



the presbyterian banner

September 2010

*The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad;
let the distant shores rejoice.*

Psalm 97:1

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Editorial

September is usually known in the southern hemisphere as the first month of spring. It's the time when new life starts to spring forth through buds and blooms of all kinds. It's the time of year that many like the best. But it is also the time of the year with the highest proportion of deaths. One funeral celebrant told me that spring was the busiest time of his year. You see, it seems that while the signs of warmer weather coming are all there, spring still has a wintry touch to it and that has its impact. Personally, I would have thought that when winter first began there would be more deaths — but it isn't so. It's after winter has worn folk down that, in spite of the increasing warmth, they become too weakened to continue on.

We need to be very careful how we look after ourselves and, even when young, watch how we live. For doesn't the way we treat our bodies while we are young influence how long we live or how well we live in older years? It is the same spiritually. While you may have gone through a cold and sapping time in your walk with the Lord, you still need to do the right things to keep you looking to Him. Don't neglect your daily prayers, scripture reading, fellowship with other believers and especially the worship of the Lord on His Day. Winter often sees diminished attendances in churches, but it should be the opposite — that is the time you should be drawing more from your Lord through His Word and Spirit.

When Peter was walking on the lake, his problems began when he took his focus off the Lord. Then he felt the stormy winds and the water lapping his toes. He could only see his awful personal situation. It's at times like this, when everything seems to be dark and bleak, that we should be looking all the more to the Lord. Jesus certainly showed us the way. As Hebrews 12:2-3 tells us, *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

Let's be those who keep looking above to Christ while living down here below.

Cover Photo: *A scene from the eastern coast of Tasmania near Port Arthur. Thank you to those who have sent in photos. We still welcome further contributions!*

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Holiness – Without Which No One Can Please the Lord

Moderator's Synod Sermon on Haggai 2:10-19

George D. Ball

As we've noted the little book of Haggai is like a few pages out of the prophet's diary – in the latter part of 520BC (from Aug – Dec). There are 4 messages altogether. The first message set in August 29 was a call to rebuild the Temple. 'You've delayed for too long. You've been able to build for yourselves nice houses, but apparently a house for the Lord is not important for you! That's the reason why the previous 20 years have been as hard as they have. Come now, consider your ways. Get your priorities right!' And the people obeyed the message of the Lord through the prophet. Work began in September (1: 14-15).

The second message was delivered at the end of the feast of tabernacles on 17th October (2:1). Discouragement had already set in! Comparing the past with the present was crippling their motivation. Haggai understands and comes with words of encouragement. 'Be strong. Work. I am with you. You are building more than what you can see. This house will be filled with more glory than the first house. If this 'glory' was to be measured in terms of wealth or political influence – that simply didn't happen. The 'glory' however was bound up with the coming of the Messiah – who graced its structures – and who brought peace to His people. The third message was dated two months later (2: 10) i.e. 18th December. These dates are important – this was when winter crops were planted. By mid December it was normally completed. What kind of a crop could they expect? Would it be like the last 20 years – another disappointing harvest? It was all very well the prophet talking about a distant 'glory – but what about now! What about the year

519? (What about 2010 for us?)

The form of the message is a little bit different and a little more difficult! It begins with:-

An Illustration (vv10-13)

The illustration uses concepts that we are not familiar with. We are going to have a Bible quiz. On the panel we have the legal eagles – the priests (11). They are going to be asked a couple of strange questions.

* Question One – verse 12 (a question of consecration). The scenario envisaged by Haggai is a person carrying home the leftovers of his fellowship offering in a corner of his garment, since clothes had no pockets in those days. 'If a man carries in the fold of his clothing a portion of an animal used in sacrifice to the Lord, and suppose the fold of his clothing then brushed against some bread, or cereal, or wine, or oil, or some other food stuff – does that then make these foods holy and consecrated?' Answer??? 'No!' Correct... Why... Because holiness is not passed on that way. Holiness is not caught! It's not transferred – or it's not transfer-

able. It's not transmitted. It's not infectious.

Next question (13) – a question about contamination. 'If a person is defiled – perhaps by contact with a corpse – and touches some of these food stuffs – does the food become unclean? Answer? YES. Why? Because dirt, disease, etc. is transferable. It is transmitted.

