

**The Golden Jubilee of  
*The Endeavour Magazine***

We congratulate the Endeavour Magazine on its 50th year of circulation, with our warmest thanks and appreciation of all those who have maintained not only their interest but also their committed involvement in its production and circulation, especially Brother Les Boddy, the current Editor, Sister Ruth Masters, the Treasurer, and the McHaffie family, who have been involved from the beginning. We also pay tribute to those who have edited the Magazine over the years: James White, George and Ruth McHaffie, Wilfred Lambert, John Weaving, John Maycock, and Ron Coleman.

The Magazine was inaugurated in 1961 in direct response to problems which had arisen in the brotherhood, as our young people were being faced with theories and ideas in education which either challenged their faith or brought them into conflict with conservative ideas. It was consequently suggested that what was required was an open forum where such ideas could be freely and openly discussed without bias or intimidation. So a magazine was proposed initially by Brother Ron Storer and Brother James White agreed to the editorship initially.

So it set out originally to allow for discussion on any topic of concern in respect of faith and scripture. Other issues were equally important. 1960 had been proclaimed World Refugee Year and some brethren were actively involved in this movement to alleviate this problem initially in Eastern Europe where thousands of people had been displaced during the war. This opened the eyes of the world to the needs of the wider community. Sister Miriam Dean, who during the war had befriended some German prisoners of war, inaugurated a charity to support them. The Endeavour movement supported this and other charitable organisations. We are glad to acknowledge that the Brotherhood as a whole has awakened to this need, as has been amply shown in the generous support given to the Samaritan Fund and the Meal a Day Fund. There were also local needs, and a recognition that there were problems on our doorsteps of lonely and aged people in need of friendship, which necessitated working with local organisations to spread a gospel of Christian love to the isolated and alone, neighbours, friends, as well as the care of our own members with problems and difficulties – an awareness which was taken up by what was initially called The Care Group.

That was not all. Many of our young people are highly trained and educated and therefore well read in literature, history, philosophy and theology. This has led to increasing discussion of Biblical interpretation and such issues as fundamentalism and Biblical Criticism. And again this needed unprejudiced discussion. The question of the Holy Spirit had already become an issue in the brotherhood, as the view of its function as purely miraculous was challenged by the Biblical presentation of the spirit's indwelling influence of the Lord Himself as the Comforter in our own hearts and lives to guide and strengthen.

Other areas were also explored as the door was opened to recognise the beauty and richness of God's Spirit in art, music, literature and the creative arts. This Magazine was designed to set us free to see God's hand at work in the world, in humanity and ourselves.

**Sheila Harris**

Sheila was a member of the original committee along with K Camplin, A J Ford, S Gibbons, P Kirkman, Ruth McHaffie, C L Russell, J H Weaving and J C White, who were later joined by Wilfred Lambert and George McHaffie.

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**New Booklet**

**What is Truth? by Sheila Harris**

This is a 12 page A5 booklet in which Sheila explains how she understands the truth of the Bible. She ends her first paragraph, entitled 'God has spoken', with the following words: 'For the wonderful plan of God with this whole universe is to reveal to man how, from the chaos of darkness, He works in and through men to the final consummation of an earth filled with His glory. And this is truth, the underlying hidden meaning. For this is the meaning of truth, in Greek *aletheia*, which means unhidden, revealed, the inner reality which explains the outer appearance, and so makes sense of the whole, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, the ultimate truth of God.' The rest of the booklet enlarges on this theme.

Copies can be obtained from the editor for £2 including p&p.

Cheques to *The Endeavour Magazine*.

**Abba**

Abba is one of the simplest possible palindromes in any language! In particular, it is an Aramaic word, but does it have any other significance for us that could be more important?

The Jewish Scriptures had been largely written in Hebrew but, well before the time of Jesus, some of them had been translated into Greek in what was known as the Septuagint, LXX, in order to make them more accessible to those who no longer spoke Hebrew. In the whole Mediterranean basin Greek had become the everyday language of business and social affairs and so Diaspora Jews would be benefited and, by the same token, the Mediterranean world was ready to receive the New Testament, a message for all people, and therefore written in Greek.

In both Judea and Galilee, I understand that ordinary men and women in the time of Jesus would, in everyday life, more than likely speak in some form of Aramaic. So much so that, by the time of Jesus, translations of some OT books into Aramaic had already appeared. These Targums, as they are called, are the Aramaic translations – or rather paraphrases – of the books of the Old Testament, and, in their earliest form, date from the time when Aramaic superseded Hebrew as the spoken language of the Jews. In their origin they were designed to meet the needs of the unlearned among the people who had ceased to understand the Hebrew of the Old Testament. It is fairly certain that Aramaic was firmly established in Palestine in the 1st century AD.

In chapter 4:16, Luke tells us that Jesus, at the beginning of his ministry, went to the Nazareth synagogue on a Sabbath day, as he did regularly. He was handed the scroll of Isaiah and opened it at chapter 61 and read a few lines. We are not told what language the scroll was written in or what language Jesus spoke. No doubt he would have been able to read and speak the

classical Hebrew of the OT and perhaps, because he was reading from the scriptures, that would have been understood by all present. But it is more likely that he read and/or spoke in a form of Aramaic, the common language of the area.

There are more than a few Aramaic words that appear in the Greek of the New Testament, words such as *abba*, *maranatha*, *hosanna*, *mammon*, *rabboni* and *talitha*. What are they doing there? Like his compatriots, Jesus would have almost certainly used Aramaic in his everyday life but Mark gives us evidence that he also used it in his prayers. In 14:36, Mark tells us that Jesus in Gethsemane told his disciples that his heart was ready to break and he went on to say, in prayer to God: 'Abba, Father, all things are possible to you; take this cup from me. Yet not my will but yours.' Probably the Aramaic word *abba* appears in Mark because it was remembered as the way Jesus had been heard to pray, and maybe not just on that particular occasion. It is most unlikely that Jesus would have actually said both *abba* and *pater*, the latter more than likely added by Mark for the benefit of his Greek-speaking readers and hearers who may not at first have understood *abba*.

Paul, in Romans and Galatians, probably written before Mark's Gospel, gives us evidence that the early church did not forget that Jesus addressed God as *abba*. In Rom 8:15 he says: 'The Spirit you have received is not a spirit of slavery, leading you back into a life of fear, but a Spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry "Abba! Father!"' In Gal 4:6 he says: 'To prove that you are sons, God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying "Abba, Father!"' Again, is it not most likely that Paul puts in the *pater* as the translation of *abba*, unless we are to take this as evidence that at least some early churches had adopted the double-barrelled 'Abba, Father' in their cries to God. Whatever the case may be, Paul's two uses of the word *abba* would suggest that his churches at least were using the Aramaic *abba* to address God and Mark's record of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane shows the likely source of the practice to be Jesus himself.

It is reasonable therefore to consider that, being an Aramaic speaker, Jesus regularly addressed God as *abba*. But what of his disciples? The phrase 'The Lord's Prayer' is usually understood to refer to Jesus's response to his disciples' request to be taught how to pray, just as John the Baptist had apparently taught his own disciples how to pray (Luke 11:1-4; Mat 6:9-13). In this country it is usually remembered in the form it took in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. Now, although neither Luke nor Matthew make any use of the word *abba* in their Gospels, is it not likely that, when at their request, he taught his disciples to pray, he encouraged them also to address God as *abba* and so the first word of the Lord's Prayer would have been *abba*, 'Father' or 'Our Father'. There is no evidence that John the Baptist had taught his disciples to address God in this way and so Jesus gave his disciples something that was distinctive of his own prayer life, something that would distinguish them from John's disciples.

There were Jewish prayers that sometimes addressed God as Father but they would have normally been in Hebrew. It is significant that Jesus did not begin the prayer with words such as 'Blessed are you, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, . . .' the opening words of the first of the 18 benediction prayers said/chanted regularly by Jews, and known as the Amidah. That would have rather implied that this prayer was only for the direct descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and so would have continued to restrict the people of God to Jews. Jesus chose to begin his prayer with a word that is used of God in the 5th and 6th of the 18 benedictions, and that is 'Father', which would be meaningful not only to Jews but also to Gentiles, not only to freemen but also to slaves, not only to men but also to women. Before God, the Father, we are all one and no one has priority over the other.

By addressing God as *abba* in Aramaic Jesus was indicating that henceforward there would be no need to address God only in Hebrew, as though this was the only language appropriate for prayers to God, and in doing so he was also opening up the way to take the gospel to the world in Greek. Some Jews still insist that Biblical Hebrew is the right language for prayers, some Christadelphians expect that all will speak and therefore pray in Hebrew in the kingdom, and Muslims still pray in 7th century classical Arabic, the language of the Koran. Judaism and Islam then both have a sacred language but Christianity does not!

Not only does Jesus not insist on prayer in Hebrew but he does not specify any set times for prayer and encourages his disciples not to engage in long, wordy prayers. His first disciples would have known how important prayer was to Jesus and how he sometimes spent long hours on his own in prayer, all of which is recorded for us in the Gospels. There can be no doubt that Jesus wanted his disciples in some measure to share his intimate experience of prayer to God with him. He wanted them to share his sonship and so to be one with him, one with the Father and one with each other. The beginning of such oneness was the *abba* prayer given for all Jesus' disciples, male and female.

It seems that the long 'a' at the end of *abba* is the definite article in Aramaic and so *abba* literally means 'The Father' but in context can also mean 'Our Father' or even 'My Father' or 'Dear Father': all are legitimate translations of *abba*. As far as the Lord's Prayer is concerned, Matthew, in the Greek of 6:9, has literally 'Our Father' whereas Luke in 11:2 has simply 'Father' which is rendered 'Our Father' in the AV but just 'Father' in the REB. 'Our Father' has certainly become the traditional reading and, as Bailey (see below) says on p. 100, 'the prayer affirms a family of God that has one Father and this prayer includes all followers of Jesus in that family.' He goes on to say, on p. 101, that: 'The Lord's prayer affirms the critical role of the community in which this title, Father, is used. When using this phrase 'Our Father' the worshiper is obliged to look down the pew and across the world and see brothers and sisters in every land. Only in the unity of the family of God is the title 'Our Father' legitimately invoked.'

There is no evidence in the NT that Jesus organised his disciples to recite anything like The Lord's Prayer together, when it would of course have been really appropriate to begin with 'Our Father'. Nor is there any direct evidence that he led his disciples in prayer beginning with 'Our Father'. He seemed to distinguish himself from his disciples and spoke of his Father and their Father, his God and their God (John 20:17), as though his relationship with God was somewhat different to theirs. Whatever the case may be, it was not too long before the prayer did form part of a regular liturgy, or order of service, that included the Lord's Prayer said together before the Breaking of Bread and only by baptised members of the church.

The prayer can of course be used by individuals when it might well be appropriate to say 'My Father'. Anyone who prays to *Abba* however must know that they are part of a family where, as Paul says: 'There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 4:28). We all share the same relationship with the Father and the Son and with one another.

In summary, Jesus' regular use of *abba* in prayer to God surely authorises prayer in any language, denies the need for one 'holy' language, and puts all disciples on the same level. Like other things Jesus said and did, his use of *abba* was, in his context, a significant part of his general purpose which was to break down barriers between God and humankind and barriers within humanity. Specifically, it contributed to the breakdown of the barriers between Jew and Gentile, freemen and slaves, men and women. Are we too contributing to the spread of the ethos that Jesus encouraged?

Les Boddy

**NB** I am indebted to Kenneth Bailey and hope I have not misrepresented him.  
*Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes - Cultural Studies in the Gospels*  
Kenneth E Bailey SPCK Soft Cover £12.99 443pp 978-0-281-05975-1  
(Especially Part 3 The Lord's Prayer Chapter 7 God our Father pp 91-103.)

Fifty Years 1961 –2011

To assess change over this time is an awesome task. It is necessarily subjective, and open to challenge. But some assessment is, hopefully, better than none, and may provoke others to think critically and offer their own observations. I've asked several people for their impressions too, so that these thoughts are wider than simply those of one person.

