



United News Canada

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 2 • MARCH - APRIL 2001

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18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

SLAIN

from before the

FOUNDATION

of the

WORLD

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

By Robert Berendt • See Page 3

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

PASSOVER ~ UNLEAVENED BREAD, 2001

TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

BY RAINER SALOMAA • EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE BIBLE HAS A FAIR AMOUNT TO say about trees. It begins with the two trees in the Garden of Eden and ends with the Tree of Life alongside the river of the water of life, which bears 12 types of fruit for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:1-2). Christ taught a parable about a fig tree. Instructions were given to Israel about the cutting down of trees during the time of sieges (Deuteronomy 20:19-20). Pagan practices of worshipping in groves are denounced. So are idolatrous customs that use trees (Jeremiah 10:1-5).

The scriptures contain many analogies likening Christians to trees. In the book of Psalms, David wrote, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. *He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper*" (Psalm 1:1-3, emphasis mine).

The prophet Isaiah wrote, "... That they may be called *trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD*, that He may be glorified" (Isaiah 61:3, emphasis mine).

In another passage, a wife is called a fruitful vine in the very heart of her house and the children are called olive plants (Psalm 128:3).

If we carry through with the analogy, then there has to be growth (represented by tree rings). There also is some pruning and getting rid of dead growth. There also has to be useable fruit. Sometimes there is even grafting.

The Passover season can be a wonderful time of growth. Just as trees grow rapidly in the springtime, drawing moisture from the wet soil, so can we, during this season, grow more into the stature and fullness of Christ, as we focus on Him, feasting on the bread of life (John 6:32-58). We are asked to examine ourselves in this growth process as we look to the Son of God and the light of His word to direct our ways. Our spiritual tree rings reveal the times of growth; some seasons, perhaps, being better than others.

Major pruning is also done at that time of year. Sucker growth is cut off. Fruit trees are trimmed back to make them more productive. Dead branches are cut off and burned or taken away as refuse, paralleling what Christ stated when He said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:1-2).

Pruning can make it appear that there is negative growth, but in the long run, it produces more and better fruit. Fruit is guaranteed if we abide in Christ. On the Passover evening in 31 AD, he told His followers, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples" (John 15:5-8).

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SLAIN FROM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

BY ROBERT BERENDT • EDMONTON

IN EVERY BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT there is reference made to the death of the Son



of God. God knew the Redeemer would be needed before Adam and Eve. One cannot help but gasp at the majesty of His understanding, comprehension and love.

The scriptures do not always give vast amounts of detail, but enough is written to clearly reveal the reasons we ought to fear, revere and stand in awe of the Almighty Creator. Some of the most revealing glimpses into His majesty are found in the study of one of the greatest events ever recorded in scripture – the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Let us look at the majesty and wonder of what God has done.

1. Before the foundation of the world, it was determined that Christ would come and die for mankind (I Peter 1:20, Revelation 13:8). Long before God created Adam and Eve, He planned for the Saviour. He took upon Himself the responsibility for the way humans were created, and the fact they would live in a world dominated by Satan.
2. Adam and Eve were encouraged about the Messiah to come. Genesis 3:15 reveals a glimpse of God's promise even though it was 4,000 years away.
3. The shed blood of Christ, which was to come, was always part of man's relationship to God in the form of sacrifices. It seems God sacrificed animals for Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:21. Genesis 4:4 shows Abel understood animal sacrifices were pleasing to God. Genesis 8:20 tells us Noah sacrificed clean animals. In the book of Job, and in other places, we see this practice was consistent with those who sought God. Animal sacrifices por-

trayed the need for the blood of our Saviour to cleanse us from sin.

4. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (and others) were given the understanding of the promise of the Messiah (Genesis 22:14,18; Genesis 26:4).
5. In Genesis 22:1-18 we read the great lesson God gave Abraham. God brought him to Mount Moriah where Jerusalem was later built. Abraham would have looked for a high point upon which to build his altar to God. This is only speculative, but could this have been Golgotha? Is it only coincidental that Isaac was laid on wood for a blood sacrifice? Christ was also laid on wood, nailed and lifted into position. Could this have been the same day and hour Christ suffered almost 2,000 years later? Would this day have remained important to Abraham and Isaac? The story passed on down to Moses over 400 years later – people did think it important enough to remember.
6. Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25). Reference to a Redeemer can be found in various scriptures such as Psalm 19:14 and in the book of Isaiah. Many understood a Redeemer was needed and that animal sacrifices were not enough. These sacrifices only showed the need for blood to be shed for sin. The penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23).
7. The command for a Passover lamb was specially given to Israel in Exodus 12:6. The blood protected the homes of the Israelites from the death angel. This unique sacrifice was made on Nisan 14.

**“LONG BEFORE
GOD CREATED
ADAM AND EVE,
HE PLANNED
FOR THE
SAVIOUR.”**



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SLAIN FROM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

**“GOD CAREFULLY
ORCHESTRATED
THE EVENTS IN
CHRIST’S LIFE
TO BE SURE
HE WOULD DIE IN
A CERTAIN WAY...”**

8. For the next 1,500 years the Passover Lamb was sacrificed in the land of Israel and worship was eventually concentrated on Mount Moriah where Jerusalem stood and where Christ was later sacrificed.
9. God carefully orchestrated the events in Christ’s life to be sure He would die in a certain way, in a certain place, on a certain day and even in a certain hour. Psalm 22, written almost a thousand years before Christ died, details His suffering. In John 12:27 Jesus states, “for this cause came I unto this hour.” God was precise in the timing of this great event. It was done according to His timetable and not that of men.
10. That day – the 14th of Nisan was the same one Israel observed for 1,500 years and that Jewish people observe even today. It is stated in the list of days Almighty God calls His own. In Leviticus 23 God states these are His days. He calls them the feasts of the Lord (verses 2, 4, 37, 44). His language – “My Sabbaths” and “My feasts” –

show ownership. These days have great significance to God. Following the theme of the Passover Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world, strongly underlines the importance of these days to God.

There can be no turning away from the clarity of God’s voice that echos throughout history about this special event. To close our eyes to this day God has carefully preserved, is to turn away from God Himself. Humans have turned away from God since the time of Adam and Eve. This is His day and not ours. It is His glory revealed in the events He guided from before the foundation of the world. It makes Him God and us mere humans. We are privileged to share in the glory of this event.

How privileged we are to share this profound knowledge. How deeply humbled we ought to feel to grasp a concept that is older than the world. How careful we should be to live by it. Let us be glad and rejoice in this day. -UNC

TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

God’s people have all been grafted into spiritual Israel, which is a good olive tree that is nourished by Jesus Christ through the roots (Romans 11:16-24). Good fruit is being born. The world is enriched. Just as trees help make this planet so beautiful by providing shade, oxygen, fuel, paper, food, furniture and countless manufactured products, God’s planting of His firstfruits harvest that He is cultivating will save and serve mankind.

It will all have begun so small, but the process of growth will ultimately encompass the entire earth. Even the largest tree in the world, General Sherman in California’s Sequoia National Park, which towers more than 274 feet high and is over 100 feet around

the base, began with a tiny seed that weighed 1/6,000th of an ounce.

In Matthew 13: 31-32, Christ said, “...The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”

At this season of the year, let us grow and flourish, enduring the pruning, drinking deeply of God’s word and His Holy Spirit in order to bring forth fruits of righteousness, standing tall and looking up to our elder brother and Captain of our Salvation, as trees of righteousness. -UNC

REGARDING RECONCILIATION

BY ANTHONY WASILKOFF • OPERATIONS MANAGER

EVERYONE MAKES MISTAKES. EVERYONE misses the mark. It is the human condition. When we find ourselves having made a significant error or breach of conduct, we need others to forgive us. In fact we expect others to forgive us, especially in the Christian community. To reach out for and receive forgiveness is a Christian reality. When others ask us for forgiveness, it is our duty and responsibility to grant it.

