

THE PRESBYTERIAN BANNER

May, 2008

Produced by the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia as a contribution to the Kingdom of God in Australia, and the World. This magazine is available as a pdf file on the Church Website - <http://pcea.org.au>.

Devotion: "Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.""

John 10:27-29.

ISSN 0729-3542



Tinonee - Manning River

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**DON'T FORGET
THE SYNOD,
12-14th MAY
AT
NEWCASTLE**

HOW TO BE A PAIN TO YOUR PASTOR

The Rev. George Ball continues his studies on "Ministry Matters," and deals with 2 Corinthians 12:11-21.

How can you be a pain to your pastor? I don't want to give you ideas that aren't already there. I once heard of a lady who objected to the reading of the 10 Commandments in church because she said it only made her think bad thoughts! So I don't want to plant any more bad thoughts in your mind lest this article should come back to haunt me or even be the basis of suing me! OK, so you've decided you're going to be a pain to your Pastor? This is what you could do.

Don't Defend Him (vs. 11).

Let him defend himself – after all he should be well able. Even if his teaching or character or lifestyle is being criticised let the Pastor defend himself. That's what the Corinthians did to Paul. He was their spiritual father and they were his spiritual children whom he had nurtured in the faith. However when some visitors arrived in town with some different ideas to Paul they charmed and captivated the Corinthians. They criticised his appearance, his speech, his apparent inconsistencies, his lack of spirituality and so on. Paul says to the Corinthians, "I ought to have been commended by you." Ironically no church was in a better position to defend the apostle than the Corinthians. But there was silence. No apparent voice of support. So the apostle very reluctantly has to defend himself against these false charges.

I'm not claiming that pastors and apostles are in the same league, nevertheless they have this in common both are appointed by God to lead and serve the people of God. If a man has earned the reputation over the years of faithfulness to the Scriptures, of integrity in his behaviour and dealings, that must be respected and defended. If there is a doubt then he deserves the benefit of the doubt. "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses." (1 Tim. 5:19). It's all too easy for a ratbag, a scoundrel, a stranger or a gossip to come along and undo a reputation in minutes. When someone is being falsely accused, or a slur is made that so easily could be corrected, and we remain silent and offer no counter evidence, we are guilty of sin. Silence can imply agreement.

Refuse to Recognize His Authority (vs. 11b – 12).

"Truly the signs of an apostle were done among you with great perseverance signs, wonders and miracles." These were the marks, the credentials, the badge of an apostle. Despite his position, his gifts and his perseverance the Corinthians still refused to submit to the apostle's God given authority. A verse which speaks clearly and directly on this matter is Hebrews 13:17, "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." If you want to be a pain to

your Pastor ignore his teaching. Refuse his counsel. Pay him no heed. Follow the spirit of the world, which pursues independency and worships individualism.

Don't Respond to His Kindness (vs. 14b-15).

Paul says, "I do not seek yours but you...and I will gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved." Paul loved them as a father loves his own children but it all seemed a tad unfair. They did not respond in kind. The natural and proper response to love and kindness is love and kindness. But Paul was being shortchanged. He was giving but receiving little in return. If you want to pain your Pastor make no effort to affirm your love for him, keep him at arm's length, make no effort to get to know him personally, never thank him for anything he says or does. That'll do the trick!

Don't Trust Him (vs.16-18).

Don't trust him – especially when it comes to money! Paul refused a stipend from Corinth after all fathers are prepared to make sacrifices for their children. But this, the Corinthians insinuated, was unprofessional as well as being a smokescreen. He was actually being crafty and devious and using his sidekicks to collect the money and he was getting his cut they implied. (We noted in chapters 8 and 9 how the collection for the Jerusalem church was carefully administered in order to avoid any appearance of exploitation.) It must have been very hurtful for Paul to have his motives and integrity impugned. If you want to pain your Pastor distrust his motives and judge them unfairly. It's very effective.

"Sadly the history of God's people is filled with examples of grieving leaders. Paul was not the first or the last. The stubbornness and defiance of the Israelites repeatedly disappointed Moses. Jeremiah's message and ministry was completely rejected by the unbelief and disobedience of Israel."

in Hebrews 13:17 wrote:

Don't Grow (vs. 20).

Paul writes of the possibility of arriving in Corinth on his next visit and finding, "contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbiting, whisperings, conceits and tumults." Ugly attitudes indeed. This was very distressing. The Corinthians had been well taught they had the best of teachers, so there was really no excuse for such behaviour. If you want to pain your Pastor who has spent himself teaching and preaching from the Word of God, who has fed his people with the finest of the wheat morning and evening and midweek; never never let the Word sink in. Don't let it affect the way you live. Go to church tired. Have some other reading material to distract you. "Bite and devour one another," and "sow discord among the brethren". It'll work a treat. The apostle John wrote to his friend and disciple Gaius, "I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth." (3 John vs.4).

"He may urge on you unpalatable truth he may utter sharp reproofs; but recollect he has no choice; remember he is a man under authority. Put the question, has he said anything that Christ has not said? If he has, disregard him; if he has not, blame him not, he has but discharged his duty to his Master and to you; and recollect, you cannot in this case disregard the servant without doing dishonour to the Master

He watches for your soul. Your spiritual improvement, your everlasting salvation, is his object; and therefore he must not, to spare your feelings, endanger your souls. It would be a cruel kindness in the physician to save a little pain, to allow a fatal disease to fix its root in the constitution, which must by and by produce far more suffering than what is now avoided, and not only suffering, but death."

Don't be a pain – for that would not be profitable for you.

Don't Change (vs. 21).

Paul refers to a situation he had already condemned in his first letter, and fears that when he arrives (for the third time) he will find those same people stubbornly defying the apostle's discipline, and proudly continuing unrepentant in their gross sexual sins. His counsel and warnings were like water off a duck's back. Paul says if this is the situation "I will be grieved." If you want to pain your Pastor continue in your disobedience. Have a lax attitude toward doctrine. Be casual about your relationships and behaviour. Don't repent. Don't change. Be proud of your stubbornness. Be brazen in your sin. Just keep on doing what you've always done. It's sure to work.

Sadly the history of God's people is filled with examples of grieving leaders. Paul was not the first or the last. The stubbornness and defiance of the Israelites repeatedly disappointed Moses. Jeremiah's message and ministry was completely rejected by the unbelief and disobedience of Israel. He states, "For the brokenness of the daughter of my people I am broken; I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me." (Jer. 8:21). Isaiah was to preach until "the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant...until the Lord has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken." (Is. 6:11).

It might be natural (and tempting) for the Pastor to respond tit for tat. Instead Paul says, "everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening." (vs.19). He genuinely loved them. Wise sheep will recognise what the shepherd is about. The old commentator John Brown commenting on the responsibility of leaders

"It is the interest of hearers that the account their ministers give of them may be with joy, and not with grief. If faithful ministers be not successful, the grief will be theirs, but the loss will be the people's." - Matthew Henry.

BLOGGING ABOUT...