### Numbers

Let's start with the bad news. Perhaps the most obvious change is in the size of membership and the number of ecclesias in Britain. Most ecclesias are now much smaller than they were in the 1960s and some have disappeared altogether. In the 1972 ALS diary there were about 316 ecclesias in Britain; in 1999 it was about 290; by 2011 it is down to 266. The decline in overall numbers can be observed by comparing reported baptisms with reported deaths. Churchgoing throughout Britain has also declined steeply during this period, and Christadelphian losses are less than those suffered by many churches. It is nevertheless a cause of concern that many ecclesias have an increasingly elderly membership.

While the lack of numbers is a problem in some areas, the youth activities provided through monthly youth groups, ecclesial camps, gatherings, conferences and Bible schools succeed in attracting and keeping a large number of young people, which bodes well for the future.

However, while numbers in Britain may be reduced, numbers overseas have increased. There were about 72 Australian ecclesias listed in 1972; now it is doubled to about 145. Numbers continue to increase as more and wider preaching is being undertaken in countries which were previously inaccessible such as in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Some areas like Australia and New Zealand have successfully converted people from the Chinese immigrant community, and ecclesias in Africa have shown large increases in number and in membership.

### Increase in Wealth

In material wealth, the community has become more prosperous. Perhaps as wealth has increased, people's interest has been absorbed elsewhere, and this may account for our decreasing numbers. But there is a positive side, and we should be grateful to God for our material goods, and see them as an opportunity to greater service. Before the Welfare State in 1948 ecclesias had to contribute substantially to help those in poverty, and this was applied to our own members, as also to hospitals and other charities. German-Jewish refugees were adopted by Christadelphian couples, thus making a very substantial care commitment. Over the last 50 years there has been an increase in contributions worldwide to help alleviate the suffering both of brothers and sisters and of people in general, with funds channelled through organisations like the Samaritan Fund, Meal-a-Day, Agape in Action, and the Bible Mission Welfare Fund. The expansion of Care Homes has led to an exceptionally high quality level of care for our elderly. More ecclesias now have their own halls. Car-ownership is high, so that travel to ecclesial events is now easier than before, with lifts readily provided, though perhaps there is some loss of communal fellowship now that ecclesias rarely hire a coach for such events.

### Ecclesial Practice

Ecclesial practice is diverse, and has probably become more so over the last fifty years. There is a well-known joke: 'How many Christadelphians does it take to change a light bulb?' Answer: '*Change?* What do you mean *change?*' In some areas, change and innovation has been pursued with approval, especially in preaching methods, where modern techniques of all sorts, especially in technology, have been adopted enthusiastically. But in other areas, change has often been resisted such as in language of prayers, retention of the King James version of the Bible, dress codes, seating, types of hymns sung, and the largely male orientation of main ecclesial activities. It is ironic that a community which began as revolutionary has tended to become largely conservative. Reasons for or against change or innovation can be given, but we all need to examine ourselves on this as on other aspects of our Christian lives and consider whether our motivation in any change we advocate or any change we oppose arises from desirable Biblical attitudes or from less worthy thinking. Change has perceptively taken place, but at different speeds according to the size and make up of individual ecclesias. The most obvious changes are the less formal styles in which our meetings are run, and the inclusion of a wider variety of hymns and musical instruments. New hymnbooks were produced by the Christadelphian Magazine and Publishing Association in 1964 and 2002. Hoddesdon Christadelphian Conference produced *Sing Hosanna* which was expanded into *Praise the Lord*, and in Australia a further new hymnbook was produced in 2010. The content of hymns has changed to some extent: there may be more stress on personal spiritual commitment and service to God here and now. Dress tends to be more casual, and there is a more general awareness that dress codes have often been more a matter of worldly fashion than Bible teaching. Suits and ties are no longer expected of men, nor dresses rather than trousers for women. Hats are less worn, sometime replaced by headscarves, while others have preferred to consider that any literal headcovering is a misunderstanding of how to apply the principles in 1 Corinthians 11. In an increasing number of ecclesias sisters are able to take a spoken part, especially in reading sections of the Bible at the Breaking of Bread, while in a few ecclesias sisters now participate in prayer, exhortation and presiding. This also leads to a counter-action where male-only verbal involvement is strongly asserted on the argument that male and female roles are 'clearly' defined in Scripture. Many brothers and sisters, when they examine Scripture, don't find the position so 'clearly' defined as is confidently asserted by those who wish to keep a male-only participation, but change is often inhibited by strong opposition presented by even one or two objectors.

### Lessons from the past? Hopes for the Future?

There is a great deal of dynamism in the community. It is often channelled in positive directions of preaching, welfare work, pastoral concern, and mutual upbuilding. It has also at times been directed less beneficially when conflicts have arisen over doctrine or practice. It is sometimes said that 'personalities' are the problem, and this was so in the early church (1 Corinthians 1:12 'One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas". . .'). Personalities affect judgment today: peer-pressure from friends and family, and above all from marriage partners. But the issue is deeper than this. Why is it that some people choose to accept one set of explanations, and others a different set? It is noticeable that many in the community are fourth or fifth generation Christadelphians, so have been brought up with a definite doctrinal predisposition to accept what they have been told rather than thinking things out for themselves like first generation members have done. One member, brought up in the Christadelphian faith, said: 'Other churches *think* they have the truth, but we *know* we have!' The doctrinal controversies that have caused splits within our community suggest that matters are more complicated. Issues over the last 50 years have included the age of the earth, the compatibility or otherwise of science and the Bible, our understanding of the Holy Spirit, interpretations of the Atonement, attitudes to divorce and remarriage, and disagreements over the extent to which women should actively participate in ecclesial meetings along with the men.

When faced with such issues, four responses are possible:

- (a) Cry 'heresy' and seek to disfellowship those who express varying understanding in these areas. This approach also often adopts an unspiritual blanket labelling of those deemed in error.
- (b) Bury one's head in the sand, and simply reiterate older views regardless of the evidence.
- (c) Refuse to allow discussion by using the power of the press to present only one side.

(d) Accept that there are genuine reasons for different approaches, and encourage discussion in a spirit of humility and a willingness to reach deeper understanding.

The first three responses have been regularly practised – not just in the last 50 years but back to the beginning in the 1850s. Over the last decade, the third response has been eliminated by the availability of the internet, where discussion forums and special-interest sites have made the expression of alternative views widely available. The fourth response (d) is the only one, in the writer's opinion, which can command either Biblical or moral support. To practice this requires tolerance, 'forbearing one another in love' (Eph 4:2) – a willingness to accept that we can still enjoy fellowship together even though different views are held on any of the topics listed above.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. (Col 3:12-16, NIV 2010)

It should be possible, if we hold to the New Testament's central doctrine on unity, to discuss any of these subjects and come to one's own informed opinion, without threats of disfellowship. Sadly, over the last 50 years, not to mention 150, there have been many parts of the ecclesial world where this has not been possible. But reassessment is necessary, even if we would prefer not to think so. By way of an example, let me finish with one area where some rethinking is needed: **Signs of the Times**.

In the 1950s I remember billing our neighbourhood with a leaflet: 'The greatest event of all time about to happen.' When one is young and does not know much about history, it is easy to be persuaded that current troubles are unique in world events and that the return of Christ is imminent. I understand the phrase 'about to happen' to mean 'within the next few years'. Such claims have been repeatedly asserted in our community as Bible truth.

In *Elpis Israel* (1849, page 373) Dr Thomas (1805-1871) claimed, on the basis of calculations from Daniel and the Book of Revelation, that the 'Everlasting Kingdom of Jesus Christ 1000 years,' would begin in 1905.

Brother Frank G. Jannaway (1860-1935) gave a series of public lectures in 1895. The newspaper advertisement said: 'DOOMED GOVERNMENTS. World-stirring changes about to take place. Infallible information respecting the impending Second Coming of Christ to the Earth, and the pulling down and building up work that he will accomplish. Are you anxious to know the particulars? Then come and hear.' (*Kilmarnock Standard*, 3 August 1895)

Did Dr Thomas speak the truth on this subject? Did Frank Jannaway?

Brother Robert Roberts (1839-1898) wrote:

'... the Dr.'s calculations are not yet proved wrong. It will be necessary for AD 1910 (common era) to pass without the presence of Christ on the earth before this can be made out; for though the Dr. expected Christ to come in 1866-68, he did not look for the establishment of the kingdom till 1910. He supposed the interval between 1866-8 and 1910 would be occupied in the subjugation of the nations.'

(Robert Roberts, *Dr Thomas: His Life and Work*, 1873 edition, page 315)

Time has proved each of these claims to be false. A very elderly brother wrote a few years ago that we owe the public an apology for claiming to know when we do not, for telling people that we have 'infallible information'. But similar claims are still made. Current advertising at the Bible Exhibition says: 'We believe that the second coming of Christ is foretold in the Bible and that it is about to happen.'

It is true that the second coming is foretold in the Bible. It is desirable that it should come soon, for the world desperately needs peace and healing; it is right that we should pray for it; and it is right that we should be aware of the non-permanence of human governments and civilisations, as the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami has forcibly illustrated. But to assert as a matter of Christadelphian faith that the second coming is 'about to happen' is not only unwise in the light of the previous false claims made in our community, but contrary to what Jesus taught: 'But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father' (Mat 24:36).

I am not scoffing like those in 2 Peter 3:4. I am asking that we should make a sober assessment of both Bible teaching and of the (now proved false) claims of our community. We need a balanced analysis of any of the issues that are current or may come up in the future, along with a willingness to make reassessments in the light of new knowledge. Dr Thomas encouraged people to investigate the Bible for themselves. Unfortunately, he liked them to do so provided that they reached the same conclusion as he! Nevertheless, the good intentions he set forward are ones we should still emulate 150 and more years later, for if we followed these, the divisions, disputes and controversies of the past could have been avoided, and all of our energy put into *constructive* agreement and disagreement, while continuing to follow the apostle Paul's criterion: 'Everything must be done so that the church may be built up' (1 Cor 14:26).

Dr Thomas printed the following thoughts by Bicheno, revised by himself:

Whatever in religion is destructive of union among true believers, which leads to domination over conscience, to hinder free enquiry after truth, or any way oppresses and persecutes men for matters truly cognizable by God, is Antichristian. Wherever there is intolerance; wherever we find conditions of communion among Christians imposed, which Christ hath not clearly enjoined; wherever creeds and modes of worship are enforced by human power, and men are made to forfeit any of their civil rights, or are stigmatized on these accounts, there is that spirit which is not of God. Wherever one Christian, or a number of Christians, assumes the seat of authority and judgment in the church of Christ, whether they call for fire to destroy those who dissent from them, or only exclude them from their communion and affection, there is a portion of that spirit of Antichrist which has so long opposed itself to the benign principles of the kingdom of the Prince of Peace, has been the cause of so many evils to humanity, and the occasion of making the inconsiderate esteem the amiable yet distinct and uncompromising religion of Jesus, as a source of mischief, instead of benevolence. Alas, how much of this spirit remains amongst us all!

('Bicheno's Thoughts on His Times – revised by the Editor', John Thomas, *Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*, Vol V, No. 8, August 1855).

As we look back on the past and forward to the future, the permanent validity of these comments is worth pondering.

Ian McHaffie

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**Treasurer and Subscriptions Secretary for  
*The Endeavour Magazine***

After over 15 years of voluntary service, Ruth would like to retire. We thank her for the invaluable work she has done in keeping the venture financially viable and for dealing so efficiently with subscriptions and distribution. So the Committee is looking for someone to fill the above post and the work involved is detailed below:

- 1). Keeping the financial records and producing the annual accounts.
  - 2). Producing an agenda for the AGM and the minutes.
  - 3). Arranging for printing of the magazine in May and November.
  - 4). Mailing the magazine in June and December.
  - 5). Keeping a database of subscribers, at present kept in Excel.
  - 6). Reminders for payment for the current year are sent out with the June issue with an option to pay for two years. A second reminder is sent with the December issue to those who have not paid.
- Anyone who is willing to volunteer should contact (Mrs) Ruth Marsters for more information. Tel. 01366 500030 email. end@marstersvoice.co.uk

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**Editorial**

**An Appreciation of Paul Launchbury, 1936-2011.**

I first made Paul's acquaintance when he came down to London from Birmingham to work for a large pharmaceutical company. Rita, his wife, had for a time been a member of the old North London Ecclesia, and so many of us already knew her.