On the other hand, if we are the ones seeking forgiveness, what is our responsibility to help bring it to pass? Is there anything we are supposed to do or, perhaps, not do? Reconciliation is a process that requires co-operation from both sides. Through the years it seems our attention has focused on one side of the issue but not so much on the other.

When we have committed an infraction that has eroded a relationship, eventually we go about the task of mending those fences. This can be done in six not-so-easy but essential and practical steps.

1. Admit Fault

The first step is to admit and acknowledge that we have done wrong. You might call this the “confession component.” In Joshua chapter 7 verses 16 through 20, an admonition is given to “make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done.” It is a very rare thing indeed for a human being to admit that they have done wrong. It’s rarer still for a person, even a Christian person, to specify what they have done wrong. The first inclination of human nature is to deny, deny, deny.

In James 5:14-16, we read of how we are to confess our trespasses one to another. The human proclivity is to hide our trespasses from one another. Sin loves concealment. When caught, most human beings respond by denying that they have done what they have done. Eventually they may be willing to say something like, “If I have done anything wrong, then I...” Reconciliation can never come about



under those circumstances. It is vitally necessary to acknowledge our wrong and to take ownership of our errors. We must be able to audibly say, “I have done wrong. I have done wrong in that I have...” and then we specify the wrong we have committed. This is the “confession component.”

2. Express Genuine Regret

Step number two is to express regret and remorse. It is possible to acknowledge our sin without actually expressing appropriate regret and appropriate remorse. When Daniel prayed his prayer of repentance, which is recorded in Daniel 9:1-7, he pleaded “but to us shame of face.” On behalf of himself and his countrymen, he explained how sorry he was – how

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REGARDING RECONCILIATION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5



ashamed he was. If regret and remorse are present and genuine, they will be appropriately and even repeatedly expressed. Romans 6:19-21 refers to “the things of which you are now ashamed.” This connotes how the Christians in the Church of God at Rome deeply regretted their past misconduct and expressed it with visible emotion.

It’s important for the guilty party (we are all the guilty party from time to time), to say unequivocally, “I am sorry for what I did. I’m really, really sorry. I feel so badly for what happened. At times I even feel ashamed.” Regret and remorse must be expressed in this honest and open manner for reconciliation to occur.

3. Make Amends

Step number three is to show how you have already made and will continue to make amends. Once a person has acknowledged an error or sin and goes on to express remorse and regret for that error or sin, then they will of necessity follow through with making amends. If someone has borrowed your vacuum cleaner and in the process of using it has damaged it and then returns it to you, you would hope that they acknowledge straight away how it had been damaged while on loan. If your neighbour then followed up his confession with a statement of remorse “I’m really sorry I wrecked your Hoover,” you would believe his regret was the real thing if he insisted on repairing it. If he didn’t offer to make it right, you would probably doubt the depth and sincerity of his regret.

Exodus 22:1-5 teaches us about the important principle of making restitution: “He shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.”

When Jesus Christ visited the tax collector Zacchaeus (Luke 19), the latter was so moved that he promised to demonstrate his repentance by restoring four-fold any funds that he had collected excessively. This would have gone a long way to reconcile him with

those citizens that he defrauded through the years. You can be sure that the actions of Zacchaeus would have been the dominant topic of conversation in his part of Jericho for a long time. If someone cheats me and then repays me four times the amount he took from me, it is likely my dim view of him will change significantly. I will be far more likely to believe that that person is really trying to turn over a new leaf. Reconciliation cannot come about without appropriate and commensurate restitution.

4. Change Conduct

The fourth step to reconciliation requires us to show how we will do things differently from now on. In this step, we reassure the aggrieved party or parties that we have learned some profound lessons and are determined to conduct ourselves differently and have an actual plan by which to do so. I Timothy 6:9-11 tells us that certain temptations or situations have to be avoided by the conscientious Christian person. Suppose a husband has a serious drinking problem. In this step of reconciliation, he would tell his wife and children that he has joined a 12-step program in order to obtain and maintain his sobriety. We can get into trouble all by ourselves but we require the help of others to get out of it.

Hebrews 4:15-16 talks about the importance of receiving help in time of need. This help certainly must come from God above but it must also come through human agents and agencies. There are many resources available to a Christian in this day and age. Regrettably too many people are too proud to ask for help. Suppose a wife has a serious gambling problem. In this step, she would tell her husband that she has joined a self-help organization, has already attended some meetings and is determined to attend a meeting once or twice a week for a year or more if necessary.

“ONCE A PERSON HAS ACKNOWLEDGED AN ERROR... THEY WILL OF NECESSITY FOLLOW THROUGH WITH MAKING AMENDS.”

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5. Ask for Forgiveness

Step number five: Ask for forgiveness. Notice how this step comes later on in the list instead of at the beginning. A lot of groundwork has to be laid first. Of course, repentance before God occurs at the beginning. Reconciliation to fellow man takes a little bit longer.

In the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 we read the way the prodigal son sought to reconcile with his father by saying, "I have sinned against heaven and before you, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." What a statement of contrition! Although he desperately wanted to be forgiven, he didn't feel worthy of asking for it directly. Admirably, his father granted him forgiveness on the basis of his attitude, what he had been through and what it took for him to come back home.

Genesis 50:14-18 gives us an account of family members pleading their situation by saying, "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin...now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." Forgiveness from our fellow man, even as from God, cannot be demanded. It can only be received. Occasionally a guilty party insists on being forgiven as if it were their right. You may hear something like, "Okay. So I made a few mistakes. Well, I've repented of them. Now it's up to you to forgive me." That is not how forgiveness and reconciliation come about.

6. Bear the Fruit

Step number six is to bear sustained fruit. Those who have been aggrieved need reassurance. This can only be done by bearing sus-

tained fruit and doing so over a period of time thus indicating we have learned our lesson and are becoming a different person. Matthew 7:16-20 proclaims "you will know them by their fruits." This statement is mentioned twice for added emphasis. The only way I can know if an apple tree is a quality tree is by observing the fruit it produces. This takes time. In the autumn of the year, the tree will yield a crop. If the apples are plentiful, tasty and attractive, then I know I've got a good quality tree. It may take more than just one growing season for a tree to properly identify itself.

John 15:16 contains the following wonderful decree of Jesus Christ: "You did not choose Me, but I have chosen you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain..." It is our task as Christians to produce visible and tangible fruit of the Christian life. Some folks do bear an array of fruit a while but then the crops diminish and disappear entirely. The fruit of a Christian life must endure a lifetime.

Remember that once others have been hurt or injured by our actions, it will take time for them to learn to trust again. They probably want to trust but it will take time for healing to occur in order for reconciliation to run its course. Reconciliation truly is a process and it cannot be rushed or fast-forwarded.

Forgiveness is a hallmark of the Church of God. Forgiveness is something that we all need from our Heavenly Father. Forgiveness is something that we all need from each other. Forgiveness must be sought. Forgiveness must be given. Only then can reconciliation be fully realized. -UNC



**“FORGIVENESS
FROM OUR
FELLOW MAN,
EVEN AS FROM
GOD, CANNOT BE
DEMANDED.”**

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Satellite Site Survey
Feast of Tabernacles 2001
Western Canada

It has been brought to the attention of the National Office that an increasing number of members may find it increasingly difficult to attend the UCG feast site in Kelowna this fall. Although Kelowna will be the only official UCG Feast site for western Canada, we are considering establishing a satellite (phone hook-up and/or video) site as well.

To help us determine if there is a need for this and choose a possible satellite site, could you please fill out the survey below (if applicable to you) and **mail or fax it to the National Office by May 1, 2001**. After the survey forms are tabulated, we will be able to decide if the numbers justify a satellite site and where it should be. Your response to this survey request is valued and much appreciated.

