



the presbyterian banner

August 2010

*He has made everything beautiful
in its time.*

Ecclesiastes 3:11a

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Editor:
Rev. Sjirk Bajema
44 Prospect Hill Road,
Narre Warren, VIC
AUSTRALIA 3805
Ph. (03) 9705 1505
Email: sjirkb@gmail.com

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Editorial

I noticed this recently in a church newsletter: *Prayer is when you talk to God; meditation is when you listen to God.* (The author was a Diana Robinson.) Now it sounds good doesn't it? Obviously if you have a relationship to God there is both a speaking and listening it. After all, isn't that what we do with each other? A healthy relationship has both these two aspects in it – speaking and listening. In fact, if a relationship was just one person doing all the talking it's not much of a relationship, is it?

But go back to this quote I noticed. And now compare that quote with your relationship with God. Does it sum up how you connect with Him?

I'm hoping here that you notice something. Because if there is a listening part to our relationship to God then it cannot be about the thoughts we have about Him, which is what this meditating would be. Then that must be what He says in His Word – the Bible – to us.

Now, some may say that this was obviously what the author of the quote meant. And within a time and a place which is exclusively Christian, this would be assumed. But we live in quite a different world. A world where this quote could be affirmed by the adherents of any of this world's religions, a world where those from a variety of Christian tradition – from extreme liberals to Eastern Orthodox – would have no problem with this. Unless our listening is to what God has said to us in His Word, it is not genuine biblical meditation. Isn't that how the psalmist describes it? Psalm 119 as the great psalm of the love for God's Law particularly highlights this. But not only there – it's found right throughout the psalms and all of Scripture.

What is especially disturbing with the increasingly down-playing of the role of God's Word in Christian meditation is the way ungodly thinking and practice becomes justified because of it. WWJD ('What Would Jesus Do?' – a popular slogan often worn by evangelical Christians) gives us the interpretation rights. WDJS ('What Did Jesus Say?') puts the emphasis fairly and squarely on God's Word!

And isn't it God's Word that becomes increasingly shifted off centre in many churches today? You feel awkward bringing your Bible to many of them. They have everything up on the screen – from the songs to the small bits from the Bible they read. And then the talks they give aren't usually of an expository nature. They are at best 'pep talks' to lift the spirit and make you feel good about yourself. Ah, there you have it again – how you feel about things yourself. Friend, your feelings will change. So why depend on how you are at a particular moment? Why not go to the One who is the same yesterday and today and tomorrow (Heb.13:8)?

Cover Photo Credit: *The July issue's picture of a pelican at Phillip Island was taken by the Vyas family. Normally they are taken by Betty-Ann Bajema. But how about one from you?*

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Dealing with Discouragement

Moderator's Synod Sermon on Haggai 2:1-9

George D. Ball

Once upon a time Satan, sensing his days were numbered, decided to have a garage sale. So he advertised the sale and laid out all the tools of his trade – all the instruments that he had used over the years to tempt and trouble mankind. Set aside by itself on a table was one very unpleasant looking instrument, very well worn and well used. But the asking price was out of proportion to all the other tools. When asked why he replied, 'That one is called discouragement, and that has been my best and most effective weapon!'

It doesn't take us long to get discouraged! We begin a new project — but our enthusiasm can soon evaporate, e.g. reading the Bible; a home improvement project; a new skill, etc. Remember the joy we had when we first believed?

The returned exiles in Haggai had responded to a powerful but simple message from Haggai – preached on 29th August 520 BC. By September (just over 3 weeks later) the work had begun (Haggai 1: 14-15). By mid October (17th) — 4 weeks after building had begun — discouragement had set in (Haggai 2: 1). It doesn't take long for discouragement to set in! Why? What had happened?

Reasons for Discouragement (v.1-3)

Verse 3 shows why the people had become so weak and discouraged.

They were looking back and comparing the past with the present (a risky exercise). Some of the older people (including Haggai?) had seen the original temple. It was an inspiring and impressive building. No expense was spared. It was lavish and grand. It had been built with freshly quarried stone and cedar wood, with an abundance of gold and silver and bronze. But the memory of it only served to feed their self-pity. The present by comparison seemed puny, paltry, drab and dinky – (see Ezra 3: 11-13). It was only a shadow of Solomon's temple. The 'glory' had gone. They felt demoralised and hopeless. They

thought to themselves, 'What's the use? This is no match to the glory of Solomon's temple! What a dinky, drab imitation!'

Looking back can (and should) be a means of great encouragement for the believer. Reading the great Christian biographies should be a means of grace. As we read of surprising conversions, we are moved to pray for more in our own day. As we read of great endeavours in the work of the kingdom they encourage us to expect great things from God too. To read the life of George Whitfield, or C.H. Spurgeon, or Joni Eareckson is to be thrilled, rebuked, challenged and stimulated all at once.

There can, however, be dangers. We can romanticise the past, whether we are reading about the Covenanters, the Puritans, the Reformers, or days of revival. Sometimes our imagination can make things bigger and better than they really were.

Making comparisons can be risky!

Whether it's comparing churches or comparing ourselves with others, the result can be the same – discouragement! Most of us have known the discouragement of feeling that what we are doing for Christ (in comparison to the 'success' of others) seems so insignificant that we may as well quit! **Other reasons for discouragement were the shortage of skilled labour (remember only 50,000 chose to return) and a shortage of materials compared to those used in the first temple.** Working on a slender margin for 27 days can be testing. As a result progress seemed agonisingly slow. The lot fell on the few! Sound familiar? We too are weak. We are few. We are without the resources and infrastructure of former days. All of our labours seem to produce little in

comparison with bygone days.

Another reason may have been constant criticism and opposition from the Samaritans who hadn't gone away.

It was also ironic that this was the end of the Feast of Tabernacles – the last of the seven great feasts of the year. (Compare Haggai 2:1 and Lev. 23: 39-43). It was like 'Thanksgiving Day'. They remembered their pilgrim journey from Egypt and the mighty acts of God. It should have been a time of joy! But the present didn't seem to match the past. The present realities seemed depressingly mundane, no match for celebrated mighty acts of God in the past.

These things, as well as other factors, could account for their discouragement. Factors surely that we can identify with?

Dealing with Discouragement (v.4-9).

Recognising it and admitting it (v.3)! The prophet frankly understood and identified with their problem. He didn't disagree with their assessment. He didn't scold, rebuke, or harangue! Rather he encouraged. How? By underlining what his generation had in common with the past.

He gave them a heartening command (v.4a). 'But now be strong.' Strikingly similar to what the Lord said to Joshua before he entered the land – see Joshua 1: 6-9. Strikingly similar to the words of David to Solomon – see 1 Chron. 28: 20. The implication is that the same God who worked with Joshua and Solomon is also at work with you. **Work!** Just because a situation is discouraging is not a reason to quit. Don't let the size of the task overwhelm you. Don't let the memory of the past overcome you. **Work!** Do what you can in obedience to God's command. Be strong! Don't sit back and wait for God to intervene. We can be sure that if we work for God – He will be working in us and for us.