Think about the contagious power of dirt? It only takes one drop of motor oil to pollute a gallon of water. It doesn't matter how many gallons of water you add - it will never make it drinkable. Why is it when kids touch a wall with grubby hands that they leave a dirty mark? Why is it that if they touch the same wall with clean hands they don't leave a clean mark? Answer. Dirt is far more contagious than cleanliness. Or consider this; can you catch a cold? Yes! Can you catch sickness and disease? Yes! Can you catch health? No! If your child is in bed with chickenpox, can you give him your health? No. Can he give you his chickenpox? Yes!

The point of these illustrations is that (sadly) evil reproduces, is easily transferred and passed. Whereas holiness and cleanliness is not – unfortunately!

An Explanation (v14)

Haggai's interest in this little quiz is not academic. His purpose was to do what Nathan did to David. His aim and goal was to have 'this people and this nation' see themselves (14). They had become defiled, and in consequence everything they touched became defiled (14). They had been bringing animal after animal (which they had reared) to offer as sacrifices – but they should now see that it had all been useless. Why? Their offerings were defiled and unacceptable to God, because they themselves were unclean. They needed

to be changed first before their of-



Second Temple

ferings could be accepted by God. 'To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.' God requires truth in the inward parts. All the religion, and all the ritual, is of no value if there is not a right heart before God.

An Application (vv15-19)

Haggai asks, 'think back over the past 20 years'. Why have all the harvests been poor? Why has there never been enough food in the pantry or in the barn? Why have the fields which promised so much return so little? Why did the winepresses which seemed so full actually deliver precious little? Why have the crops been affected by mildew, blight, drought, hail, and disease? Why had their work been trouble, frustration and disappointment? WHY?? It wasn't random fluctuation in the wind or weather! It wasn't just a bad run. It was a direct result of the judgement of God, 'I struck all the work of your hands, with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not turn to me declares the Lord.' (17). The Lord had clearly warned these people in Deut. 28: 15ff that if they disobeyed the Lord and did not follow His commands and decrees all kinds of curses and judgements will come upon them. God was disciplining them – so they

might return. Alas they had not. However things were now going to change (18-19). Mark this date – '18th December 520 BC!' This will be a red letter day. 'From this day on I will bless you.' (19). From this day on the Lord's blessing will be evident in the fruitfulness of the vine, the fig, the pomegranate and the olive tree. Conditions were now in place to receive God's blessing. How does this apply to us today in May 2010?



Picture of Haggai

As we've seen in Haggai's day, people continued to bring offerings to the ruin of the temple, hoping it would

influence God to bless them (14). Yet such religious exercises – even those prescribed in His Word – were actually totally worthless because the offering by defiled hands made the offering defiled. The problem which they and we face is that we are defiled by sin. It is contagious. Every one of us has been affected by Adam's first sin. We cannot make ourselves clean. Religion cannot make us clean. Cleanness must come from outside of us – it must be an act of God. That is what God promises in 2:9. God had come again to dwell in their midst. The result – peace. Just as the establishment of the temple in Haggai's day was a critical turning point – so the coming of Christ is the radical turning point from curse to blessing for the world. He is Immanuel. Now there is peace (Luke 2: 14). In Him, we who believe, have righteousness, holiness and redemption. In all our work and service that which is of any worth or lasting value is that which is done in the name of Jesus Christ and for the single honour and glory of Christ. 'From this day on I will bless you.' May it be Lord!

Is the Shroud of Turin Authentic?— A Response

The article by Eric Fanet is very interesting and well written; however it seems to me there are some serious omissions in the arguments.

The shroud is a very remarkable object, generating raging controversy. It has a number of unique characteristics that argue conclusively against fakery. It is precisely the presence of these unique characteristics that give rise to controversy - it has not been able to conclusively be demonstrated to be either a faked image or from another time. Walsh commented: "The Shroud of Turin is either the most awesome and instructive relic of Jesus Christ in existence... or it is one of the most ingenious, most unbelievably clever, products of the human mind and hand on record. (1963:8). It is accepted as not being a painted fake. This issue was never in doubt by the team who examined the shroud, only the date. "It is simply not known how the ghostly

image of a serene, bearded man was made." - Philip Ball in a critical editorial in *Nature*, 2005.

In one respect, the shroud of Turin resembles the Bible - a cursory glance will dismiss it as fake, but the more you study it, the more compelling it becomes.

