

On the Great Resurrection Day, God will finalise this change by re-creating us in His image (We call this Glorification).



Twenty-year-old Linda Lenehan wrote to me regarding a book she was writing called "Precious Times". In her email she describe the main character in the book as being (quote) 'fine'. However, further down in the email she

clarified what she meant by 'fine'. She wrote, "Yes, she's fine, F-I-N-E, which really stands for stands for 'Freaked out, Insecure, Neurotic and Emotional'".



Tuesday 9 October 2007

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

The difference between judgement and observation

To develop healthy boundaries it is helpful to make a distinction between being and behaviour by learning how to observe behaviour without making judgements about myself and others.

There is a huge difference

between judgement and observation. It is vital for me to observe other people's behaviour in order to protect myself.

That does not mean I need to make a value judgement about their being based upon their behaviour. Judgement is saying, "that person is a jerk." Observation is saying, "that person seems to be really full of anger."

The trap here is equating the thought that I did something bad therefore I am a bad person, or I made a mistake therefore I am a mistake.

Job makes this distinction in Job 2:10 by saying to his wife that

she "speaks as one of the foolish women speak" (*nebalah*, pron: neb-aw-law) rather than actually calling her a fool (*raca* [Matthew 5:22]).



2008

Praying in the Spirit

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. Ephesians 6:18 (KJV)

What does it mean to Pray in the Spirit.

Most commentators and many translations (such as the King James, above) translate the Greek as "Pray in the Spirit" (Spirit with a capital 'S').

But is this true to the original language and consistent with the rest of Scripture?

Those of Charismatic persuasion often place tremendous emphasis on being, walking, praying and living IN the Spirit. This focus on IN the Spirit is epitomised by glossolalia - speaking (tongues) in the Spirit. The verse that is often used in argument of this is Romans 8:9 - "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit..."

There is a semantic problem with this, and that is the difference between being in and having in (within). Building a doctrine on semantics is a very dangerous thing. Proponents of

this view neglect the second part of the verse which goes on to say, "... if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you..."

So to focus solely on us being IN the Spirit or IN Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30, 4:15, 15:18-19, 22, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 1:22, 3:28, Ephesians 1:1, Philippians 1:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:14, 4:1, Philemon 1:8, 1 Peter 5:14) without considering the necessity for us to be filled personally, is considering the Holy Spirit to be the vessel and our human spirit the power within.

We are the vessel (Isaiah 64:8, Jeremiah 18:4-7), God is the potter and the Holy Spirit is the oil that fill us (Matthew 25:1-13)

so that we may be lights to the world (Matthew 5:14).

James S. Hewett writes in *Illustrations Unlimited* (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, Wheaton, Ill. 1988, p303), 'One Sunday on their way home from church, a little girl turned to her mother and said, "Mommy, the preacher's sermon this morning confused me. The mother said, "Oh? Why is that?" The little girl replied, "Well, he said that God is bigger than we are. Is that true?" The mother replied, "Yes, that's true, honey." "And he also said that God lives in us? Is that true Mommy?" Again the mother replied, "Yes." "Well," said the little girl, "if God is bigger than us and he lives in us, wouldn't He show through?"'

If you placed a bath-sponge in a container of water you could legitimately say that the sponge is IN the water. But as the sponge does what all sponges do (soaks up the water), it would be more accurate to say that the water is IN the sponge. This does not negate the former, but focuses our attention upon the latter. When we daily invite the baptism of the Spirit, we become baptised (literally fully immersed) in Him, and like the sponge, we become fully absorbed with Him.

A second consideration when considering the argument for 'Praying in the Spirit' is that when the phrase 'in the spirit' is used in Scripture, the word 'spirit' does not necessarily always refer

to the Holy Spirit. In some verses it is obvious that God's Spirit is being referred to (see, for example, Ezekiel 37:1, Revelation 1:10, 4:2, 17:3, 21:10).

John the Baptist being 'in the spirit' in Luke 1:17 refers to the spirit power (pneuma dunamis) of Elijah. Undoubtedly this came from God, but the verse does not claim that John was 'in the Spirit'. In Galatians 5:16 and 25, Paul talks about living and walking in the Spirit, but the development of this outward habit requires inward habitation (of the Holy Spirit).

I wrote to a theologian colleague to ask for a peer-to-peer comment on this concept, and

this is what he wrote in reply
(Email 10 Dec 2008):

"It is very brave of you to argue with the scholars and commentary writers, but I must concur - your argument alleviates my anxiety over the divinium mysterium. Your erudition has me kicking myself for not seeing it that way it first."

- Dr Arthur N Patrick (BA, MA, MDiv, DMin, MLitt, PhD)

So let us focus, not on being and doing IN the Spirit, but focus on inviting the Spirit's being and doing in and through us.

We cannot ever smugly assert that we are in the Spirit or that we walk and talk in the Spirit. But let us humbly ask the Spirit's help

for us to empty ourselves and be filled with Him.



A bit of flattery now and then,
Makes husbands out of single
men. (Anon)

And occasional flattery you will
discover,

May help your spouse become
your lover.



The words "pray" and "Prayer"
in their different forms appear
over 250 times in the Bible, so
why not use the Bible in prayer?
The Bible is full of God's promises
for all circumstances in life. Bible
verses can be a wonderful
inspiration to make up our prayers

or even praying a particular promise God has brought to our mind or attention while reading the Bible.

When we need inspiration, I have found that there is no better place than the Bible to find it. We can look up the subject in a concordance or pray and ask God to guide us to the verse we need to find. I believe it will happen. God communicates with us through Scripture. He can show us promises we need to claim or pray for every circumstance.

Kurt Johnson, in *'Prayer Works'*, suggests the following: Lay the Bible before you on your chair or bed. Read the passage on your knees. Pray through each

verse. Apply the verse to your life in prayer as you talk to God. Write down the thoughts that come to you in prayer. He says that a good place to start may be the Book of Psalms. Other places to pray through could be Colossians 1:9-14, Philippians 1:9, Ephesians 3:16-20, or Jeremiah 10:23-25.



The latter part of Ephesians 4:28 "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

If such a good admonition to share is given to the dishonest, surely we can apply the advice to

all of us: "Let [a man] labour,
working with his hands the thing
which is good, that he may have to
give to him that needeth."



Sunday 24 February 2008

Happy 60th Birthday Dennis
Tedman

Dennis...

When birthdays come and we
feel young we count the years
behind. But now we count the
years to come and hope the Lord
is kind.

Sixty years have given you
wisdom, maturity, erudition and
sage, but you have been robbed, it

seems, of the proverbial curses of old age: for me, I know I'm living that I'm not among the dead though I'm getting more forgetful and all mixed up in my head.

I got used to my arthritis; to my dentures I'm resigned; I can manage my bifocals; but, Dennis, I miss my mind. For sometimes I can't remember when I stand at the foot of the stair if I must go up for something or have I just come down from there? And before the fridge so often my poor mind is filled with doubt; have I just put some food away? Or have I come to take something out? And there's a time, when it is dark I stop and hold my head: I don't know if I'm retiring or am I getting out of bed?

So I stand before the mailbox
with a face so very red: instead of
mailing you this note I'm faxing it
instead.

So have a happy birthday, or
should I wish instead: happy
anniversary, happy Christmas,
blessed Sabbath, wonderful
wedding, successful graduation,
deepest sympathy, or simply...

Congratulations on your coming
of age!



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2009

Row, row, row your boat

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

Row, row, row your boat

Now the harvest's done

Merrily, picnicky, frolically,
peacefully

We can have some fun.

Moo, moo, eat your fill

While the field is green.

Merrily, Daisy and Clara-Bell

Make some milk and cream.

Mow, mow, mow the field

Into bales of golden brown,

Merrily, wearily, but still

cheerily

Take them to the barn.

Rain, rain, water the field
The air's now fresh and clean
Merrily making lotsa puddles,
Every small boy's dream.

Shine, shine heavenly sun
Spring is in the air
Make the rows of swaying corn
Smile from ear to ear.



Getting a Tattoo

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

I received an email where the writer asks: 'My Dad has been arguing with me because I want to get a tattoo. What do you think, is

it really so bad wanting a tattoo?

My reply:

As I use the Bible to guide what I think, I would rather tell you what the Bible says, than simply what I think. Leviticus 19:28 in the New International Version (NIV) reads 'Do not cut your bodies ... or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.'

Now you will probably think that the context of this argument is weak if, for example, you read the preceding verse, 'Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.' (Vs 27). However, the New Testament provides a stronger argument in John 2:21 where John describes the body as a temple.

Paul expands this concept in 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20: 'Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.'

So if our bodies are a home for the indwelling of God, then we are indeed responsible for caring for His 'house'.

Surely mutilating God's temple is not what the Creator has planned for us.

Also the Bible puts humility and service to others above the decoration of self: 1 Peter 3: 3,4: 'Your beauty should not come

from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.'



Saturday 14 February 2009

Valentines Day snippet for
FreEzine Magazine:

These hidden treasures are found by reading the verse and selecting each letter of each word only in the order that they were written. The words are chosen to describe what the verse is saying to you.

This exercise is to encourage you to read the verse many times and to look for the deeper personal meanings.

It is not an appropriate method of building theology.

Valentine:

For God so loVed the world,
That He gAve his onLy BegottEn
SoN That whosoever believeth In
Him Should Not perish, But have
Everlasting life.' John 3:16

Phrase: Goodness to us all

For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only begotten
Son, that whosoever believeth in
him should not perish, but have
everlasting life.

Here are some more that I found: God's Valentine; God loves even me!; God loved even Satan; God loves you all; Great Love; Eternal life; Forever; Good Hope; Love divine; Great Trust; Faith in Him; God gave to us life; Favourite; Greater honour; God's love is so true; The world sees that wonder; Will I have everlasting life?; Glory to who ever believes; God invites all.



Thursday 24 September 2009

Eldritch Happenstance

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com
October 2013)

Back in the 1970s and 1980s in

Selected Journal Jottings 1960-2022

Lionel Hartley

(p439)

Christchurch, New Zealand, I owned several vehicles, one of which was a Morris Minor Convertible sports car affectionately named 'Ferdinand'.