Statue of Haggai

(NB. He didn't expect them to replicate or duplicate the work of the past. No! We cannot repeat history. It is an error to imagine that spiritual vitality will be recovered by doing so. This Temple will be a new temple – a different temple. God will always do new things. God will raise up new churches, new colleges, etc. So we cannot 'trap' or confine God to history and insist that because He did it this way in the past, He must do it this way again.)

He gave them a heartening promise (v.4c, 5). 'For I am with you...' Reminds us of the refrain of Psalm 46, 'The Lord of Hosts is with us.' God made a promise at Sinai and does not forget His promises. That makes all the difference! ... With the promise of God's Spirit there is no need for them to fear that their labour will be in vain. It doesn't matter what things look like – so long as God is there, His Word is there, His Spirit is there. Follow that through into NT and today! This helps to reduce mountains into molehills. On one occasion Martin Luther's wife Katie (a smart lady) came to him one day dressed in black. 'Has someone died?' asked Martin? Katie replied, 'Have you not heard the terrible news? The Great God has died!'

Deeply shocked, he rebuked her blasphemous words. She retorted, 'And if God is not dead, what right have you his servant, you a Christian man, to be so downcast and depressed?' We have no right to be discouraged in the same world as God. God is alive, active and working out His sovereign and loving purposes. He has not withdrawn in helplessness or despair!

He gave them a heartening insight into the future (v.6-9). He tells them, be strong, work; do not fear, because what you are building is more than what you can see. (cf. the words of Jesus, 'what I am doing now you do not understand.') What do you see? You see a dismal, drab, diminished temple. But God sees more than that! He sees it as only the beginning of something far greater. He says that the future glory of this house will be even greater than the past! (v.9). The best is yet to be. The lesson is – do not despise the day of small things. 'And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, declares the Lord of Hosts.' (v. 7 ESV). Perhaps the most difficult verse. That's why I prefer the ESV. (The KJV translates 'the desired of

all nations' as referring to Christ. But this is doubtful. Christ is not the desire of nations! Grammatically the verb 'shall come' is plural i.e. many things shall come). The 'treasures of all nations' is looking forward to the likes of Darius (Ezra 6:8); and Artaxerxes, and Herod – in their contribution to the rebuilding of the temple. Ultimately it is looking forward to the coming of Christ, and the day of Pentecost when the Lord will bring in His treasures – to build not so much a Temple as a people.

We too need to be reminded of this glorious hope we have. We look back to God's mighty work in Christ accomplishing our salvation and establishing our peace. In Christ, God has already shaken the entire world order. Yet we also look forward to the world shaking that is still to come, when God will bring all history to its consummation in Christ. There is a day coming when God's kingdom will be fully and finally established, when His glory will fill the world and His peace will reign for evermore. This is an antidote to our temptation to despair. The rubble that surrounds our lives and our churches is not the end of the story. The best is yet to be!

**Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia
FAMILY CAMP
at
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Stanwell Tops, NSW**

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2 pm Friday 7th January 2011 (DV)**

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Main Speaker: Rev. Iain Smith, (SPC, Hobart)

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Be seriously challenged in your thinking and lifestyle
Afternoons free to relax – games, bushwalks and pool
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Registration forms available August DV

Please pray for guidance and blessing from the Lord as we plan for this event.

Is the shroud of Turin authentic?

Eric Fanet

On the surface of the shroud preserved in Turin is impressed the movingly realistic image of a man who died crucified. Is this material evidence of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

According to the supporters of the authenticity of the shroud, the image cannot be a painting. They present it as a true imprint of the tortured body of Christ.

A scientific controversy

The shroud has captured the interest of scientists. A forensic analysis has been conducted. The cloth was also tested for traces of human blood, for pollens found only in the region of the Dead Sea and for faded inscriptions designating Jesus. The interpretation of the results of these experiments remains subject to controversy.

However, in 1988, under the coordination of the British Museum, three independent laboratories (Oxford, Zurich, and Tucson in Arizona) carried out the radiocarbon dating of the shroud. This dated the making of the shroud between 1260 and 1390 A.D. There does not appear to exist conclusive reason to doubt either the validity of the dating method, or the proper conducting of the test.

Indeed historical data strongly corroborates this conclusion.

A medieval pilgrimage

The existence of the shroud is first attested in Lirey, a small town in north-eastern France, in 1355 A.D. It was the object of a pilgrimage leading to the collegiate church founded by the French Knight Geoffroy de Charny.

The bishops of Troyes, Henri de Poitiers and Pierre d'Arcis, banned the displays of the shroud because, according to them, the faithful were being deceived. In 1389, Pierre d'Arcis wrote about the matter to Pope Clement VII, and asserted that his predecessor had 'discovered the fraud' and obtained a confession from the artist. Pope Clement nonetheless allowed the exhibitions, on condition that it be declared, 'with a loud and intelligible

voice', that 'this is not the true shroud of our Lord Jesus-Christ' but only a 'picture made to represent it'.

The veneration of relics was a prominent feature of popular piety during the Middle Ages. Yet as we have just explained, even in such a context, the authenticity of the shroud was not regarded as truth-compelling recognition. Rather, popular fervour was belatedly and carefully sanctioned by the church authorities, principally after the cloth was entrusted to the Duchy of Savoy. It was then kept in the castle of Chambéry and transferred to Turin in 1578, that city having become the



A souvenir medallion of the pilgrimage at Lirey. This is the oldest known representation of the shroud. Above, two priestly stoles support the cloth, which has been removed from a coffer (below) adorned with an engraving of the empty tomb. On each side of the engraving are the coats of arms of the De Charny and De Vergy families, the first medieval proprietors of the shroud. © Paris, Musée National du Moyen-Age-Thermes de Cluny, © Direction des musées de France, 2001

new capital of the Dukes of Savoy.

The Shroud and Christian antiquity

The supporters of the shroud nonetheless refuse to assign a medieval origin to the cloth, and identify it with the mandylion (from the Arabic mandil : cloth, handkerchief), a portrait of the face of Christ that, according to a tradition which likely reached its present form in the sixth century, Jesus himself impressed upon a piece of cloth. The image took on a great religious significance but disappeared during the sack of Constantinople by the Crusaders (1204).

This thesis is fragile: the word mandil always refers to a cloth of small di-

mensions. Moreover, how could the discovery and the transfer to France of a relic of such immense importance not have been greeted by an explosion of the 'exuberant devotion' characteristic of the time? This impossible identification points to the fundamental purpose of the defenders of the shroud: to contemplate the face of God who became man, and the reality of his sufferings.