Paul's interests were many despite the handicap of severe, painful eye trouble which necessitated two corneal grafts. He was overjoyed with this renewed gift of sight, but in course of time it deteriorated again until he could hardly see the print of his beloved scriptures, either in English or in Hebrew, his knowledge of which was extensive. Many at Barnet profited by his expertise, particularly his love of the Psalms. We miss his many gifts.

Barnet Ecclesia had a good nucleus of members in those days, and we took the plunge to buy premises that we could use throughout the week. Thanks to Paul and his older sons, and to other strong men like Bill Robinson, the building was knocked into shape for our many needs – we had a 'home', and Paul and Rita subsequently took on the job of wardens, living in the flat above the ecclesial rooms. Their door was always open to any who needed practical or spiritual help, and for many years they also meticulously looked after the large garden where Paul was able to have a greenhouse for his very fine cactus collection.

Another of Paul's great joys was to attend the Christadelphian Summer School in Birmingham where he played a full part in

discussion, talks and workshops. He was a staunch defender of the School and all who attended it.

Unfortunately, some fifteen – perhaps more – years ago, the first signs of Parkinson's were diagnosed and he and Rita moved to Kent to be with their eldest son, Steve. This prompted Paul to gather together his thoughts on immortality and time – whether immortal beings could, and did, go back and forward in time at will. He called this *Metachronology* and he first had it printed as more of a thesis. By request, he revised it for a wider readership, and it was completed just before his death. May it prosper!

By Dec 2010, Rita herself needed respite care and Paul was moved into a nursing home. Just before Christmas, He began hallucinating badly but he was able to share communion with us and to follow our thoughts. He now sleeps in the care of his Lord and ours, who we know will comfort and strengthen Rita and the family.

The following was the 'affirmation of faith' used at our last breaking of bread:

Where does the journey end?  
Beyond where you can see.  
Where do the years end?  
That's unknown to you or me.  
Where does life end?  
In love and eternity.

(From David Adam's *Landscapes of Light*)

Margery McGregor

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## A prayer

From *In a Strange Land* by Malcolm Goldsmith, page 176.  
(See next article.)

*Lord, as I move into an uncertain future  
provide me with those who can be the  
Christ-light for me.  
Enfold me within the worshipping community and  
help me to rest in the faith that,  
although I may well forget you,  
your love never allows you to forget me.  
Thank you, for that good news, that Gospel message  
which will sustain my inner being, even though  
I may be unable to remember from whom  
such love and mercy flows.*

*In a Strange Land...*  
***People with Dementia and the Local Church***  
by Malcolm Goldsmith  
4M Publications, Southwell & Edinburgh, 239pp, ISBN 0 9530494 6 9  
£12 at Amazon

The title of this book is based on Psalm 137: 'By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept . . . How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?'

In 587 BC Jerusalem was attacked. The Temple was destroyed and the Hebrew people were taken into exile in Babylon. From a time of what appeared to be disaster and despair new insights into the nature of God emerged and new experiences of God's love and care became clear to them. On page 14 of his book, Malcolm Goldsmith says:

I want to suggest that our experiences of dementia may not perhaps, be all that dissimilar. For the person with dementia and for their families and carers there is a breaking down of what has been known and trusted and accepted over the years. A future is emerging which can be very frightening. A diagnosis of dementia can be experienced as an invasion of all that has been held dear, a breaking down of, or a threat to, relationships, understanding, plans and hopes, even of Hope itself. It is very often an experience of devastation, sometimes coming very quickly, or sometimes, for other people, coming quite gradually – but still coming, whether slowly or quickly. It is a strange land which is beckoning, and will it be possible to sing the Lord's song within it? The answer to that question must be – Yes, it will be possible, for many people for much of the time; the challenge is to help enable that to be the case. A further challenge is then to enable it to be possible for all people for most, or all of the time.

This book is written for church leaders and for all Christians who want to understand dementia and the effect that it can have on the lives of people with dementia and their carers. Its aim is to help us to have a greater understanding and to suggest ways that we can help. Malcolm Goldsmith is well-read on the subject as well as having wide experience of working with people with dementia and those caring for them, whether family members or those working in care homes. It is written from a Christian perspective. Many of the chapters either begin or conclude with a relevant prayer or a quotation from the Bible. At the end of

the book there are two appendices giving suggested services for use in a care home and one when a person is admitted to a nursing home.

There are four sections to the book. Part one deals with the basic principles that Malcolm Goldsmith wants to stress. He believes that the person with dementia remains a person until the point of death. As carers we have to develop our personal resources to treat them as a person. He believes that God is the umbilical cord which sustains every human being. So, God is there when all that seems left of a person is an empty shell. He believes that the time has come for churches to be more accessible to people with dementia.

Part two gives a useful presentation of current research about dementia and recommends books for further reading. Malcolm Goldsmith is anxious to point out that everyone is different and so the patterns which are given for the progress of dementia are not followed by every person with dementia. Nor are some of the activities he suggests suitable for all people all of the time. He gives accounts of the experience of dementia from the perspective of those with dementia and their families. He deals with memory, wandering, challenging behaviour, grief, depression. In this section he makes suggestions for visiting a person with dementia. He makes points which are relevant for any visit to someone who is old and/or ill. Prepare for your visit so that you give adequate time to the person you are visiting. Give the person time to register that someone has arrived. Introduce yourself. Do not rush a person with dementia. Allow the person time to process what you have said. If you start a conversation you must have time to let it develop. Be alert to how the person is feeling. They may be tired or not feeling like communicating. This may be different on a different day. Try to sit or stand at the same level as they are. Speak slowly and simply but do not speak down to them. People with dementia are adults and should be treated as such. Do not be afraid of pauses or silence.

Malcolm Goldsmith says that one of the saddest consequences of people having dementia is that people so rapidly forget or ignore what that person has done or said or achieved. There is great value in building up a life story with photos and captions. He also suggests the use of photographs to make up a scrapbook or a memory box holding things that will evoke memories. It could be a stone from the garden or a theatre programme, or a button from a favourite dress.

In part three Malcolm Goldsmith deals with frequently asked questions in relation to people's faith. Why should this happen to me? Is it a punishment from God? What will happen to my faith? What about the faith of the care-givers? To these he gives positive, practical and supportive answers in the form of a discussion of the issues. He also gives examples of how people have answered these questions. An American nun remarked to her doctor, 'Dr. Snowdon, do you know what my worst fear was?'. . . 'That I was going to forget Jesus,' she said. 'I finally realised that I may not remember Him, but that He will remember me.' (Page 133)

The book is written, as the title states, for the local church and in this third section he gives practical suggestions of how churches can help those in their congregations who are suffering from dementia. The church needs to be aware that they may be unwittingly sending out signals that people with mental problems are not welcome. People who once did jobs in the church may now be asked less. The services can be confusing. Other members of the church do not know how to deal with people when they appear to be different or difficult. These can be problems that our ecclesias may have too. An important part of dementia care is to focus on what people can do, so there may be jobs that people in early stages of dementia can still continue. Churches and our ecclesias should be places of welcome for 'all sorts of conditions of men'. So we need to develop some understanding of how to help people with dementia and that is what this book is about.

The fourth part of the book is entitled 'Theological Reflection'. Here Malcolm Goldsmith returns to the theme of exile but also looks at the passion narratives which deal with unmerited suffering. On p. 304 he says:  
Nothing that I write can take away the pain and sadness associated with dementia. Good dementia care can alleviate some of the suffering and share some of the burden. . . . But there is no escaping the hard reality that this is a progressive illness that will gradually make normal communication more and more difficult. . . .  
But Malcolm Goldsmith believes that there is hope. Hope in increased medical understanding of the problem, in developing new treatments, in a greater understanding of care. Hope in a greater general understanding that will help us all in our communication with those with dementia.

Malcolm Goldsmith brings together a wealth of information, encouragement and practical advice for all who are engaged in the care of people with dementia. He encourages us all to have a greater understanding of the problems and practical issues that should help us to be supportive of those with dementia and their carers.

**Averil McHaffie**

**NB.** A short and interesting article by Malcolm Goldsmith on Dementia can be found on [www.guild-of-st-raphael.org.uk/dementia.htm](http://www.guild-of-st-raphael.org.uk/dementia.htm).

### ***Whose story am I? Re-thinking dementia in the Kingdom of God.***

Talk by John Swinton given at Greenbelt 2010,  
available on CD from [www.greenbelt.org.uk](http://www.greenbelt.org.uk)

John Swinton is Professor in Practical Theology and Pastoral Care at the University of Aberdeen. John is an ordained minister in the Church of Scotland and has a background of working as a nurse in the area of mental health and learning disabilities, and then as a hospital chaplain and a community health chaplain. His theological reflection is therefore firmly grounded in a wealth of practical experience and he speaks engagingly and with warmth and humour. So he is easy to listen to but his practical help and theological insights are profound.

The title of his talk at Greenbelt 2010 (an annual Christian festival held on the Cheltenham racecourse) is *Whose story am I? Re-thinking dementia in the Kingdom of God*. This could lead you to think that this talk is really only of interest to those who are wrestling with understanding dementia and its spiritual and practical implications. It is all that, but it is also so much more and as John says at the beginning of the session, it is about what it means to be human.

Underpinning this talk is the question 'Who am I?' One of the ways that we know who we are is through the stories we tell and the stories told about us, John explains. Memory is not just held in your own mind, but is located in all sorts of places (your computer for example!) and significantly with friends and family. Someone who loses their memory through dementia therefore has not lost their story entirely, for it is held by others also. He suggests that one of the good ways of being with people with dementia is to hold their story well and protect them from stories that do them damage and harm.

Yes, John says, dementia *is* a neurological condition but it is not 'nothing but' a medical condition for there is a social element to it, for if you treat people with dementia as problem people this then becomes self-fulfilling and a malignant social psychology develops. Maybe we should give people with dementia the benefit of the doubt, not assume 'their mind has gone', and should

treat them with a greater degree of hope? We should also beware of assuming that spirituality rests only in rationality and high levels of cognition.

John tells the story of Sandra who has profound disabilities and who is a member of the Quaker community. When Sandra is in a Quaker meeting, and the silence 'breaks', she enters with the other people into a positive experience of the silence. Her spirituality is non-cognitive. This quality of spirituality is also applicable to people with dementia for they are able to re-enter faith experience in a way that bypasses their disability.

Another story John tells is of a lady who was a patient on a dementia ward and who underwent a change in behaviour becoming very disturbed and restless, saying the same thing over again. A nurse got alongside her and found that she was repeating endlessly 'God, God, God.' The lady with dementia was a Christian and the nurse had the insight to ask her if she was afraid that God would forget her. That indeed was her fear and the nurse was able to reassure her that although she would forget God: God would not forget her – and the disturbed behaviour immediately ceased.

In his concluding remarks, John picks up on this theme that the hope for dementia sufferers, and for us all, is that God will remember us. Whether or not we have dementia, none of us knows our story fully, free from distortion. We have fleeting glimpses, but only God knows and remembers who we are. On that great day when we stand before God in judgement, he says, then we will know who we are because the story will be told properly.

This is a CD well worth listening to. It is profound and moving and includes many memorable stories which challenge our perceptions and behaviour. Underlying the whole talk is the theme of what it means to be human which is brought into sharp focus with the issues surrounding dementia but is a common human dilemma. It reminds us that we are not intended to live as isolated individuals but that in our corporate faith we are holding each other. Ultimately it is only God who truly knows our story and our present and future hope lies in this. It is the sort of talk where you just want to discuss it with others afterwards, probing and sharing together the insights and exploring the practical implications.