One day when I went to start Ferdinand before leaving home, the starter cable broke. Now, the starter on this model was a switch concealed under the dashboard with a short cable leading to a round knob on the centre section of the instrument panel. Pulling on the knob would start the car, however on this day the knob came out in my hand when the cable broke. So the car just could not start.

I knew that I wouldn't have a replacement cable in my "man-

shed" so I looked for something that would provide a temporary substitute. I found a short length of fine chain that looked as though it might do the job, at least to get me started for the day.

Conveniently, on the end of the chain was a cylindrical-shaped knob. It was a white and blue porcelain handle from a toilet cistern of the Victorian era. It had the word "Pull" in elaborate calligraphy emblazoned on it.

As the chain was too thick to traverse through the hole in the instrument panel where the original knob had been, I left it hanging below the dashboard and started the car by pulling down on

the porcelain handle. It worked surprisingly well.

Now, being a lazy sort of fellow, as often has happened when I effect a temporary repair on something, the chain-pull starter became a permanent fixture.

Sometime later, when I took the car to have an annual inspection for registration, the inspector noticed that the starter knob was missing, and asked how to start the car. I responded by saying, "Just pull the chain!"

The inspector burst out laughing and called a colleague to share in the humour of the situation. For several long minutes

they sat together in the car laughing and repeatedly starting and stopping the engine, each pull of the starter followed by peals of laughter.

Eventually, inspection forgotten, they sent me on my way with an un-inspected vehicle, but with the ticket for a fully approved annual inspection.

A few years later I sold the car with the toilet-flush starter still in use.

Now I would like to bring you forward in time to the year 2009. At this time I was living in Australia. It was while driving a Holden Commodore that, once again, I had a problem with a

starter switch. I managed to start the car by running a wire from the battery to the starter solenoid (the little device that controls the starter motor). Obviously having to open the car bonnet to start the car meant that this could never be more than a very impermanent resolution to the problem.

I took the car to an auto-electrician in the town of Murwillumbah to effect a more permanent solution. While discussing the dilemma with the mechanic, I lightened the moment by relating to him the true story that I have just shared with you.

As I told him, instead of chuckling along as I expected, his

eyes opened wide and he shook his head in disbelief.

"So this was in Christchurch about thirty years ago?" he asked in confirmation.

I replied in the affirmative.

"Then let me tell you a story," he ventured.

"My wife is a New Zealander," he began. "In Christchurch, about thirty years ago, she bought a Morris Minor Convertible. The starter was, as you have described, the porcelain handle from a Victorian toilet cistern.

She was too embarrassed to tell the seller of the vehicle that she felt uncomfortable driving a

car with a toilet-flush starter, so as soon as possible she had it replaced by a conventional starter. She kept the porcelain handle as a souvenir and we still have it hanging in our toilet cubicle at home as a decoration."

Now it was my turn to sport wide-open eyes and to shake my head in wonderment. A subsequent email with a photograph confirmed the validity of the amazing coincidence linked by 1500 miles and 3 decades. (The photo is online at lrhartley.com/pull-chain.jpg).

Was this eldritch happenstance (coincidence through supernatural intervention)? Are coincidences God's teachers? Is there a lesson to be learned?

Now what sort of prayer is it that gets you (personally) started in the mornings? Is it some relic from the past that is more decorative than utilitarian? Or is it something relevant for today.

It is no coincidence that the psalmists used the morning time specifically to both praise God and to bring petitions to His throne. "...It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night" (Psalm 92:1, 2). "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up" (Psalm 5:3). "Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to

know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee" (Psalm 143:8). "I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble" (Psalm 59:16).



November 2009

Weeds and Wheat (Matthew 13:25-29; 36-40) a BLOG posting

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

Matthew 13:25-29 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26) But when the blade was sprung up, and brought

forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27) So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28) He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29) But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30) Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Matthew 13:36-40 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went

into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37) He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38) The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39) The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40) As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. (KJV)

Whenever I have, in the past, read this passage, my mind automatically went into "them and us" mode, with "them" as the

tares, naturally.

The word used in the Greek for "tares" is "*zizanio*", and more than likely refers to darnel (*Lolium temulentum*), a weed that resembles wheat, that may be found growing in wheat fields and is regarded as poisonous. Darnel is sometimes called false grain.

When we look at this passage in context, between Matthew 13:29 and Matthew 13:36, Jesus tells two other parables, one about tiny mustard seeds that grow to enormity, and a second about yeast that permeates the entire loaf. Noticably, verse 41 says, "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that

offend, and them which do iniquity"

There are two subjects mentioned in this verse: 'Things that offend (Gk. "*skandalon*" - "stumbling-block")' and 'Them which do iniquity (Gk. "*anomia*" - law-breakers)'. .

Based on the content of the accompanying parables and the two subjects of verse 41, I would like to suggest that the wheat and tares are not just referring to people that the Enemy has planted in our midst (them which do iniquity), but to behaviours that we display when we fail to reflect a Christ-like character (all things that offend) especially when this behaviour becomes a stumbling

block to ourselves or others.

This means that at some time or other we are all tares for the Devil (See Romans 3:23, 24). I observe that James 3:2 says, "For in many things we offend all." (offend = Gk "*patio*" - "stumble" - the NIV says, "We all stumble in many ways.")

Darnel or false grain produces no usable fruit. So if I desire to reveal the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23) I ought not to wait until the sickle is used before using the hoe (see Heb 3:12-15).

In times past when we lost a loved-one through death, we men would wear a black arm-band as a sign of mourning and the women

would wear black dresses. The arm-bands or black dresses are historically referred to as "weeds" (from the Germanic word for "garment").

Now-a-days we don't always publicly display our grieving, but endeavour to contain it within ourselves.

Likewise we are inclined to be very quick to see weeds around us but fail to see the festering within.

I need to remind myself that criticising the weeds in my neighbour's garden does not remove the weeds from my own.

So, what can I do about this?

Firstly, I believe I need to abandon my 'them and us' mentality (See Matthew 7:1-5).

Second, I believe I need to invite God's Spirit to enable me to examine myself in order to weed-out undesirable traits in me (See Psalm 139:23, 24).

Thirdly, I believe I need to reflect on and confess my past judgement of particular individuals as being weeds while I considered myself as wheat (See 1 John 1:9).

And fourthly, I believe I need to follow the admonition of Romans 12:3-21, specifically verse 18, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably

with all men".

May God help me in this
endeavour.



2010

Seen on a bumper sticker in the church car park: "I 'd Rather Be Fishing." What does this tell us about the car owner's attitude to church? Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.



Sabbath 30 January 2010

Children's story: Rescued by an Angel. (Bray Park SDA Church)

Doris Backhouse loved

swimming. Who here loves swimming?

Let me tell you about Doris. When she was six years old she went with her family on a holiday and they stayed in a little cabin next to the beach. All through the day they played together on the beach and had a grand time. Do you like the beach?

When they went back to the cabin they were joined by another family and the adults talked and talked. Little Doris felt very left out. Does that happen to you sometimes when visitors come and chat with Mum and Dad?

Well, Doris decided that even if she wasn't grown-up enough to

talk adult talk, surely she was grown-up enough to swim. So she sneaked out of the cabin and ran down to the beach. As the tide was out, the beach seemed a long way away, but she ran and splashed in the water. Then she waded out to investigate a large rock that jutted out of the sand.

During the day, when the tide was in, this huge rock was completely covered by water - so she hadn't seen it when she played on the beach earlier in the day. It was a very big rock - wet and black and shiny. Doris huffed and puffed and climbed to the very top. Then tired little Doris lay down on the top and fell asleep.

When she awoke it was getting very dark and to her horror the huge rock was now a tiny island as the tide was coming in and she was stranded. As she watched the water rise and the place where she sat on the rock become smaller and smaller she yelled out into the wind, "Help! Won't someone please help?"

Then Little Doris sobbed,
"Please Jesus, send me an angel!"

All of a sudden a big man dressed in white stood next to her in the water. He scooped her into his strong arms and carried her through the waves and set her down on the beach.

As she stood and turned to

thank him, she looked around and there was no-one there. Further down the beach she saw her mummy and daddy running down to meet her. As they all hugged and cried tears of joy, daddy asked, "Where is the person we saw carrying you out of the water?"

Doris didn't know, but when I met her more than seventy years later in a nursing home in Cooranbong she told me this true story and she was still convinced that it was her Guardian Angel. What do you think?



February 2010

What Money Can't Buy

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

With money you can buy a bed
but you cannot buy sleep

With money you can buy a book,
but you cannot buy wisdom

With money you can buy a
calendar but you cannot buy
eternity

With money you can buy a clock
but you cannot buy time

With money you can buy a
computer, but you cannot buy
intelligent reasoning

With money you can buy a
dowry to secure a bride but you
cannot buy marital happiness

With money you can buy soap
but you cannot buy a clean heart
and mind

With money you can buy
inspiration but you cannot buy a

change in attitude

With money you can buy
motivation but you cannot buy
instant success

With money you can buy a
house but you cannot buy a home

With money you can buy a
position but you cannot buy
respect

With money you can buy a
romantic gift but you cannot buy
romantic reciprocation

With money you can buy blood
but you cannot buy life

With money you can buy
medicine but you cannot buy a
cure for all ills

With money you can buy
crutches and splints but you
cannot buy a new body

With money you can buy

peaceful music, but you cannot buy peace

With money you can buy security services of a companion, but you cannot buy true security

With money you can buy sex but you cannot buy love

With money you can buy the services of a companion, but you cannot buy true friendship

With money you can buy the services of a creative person, but you cannot buy creativity

With money you can buy the services of a doctor, but you cannot buy good health

With money you can buy the services of a magician, but you cannot buy magic

With money you can buy the services of a nanny or surrogate

mother, but you cannot buy a
mother's love

With money you can buy the
services of a priest, but you
cannot buy salvation

With money you can pay for a
wedding, but you cannot buy a
marriage

-- Expanded from a Chinese Proverb



Sunday 14 February 2010

Sadly for Rosemary, she is in
hospital today for her 60th
birthday. While I was there,
visiting her, I saw out of the
window a sight that can only be
described as coincidence (that's
when God chooses to remain
anonymous). I drew her attention

to it and we both watched as an aerobatic 'plane circled slowly overhead, writing in the sky in bold white lettering, the words, "Happy Birthday, Rosemary".