OUR CHURCH AND THE CHINESE

Australia was almost entirely Anglo/Celtic in the 19th century, with the Chinese and Germans the largest non-British communities. The Germans were mainly Lutherans who had left Prussia because of persecution. The Chinese had come following the discovery of gold in 1851, and were overwhelmingly males (in 1861 there were about 28 Chinese-born males to every Chinese-born female, and in 1901 the ratio was even higher at 75 to 1; the Chinese-born community in both years was around 30,000. Given our centres were mainly rural towns it is not surprising that there was not much contact with Chinese. But there was some.

The Hamilton (Vic) Session minutes for 23 September 1881 read: "The Moderator [Rev William McDonald] brought before the notice of the Court Joseph Cooney, a chinaman who had been attending the Public Means of Grace in this congregation for fully three years, and who now desired admission into the Church by the Sacrament of Baptism. Joseph Cooney who was present was questioned regarding his belief in the Existence of God, doctrine of the Trinity, Inspiration, future state of Rewards and Punishments, Deity of Christ, doctrine of Atonement etc. Joseph Cooney showed competent knowledge of these doctrines and expressed his belief in them, and also in the atoning work of Christ as the Ground of his salvation. The Session after some deliberation agreed to admit Joseph Cooney as a Member of the visible church by the Sacrament of Baptism. Closed with prayer."

On 10 October 1881 Mr Cooney, who had been born in Canton, was united in marriage with Caroline Walters, the ceremony being conducted by Mr. McDonald. On the certificate his name is given as Coon, but doubtless both forms are anglicised, perhaps from Qun Li. The earliest relevant list of church members is from 1883, and Mr Coon/ey is not listed, nor are there any members with his wife's maiden name. Cooney had been a partner in a local business. His son Benjamin was born in Hamilton in 1882 but the other eight children in Ararat between 1884 and 1900, where he had a market garden.

Another Chinaman connected with our church was a former Anglican missionary in Sydney, Rev George Soo Hoo Ten (1848-1934). Originally a tea merchant he began a mission to market gardeners sponsored by the Anglican church in 1879. He was very active and successful among the unchurched and in the opium dens, and was a friend of the PCEA which supported Christian workers in Formosa. He retired to Homebush about 1912 but identified with the PCEA because of her Scriptural principles. He was always in his accustomed place in St George's, and was marked by his tall and stately appearance, silk hat, stick and gloves. RSW

TIMES ONLINE MISTIMES

In the March 31st edition of "Times Online" there was a report bearing this heading: "Clay tablet identified as asteroid that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah." It also carried the following picture of a clay tablet 6cm in diameter.

Their Science Reporter, Lewis Smith, writes: "A clay tablet that has baffled scientists for 150 years has been identified as a witness's account of the asteroid suspected of being behind the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah."



The tablet, apparently, was found by Henry Layard in the remains of the library in the royal palace at Nineveh in the mid-19th century. It's thought to be a 700BC copy of notes made by a Sumerian astronomer watching the night sky and recording the event.

He continues: "Using computers to recreate the night sky thousands of years ago, scientists have pinpointed his sighting to shortly before dawn on June 29 in the year 3123BC. Mark Hempsall, one of the researchers from Bristol University who cracked the tablet's code, said: "It's a wonderful piece of observation, an absolutely perfect piece of science." He said the size and route of the asteroid meant that it was likely to have crashed into the Austrian Alps at Köfels. As it travelled close to the ground it would have left a trail of destruction from super-sonic shock waves and then slammed into the Earth with a cataclysmic impact. About one million sq km (386,000 sq miles) would have been devastated and the impact would have been equivalent to more than 1,000 tonnes of TNT exploding."

The writer then tells us: "Dr Hempsall said that at least 20 ancient myths record devastation of the type and on the scale of the asteroid's impact, including the Old Testament tale of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Ancient Greek myth of how Phaeton, son of Helios, fell into the River Eridanus after losing control of his father's sun chariot."

Mr Hempsall is clutching at straws here – and there are two things that show this is the case. First he refers to the OT account as "a tale." Jesus didn't regard it as "a tale". Besides, there isn't much point in the reference to Sodom unless it's a fact! If these things are myths and tales what credence can be put in them!

But a more serious objection to the story is the date this is said to have happened - 29th June, 3123! The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah occurred in the days of Lot, Abraham's nephew [Genesis 19:24-26]. And those who know something of Biblical History will know that even the most conservative dating for Abraham puts him about 2000BC [2166 - 1991 BC - to be more precise]. That's just a mere 1,000 years before Abraham, Lot, and the Lord's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah!

This all serves to underline afresh the fact that a little bit of Biblical History goes a long way in evaluating what we hear and read. We neglect it to our own disadvantage.

THE 20/20 SUMMIT - AND SYNOD

For both these meetings, we can be fairly certain that this will be true of them: "When all is said and done, more will be said than done".

VIETNAM REVISITED

Mr. John Greensill writes about his return to Vietnam after 38 Years

I was a National Serviceman who served with the Army Construction Engineers in Vietnam towards the end of our involvement in the war. When it had been decided to pull out, projects to assist the South Vietnamese received a higher priority. We then spent our time on projects from building roads, bridges and various buildings which included accommodation for the soldiers of the South Vietnamese and families who lived under bad conditions. I spent most of my time working in the towns and villages the Australian Task Force was responsible for. I have wondered ever since how the people and the places where I had worked had fared? I didn't know if I would ever return there.

When my wife Judy, a travel agent, said she had been offered a trip from Saigon up the Mekong river into Cambodia, the decision was made to go. It would start with 3 nights in the areas I had been in 1970 - 71. This was a great opportunity for me to retrace my steps!

Saigon

Saigon is as busy as ever with crossing the street one of life's great experiences, especially for the newly arrived and the city bursting with activity and new building and development projects. I noticed a great deal of change as we travelled towards the coastal town of Vung Tau, which was the former Australian support base. I marvelled at the beautiful gardens in the centre of the roadway, the polished granite walk-ways and seating around the water front and how the town had become an Asian version of the Gold Coast. It had a beautiful new high school just completed and yet another big war memorial honouring the soldiers from North Vietnam and local Vietcong which certainly attracts attention. The memorials are very "in your face" to those who served the former South Vietnamese government or army. Many of them had been sent off to re-education camps in the period after the fall of South Vietnam in 1975. This time had been a very tough period for the people under a strict brand of communism that could hardly produce enough food, until it later changed policies .

Nui Dat and Long Tan

Day 2 was an official veterans tour of the former Australian base at Nui Dat which was my base (when not stationed out) and many other points of interest, including Long Tan, which receives recognition now. I was particularly interested to see if I could relocate any remaining projects we army engineers had worked on which were many and varied. This included 500 basic units in blocks of 10 erected for soldiers and families of the South Vietnamese army to help them get established before the withdrawal.

Travelling back to the provincial capital of the area

of Australian responsibility, I was a little concerned because I did not recognize anything. It had grown and changed so much. Fortunately I glimpsed an old water tower which gave me my bearings. With great work by our interpreter and guide we found what remained of one of the sites.

The people were very friendly, showing me through their homes, with all gathering around making it a joyful event and with me being able to catch up on 38 years of history. When the South fell to the North in 1975, these South Vietnamese army homes were not the address to be found living at, so they were abandoned and a lot of pilfering took place. But later people moved back, repaired them, and made them livable. Recently, at the end of one of the remaining buildings a charity had donated money for erection of a couple of units for those affected by "Agent Orange", another sad aftermath of war.