**Alison Goodlad**

### **Faith – no *reason* to be hurtful**

Faith will manifest itself in many admirable ways. Unfortunately there is a downside when the balance between faith and reason is lost. An uncritical veneration of scripture inevitably leads to unrealistic beliefs, most of which may be seen as harmless. This article is devoted to the problem of faith when it proves hurtful. Reading the Word too literally manifests itself in various hurtful ways. Down the centuries this has proved fatal to thousands of people. It is a horrid truth that so many callous and brutal deeds have been perpetrated in the name of religion. We must feel uncomfortable with many aspects of the Old Testament. The following selection should suffice:

**'Thou shalt not suffer a witch (a woman who does evil magic) to live.'**<sup>1</sup> How many innocent women were relentlessly hunted and tortured until they 'confessed', and were then burned? Luther arranged for the burning of 4 witches and Calvin also quoted Exodus to authorise that witches should be killed: and they surely were in their tens of thousands. So do we believe today that those found to be involved in incantations, spells or sorcery are worthy of death? Or, using *reason*, might we not conclude that a death penalty is inappropriate for a dubious ability to actually work evil magic?

There are a number of other **harsh penal laws** like the one relating to unruly children: 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.'<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew word for *curse*, according to Young, means *to lightly esteem, vilify, revile*. The death penalty awaited those who swore at their parents. A lot of modern youngsters would clearly not have survived beyond their teens.

'Cases of wives with suspicious husbands'<sup>3</sup> reads like a medieval trial by ordeal. A ritual is described in which a priest, at the request of a suspicious husband, mixes holy water, flour and dirt and then insists the woman drink it to determine whether she has committed adultery. If she had been faithful she would be immune from the water. If unfaithful, the oath, which she had been made to take, summoned God to 'cause your genitals to shrink and your stomach to swell up.' Under this law the husband was free from responsibility of false accusation, but worse, it may have given him a licence to make his wife submissive to his demands. Only women were subject to this degrading ritual. 'That no comparable law existed for the male, or no concern is expressed that undisclosed male infidelity might contaminate the camp, is revealing of the patriarchy involved.'<sup>4</sup>

**Genocide**<sup>5</sup> and **Infanticide** (featuring in the Old Testament), often invite vitriolic comment from the critics.

**'Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters**, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering' . . .<sup>6</sup> If then, you find yourself in the service of a harsh master, try to be philosophical and well, just get on with it. It is rather surprising that nowhere in scripture is the institution of slavery condemned. The Law of Moses regulated and therefore legitimized it, and, after an unfortunate incident, Noah embraced it: 'Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers.'<sup>7</sup> Christians used this verse to justify slavery (and the Ku Klux Klan to justify white supremacy). Africans were believed to be the offspring of Ham and were thus subjected by their fellow humans to be the 'lowest of slaves.' Many used the apostle's teaching to justify their involvement in the slave trade.

The writer of *The Shepherd of Hermas* took a more acceptable line. He actually instructs Christians to use their common funds to redeem slaves. Wilberforce didn't take the teaching of the scripture literally either. He was part of a wider movement which campaigned long and hard for an end to slavery. They 'worked for it, at a time when most of the institutional church was quite happy to accept it (and, indeed, endorse it) as a fact of life.'<sup>8</sup>

### **The challenge of fundamentalism**

We have highlighted a number of thorny issues in the Bible involving a moral code completely unacceptable in the modern world. It's undoubtedly true to say that Israel showed a moral awareness that was superior to other contemporary societies but the moral code we have examined clearly has no relevance for today. Our community, by and large, has a fundamentalist rationale resistant to finding fault with *sacred* instructions in scripture (despite the undoubted suffering and hurt which has resulted from the passages we've highlighted). 'If it's in the Bible, God said it, I believe it, that settles it'. There is a significant moral leap from the Old to the New Testament, where genocide, for example, is transformed into 'love your enemies'. Unfortunately a literal reading of the NT will still lead to hurtful practices. Our community, regrettably, has an intolerant policy

towards homosexuals, a strategy which scorns and ostracizes those who divorce and remarry (treating them, at best, as second class citizens), and an androcentric structure to ecclesial organization. Ouch! This suggests there is more love and tolerance (and with less discrimination) in the secular society around us than in the ecclesia – a historical reversal of roles.

### The amazing principle of sublation

The idea of *sublation* is that an old idea or principle is not simply disproved and disposed of but is *contained in* the new higher principle that has replaced it. As another example, in our childhood we wrestle with certain problems which are forgotten by the time we are adults, but in fact it is those struggles which have formed us into the adults that we now are, though we are no longer troubled by those same problems. Thus: ‘to supersede, put an end to, but simultaneously maintain, preserve.’

Jewish rabbis have amended almost all the rules laying down harsh penalties – like stoning to death. One reason given is that they are in ‘tension’ with other laws like ‘loving your neighbour as yourself.’ Reform Judaism in the USA (19<sup>th</sup> Century) in referring to Orthodox Judaism, declared; ‘Today we accept as binding only its moral laws and maintain only such ceremonials as elevate and sanctify our lives, but reject such as are not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilization.’ Mercy and restraint were always held to override the strict application of the law. Love is the dominant force in Christianity and should therefore negate hurtful practices. Jesus’ primary teaching may be summarized as ‘Love God and your neighbour; and whatever you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.’

In the Bible we observe a maturing quality in the administration of justice to sinners; so God first ‘punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.’<sup>9</sup> In the estimation of Jesus, when asked about how many times we can forgive those who sin against us, he answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.’ Sublation is a genuine scriptural principle.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus uses the principle of sublation with astonishing power. With the mantra, ‘you have heard...but I say unto you,’ he breathes new life into old laws. ‘In this series of statements . . . the religious Law is not abandoned. But it is interpreted in such a way that most of its specific commands are rendered obsolete. The Law, Jesus teaches, is not simply to be cast aside as worthless. But it is to be fulfilled and transcended by a more inward, more universal and more demanding morality.’<sup>10</sup> The reinterpretation of the Torah given by Jesus emphasizes moral action (putting aside the ritual precepts that define Jewish identity) and he calls for justice to be combined with generosity and compassion.

The Pharisees were offended when Jesus and the disciples picked and ate ears of corn on the Sabbath. Jesus cited the example of David: when hungry, he was given the showbread, which, under the Law, only the priests were permitted to eat. ‘The necessity of the case, however, was in this instance allowed to override the ceremonial ordinance, and our Lord teaches men through that single instance to see the general principle that when positive commands and necessities involving the good of man come into collision, the latter, not the former, must prevail.’<sup>11</sup>

Jesus told his critics, ‘If you had known what these words mean, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice,” you would not have condemned the innocent.’ Moral considerations are *more important* than ritual (and literal obedience to rules) in the estimation of the prophet and endorsed by Jesus. The Pharisees were blinded by a literal understanding of the Sabbath and in failing to apply loving consideration they condemned those our Lord declared to be entirely innocent.

Jesus noted inconsistency in their thinking. They actually allowed circumcision to be performed on the Sabbath. According to Hillel<sup>12</sup>, ‘the Sabbath Law was one of the Negative and the Circumcision Law one of the Positive Precepts, and that the Positive destroys the Negative.’ Circumcision was a patriarchal rite adopted into the Law of Moses and was given sufficiently high status to override the Sabbath. ‘If then a patriarchal rite is greater than the Mosaic Sabbath, because the fathers were anterior to Moses, how much more an act of love, which is anterior to all time.’<sup>13</sup>

Jesus, then, lays down some vitally important principles for us to grasp. We need no longer be trapped into believing that homosexuals deserve the death penalty<sup>14</sup>, or, like Paul, hoping that they ‘received in themselves the due penalty for their error.’<sup>15</sup> Today, we could actually extend to them some tolerance, understanding and sympathy. Jesus, in teaching us to show compassion and sensitivity to the feelings of others, makes clear **the real nexus of our religion**<sup>16</sup>. When confronted with the woman taken in adultery, Jesus, who clearly took the Law of Moses very seriously, illustrated this very point. He invited any without sin to cast the first stone. No one did and he said ‘neither do I condemn you.’ His judgement and interpretation of this harsh law has immense significance. Clearly, Jesus didn’t read the scriptures literally and was somewhat frustrated by those who did.

‘If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed.’<sup>17</sup> This is not a sentiment that many of us wish to share because it is in *tension* with positive precepts. Unfortunately, others, believing all parts of scripture to be equally inspired, will zealously endorse this imprecation. ‘Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed.’<sup>18</sup> I’m aware that over time a certain amount of energy has been exerted in the practice of *shunning*. This may have been because of divorce and remarriage, marrying out of the faith<sup>19</sup>, for holding alleged heretical views<sup>20</sup>, or simply for losing faith. Confronting these situations, all too often, negative tactics have been employed.

This article has tried to demonstrate that, faith, when linked to a literal interpretation of scripture may prove hurtful, will invite critical disapproval and stands in need of intellectual emancipation. Faith, in association with reason, love, the principle of sublation and the dominance of positive precepts, should ignite a spirituality that is more effective in transforming character, in releasing human potential positively and administering justice humanely. It will likely invite joyful approval as a more genuine and beautiful form of Christianity<sup>21</sup>. After all, Jesus announced good news for everyone and the triumph of love. He was a ‘friend of tax collectors and sinners’, and of the lepers and the demoniacs, the vain and the lonely, the discourteous and the unattractive – everyone who was unacceptable came within the reach of his saving embrace. Do we need to spoil this good news and the beauty and power of his teaching by sanctioning *hurtful* interpretations<sup>22?</sup>

Keith Lowe

### Notes

1 Exodus 22:18

2 Exodus 21:17 NIV, Leviticus 20:9 and Proverbs 20:20

- 3 Subheading in GNB for Numbers 5:11-31  
 4 *The Pentateuch Oxford Bible Commentary* p. 161  
 5 Numbers 31:17-18 NIV  
 6 1 Peter 2:18-20 and Ephesians 6:5-9  
 7 Genesis 9:24-25  
 8 *Faith and Politics after Christendom*, Jonathan Bartley p.217  
 9 Numbers 14:18 NIV. Exod. 20:5: Chadwick (1890 Commentary) notes that ‘. . . this is confirmed in all the experience of the race. Insanity, idiocy, scrofula, consumption, are too often, though not always, the hereditary result of guilt.’ This notion of collective guilt was sublated because, presumably, it was inconsistent with an individual’s right to justice. So, later on, we read: ‘parents shall not be put to death for the children, nor shall children be put to death for their parents; only for their own crimes may persons be put to death.’ Deuteronomy 24:16.  
 10 *Is Religion Dangerous?* Prof. Keith Ward p. 120  
 11 See Ellicott Matthew 12:1-8  
 12 Hillel c.110BCE-10CE was a famous liberal Jewish religious leader associated with the development of the Mishnah and the Talmud.  
 13 Ellicott. Notes on John 7  
 14 Leviticus 20:13  
 15 Romans 1:27  
 16 Desmond Tutu, the former Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town and a Nobel Peace Prize winner, has described homophobia as a ‘crime against humanity’ and ‘every bit as unjust’ as apartheid: ‘We struggled against apartheid in South Africa, supported by people the world over, because black people were being blamed and made to suffer for something we could do nothing about; our very skins. It is the same with sexual orientation. We treat them [gays and lesbians] as pariahs and push them outside our communities. We make them doubt that they too are children of God – and this must be nearly the ultimate blasphemy. We blame them for what they are.’  
 17 1 Corinthians 16:22 ESV  
 18 2 Thess.3:14 also 1 Cor. 5:11-13, 2 Thess 3:6, 2 John 10-11  
 19 Divorce and remarriage provoke a great deal of anguish and hurt. Family Bible School the organisers stipulate ‘that God hates putting away, and they do not wish the harmony of the School to be disturbed by this kind of problem.’ Hmmm! Just the sort of hurtful discrimination that this article is trying to address.  
 20 Note recent observations in TEM about Ralph Lovelock. Those who try to reconcile science with Genesis will probably be given a hard time.  
 21 Augustine advocated that in a general way ‘no interpretation could be true which did not promote the love of God or the love of man.’ p. 75 *Early Christian Doctrine* JND Kelly 5<sup>th</sup> Edition  
 22 Matthew 18:15-20 outlines what the ecclesia should do to resolve disputes. Withdrawal of fellowship may sometimes be necessary. Treating one who has been disciplined as ‘a pagan or a tax collector’ is rather negative and may be sublated by a sympathetic effort to restore to fellowship

### **A Kingdom based on the Cross**

Ultimately the Kingdom of God will be the triumph of God and of Christ over all evil and the establishment of all good, when God is all in all. How will this be achieved? Will it be by triumph in war, by coercion, with millions dying in the conflict? or will it be by persuasion, by winning hearts and minds on the basis of Jesus Christ and him crucified?