I confessed to her that I had neither organised nor paid for such an extravagant gesture, but was delighted when I observed how it lifted her spirits.

I believe there are times that God sends events, things or people to remind us of his watch-care.



March 2010

No other gods before me... A
BLOG Posting

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

Question: When God says not to have other gods BEFORE him (Exodus 20:3), is he saying we have to "clean up our act" before coming to Him, and is He suggesting that it is okay to have others AFTER accepting him?

In answer to the first part, the preceding verse (Vs 2 - I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.) says that He has already accepted us BEFORE he makes the demand regarding other gods.

In answer to the second part, "before" is not just before having

God, but also includes having no gods "as-well-as" having God as our god.

'Before' is made up of two Hebrew words 'al (Strong's Concordance #5921) and paniym (Strong's Concordance #6440) and these encompass both before, during, and after!

Exodus 20:3

(NRSV) You shall have no other gods before me.

(NIV) "You shall have no other gods before me.

(KJV) Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

So God accepts us "as we are" and doesn't leave us there, but helps us grow by wanting us to

remain true ONLY to Him.



The Measure of Friendship
Friendship is not measured
By day or by year
Nor by miles or kilometres
By far or by near...
Nor by rule or by dictate
Command or by law
Nor freedom from argument
Disagreement or war.
Friendship is not even
measured
By how much we share
But by love and concern
And showing we care.



April 2010

A BLOG Posting

What Type of Music is Appropriate For Worship?

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

Maybe this is best answered by analysing one of the items of music in the Bible, written especially for Sabbath worship, Psalm 92.

1 A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing

praises unto thy name, O most High:

2 To show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.

4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

5 O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

6 A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.

7 When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they

shall be destroyed for ever:

8 But thou, LORD, art most high for evermore.

9 For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall

be scattered.

10 But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

11 Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked

that rise up against me.

12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow

like a cedar in Lebanon.

13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

15 To show that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

Verses 1 tell us the Object of our worship: The Lord, the most high God.

Verses 1 & 3 tell us how to worship: with thanksgiving and with music, what to sing (praises), to include musical instruments if available*, and for the music to be

solemn (Hebrew Higgsaion,
meditation, solemn sound, not
boisterous)

Verses 2 & 4 tell us why
worship: To acknowledge God's
loving kindness, faithfulness and
the works He has done. (Verse 5
describes these works)

Verse 6 warns against
foolishness (Hebrew keciyl -
foolish, stupid, silly, not taken
seriously) & brutish (Hebrew
Ba'ar - fiery, greedy, wasteful)
behaviour.

Verses 7 & 8 contrast the
transitory life of wicked man with
the eternity of God

Verse 9 highlight the fate of
the wicked to contrast verses 10-

14, which highlight the blessings of acknowledging God.

The Psalm concludes with another reason for worship, i.e.: To show that the LORD is upright: he is (our) rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him

So how do we summarise:

Music in worship should be joyful yet solemn, remembering that we are in the presence of the Most High God.

Music in worship should spring from gratitude within our hearts (thankfulness) and an acknowledgement of who God is and what He has done.

Music in worship should be

taken seriously

Music in worship should not be conducted foolishly, flippantly and without regard to the Object of our worship.

Music in worship is for the benefit of:

1. God - He is the Object of our worship and deserves our thankfulness and praise (Verse 1, 2, 5, & 8)

2. The worshipper: (Verses 10-14) and

3. Observers and other worshippers: the music should lead others to see the righteousness and surety of God (Verse 15)

* I have written to include musical instruments if available because this Psalm is a worship item not a command



Wednesday 21 July 2010

Mornings are nippy, but at least we have a roof over our head, a nice cosy bed, a tummy well fed and bodies well clad.



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2011

Friday 21 January 2011

In nine different verses in the Bible we are told to love our neighbour as ourself.

Leviticus 19:18 Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself

Matthew 19:19 Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Matthew 22:39 Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Mark 12:31 Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself

Mark 12:33 And to love his neighbour as himself

Luke 10:27 Thou shalt love ...
thy neighbour as thyself.

Romans 13:9 Thou shalt love
thy neighbour as thyself.

Galatians 5:14 Thou shalt love
thy neighbour as thyself.

James 2:8 If ye fulfil the royal
law according to the scripture,
Thou shalt love thy neighbour as
thyself, ye do well.



An ounce of appreciation
received is worth a pound of
pressure relieved



The hardest thing that God
could do (assuming God has
difficulty doing anything -- which

I doubt), was to give us the freedom of choice (free to choose or reject Him). Because God is 100% love, it is the easiest thing for God to choose us. God makes every effort to make the choice easy for us to choose him.

It is our fears and concerns that make it hard when we believe Satan's lies. Choosing God is the BEST thing we can ever do.

Blaise Pascal wrote, "Granted that faith cannot be proved, what harm will come to you if you gamble on its truth and it proves false? ... If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing."



Snippet for FreEzine Magazine:

Feeling down-in-the-mouth?

Recently, a spelling error that I noticed in a PowerPoint slide of Newton's hymn Amazing Grace provided my journal with an interesting object lesson (not to be read at mealtime).

In the first verse of the hymn a line on the screen read: "That saved a retch like me" instead of "That saved a wretch like me".

A wretch (spelled with a W) is one for whom we feel sorry whereas a retch (spelled without a W) is that which is spued out of the mouth.

However, this lapsus calami may

still have been quite biblical.

Leviticus 18:25 & 28 speaks of the land vomiting out its evil inhabitants and Leviticus 20:22 speaks of the obedient ones not being vomited out of the land.

In Job 20:15 we read the words of one of Job's "friends", Zophar the Naamathite. Zophar's discourse upon the certain misery of the wicked includes the expression, "He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly." (Which is just another way of saying that wickedness is a retch.)

After the well-known expression "[As a man] thinketh in

his heart, so is he" the proverb continues, " Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.
(Proverbs 23:7,8)

Proverbs 25:16 warns against eating too much honey (remembering that honey, according to Proverbs 24:13, is good for you.) confirming that too much of a good thing is bad for us. (This warning is repeated in Proverbs 25:27)

Revelation 3:16 reads, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." This is the most unequivocally definitive

verse likening us (embarrassingly) to vomit!

However the most reassuring verse in the Bible in relation to us being a retch is found in Jonah 2:10 where God caused Jonah the wretch (spelled with a W) to become Jonah the retch (spelled without the W) in order to give Jonah a second chance.

It says "And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." Jonah then changed from retch to revivalist, from throw-up to show up, from puke to preacher, from sick to sermoniser, from filled with spew to filling the pew, in short, Jonah was called from the vomit by God to the vocation of

God.

Finally, if you're feeling down-in-the-mouth over this, remember Jonah. He came out all right!



Monday 25 July 2011

Last night in our family devotions we read the verse, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." (James 1:22 KJV)

This morning my wife Rosemary said that her back felt sore. I responded. "If you come closer, I'll tell you how it feels to have your back massaged." As she drew near I began to tell her how nice it feels to have a caressing hand in

contact with one's back, a firm but gentle pressure, a caring touch administered with compassionate concern, loosening muscles and relaxing the whole body.

As I continued to tell her how wonderful it would feel to have her back massaged, she interrupted me to say that rather than just hearing about it, she would much rather actually experience it. Hearing about it was good, but not what she really needed or wanted. (Gratefully, she knew I was teasing her.)

The lesson applies to our talk about our Saviour. It is really great to talk about what we could do for Him, to talk about what we

will do for Him, to talk about where we could go for Him, but what He really wants is action.



July 2011

I was at a seminar last night when the presenter bragged that there wasn't a question that he couldn't answer.

Whereupon a smarty-aleck (there's usually one in every seminar audience) challenged the presenter by asking a totally unrelated question - one to which the presenter couldn't possibly know the answer.

The presenter responded by confessing, "I don't know."

The smarty-aleck quickly retorted, "I thought you said that there wasn't a question that you couldn't answer!"

"Oh, but I did answer. 'I don't know' was my answer," the presenter smugly replied.



July 2011

Inside every girl is a young woman waiting to blossom.

Inside every boy is a fireman or engine driver bursting to be revealed.

Inside every skinny woman is an average-build woman hiding in the shadows.

Inside every fat woman is a
skinny one trying to get out.

Inside every skinny man is a
muscular man hoping to be seen.

Inside every fat man is another
fat man saying, "Who cares?"



Sabbath 13 August 2011

Pride Vs Humility

I learnt many years ago that if
you want to see the stars at any
time, day or night, there is an
easy way to do this. All you need is
a fireplace with a tall straight
chimney - and look up the chimney.

However, to see the stars you

need to get down as low as possible and possibly get dirty in the process. It is the same with life.

If we want to reach for the stars we need to accept that humility is the best course, even if it means getting our hands soiled in the process.



October 2011

Galatians 3:1. O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

Jesus, in Matthew 5:22 said,

"But I say unto you, ... whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

"Raca" is a Chaldean expression of utter vilification, meaning "You empty one" that is to say, "You worthless person." The word fool in this verse is the Greek word "*moros*" meaning "dull or stupid". (Cf. 2 Sam 6:20 James 2:20)

The most common word for fool in the OT is *nabal* (na-bawl) meaning both stupid and wicked. Job avoids sinning by calling his wife a fool in Job 2:10 by saying, "You are talking like a foolish woman (NIV)." (Note, he attacks the behaviour and not the person).

The word here for foolish is the Hebrew word "*nebalah*" (neb-aw-law) the feminine form of nabal (na-bawl).

In Galatians 3:1 (O foolish Galatians...), Paul uses the Greek word *anoetos* (an-o'-ay-tos) simply meaning unintelligent and unwise.



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2012

March 2012

(John 4:23-24 KJV) But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24) God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Truth is objective; Spirit is subjective.

Those who have the Truth alone dry up

Those who have the Spirit

alone blow up

Those who have both grow up



2013

February 2013

Blessings After the Creation of Man

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

The first seven blessings after the creation of Man - Genesis 2 Vs 7) And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

1. Good surroundings - Vs 8)
And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and

there he put the man whom he had formed.