But the authenticity of the shroud of Turin would imply that the entire dead body of Christ was in contact with the one piece of cloth. In the

Gospel of John, however, the Greek word soudarion (hence, the English 'shroud') designates a small 'face cloth' placed upon Jesus' head, and is clearly distinguished from the 'linen cloths' wrapped around the body. It is not a mere 'chin-piece' wrapped around the face of the body, as defenders of the shroud would have it. Moreover, from John, an eyewitness of the empty tomb, we learn clearly that several 'strips of linen', not a single continuous one, were used to bury Jesus.

There is in any case an eerie beauty to the shroud of Turin and it is right to uphold the historicity of the Passion, death and resurrection of Christ. Indeed the Gospel is not a moralistic allegory

but the proclamation of the work accomplished by Jesus, within human history, to reconcile us to God. But God meets us in the ways He Himself has ordained. 'Faith comes through hearing' (Rom. 10:17). During the past 2000 years, it is exclusively through the faithful proclamation of the testimony of the apostles, written down in the New Testament, that God has been creating saving faith in the hearts of his people.

The author, formerly of Dijon, France, worships in Knox PCEA, Melbourne. This article with footnotes is available from the Editor.

I weep for my children

James Cromarty

Today, many godly parents are weeping tears of sorrow because their children have forsaken their God. Young people have walked out on their covenant responsibilities. This is no small matter, for to rebel against the LORD God and his Son is to invite the wrath of God upon themselves, both in this life and in the life to come.

Christian parents always have great spiritual hopes for their offspring, and the hurt is great when those spiritual hopes are dashed. And today, we find so many young people and adults turning their backs upon the God of the covenant. There are those young folk and adults who deliberately neglect the worship of God; they do not attend prayer meetings and they live and act as if there were no God. As the Psalmist writes (10:4), 'God is in none of (their) thoughts.' There are others who 'profess to know God, but in their works they deny him.' (Titus 1:16)

There are aspects of God's covenant made with Abraham, that are in force today. When the Lord appeared to Abraham, he established his covenant with him. This covenant did not just apply to Abraham, but was relevant to all of his descendants after him. This is clearly taught in Genesis 17:7, where we read, 'And I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.' Here we read the great covenant promise: 'I will ... be God to you and your descendants after you.' This promise is found again and again throughout the Old Testament. Even after the sin of God's covenant people and their time in Babylon, God promised that they would return to the Promised Land, and we read: 'They shall be my people, and I will be their God ... for the good of them and their children after

them.' (Jer.32:38,39)

The Abrahamic Covenant in the New Testament

We read Peter's great sermon on the Day of Pentecost where he called upon all his hearers to repent of their sins and to believe in the name of Jesus Christ. In Acts 2:39 we read: 'For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.' Here again is the covenant promise made to believers and their seed. This aspect of God's covenant with Abraham remains true to this day.

God does not usually establish his covenant with just one isolated person. He does with some, but so often the covenant is with whole families. Psalm 22:30,31 speaks of this truth: 'A posterity shall serve him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation, they will come and declare his righteousness to a people who will be born, that he has done this.'

One wonderful occasion being established with a family through the faith of the family head is found in Acts 16. Paul and Silas were in prison in Philippi. When, by the power of God, they were released, the Philippian jailer cried out, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' The reply came loud and clear: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.' (Acts 16:30,31) The faith of the parent brought the covenant blessing upon the family.

And faith in Christ makes us spiritual descendants of Abraham, for Paul tells us: 'If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.' (Gal. 3:29) And again, the promise spoken of here is that made to Abraham: 'I will be God to you and your descendants after you.' This means that God does not look upon our children as he does the children of unbelieving parents,

for Paul tells us that the children of believing parents, or one believing parent, are not 'unclean ... but they are holy.' (1 Cor.7:14).

Children born into the family of believers are the special objects of God's love.

Covenant Blessings to Covenant Children

In the Christian family, covenant children experience great privileges. Timothy is one such example, for Paul tells us (2Tim.3:15) that Timothy's godly grandmother, Lois, had taught her daughter Eunice the ways of God. She in turn had taught Timothy 'from childhood the Scriptures and the way of godliness. The same privilege belongs to covenant children today. They are prayed for by believing parents and other believing relatives and church members. In their families they have been taught the ways of God. Parents have set before their children the ways of godliness and faith, and Christ has been glorified before their eyes. Covenant children have attended worship each Lord's Day. Again and again the Holy Spirit has called them to faith in Christ. These are not the privileges of children in unbelieving families. Who prays for them? Who teaches them the things of God? Who takes them to worship? The truth is that God pours out blessings upon blessings upon our covenant children. When believing parents stood before the Lord and the congregation on the day of the baptism of their child, they confessed what Joshua once said: 'As for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah!' (Joshua 24:15). The Lord was present on that day and his command to the covenant child was: 'My son (daughter), give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways' (Prov.23:26). The command of God to Abraham again rang out: 'I am Almighty God: walk before me and be blameless!' (Gen.17:11).

Thus we observe that special obligations are placed upon covenant children. Promises were made by parents, and covenant children are bound by these promises of parents, and commands of God.

But the cry goes up: 'That's not fair! I didn't ask to be born into a Christian family!' The same cry and reason might be given when an Australian is jailed for breaking a law peculiar to Australia: 'It's not fair! I didn't ask to be born in Australia.' But that is no excuse before the law; nor is it an acceptable excuse before the Lord. All covenant children are bound to the covenant, regardless of their feelings in the matter.

Covenant Children Must Bow Before King Jesus

Believing parents expect and pray that their children will walk in the ways of the covenant. They pray that God's covenant promise will be realized as their children come to faith in Christ. Parents long to see their children living to the glory of God—living the life of faith. And the life of all covenant people is to one of separation from the world. As John wrote: 'Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides for ever' (1John 2:15-17). Covenant people are not to conform to the ways of the world. The world glitters before the Christian and its attraction is so great to unconverted covenant folk; but all must be aware of misusing the world, for to do so is to dwell in the land of sin. Covenant folk need to be reminded of the words of Ps.1:1—'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...' The ungodly of this world can and do drag covenant young people and professing Christians of all ages, down into hell. Covenant children must be taught of their unique position before God. They must understand that Jehovah is their God and that they are called

to faith in Christ and a life of holiness. They must be taught that out of place are 'evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, pride (and) foolishness' (Mark 7:21,22). Covenant children must be taught that these words of Christ must be obeyed. Paul adds to the list of sins to be avoided: 'disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, merciful...' (2Tim.3:2,3).

Covenant folk are called to give themselves wholeheartedly to God. There must be true conversion and they must serve God faithfully, from the heart and according to the truth.



Covenant folk must confess their sin in true repentance and follow Christ, avoiding evil, and the very appearance of evil.