The original teaching of the Christadelphian pioneers was that the kingdom would be established by force, with much bloodshed, and accepted by the mortal population only as the outcome of defeat. Many of us rejoiced in the psalm which spoke enthusiastically of the righteous washing their feet in the blood of the wicked and we looked forward to participating in executing the divine judgements. ‘This honour have all his saints!’ It was calculated that if, according to Zechariah 13, two thirds of Israel were to be slaughtered, it would not be a smaller proportion for the whole of mankind. And little thought was given to the terrible suffering involved, including that of billions who never knew anything of God’s covenants and the work of his Christ.

If this expectation were true, the mission and teaching of Jesus would lose its meaning and the gospel would be replaced by the bad news of worldwide bloodshed and vengeance. The way of life he taught and lived would have related merely to an interim period between two eras of bloody warfare, before perfection was forcibly inaugurated.

But would it rather harmonise with all that Jesus stands for, to believe that the Kingdom will spread to earth’s remotest bounds by the message of the cross, by the redeeming influence of the Lord Jesus Christ? Are not people to be saved by the impact of Jesus himself, his self-giving, his turning upside down of the violence which has pervaded all human activity throughout history, his establishment of new values stemming from his way of loving your enemies and overcoming evil with good. Is not God’s perfection shown in the Sermon on the Mount in ‘loving his enemies’, in leading people into the paths of forgiveness while they were yet sinners? One must recognise that judgement is part of this love and further study will no doubt lead to an understanding of judgement and forgiveness in which everything will fit harmoniously. (Romans 1 and 2 will require special attention.)

‘God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.’ ‘God is love.’ ‘Father forgive them for they know not what they do.’ Will not the Lamb of God finally complete his redemptive work when his life, death and resurrection become the means of weaning all mankind from the violence, lies, lewdness, hedonism, greed, consumerism, blame projection, hatred, gossip and slander which have ever dominated human society, though there have always been a minority whom Paul describes as having the law inscribed in their hearts?

Who would be the recipients of this benign influence in the development of the Kingdom of God in its final stages, which may last a lot longer than the 1000 years – the millennium – taken literally?

#### **Are there few that are saved?**

One statistic suggests that the justice of God will require that more people will have a chance of final acceptance than is usually believed. It is estimated that 100 billion people have actually lived on the earth throughout history. It would be excessively optimistic to believe that more than one per cent of these have ever heard the gospel in any meaningful way, sufficient for it to be said that they ‘refused obedience’ (Rom 1:21; 2:8). The question arises whether God will obliterate the 99% who have ever lived without a chance to respond to the gospel, or whether far more people are going to be raised in a general resurrection than we have hitherto believed. If they have never had a chance and have lived largely miserable lives in poverty and fear, will God raise from the dead all of these people? And will the work of the Kingdom until God is all in all, be the presentation of the total work of Jesus to all mankind? Will the life, death and resurrection of the Lamb of God – the Word made flesh – exert a major impact on all mankind? Will not the saviour himself in the earth, cause billions to become like him, for they shall see him as he is? (I John 3:1,2 re-applied to future children of God). And will the saints who live and reign with him have the role of ministering Christ to the masses and leading them in the ways of non-violence and love, unto repentance and transformation into the image of Christ?

Such a role for the believers of the first resurrection would be more noble and absorbing than that of the pictures of the kingdom popular in Victorian times, when Robert Roberts wrote his imaginary picture of the Final Consolation, (Christadelphian 1885), with the accent on the high status of the immortal saints. But the picture we are tentatively enquiring about is of saints employed in the perpetuation of the self-giving of Christ among the then recently resurrected mortal population of the earth. And, of course, it is more appealing than the vague eternal existence in some heaven which still predominates in the minds of most Christian congregations. This, in spite of the work of Tom Wright, until recently Bishop of Durham, to place the emphasis on the earth as the place designed by God where he will dwell in his human family, when the new creation is established.

If only a very small minority of those who have ever lived reach God's perfection, then will not God's purpose in creation have failed? The world will not have been so loved through the work of Jesus that God ultimately embraces the majority of those who have ever lived. Presumably non-coercion is a two-way street and God will not compel people who have this chance to accept it. They can still reject it and doubtless many will, but they will have been given the opportunity which their original mortal lives did not give them.

#### **A chance for all mankind**

A positive answer to my questions would fit with a number of scriptures which suggest a wider opportunity than we have been accustomed to suppose. The word 'all' in many of the following references is, of course, susceptible of other explanations. It could be 'all without distinction' or 'all without exception'. The flavour of the passages tends to suggest that all individuals without exception will have this final opportunity, not just all categories of humanity without distinction. Let us mull over these passages and consider whether our traditional interpretations have failed to give them enough weight. (The following quotations from the REB are not given in full, in anticipation that readers will look them up).

**John 1:29:** The Lamb of God that takes away the Sin of the World (ultimately creates a world where sin is totally absent – a collective outcome of the cross.)

**John 3:17:** It was not to judge the world that God sent his Son into the world, but that through him the world might be saved, (see also John 12:47).

**Romans 5:8:** One man's righteous act will bring acquittal (a not guilty verdict) for all people. (see v 17 – grace to many by one man, vastly exceeding the results of one man's sin. REB translates 'out of all proportion'.)

**Romans 11:32:** God's purpose was to show mercy to all mankind.

**1 Corinthians 15:22:** As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

**2 Corinthians 5:17-23:** There is a new creation . . . God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, no longer holding people's misdeeds against them.

**Ephesians 1:10:** God has a secret purpose in a plan determined beforehand in Christ, when the time is ripe, that the universe – everything in heaven and earth – might be brought to a unity in Christ. (The whole of Ephesians ch 1 and 2 are suffused with the theme of the fullness of Christ in life, death, resurrection and ascension ultimately filling the universe in all its parts 1:23.)

**Phil 2:10:** At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth and in the depths (resurrected) and every tongue acclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord.

**Colossians 1:20** God will reconcile all things to himself – making peace by the cross.

**1 Tim 2:3:** It is God's will that all should find salvation and come to know the Truth. Verse 6: Jesus sacrificed himself to win freedom for all mankind, revealing God's purpose in God's good time.

**Titus 2:11:** The grace of God has dawned with healing for all mankind.

**Hebrews 2:9:** He experienced (tasted) death for all mankind.

**1 Peter 2:12:** Let your conduct among unbelievers be so good that reflection on your good deeds will lead them to give glory to God in the day when he comes in Judgment. (This will evidently be an option in judgment day and is balanced by giving account of themselves to him who is ready to pass judgment on the living and the dead, see 1 Peter 4:5, which envisages many being raised who were not 'in the truth'.)

**1 Peter 3:18** The imprisoned spirits – a very difficult passage to all interpreters, but it does suggest that some sinners are raised to hear the gospel from the Lord; those in the Noah period may be a sample of a wider audience for the saving proclamation.

**1 John 2:2:** Jesus is himself a sacrifice to atone for our sins, and not ours only but the sins of the whole world.

**Revelation 5:13:** Then I heard all created things in heaven, in earth, under the earth and in the sea, crying 'praise and honour, glory and might, to him that sits upon the throne and to the Lamb for ever'.

A favourite passage, traditionally quoted in discussions with interested friends is 'prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.' We will wish to follow this ourselves as we, even now, follow the Lamb wherever he leads us.

**Alfred Ward**

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There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in his justice which is more than liberty.  
F W Faber

#### **Samaritans & Samaritans**

*The origins of the Jewish sect of the Samaritans, who still worship on Mount Gerizim, are unknown, but the sect was orthodox and conservative in spirit and practice . . . So wrote Wilfred Lambert in *The Endeavour Magazine*, No 91, May 1994, p 37.*

There is no reference to the Samaritans in the Hebrew Old Testament! Scholars are unable to determine precise events whereby there became a permanent division between the Samaritans and the Jews of the New Testament. What, then, does the Old Testament say?

**II Kings 17:29** In this verse we find the only occurrence of the word *Samaritans* in our English Old Testament. However, when reading the Hebrew text, we find the word *Samarians*. We are left to wonder why the translators of the RSV wrote of *the high places that the Samaritans had made*. The reason is not hard to find, for the Greek translation – known as the Septuagint, written c 250 BC, – speaks of the Samaritans, and so the English translation follows the Greek. However, in the NIV, we read of *the shrines the people of Samaria had made at the high places*. In other words, this more modern translation takes note of recent knowledge and is more faithful to the Hebrew text.

**II Kings 17:24-34** describes how the king of Assyria resettled Samaria after the Northern Kingdom of Israel went into captivity. Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, from Cuthah, from Avva, from Hamath and from Sepharvayim and resettled them in the cities of Samaria, thus displacing the people of Israel. If this description applies to events shortly after the deportation in 722 BC, this king of Assyria would be Sargon II (722-705) who boasted in records that he deported 27,280 people, enough to form a regiment of 50 chariots. It may be noted that Ezra 4:2 says that Esarhaddon (681-669 BC), king of Assyria, was responsible for the deportation.

It is estimated that at the time of the fall of the city of Samaria, the total population of the northern kingdom would have been c 800,000. Thus, the native Israelites would have continued to form the overwhelming majority of the population, at a time when there were two groups coexisting, the remnants of the native Israelites and the foreign settlers. The Jewish view is that the

Samaritans of New Testament times were the descendants of such colonists, while the Samaritan view is that their forefathers were native Israelites. According to Josephus, the Samaritans sometimes denied and sometimes professed that they were Jews<sup>1</sup>.

The policy of displacement of subject peoples was a policy of the Assyrians. As a result, the 'mixed multitudes' were less likely to be united enough to rebel. More importantly, such peoples would have mixed religious beliefs. Perhaps this helps to explain the background to the message of Ezra with reference to foreign colonists. **Ezra 3** tells, during the time of Persian domination, of the erection of an altar in Jerusalem and the calling of a national assembly. In verse 1 we read that the children of Israel gathered themselves together as one man. This would imply that both northerners and southerners were involved. This is not surprising, for Josiah's reform (II Kings 23:19) embraced people in the north. See also II Chronicles 35:17-19.

However, from the death of Solomon there was considerable dispute between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Certainly, after the fall of the Northern Kingdom, the city of Samaria was an important seat of Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian governors who were seen as the representatives of a foreign power.

**Ezra 4:1-6**, which is concerned with the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, gives an account of the intervention of the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin. These adversaries were probably the mixed race that had settled in the town of Samaria and had spread south towards Jerusalem. We do not know their original motive behind the offer to help in the rebuilding of the Temple. Was it to unite in the project, or was it to hinder the work from within? Was the opposition based on religious grounds or was it political? What we do know, from II Kings 17:33, is that *they feared the LORD and served their own gods after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away*.

**Nehemiah 6:1-9** depicts the plot against Nehemiah and it seems to have primarily involved foreigners. Sanballat is first mentioned in Nehemiah 2:10 and he appears to have been governor of Samaria, for a letter – part of the Elephantine Papyri, which date from the 5th century BC, having their origin in Egypt and published only about 100 years ago – refers to Sanballat as the governor of Samaria. We also read in Nehemiah 12:28 that a certain Manasseh, a man of priestly family, married the daughter of Sanballat and as a result was expelled from Jerusalem. He fled to Samaria and helped Sanballat set up rival worship on Mount Gerizim c 410 BC, where a temple was ultimately built. How this happened is found in Josephus and summarized by D. S. Russell.<sup>3</sup> After Darius was defeated by Alexander the Great, at the battle of Issus (333 BC), Sanballat 'came to Tyre (332 BC) with 8,000 soldiers, offering to transfer his allegiance from Darius to his victor. Alexander was greatly pleased and, on hearing Sanballat's request, gave him permission to build the Temple on Mount Gerizim.' Some two and a half centuries later, a great host from Samaria joined the Syrian army under Apollonius to fight the Jews led by Judas the Maccabee in 166 BC. John Hyrcanus – the high Priest and ruler of the Jews from 135 to 95 BC – destroyed the temple on Mount Gerizim. See II Maccabees 3:12-24.