**MINISTERIAL SERVICES
WESTERN CANADA FOT SURVEY**

Total number of people in your party: _____ Adults _____ Children

Please indicate which satellite site you would prefer:

Regina _____

Other _____

Church area you are from: _____

Additional comments: _____

**Mail to: Ministerial Services, 1243 Islington Ave. #600, Etobicoke, ON M8X 1Y9
Or, you can fax your form to: (416) 231-8238**

OBITUARY: ONNE “ANDY” DE JONG

BY WILLIAM DE JONG • OTTAWA

ANDY DE JONG, A MEMBER OF THE OTTAWA church, died November 23, 2000 after spending several months in Winchester District Memorial Hospital.

Andy was born in Oudega, the Netherlands, on April 15, 1930, to a large family of brothers and sisters. He grew up during the war years fearing bombs and German occupation of the country. When he was 14, he began working for his uncle, who was a fisherman.

By the time he was 16, Andy was working on a boat that travelled from the Netherlands to Germany on the Rhine River. While sailing on the river, he saw much devastation resulting from the II World War. He described seeing people “crawl from the rubble as if they were moles.”

Andy decided there was no future in his homeland for a young man with a dream of owning his own farm. So, at the age of 19, he and his brother, Bill, immigrated to Canada even though they did not understand English.

The two brothers travelled to Canada by boat and arrived June 15, 1949. Andy worked on farms, in construction, or any other job that

was available in western Ontario before moving to eastern Ontario. There he purchased his own farm while working on the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway in the 1950s. Andy went on to be a carpenter and rebuilt and repaired many barns and houses in the community. He also managed to build three new homes for himself in the latter part of his life.

Andy grew up in the Christian Reform Church and helped build one of the first Christian Reform churches in his area. During the 1960s he became a member of the Church of God, which he faithfully supported the rest of his life. His brother and sister-in-law also became members of the Church of God, and remain faithful members of UCG - Ottawa.

Andy’s funeral, conducted by Anthony Wasilkoff, was held in Williamsburg, Ontario on November 27, 2000. He will be sadly missed by his family, community, church and all who knew him. -UNC



Onne “Andy” De Jong

INTERVENTION

BY SUSAN WELLS • TORONTO

DUE TO HEREDITARY SKELETAL problems, a diagnosis of osteoporosis last year, and the addition of stabilizing steel rods to a spinal fusion, I practice caution when moving about and am extremely careful walking outdoors.

This past December, the Brampton area received its first taste of winter with a dusting of snow over patches of ice. I was walking my dog, as I do every day, when suddenly my foot stepped on a bit of ice and I began to fall backwards. Since I am not able to bend at the waist, in a matter of seconds I was lying completely flat on the side-

walk looking at the sky with the dog leash still in my hand. I actually began to laugh a little, for you see, I didn’t feel any part of my body make contact with the ground! It was as if I were gently lowered from about six inches above the ground to the sidewalk.

Just then a man appeared above me and helped me to my feet. Due to the spinal fusion, getting up unaided from flat on my back would have been most awkward.

I continued on my way feeling absolutely wonderful and thanking God for his intervention; once for soft-

ening my fall and again for the helping hand to get me to my feet.

Everyday I had seen this man and his work crew on my daily walk. For the past two weeks they had been doing some construction work on a private residence.

I wanted to thank him for his help, so the next day, walking the same route, I was looking for him. He was nowhere to be found. I can only assume that the day before when he assisted me was the last day he and the other workmen were at that address. -UNC

NATIONAL OFFICE UPDATE

SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL OFFICE

**“OUR TEENS ARE
VERY INVOLVED
IN THE LOCAL
CHURCH, HELPING
TO SERVE IN
VARIOUS WAYS,
OFTEN PROVIDING
SPECIAL MUSIC.”**

VANCOUVER & VANCOUVER ISLAND UPDATE

The following report is submitted by David Palmer, pastor of the Vancouver and Vancouver Island congregations.

Here on British Columbia's West Coast, we have a “team” approach to serving God's people in the UCG congregations. Elders Lorne Davies and Joseph Cheperdak, along with deacons Chuck Chase, Ken Kerr Sr., and Willy Weber, along with several enthusiastic volunteers, all work closely together in creating, under God's guiding hand, a “family” atmosphere.

Recognizing the importance of communication, both Mr. Davies and I hold a teleconference with Mr. Cheperdak and Mr. Kerr on the Island, twice a month, allowing us to formulate local initiatives. One of the most recent was the discussion to combine the Victoria and Nanaimo areas into one UCG congregation located in Ladysmith, which is situated between the two larger centers. After consultation with the brethren, the move was made to the satisfaction of all concerned.

In both the Vancouver and Island congregations we have a number of young people, including teens. A children's Sabbath school is a regular activity on the Island and in Vancouver. Mr. Glyn Davies conducts teen Bible studies. Our teens are very involved in the local church, helping to serve in various ways, often providing special music.

Many of our elderly are also very active in the church. One of our members, Mr. Ernie McBratney, has over the many years gathered hundreds of special inspirational, sometimes even humorous, sayings, *Words To Live By*. He has compiled several of those “words” into a book he has dedicated to the United Church of God. Here's an example: “Age is but a number – and mine is unlisted.”

Fellowship is a very important part of our local congregation, and each month we acknowledge all members who have observed a birthday or celebrated an anniversary in that month with an after-services potluck. An album of the church's activities has been created. Pictures are taken and placed in the album, a highlight with visitors who

come through and love to scan through the pages of pictures we've gathered.

So, as always, an invitation is extended to all who visit Canada's West Coast to come spend the Sabbath with us. After all, you're part of the family!

LETTER COMMENTS

We sent out nearly 4,000 letters to our Good News subscribers coast to coast. Here are a few comments that we have received:

“I would be grateful to you if you have a Bible Study program available. A home study course – I would gladly pay for it. Thank you. Your magazines are sensational. I look forward to receiving them. Very instructional and informative. Bravo.” *Windsor, ON*

“Thank you. I enjoy reading your magazines. There is a lot of good in them. I am 80 years old. Thank you.” *North Bay, ON*

“Always much appreciated! Thank you! I share your magazines with my neighbours.” *Armstrong, BC*

“Please keep up the good work doing excellent jobs. Topics are great. Please pray for me. God bless you all.” *Kitchener, ON*

“I surely enjoy and get a lot of help from the Good News magazine. I am very thankful for the wonderful magazine. I'm 84 years old and I really get a lot of good teaching and happiness from reading the *Good News* magazine. I will be happy to receive the books you have to offer.” *Winnipeg, MB*

“I have been reading the *Good News* magazine for some time now – whenever I get a hold of one. By reading your magazine it has helped me to see many things differently and have certainly learned a lot.... I would also like to receive a few of your recommended readings.... The readings will be shared between my friends and family members. It will help us ... to get closer to the Lord.” *Surrey, BC*

JUST AS WE HAD BREATHED A SIGH OF relief after the Y2K scare early last year, an unexpected and wonderful event changed who I am forever.

Last January I received an unexpected phone call. A voice said “Hello, Gerry Fix? I think I’ve found your birth family.” Could this be true after 57 years? Could this voice unlock my past? So many questions – my mind exploded like fireworks. My response was garbled and unintelligible. This voice opened possibilities that could affect my life and others.

I am one of many thousands of children who grew up never knowing their origins. Many of us who are adopted open our family history books with blank covers and empty pages, finding nothing about our roots. It’s like looking into a mirror that casts no reflection. What others take for granted are a puzzle to us. Simple things like, why is my hair brown? Why are my nose or eyes or ears shaped this way? Where do I get my peculiar laugh, my smile? This information had always been missing because I am adopted.

I never liked the sound of that word. It leaves me with an uneasy feeling. Nevertheless, I was grafted into a loving family. They raised me as their only child; I was loved and had all the opportunities for success. I am eternally grateful to them.

However, not knowing who I was left me feeling something was missing. I married, raised a family, and was called by God. I’ve had good and bad years. But every so often the same questions would reappear: Who am I? Where is my family? What are my roots? Was I abandoned?

In 1984 I began the search to find my birth family. My first fear was whether I could live with the outcome if I uncovered something painful. What if my birthmother was a street person, an addict, or a three-headed monster? What if she had no desire to see me? Could I handle being rejected a second time? After counting the cost, I continued my search.