1. It is a negative image

The art of photography with negative imagery on films, has only been invented in the last 200 years or so. It is only when the shroud was photographed for the first time, and the negative image examined, that it was revealed that the shroud image is actually a negative image. This astonishing discovery immediately throws up a number of questions to the supporters of fakery: How can it be that a technique discovered only relatively recently, was rendered with such astonishing mastery? And if it is fakery, why

Jurien Dekter

was this art form never repeated? We do not know of the existence of any other such artistic negative images. People do not think in terms of negative images - just looking at any black-and white negative image, it looks very weird. We aren't "wired" to process imagery in negative. It is not plausible that such an art form would surface in one single work, be executed with such total and complete mastery that no imperfections that point to fakery can be found in the shroud image, and then vanish completely. The most likely explanation remains that it is a genuine negative image.

2. It is not painted

The image is formed by discoloration of a microscopic thin coating of crude starch on the fibres. This coating only exists on the surface layer of the linen fibres, that is fibres next to

the surface of the cloth, which is consistent with linen manufacturing techniques found in the time of Jesus. This coating is left over after the cleaning process of the cloth; it is not something added to the cloth. In some places, the coating has turned brownish in colour, and this browning forms the image. No painting technique was involved - there is no pigment on the cloth. Heat was also not involved, since the fibres underlying the discoloured coating are not discoloured themselves. To date it is not known what produced the browning. Even with today's sophisticated methods, no one has been able to reproduce the image to demonstrate how it might have been faked. An artist intent on fakery might be able to produce something that is not detectable with the naked eye, but certainly not a fakery that escapes even the largest magnification that modern technology can throw at it. To believe it had been faked in medieval times, simply stretches belief too far. The statement by the Bishop of Troyes who claimed to have obtained a confession from an artist, is highly doubtful. We don't know what the bishop's motives were to make this claim - perhaps he simply wished for veneration and greed to stop.

3. The 3D Information

The image which in essence is an unfocused, shaded image of a man, contains 3D information. Using modern image processing techniques, originally applied for terrain topography analysis, the shroud image has been found to accurately render a 3-dimensional model. The 3D information is recovered from the variations in the amount of browning, ie the shading. It beggars belief that a middle ages artist could produce this sort of technology, with no paint or other pigment involved, in negative, with such perfection.

There are many other characteristics that defy the theory that the shroud is a manufactured fake - for example, the pathology of the corpse that produced the imprint is perfect. It seems clear that the shroud is indeed an authentic image of a man who died by crucifixion, and having identical wounds to those described in the Bible of Jesus. The article also makes no mention of recent discoveries regarding the sample that was used for radio-carbon dating the cloth, namely that the section of

cloth where the sample was taken, has been found to be a skilfully repaired section, with more modern linen interwoven into the original cloth with such meticulous skill that it has gone undetected until a few years ago. This evidence was enough to swing the opinion of one of the strongest critics of the shroud, Raymond N. Rogers. Robert Villarreal, the chemist who directed the radio-carbon dating, released this statement: "The age-dating process failed to recognize one of the first rules of analytical chemistry that any sample taken for characterization of an area or population must necessarily be representative of the whole. The part must be representative of the whole. Our analyses of the three thread samples taken from the Raes and C-14 sampling corner showed that this was not the case." Rogers went on and published a paper in the peer-reviewed *Thermochemica Acta* demonstrating with chemical analysis the shroud cloth to be older than 1400 years.

The cloths

It is also worth discussing the point made about what the Bible mentions about the various cloths. The gospel of John mentions strips, while Luke first mentions 'sindon' (fine, expensive linen or cloth) and later 'othonia' (strips). Matthew and Mark also mention 'sindon' (fine linen). It seems that positive identification of the shroud from the gospels is not possible, but neither do they positively exclude it. The shroud of Turin is fine linen, with flax strands much thinner than human hair. Regarding the traditions of those times, it needs pointing out that such is circumstantial evidence. Circumstantial evidence alone cannot be used to prove or disprove a case; only direct evidence such as carbon dating can do that. We have to remember we do not know what exactly happened. We are only told some of the events in the Bible, not every single detail. Historical records are necessarily incomplete. Regarding the shroud's early history, it now seems fairly likely that it was a spoil from the sack of Constantinople in 1204, where it was exhibited in a church on Fridays as described by a soldier in 1203 in Constantinople. Likely it was brought to Europe along with many other spoils from the Crusades. Pollen samples taken from the shroud bear this out, which indicate exposure to air in Palestine, Turkey

and Europe.