2. Good food - Vs 9) And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food;

3. Good labour - Vs 15) And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

4. Good rest - Vs 21) And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

5. Good companionship - Vs 22) And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the

man. 23) And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24) Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25) And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

6. Good salvation - Ch 3, Vs 15)
And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

7. Good covering (atonement) -
Vs 21) Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make

coats of skins, and clothed them.



March 2013

My ideal image of a great church is very selfish

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

One of the first books that I wrote was published in 1965 in New Zealand (Stereo Publishing). It was called 'The Gospel According to Jonah'.

At that time I was an Anglican. When the book was republished in Australia by Philadelphia Publications in 1985, I changed references to Sunday to use the word Sabbath, which for the

biblically literate is the seventh day, and Sunday for others.

At the close of chapter 3 on pages 16-18 I wrote the following prose-poem, with the heading:

My Ideal Image of a Great Church is Very Selfish.

My ideal image of a great church is very selfish:

It will be composed of ordinary people just like me.

It will epitomise family fellowship if I treat each member as a much-loved brother or sister.

It will welcome visitors if I make the effort to talk and listen to strangers.

It will be friendly if I am

friendly -- I will only make friends by being one.

I t will have reverence if I remember always to respect the sanctuary.

I t will help me to grow if I am amenable to counsel.

My ideal image of a great church is very selfish:

I t will do a mighty work for God if I also work, volunteer, participate and become involved.

I t will have filled-to-capacity prayer meetings and evangelistic programmes if I support them.

I t will be humble if I don't brag or seek kudos for myself.

I t will make munificent gifts to many worthwhile causes if I am generous.

Members will be true saints if I

uphold them daily in prayer (and if they are not, I must continue to pray for them and me).

It will be a true Sabbath-keeping church if I honour the Sabbath, especially at the opening and closing of God's gift in time.

The rustle of pages will be heard if I, too, open my Bible and read along with the preacher.

My ideal image of a great church is very selfish:

It will have a vibrant Sabbath School lesson if I balance participating in the discussion with keeping quiet to let others contribute.

There will be an authentic and personal concern for the welfare of attendees if I am genuinely sincere in my concern for them.

It will have the best possible pastoral and leadership team if I daily pray for them.

The leaders will feel valued if I tell others of their virtues and give to them personal words of affirmation and acknowledgement.

It will bring others into its fellowship if I help to bring them also.

It will have seats that are full if I attend regularly and invite others to fill them.

The neighbouring community will want to be involved in my ideal church if I go door-to-door and invite them.

My ideal image of a great church is very selfish:

Nothing negative will ever be heard about it if I only talk about

the 'positives'.

It will be a place of nurture if I stop to listen to people and help them where I can.

It will be a witness to the community if I do my part in telling others about Jesus.

It will resonate with joyful music if I join in the singing.

Absent members will feel valued if I notice their absence and contact them during the week to let them know that they were missed.

Visitors will want to come back if I radiate warmth, genuine love, diplomacy and tact.

Pleasant conversations will fill the foyer if I let others talk about themselves rather than me talk about me.

It will stay alive if I am faithful to its mission.

It will be a church of loyalty and love, of faith and service if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these qualities.

My ideal image of a great church is very selfish:

I will get much from my ideal church if I contribute much to it.

Therefore, through the power of God, I must be everything that I want my church to be.



Thursday 13 June 2013

Death is a Waiting Room

(1 Thessalonians 4:16) "For the Lord himself shall descend from

heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:"

Rosemary and I visited a medical facility yesterday that had in the foyer a large and busy waiting room complete with a plethora of magazines, live-broadcast TV, a colourful play area for children and huge glass windows bathing the area in filtered and natural sunlight.

Young people talked, sent text messages or played games on their mobile electronic devices, couples chatted, some of those waiting read magazines or watched the TV while others waited with obvious frustration in impatient silence.

After a time of waiting in this waiting room we were ushered closer to where we had our appointment, to wait in a smaller waiting area deeper within the building.

Although we did not need to wait long there, the contrast was striking. This waiting area consisted of two rows of chairs in part of a corridor, illuminated by tiny overhead lights in the ceiling.

It was comfortable, peaceful and quiet with only the faint murmur of voices heard from behind adjacent closed doors. There were no magazines, TV, children playing, people chatting nor electronic devices beeping.

We, ourselves, were actually glad to be waiting for our names to be called, as we knew that the soon reward of our appointment was waiting for us.

As I thought about the contrast between these two waiting areas I was reminded of a question that I was asked a few days ago regarding what death is like for a Christian, and I came to imagine the difference between life and death as being like these two waiting areas.

Life is a like large, well-lit and busy waiting room complete with impatience and a superfluity of distractions and entertainments. According to a 2001 'Cake (band)' song, "As soon as you're born, you

start dying." With that premise in mind, you could even extend it to say that from the moment of our conception, living is about being occupied (preferably productively) while waiting for the (sometimes frightful) final call of our name.

In striking contrast, death for the Christian is like entering a tiny silent, tranquil waiting room with no distractions, just a quiet intermission, anticipating the reward that comes with the wonderful final call of our name.

According to 1 Thessalonians 4:16, at the Second Coming of Christ the dead in Christ shall rise first (see Vs.13-17). Death for the Christian means simply waiting patiently for three closely

consecutive rewards: 1) Resurrection, 2) A "front-row seat" to the awe-filled splendour and majesty of the Second Coming, and 3) the final reward of an eternity with the Redeemer.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the

archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).



Sabbath 22 June 2013

Reflecting on God's grace in our lives

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

Many decades ago I received the gift of a finely crafted damask-lace doily (a small hand-made silk ornamental mat) that I then used for several years under

a coarse lead-crystal flower vase on the polished wooden surface of the mantelpiece in my home library.

In South New Zealand's cooler climate (where I lived at the time) the fireplace was used regularly and the mantelpiece required frequent dusting. As the vase and doily were moved so often, the delicate lace doily gradually became very frayed around the edges.

Because I possessed neither the skills nor the lace-making bobbins and silk threads to repair this fine damask napery, I kept it in this tattered condition for many years, perhaps in respect to the giver. I guess that I was

comfortable in the knowledge that the centre of the now-ragged doily remained in excellent condition and was still functioning well.

Eventually I somewhat reluctantly discarded it, but not before reflecting on God's grace in our lives being like that doily.

When our life circumstances become frayed all around the edges, God's grace is still functioning perfectly in the centre - we are still treasured, loved and blessed by Him. Our worst days are never so bad that we are beyond the reach of God's grace; our best days are never so good that we are beyond the need of God's grace.

This is how it has always been. Even in Old Testament times God's grace was the perfect centre, blessing and providing salvation to frayed and ragged lives. As we contemplate a God who never changes (Malachi 3:6) let us thank Him for the amazing grace that blesses our lives.



September 2013

Easy Evangelism

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

Personal Bible study with prayer is the evangelism of the internal mission field within ourselves. Readyng us for Christ's return and readyng us to be able

to reach out to the external mission field.

Where does our external mission field begin? It begins at the furthestest part of our nose.

Where does our external mission field end? It ends at the furthestest parts of the earth.

So this creates a challenge. How can we reach such a vast mission field that extends from the tip of my nose to the ends of the earth?

I would like to be able to tell you, "Don't worry, you don't have to".

Well, like the comment made by the person who called me a wit,

that's only half right.

Yes, 'don't worry'; no, 'we do have a responsibility to do our part in the mission field allotted to us'. So why did I title today's blog entry 'Easy Evangelism'?

Because there are some easy things that we can all do to fulfil our mission calling.

Think for a moment the extent of our mission territory. Picture, if you will, a pebble dropped into the centre of a lake, creating concentric ripples in an ever widening circle. Think of ourselves as placed by God in the centre of our mission field. Each of those circles around us represent a part of our ring of influence. Those

ripples closest to us represent our immediate family. As we touch them for God and for good, their influence will multiply ours. Beyond that are our neighbours, acquaintances, friends, fellow students, work colleagues, and strangers, etc. These nearby rings can be touched by our hands and voices, and I'm sure that most of us do this already.

Between the first few rings and the outer-reaches of the pond are those we can touch by other means.

The most important, by far, is touching them through prayer. Of course we pray for those in the first and second circles, and we can not only pray for those in this

wider circle, but also for those personally ministering for the Lord to them. Remember, that they are not only doing mission on the Lord's behalf, they are doing mission on our behalf as well, because we cannot personally and physically go to every part of the globe.

Space precludes the opportunity to share how prayer can instantly change a circumstance - who knows how different it may have been had we not prayed?

And in another instance, who knows how much better a circumstance may have been if we had only prayed for someone when their name came into our

thoughts?

We can touch those living and working in our wider circle though the power of the pen (or computer). Letters and emails can be used to touch hearts where feet cannot go.

Receiving a personal letter sent with a postage stamp and a prayer can enable someone to see your smile without seeing your face. A thoughtfully chosen seasonal card or gift can make something special of those occasions.

Emails, (not just forwarding gushy spam), written personally to encourage and inspire can do something that just thinking about them cannot do. It can reassure

them that someone cares and that they are in your prayers.

Isolated missionaries need that contact, and something as simple as an email can make all the difference. Remember too their children in your prayers and correspondence. Whenever you write to missionaries abroad, invite them to supply you with topics for special mention in prayer or specific needs that you can lobby for in your own community.

And finally we can touch the outer reaches of our wider circle though the power of giving. Weekly offerings to help prepare a people for mission and at the end of each quarter of the year

we can give a special offering to focus our giving to missions.



Mission or Commission Mythtakes

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

In order to do our personal witnessing more effectively, I would like to share with you seven of what I call Mission or Commission Mythtakes. These are myth-conceptions that may hinder us in reaching our our neighbours, acquaintances, friends, fellow students, work colleagues, and strangers, etc..

Mission Mythtake #1 We are called to be soul-winners. I

challenge this because we are called to be seed sowers with the Holy Spirit doing the winning.

It is not our responsibility to convert people. We are only responsible for what we can do, not what others do. Our responsibility is simply to share our personal gospel testimony in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God. We don't have to push, in fact, there is only one way to push a person, and that is away. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).

Mission Mythtake #2 We don't need words to witness.

Our lifestyle is a witness

whether we like it or not.