Gerry (left) and Margaret Fix, with Gerry’s special, new-found Aunt Lilly (centre). Lilly is his birth mother’s sister.

My first inquiry was sent to “Post Adoptive Services.” On January 18, 1984, I was advised to contact “Parent Finders.” This too proved disappointing. It seemed all the doors closed and the secrets of the past would remain secrets. It seemed as though I would never know the answers in this lifetime. But the older I got, the more insistent these urgings to know pushed at the doors of my mind. I decided to try once more.

During a conversation about family history with a friend in 1998, she recalled seeing on the Internet a volunteer organization that assists those searching for birth relatives. I was skeptical, but I contacted TRIAD (The Society for Truth in Adoption), that was founded in Calgary in 1982, and nationalized in 1986.

This time I’m sure there was divine intervention. I called someone in the records department of the hospital where I was born. Armed with previous information, I poured out my story. Near the conclusion of our conversation, the woman said, “Give me your phone number.” Two days later, they phoned back to with information. It was more than I had hoped for. I found out later that it was not their policy to give out free information. Strict rules required the consent of the birthmother or other family members. I was told that some of the information this person gave me was not recorded at the hospital. Where did it come from? Draw your own conclusions.

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“I WAS TOLD SOME INFORMATION THIS PERSON GAVE ME WAS NOT RECORDED AT THE HOSPITAL. WHERE DID IT COME FROM?”

**“HOW IS THIS FOR
ROOTS? ONE OF
MY COUSINS
GAVE ME A
‘FAMILY HISTORY
BOOK’ THAT DATES
BACK TO 1642!”**

TRIAD gave me the name of a possible relative to contact, along with some guidelines. Excited, I threw caution to the wind. I phoned the person and said, “I think I’m related to you.” I told her I had some documentation I would like her to look at. The kind, friendly voice was warm and more than willing to help. I later learned she was my aunt, by marriage. After that the doors swung open like flood-gates on a river. I found a warm, loving family – my family roots.

I am still an only child. My birthmother never married. She cared for her aged mother and a mentally-challenged brother until her death in 1992. It hurts that I won’t meet her for a while. But meet her I will!

My mother was one of 15 children. Four of her brothers are still living and one sister, my special aunt, whom I fell “in love” with immediately. I also have 55 “new” cousins to get to know.

In August, my birth family had a reunion and our family was invited. We were given a place of honour at the evening meal. I met 200 close relatives and they all treated us like family. What a wonderful experience!

And roots. How is this for ROOTS? One of my cousins gave me a “family history book” that dates back to 1642! That’s the year my mother’s ancestors came from France into the New World. (It spans 11 generations at the time of writing.)

They are French Acadians. The meaning of the word *Acadie* is the land that is plentiful. The term *L’Acadie* is used to distinguish the Maritime part of New France from the area now known as Quebec. The boundary would have comprised the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, parts of Quebec, and the state of Maine. My mother’s ancestors settled in the part of Acadia now known as Nova Scotia, at a place called Port Royal.

My mother’s family is a closely-knit, highly respected family with a long history of

accomplishments. Some of them came to the west largely due to the travels and exploits of one man they fondly called “Uncle Joe” who was a *coureur de bois*. He traveled by canoe and slowly made his way west. When he reached B.C., he did some prospecting which turned out to be very profitable. He staked a number of very successful claims in the Kootenays. One is called the North Star. It is one of the first silver/lead mines in the Kootenays. The town of Kimberley grew around this mine.

From there Uncle Joe moved to Alberta where he bought a large tract of land. He bought two thousand acres in the Little Sturgeon River area in 1894. Later he asked two of his brothers who were living in the east to come to Alberta. They came west in 1900. My birthmother’s grandfather was one of them.

There are many more stories that could be told. Some are sad stories in that wonderful fabric of family history.

I feel so privileged to be accepted as part of this colourful family’s fabric. Even now, as I write, I have a funny little lump in my throat.

I am still wondering about my father’s side of the story. Well, maybe I’ll find out someday – I’ve found out enough to satisfy me for now. There’s a sad love story involved and perhaps my birthmother would want it sealed up until I see her. We’ll see. *Que Sera Sera, Whatever Will Be, Will Be* as the song goes.

My wife has been supportive from the onset. A “people” person, she was quickly accepted by this new family and she is comfortable with them. My children, too, are very happy for me. They can see what a positive impact this has had on me.

As you can see the year 2000 will always be my special year. I’ll soon forget the Y2K incident. But I will always remember the year I found my roots! -UNC

MUSIC AND THE CREATOR

BY RICHARD KMODRAS • GRAPHICS BY MICHAEL DAVIES



ASK, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU, SEARCH, and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you,” the Bible tells us in Matthew 7:7.

That statement holds absolutely true in our everyday lives. Yet considering our Creator and the stunning depths of His vast, unfathomable work of creation, the statement holds ever more true. The closer we look, the more we find.

An article some time ago talked about the work of man versus the work of God, comparing a simple sewing needle with a rose. It pointed out how very clumsy that needle appeared under the microscope – how ragged, dented and inconsistent was its surface. It was then compared to a petal of a garden rose that even under very close scrutiny revealed more and more perfection, order and harmony.

Music as God’s Creation

Music has the same inherent attributes, since it’s not a work of man but a work of God. It has evolved over the centuries in man’s hands, depending on the various times, places and the inspiration of the individual composer. But it was the Creator God Himself who put in place all the laws governing the world of sound, also giving man the ability to work with them artistically and scientifically. In that sense, the God who made the universe, the Earth and all life upon it also created music.

Strangely, most people today don’t associate music with the Bible or any type of religion at all. And yet, a close look at its structure reveals an unmistakable trace, a handprint of the Almighty Creator.

God’s Signature

Several years ago I became quite interested in various numbers and numerical patterns found in the Bible. It took some time however,

before I began comparing them with what I had learned previously in my music studies. Never did I realize that so many interesting parallels could be drawn. Soon it was soon becoming obvious that there was a much more direct connection between music and the Creator. The seemingly mysterious ways of God now looked as if they were carefully planned, with a larger, universal pattern in mind.

Origins of Music

The Bible appears to indicate that music was created before man. It also seems to indicate that Satan, the Adversary, was very well educated in it. Ezekiel 28:13 says: “The workmanship of your tabrets and of your pipes was prepared in you” (relating to Lucifer) “in the day that you were created.” Isaiah 14:11 adds: “Your pomp is brought down to the grave, and the sound of your viols.”

Here, in Satan’s former, unspoiled state, we see him connected with creating and performing music! Also, three different types of musical instruments are mentioned: pipes, viols and tabrets.

Interestingly, despite all its complexities, music has only three basic elements: melody, harmony and rhythm. Notice that a pipe (flute) is a melodic instrument, since it can only play one note at a time. A viol (lyre or a lute) with its many strings is primarily an instrument of harmony. Tabrets (percussion or drums) add rhythm, making the ensemble complete.

A good musical work must present a good balance of these three elements. Rap music, for example, shows the first two, melody and harmony, either sadly lacking or absent. The result is, as we know, monotonous, dull, and unaccomplished.

“...[D]ESPITE ALL ITS COMPLEXITY, MUSIC HAS ONLY THREE BASIC ELEMENTS: MELODY, HARMONY AND RHYTHM.”

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MUSIC AND THE CREATOR

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God's Number of Foundation

Most people know that there are 88 notes found on any standard size piano. That is true, although they're not 88 different notes, but only 12. Seven of them are marked as white keys, five as black. The Bible is filled with different examples of twelves, but perhaps we haven't noticed a few more similarities.