From the first site we were given directions to the second site that I was particularly keen to visit because I had spent several months stationed in a South Vietnamese military compound and district headquarter with 3 or 4 other young Australians carrying out the building projects in that area with the assistance of Vietnamese.

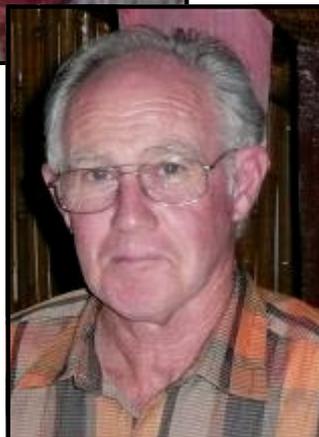
I was completely amazed at the change in this particular area and thought our guide was way off course! There is now a four lane highway there, with gardens down the centre and electronic signs above the road. The military compound is now another grand war memorial with beautiful gardens honouring the North.

Down the road we found the only remaining unit built for a soldier family, now being lived in by a hard working carpenter who also had his small workshop added on the front. Unfortunately

he lost his wife in a motorcycle accident a few years ago and was raising his four lovely children on his own (3 daughters and a son). He asked Judy "which one would you like to take"? Probably fortunately, Judy did not fully realize until later at dinner that night (after asking the interpreter) that the father's offer was serious. He felt, for the sake of the child, he or she would have a better life.

Protestant Church Remains

The small Vietnamese Protestant church I used to see only 200 metres away from the above site often came into my mind. It left me wondering what would have happened to it and the people. I feared the worst! But I was assured that the big new church that stands there now is on the original site. We went to have a look and, as it was open, we went inside. After emerging a short time later we were met by a man coming over the yard. He told me the Church had a Pastor since 1975. He informed us that the original little church was bombed in 1975 during the final





The Beach at Vung Tau
Below: Image at Vung Tau



battles with only the front left standing. There were difficult times but repairs were carried out and applications made to build a new church which was only granted in 2003. It now has a congregation of 900. Within the limits of speaking through an interpreter I asked him if the Pastor was compromised in any way? To which he replied that he was limited to only being able to preach in this church building and a few other authorised preaching stations where there were 300 people. As we travelled about it was apparent that the Roman Catholic Church

had a big presence in Vietnam. At one place they have since built a huge statue of Christ rivaling the ones that might be found in South America. It is built in the middle of a huge old French Gun Battery on top of the hill over-

looking Vung Tau and the ocean.

We then joined the Pandaw Cruise on the Mekong, on a replica ship with a shallow draught design used in Burma from 1865 [without the paddlewheels] by the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company established by Scots merchants. The early fleet was sunk in 1942 to stop the invading Japanese army using it. These replica ships are now suitable to cruise the Mekong Delta. The cruise was a relaxing way to view life passing by, both on land and water, with frequent stops for onshore excursions visiting remote villages and things of interest along the way. We then moved on to Cambodia which is now emerging from even more terrible and troubled times, with the Khmer Rouge period being particularly dark and cruel.

There is much more that could be said and perhaps should be said but this is enough for the moment. I left Vietnam this time as I did 38 years ago thankful for the blessings and privileges that we have in Australia. We could all pray that there will be more and more freedoms and opportunities to worship openly the living and true God in these countries and that old wounds will be healed.

Below: Battle of Long Tan War Memorial



Rebuilt Protestant Church



MISSION NEWS

Many of you might know that the Principal of Dumisani Theological Institute (DTI) in King Williams Town, South Africa, is coming with his wife to visit our congregations over a three week period this month. Alistair and Jenny Wilson will fly into Melbourne on the 6th of May to visit the Victorian congregations, as well as the folk in Ulverstone. During the next week of their visit they will be in Sydney before attending Synod in Newcastle. They will then travel to Brisbane, meeting with the country NSW congregations on the way. You are probably already aware of when Alistair and Jenny will be visiting your congregation, if not you should contact your elders. Please pray for Alistair's and Jenny's health and safety, and that they might receive great encouragement and know that we are praying for the work in SA.

and the provision of basic literature in English and Xhosa. In 1985 the work moved to King William's Town. In 1991 Diploma classes were started for men studying for the ministry and in 1997 the link with Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (now North-West University) was forged.

The PCEA has had a strong connection to South Africa, particularly through Dr Campbell Andrews. As Rev. Dr Ward remarks, he made a 'remarkable contribution to the South African church as a medical missionary, preacher and church builder.' Dr Andrews was in South Africa for around 22 years from 1948-1964 and 1970-1975. In the later six years Dr Andrews was seconded to a Methodist hospital in King William's Town before he retired to Wau-



If you are not familiar with the work of DTI, the following paragraph is reproduced with permission from the DTI web site www.dumisani.org. There are links there to Dumisani newsletters which will keep 'The Presbyterian Banner' readers abreast of what is happening at the Institute and Bible School.

DTI exists to provide theological education and training for the church in South Africa, with a particular focus on the isiXhosa-speaking churches of the Eastern Cape. The doctrinal position of Dumisani Theological Institute and Bible School is that reflected in The Belgic Confession, The Canons of Dort and The Heidelberg Catechism; and The Westminster Confession of Faith and its Catechisms. The Institute began in 1979 as the Dimbaza Reformed Bible School. The main emphasis then was lay training

chope. Four years later the beginnings of Dumisani Theological Institute in King William's Town began as the Dimbaza Reformed Bible School. In more recent years, Rev Peter Gadsby has also assisted DTI in teaching a number of students when he and his wife, Lindy, travelled to SA.

Rev. Dr Alistair Wilson was appointed Principal of the Institute in 2006, and some new faces have recently helped bolster the teaching and administrative staff. What is most pleasing is the Institute's desire that everything that is done may be done for the glory of God. There is a real focus on the future; recognition of the needs of the church in South Africa and a focus on prayer that the students be made up of people whom the Lord has called. We can rejoice that there has been a good

start to the 2008 year with a healthy number of new and continuing students.

In 2009 Dumisani will be applying for accreditation to teach the syllabus leading to the degree of Bachelor of Theology. Accordingly, the Institute needs a greater library and particularly commentaries and theological books to match the demands of the higher degree and to cater for BTh students. So if you or anyone you know is looking to divest themselves of a good theological library or even part of one, you may wish to let Alistair have a look at those books while he is visiting your congregation.

But even if you don't have those types of books, you can still help! Donations towards the purchase of books can be coordinated through your Deacons' Court and the missions committee. The monies collected would then be sent to DTI as a gift from the PCEA enabling them to purchase the specific books they need. Please pray about

this real need and consider whether you are able to contribute.

Finally, just a little plug to encourage people to think seriously about being a part time missionary! For those who are retired and perhaps thinking of an overseas trip, there are wonderful things to do and see in South America. In between climbing in the Andes and soaking up the sun and atmosphere in Venezuela, why not spend a few weeks in Peru at Colegio San Andres in Lima or at the Annie Soper School in Moyobamba.