#### Two Commentators on II Kings

*Here, the city and the country of Samaria<sup>4</sup> are in mind. Of the 48 occurrences in II Kings, most are restricted to the city . . . the term Samaritans is ambiguous. Sargon's inscription refers to Samaritans, that is, local inhabitants . . . It is wise to make a distinction between the religious group of the Samaritans, whose origin is lost to us, and the community of the north as a whole. The term in II Kings does not refer to the [New Testament] religious sect.<sup>5</sup> The immigrants brought to the northern kingdom by the Assyrians, to replace the Israelites taken into exile, have nothing to do with the Samaritans of New Testament times.<sup>6</sup>*

**The Apocrypha**, which is not part of the Protestant Bible, gives us a picture of events between the Old and New Testaments. This is a collection of 15 books written between the second century BC and the first century AD. In Ecclesiasticus (also known as Ben Sira) 50:26, which may be dated c 180 BC, we read of *the foolish people that dwell in Shechem*. This is the first clear reference in Jewish writings giving clear evidence of anti-Samaritan feeling.

#### The New Testament

Here we meet the Pharisees and the Sadducees who were part of the Jewish community. The Samaritans were clearly not so regarded, as the following well-known examples show:

**Luke 9:51-56** concerning the Samaritan villages show how Samaria and its people are regarded as representatives of an alien world.

**Luke 10:30-37** which tells the parable of the Good Samaritan is probably the best-known story told by Jesus. In fact it is so well remembered that the term 'good Samaritan' has passed into everyday English language.

**Luke 17:1-18** is the story of the healing of the Ten Lepers of whom only one, a Samaritan, returned to give glory to God. Note that in verse 18 Jesus calls the Samaritan one of a different race. Was there a difference in speech; perhaps a different dialect of Aramaic, which would have been the language spoken and not Hebrew?

**John 4:1-26**, which tells of an encounter by Jesus with the woman at the well, is a rather lengthy dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Sychar is usually identified with Askar, a mile distant from Jacob's well. It is perhaps the most identifiable site in modern Israel connected with Jesus' ministry. It was situated at the foot of Mount Gerizim.

#### Conclusions

Two differences between these groups may be noted. Firstly, the Samaritans, who described themselves as the keepers of the Law, recognized as scripture only the first five books of the Bible, the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Samaritan text is textually almost identical to the Masoretic text used by the Jews. Secondly, Ezra had stood for the exclusiveness of worship based on Jerusalem. This was the second major point of dispute. In Exodus 20:17, in the Samaritan Pentateuch and immediately after the Ten Commandments, there is inserted a command to build the temple on Mount Gerizim. Also, in the Masoretic Text at Deuteronomy 11:29, a blessing would be pronounced from Mount Gerizim and a curse from Mount Ebal. Note that apparently, these were the two most prominent hills on either side of what is the natural centre of Palestine. In the Samaritan Pentateuch, in Deuteronomy 27:4, the place where the temple is to be built is Mount Gerizim not Ebal, as in the Masoretic Text. However, the Samaritans, like the Jews, expected a Saviour. Whereas this hope for orthodox Jews is found throughout the Prophets, the Samaritan hope was grounded in the promise of Deuteronomy 18:15-18 where the Taheb, or restorer, will appear on earth to usher in a new age.

John Stephenson (NZ)

#### Notes

1 *Antiquities of the Jews* ix, xiv, 3

2 *ibid* xii, viii, 1-6

3 *The Jews from Alexander to Herod*, New Clarendon Bible, OUP 1991 p 13

4 Omri (885-873 BC) applied the name Samaria to his new capital. Later the name was used to describe the district within which

the city was situated, and finally to the Northern kingdom as a whole.

5 T. R. Hobbs in the *Word Biblical Commentary II Kings* Word Books 1985

6 Wilfred Lambert in *The Endeavour Magazine*, No. 81, May 1989, p28.

**NB** Those who wish to investigate this subject in more detail could consult R. J. Coggins' book *Samaritans and Jews—The Origins of Samaritanism Reconsidered*, John Knox Press, 1975.

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### Why we are here.

Why are we here? There is a simple answer: we are here to glorify God. By understanding His gospel, believing it, choosing to serve God and developing characters which will be acceptable to Jesus when he returns, is the means to give God glory. Our hope thereafter is to serve God perfectly in his kingdom. Summarising, firstly, choice, then character.

#### The Lord Jesus Christ

Jesus is our example: *For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.* (John 13:15, quotations are from NASB). *For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,* (1 Peter 2:21).

Jesus chose to serve his Father: his whole life showed the choice he had made. As well as the explicit temptations in the wilderness, the gospels recount many more occasions when the Jews and even his disciples tempted, tested, him – but each and every time Jesus chose the spiritual way, pleasing his Father.

*Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.* (Heb 5:8).

*For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.* (Rom 5:19).

*But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished!* (Luke 12:50)

These three quotations are a selection of many which show us that Jesus had to learn obedience; like all people, there was nothing innate which exempted him. His character was developed by trials and hardship and his perfect life comes down to us as a demonstration of how we should cope.

Early in life he was untried, untested, and it was throughout the first thirty years of his life he was prepared for his future work. We have very little information about these thirty years, but by the time that the Lord started his ministry, he was ready for everything that happened. Jesus, by living in Galilee, lived away from the legalistic, ceremonial life of the Jews in Jerusalem, so he grew used to mixing with Gentiles. Was this the time when Jesus became sympathetic to women, including Gentile women?

Jesus was the eldest son of a large family, with other younger children growing up and needing help. It seems that Joseph, his stepfather, died, so Jesus would have known the responsibility of helping his mother, of leadership of the whole family and with providing an income. Did Jesus ever fall ill? There is no account of such an eventuality, but we are told repeatedly that he experienced all the trials of mankind. It is unlikely that he was exempt from illness, whether the usual childhood illnesses, or something more serious (are the Psalms of David a prophecy of such a happening?). We cannot sensibly speculate further on the early life of Jesus, a life that prepared him for the greatest three years in the history of the world. That Jesus was ready for what lay ahead was shown by his Father's approval at the time of his baptism: *Behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.* (Matthew 3:17)

Was God a good Father? Of course He was. Even to ask the question invites the answer. In what ways God acted as a Father are not revealed to us. They were private matters between Father and Son. Jesus chose to serve God, and by the age of thirty had developed a character able to overcome all the difficulties and tests of his ministry.

#### Ourselves

We ourselves must each similarly make our choice to serve the Lord. The rest of our lives are then spent in making our characters mature spiritually, ready for places in the Kingdom. By doing these two things we follow the example of Jesus Christ, our Lord. We cannot follow any other way than the way he showed us as recorded in the four gospels. After making our choice to commit ourselves to God, our lives are then spent coping with temptations to be resisted and experiencing hardships, so that we are toughened for future service to God. We are not called to a life of ease and indolence:

*Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by him, for those whom the Lord loves he disciplines and he scourges every son whom he receives.' It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.* (Heb 12:1-13).

Every disciple is disciplined in an individual way. The Lord tailors our circumstances and trials to the needs of each one of us, male or female, whatever age, country and background, and however long or short our probation. But life will of necessity involve tests to toughen us spiritually. One Christian said that it was only after his baptism that life really became difficult; but he accepted that without complaint because that is what is to be expected for the life of a disciple being prepared for the kingdom – a matter for rejoicing, not pessimism.

#### Adam and Eve

What about Adam and Eve? They were tempted by the words of the serpent. This was their first and only temptation in the Garden of Eden. The serpent contradicted the words of God. Did Adam and Eve choose to serve God? No. At this one and only temptation they failed. They chose to disobey.

But surely this was only to be expected? They had no experience of life. They were like little children offered sweets to go against their parents' warning. They were like each one of us when we were young and untried. It was inevitable that they would choose to disobey because at that stage they had weak characters which had not been honed by the vicissitudes of life. How could they be wise as serpents? They were only innocent as doves.

Did God apply the penalty of death in the very day of disobedience? No, God did not. In His mercy and goodness, He gave Adam and Eve (and all mankind) a second chance by letting them live to develop true characters. When they left the Garden of Eden they could live like all their descendants, with a fresh start under a different set of conditions. This all happened because God planned it that way. God knew in advance that Adam and Eve would decide to disobey and fail. It was God who deliberately created the serpent with the power of speech. It was God who planned in advance what the serpent would say. It was God who also planned in advance that Adam and Eve would disobey, because He made them with untried, innocent, naïve, behavior patterns. God planned it all.

God had also planned in advance what He would tell Adam and Eve afterwards. To Adam he said: *Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.* (Genesis 3:17-19).

Notice that there is no curse upon Adam. He will have a life of hardship; life will be a struggle because of the characteristics of the world he would live in (exemplified by the words about the ground). These hardships inevitably would come upon Eve as well, she could not be detached from the circumstances of life affecting her husband. As man and wife they would together share the new conditions of life.

But that is how Adam and Eve could develop characters. God could not create them with those characters because it is only by making choices and actually experiencing difficulties that mature, spiritual characters come about. In other words, God was giving Adam and Eve the chance of serving Him in a way that they never could have done in the protected environment of the Garden of Eden, and in their immature, naïve, state. Thus the new circumstances were a blessing for Adam and Eve, not a curse as they are so often portrayed. And that blessing comes down to every man and woman since that time, including the Lord Jesus Christ and you and me as we struggle through our lives.

To Eve, God said: *I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.* (Genesis 3:16). Are children a curse? To bring up children is not straightforward for any parents. And it is a shared responsibility between husband and wife, not just something for the wife and mother. To confine the meaning of these words to the actual childbirth is bizarre, since the pains of actual childbirth are usually quickly forgotten with the blessing of the new infant.

The descendants of Adam and Eve would fill the earth, in this way giving many people the opportunity of choosing to serve God and to develop characters fit for the future Kingdom of God. Included among those future children is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. He brings in the true spiritual life available to the descendants of Adam and Eve, that greater and wonderful way of giving glory to God in His kingdom. How can these arrangements be discussed in terms of curses? Surely they are blessings, the stages of the creation, of filling the earth with God's glory – which could never happen with untried, naïve, Adam and Eve.

Thus the happenings in Eden were all essential to the purpose of God in creation. Under the love and mercy of God, men and women are given the opportunity to choose to serve Him and to have their characters developed under the Creator's guidance. Let us all hold fast as members of the spiritual body of Christ by following the example of our Lord.

Roy Boyd

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God made us for himself;  
that is the first and last thing  
that can be said about human existence  
and whatever more we add  
is but commentary.

A W Tozer

#### A Travellers Tale

Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth (Luke 1:39). The hill country of Judea lies south of Jerusalem, reaching down to the Negeb. Here the descendants of Aaron were given Hebron (20 miles south of Jerusalem) as their centre, but other places are mentioned as well (1 Chron 6:57). My map of *Israel in New Testament Times* shows a place 10 miles south of Jerusalem called Beth-Zechariah! As Zechariah himself was 'well on in years' he would not want to be too far from Jerusalem when his term of duty in the temple came round. Was this the place Mary hurried to?