It is also worth pointing out that just because of the practice of relic veneration in the Catholic Church, we should not automatically eliminate the possibility of authenticity. It is worth being objective.

So here we have an object about which a remarkable claim is made, with remarkable properties. Modern science has thrown all they could at it, and so far, properly understood, not a single test has failed. I am an evidence kind of person. I am convinced by the evidence it is not a fake. If it is not Jesus Christ's burial shroud, it would have to be from some bizarre ritualistic "copy cat" crucifixion, along with an even more unlikely simultaneous body imprint left on the shroud by means unknown. While many of the wounds are not uncommon with crucifixion from those times, the wounds in the scalp from the thorny crown and in the rib cage from the centurion's lance, as well as the unbroken legs, are important in the positive identification with Jesus.

The steps taken to arrive at the conclusion that the shroud of Turin is authentic, are not at all outside commonly used techniques in archaeology: It contains unique information embedded in it, it matches perfectly with written accounts and cannot be faked. If it is genuine, who else but Christ? The shroud is to many an object of extreme significance - palpable proof for the existence of Jesus Christ, his manner of death and, it may be argued, his resurrection. Those that initially found comfort in the now-discredited carbon dating, are now retreating to the desperate position that "even if it IS 2000 years old, it still proves nothing." Of course, Jesus himself said in the parable about Lazarus, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." So we shouldn't expect proof to be convincing. Students of this case may be interested in the many papers collected at www.shroud.com.

The Banner on Society

God's showing them up!

Sjirk Bajema

Someone commented to me about the way our society is today. We were discussing the growing number of states and countries around the world legitimising homosexual marriage. As a Christian, she felt the way things had become was quite depressing. 'How can people be so sick?' she asked. It's true, isn't it? We wonder why the moral fabric of our world has so quickly unravelled. It's all so suddenly falling to pieces! Well, what can you say when someone says that? Agree with them? Commiserate about how terrible everything is?

That would be true if we looked at it from a human perspective. No matter how hard Christians try, it all seems to be written off as some right-wing, fundamentalist, bigoted view. For every little step we appear to be making progress with, there are two or more big steps going the other way. But shouldn't we see it with God's eye? And where else do we find His view than in the book He Himself wrote — the Holy Bible?

So we open that up. We turn to a passage that describes the way the world is today right down to a tee. The only difference, though, is that it was written two thousand years ago! That was when the apostle of the Lord, Paul, wrote the words of Romans 1:18-32.

And not only was he writing these words which applied then and now, but they are words which have applied many times before he wrote and lots of times since. Over fifty years ago, Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, 'It is truly amazing and astonishing how this second half of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans sums up so perfectly the modern situation. Had it been written specially and specifically for our day, it could not have been more

perfect or more complete.' 'So what's this text about?' we may well ask. 'How can it describe our situation today down to such grue-

¹⁸The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

²¹For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

²⁸Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³²Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

some detail and yet apply to so many other times in history as well? Ah, there's the rub! Because what we see as the text begins in verse

18 is the complete antithesis of verse 17. As Paul brings out the righteousness from God in verse 17 — the righteousness that is by faith — he cannot avoid the wrath of God.

You see, in our text Paul begins telling us why the Gospel is good news by telling the bad news. You don't get to see the difference light makes until you've been in the dark. God couldn't be the good and loving God if He didn't react to our evil with wrath. And that evil is right here, in this world.

There are two aspects to how the apostle deals with this. We can already see that in verse 18. For there, Paul speaks about God's wrath being revealed from heaven against the 'godlessness' and the 'wickedness' of men.

'Godlessness' talks about wrong belief. 'Wickedness' talks about wrong practice. They are both connected. But wrong belief — idolatry — always comes first and then wrong practice — immorality — follows.

What they are doing inside

In the first place, we see what they're doing inside. We get to have a look at the pagan heart. This is about 'godlessness'.

The fact that we're able to see this is the result of the Gospel. For Paul is not specifically writing to us here about how bad things got at that point in Roman society. He's not having a whinge about the decline in standards then. Rather, he's saying that the effect of preaching Christ crucified, risen, ascended and coming again, also brings the revelation of God's wrath against their sin. Then their real selves will show up — the character that mankind has had ever since the fall into sin.

That's why those who don't believe the gospel will always suppress God. They will try whatever they can to stop the truth getting to them.