However, simply observing someone's lifestyle doesn't bring about a conviction. By definition a witness is "one who testifies."

What if all the "witnesses" in a court trial only answered in a game of charades? Although our lifestyle needs to be consistent with the words we say, our lifestyle is not a substitute for saying convicting words.

Mission Mythtake #3 People aren't interested

Many people are tired of shallow conversations and the rules of political correctness that make it taboo to talk about God. Matthew 9:38,39 and repeated in Luke 10:2) reads, "Then saith he

unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

Mission Mythtake #4 I must have all the answers

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, "And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of

wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

Mission Mythtake #5 I must have a close, long-term relationship with a person before I can share the Gospel with them. While this helps, the gospel's inherent power is not bound by our personal connections.

God may bring people across our path for even a brief time by His sovereign design in order that we would share the message of Christ with them.

A biblical example is the account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch as recorded in Acts 8:26-

24) Sharing the gospel is a supernatural endeavour that requires supernatural power.

That's why the disciples were told to wait for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to be God's witnesses. That power is now available to every believer.

Mission Mythtake #6 I must wait for people to come to me, ask why my lifestyle is different and ask me to tell them about Christ.

Joe is a fisherman who has caught nothing yet. He sits on his verandah day after day waiting for a fish to jump out of the pond several blocks away, flap all the way up to his house and ask, "Hey Joe, where's your fishing rod? I

want to get on your line and hook right now."

Fishing for men requires initiative on the fisherman's part, not the fish's! Sharing the gospel with others is an active endeavour, not a passive one.

And lastly (though there are undoubtedly more), Mission Mythtake #7 I must tell everything I know about God in every situation.

Not every opportunity to share the message is going to be equal. In some cases you'll have just a few minutes to talk, ask a question, share an idea, or simply listen. Make the most of it and relax.

Colossians 4:5 says, "Be wise [and] make the most of every opportunity". Try to discern how much a person is ready to hear. Jesus Himself said "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear" (John 16:12). Even with His disciples he did not feel compelled to unload everything at once.

Adapted from L. Hartley, Mythtakes of the Mouth, The Anglo-Catholic Leader (magazine), January 1976, Pp 11,12



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2014

Sunday 20 April 2014 (Easter)

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

Victory!

Several hundred years before the birth of Jesus, a crucial battle occurred between the Greeks and the Persians upon the plains of Marathon.

The battle raged for hours. In many respects it was a fight to the finish. Finally the numerically inferior Greeks, the underdogs, managed a tremendous tactical win, but there was a problem.

Soon the Senate, many miles away in Athens, was to vote and would most certainly ratify a treaty of appeasement. In desperation they sent a runner in full battle gear to go the twenty-seven miles to tell of the news.

By the time the young boy got to Athens he had run a Marathon. It is said he was totally spent, that he literally ran himself to death. In his exhaustion he was able to utter only one word to the Athenians: "Victory."

Easter is all about that one word: victory.

A while back, I asked my son David what Easter means to him and he said, "An empty tomb".

I applaud his answer, however there is much more to it than that, because THE empty tomb is not just any tomb. There is an empty tomb in Egypt that dates back to the fourteenth century B.C.

It is an elaborate tomb that was prepared for King Tutenkhamen's military leader Horemheb, but he was never buried there. Four years after King Tutenkhamen died, Horemheb became the pharaoh and was later buried in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes.

The Etruscans were the first known inhabitants of Italy. They were there before the Romans and had a highly developed

civilization. They left no written record, no history, no poetry, and no literature. All that we know of them we have learned from their tombs. Grave robbers have stripped these tombs bare. There are many empty Etruscan tombs.

One April, a certain Sunday school teacher asked all eight children in her class to hide within an empty film container a small object that represented life in the spring.

Not wanting to embarrass eight-year-old Stephen, whose mental retardation was becoming more manifest, the teacher suggested that the children all place their unlabeled containers on her desk. Since she feared

that Stephen might not have caught on, she decided that she should open them.

The first had a tiny flower. "What a lovely sign of new life!" "I brought that one!" the donor exclaimed. Next came a rock. "That must be Stephen's," the teacher thought, since rocks do not symbolize new life. But Billy shouted that his rock had moss on it, and moss was new life. The teacher agreed.

A butterfly flew from the third container, and another child bragged that her choice was best of all.

The fourth container was empty. "That has to be

Stephen's," thought the teacher, quickly reaching for the fifth.

"Please, don't skip mine!" Stephen interjected. "But it's empty." "That's right," said Stephen. "The tomb was empty, and that is new life for everyone."

Later that summer, Stephen's condition grew worse, and he died. On his casket at the funeral, mourners found eight little containers. They were all empty.

For me the victory of Easter is not an empty tomb but a risen Saviour.

Musical duo William and Gloria Gaither wrote, "Because he lives I can face tomorrow; because he lives all fear is gone. Because I

know he holds the future, and life is worth the living just because he lives."

On Saturday 17th August, 2002, suspected Basque terrorist I smael Berasategui Escudero escaped from the high security La Sante prison in Paris.

He swapped places with his brother and it took embarrassed staff five days to discover the escape.

On Friday on the first Easter, Barabbas was on death row, condemned to die. Your Elder Brother and mine swapped places with him and was crucified instead. It took three days for the disciples to discover his death

sentence had really been revoked. It has taken two thousand years since then and still many have not discovered Him.

In 1874, hymnist Robert Lowry wrote a certain hymn. I have at home a scratchy 1921 recording of it by Henry Burr and the Peerless Quartet.

When I first heard it, I laughed. I confess that at first I did not listen to the words, but was intrigued by the metrical pattern in the melody. The verses are sung very solemnly in five-part harmony and the refrain in unison is in contrast, both upbeat and joyous. As they sang on, I began to listen to the words and it was strangely moving. Here is what

they sang:

"Low in the grave He lay, Jesus
my Saviour, waiting the coming
day, Jesus my Lord!

Vainly they watch His bed,
Jesus my Saviour; vainly they seal
the dead, Jesus my Lord!

Death cannot keep its Prey,
Jesus my Saviour; He tore the
bars away, Jesus my Lord!

And the refrain: Up from the
grave He arose, with a mighty
triumph o'er His foes, He arose a
Victor from the dark domain, and
He lives forever, with His saints
to reign.

He arose! He arose! Hallelujah!
Christ arose!"

Easter is all about that one word: victory.



Sunday 1 June 2014

Someone asked me today how long I had been married. I said that Rosemary and I had been married a wonderful 35 years.

"That's an awful long time," was the response.

I replied, "It would have been a lot longer without her!"



December 2014

A Christmas Prayer

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

The following prayer was written in rhyming couplets. It is not intended to be good poetry, It is just as it came from my head to the paper, unedited. (Lionel.)

Lord, this is our prayer, we know you are near

We know that You care; that you sense our tears,

You feel our pain and as we come to you again

You feel our joy as we praise your holy name.

Our hands and feet are committed for your use here on earth

For the building of your kingdom in honour of Your Birth.

The day you changed all history to show us the father's love

By leaving all the glory, leaving
Heaven above.

A stable rude was where you
came to begin your sacred duty
Animals for company, a manger
for a bed, no comforts, no beauty

In the comfort of our
decorated homes, we need
reminding once again

That Christmas is not about
tinsel, but remembering why you
came.

And as the angel chorus
welcomed you that day

We too welcome you into our
lives to stay.

And as humble shepherds were
privileged that night

We too consider it an honour to
be for you a light.

As the Eastern wise men came

in homage to their king

We likewise pay you tribute as
we join in offering —

Ourselves into your service,
whatever way we can

Acknowledging that every gift
comes from your generous hand.

We confess our sins and selfish
ways,

You take confessed sin and
blow it away.

You give us new life and new
paths to tread,

Free from anxiety, worry and
dread.

Filled with Your peace, you give
us new hope,

New vision, new hearts and all
we need to cope.

We offer our thanks, our
gratitude clear

Lord, this is our prayer, we
know you are near

We come to You for learning,
our hearts are open wide,

Inviting Your Holy Spirit to
come and dwell inside.

Teaching us all things that we
need to know

As we heed your commission
for us to boldly 'Go'.

For all that you've done and are
doing today

And what you have planned for
eternity

We praise you, precious Lord
again.

This is our prayer, in Jesus'
name.

Amen



2015

A common greeting of these days is, "How are you?" The stereotypical reply is, "Fine, and how are you?"

No one comments on the obvious and colossal lie that it is. I confess that I frequently give this reply to my friends who would be dismayed and bored if I tried to tell them the lengthy truth, for this Model T Ford which I call my body is getting worse and worse, and my friends - even my grandson will recognize it and make mental note, "He is getting old &

dottery."

This jalopy of a body of mine is getting into tired condition. The steering gear is so worn and wobbly that I have to use a cane to keep it from running off the road. The headlights are so dim that I need magnifying lenses in front of them. The horn is a mere squawk compared to my youth. And as for climbing hills, the less said the better. It is clear that this jalopy of a body of mine is going to have to be junked one of these days.

Ah, but the real person who lives inside this jalopy of a body is a totally different story. Inside this wearing-out frame, enthusiasm is high, hope is secure,

God is real and his truth shines brightly. The companionship of Christ is constant through His Holy Spirit, and God holds out a hope for a new model after this present jalopy is junked.

Despite my personal battles with degenerative bone disease, several years in a wheelchair with a crushed spinal cord, and a highly malignant brain tumour, there is a hope burning within that is young and vibrant.

So, I am fine, thank you. How are you?

You, too, irrespective of your present circumstances, can have a mind and heart filled with a joyous hope. You see, there are no

hopeless situations, only people
who think hopelessly.



2016

March 2016

Open Letter to Ursula
Unremarkable

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

Dear Ursula:

I am writing to help you shake this feeling of evangelistic uselessness that has overtaken you. Several times you've said that you don't see how Christ can possibly use you.

Our church must bear part of the responsibility for making you

feel as you do. I have in mind the success-story mentality of the church. Our church periodicals tell the story of Milton Moneybags who uses his influential position to witness for Christ. At a church youth meeting, we have a testimony from the football 'legend', Bull Kickoffsky, who commands the respect of his team-mates when he witnesses for Christ. We are led to think that if you don't have the leverage of stardom or a big position in the business world, you might as well keep your mouth shut. Nobody cares what Christ has done for you.