#### Her journey

From Nazareth to Beth-Zechariah, as the proverbial crow flies, is approximately 75 miles. But Mary could not travel in a straight line, due to the terrain. For instance, a straight line passes through Mount Gerizim, so she would have to make a detour. It also passes through Sebaste (the ancient capital of Samaria, so named and rebuilt by Herod the Great) and relations with the Samaritans were strained. A young woman – no woman – would travel such a distance alone. Did a relative, relatives, or family friend accompany her? Did she travel all the way on foot, or by donkey? Later, she and Joseph could only afford the pair of turtledoves and young pigeons, let alone an animal from the flock which the Law stipulated (Lev 5). Perhaps her father or family friends provided the means of transport,

#### How long did the journey take?

Let's suppose she covered, say, 10 miles a day – which means it took around seven days, perhaps longer, as she would have to put up somewhere every night. The Jews were commanded by the Law to show hospitality to travellers. But what sort of bed would she get? No 'en suite' with bedside teasmade! Probably a straw mattress on the floor. Three months later she would make the return journey, this time to face her own confinement.

Michael Craddock

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#### A Prayer

Lord, I asked you for a harvest to reap and you put my hand to the plough.  
I asked that I might bear fruit, and you gave me a handful of seed.  
I asked you to build me a fire, and you handed me sticks and a flint.  
I asked you to give me light, and you gave me oil for my lamp.

The King James Bible

On the death of Queen Elizabeth in March 1603, James VI of Scotland became James I of England, thus beginning the Stuart era. James fancied himself as a scholar, having written books on religion, witchcraft, politics and kingship. His handbook on kingship, *Basilicon Doron* (The Gift of Kingship) expressed his conceit that 'the king is as one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures all the people gazingly do behold'. However, his view of kings as exemplary figures did not sit well with the bawdiness of life in his Court.\*

James was an extremist. When he was James VI of Scotland he ordered Agnes Sampson to be burnt alive as a witch for easing the pain of a woman in childbirth. And as James I he condemned a London preacher, Bartholomew Legate, to the same fate for saying that Jesus was called 'God,' not from his essence but from his office. Henry IV (1583-1610), the Catholic king of France, who granted the Huguenot dissenters freedom of worship under the treaty of Nantes, famously described James I as 'The wisest fool in Christendom'.

Although the Church of England was ostensibly 'Protestant', in the sense that Henry VIII had declared the monarch to be the head of the Church, much of the Roman Catholic ritual persisted. This led to a rising tide of Puritanism that sought to rid the church of all elements of Catholicism such as images, vestments, the sign of the cross and the Prayer Book. Consequently, in May 1603, only two months after his accession, James received a petition from the Puritans to call a conference to determine the future direction of the Church of England.

In granting their request James arranged a three day conference at Hampton Court in January 1604. But from the start it was clear that he would not allow any weakening of his authority as head of the Church, for he had also written in *Basilicon Doron* that 'God gives not Kings the style of Gods in vain. For on his throne his Sceptre do they sway'. Accordingly, James only allowed four of the more moderate Puritans to attend and when their leader, John Reynolds, suggested that bishops should be subject to a committee of elders (Presbytery), James launched a torrent of abuse: 'If this be all your party hath to say, I will make them conform themselves, or else I will harry them out of the land, or else do worse.' It is therefore clear that James convened the conference determined that it would not weaken his claim to be head of the Church, as opposed to the Puritans who held the Scriptural view that Christ is the head.

On the second day of the conference, John Reynolds suggested that there should be a new translation of the Bible acceptable to both sides. Up to this time the Church of England had only used Bibles authorised by the monarch, i.e. *The Great Bible* 1539 and the *Bishops' Bible* 1567. But these were large volumes printed in black Gothic type and not intended for home use. This need had been met by the radical Protestant reformers who fled to Geneva from Catholic Mary's persecution and, in 1560, produced the first of a long series of Geneva Bibles.

The Geneva Bible was smaller and user-friendly; it was the first English Bible to use easy to read Roman type and numbered verses, the first to use italics for words not in the original Hebrew and Greek, and the first to translate all the OT from the original Hebrew. In addition, Geneva Bibles had wide margins with cross-references and copious expository notes. Not surprisingly, by the time of the Hampton Court Conference, the Geneva Bible was the market leader, and in suggesting a new English Bible, John Reynolds undoubtedly anticipated that it would be based on the more popular Geneva version. But James would have none of this. He objected to some of the marginal notes; in particular he regarded as seditious the note commending the midwives who disobeyed Pharaoh. He skilfully persuaded the Conference that there should be a thorough revision of the Bishops' Bible by a team of the best scholars and that the margins should only contain cross-references and alternative translations.

The omission of marginal expository notes was both shrewd and wise. It was shrewd because it excluded the Geneva Bible and it was wise because it opened the possibility of a Bible acceptable to all denominations. Notwithstanding the merits of the Geneva translation, the Geneva Bible was flawed by the trinitarian bias of some of its marginal notes. For example, in John 1:1 the marginal note reads, 'Christ is God, before all time.' and on John 1:10 we find, 'Because they did not recognise him as God.' The note, 'Christ is God' also occurs opposite Rom. 9:5.

The so-called King James Version (KJV) appeared in 1611, seven years after the Hampton Court Conference. To what extent did it fulfil its purpose? The Geneva Bible continued to be popular and new editions continued to be published until 1644. But the KJV eventually prevailed because it adopted many of the virtues of the Geneva translation and presentation. Regarding the text, the KJV was more influenced by the Geneva translation than by any other version and since both versions were strongly trinitarian the differences were more ceremonial than doctrinal. Only a year later, in 1612, a quarto KJV in Roman type appeared and it is significant that in 1716 a KJV was published with the Geneva expository notes.

The KJV was the outcome of a battle between a High Church Anglican king with his appointed bishops, and Low Church Puritans. As such it bears the stamp of James's victory in its translation of the Greek word *ecclesia* into 'church', rather than 'congregation' – the word used by all previous English Bibles.

As we have seen, the KJV was the third English Bible to be authorised. After breaking with Rome, Henry VIII became head of the Church of England. He banned Tyndale's translations and made no attempt to save him from execution. But only three years after Tyndale's death, Henry ordered that a copy of the Bible should be placed in every Church. By a terrible irony the greater part of this so-called Great Bible was based on the work of Tyndale.

The publication of the Geneva Bible in 1560 highlighted the deficiencies of the Great Bible and the need for a new authorised Bible. Accordingly Queen Elizabeth commissioned a revision of the Great Bible by a team of scholars including 13 Bishops. This so-called Bishops' Bible was published in 1568. Most of the editions were black letter folios for Church use and they did nothing to stem the increasing popularity of the Puritan Geneva Bible. As shown above, it was the rising tide of Puritanism that triggered the Hampton Court Conference in which King James outwitted the Puritans and laid the foundations for a third authorised version which was dedicated to himself with a splendid portrait and an extremely flattering dedicatory epistle that matched James's pedantic vanity.

It is remarkable that after almost 400 years, the KJV continues to be the most popular English translation. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century it had acquired an aura of sanctity that induced many to believe that the KJV was an inspired translation. To some extent this view persists, so that in spite of the appearance of more accurate and much less trinitarian translations, such as the RV and RSV, more KJVs are sold than any other version.

The KJV is often praised for the beauty of its language, but this it owes to Tyndale. The KJV was **not** a new translation; it was a revision of the Bishops' Bible that was a revision of the Great Bible that was largely Tyndale. For this reason the language of the KJV was archaic from its inception; it was the language of almost a century before. Now, almost 400 years later, the language of the KJV is even more archaic. So for those who have not been trained in its use and especially for those who are learning English, the KJV may be an impediment to a full understanding of the word of God.

Why then does the KJV continue to be popular? For several reasons, including our natural conservatism and the fact that, until recently, Bible concordances and dictionaries were based on the KJV. But could it be that we subconsciously allow the other-worldly language of the KJV to shield us from the need to apply divine laws to the real world in which we live?

Alan Fowler

For details of the Hampton Court Conference, I am indebted to a booklet, *Drama and Debate*, published by Historic Royal Palaces, Hampton Court Palace, Surrey, KT8 9AU.

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### What is Church for?

Firstly it is worth noting that in the New Testament, the word 'church' (Greek *ekklesia*), **always** relates to a group of people and not to a building or an institution. So, when we ask 'What is Church for?', with the NT meaning of the word 'church' in mind, we are asking a very different question to the one that might refer to 'The Church' as an institution or a particular building.

Secondly, verses like 1 Cor 10:16-17, *Is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.* and 1 Cor 12:27, *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it,* make it clear that the 'Church' is also referred to as the 'body of Christ'.

Christ was God's medium for revealing himself to the world in human form, in a language we would understand. Christ showed us what God is like. John 1:14 *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*

and Heb 1:3 *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.*

show us that God's being and his message were perfectly united in Christ. The life Christ lived and the words he spoke revealed not just the word of God but the very being of God. If God's chosen medium was Christ, and the church is the body of Christ then the church is God's chosen medium for God's ongoing revelation to the world; the church exists to embody and proclaim the good news of God's kingdom.

The message of the gospel is profoundly shaped by the way the church lives in the world **and** by the way each individual church member lives within their world context. The 'People of God' – God's chosen people – was expanded from just being Israel to include all believers. And while this 'chosen people' is 'set apart' from the world (called to be distinctive), it exists for the explicit purpose of blessing the world as a light to the nations, just as the Israelites were supposed to be.

You personally and we collectively, as the 'body of Christ' in it's wider context, are the best vehicle that God has for advancing his Kingdom today. Conversely, you could be the best medium for shattering everything God is trying to do. If people don't see Christ living in and through you, yet you claim to be a follower of him, your life shouts louder than your claims and it speaks in direct opposition to the message God has for the world.

Nearly everywhere in the New Testament where Paul writes 'you', the word in the Greek is in its plural form. But, partly because of the individualistic bias of the print age or 'modern age' and the lack of a plural 'you' in modern English, we interpret most of these things individually, personally. Remember though, that Paul was writing to churches, not individuals. For example, let's quickly have a look at 1 Cor 6:19-20:

*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

Every time Paul writes 'you' he speaks plurally, but when he writes 'body', it is singular. He speaks to a corporate group about their single body. He is concerned about a community's health and purity (whilst clearly, the individual purity also matters).

So, what does this passage call our churches and our community to become? If we are reading through a corporate lens, we begin to see scriptures' images as community rather than personal and we can develop a more complete understanding of the true essence of the church and have some clarity on God's chosen medium. Shane Hipps put it like this: *The scriptural vision of the church is one in which individuals exist for the sake of the community and the community exists for God's mission in the world. God chose the church, in all its various and disparate, flawed and beautiful ways, not individual Christians, as the medium for his ongoing mission.*

We are the medium of God's message, individually, but more importantly, corporately. How this looks in reality will vary from congregation to congregation but the experience within our churches should be one of a foretaste of God's kingdom as we hold faithfully to God's agenda and try to live his message. We are the medium and the message.

### So what is 'church' for?

The tradition of a group of Jesus' followers gathering together to become a 'Church' follows along the logic that you can't show God's love on your own. Therefore, the collection of disciples and the activities they engage in exist to excite you, to propel you, to inspire you, to motivate you, equip you, brief you, train you, pray for you, support you, laugh with you, cry with you, learn from you, teach you, learn with you, journey with you as you get involved in individual acts of worship in your whole life as an individual follower of Jesus.

'The Church' is for the members, for the local community, for your own local community and for anyone who may meet part of it. Church is what you do, as a group of Jesus' disciples, not a building or an institution. Church is not confined to a building or event, it continues throughout your life; 'church' should be something you are, something you do. 'The Church' exists for the explicit purpose of blessing the world, by embodying and proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom – a world redeemed and restored, a world refreshed and renewed. It is God coming to live with humans in an endless perfect, flawless harmony, God and humans in intentional, passionate, everlasting intimacy.