Now, they can attempt that but they won't succeed, because they simply cannot ever get away from it. Verse 19 is quite clear when it says that God has made the truth quite plain to them. No one in the world can get away from God's creation. That was how Paul appealed to the Athenians in Acts 17. In verse 24 he argues with them that the Lord God is their unknown god, the One who made the world and everything in it. Those Paul is speaking about here have been trying to suppress that witness. Verse 20 shows how determined they have been to ignore the overwhelming evidence. And because they have been doing that, the suppression doesn't stop there. It actually develops into ignoring God.

Suppressing and ignoring God

We can think here about the behaviour of someone who keeps doing something wrong when they know it's wrong. At first they try to avoid any criticism, or they play it down. But then they just bluntly ignore it. You can go and try convincing them to change. You can do that till you're blue in the face. But you might as well be hitting your head against a brick wall!

In fact, what you notice about them is that they're on a completely different wave-length. It's as if you just don't connect anymore. Because you don't! As verse 21 says, 'although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.'

In using the word 'heart', Paul shows how the suppressing and ignoring of God comes from the intellect. Those who are going the opposite way to God's way justify that with quite strong arguments. That's what you'll find when you have a debate with them. You'll soon see that they have an answer for everything.

You know, when you do that you'd almost think that they are replacing God altogether. And that's exactly it! The verses 22 till 25 tell us what's happening inside them. The words 'wisdom' and 'images' are speaking of their alternative option to the Lord – in other words, their idolatry!

Those who suppress and ignore God end up making their own god. It's a false belief, but it shows how deep the hostility to God is.

God lets them go

At this point we come to a phrase we find appearing three times in this passage. In verse 24 it says, 'God gave them over'. In other words, God let them go to do this. In His plan for this world, He's letting it all hang out. The contrast between the gospel and the world is going to be quite graphic.

We can see that, can't we? But they can't, though. So hell-bent are they, it's the prince of this world that's completely taken them in. 'They exchanged the truth of God for a lie', verse 25 says. So the Father of lies himself is having his way with them. That's why they're worshipping and serving created things rather than the Creator.

But right throughout this, there's still the gospel. While it may seem that God's giving them up means the end of them, He is letting them go so that they might repent and turn to him. Perhaps they'll be that confronted by the awfulness of what they are doing that the Spirit might yet save them.

That's the word of the Lord has in Isaiah 19. There in verse 22 the prophet declares, 'The LORD will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the LORD, and he will respond to their pleas and heal them.' And how about 1st Corinthians chapter 5? There the church is told, in verse 5, that the man who has utterly rejected the gospel must be handed over to Satan, so that his sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

A time for reformation?

I like the way one person put the current situation in our society to me. He said that this may well be the opportunity for the Church to claim back marriage as an institution of God. The direction of our society could well be the way to make our witness to the Lord even clearer.

It's a good point. Often we can fall into the trap that it's good laws that

make a good society. But that's working from the outside in. True revival is quite the opposite. For isn't it when things become very bad on the outside that the Holy Spirit especially blesses the gospel to make it more effective inside?

That may help explain the way Paul ends verse 25. In the midst of this passage outlining the evil set against God, he suddenly expresses praise to God.

Now, this follows the Jewish pattern that whenever God's name is mentioned there's a type of benediction said. But its happening at this place, and with the Amen' as well, makes this an affirmation of the blessedness that belongs to God. This light is present even in the middle of the darkest pagan night!

How it gets shown outside

Thus we've seen what is happening inside the hearts of the godless. Next, in the verses 26 till 32, the apostle tells us how it gets shown outside. Here we will see Paul's exposition of the 'wickedness of verse 18.

He does this using a similar framework to the previous section. So the rest of the text follows a similar pattern on the outside to what we've seen happening inside in the verses 18 till 25. That's why verses 26 and 27 bring out their unnatural lusts. Paul starts by describing the consequences of a wrong belief. 'Even their women' makes it clear how pagan this is. Weren't our women once seen to be the more modest sex? Many times they have been the bastion of morality. But false religion sweeps them away, too. It's when this happens that we often are most shocked. This is when it's 'in your face!' And that's how they want it to be. Through their Mardi Gras, Gay Pride marches, Hero Parades, television, and other media, their selfishness is clearly shown. You see, it is a religion. Believing in it as they do they have to convince you it's true, too. And don't get in their way! Then their intolerance for other beliefs will be vividly shown.