We've forgotten an elementary fact about Christian witness, something that should

encourage you and me: God has chosen what the world calls foolish to shame the wise. He has chosen what the world calls weak to shame the strong. He has chosen things of little strength and of small repute, yes, and even things which have no real existence to explode the pretensions of the things that are: that no man may boast in the presence of God.

When Jesus Christ chose His disciples, He didn't choose Olympic champions or Roman senators. He chose simple people like you and me. Some were fishermen, one was a political extremist, another was a publican, a nobody in that society. But these for Christ, these men

turned the Roman world upside-down (or rather the 'right-side-up' as the world was already upside down). How did they do it? Through their popularity? They had none. Their position? They had none. Their power was the power of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Ursula, don't forget that we still need the ordinary people in the hands of our extraordinary Christ to turn the world around to Him.

Blessings, LH ><



Sunday 10 July 2016

I was invited to run some

family-life seminars at the Mount Gravatt SDA Church. On this first occasion, as I hadn't been there before, I carefully studied the road map, prayed for safe travel and left extra early to allow for unfamiliar roads, possible road-works or other delays.

However, the traffic was surprising sparse and as I drove off from the highway I had a very strong impression, not an audible voice, but an overwhelming conviction that I should turn left at the next intersection rather than going straight ahead as the map dictated.

In bewildered obedience I did turn left and drove for several minutes before an equally strong

impression came to me that I should stop the car.

I pulled over to the curb behind a caravan that was parked on the roadside. Not knowing why I was to stop there, but believing I was doing the right thing, I stepped out of the car.

It was then that I saw a lady sitting on a low fence next to the caravan. As I approached her she asked, "Have you come to help me?"

I asked what help she needed and she said that she had been packing her caravan for a holiday commencing the next day but had some unfinished business with one of her relatives and did not know

what to do about it.

I sat on the fence beside her and invited her to talk about it. After almost an hour of listening and providing some biblical solutions, I had a prayer with her and left this divine interruption to continue my journey to the seminar.

Amazingly I easily found my way back to the road I was supposed to be on and surprisingly I was still in plenty of time for the seminar.

So we don't have to be extraordinary when we have an extraordinary God. We just have to be willing. What Jesus calls watching, waiting and being ready. Thank You God for this Divine

appointment.



2017

A certain lady in a counselling session last week said, "I have a rather boring book at home called 'Moral Responsibility' which was written by a man whose name and even initials are precisely the same as yours. Is that not an interesting coincidence?"

"I hardly think that is a coincidence," I replied."

"Why not?"

"For the simple reason that I wrote the book."

In today's session she told me that she sat up until the early morning hours to read the book again, and when it was completed it seemed to her the most interesting book she had ever read. It wasn't boring at all. She found it fascinating.

The secret, I imagine, was that she had simply discovered the author. What an incentive to read the Bible - to get to know the Author.



January 2017

The need to cross the sea the witness?

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

I recently met a Christian couple and their young children (from another denomination) who had advertised that they wished to give the bulk of their Christian books to a church library. As the librarian for our church library, I accepted their offer and visited them. As I journeyed for the visit, I prayed that they were not giving away their faith with their books.

As they shared their books they also shared that they were going overseas in two day's time as missionaries to ... wait for it ... my own home town!

As we spoke together they shared some of their fears and anxieties about selling up and

moving to a different country. As we discussed faith (and what it is and is not) I was able to reassure them of God's love and watchcare. I knew that God would bless their obedience to His call, as they were amenable to counsel and learned from our discussion that Heaven is a free gift - that obedience is our 'thank-you' for what Jesus has already done rather than what we must do to earn salvation. While referring to me as a 'Grandfather in the Faith' they believed that our meeting was a providential Divine appointment.

At the close of my visit I asked if I could pray with them, entreating God's blessings on their family and ministry. Even though we had just met, we

prayed together like a family.

As I was leaving, I silently prayed for them again and thanked God for the opportunity to encourage them in their faith, grateful for the opportunity to witness anywhere, any time.

As I prayed, I could sense the Spirit convicting me that to witness you don't need to CROSS the SEA, you just need to SEE the CROSS.



January 2017

The Breath of God

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

"... there is a spirit in man: and

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the inspiration of the Almighty giveth ... understanding" Job 32:8).

It is absolutely vital that we have the *right* spirit to understand God and His Word aright.

In the Old Testament, the very first reference to the Holy Spirit is in verse 2 of Genesis 1: (... And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters). The word used here is the Hebrew word "*ruwach*" meaning breath (vis. The Breath of God). This corresponds to the "*pneuma*" that Dan mentions from the New Testament. This is expiration or God breathing out.

In Job 32:8 (But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.) the word for breath is "*neshamah*" meaning, once again to breathe. In 2 Timothy 3:16 (All scripture is given by inspiration of God...) the word for the expression "inspiration of God" is "*theopneustos*" meaning simply "God's Breath".

Inspiration is breathing in the "*neshamah*" or "*theopneustos*" that God provides. Like life-or-death mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, it is vital that we breathe in (inspiration) the same breath God breaths out (expiration).

There is so much ecclesiastical pollution in the world, so many false spirits, false prophets, false teachings, that we dare not allow our spiritual lungs to become contaminated with any other "breath".

Fortunately, access to the same Spirit that breathed inspiration into the Bible writers is only a prayer away from breathing understanding into us.

Pray today like you've never prayed before and God will provide this life-or-death mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and revive your spirit with His. "... there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth ... understanding" Job 32:8).



February 2017

Listening to Sermons

(Posted to hartleyonline.blogspot.com)

As a child preacher from aged 8 or 9 I listened intently to other peoples' sermons selfishly to improve my own.

I quickly learned that God could use me more mightily if I let Him teach me. (John 14:26 starts, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things").

So over the many decades since then I have listened, not for my

preaching, but for my edification.

There was a time when I wondered why I listened so intently when I seemed to forget most of what I had heard. Words would go in one ear and out the other like a worm in a cornfield.

However ...

1. John 14:26 continues, "[the Holy Spirit will] bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." In order for us to be reminded of something the Lord has said through His servants we must first hear or see it. And

2. By way of illustration: During our long and joyous marriage my wife Rosemary has prepared and served over 40,000 meals, and

almost a third would have included a devotional reading and mealtime-worship. I must honestly confess that I can't remember a fraction of what was in those meals or readings. However, I can honestly say that I have always been well fed.

Hearing a sermon is never a waste of time - listening to a sermon is never a waste of energy - jotting down what we hear is never a waste of ink (the act of writing in itself is a reinforcer for our memory) - and sharing what we have heard gives us a triple blessing (we are blessed when we hear, we are blessed again as we share and we are blessed when others respond to our sharing).



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2018

May 2018

Now that we have sold our house at Red Range, we visit occasionally and stay in our caravan on the adjoining block of land that we purchased separately because it contained an artesian well.

Our water supply in the caravan is from a tank under the caravan, filled as necessary from the well. To get the water into the sink I have fitted a small hand-operated piston pump attached to the tap.

When the pump is frequently used, very little energy was required to have water, as the water pours out at the first stroke. But if the pump has not been used for a long time as we have been away, the water gets low in the pipe, and when we want it we have to pump a long while, and the water comes only after some effort.

Thinking about this reminds me that so it is with prayer. If we are instant in prayer, every little circumstance awakens the disposition to pray so that desires and words are always ready. But if we neglect prayer, it is difficult for us to pray, for the water in the pipe gets low.



Sunday 15 July 2018

It's been 1,000 days since No Nail Day

On 20 Oct 2015 I was writing an article on overcoming addiction and very smugly said to myself that I don't have, neither have I ever had any addictions. Just as I was feeling self righteous, I looked at my hands on the keyboard and acknowledged that I indeed have an addiction, Onychophagia (Nail biting).

I don't know why I started this habit, but my mother told me once I was at a certain age when it changed from finger sucking to

nail biting. I worked it out then and if I recall, it would have been about 1954 or 1955.

Now after 60 years I finally acknowledged that is a compulsive behaviour or an addiction.

I prayed that the Lord would take away any inclination I had to nail-biting, and I wrote on the kitchen wall calendar on 20 Oct 2015, 'No Nail Day'.

Now, even though I encourage others who are overcoming an addiction to seek an accountability partner, I didn't follow own advice, and I told no-one.

A week later, Rosemary asked me about the calendar entry and by then I felt confident enough to

show her my nails and tell her that I had quit nail-biting.

Believing in taking one day at a time, every day for the first 100 days (to 28 January 2016) I began the day with a prayer to be strong throughout that day.

It was then that I acknowledged that I no longer needed such a selfish prayer and focused my prayers on gratitude to God and on the needs of others.

Today marks 1,000 days and I can only thank God for this. In my own strength, I couldn't possibly instantly break a 60-year habit.



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2019

I have been blissfully and securely married to Rosemary for over forty years and our honeymoon still isn't over.

The first time that I ever kissed Rosemary was on our wedding day, in the church, at the invitation of the minister (her brother Pastor John Wells) as he pronounced us man and wife.

In fact, a week before the wedding when I had both our families at my house having a Christmas meal together — getting to know each other — I

overheard my mother tell my future mother-in-law, "The only female that Lionel has ever kissed is either a blood relative or on four legs.

(I presume by 'on four legs', she was referring to the family cat.)



March 2019

During our morning walk I was reminded of the saying, "Horses sweat, men perspire and women 'glow'", when we saw a woman approaching wearing a T-shirt with these words written across the front: "I don't sweat, I sparkle!"



Tuesday 11th June 2019

A day I'd rather forget.

Today was scheduled to be a typically busy one.

Firstly, my personal Prayer Journal Devotions where my key verse was Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose".

Then breakfast, followed by our shared devotional with the theme that day of, "In Every Thing Give Thanks".

The chosen verse was 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the

will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

" The day would continue with an appointment with the bank regarding my life insurance.

For some unexplained reason, the Insurance Company, a subsidiary of the Bank, was of the impression that I had died several years ago, and because no claim was made against the policy, premiums continued to be deducted from our joint bank account.