The children at both schools would be delighted and so appreciative that you came so far to help them with speaking in English! There is no requirement at all for you to be a qualified teacher; you just have to have a real love for the kids in these Christian Schools. It would be lovely to hear from you about this marvellous opportunity.
- Peter Smith, Convener, Missions Committee

THE GREAT INTERFERER

"No word in my vocabulary expressed deeper hatred than the word Interference. But Christianity placed at the centre what seemed to me a transcendental Interferer. If its picture were true then no sort of "treaty with reality" could ever be possible. There was no region even in the depths of one's soul [nay, there least of all] which one could surround with a barbed wire fence and guard with a notice No Admittance. And that was what I wanted; some area, however small, of which I could say to all other beings, "This is my business and mine only." C.S.Lewis, Surprised By Joy, p139.

CHURCH AND NATION REPORT -2008

We have much to thank the Lord for as we live in this nation of Australia. We hear of wars and violence in so many nations. We hear of Christians being persecuted especially in Islamic and Communist countries. In India militant Hindus continue to persecute Christians. Last Christmas in one Indian state seven tribal Christians were butchered and over 400 homes were torched along with a number of churches.

We had a smooth transition of government in 2007, unlike that in Kenya and so many places. Indeed, we have a great deal to be thankful for stable government, law and order, freedom and security, high living standards, opportunities for education, and employment at its highest level for over thirty years. It is not as it once was. But then it is not as it might be if the Lord dealt with us as we deserved. We pray for the new government and for our prime minister to stand firm especially in the light of the ACT government's determination to legalise same sex marriages.

We give thanks to the Lord for drought-breaking rains in recent days across much of the land. Many farming families suffered and still suffer. We prayed for them and continue to pray above all that they turn to the Lord and be saved. If you walk in my statutes and keep my commandments and perform them then I will give you rain in its season the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit (Lev 26:3,4). We hear a lot about climate change, but little about prayer. 'Weather worship' has become yet another god in our land. The climate may well be changing but let all the earth know that the Almighty Creator God, not man, is the one in control of this

earth.

Selfishness and disobedience to the commands of God characterise all levels of our society today, and though there is an outward show of "mateship" and "compassion" for which we can be very thankful, there is also an underlying tension, antagonism and tendency towards violence. This is reflected in litigation, incidents of road rage, binge drinking, mindless acts of violence, and sheer bad manners. Much personal suffering and poverty is self inflicted, or in the words of Scripture a case of 'reaping what you sow' (Gal 6:7). High expectations, irresponsibility, and unthankfulness create a sense of grievance in the minds of many. A range of measures seek to address the needs of those disadvantaged but these are sometimes used irresponsibly.

Notwithstanding, compassion and concern for the genuine poor is at a low ebb. As a nation we give proportionately less to alleviate poverty in the world than any other developed nation. The rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. God told his people there should be no poor among you (Dent 15:4). As Jesus went through the town and villages of Israel he was moved with compassion for the people that were weary and scattered like sheep without a shepherd (Mat 9:36). We ought to feel the same as we look out upon our nation today. But we must not stop there. Jesus went on to say: The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest (Mat 9:37,38) Our task is great but our God is greater.

Run For Glory

YOUR WORD - A LAMP TO MY FEET [Psalm 119:105]

"Seven hundred years ago [the story was written in the 19th Century] all Europe was sending soldiers to Jerusalem to fight for the Saviour's grave. The lords of Jerusalem at that time were fierce Saracens [Muslims] who did not believe in Jesus. And the people of Europe said: "Why should unbelievers like these be lords of the place where our Saviour lay?" Army after army went from England, France, and Germany. And sometimes they won, and sometimes they lost. And when it was their lot to lose, they were seized, made prisoners, and sold as slaves.

It happened in one of the battles that a young Englishman, named Gilbert a' Becket, was taken prisoner and sold as a slave. He was sold to a rich and princely Saracen, who set him to work in his garden. And there, as she took her daily walks in the garden, the daughter of his master saw him. And when she looked at his sad, but beautiful face, and remembered that he was a slave, first she wept for him and then she loved him; and then she resolved to help him to escape. So one night she procured a little ship, and had it waiting near the shore, and she opened the door of a Becket's prison and gave him money, and said to him, 'Go back to England'.

Now Gilbert had seen her love and returned it. And when he was going away, he said to her, "You too will one day escape, and find your way to London, and there I will make you my wife". And then he kissed her, and blessed her, and went out free". And he reached the little ship and found his way to England. But the Saracen maid remained in the East.

Many a night she looked towards the sea, along the very path he went, and thought of him, and longed for him, and wept. She longed to be at his side. But how was she to escape from home? How could she cross the seas? How could she ever hope to arrive in England? She could not speak the English speech. The only words she knew were 'London a' Becket'. A Becket had taught her this much in the garden.

At last she could remain no longer in the East. She would go to the Christian land and be a Christian, and the wife of Gilbert a Becket. So one day she left her home and went to the sea, and to the English ships, and as she went she said, 'London a' Becket'. She uttered these words, and rough sailors made room for her in their ships. 'London a' Becket,' she said, and ships hauled up their anchors and spread their sails and carried her through stormy seas. 'London a Becket!' It was all she said, all she could say, but it went before her like a light, and made a path for her over the pathless deep ; and she followed it until her eye

caught sight of the white cliffs of England, and her feet touched the sandy beach, and she was in the land of him she loved.

She had far miles still to travel to reach London. And these were the old times when there were no railways, no coaches, not even roads. Old bad times, when robbers lived in dusky woods and bad men watched from grim stone castles that they might rob and kill the lonely travelers. But she went onwards. 'London,' she said, 'London a Becket.' London was many miles away; but that word opened up a way to her, went before her, was coach and road and guide to her. It was a lamp to her feet. She uttered it as she was setting out every morning, and peasants tending their cattle on the heath pointed in the direction where London lay. The lamp went before her over hills and fields, and woods and streams, and brought her at last to the gates of London town.



'London a Becket,' she said, as she passed on through the streets. From street to street went this Eastern lady, from street to street, and from house to house, and still as she went she said, 'London a' Becket'. Crowds gathered about her in the streets, and some wondered, and some mocked, and some had pity; but she made her appeal to the very crowds as she said, 'London a Becket'. The words were caught up by those who heard them and passed from lip to lip, and from street to street, until they filled the town, and searched out for her a Becket's house and brought her to his very door. And then her long toil was ended. A Becket heard the well known voice, and leaped and ran, and folded her to his bosom, and took her into his house, and made her his wife, and loved her with all his love. His word had been a lamp to her feet, and brought her to his side. She became the mother of the famous Thomas a Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury.

A greater than Gilbert a' Becket went to Jerusalem and was a prisoner there. And before he passed from His captivity He left a word with those that loved Him to be a lamp to their feet, to light up their path, that they might follow Him and arrive at His home, and live with Him for ever. It is of this word it is said, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet". And surely if the mere earthly word which that lady learned from an English soldier could light her steps from the farthest shores of the Mediterranean Sea to London, the heavenly, divine word we have received from Jesus is better fitted to be a light to us for the paths which lead to Himself." - ALEXANDER MACLEOD, Talking to the Children [8th edition], p. 39.