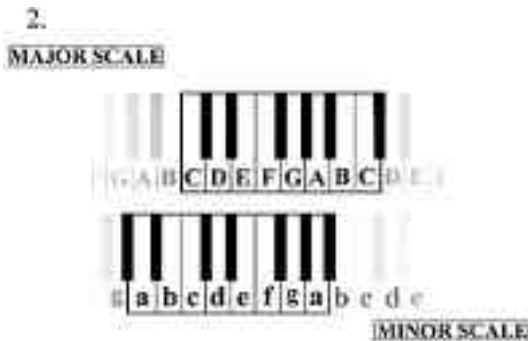


God's Number of Perfection

By choosing seven keys out of the 12, we can form a scale with an audible character. That character will be happy and bright or sad and dark, musically known as major and minor.

Most good quality music shows approximately an equal balance of these two types of scales in any larger work. The Creator put them in place as contrasts exactly the same way as day and night or light and darkness.

All the holy days occur within the first seven months of God's calendar. The remaining five months are without holy days. This seems to agree with the color code of the piano keys!



God's Number of Completion

Three of these seven notes stand in a position of primary importance or significance. To musicians, they are known as Tonic, Subdominant and Dominant, or simply First, Fourth and Fifth. They are present in every piece of music as much as there are complete music styles built only on them alone. They serve as the all-important pillars of the whole structure without which it wouldn't work.

Interestingly, the seven Holy Days of God unveil during three different seasons of the year!



Music as a Part of God's Plan

In summary, 12 different notes form the basic foundation of music. A choice of seven gives that foundation a specific character. Finally, a finest choice of three notes determines the principal supports on which all music is built. Similarly, out of the 12 months of the year, seven are chosen to accommodate God's Holy Days, which are celebrated in three distinct seasons of the year.

But that's not all!

Our Creator, when He walked this Earth as Jesus Christ of Nazareth, had followed this pattern at least one other time. He personally chose twelve disciples. He further picked out seven of them to witness one of His final appearances and hear His last commands: "Feed my sheep" (John 21:2). Finally, He had made the finest choice of only Peter, John and James, who became the only men allowed to see Jesus in the glorious vision of His Transfiguration (Luke 9:28).

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"...[B]Y CHOOSING SEVEN KEYS OUT OF THE 12, WE CAN FORM A SCALE WITH AN AUDIBLE CHARACTER."

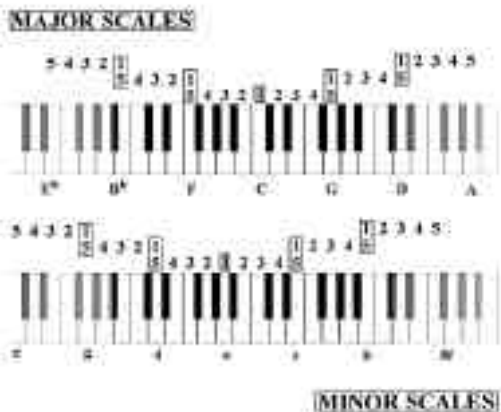
God's Number of Resurrection

While seven notes make up a musical scale, it is the eighth note of the same name and sound as the first one, that restarts and continues this pattern. This concept is identical to that of the eighth day beginning the new week. Also, there were eight people in the ark to "resurrect" mankind from death in the flood.

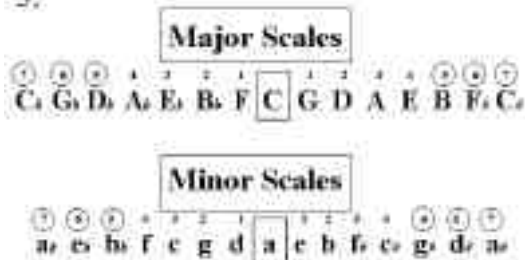
God's Throne

Every scale has a seven-note pattern of whole steps and half steps. The next scale in sequence begins five notes up or down in opposite directions from the center. This is, as simple as it can be, the way to find the rest of the scales.

4.



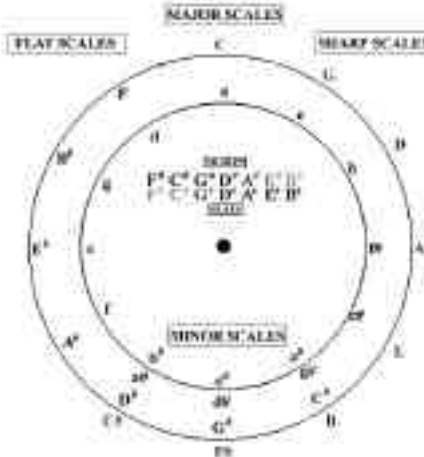
5.



Seven scales to the right and left, we find something quite interesting: #7 right is the same sounding scale as #5 left, #6 right as #6 left and #5 right as #7 left. The logical conclusion would then be that the two lines actually curve down and create two circles, with 12 scales within each, 24 in total.

The complete picture is musically known as the Circle of Fifths and can be commonly found in many textbooks. It actually resembles a clock and suggests that God has created time on a similar principle.

6.



Now notice the two lines of letters within the circles as well as the black dot at the very center. Music uses seven different sharps and flats as markers to alter the pitch of a note. The manner in which they are assembled by the scales makes for the same order from left to right for sharps as from right to left for flats. The two groups practically fade into one another and actually become one.

In other words, the scales on the right totally agree with the scales on the left. They arrange their sharps in the exact same order as the opposite scales impose their flats, arriving in unison at one and the same, unmistakable result.

The final outcome is of utmost significance!

It is an amazingly accurate representation of the immediate surroundings of the very Throne of God, exactly as described in Revelation 4:4: "And round about the Throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes with golden crowns on their heads." Verse 5: "Coming from the Throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the Throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven Spirits of God."

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“WHILE SEVEN NOTES MAKE UP A MUSICAL SCALE, IT IS THE EIGHTH NOTE OF THE SAME NAME AND SOUND AS THE FIRST ONE, THAT RESTARTS AND CONTINUES THIS PATTERN.”

MUSIC AND THE CREATOR

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**“THE DESIGN
OF MUSIC
REVEALS
GOD’S PLAN AND
GOD’S LAW.”**

Surprisingly, in the very complex and seemingly endless sphere of music, this picture represents all that is available or even understandable to a listener, musician or a composer of music!

Music as a Form of Worship

What is true about the unity of the twenty-four musical scales is also true about the twenty-four elders. They are mentioned throughout the Book of Revelation seven times, each time with their faces against the ground in total obedience and worship of God. The inevitable question is, since the created angels continually praise and worship their Creator, shouldn't music do the same?

A Universal Guideline

As we have seen, the very design of music reveals God as creator and also His Law. To reflect Himself and His glory through music, He gave us a complete, yet clear and simple guideline. Following that guideline will be as important for music as is keeping God's Law. On the contrary, disobeying it will have the same disastrous effect on music as breaking the Law of God has on our life and society.

A Musical Rebellion

History clearly tells us that the so-called modern movements of the late 19th century deliberately broke all the rules. The early 20th century system, ironically called the Twelve-Tone System decided to do away with all structure altogether. In the minds of its makers, all notes were made equal, each would be simply given a number and one could “compose” with only a numerical pattern of a sort, such as page of a phone book or a date of birth.

The most fundamental part of any creative work – God-given talent and inspiration – was completely disregarded, structure was dismantled, balance, order and hierarchy thrown out. Fundamental concepts that were put in place by Jesus Christ Himself were considered obsolete and outdated.

The results spoke for themselves. “Modern”

became a cover-up word for clashing, disharmonious and uninspired noise, although the books, the critics and the so-called experts in the field have always referred to it as musical progress.

Some other, more ethnic experiments in this field went even further. They totally removed the very foundation altogether, using more or less notes than twelve. The outcome was not only absurd but also musically meaningless, consisting of only unintelligible noises sure to aggravate a person in a very short time.

Over the years, things haven't changed all that much in this regard. A random search through your radio dial will serve as a good demonstration of where we stand today. Our choice as a society, is music well outside the protective bounds of God's Law. Instead, we have chosen musical rebellion, musical lawlessness as the sign of our time and we suffer for it.

The Music of Tomorrow

But despite the dismal state of most of today's music, the future looks bright. A widespread understanding of God and His plan will be just a part of life in the world tomorrow. All people will be aware of music's glorious purpose as a way of respect, love, praise and worship of the Almighty Creator.