Grace is not hereditary—passed down from generation to generation, like the colour of the eyes. Covenant folk must bow before God and believe the gospel. All covenant people must fight the forces of evil in every department of life. We are all to live the life of faith, which is to the glory of God. We are to promote his glory in the home, at church, at work, at school, at play, and in our relationships with others.

Parents must pray fervently that the Holy Spirit might change the heart of our covenant seed, that they might find Christ—that they might become new creatures in Christ.

Covenant Breakers

We are ever surrounded by the tragedy of covenant people who turn their backs upon Christ and become 'covenant breakers'—apostate! This is a hard word, for it speaks of people who have departed from the living God, and so made shipwreck of

their souls. God requires of covenant people, faith in Christ and obedience. If this is not the situation and sin abounds, the Lord declares, 'They shall bear their iniquity' (Ez.44:10). Israel was warned against disobeying God, for if they did, God promised, 'I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of my covenant' (Lev.26:25). To despise the word of Jehovah and so bring reproach upon God carried a great punishment; 'Because he has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken his commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him' (Numbers 15:31).

Israel murdered/crucified the messenger of the covenant, Jesus Christ. As they did, they cried out, 'His blood be upon us and our children!' (Matt.27:25). The curse of the covenant fell upon Israel. Jerusalem was destroyed in AD70 amidst the most horrible and cruel treatment of humans that we could ever imagine. Christ said of that day, 'For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be' (Matt.24:21). Hitler's horrific treatment of the Jewish people was nothing compared to the horror of AD70. This was the 'vengeance of the covenant,' for breaking the covenant. And those godless covenant breakers who crucified Christ, faced the judgement of an angry God, a judgement that had eternal consequences.

Covenant people, the blessings of God are yours if you abide in Christ and live the life of faith and obedience. You are children of the kingdom, but reject the Lord Jesus Christ, then beware, for what Christ said to covenant breaking Israel will apply to you, 'The sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matt.8:12). Covenant people, you are the ones who are first invited to the great supper spoken of in Luke 14:15ff. The invitation is clear, 'Come, the things are now ready' (v.17). In Christ's parable the ones invited made excuses why they could or would not come, 'I've just married. I cannot come'; 'I've bought some

land and want to go and inspect it.' The excuses came thick and fast. What are your excuses today? 'I enjoy the company of my godless friends.' 'Sunday is the day when we all enjoy ourselves. We can't enjoy ourselves at Church.' 'I don't care what you say, I'm going to live with the one I love.' 'Sunday sport is more important than Christ and worship.' 'I just want to enjoy myself!' And on it goes. The world and its attractions are of more importance to you than the Christ of the covenant. When covenant folk turn their backs upon Christ, their invitation to the Great Supper is thrown away, and the Lord fills his kingdom with the unbelievers of the world who are brought to repentance and then worship and serve Christ. When Israel rejected the preaching of the good news, Paul and Barnabas said, 'It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles' (Acts 13:46).

God's Judgement Upon Covenant Breakers.

In John 15:1-8 we have Christ's parable of the 'Vine and the Branches.' This is a parable of the covenant, and we see the reality of this parable about us everywhere. Children of believers, and adults who once professed faith in Christ, all part of the covenant people, have been cut out of the vine for they have not produced the fruit of a living faith. They live like the worldling. Where is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, 'love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control?' (Gal.5:22-23) These covenant breakers are the withered branches of the vine. And the end of such branches is that they are gathered together and burned in the fire; cut out of the vine because they are spiritually useless. And this is the end of all unrepentant covenant breakers. How we should pray for covenant people of all ages, especially our children. We weep over their precarious spiritual state, and pray that the God of the covenant may bless them spiritually.

But not only should parents weep and pray before the Lord, but the church, as the body of Christ, should together weep and pray. The Parable of the Vine and Branches teaches the truth spoken of by Paul in Romans 9:6, 'They are not all Israel, who are of Israel ...' There was an elect within the covenant people, and we see the same today.

Unsaved, rebellious covenant children and adults face an horrific judgement and eternal punishment. The kingdom of God was so close to them, but they rejected the entreaties of the Holy Spirit to come to Christ in repentance. Christ looked down over the covenant inhabitants of Jerusalem and wept because of their sin and hardness of heart. We read his words, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing' (Matt.23:37). Their doom was sealed! They were covenant breakers who were responsible for their rejection of Christ.

And the Lord warns all unrepentant covenant people of the severity of their doom: 'Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement...' (Matt.10:15; 11:22,23).

The Severity of Judgement

In Hebrews 10:26-31 we read a severe warning given to any who were covenant members through birth or confession of faith. These words are a warning to all who have 'trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace' (v.29). Those born into the covenant have tasted the good things of God, as have those who have entered the covenant through their own profession of faith in Christ. They have felt the entreaties of the Holy Spirit (Heb.6:4) and know the way of truth. But they have rejected it all; they have broken covenant, and

unless God is gracious to them their end is fearful. All that remains for unrepentant covenant breakers is 'a certain fearful expectation of judgement and fiery expectation ... Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing and insulted the Spirit of grace' (Heb.10:27,29).

Indeed Peter declares (2 Peter 2:21), 'It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.' All of the ungodly will perish in the hell of God's abandonment; but for covenant breakers there is 'worse punishment.' As Christ declared, 'And the servant who knew his master's will and did not prepare himself, or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much more will be required; and to whom much is committed, of him they will ask the more' (Luke 12:47,48).

What a tragedy it is to hear covenant breakers crying on their deathbeds, 'God is departed from me and answers me no more' (1 Sam.28:15).

Covenant breakers may run from God in this world, but they can never escape the judgement of that day. The eye of God is upon them all, and hell/eternal punishment, will be their end if they remain unrepentant to the end of life.

Let no one fool themselves; this is your end if your profession of faith is not true. This is the end of all covenant breakers, the end of believers' children, if they do not abide in Christ.

This is why believing parents weep. This is why the hearts of believing parents are broken.

What Can You Do?

You may be thinking, 'Why should anyone write on such a sensitive

matter and cause more sorrow of heart?' But I weep with all those who weep (Rom.12:15). Indeed all readers should weep over rebellious covenant children and adults. Together we must pray for unconverted children, young adults and adults. Together we should pray, 'Lord, be pleased to remember your covenant established with us and our children. Lord have mercy upon our straying children and in mercy, or wrath, bring them to faith in Christ.' Parents must continue to bear witness to unconverted children in the way they live and the words they speak. May we never be ashamed to say to our children, no matter what their age, '... this is our God; our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide, even to death' (Ps.48:14). But too often believing parents discuss before their impressionable children the failures of the church; they openly criticize the minister. It is little wonder that children grow up and depart from the church? As parents let us present the good news of Christ in a way that is understandable, in love and not coldness. Let us encourage our children to come to Christ. Let us also not be afraid of unburdening our souls to Christian friends, seeking their support, encouragement and prayer, in our weeping and prayers. As Paul said of the church, 'If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it ...' (1 Cor.12:26). Your minister and elders have a great responsibility in this area. They are the shepherds of the flock. They must

be there to give help and advice to parents in pain. They also are responsible to Christ in a very special way for the people of the covenant. What a judgement will fall upon ministers and elders if they fail in their duty in this area!