FEAR NOT!

SEARCH WORK - MAY

"If you were asked what commandment in the Bible comes the most often, do you think you should know? Shall I tell you which commandment God gives most frequently? "Fear not." He says this more than eighty times I believe, eighty-four times; this is much oftener than any other commandment. "Fear not."

You know, if we are afraid it looks as if we did not trust God. If anybody is afraid in the dark, if anybody is afraid of thunder, if anybody is afraid of going to bed alone, if anybody is afraid of robbers, if anybody is afraid of wild beasts, if anybody is afraid that God will not forgive him [when he asks Him], if anybody is afraid that God will not guide him all along till he gets to heaven then he does not trust God.

Suppose you were told to take care of a little child, should you like that little child to cry and say, "I am afraid"? You would feel yourself affronted if that child did not trust you. If anybody were leaning upon your arm for support, would not you like it? I think you would. I should; I like it, and I think you all like to lean upon some one's arm.

God likes you to lean upon His arm. God does not like it, when He is taking care of us, for us to say, "We are afraid". It pleases God when you trust Him, when you think what a good God He is, what a kind God He is. I do not wonder that the Lord is displeased if we are afraid, when He says "Fear not," eighty-four times!

Then I wonder to whom God says it? There are some people whom I shall call "Don't-care people". I know some boys and girls too who look as if they said, "I don't care; I am not afraid of anybody or anything". But I think that this spirit that this kind of boy or girl displeases God more than anything else. It is like Cain when he killed his brother Abel. It is like Joseph's cruel brothers who put poor little Joseph down in the pit, and did not seem to care for anybody or anything. I hope none of you are these "don't-care people" as to what God says.

You see if God's children did not sometimes "fear," God would not say "Fear not," to show that they do "fear". I'll tell you what you are to "fear" fear to grieve God. In other respects God says, 'Fear not'..... Fear not, little flock for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." [Luke 12:32]

- Selected from James Vaughan, *The Little Flock Encouraged, in The Expositor's Treasury of Children's Sermons*, p596.

SENIOR 12+ yrs; INTERMEDIATE 10-11 yrs; JUNIOR 9 and under.

May 2008

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate omit questions 5 and 8

2 SAMUEL Chapter 15

1. How did Absalom steal the hearts of the men of Israel? (2verses)
2. What did David say to his servants when told the hearts of the men of Israel were after Absalom?
3. What was the answer of Ittai the Gittite when David told him to return home?
4. What was David's prayer when he was told Ahithophel was with Absalom?

Chapter 16

5. (x) What was David's response when Abishai offered to kill Shimei because he had cursed David? (3 verses)

Chapter 17

6. When Ahithophel and Hushai had both given Absalom counsel, whose advice was accepted, and why? (2 verses)
7. What did Ahithophel do when he saw his counsel was not followed?
8. (x) What did Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai do for David when he came to Manahaim? (3 verses)

JUNIOR

GENESIS Chapter 31

1. To what land did God tell Jacob to return?
2. What did God say to Laban when he was pursuing Jacob?
3. What did Jacob say would have happened to him unless the God of his father had been with him?
4. Why did Jacob call the heap of stones Mizpah?

SEARCH WORK TO: MRS I. STEEL, PO Box 942, EPPING 1710.
E-mail: iesteel@gmail.com



BURDEN BEARING

"There was once a poor man toiling up a hill with a pack on his back, and a gentleman riding up in his carriage said to him, "Come and sit in the carriage and I will take you up the hill". This poor man rode up the hill, but he did not take the pack off his back; so the gentleman said, "If I carry you, I think you need not carry your pack". Therefore remember that if God carries you, He will carry all your burdens - you need not carry them."

- James Vaughan.

ACTIVITY PAGE.....

59. A Promise

In 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 Paul gives us a wonderful promise.



From: Search and Solve: Bible Activity Sheets by Betty DeVries [Illustrated by Donna Greenlee] Baker Books, 1998.

For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.



Find the words of this promise in the word search puzzle. If a word is in the promise two times, it is hidden only once in the puzzle. Words are hidden up, down, backward, forward, and diagonally.

B	L	T	H	R	O	U	G	H
P	W	D	I	E	P	A	T	H
A	I	T	R	S	A	H	O	T
O	L	M	H	U	O	T	H	E
L	L	A	C	R	S	A	O	C
O	D	D	B	R	L	E	A	N
T	M	A	D	R	A	D	O	I
S	E	M	A	E	O	M	E	S
I	A	S	A	C	V	P	E	S
R	N	A	S	T	O	E	E	N
H	N	O	L	I	R	A	I	N
C	O	R	F	O	A	M	E	N



IN MINIMUS DEUS MAXIMUS [In little things God is made great]

“Jesus was fond of telling us how God loved the little things. The lilies of the field, the birds of the air, and the beasts of the forest were His special charge. We get a new thought about God when we learn not only that He loves little things, but that we see Him more clearly in little things than in great...And does it not help us to understand God, to find Him near, to find Him real, to find Him loving? to be told that in such little things God becomes more clear to us than in the big, strange, unfamiliar and great ones. God wishes us to feel at home with him and He says no one understands Him so easily as a little child....Let us not then have any fear of God, that is, not be afraid of him because we think He is far off and too terrible to approach.” [G.Currie Martin]

Something Different: Defrag Your Hard Drive!

This month I thought I would have a slight change and look at something a bit more technical. Being in IT a common question people ask is about fragmentation and how to de-fragment their Hard Drive (aka Hard Disk Drive, HDD, etc).

What's fragmentation: an illustration

A sentence is a collection of words. If the words are all next to each other in order then it is quite easy to read the sentence. If the words, however, were written all over the place with other words interspersed in between imagine how hard it would be to read the same sentence. It would be very *fragmented* to skip up and down lines or even turn pages. This is *fragmentation*.

If you wanted to add a new sentence, you would need enough space in which to write the sentence.

If your sentence was five words long and you had left a blank line at the top of the page you could easily add that sentence in. This blank line is referred to as *contiguous space* and if it is large enough (or the sentence is small enough) then you could fit the whole sentence in without a worry. And no fragmentation would occur.

If, however, it was a 50 word paragraph you could get the first line in, but the remaining 8 lines would need to go somewhere else. Maybe you can squeeze them down at the bottom of the page. So you draw an arrow from the end of the first line to the bottom of the page where you squeeze in another 30 words. Ah, but then your last sentence can't fit so you put in a "please turn

over page" note and then turn the page and write that final sentence at the top of the next page. Your writing has become fragmented.

To fix this, you need to move all the words around until each word in each sentence was in its proper place. This moving the words around until they are next to each other in the correct order is called *de-fragmenting*.

What's fragmentation: a diagram

Similarly, file fragmentation is where a file is not stored together as one contiguous collection of data, but is rather scattered around the HDD in whatever place the operating system puts it.

Assuming that the computer's HDD has both Empty and Used Space, shown as White and Blue respectively. We are going to write 2 files, delete the first and finally write a third file to the HDD.