Their intolerance

This is what the Rev. Charles McIlhenny found out in San Francisco. In that city with a 20% homosexual

population, his Orthodox Presbyterian church dismissed the church organist when it was discovered that he was a practising homosexual. Fair enough, we would say. That lifestyle is completely incompatible with Christianity. But that didn't stop a flood of persecution. They were subjected to two lawsuits brought by that organist and later by two lesbians. Their home has been fire-bombed, vandalised and graffitied numerous times.

They've received a multitude of obscene phone calls and death threats. Several times, for the sake of their children, they had to flee the city. You see, we cannot say that those homosexuals can't help themselves. They **weren't** born that way. There's no so-called 'gay-gene' that predisposes them to this! They became that way through hearts that were set against the gospel. Hearts and lives that violently oppose God's Word. That it makes no sense at all doesn't matter. Because it's unnatural means they can't reproduce; it means they will have more diseases; and it means they cannot sustain committed relationships. You'd think they'd realise that. Don't they know you need a mother and a father? Can't they even see how it is in nature around us? But, remember, it's coming from within. That God has given them over to this means it doesn't need to make any sense. Because if that were the case, wouldn't Pharaoh have let the Israelites go?

And what about all the other religions in the world? They don't make any sense at all! And how many have been taken in by that 'New Age' nonsense?

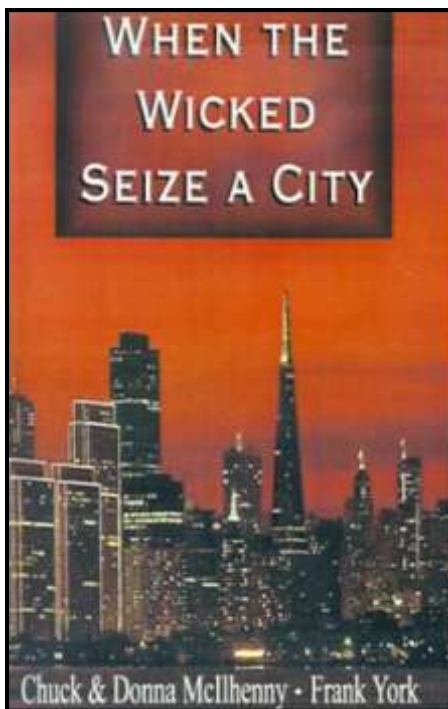
How deep this goes

Now, when these things start to happen in a society we know things are pretty grim. The Bible shows this with Sodom and Gomorrah, and with the situation at the end of the Judges. It's those situations which show how entrenched this evil behaviour has become. And that's what the verses 29 till 31 spell out.

Because you have a look at this list. And a list it certainly is — a list of everything which actively opposes the good news about Jesus. While it's not as comprehensive as the list

in Galatians 5:19-21, it makes its point. For this is what comes out of the depraved mind of verse 28. A depraved mind is missing something. Something that prevents self-harm through immoral behaviour. And that's what God has done. This may shock many Christians, who think that it's what these people have got themselves into. It's their own fault. And if they get AIDS because of it, well, it serves them right!

Hatred for the Word



But it's actually then that we have to proclaim the Gospel more — by what we say and by what we do. This was exactly what the believers of Paul's age were doing. And it's what Christians have done throughout history in such desperate times. You see, in Paul's day there was rampant homosexuality, adultery, paedophilia, abortions, and euthanasia. So many others just stood by and let it happen. They even encouraged those doing it. Like so many millions are doing today as they watch it on TV, or read in the weekly gossip magazine. The more depraved it is, the better it sells! That's why the gospel is hated today. People accuse the Christian leader who dares raise his voice at yet another sexual perversity of being twisted himself! He's a killjoy.

Those who openly flout the law in pushing their filth, though, are the heroes of the day!

Now they are even trying to pass laws banning so-called 'hate crimes'. Then the witness for the gospel will cost us. We could well be thrown into prison!

That's what has happened already in Sweden. Because of a law passed there similar to that proposed here, a minister was recently jailed for preaching from the Bible against homosexuality.

But, you know, then we couldn't be in better company! We would join the apostle Paul, the other apostles, and thousands of thousands of other believers all round the world today. Together with them we'd be shining the mirror of God's Word into the faces of those who imprisoned us.