As we know, there will be no rebellion in the world tomorrow. In my opinion, there will be no radios, TV's, phones and computers constantly bombarding us with noise, while calling it entertainment. There will be no tapes, CD's and MP3's that contain nothing but musical trash, totally void of any timeless quality. There will be no “free” music forms as an egotistical, almost insane way of everybody playing whatever they please, all at the same time. There will be no “modern” music to sneer at everything that the Creator made for us to enjoy, nobody trying to destroy the balance between melody, harmony and rhythm. As a result, we will not have whole generations of people who haven't heard a decent piece of music in all of their lives other than by accident.

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NEHEMIAH: A LEADER FOR ALL TIME

BY DARLENE PETERSEN • CALGARY

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE KIND OF leadership. Some leaders are dictatorial, such as Nimrod, while others lead by example, such as Nehemiah.

Nehemiah's life and principles show us what a Christian needs to be a good leader, especially when we lead by example. Nehemiah had Godly character traits that made him an outstanding leader.

Nehemiah was loyal to the king and to his fellow Jews, but above all, he was loyal to God. He fasted and prayed in preparation to do God's work (Neh. 1:3-4). He did this in order to serve his fellow Jews, and to follow God's will instead of his own. He proved that to be loyal is to be constant and faithful in any obligation, implying trust and confidence.

He led by example, and did not expect others to do what he would not have done himself (Neh. 2:17-18; 4:21). If Nehemiah were hauling stones himself, how encouraging it must have been for the people to see this high-ranking official working so hard to defend the city. In Nehemiah 4:21, Nehemiah uses the word "we" instead of "you." He was governor, but he still got his hands dirty. Our approach to the work of God should be the same.

Nehemiah was faced with opposition that was trying to stop him from rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. He risked his life for others and for the cause (Neh. 4:19-20). He was very bold and courageous, and he knew God's will.

He simply prayed, then went to work and trusted God to protect him (Neh. 6:8-9,16).

In chapter 6:10-11, Nehemiah was tempted to hide in the temple, for fear he may be assassinated. But he refused to sin by entering the temple in this manner. By showing fear in the face of danger and running away at such a crucial time, Nehemiah's actions would have disheartened those who had been inspired by his valor. We need to be just as bold in our Christian lives so we can resist those who frustrate the purpose of God and his church.

Nehemiah was a generous man. He was not in it for personal gain. There was a famine that ravished the land, and many had gone into debt to feed their families. Their homes were taken away and their children were sold into slavery (Neh. 5:9-10). Nehemiah lent them money and grain, and paid a great portion of these expenses out of his own pocket (Neh. 5:17). He also corrected those who took advantage of the situation (Neh. 5:10).

Nehemiah feared God. He turned his attention to rebuilding the spiritual foundation. He publicly subjected himself to God's laws and set a high standard for others to follow. He restored tithing, the Sabbath and Feast days, and he refrained from mingling with pagan nations (Neh. 8:1-18). In Nehemiah 10:1, he was the first to sign an agreement to walk in God's laws. As a result of his leadership, the rebuilding of the wall was completed in less than two months.

**“NEHEMIAH WAS
A GENEROUS MAN.
HE WAS NOT
IN IT FOR
PERSONAL GAIN.”**

Nehemiah knew when to exercise his authority because he knew and understood God's will and was loyal to it. We, too, need these character traits to be a balanced Christian, whether we are leaders or not.

-UNC



BY THEIR OWN HAND: THE ALARMING SUICIDE RATE

BY PAT SNYDER • CALGARY

**“OUT OF EVERY
100 ATTEMPTS AT
SUICIDE, THERE
IS ONE
COMPLETION
OF THE ACT.”**

A RAPIDLY DEVELOPING PHENOMENON IS invading many levels of our present society. Suicide, the act of taking one's own life, is becoming an alarming statistic to law enforcement and social administrations in our country. Almost unheard of a few years ago, the average citizen or church member would be astounded at the prevalence of this situation.

As with almost everyone, it is also difficult for church members to discuss the subject and be comfortable in supporting members of the immediate family. Part of this is a result of the shock that goes with such abruptness and unexpected loss. Emotions are deeply disturbed and closure is temporarily in limbo. Further, it is difficult to console the bereaved since many of us are fearful of saying something that could make the loss more painful.

Suicide is not commonly understood but talking about it can and does diminish the fears and unknowns. Even in the church today, brethren seldom speak about or discuss the subject of suicide. However, consider this: If the individual, who had died of an accident, illness or suicide, had been part of the church, then as a departed family member, he was a integral part of the church and our lives.

We personally feel that to talk about the loss of our loved ones is a major part of the healing process. Those who have shared humorous memories, quiet times, in-depth conversations, and wrote about them in cards and letters, have helped us to cope with the death of our son. And we deeply and sincerely thank all of you, once again, who were there for us at that time.

The following information is not meant to shock, but to reveal to you some of the results of the pressures that are rampant in our society. These statistics are not embellished in the slightest and should alert us to the societal pressure that is in the schools, workplace as well as with those who use drugs and/or alcohol in our fragmenting society. Suicide is the third largest cause of death among alcoholics.

Armed with the following information you could be instrumental in recognizing a potential situation and get help for the individual.

Let me express some astonishing facts about suicide received from the Mental Health statistics. In 1996 (the latest available statistics in Calgary), there were 454 reported cases of suicide. Approximately 45 unreported cases are over and above this. It is estimated that ten per cent of deaths in Calgary are unreported suicides which means they might have been an embarrassment to the family or were unreported for insurance reasons, etc. Out of every 100 attempts at suicide, there is one completion of the act. One in seven people have serious suicidal thoughts. Suicide is second only to accidents as a cause of death for people under the age of 35.

These numbers are staggering and they are from 1996! The figures have escalated since then. The risk factors of men between the ages of 60 to 65 are considered high and this risk escalates if the man has lost his job or his wife. Women between the ages of 50 to 54 are also considered a high risk, due to the change of life and how difficult it is for them to deal with it. Young girls between the ages of 13 and 17 are high risk, and young men, between the ages of 15 and 24, are even higher.

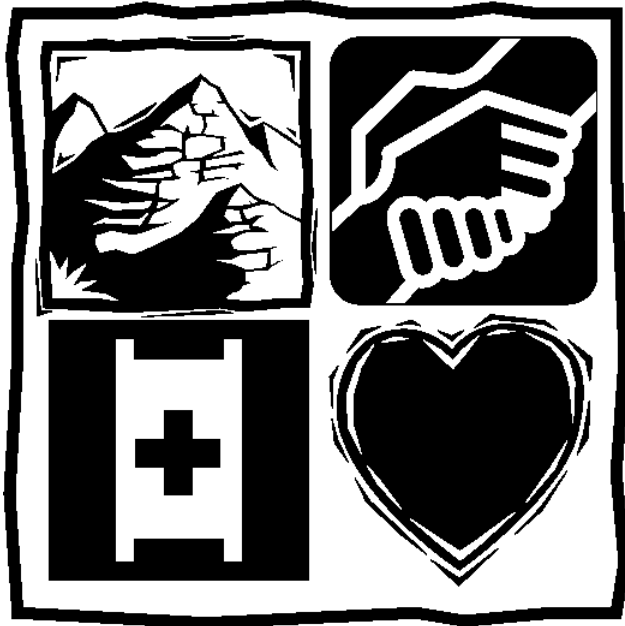
Girls are more likely to access the resources (help-lines); whereas men usually do not even attempt to do this. Girls will try to commit suicide many times more than boys will, but boys are more successful.

There are many reasons leading to suicide. The term used by the medical profession to identify the reasons or “contributaries” are: gender, symptoms, stress, age, etc. These contributing factors include desperation, anger, guilt, worthlessness, loneliness, sadness, or a feeling of hopelessness or helplessness. They are very high in young people who have used drugs of any kind.