The computer starts writing the file in the first empty space it can find, it keeps writing until it fills up all the empty spaces next to the first and then proceeds to the next empty space until it has finished writing the file. What I haven't shown, but if a file was represented by 2 blocks and there were three empty blocks, then it would not get fragmented (or split) as there would be no need. This process of writing the 2 files, has been shown as green and yellow blocks filling up the empty White area. We then delete the first file, hence those areas are now white again. And finally the third (and largest) file is written starting at the first empty space...shown as orange.

Hopefully you can see both File #2 and File #3 have been *fragmented* or split over different areas of the HDD. If this "splitting" up of files continues then you will end up with the data on your HDD all over the place. And then when you, say, open a file the HDD will be *thrashing* about as your computer finds all the "bits and pieces" which together make up the file and loads them into RAM.

Recommended software:

Donn Edwards has done a fabulous review. "The Great Defrag Shootout: all the defragmentation utilities I can find" donnedwards.openaccess.co.za/2007/06/great-defrag-shootout-all.html

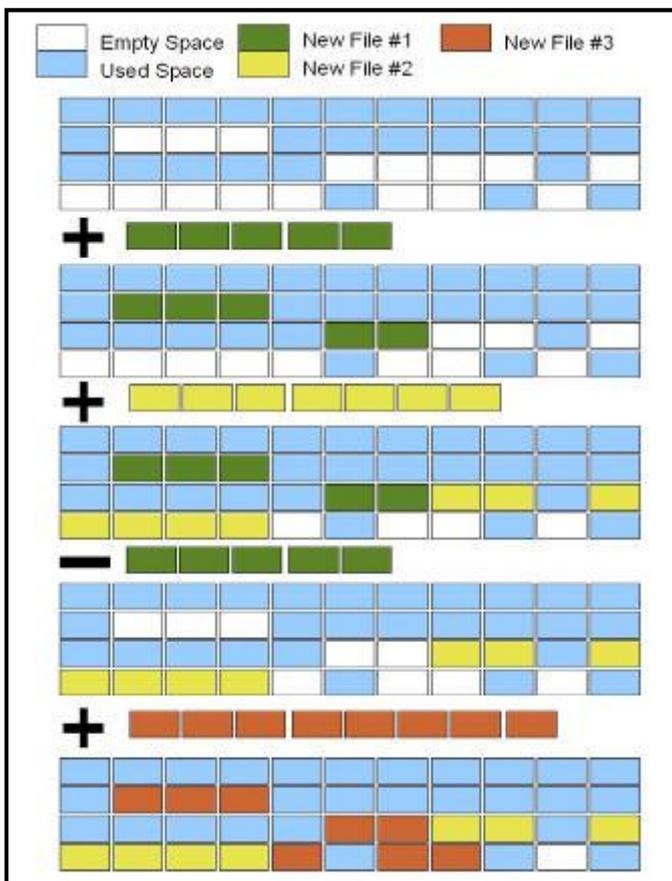
This page lists all the tools reviewed with a Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down rating. If you are in the market for a defrag tool then I would definitely recommend skimming through the whole 30-odd pages. I didn't notice anything inappropriate or offensive but I didn't read every paragraph. If you don't want to read the whole article. The winners are:

Paid - Raxco PerfectDisk 8

Free - JkDefrag 3.25

I have used the built-in Windows tool, Norton's Speed-Disk, Paragon Total Defrag, O&O Defrag and JkDefrag. At this point in time I am using both Paragon Total 2008 and JkDefrag 3.34.

The final question is usually, [**Continued on page 12**]



THE CHURCH ...



Some of the Ministers at the Farewell to Rev George Ball, 12 April 2008 Back row: Ed Blackwood (RP), Dallas Clarnette (PCA), Lynsey Blakston (RP), Gavin Smith (PCEA) Middle Row: Alastair McEwen (RP), Spero Katos (Greek Evangelical), Alex White (Baptist), Stephen Giles (PCA) Front Row: Rowland Ward, George Ball

NARRE WARREN NEWS

The Narre Warren Church was crowded for the official farewell to George and Rhoda Ball on Saturday 12 April. A light meal and informal conversation started the evening at about 5.30pm. At 7pm the 100 or so present were seated for some light entertainment, including on the cello and later on the piano, by two of the young people, Rowena Vaatstra and Keaton Cloherty.

Then came the words of appreciation from various of those present including John Holmes, Betty Simpson, Denny Hughes, Revs. Tut Wan Yoa, Alex White, Spero Katos, Stephen Giles, Dallas Clarnette, Ed Blackwood and MC Rowland Ward, to which George suitably responded. A sum of money was given by Narre Warren Congregation and a signed card/folder by Knox. It was a happy evening tinged with sadness.

George's last services at Narre Warren on 20 April were well attended. Rowland Ward is Interim-Moderator.

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY

On Friday 18 April the Southern Presbytery met to deal with a request for Presbytery to moderate a call to the Rev Sjirk [pronounced Sherik] Bajema, BA, BD, BA. (Hons) of Mangere Reformed Church, Auckland, New Zealand. Mr Bajema had preached in Narre Warren three times and in Knox and Geelong during March. The Presbytery had met with him on 19 March, declared that it was fully satisfied in terms of our Mutual Eligibility Act (Reformed Churches of New Zealand) 2006, and that he was eligible for call. Rev Gavin Smith, Moderator of Presbytery presided. The call was most heartily signed and sustained by the Presbytery. We now prayerfully await the result. Mr Bajema is a New Zealander married to Betty-Ann from Geelong with two adult children. He was minister of Canning Reformed Church in Perth (1987-99) and of Mangere since. He edited the Reformed magazine /The Call/ (1993-98) and has edited the RCNZ magazine /In Focus/ since 2001.

- Rowland Ward.

[Continued from page 11] how often? There are no rules, unfortunately. And it really depends on your computing habits. Most people recommend somewhere between once a week to once a month, however for some people once every two months might be enough. Too often is arguably as bad as not often enough. If you find the defrag takes several hours you probably should do it more often. If it's well under an hour, then you can probably reduce the

frequency. Bear in mind that if it's been a long time since your last defrag it can take a long time to run through the complete process.

Wrapping up:

* Scan for viruses, backup your system before installing any software to avoid data loss.

* you can find more information at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defragmentation>

TRAINING OF MINISTRY REPORT- 2008

The committee did not meet during the year. Indeed, the committee had no business before it, in part due to the decision of Synod 2007 to authorize the Southern Presbytery to arrange instruction and examination of David Kerridge.

That a church with vacant congregations, and a number of ministers at, or approaching, the age when they are able to retire, has no students under the oversight of its Training of the Ministry committee is a matter of concern.

In the incident recorded in the gospels, where a paucity of labourers is noted, the instruction is to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field. There are other relevant instructions too to make disciples; to entrust God's truth to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others (stated on two occasions). We are also reminded that, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Further, we are told that the ascended Lord gave some, including pastors and teachers, "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attain-

ing to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

All this lays upon those who minister God's word, in dependence on God's help and blessing, the responsibility to pray, motivate, enable and equip others in God's service that we might all be brought to maturity.