The Return of the Prodigal Son, by Rembrandt

But, as believers weep over rebellious covenant offspring, let us rejoice with covenant offspring who are faithfully going on with Christ. Let us praise God that we see many of our folk who truly love the Lord and show fruits of faith. May we ever praise God for do-

ing great things for covenant children.

We cannot force Christ into the heart of covenant breakers, this is the work of our Sovereign God. He alone can change hearts and wash away sins. Thus it is to God we must turn in prayer, and seek that, for the sake of Christ, all of our covenant children might be saved.

And as the hurt goes deeper, let us always remember the parable of the Prodigal Son. He turned his back upon his parents and the God of his parents, yet the Lord humbled him in a pigsty, and in true repentance he returned to his father and his father's God. Sometimes the Lord deals harshly with his wayward covenant children. He drives them to their knees in shame and hurt; all this that they might cry to him, and then God lifts them up. We must ever let our covenant breaking offspring know that their way of life is unacceptable, but let us ever assure them that we shall be there to pick up the pieces, to forgive their hurt, and to welcome them home.

The Rev. J. Cromarty is an emeritus minister in our denomination. He is also an author of a number of Christian books—for adults and children.

Was this space for your church news and photographs?

Ask your minister or elder how your congregation can be part of this positive promotion of the denomination, as well as keeping the rest of us up with what's happening!

Camps, special events, youth news, seniors, engagements, marriages, births, anniversaries, obituaries... the list goes on and on!

Perhaps you could volunteer to send in some news and photos?

The World in the Banner

Merging World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council

The Uniting General Council 2010 began its eleven-day meeting on 18 June 2010 at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to merge the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council into one body called the World Communion of Reformed Churches — a worldwide affiliation of 80 million Christians from 108 countries coming together as one body in Christ.

Attending the council meeting is Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), who expressed the desire to see the same level of cooperation between the WCC and the merged group as has existed between the WCC and the two groups that are merging.

Tveit commented: 'We now see a more visible unity of Christ in the spirit of fellowship,' and said that though the merger is bringing more people together around the table, 'Unfortunately, we don't all yet share the Eucharist, but we do live out of the same baptism.'

+ *World Communion of Reformed Churches*, info@reformedchurches.org
 + *World Alliance of Reformed Churches*, 150 route de Ferney, Post Office Box 2100, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland, 41-22-791-6240, Fax: 41-22-791-6505, warc@warc.ch

+ *Reformed Ecumenical Council*, 2050 Breton Road Southeast, Suite 102, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546, 616-949-2910, rvh@recweb.org

+ *World Council of Churches*, 150 route de Ferney, CH-1211, Geneva 2, Switzerland, 41-22-791-6111, Fax: 41-22-791-0361

+ *Calvin College* 3201 Burton Southeast, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Police Arrest Four Christians for Evangelizing Muslims

An 18 June 2010 ASSIST News article by Mark Ellis titled 'Three Christians Arrested in Outreach to Muslims in Dearborn, Michigan', reports that after the city of Dearborn, Michigan, in 2010 banned the distribution of Christian literature in the vicinity of the city's yearly Arab Interna-

tional Festival, a three-judge panel from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit granted an emergency motion on behalf of Pastor George Saieg, allowing him to distribute literature and talk about his faith to Muslims at the festival.

On 18 June 2010, while proclaiming their faith in Christ to some of the hundreds of thousands of festival attendees, Dr Nabeel Qureshi, co-director of Acts 17 Apologetics Ministries, along with David Woods and Paul Rezkalla, were arrested on breach of peace charges by Dearborn city police.

A Canadian attending the festival said that a crowd of fifteen to twenty Muslims watching the exchange between the evangelists and other Muslims cheered and shouted 'Allahu Akbar' (Arabic for 'Allah is the greatest') as the police arrested the three evangelists. The Canadian commented: 'I never thought I would see this in America.'

A 22 June 2010 ASSIST News Service article by Dan Wooding titled 'Thomas More Law Center Represents Four Christian Missionaries Arrested at Arab Festival in Dearborn' reports that the arrests at the festival are being dubbed 'police enforcement of Sharia law', that a fourth person, Negeen Mayel, was arrested on the same charge and an additional charge of failure to obey a police officer's orders while, from 100 feet away, filming the discussions and subsequent arrests.

The four arrested are being represented by the Thomas More Law Center (TMLC), whose President and Chief Counsel Richard Thompson commented:

'These Christian missionaries were exercising their Constitutional rights to free speech and the free exercise of religion, but apparently the Constitution carries little weight in Dearborn, where the Muslim population seems to dominate the political apparatus. 'It's apparent that these arrests were a retaliatory action over the embarrassing video of the strong-arm tactics used last year by Festival Security Guards. This time, the first thing police officers did before making the ar-

rests was to confiscate the video cameras in order to prevent a recording of what was actually happening.

'Contrary to the comments made by Police Chief Ron Haddad, our Constitution does not allow police to ban the right of free speech just because there are some hecklers. Not all police officers approve of the way their department treated these Christians.'

A TMLC lawyer on 21 June 2010 faxed a letter to Chief Haddad demanding that the three video cameras and tapes illegally seized from the missionaries be immediately returned.

+ *Assist USA*, danjuma1@aol.com
 + *Acts 17 Apologetics Ministry*, nabeel@acts17.net
 + *Thomas More Law Center*, 24 Frank Lloyd Wright Drive, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106, 734-827-2001, Fax: 734-930-7160, info@thomasmore.org

Seminary President Loses Administrative Role

A 25 June 2010 article by Ray Reed in *The News and Advance* titled 'LU Won't Renew Caner's Contract as Dean of Seminary' reports that Liberty University will not renew the contract of Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary President Ergun Caner as dean of the seminary. Caner though, has signed a contract to be a member of the seminary's faculty for the 2010-2011 school year. Caner's loss of the seminary administrative position is due to the findings of a four-member investigatory committee of the Liberty University Board of Trustees that 'Dr. Caner has made factual statements that are self-contradictory', regarding his background as a Muslim convert to Christianity.

A 26 June 2010 article by Mirelle on the *Talk Islam: A Crescent Waxing* Islam blog cited *The News and Advance* article, and commented: 'I think 'self-contradictory' is Evangelical-speak for 'being caught lying over and over and over again about where he was born, why he came to this country and that he never was a

member of some outfit called 'Islamic Youth Jihad,' among other things.' 'Self-contradictory' also means that he gets to keep his job as professor at LU. The lesson the rest of us take away from this is that lying can be profitable, even when you're caught making egregious whoppers on multiple occasions over many years.'