Alex Green

### All One In Christ Jesus (Quotations are from the RSV)

When there is discussion on the roles of women in the church, it invariably centres on three scriptures: firstly, the positive statement in Gal 3:28-29 '*... there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*' from which is taken the title of this book, and two negative 'thou shalt not' scriptures arising from events in local churches, 1 Cor 14:34, '*... women should keep silence in the churches ... should be subordinate as even the law says.*' and 1 Tim 2:11-12, '*Let a woman learn in silence*

with all submissiveness. *I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent.*’ On first reading the latter verses conflict with Galatians. Because all three are inspired, we are driven to seek a reconciliation, and, no doubt because the Corinthians and Timothy verses appear to be clear cut, they have dictated the traditional resolution of the problem – that Galatians is limited to speak of our status before God, while Corinthians and Timothy refer to our roles in the church today. But this is not a happy solution, for Galatians is one of the key statements of the Christian faith, as it marks the breakdown of barriers and should drive how we express our faith in our relationships with each other, which is why Paul was writing this letter, and he does expressly refer to the present relationship of men and women. Is there another solution that doesn’t allow scriptures dealing with isolated local events to overrule foundation statements? Averil and Ian McHaffie think there is; they feel passionately about a shared role for sisters and have spent much time and research defending their convictions, and now they share these with us in this new edition of *All One in Christ Jesus*. Since brothers and sisters do still come to different conclusions on the matter, they do warn us that this is an indication that scripture teaching on the subject is not straightforward, and this becomes clear as you read their book. Even so, they are convinced that one cannot escape the weight of the teaching of Jesus and the early church who, despite the limited opportunities in their day, began the process of granting our sisters equal opportunity in the roles of the church.

This is not their first publication on this subject; that was *Reliable People* in 1991. Several pamphlets followed and their studies were brought together in a two-part publication, *All One in Christ Jesus*, completed in 2007. This present publication, of the same title, is an updated and enlarged book of 364 pages which includes their recent discussions with those who do not accept their conclusions.

The book opens with a short but positive presentation of the respect Jesus showed, in contrast to his own world, to women and the use he and the early church made of them in their work, which extended to praying in the body of the church, prophesying and preaching. This contrast is emphasised by drawing on the writings of contemporary Jewish and ancient authors showing how women were undervalued in ancient society, in many cases treated little better than slaves. For example, the Jewish *Mishnah*, tells us that a woman *‘continues within the control of the father until she enters the control of the husband’* and this dramatically adds to the Luke 8:1-3 record where Jesus accepts and uses the services of women who ignored social norms and laws, left their husbands at home and, from their own funds, helped his ministry. This is only one example of the extensive background research that Averil and Ian have undertaken to help us understand relevant verses and is a useful tool, in its own right, for a general understanding of the NT world. For many of us, the force of this opening section is so compelling that we will need little further evidence to justify the equality of sisters, accepting that some verses will always remain a mystery. Averil and Ian start on the same premise, but, to convince doubters, they then go on to look in great detail at the many ‘awkward’ verses and arguments, both OT and NT, that their opponents have raised in objections. These case studies form the bulk of the book and can be demanding reading, but we shouldn’t be daunted, for this part of the book is not required to be read at one sitting, each study is self-contained and the cases provide us with a valuable reference section to refer to as and when needed. The book is well titled and has a Bible verse index for easy reference.

When we come to look at the studies, we find that the background of events is frequently uncertain and this can be important in understanding a verse – there may be other possibilities that lead to different opinions to the traditional ones. The art of translation introduces us to further uncertainties, for a word can have several meanings depending on the context. Then there are the errors in the manuscript transmission of the text. Averil and Ian list the different readings they have identified, including those that support the thrust of the teaching of such key verses as Gal 3:28 and can resolve the problem identified in the opening of this review. For someone who has been used to reading from the AV the possibility of alternative readings can be worrying, but even the AV in its margin gives witness to textual variations and, it should be stressed, we are dealing with differences that do not undermine the tenets of our faith, rather that support them. Others will see posing possible alternative readings as fogging the issue. Not so, for while we may not be sure about the context of a verse or its reading we are nevertheless being presented with credible alternatives that can support core teaching.

In addition to the many case studies and the chapters on social background the book has chapters dealing with the ‘Attitudes to Women in Christadelphian Writings’, ‘What Should the Position be Today?’, ‘Is Change Possible?’ etc., and even a ‘Miscellaneous Issues’ chapter that includes exchanges with Christadelphian opposition in Australia. The authors have sought to meet the need of all and leave no stone unturned! They have, as we have already noted, given us a unique reference book which should be useful for all seeking to come to terms with the role of sisters in the Christadelphian community. Whatever side of the debate we come from, they deserve our thanks for their diligence and depth of research. From now on anyone who wishes to comment on the subject will need to see if they have an answer to the authors’ conclusions. Their work should help those whose inclination is to grant sisters greater authority but have hesitated because of the traditional readings of regressive verses. It demands that those who reject sexual equality look carefully at the evidence before commenting and, hopefully, may be moved to more tolerance. And through their work all of us, from whatever side of the debate we come, have a wider base on which to begin our own personal explorations of one of the great victories of the Cross, freedom.

And a final word! *All One in Christ Jesus* is not just about granting our sisters authority. It is a mutual exploration of submission to each other, brothers and sisters in Christ, and this is a path of learning, in God’s grace, that we all must participate in, and it is not always an easy path. On the first page of their book Averil and Ian have given us an example for it is usual for the husband to be named before the wife but like Priscilla and Aquila they present themselves to us as true equals in Christ sharing the lead!

**Ken Drage**

Copies of the book can be obtained from the authors for £10, including p&p.  
Averil & Ian McHaffie, 176 Granton Road, Edinburgh, EH5 1AH  
or contact them at [mchaffie@tesco.net](mailto:mchaffie@tesco.net)

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When the Bible is read in its context,  
it produces a positive description of men and women  
working together in service.  
That is what we should aim at today.  
(Averil & Ian, p353.)

**Ferenc Dávid**  
**and the search for Bible truth in Transylvania**

by James Andrews (2010)

Paperback, 164 pages, Price £5.50 on [lulu.com](http://lulu.com), or free PDF download.

The main reformation is well known. In the early 1500s Martin Luther sparked major reform which led to a breakaway from the Roman Catholic church, and produced various Protestant churches such as the presbyterian Church of Scotland, the episcopal Church of England, the German Lutheran and Swiss Calvinist churches, all independent of Rome.

Less well-known is the work of those who sought a more radical reformation, including those who opposed the doctrine of the Trinity. It is some of this latter group that James Andrews describes and analyses in this book. James spent some time in Transylvania where much of the action and controversy took place, and has given a lively description of events and the main people involved, along with photographs of the places and buildings. The book is well-referenced, and draws considerably from the authoritative book by G. H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (2001), besides many other sources.

James is careful not to claim more than is reasonable in drawing conclusions about the similarities between Christadelphians and earlier antitrinitarian groups. He acknowledges the accuracy of the work of my late mother in *Finding Founders and Facing Facts* (Ruth McHaffie, 2001), while not agreeing with some of her contemporary applications. Ruth's conclusion was that if we admire the faith and witness of these people of the past, with whom we have some things in common and some things not, we need to apply the same in our modern attitude to others who seek to follow Christ. James, I think, tends to the conclusion that if only people would follow Bible truth, controversies would be solved. Hence the second part of the title: '... the search for Bible truth in Transylvania'. However, the changes in thinking of Ferenc Dávid himself demonstrate how difficult it is to come to a satisfactory conclusion along these lines. On the one hand, it can be said:

Fundamentally, in all his theological disputations and writings, he [Ferenc Dávid] submitted himself to the guidance of the Bible – which for him was the Word of God. This was the plumb line against which he measured the ideas which he came across; and it was to this book that he turned as the ultimate authority in his search for the truth about God and His purpose, (p. 100).

On the other hand, as James Andrews wrote earlier in the book, (p. 77),

Dávid's disavowal of external influences may perhaps seem naïve; but it reveals the key importance of the biblical texts in his theological self-understanding.

and, on p. 76,

Ferenc Dávid existed in the social and political context of sixteenth-century Transylvania; his beliefs were undoubtedly shaped by the intellectual climate of the Reformation and the radicalism which it sparked.

He took *sola scriptura*, 'by scripture alone', as his guiding principle, but that was also claimed by those who disagreed with him. Both Socinus and Dávid adopted antitrinitarian explanations, and both 'saw the Bible as the sole authoritative source of truth about Christ and about God' (p. 111) but then strongly disagreed with each other over the present role of Christ:

Since Christ [according to Dávid's interpretation] has no present, active role, and is by his current office neither Priest nor Mediator, Dávid argued that it is useless for Christians to pray to him or even to invoke him in prayer. Socinus, by contrast, believed that Christ is still actively both Mediator and Priest, these roles being confirmed by his Exaltation and Session at God's right hand, (p. 113)

The people of the past were working on assumptions, which many people still follow today, that if one simply sets down Bible texts, we have the answer. The problem is that different sets of texts can be arrayed, and different interpretations and conclusions are then drawn. The issue is partly selection of texts, partly how literally texts are taken. If we stand back a bit, we should question whether the nature of God should be able to be defined in any precise definitions. Anti-trinitarianism and Unitarianism (in the sixteenth century sense) sought to preserve the unity of God, a fundamental Bible teaching. Trinitarianism attempted to combine the undoubted fact that Jesus was a man, along with descriptions of him given by the apostle Paul that he is 'Lord' – again a fundamental Bible teaching. But 'Lord' is the term used of God in the Old Testament. The difficulty can perhaps be illustrated by Paul's comment:

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

(Eph 4:4-6, NIV 2010)

There is one Lord and one God, and God is also described as Lord, yet there are not two Gods.

As the controversies described in this book illustrate, it is not therefore a straightforward matter of searching for Bible truth, but of how that Bible truth is read, interpreted and explained. This applies to other doctrines too. The lesson I think we should learn is that we are not called to produce dogmatic definitions of the nature of the relation of Jesus to God, but to live lives transformed by the teaching revealed. The commitment and sincerity of people on both sides of the issue are not generally to be dismissed; and we can but be in admiration of the constancy of the beliefs and dedication where people paid with their lives, like Michael Servetus, burned at the stake by Protestant reformers aged 42 in 1553, or like Catherine Weiglow:

In 1539 Catherine Zalaszkowska Weiglow became, at the age of eighty, the first of only three people put to death for heresy in Poland-Lithuania in the entire sixteenth century. Her crime was her rejection of the Trinity: she could not, she said, understand 'the three Persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit', nor could she accept that God had a literal son, for 'all are sons who walk his appointed way', (p. 63).

James Andrews has done an excellent job in outlining these views and controversies and many more, and in providing detailed information and prime-source quotations on which we can exercise our individual judgment. His book is well worth reading. It is attractively produced, with a good bibliography, and with appropriate and challenging introductory quotations at the head of each chapter.

**Ian McHaffie**

(Available at: <http://www.lulu.com/product/paperback/ferenc-david-and-the-search-for-bible-truth-in-transylvania/14611527>)

### **The funny side of life**

#### **Secret of a happy marriage**

Married fifty years, the happy couple revealed their secrets for wedded bliss:

Him: 'Never be selfish. There is no 'I' in the word marriage.'

Her: 'Never correct your husband's spelling.'

Another name for marriage? Holy acrimony?

Old aunts used to come up to me at weddings, poking me in the ribs and cackling, telling me, 'You're next!' They stopped after

I started doing the same thing to them at funerals.

If marriage were outlawed, only outlaws would have in-laws.

Most religions teach us to have only one spouse. This is called monotony.

If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.

**An American in Paris**

A thief in Paris planned to steal some paintings from the Louvre. After careful planning, he got past security, stole the paintings, and made it safely to his van. However, he was captured only two blocks away when his van ran out of gas. When asked how he could mastermind such a crime yet make such an obvious error, he replied, 'Monsieur, that is the reason I stole the paintings. I had no Monet to buy Degas to make the Van Gogh.'

**Giving Generously**

Hello, is this Father O'Malley? It is.  
This is Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. Can you help us? I can.  
Do you know a Ted Houlihan? I do.  
Is he a member of your congregation? He is.  
Did he donate £10,000 to the church? He will.

You don't stop laughing because you grow old, you grow old because you stopped laughing.

Bald spot? No, that's a solar panel for brain power.

Brain cells come and brain cells go, but fat cells live forever.

It's frustrating when you know all the answers, but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right time, but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.

I plan on living forever. So far, so good.