Nearly thirty years ago Richard Lovelace wrote, "... pastors gradually settle down and lose interest in being change agents in the church. An unconscious conspiracy arises between their flesh and that of their congregations. It becomes tacitly understood that the laity will give pastors places of special honour in the exercise of their gifts, if the pastors will agree to leave their congregations' pre-Christian lifestyles undisturbed and do not call for the mobilisation of lay gifts for the work of the kingdom. Pastors are permitted to become ministerial superstars. Their pride is fed and their insecurity is pacified even if they are run ragged, and their congregations are permitted to remain herds of sheep in which each has cheerfully turned to his own way."

While we are confident this hasn't happened among us, it is a challenge to see that it doesn't. Let us all encourage each other, and the church at large, to look to the great Head of the church to provide for us in the days that lie ahead.

"It is when you have yourself had fellowship with Jesus that you have either the heart or the power to speak of Jesus to another." Hugh Martin, Simon Peter p15.

[THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT - Continued from page 14]

be done. As regards the things that have to be done, there is little to be said. Certain things are necessary for our existence, and we are not committing any fault by doing them. There are also certain religious duties which we should perform, for Scripture tells us that this day is to be a "holy Sabbath to the LORD." It is made for man, as our Lord said, but it is made for man to keep holy to God. This also is fairly obvious. Then we come to other things which we should do or which we may do on the Lord's Day. Here we cannot do better than to go to the words of our Lord Himself – "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out. Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." (Matthew 12: 11,12)

At the same time, there are many things that are not in themselves wrong, but which are not appropriate on the Lord's Day. It is to be a day of holy resting to the Lord, and is, so far as possible, to be kept separate from all the other days of the week in remembrance of the victory of Christ over sin and of His entering into His rest. But there are works which we may carry out on that day, even though it may be possible to leave them. The sheep in the pit might have been able to survive for a day, but no one would leave an animal to suffer unnecessarily. Similarly, it is not only lawful but commendable that we should carry out such works of mercy as come our way even on

the weekly Day of Rest.

Conclusion

It is time to bring this article to a close. Perhaps, as we do so, we could pause on that thought of the Lord's Day as the weekly Day of Rest. Usually we like to rest why should so many people consider the Lord's Day a burden? Why do they feel it a burden to rest on this day when they would be pleased to have the opportunity to rest on other days? The Lord's Day is a day in which we can pause to remember work done the finished work of the original Creation and the finished work of the New Creation in Christ. Surely it is a glorious privilege to have a whole day in which to think about these things, as well as to recoup our own energies for the next week in this world where toil does not end? Our physical bodies need the rest because of "our work and the toil of our hands." Our souls need to contemplate the rest which the Lord has provided for His people.

As well as being a day of remembrance, this day is or should be also a day of anticipation. As we rest from our work and from our ordinary pre-occupations we can enjoy a fore-taste of the wonderful rest that has been provided for those who are joined to Christ in His death, in His resurrection and also in His rest. But let us never take that future for granted. It is only for those who are joined to the Saviour by faith in His finished work. Let us heed the warning of the letter to the Hebrews "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it." (Hebrews 4: 1)

The Fourth Commandment

Dr. W.J.W. Hanna, Brisbane, continues a study on the Ten Commandments. He deals now with the fourth Commandment: Exodus 20: 8-11- *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.”*

Introduction

We now come to consider the fourth of the Ten Commandments which God gave to His people through Moses. You will remember that we have seen that these are moral laws. This makes a distinction between them and the ceremonial and the civil laws. The civil laws might change when the conditions under which the people lived would change, and the ceremonial laws would be abrogated or abolished when the realities of which those ceremonies spoke should come to pass but the moral laws are of everlasting standing. They will never pass away or be abolished, for they are a reflection of God's unchangeable nature. I am stating this clearly at the outset because, while very few would doubt the everlasting nature of nine of the commandments, there are those who would say that this does not apply to the fourth.

A Moral Law

Now, to say this is to say that the fourth commandment is not a moral law that it is a ceremonial law. This line of argument could be quite persuasive but this is partly because we have a mistaken impression of what is meant by moral laws. We think of moral laws as being like the prohibitions on adultery and murder, and we say that the law of the Sabbath day is of a different sort. But they all involve the principal of subjecting ourselves to what God decrees is right and wrong, and not to our own desires or self-interests. So in this the fourth commandment is certainly not in a different class from the second. The second commandment tells us that God is not to be worshipped in any way which He has not commanded the fourth is a positive commandment telling us that He is to be worshipped by setting aside one day each week in His honour. If, then, the second commandment is a moral law, so is the fourth one.

A Creation Ordinance

Another reason why we should consider this commandment as one of the basic moral laws is that it is a creation ordinance. It did not come into existence after many generations of human history had passed as is the case with the ceremonial and the civil laws of Israel. It was a law which had been there from the very beginning. In Genesis 2: 2,3 we are told that “... on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”

It is sometimes said that these verses do not say that God commanded that men and women should rest on the seventh day only that He did, but this is a spurious argument. Mankind was created in the image of God is it not reasonable that God's rest should be meant as an example to those who were made like Him? In any case, we have the testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that “the Sabbath was made for man.” It was instituted for the benefit of human beings so that they might have time to rest and to remember their Creator.

Then, again, the commandment itself claims a creation origin. It says that we are to remember the Sabbath Day because, “in six days the LORD made heaven and earth and rested in the seventh day, therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath Day and sanctified it (set it apart).”

To say that the second statement of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5: gives a different reason for keeping the commandment does not detract from this reason there may well be several reasons why a particular law is given. This one definitely connects the seventh day of rest to the creation!

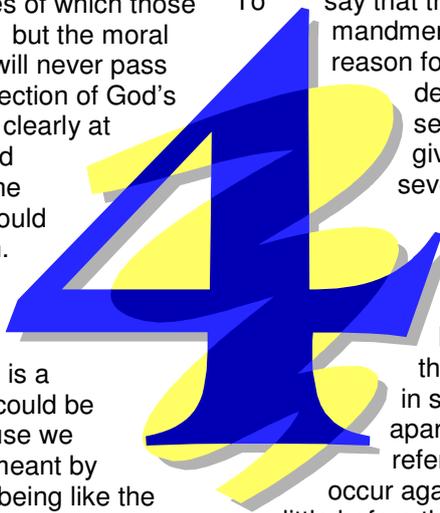
We can also note that this commandment commences in a different way from the others. “Remember the Sabbath day,” it says. The implication is that the necessity of keeping holy one day in seven was already known! It is true that apart from the reference in Genesis, direct reference to the weekly Sabbath does not occur again until the Israelites had left Egypt, a little before the giving of the Commandments, yet there are references to the division of time into weeks periods of seven days which again implies a knowledge of a period of six days of creation plus one rest day.

The Way It Was Given

Another reason why we should consider this commandment as a perpetual moral law lies in the circumstances in which it is given here. Most of the laws given to Israel as part of their covenant relationship with the LORD were given through the mediatorship of Moses. God spoke the ceremonial laws and the civil laws to him and he wrote them down. But these ten laws were directly inscribed by God on stone slabs. They came directly from Him, and the material used was an indication of their permanence. Clearly they are in a class by themselves! Very few people would deny that the other nine of these Ten Commandments are of permanent validity why should it be supposed that this one is different?