+ *The News and Advance*, 101 Wyn-dale Drive, Lynchburg, Virginia 24501, 434-385-5440, tjamerson@newsadvance.com
+ *Talk Islam*, salaam@talkislam.info
+ *Liberty University*, 1971 University Boulevard, Lynchburg, Virginia 24502, 434-582-2000, jrmoore@liberty.edu

The Elders Handbook: A Practical Guide for Church Leaders Available Online

The 1979 Christian's Library Press publication *The Elders Handbook: A Practical Guide for Church Leaders* by Gerard Berghoef and Lester De Koster is available on-line through Scribd Inc.

Ed: This book is highly recommended!
+ *Magyar Református Egyház*
+ *Scribd Inc.*, 539 Bryant Street, Suite 200, San Francisco, California 94107, 415-896-9890, press@scribd.com
+ *Christian's Library Press*, 161 Ottawa Northwest Suite 301, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

Religious Freedom under Threat in the West

The principal religious liberty trend of the multicultural West is that religious liberty is disappearing as the culture's biblical foundations are eroded. Unfortunately, most churches and Christians are not going to realise it until the new social order has been consolidated and persecution starts to strike them directly. Christians in the West are losing the right to criticise Islam and witness to Muslims. They are also losing the right to conscientiously object to new social norms being imposed on them essentially at the behest of Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender (GLBT) lobby groups. Just as in non-free states, Western law-makers and law-enforcers are justifying their interventions as necessary to maintain 'peace' and/or defend 'equality' against 'extremist fundamentalism' (i.e. any ideas contrary to the democratic consensus).

Rattled by the chaos and confusion of

cultural collapse — the result of a culture losing its foundations — Western governments are increasingly resorting to external restraint and authoritarian repression. They are opting for 'peace' through appeasement, rather than justice and defence of their Constitutions through education and rule of law. To remove contradictions, laws are being amended and re-interpreted and fundamental concepts are being redefined. Driven by fear of unrest, Western governments are increasingly proving themselves willing to secure 'peace' at any price — even the loss of liberty. As soon as it appears that intolerant forces might protest, riot or divert their collective vote elsewhere, weak Western democracies yield and appease, repressing 'divisive' or 'provocative' elements at the behest of the most belligerent. And in a 'post-Christian' (as distinct from Judeo-Christian) culture, there is nothing as divisive and provocative as the gospel message and righteousness of Christianity.

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin* | RLPB 061 | Wed 23 Jun 2010

Costumed Animals and Native American Interpretive Dancing?

A 5 July 2010 article by Edward Terry of Presbyterian Lay Committee titled 'Opening Worship: Skunks, Rabbits and Wolves, Oh My' reports that the call to worship of the opening service of the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), being held 3-10 July 2010 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, featured the attendees facing the four points of the compass while praying for the Holy Spirit to come, and watching people dressed as furry animals march through the aisles and throughout the worship space. Additionally, interpretive dancing and four processions of flowing banners rounded out the call to worship, all paying homage to the area's Native American heritage.

A man that attended the service afterwards described it as 'pagan' and another attendee broke into tears while discussing what he had just seen.

Comment: This is the kind of nonsense already present for some time at the World Council of Churches meetings. It is patently anti-Christian and only exposes the degree to which these people have turned their backs

against the gospel. It is no surprise that this same denomination lost more than 3% of their membership in the last year — a drop of more than 63,000 members. We have seen the same locally with the Uniting Church and the more liberal of the Anglican churches.

+ *Presbyterian Lay Committee*, laymanletters@layman.org
+ *Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)*, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, Kentucky 40202

One couple and their teapot

Newspapers across the Ditch and further abroad recently reported the story of an elderly man in Sydney who is touted with having saved hundreds of lives, because of his unique and courageous actions. Don Ritchie and his wife live opposite "the Gap," a cliff that is Sydney's most notorious suicide spot.

For nearly fifty years, when Don has seen people stand at the edge of the cliff he has hurried over to them from his home, and invited them inside for a cup of tea and a chat. Hundreds have taken him up on the offer, and those cups of tea have been turning points for many who have paused and reconsidered their decision. They have walked away with a renewed desire to give life a chance.

Many have returned to thank the Ritchies for their generosity. One woman writes to them regularly and hanging on their wall is an artwork another woman painted and sent to them, months after they rescued her. The council under whose jurisdiction "the Gap" falls, is currently looking into fencing options to close the cliff face off to would-be jumpers. While this may stop people from jumping at this particular spot, it is likely to move rather than solve the problem. Contrasted with this measure, the actions of Don Ritchie and his wife meet the very real need displayed almost weekly on that cliff face—the need for human connection, support and love. In 2006, Don was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his services. Read a Sydney Morning Herald article about Don Ritchie
<<http://www.smh.com.au/national/angel-walking-among-us-at-the-gap-20090731-e4f2.html>>
+ *Real Issues No. 361*, Maxim Institute, New Zealand.

The Banner on Society

How May I Ignore You Today?

Herm Zandman

I had a chuckle and complimented the man who wore the T-shirt with this text regarding the funny in-your-face message it sent. However, after walking on a while, it would not leave me alone. Was it really a funny text to advertise? It was certainly intended as such!

As we Christians are expected to look at what meets us with Bible coloured glasses on our faces, a text like this ought to stir something uneasy within us. That is what happened to me. What the text declared is something that has been bemoaned and groaned about ever since Western society started. David Riesman, Nathan Glazer, and Reuel Denney wrote in 1950 *The Lonely Crowd*, depicting a facet of the American character, notably expressing dismay at the loneliness of people in a large city like New York, even resulting in some one lying dead in an apartment for days before being found. A slogan like the one in our title loses its funny aspect in such situations.

The loss of commitment

One other way in which the slogan loses its funny content, is when we consider the manner in which people view each other in terms of long term relationships. More and more it has become the norm that people live together without formal commitment of marriage. How damaging this can be is evident from the latest research coming out of Great Britain which demonstrates that married couples are ten times more likely to stay together than casual cohabitants. Cohabitation, says the report, forms a route into divorce and separation. "Cohabitation is typically a short-lived and fragile state on its own terms, and those couples who cohabit prior to marriage are at increased risk of divorce", the report said (Australian Christian Lobby, newsletter 25 February 2010). "How may I ignore you today?" By seeing your relationship with me as cheap and to be discarded as soon as the I'm Okay, You're Okay illusion has waned.