Of course, being deceased so long ago would invalidate any claim made against the policy in the event of a future (or second) death, so the policy I had been

paying for all this time was useless.

My appointment with the bank was to either request a refund of premiums paid since my supposed death and activate a new policy or reinstate the original policy seeing that I am still alive (I think).

After visiting the bank, I had planned to attend a management meeting at the church.

Following that meeting, it was planned that I take my wife Rosemary to a seminar at the local library and then go back home to have lunch, then back to the library to collect Rosemary from her seminar and then take her back home before I went to

collect our grandchildren from their respective schools for some baby-sitting through until the early evening.

As I said, 'a typically busy day'.

So I left early to the appointment with the bank and was less than half-way there when the car received a flat tyre.

This necessitated a scary and hasty wheel-change on a busy intersection with the hazard lights flashing.

Frustratingly the spare tyre was soft - still hard enough to drive, but obviously needing more air.

I stopped at a service station

and re-filled the spare tyre with air before going on to my appointment.

Although I was late for the appointment with the bank, I was still able, after an hour or so, to resolve (in part) the insurance issues.

Not being used to using hazard lights, I accidentally left them on the whole time I was in the bank, so when I went to drive the car again, the battery was flat.

I requested an Automobile Association serviceman to attend, but was advised that I had not renewed my membership and it was evidently due 11 days prior.

When I asked why I had not

received any reminders they suggested that they had been sent by email, but when they checked the system, yes, it said to send email reminders, but it also said that there was no email address recorded, which is why none was sent.

I renewed my membership on the spot - an expense I had not bargained for at the time, and I was told a serviceman would arrive in about an hour.

I telephoned the church to postpone my meeting there and then arranged for someone else to take Rosemary to her appointment while I waited for the Automobile Association serviceman to come to start my car.

To add to the frustration I was advised that the battery, now ten years old, would need replacing - a second bite into our budget.

Once the vehicle was mobile, I took the car to have the puncture repaired and was shown that the puncture occurred because of a crack in the rim that had torn the side-wall of the tyre and I would need both a new tyre and a replacement rim. A third bite into our budget.

I asked them to exchange the new tyre for the spare that I had put on while on the roadside.

When I went to collect the vehicle they showed me that the spare wheel had been soft

because it also had a similar hairline crack and it too would need both a new tyre and replacement rim. Yet another bite into to our budget.

We had used the morning devotional "In Every Thing Give Thanks" as an opportunity to give morning thanks to God for the day, even though we did not know what the next few hours would bring.

Now in the afternoon I pondered the mornings devotionals and remembered an old saying, "when you go with God to a new level, you get resistance from a old devil".



2020

Friday 14 February 2020

Overheard on advertisement from the TV in an adjacent room: "Kissing is just a matter of putting your lips to the sweet end of 66 feet of intestines".



Sunday 16 February 2020

This morning I was presented a devotional at Robina Hospital Chapel entitled "How to React to Crisis"

In attendance was Jackie, one

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of the Hospital Chaplains.

At the end of the devotional she shared the following dramatic instant answer to prayer.

This is what she said. "I confess that I was only half-listening while you were speaking this morning as I was praying, 'Lord I have to travel on an aeroplane soon and my personal crisis is that I'm terrified of the idea of flying. Please may Lionel say something today to give me comfort? In Jesus Name, Amen.'

Immediately I finished my silent prayer you told the story of an American writer's daughter in an aeroplane. Thank you for allowing God to answer my prayer

through you."

Here is the story: The American writer Joan Marie Arbogast explained that her daughter was terribly anxious the first time she flew in a plane. "What if the plane falls down?" she asked as they boarded. "What's that sound?" she questioned as the engines revved. During take-off she squeezed Joan Marie's hand till the knuckles turned white. However, once they were above the clouds, the girl released her grip and announced, "It's okay now. I'm not afraid. We're above the clouds ... and next to heaven."



March 2020

Six types of seals

Seals for closing (Sealed up)

(Daniel 6:17) "And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel."

(Matthew 27:66) "So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."

Seals for marking (Royal Seal)

(1 Kings 21:8) "So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed

them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth."

Seals for authority

(Esther 3:12) "Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring."

(Esther 8:8) "Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse."

(Esther 8:10) "And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries:"

Seals for setting apart

(Ephesians 1:13) "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed

with that holy Spirit of promise,"

(Ephesians 4:30) "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

(2 Corinthians 1:22) "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

Seals to stop us falling apart

(Revelation 7:2-3) "And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3) Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of

our God in their foreheads."

(Ezekiel 9:4-6) "And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. 5) And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: 6) Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house."

And Seals that cause change

(Job 38:14) "It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment."



April 2020

In Old Testament times the Sanctuary was made for the people to experience God's presence. In New Testament times the people are made into a sanctuary to be filled with God's presence.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the

Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:15-17).

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own" (1 Corinthians 6:19)?

Jesus referred to his body as a temple: The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" 21) But the temple he had spoken of was his body (John 2:19-21).



Wednesday 26 August 2020

Just to show respect is not enough. For example, like the country of my parent's birth, the country where I was born has no snakes other than those in captivity.

I have learned in this country, not to be afraid of snakes but I certainly respect them. I do this by giving them a wide berth.

In other words I keep as far away from them as is practical, and I just leave them alone to do whatever it is that snakes do.

Similarly I am not familiar with which mushrooms are edible and which are poisonous. So I generally will stay away from wild-

grown mushrooms lest in the day that I eat of them I will surely die.

Am I afraid of mushrooms? Certainly not, but I do respect them and will touch or eat only those I believe to be safe.

Now if we only respect God but stay away from Him we offend Him just as much as if we were scared of approaching Him.

Years ago I worked part-time for a publishing house as a translator of manuscripts into and from various languages including English, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, French, Portuguese, Dutch, German, Spanish and Italian.

I had gained proficiency in writing and reading these languages by diligent study of dictionaries and textbooks on grammar, usage, sentence structure and ethnology.

However on the many occasions that I have attempted to converse verbally in some these languages other than English, I have caused much mirth with my mispronunciation, mystification with my misunderstandings and mortification with my mixed and muddled messages.

The only language I studied in primary school other than English was classical Latin, hence the lexis of my verbal vocabulary is embarrassingly stunted.

As recently as last year I translated some literature into Spanish and was told that my translation was impeccable excepting that most Latinos on the Gold Coast speak Columbian not español académico or academic Spanish.

When I tried conversing in German to a friend recently, he asked why I was speaking hochdeutsch as if I was Martin Luther speaking from the highlands of South Germany.

Many of us read the Bible and some read it well; but let us undertake to try to talk in the language of Zion, and see whether we do not also stumble.

I have learned that Bible reading needs to be accompanied with speaking with, listening to and getting to know the Author.



As the lost property at the church was stored in a cupboard in the church library in the foyer, as Librarian I was responsible each month to clear out the cupboard. Each month I would get a cardboard box, move the lost property to another room and there leave it for a further month before putting it into bags and donating it to charity.

After a while one box was insufficient and the box that I had been using was getting rather

tattered. So I tried to locate a plastic storage box big enough to hold a month's supply of items. All of the plastic boxes in the local stores were too small, so I prayed that God would help me to find one big enough.

Today I had occasion to visit the local primary school to give the staff information on some professional development training that I will be providing as part of a seminar series that I am running on Building Resilience in Children.

As the staff and visitor's car parks at the school were full, I parked my car in the street a couple of blocks away adjacent to a community park.

When I returned to the car, there on the grass verge and leaning against the passenger door was a large clean plastic wheeled storage box, but there was no person in sight neither up nor down the street.

What else to do but put the box in the car, take it to the church and use it for the lost property? Thank you once again, God, for your provision.



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2021

Sunday 4 April 2021 (Easter Sunday)

"A handful of patience is worth more than a bushel of brains" — Dutch proverb.

I was preaching at an event being held in a public hospital. It was during a time when we were required to register our attendance due to COVID-19 restrictions.

There was quite a queue at the hospital entrance, and when I finally signed in I was asked if I

would talk to a certain person known to be attending the event but who had jumped the queue. His description was given and I agreed to talk with him if possible.

After the event I identified the person concerned and when I challenged him, he explained that he couldn't be bothered waiting in a queue, regarding the whole thing as a waste of time.

I spoke with him questioning the Christ-likeness of his attitude, and I suggested that he speak with the nurse at the reception and seek her forgiveness.

Later in the day when I was leaving, the particular nurse called

me aside and gratefully told me of his change of attitude and his apology.



Thursday 13 May 2021

I was waiting in line at the counter in a local chemist shop when a young man ahead of me started to raise his voice to the young softly-spoken female pharmacist as she explained that the prescription was more than 12 months old and no longer valid.

The man became very agitated and started accusing the pharmacist of deliberately and cruelly refusing to fill his prescription.

I could see that this situation could get out of hand if the man's temper led him to violence.

So I casually walked closer to him and gently said, "She's right, you know. The pharmacist doesn't make the rules; she simply enforces them.

And it's better for us and it makes her job a lot easier if we choose to obey them. Getting a new prescription from a physician is much easier than trying to fight against a system that is designed to protect us from applying last year's cure to today's ailment.

I'm sure that the pharmacist here will be more than happy to supply you with medicine if the

prescription is current and up-to-date. Thank you for choosing to obey the rules even if it doesn't seem fair."

The man left quietly and both the pharmacist and another customer expressed gratitude that a potentially volatile situation was diffused.

(Proverbs 15:1) A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.



June 2021

Two days ago Rosemary and I were about to enter a restaurant for lunch when our daughter Norreen contacted us on the

mobile telephone. She was to take a part in a programme that evening and asked if I could provide a short snippet for her to present as an ice-breaker for the programme. The theme was 'outer space', reflecting on our readiness for heaven.

Because my wife and I were away from home, my library was inaccessible.

So I penned the following free verse fragment in the restaurant while waiting for our meal to be served.

It is an announcement supposedly heard over an airport public address system:

"Your attention please, Ladies

and Gentlemen. Welcome to Eternity Intergalactic Airport. Please check in today for Destination Heaven. Your tickets need to be in order before you board the flight. And passports, visas and papers must be checked and all right. Leave luggage & baggage at the boarding gate to heaven- you won't need it there.