New Testament Evidence

We can also consider the New Testament evidence concerning the Sabbath Day. I want to consider this in particular because those who oppose the idea of the perma-



nence of this commandment often refer to the New Testament. They will say that Christ spoke of all the other commandments except this one, and that it is therefore abolished. But the argument of silence is never a very good argument! We can also say that nowhere in the New Testament is there a statement that this law is abrogated and surely such a clear statement would be necessary before we could consider dropping out one of the Ten Commandments! Christ had many opportunities to make such a statement but He did not! When He and His disciples were accused of breaking the Sabbath rest, He did not say that the Sabbath was now abolished! No, He said that "... the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Matthew 12: 8) How could He be Lord of something that no longer existed? When He was asked to state the most important commandment of the Law, He gave two statements, one embodying our duty toward God and one toward our fellow human beings. The first of these was a quotation from Deuteronomy, and comes from the section giving the Ten Commandments. This Fourth Commandment is included among our duty toward God as well, indeed, as our duty toward our fellows, for it includes seeing that they also have opportunity to rest on that day!

Which Day?

I think we have said enough to establish that the Fourth Commandment is permanent obligation on us let us then leave that and turn to another subject. It might well be argued and is argued by some that the commandment speaks of keeping holy the seventh day, and that, therefore, we should be keeping Saturday rather than Sunday. They would say that Saturday is the seventh day and that no one has any right to change this any more than they have a right to change any of the other commandments. How would we answer this?

The Seventh

Let us consider the situation if I were to collect a group of children together and to give one of them a bag of apples to distribute. I might say to the one chosen, "There are seven apples in this bag. I want you to distribute six of them to the other boys and girls, but the seventh you may keep for yourself." Now, which apple does that child get? He gets any one any apple can be the seventh one! In a similar way, the seventh day can be any day of the week. The commandment does not state a particular day, it only states that we must keep one day holy in every seven.

Now there is a restriction on this; we cannot choose for ourselves which day we will have as our "seventh" day but God can! And it is quite clear from the Bible that, from the end of Creation, God appointed and set aside the last day of the week as the weekly day of rest and worship. This arrangement remained in force until the resurrection. At this time there was a new, Divinely sanctioned, day of rest. Jesus Christ finished His work of atonement for sin and, on the first day of the week, He

rose from the dead and entered into His rest.

The First Day

That this day was appointed by our Lord as a special day can be seen from the fact that, from the very beginning, He chose that day to meet with His people. He rose on the first day, He met with His disciples in the evening of that same day and then again on the first day a week after that! Then, seven weeks after His resurrection, again on the first day of the week, He sent His Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We can see in these events a setting apart of that day as separate, as sanctifying it, and this was understood by the early church, for they were already gathering together on these occasions. As we read through the rest of the Bible we read of the Church meeting for worship and to celebrate the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20 : 7), of them bringing their offerings on that day (1 Corinthians 16: 2), and we even find that John speaks of "the Lord's Day," though he does not actually say which day this is.

Some will quote such verses as Colossians 2: 16, 17 – "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ." They will say that this shows that the fourth commandment had been abolished. However, when these verses are taken in conjunction with what I have just said about the change of day, their argument can be shown to be at fault. Very early, as we have seen from John, the new rest day became known as "the Lord's Day" as distinct from the Jewish "Sabbath" and the various other Jewish observances. Paul, writing to a church of mainly Gentile Christians, but which was being infiltrated by Judaizers who wanted them to keep all of the Jewish law, was pointing out that there was no obligation on Gentile Christians to keep the Jewish "last day of the week Sabbath," since this had been replaced by a "first day of the week" Sabbath.

" We can also say that nowhere in the New Testament is there a statement that this law is abrogated – and surely such a clear statement would be necessary before we could consider dropping out one of the Ten Commandments! Christ had many opportunities to make such a statement but He did not! ... He said that "... the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Mt 12: 8) How could He be Lord of something that no longer existed?"

Those who will argue that there is no Sabbath obligation any longer will usually say that there is an obligation, nonetheless, to attend the Lord's Day services of the Church. By doing so they are saying that the Church can command that which God does not! Furthermore, since they also usually say that this is only an obligation for Christians, they are, in effect, saying that what would be a sin for a Christian is not a sin for a non-Christian. How can this be?

Which Behaviour?

I think that the point is clear that the Fourth Commandment is a perpetual moral law, and that it is fulfilled in the New Testament era in our keeping of the Lord's Day. The question that we should take up before we close is "How are we to keep this day?" It is to be a day of rest, so does that mean that we should do nothing on it? Clearly, we can't simply do nothing some things will have to be done and, equally clearly, there are things that should

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BETWEEN YOU AND ME

I was caught between two good photos of our Church at Tinonee - one of the front, and one of the side. The only way I could do justice to this old Church set on the hill in Tinonee was to put one on the front page and one on the back!

The Church at Tinonee has quite a place in the life of our Church reaching back to 1856. It was central in the revival that took place on the Manning between 1857 and 1860 under the ministry of the Rev. Allan McIntyre. Of this revival, J.C. Robinson, makes this comment: "This is the only place in Australia, so far as we are aware, there was anything resembling the religious awakening that swept America, Ireland, and Scotland during the years of 1859 and 1860." [The Free Presbyterian Church of Australia, p88] Mr. George Martin, an eyewitness of these things notes that "not a few rowed in their open boats sixteen and eighteen miles to Tinonee and back to be present at the services." And the work still continues there with a flourishing Youth Group under the guidance of Neil and Wilma Robinson.

Tinonee is also impressed on my own mind, too, though

for different reasons! I remember preaching there many times when I was a student for the ministry. The service then was held at 2.00 in the afternoon and in summer it was very very hot. And in those days there was no thought of casual dress. It was a suit, complete with jacket. We used to wedge the back [Session Room] door open trying to coax the breeze in.



I also remember that the minister's wife, Mrs M.C.Ramsay often used to sit in the back seat, and afterwards conduct a "post mortem" on the service. "You dropped your voice at the end of your sentences;" "You must keep your voice up"; "You must speak distinctly." I have always been grateful for her wise and gracious criticism. It's been worth more to me than all the elocution lessons I've ever sat through. To the best of my knowledge, no one has had trouble

hearing me since though whether they agree with it or not is another issue! Every student needs such a frank and honest critic to sit in the back seat of a big church and tell them to speak clearly and distinctly and keep their voice up even in the days of microphones! If preachers don't, microphones will not help the older people!

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WORSHIP ...

"In one sense worship is the whole point of everything. It is the purpose of history, the goal of the Christian story. Worship is not one segment of the Christian life among others. Worship is the entire Christian life seen as a priestly offering to God. And when we meet together as a Church, our worship is not merely a preliminary to something else; rather, it is the whole point of our existence as the body of Christ." John Frame, *Worship*, p 11.

The Presbyterian Banner is the official magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. The PCEA was established in 1846 and adheres to the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) as its doctrinal standard.

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Subscriptions [11 Issues per year]
Within Australia, \$25 [Bulk \$20]
Overseas : Aud \$40 Airmail.

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CLOSING DATE FOR MATERIAL: 15th of Each Month. WEB PAGE ISSUE AVAILABLE: 1st of Each Month.