Recently I have been trying to strike

up a bit of conversation with some forklift drivers I meet. It is getting harder, because they have discovered these MP3 players or I-Pods (perhaps they are one and the same, I don't know – yet). Now I know that, when a white wire hangs from the hair or peeps from under the cap, the wire carrier lives in a world of his own, the wire serves as a 'Do not disturb' sign on a hotel room door. "To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts," says Henry Thoreau (American author 1817-1862). It is hard to affect the quality of the day positively when relational meaningfulness is replaced by white wires. The same author also said, "What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?" This begs the question as to what defines a tolerable place. One thing that the Bible has as a very central theme is positive relational meaningfulness. God has created man as a relational being. Starvation in relationships means that something dies in the person. This was allegedly tested in Nazi Germany as a group of babies was separated into two groups, one of which received normal, relational treatment with cuddles, basic necessities, and conversational love; the other group was treated mechanically, with just the feeding and cleaning being done. Of the second group almost every baby died, while the survivors were traumatised.

The demeaning of humanity

Once the value of a human being is eroded in the psyche of the people, relational interaction becomes unimportant, unless stoked by an economic motive (just notice how sitcoms usually attribute the value of a person and what he has to say to the economic standing he holds). From that point onward, i.e. ignoring you today, it is but a small step to what is happening in Holland these days, even horrifying the hardened Italians. The prime minister of the Netherlands thinks that killing babies because they are born with terminal or seriously disabling conditions is not a scandal.

But daring to point out (as Italian politician Carlo Giovanardi did) accurately that German doctors did the same during World War II, was received as scandalous by the Dutch authorities. The Netherlands cannot escape this ugly fact: Dutch doctors kill scores of babies each year and justify this fundamental abuse of human rights upon the inherently discriminatory concept that they can decide that another human being's life is of such low quality it has no business being lived (<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/012/003dncoj.asp>).

"How may I ignore you today?" Very easily, but also very traumatically. Erode relational meaningfulness; reduce it to an economic level or below. Do not see another human being as God's image bearer any longer. Get busy with your own closed in environment by blocking out the senses and emotions to those around you. It is the devil's most successful tool today, the creation and fostering of individualism. It runs diametrically counter to the covenantal and evangelistic outreach with which the Scriptures urge God's people to engage.

It shows in the life of the church too. Many a church has a welcoming committee. The church consists of 250 members, but only four of the faithful have put their hand up to be part of the welcome committee. Extending the relational hand takes effort; it can even cause a person to be vulnerable in reaching out and giving of self. Yet, it is the grist on God's mill. He created man to be relational, firstly to Him and secondly to his neighbour. Satan appears to have used the blessing of modern technology successfully as a curse to enable people to ignore one another.

Like all ethical roads in life, this one also has a T-junction: "How may I reach you today?" or "How may I ignore you today?"

Dr Herm Zandman is a former Christian School educator now involved in the Australian Transportation Industry. He lives in Mt Gambier where he attends the Presbyterian Church.

Prescribed Search / Youth Work

AUGUST 2010

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 5 and 6)

MATTHEW 15:21--39

1. How did the woman of Canaan respond when Jesus told her it was not meet (good) to give the children's bread to dogs?

What was Jesus' answer to her? (2 verses)

2. What food was used to feed the four thousand? How much remained over? (2 verses)

Chapter 17

3. What happened to Jesus' outward appearance when he was transfigured?

4. What words were spoken by the voice out of the cloud?

5. Why couldn't the disciples cast the demon out of the child? (2 verses)

6. What was Peter to do so as not to offend those who received the tribute (temple tax)?

Chapter 19:16--30

7. Why did the rich young man go away sorrowful?

8. What is easier than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God?

JUNIOR

MATTHEW 15:21--39

1. What was Jesus' answer to the woman of Canaan when she spoke of the dogs eating the crumbs from their masters' table?

2. How many loaves and fish did Jesus use to feed four thousand?

Chapter 17:1--13

3. Which two men were talking with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration?

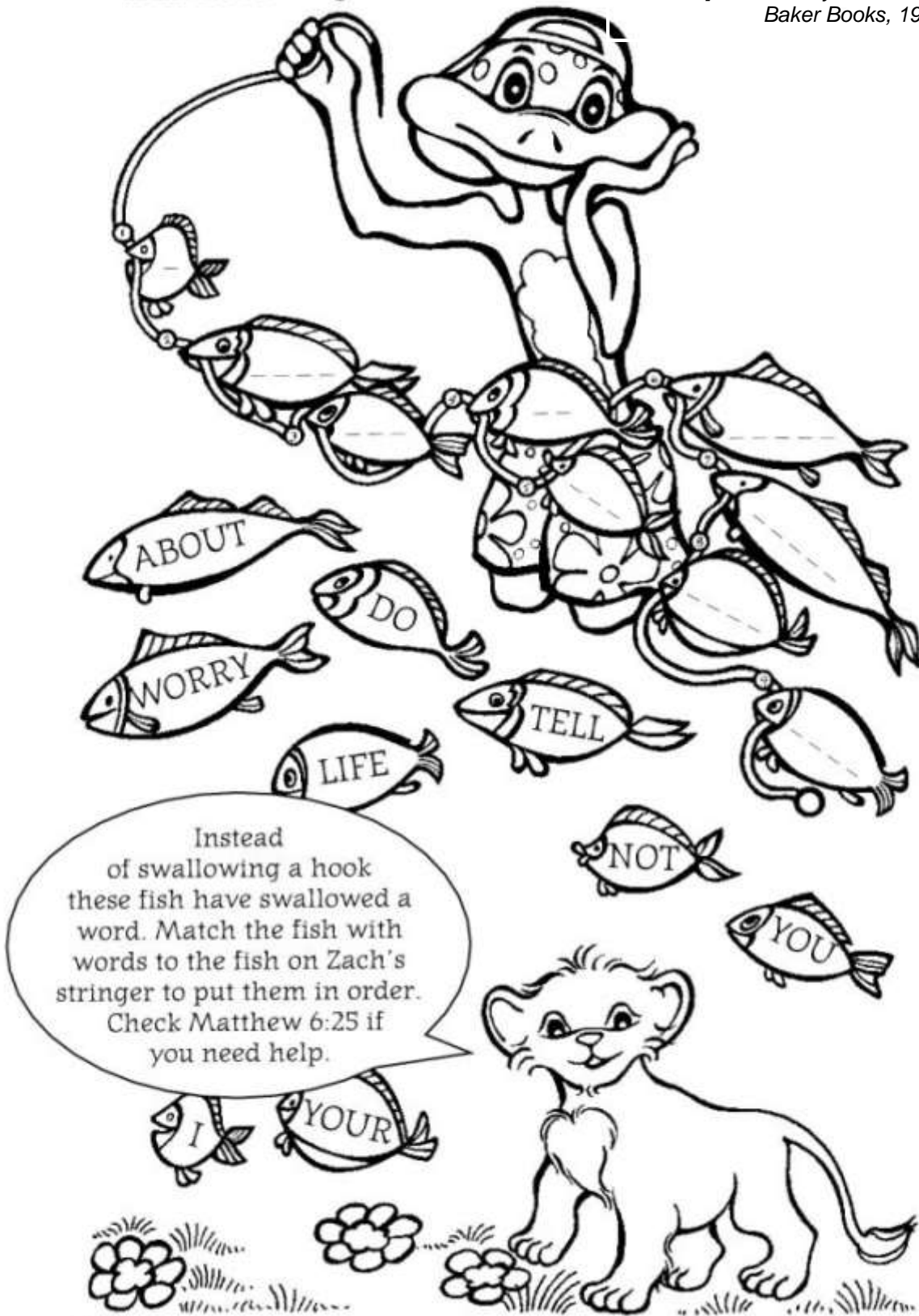
4. What words were spoken by the voice out of the cloud?