And your passport of faith has been stamped with your fate (when you chose to accept the free airfare). For your ticket is paid for by the Pilot's own Son. And He sent you His Holy Steward to help you to come.

So Ladies and Gentlemen, your attention please. You all can be ready by the Company's Grace. So

pack up your worries, invite your friends and take your ease. The ticket is paid and we've reserved you a place. All flights are in standby mode; you must be ready at all times. And as we only offer one destination, passengers not ready must travel by another airline."



July 2021

While washing clothes, I read a label on one garment that said, "Care Instructions. Wash gently in warm water. Do not use harsh or caustic chemicals."

I thought: what a great set of Care Instructions for

relationships. Be warm and gently, and avoid anything harsh or caustic.



August 2021

While visiting a certain public mens' room, I greeted a man with a 'hello' as we both entered different cubicles. Shortly afterwards, I heard the man in the next cubicle suddenly ask, "So, how are you?"

I responded with what I considered an appropriate answer before he asked, "What do you do in your spare time?"

Again I responded in a voice loud enough for him to hear. At

this he called back, "Do you mind, I'm talking to a new friend on my mobile 'phone!"

It doesn't pay to jump to conclusions.



September 2021

God's Gifts in the 23rd. Psalm.

1. Relationship: The Lord is my Shepherd
2. Supply: I shall not want
3. Rest: He maketh me to lie down
4. Beauty: In green pastures
5. Refreshment: He leadeth me (beside still waters)
6. Tranquillity: Beside still

waters

7. Healing: He restoreth my
soul

8. Guidance: He leadeth me

9. Direction: In the paths of
righteousness

10. Purpose: For His name sake

11. Challenge: Yea, though I
walk through the valley

12. Continual presence: (The
valley) of the shadow of death

13. Assurance: I will fear no
evil

14. Faithfulness: For thou art
with me

15. Safety & shelter: Thy rod
and thy staff

16. Comfort: They comfort me

17. Provision: Thou preparest a
table before me

18. Hope: (Thou preparest a

table ...) in the presence of mine enemies

19. Consecration: Thou anointest my head with oil

20. Abundance: My cup runneth over

21. Blessings: Goodness and mercy ... all the days of my life

22. Security: And I will dwell in the house of the Lord

23. Family: (In the house of the Lord)

24. Eternity: Forever.



September 2021

Years ago my mother taught me a little rhyme. This is the version that I remember:

'I grieved because I had no shoes; / Until I met a man who had no feet.'

This last week Rosemary and I (as Disaster-Support Volunteers for the Australian Red Cross) visited people in the storm damages areas of the Tweed Valley in New South Wales, specifically the township of Kingscliff. Many of the people we visited had their homes damaged in a brief yet violent storm with horizontally flying brick-sized jagged hailstones.

Because the town looked like a tent-city with its hundreds of tarpaulin covered roofs, many commented 'there are so many worse off than we are!'

I recall reading that the prolific hymn-writer Francis (Fanny) Crosby who was blind, penned these words when she was only about 8 year old: 'Oh, what a happy soul am I! / Although I cannot see, / I am resolved that in this world / Contented I will be; / How many blessings I enjoy / That other people don't!

/ To weep and sigh because I'm blind / I cannot, and I won't!
(Cited in E E White, *Singing With Understanding*, Sign Publishing, Warburton, 1981, p463)

What an encouragement for us. '...For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content' (Philippians 4:11).



October 2021

When the soldiers of Israel saw Goliath, they thought to themselves. "Behold a terroriser. He is so big we can never kill him. Where is God when we need Him?"

When David saw Goliath, he thought to himself, " Behold a target. He is so big that I cannot miss him. God is here when I need Him!"



November 2021

Luke 4:8 - And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou

shalt worship the Lord thy God,
and him only shalt thou serve.

My infant son Michael
underwent surgery on his back to
have a benign tumour removed. A
short while later he asked us what
to do if he was tempted to do
something naughty. His Mother
suggested saying to the Devil,
'Get behind me, Satan!'

'I can't do that,' he replied,
'He'll hurt my back!'



November 2021

Although not a member of their
denomination, on one occasion I
was an invited guest to speak at
the afternoon session of a

Presbyterian General Assembly in Brisbane.

When I arrived they were in the process of installing a new moderator. (That's Presbyterian talk for appointing and commissioning a new presiding officer or president). When he was called upon for his inaugural speech, I knew by his opening words that they had chosen a man capable of putting an element of humour into the demands of leadership.

This is what He said, "Thank you for your invitation to be your Moderator. Out of curiosity, to determine if you've made a right choice, I looked in the dictionary to see what a moderator does. My

dictionary says, 'A moderator is a device to control the flow of gas'."



December 2021

Strange Theology:

On a label on a tub of Alpro plant-based vanilla yoghurt manufactured by Danone Murray Goulburn Pty Ltd:

"What a great choice. One spoon will get you to heaven. Simply divine."



I choose not let my feelings keep me down during the day nor

worry keep me up during the night.

How I handle daily events will dictate if I will be uptight in the daytime or upright in the night-time.



There was a time in my childhood when I thought that my mother was perfect, but I vividly remember the day she blew a hole in that notion.

I remember that she came to me one day when I was about seven or eight years old and asked me to forgive her for being cross with me over some misunderstanding.

I suddenly saw my mother as

human, able to make mistakes, and (more importantly) able to own up to them and seek forgiveness.

Although I shared thousands of hugs with my mum over the decades, I remember the hug that day as being especially close.



I'm so grateful for the spiritual lessons that my parents gave to me. My mother was ardent Anglican and my father was nominal Baptist. But Sunday School was always a priority, from times when I was too young to remember much detail to well beyond the age where I made my decision to follow Christ.



In the suburb of Bray Park, in Murwillumbah NSW, Australia is a small street called Hope Street. This quiet treed cul-de-sac has a sign, erected by Council, at the entrance.

On this signpost below the words, 'Hope Street', appear the very sad words, "No Through Road."

When I was very young, I remember seeing a sign on a similar cul-de-sac in another country with the words "No Exit" on a sign at the entrance. I recall asking my mother what an exit was. For simplicity, she explained that it was the way out of

somewhere.

In my child's mind I pictured a street that, if a visitor dared to enter it, he or she would never return and I guess that I figured that only the actual residents could come and go (as I had seen them do).

I remembered that troublesome childhood experience when I first read, "Hope Street - No Through Road." Surely hope is not the end of the road, an abyss with no return, or somewhere that only the current residents may dare to venture.

Hope is not a 'No Through Road' - You and I can use hope as a valuable part of our journey

whatever road we take. Hope is not the end. Hope is just the beginning.



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2022

Sabbath 25 July 2022

A certain church, where for many years I have been a regular preacher, was appointed a new pastor. I had met him once before when I preached at his church in another district.

In fact, I preached there more than once although I only met him on that first occasion. Now he was the pastor of this particular church under discussion and I was invited to attend this church today because, as happens quite rarely, I have a free day and

wasn't preaching anywhere else and there was an afternnon sacred concert in the same venue in the afternoon.

I did, however, preach there last week. After the service the pastor welcomed us and asked if we lived locally, as he would like to visit us and welcome us into fellowship. When he discovered who I was, he was overcome with embarrassment and most profuse in his apologies.

This mistaken identity happened once before when I was standing in shop looking at items on display. A woman came up behind me and began to speak to me as if she knew me.

When I turned around and she saw my face, she stopped, looked astonished, and said, "Sorry, I thought you were someone else."

I said, "Yes, Ma'am, You are right. I am someone else."



Thursday 18 August 2022

Forgiving disease

While reading the book 'Chicken Soup for the Christian Woman's Soul' (Canfield & Hansen, et al. 2002, p115) I came across a misprint as the author quoted Psalm 103 vss 1-4 supposedly from the New International Version.

The verses according to the book read, "Bless the Lord O my soul. And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your diseases. Who redeems all your life's destruction, Who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies."

When I read the line, "Who forgives all your diseases." I remembered the original of verse 3 that reads, "Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases".

However, thinking about recovery made me wonder if the misprint is closer to the mark in the many cases when our present diseases have been caused by our past disobedience to God's ideal

for us. Thank goodness that the Psalmist, in this case David, goes on to say in verse 10 of the same psalm that God "Does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities."

"Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-- who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, 4) who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion" (Psalm 103:1-4 New International Version).



September 2022

The difference between
container and content.

"The Bible is important, but not
as important as the messages that
it contains and even less important
that the Person the Bible has been
written to reveal."



Tuesday 12 October 2022

A certain person recently
confessed to me that there was a
time when she absolutely hated
me.

A recent hug initiated by her
told me that this is no longer the
case.

When Rosemary and I were

courting, this lady, Lorraine, had been Rosemary's best friend for the previous decade or so, and in Lorraine's mind, I was stealing her best friend.

We solved that by introducing her to a friend of mine and they got married a week after us.

Just before Christmas we spent several days with them as their guests at a seaside resort.

After over 50 years Lorraine still refers to Rosemary as her best friend.



November 2022

I am not an aficionado or

ardent follower of sports. Most games, it seems, consist of a dozen or so grown men (or women) kicking, hitting or chasing a ball around a paddock.

A few athletes who desperately need rest are watched by millions who desperately need exercise.

In fact one of the dictionary definitions of a 'sport' is an organism that has abnormal characteristics resulting from chromosomal alteration - in other words 'a moron'.



November 2022

The concept of eight days is fraught with wonder and pain in

scripture.

There are numerous occasions in Scripture where something significant and painful occurs on the eighth day.

For example circumcision, painful for the person being circumcised, occurred on the eighth day.

The eighth day was a grieving time for any surviving inhabitants of Jericho in Joshua's time.

Many of the sacrifices listed in Leviticus occurred on the eighth day.

Jesus and a select few of his disciples heard Moses and Elijah speak of Jesus' pending death

when they met on the Mount of Transfiguration on the eighth day.

And one of the longest weeks for any individual in Scripture was when poor unbelieving Thomas suffered needlessly for eight days grieving the death of his Saviour.

But unlike most of the other eight-day periods in Scripture, for Thomas this was a gloriously joyous occasion.

"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand,

and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:26-29 KJV).



FIN