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THE “GOOD” SAMARITAN

BY KEN ALLEN • TORONTO



“LOVE, LOVE, LOVE/LOVE IS ALL YOU NEED.”

So runs a line from a popular song. But what kind of love do we need and how should we show it?

In 1 Cor. 13:1-3 we read: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”

The apostle Paul here tests our love quotient on three levels:

Does your love only speak eloquently but is not ratified by deeds?

Is your love purely an intellectual concept?

Is it merely a photo opportunity or a show to get applause?

News-making acts of philanthropy and self-

sacrifice are just that (news-making) if they are done from ulterior motives and not from genuine love. As they say: “You can give without loving but you can’t love without giving.”

Let us take a fresh look at the parable of the Good Samaritan that demonstrates the principle of true godly, unconditional love. It also shows us that God is more impressed with our living the law of love than merely believing or preaching it. The gospels record two men coming to Christ on different occasions to inquire of Him the way to eternal life: one a rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16-22) and the other a legal expert (Luke 10:25-37).

When we compare both passages we see some startling similarities and differences. First thing we notice is that both had the same question: What must I do to gain eternal life? But while the young ruler genuinely wanted to know; the lawyer was just trying to test or try Jesus.

The second thing we see is that Christ showed there is only one way – keep God’s commandments! (See Matt. 19:17). Notice in Luke 10:26 that Jesus answered the fool according to his folly by saying essentially “You are the legal expert. What’s your interpretation of the law?” The lawyer correctly responded by summarizing the law as love toward God (Deut. 6:5) and love for your neighbor (Lev. 19:18). The young ruler, like many elusive Christians today, wanted to know which of the Ten Commandments were relevant for him to keep. (Anti-sabbatarianism in their efforts to minimize or negate the relevance of the fourth commandment usually ask which of the Ten is relevant for us today).

“[IS YOUR LOVE]

MERELY A

PHOTO

OPPORTUNITY

OR A SHOW TO

GET APPLAUSE?

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THE “GOOD” SAMARITAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19



A third point to notice is that while the young ruler realized there was a need to do more than just keep the commandments, the lawyer sought to justify or acquit himself from personal responsibility to his fellowman. He did this by attempting to engage Christ in semantics on the word neighbor (Luke 10:29). Jesus went on to explain in Matt. 19:21 two extra steps required to gain eternal life:

1. Self-sacrifice (sell your possessions and give the proceeds to the poor).
2. Self-denial and commitment (“Come follow Me”). Mark, in his account adds, “Take up the cross and follow Me.”

This is the same commitment we are called to make when we decide to follow Christ (Luke 14: 26-27, 33).

At the end of this discourse we see that both men failed the test of true discipleship. The rich young ruler failed because he was too materialistic. His priority was misplaced on his wealth. The legal expert failed because he was legalistic. He preached the word but did not practice it. That’s hypocrisy.

Now let’s turn our attention to the concluding part of the story in Luke 10:30-37. Here Christ followed up on the legal expert’s question about who is his neighbor. He magnifies the law by using a parable to explain who is a neighbor and how we should show love to our neighbor. In this familiar story a man is robbed, beaten and left half dead on the roadside. A priest passed by and avoided him by walking away on the other side. A Levite came by, looked curiously and then walked right on by. But a Samaritan came by, picked up the unfortunate crime victim, took him to a hotel and took care of him.

This story should make us ask ourselves some soul-searching questions. Are you like the priest who just walked away on the other side when you see someone in difficulty? His was an apathetic attitude of non-involvement. Perhaps he was too busy, concerned with more

important matters, or considered himself too good to get his hands dirty with the blood of a wounded stranger.

The Levite was a typical curiosity-seeker. He just wanted to see what or who was suffering but had no interest in helping. His behavior is so typical of many motorists on our highways who are more intrigued with looking at a car in the ditch than they are in stopping to see how they can help the unfortunate fellow motorist.

But not everyone is like the uncaring clergymen. Jesus used a most unlikely character, a Samaritan as the one who showed good neighborliness. Often times it is those from whom we expect the least that we receive the most. Those who have been victimized and later shown compassion are usually more apt to identify with others who are suffering.

The Jews despised the Samaritans. Yet it was this despised and rejected Samaritan who came to the rescue of the crime victim. He perhaps never read from the book of the Law in the temple like the priest and the Levite. He was not a legal expert. He never gave a sermon on steps to loving your neighbor. He never had the distinction of presenting an exegetical dissertation on the etymology of the word neighbor. And he was definitely not schooled in the fine art of hermeneutics like the priest. Yet this humble Samaritan preached the greatest sermon on how to love your neighbor by his practical demonstration of compassion to a stranger in need.



continued on page 21

**“THE JEWS
DESPISED THE
SAMARITANS.
YET IT WAS THIS
DESPISED AND
REJECTED
SAMARITAN
WHO CAME TO
THE RESCUE....”**



He practiced love first-hand. He didn't love at a distance or through an agency. He took personal responsibility for this victim in need.

And he went the extra mile by not only staying with him overnight in the hotel, but making arrangements to pay any additional expenses incurred for his care. That is love and compassion in action!

We have all heard stories of Good Samaritans. We may even know people who have risked life and limb to help others in distress. We may have even been Good Samaritans ourselves at one time or another. There are three important lessons we can learn from Good Samaritan situations:

Don't refuse to help when you are able to (Prov. 3:27).

Never assume someone else will do it. Take personal responsibility.

You may suffer for doing good but it is worth it (1 Pet. 3:17; Matt. 5:10).

Next time you have an opportunity to serve someone in need (a motorist in distress on the highway; a person under the cloud of depression; a friend in a financial bind; a single parent being overcome by a rebellious child; a stressed-out coworker)... what will your reaction be? Will you be the religious law-speaking type or the proactive law-living type?

The message of the parable is very clear: good neighborliness and showing love by doing are more honorable than merely speaking about love. Franklin D. Roosevelt said in his inaugural address: "In the field of world policy, I would dedicate this nation [America] to the policy of a good neighbor." Jesus' instruction to us is simple yet profound: "Go and do like the Samaritan!" -UNC

“THE MESSAGE OF THE PARABLE IS VERY CLEAR: ... SHOWING LOVE BY DOING [IS] MORE HONORABLE THAN MERELY SPEAKING ABOUT LOVE.”

SUICIDE RATES

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When a person is considering ending their life, they are referred to as being "in the stream." All have thoughts of suicide when they are in the stream. To me, this is the scary part because some children, as young as nine years of age, are thinking about ending their life. They don't even have a full understanding of the act, but the thought is there. How can such young ones have so much pain that they want to end their life? Counsellors tell us this is where one has to determine the "at risk" of an individual, based on these contributing factors. Warning signs include: giving away possessions; withdrawing from the family, friends, school or work; loss of interest in hobbies; reckless behaviour; extreme behaviour changes; impulsiveness or self-mutilation; lack

of interest in appearance; disturbed sleep; and change or loss of appetite or weight.

Finally, when someone has attempted the act, it is referred to as "over the falls." They have suicidal behaviour, having injured themselves or caused death. The very sad state about this is that a person's pain was greater than the resources for coping with pain, and they chose this escape during a time of personal crisis.

If you know someone who is feeling suicidal, please tell them to access the help lines (SIEC) www.siec.ca or the suicide prevention resources at www.ucgcalgary.org, talk to someone they trust, or call the hot line in their area. Get them to ask for help. There are trained individuals ready to assist them. -UNC

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES!

BY CHRIS CARTER • TORONTO

“...CHRIST’S
SUFFERINGS
[HAVE BEEN] MADE
SO MUCH
CLEARER TO ME
THROUGH MY
OWN SUFFERING.”

ON MAY 6, 1999, MY LIFE WAS AS IT HAD been for the last few years. I was working part-time as a bookkeeper, which I really enjoyed, plus I spent time looking after the needs of my husband and three sons. (Our fourth and oldest son lives in the U.S.A. with his wife.)