Please send the answers to Mrs I Steel at:
PO Box 942
Epping NSW 1710
Or email to: iesteel@gmail.com

Children under the Banner

From: 'Search and Solve: Bible Activity Sheet',
by Betty De Vries,
[Illustrated by Donna Greenlee]
Baker Books, 1998

Another String of Fish



Update of Synod finances

As at 30th June 2010 the balances of the main Working Funds of the church Synod were:

30/6/10	31/12/09	
\$ 9,350	\$ Nil	Missions (General Funds)
\$ 57,627	\$ 56,706	Missions (DA Anderson Bequest)
\$ (16,329)	\$ Nil	Missions (TI Leggott Stipend Support)
\$282,858	\$ 282,858	Missions (Relief Fund – M McSwan Bequest – Equity Investments)
\$102,915	\$ 114,113	Missions (Relief Fund – M McSwan Bequest – Working Funds)
\$ (13,128)	\$ Nil	Stipend Relief
\$ 44,600	\$ Nil	Stipend Relief set aside for Aid-Receiving Congregations as approved by Synod 2010.
\$122,748	\$119,390	Training of Ministry
\$ 10,688	\$ 10,216	Youth & Fellowship
\$ 12,941	\$ 60,881	Synod General Funds

Our main need continues to be in providing financial assistance to congregations who are not able to fully fund their ministers' stipend, superannuation and congregational operating costs.

There was a shortfall of \$13,128 in the Stipend Relief Fund as at 30/6/10 being the net result of payments made from 1/1/10 to 30/6/10. This deficit is to be covered from Synod General Funds (\$12,941 as at 30/6/10 plus \$2,000 to be reimbursed by congregations for Synod costs). So as to be able to meet Stipend Assistance requests from congregations for the current Synodical year, \$44,600 has been set aside from Synod General Funds in terms of Synod resolution (Minutes 10.32.3). As it was estimated there will insufficient Synod funds to meet the total assistance of \$60,400 sought by aid-receiving congregations for the Synodical year of 2010/11, Synod approved allocations on a proportional basis totalling \$44,600.

To date, of the estimated shortfall of \$15,800 in Stipend in 2010/11, the church wide appeal made in March resulted in \$6,120 being received for Stipend assistance. This included generous donations from three individuals totalling \$5,000 and also \$1,050 from one congregation.

If any congregational treasurers are holding funds donated, please send them to the Synod treasurer.

The current deficit of 16,329 in Missions (TI Leggott Stipend Support) can be covered by transfer from Missions General and Missions (DA Anderson Bequest).

Your prayerful and financial support is therefore sought to enable Synod to provide the full amount of assistance requested by aid-receiving congregations for the current year.

"God twice pays what is lent to Him, once in this world, by multiplying the wealth of the benevolent, and then in heaven He pays it over again" Cornelius Alapid

Churches in the Banner

Reformed Presbyterian Fellowship Camp 2010

What could possibly attract 120 people to a cramped, spider-infested, muddy campgrounds, set in the middle of the bush? When families and singles from the congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia attend Dixon's Creek camps, their enjoyment is in no way dampened by the rugged setting. This year's Fellowship Camp, held 2nd – 5th April, over Easter weekend, was no exception. Some of the highlights included bush walks and games, encouraging studies, and, of course, fantastic food.

The traditional bush walks up treach-

erously steep Harbour's Hill and searching for bullet casings at the quarry are always enjoyed by young and old. Frisbee, footy, and team quizzes also allowed for good interaction throughout the camp.

Murray Capill, president of the Reformed Theological College in Geelong, spoke this year on "Building the Church" from I Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. The discussion groups that followed each study considered practical ways to build the church through our gifts and talents, through our love for one another, and through worship. It was also a joy to sing with one an-

other and learn new Psalms together.

The food was prepared American style by the Blackwood family. Mealtimes, of course, were not only about great food. Gathering around tables also provided opportunities for conversation between old and new friends.

Dixon's Creek fellowship camps continue to be times for encouraging, building friendships, and growing in godliness. For this, we are very thankful.

Written by youth who attended this year's fellowship camp

Churches in the Banner (cont)

The Farewell to Rev. Alan and Mrs. Tripovich

On Saturday 26th June 2010, a gathering took place at the PCEA Hall, Campbell Street, Wauchope, to farewell and celebrate the work of Rev Alan and Mrs.

Tripovich over the last 42 years with the Hastings River congregations. Mr and Mrs Tripovich came to Wauchope in 1968.

There were over 70 people attending, with representatives travelling from the congregations of St. George, Mt. Druitt, Hawkesbury/ Nepean, Hunter/ Barrington, Armidale, the Clarence River and the Manning River.

The address was given by the Rev Ray Murray, the Clerk of Northern Presbytery, on Psalm 71, verses 14-15, on the prayer of the old man.

The gathering sang Psalm 126 to the tune 'Desert' and Psalm 92 verses 12-15 to the tune 'Orlington' at the end of the proceedings. The strong tenor voices were a pleasure to hear. The presenting was done by

Mrs Kay Hilberts.



The M.C. duties were capably performed by Elder, Mr Glen Hamilton, and Elder, Mr Doug Hamilton spoke on Mr Tripovich's work over the years on the Hastings River when services were held at Birdwood, Comboyne, Port Macquarie, Kindee and Wauchope.

A number of visiting Ministers and elders spoke, giving reminiscences and best wishes to Mr and Mrs Tripovich.

A presentation was made from the Hastings River Congregations by Mr. Barry Hilberts; and his granddaughter,



who was unable to attend due to ill health. The presentation from Presbytery was done by Rev Peter Smith, the Interim Moderator. Mr Tripovich responded, thanking all present for their kind words and best wishes. At the close of the ceremony, a fine spread of food was enjoyed by all for afternoon tea.

Mr and Mrs Tripovich are moving into a unit in Wauchope at Bundaleer Gardens Retirement Hostel. As Rev Ball from the Manning Congregation said: 'You do not stop now, but continue with your work, witness and ministry.' May God bless them in their efforts and retirement.



Miss Rebecca Hamilton, presented a bunch of flowers for Mrs Tripovich,



RP Fellowship Camp 2010 Attendees