Friday, May 7, was drawing close to Mother’s Day on the Sunday. So we decided to make a visit to an elderly lady, who lived a half hour’s drive from us, to bring her some flowers and a card. Unfortunately, she would never receive them. We were about half way there when the big bang occurred.

An 18-wheeler tractor-trailer slammed into our car leaving it a total wreck. My husband was hurt very little. My injuries were quite severe – a broken humerus (top left arm), 11 cracked ribs, a cracked pelvis, and both lungs punctured. It wasn’t too long before the ambulance, fire truck and police arrived. They were unable to get me out of the car via the door so they used the “Jaws of Life” to haul me out through the roof. It was all quite scary and I was in a daze most of the time. Then began my round of the hospitals – four in all.

My next day of full consciousness was three weeks later. Despite being heavily drugged during that time, I’d been aware of family and friends talking to me with words of encouragement: “Hang in there, Chris, don’t give up!” I heard from a dear friend and deacon. My husband and the three sons living in Canada were constantly around to cheer and encourage me with their presence.

The pain was all encompassing. Yet my thoughts were centered on Jesus Christ. I imagined (or tried to) all the pain He must have

suffered on the cross, yet without relief from painkillers or comfort from friends and family. How I thanked Him over and over as I had never done before. I don’t think I’ll ever forget that experience.

I was bounced around from one hospital to another until finally I came to a Rehabilitation Hospital where I wheeled myself down to my first rehab session. I was sure I must be on another planet – the planet of beautiful people. At least 90 per cent of the physios were girls with long legs, perfect posture and long blonde hair. I must be in the wrong place, I thought, feeling the worst I had ever felt in my life. “They’re just doing this to depress me!”

However hard I worked I’d never become like one of the beautiful people on this planet! But if I thought this was hard, it was only the beginning. God was setting out to teach me patience and if I didn’t learn it one way, I’d have to learn it another!

So what difference did a day make in my life? Physically, a huge difference – having to rely on people for help. Spiritually, I’m still learning lessons, but I rely so much more on God and on Jesus Christ. The Passover will be so much more meaningful to me now; Christ’s sufferings being made so much clearer to me through my own suffering. “All things work together for good to those who love God, to them who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8: 28).

So if you ever have a disaster overtake you, remember that that day will no doubt bring many good things in God’s good time. Don’t despair! You’ll soon be saying “What a difference a day makes!” -UNC



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MUSIC AND THE CREATOR

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The composers of the future will not purposely “dumb down” their work and follow lame music formulas in order “to sell” and become the next celebrity. Truth and sincerity will be the artists’ driving force, giving back to God what He gave them in their talents. Factors such as disease, death, poverty, envy, ego or lack of time and opportunity will not destroy an extraordinary musical talent, as it has so many times in the past.

One day, upon having his hearing back, Beethoven will write his next big work. Mozart will perform and conduct a concert by himself. Also, one day King David will play his harp and sing his psalms and we will know what they actually sound like.

We are approaching a time like no other in all of history. A time without comparison, an era unheard and unimagined. The music of the future will possess the power to revive our minds and strengthen our bodies like it never has in our lifetime. For the first time in human history, it will fully symbolize and represent its Creator.

For the time being though, let’s thank Him for what we already have. On the next Sabbath, before the pianist ever touches the first key and we take the first breath to sing, let’s remember that He has already created a masterpiece. -UNC



Words to Live By

COMPILED BY ERNIE MCBRATNEY

Blowing out the other fellow’s candle won’t make yours shine any brighter.

There may be a destiny that shapes our ends, but our middles are of our own choosing.

When a man is continually turning over a new leaf, it’s likely to be pretty much a carbon copy of the last.

Middle age is when you’ve met so many people that every new person reminds you of someone else.

Progress involves risks. You can’t steal second and keep your foot on first.

The luckiest people in the world are those who do not depend on good luck.

A man of words and not of deeds is like a garden full of weeds.

Complacency makes people fear the unknown, mistrust the untried and abhor the new.

The life one lives speaks louder than the words one utters.

Whatever your past has been, you have a spotless future.

It’s not enough to be busy. The question is, what are you busy about?

Doing what’s right today means no regrets tomorrow.

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CLONING ADVANCES OUTPACE REGULATORS

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- Rapid advances in the fields of embryology, genomics, and in-vitro fertilization and genetic screening have increased chances that a human clone will be born in the coming months. Will Washington take regulatory aim?

On January 26th this year, American and Italian fertility specialists announced from Kentucky that they and several other scientists are actively seeking to clone a human being in the next 12 to 24 months.

The procedure will most likely take place in the Mediterranean region.

The New York Times Magazine recently ran a cover story about a **Canadian based cult, the Raelians**, seeking to do the same. As United Press International reported on October 12, 2000, the group claims to have a lab and experts in the United States, and expected success within 18 months.

Currently, there is no federal law prohibiting privately-funded human cloning.

“There is nothing in the Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act or any other piece of relevant legislation that gives the FDA jurisdiction over cloning or anything that could even arguably include cloning,” says Mark Eibert, a frequently cited cloning advocate and attorney in San Mateo, Calif. **“Furthermore, to talk about outlawing it is ridiculous given fact that there are no laws in about 150 countries.”**

Some countries, including Japan and the European Union, have placed bans or moratoriums on human cloning but many including Russia, Brazil and India have not.

On January 21 this year, the

British government legalized the use of therapeutic cloning to make human embryos for stem cell research. At this printing the Bush administration had yet to state its full position on cloning.

OLD PROPHECY SEARCHED FOR CLUES TO NEXT POPE’S IDENTITY

ROME: (Times Newspapers) -- The Pope is to keep up a full schedule of travel this year, including a trip to Ukraine. He has also appointed several new cardinals. At least 120 are required to elect his successor. Vatican-watchers believe that the move is a clearing of the decks by the 80-year-old pontiff, who has Parkinson’s disease.

A 16th-century prophecy once again circulating in Rome offers a rather less optimistic view: the forecast, known as the Prophecy of St. Malachy, suggests that the next Pope will be the penultimate pontiff, and will in turn be succeeded by the last, who will take the title Peter II.

The prophecy has nothing to do with the Old Testament prophet Malachi. It may not have much more to do with St. Malachy (1094-1148), its supposed author, who was Archbishop of Armagh and a key reformer in the Irish Church.

The prophecy appeared in 1595 under St. Malachy’s name, and is said to be a record of a vision of 112 future Popes which he experienced during a pilgrimage to Rome in 1139. Advocates of the prophecy claim that St. Malachy presented it to Pope Innocent II (1130-43) but it was suppressed or forgotten and rediscovered only at the end of the 16th century. Others say that the prophecy is a forgery. **But since it forecasts that the last Pope will coincide with the**

end of the world, it has seized the imagination of thousands including some of the Vatican’s hierarchy.

The prophecy lists 112 Popes beginning with Celestine II, who reigned briefly in 1130 before being deposed by force. Like the prophecies of Nostradamus it is in code, but can be made to correspond to actual pontiffs: De Rure Albo, for example, is said to be Adrian IV, who came from St. Albans.

Among modern Popes, the 109th on the list, John Paul I, who reigned for only three weeks in 1978 is De Medietate Lunae (Of the Half Moon), a reference either to his birthplace, Belluno (Beautiful Moon) or to the fact that he was elected on a day when the moon was half full. The 110th Pope, John Paul II, is listed as De Labore Solis or from the Labour of the Sun.

This could allude to his youth as a labourer or his feat in circling the Earth as the most travelled pontiff in history. It could refer to Copernicus, who believed the Earth revolved around the Sun, and like the Pope, came from Cracow.

As for the next or penultimate Pope, the prophecy gives him the code name Gloria Olivae, or The Glory of the Olive. Irreverent wits in the Vatican see in this a reference to Cardinal Martini, while the more serious-minded say it suggests a Pope from the ranks of the Benedictines, who are also called Olivetans.

For others it points to Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, and therefore to a Jewish connection. The Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, 74, was born to Polish Jews massacred under the Nazis but was raised by a Catholic family in France. -UNC