In the words of verse 32, those people 'deserve death'. It's a death that is not only physical. And that's what the gospel must show them. It must strike them in their hearts — again and again. Perhaps that might mean a hardening of their souls. But it could also mean their salvation.

Preach the Gospel

That's why God's Word needs to be declared from the pulpits of this country. Not the words of men, no matter how sincere and spiritual they may sound! The lack of God's Word has contributed to where we are now. But God has allowed that, too.

Because now He calls us to shine forth God's light even more in the world we live in. As 1st Corinthians 1 verse 23 says, Christ crucified is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles, but it's the only way to be saved.

Let's pray for such a revival. Let's pray that's God's grace will crack hardened hearts. Let's pray that instead of living for themselves, they will live for the Lord. And let's do it as well as pray.

Christ in the Psalms

The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia upholds the singing only of Psalms in public worship. PCEA ministers and elders, before taking office, undertake to uphold this principle, as well as other points of Church government. It therefore came as a surprise to me some decades ago, when I read of the reason given by one of our clerics for his intention of resigning from the ministry. For privacy purposes, I shall designate this person 'critic'. The reason 'critic' gave: he wanted to sing about Jesus, and the singing of 'Psalms only' restricted him in this desire!

I still ponder over his reasoning, and wonder how a trained theologian could make such a statement. Admittedly the word 'Jesus' will not be found in the 150 inspired Psalms, but the more I read and meditate upon them, the more I detect wonderful truths about Jesus and sometimes even the actual words of Jesus, uttered through the prophet David. Yes, Acts 2.29-31 describes David as a prophet and briefly mentions some of the prophecies regarding Jesus as found in the Psalms.

When we sing 'Kiss the Son' as shown in Ps 2.12, we immediately know to Whom it refers, 'Kiss' of course means to 'Pay homage to the royal son' as shown in the latest Free Church of Scotland Psalm Book, 'Sing Psalms'. Or 'Lift up the light of thy countenance upon us' (Ps 4.6), that causes us to recall the words of Him who said, 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me

shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life' (John 8:12) or 2 Corinthians 4:6: 'For God ...hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ'.

If our 'critic' failed to associate 'The Lord's my Shepherd' with the words of Jesus in John 10:11 (I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep), it is not surprising that he discarded the singing of Psalms.

Who was the Holy One in Psalm 16:10 that would not see corruption: 'For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption'.

Acts 2:31 gives us the answer: He (David) seeing this beforehand, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption.

Who was the One that David anticipated to be like at the resurrection (Psalm 17:15): 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.'

Yes, it was the Lord Jesus — the same One for whom each of us, who love Him, share this hope (1 John 3:2): 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is'.

And as for Psalm 22, about whom did 'critic' think he was singing when uttering the following words which foretold the sufferings of Jesus on the

cross?

'But I'm a worm and not a man, By people scorned, reproached by all.

And those who see me shake their heads; They sneer at me, and thus they call:

'This man has trusted in the Lord, So let him save him from his plight.

Now let his God deliver him, Because in him he takes delight.'

A pack of dogs encloses me; Their circle round me is complete.

I am beset by evil men And they have pierced my hands and feet.

I count the number of my bones; With gloating eyes the people stare.

They throw the dice to get my coat; Among themselves my clothes they share.'

One could go on quoting Psalm after Psalm as well as their counterparts in the New Testament: e.g. Psalm 8.2 and Matthew 21.16; Psalm 31:5 and Luke 23:46; Psalm 31:13 and Matthew 27:1; etc., etc., etc.

There may have been other reasons why 'critic' chose to resign from the PCEA ministry, but the one that he named sounded hardly sustainable.

Bruce Dunne

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

USA: Two More Cases of Discrimination Set Precedents

The University of Illinois sacked Professor Kenneth Howell on 9 July after he was accused of 'hate speech'. Professor Howell, a respected Christian who had been teaching at the university for nine years, offended a student from his class, 'Introduction to Catholicism and Modern Catholic Thought'. He explained in an email to the student that according to Catholic doctrine, 'A homosexual orientation is not morally wrong just as no moral guilt can be assigned to any inclination that a person has. However, based on natural moral law, the Church believes that homosexual acts are contrary to human nature and therefore morally wrong.' The offended student complained and the professor was sacked. Meanwhile Jennifer Keeton (24), a graduate student pursuing a masters degree in school counselling at Augusta State University, has been told she will be dismissed from the program unless she is prepared to alter her 'central religious beliefs' concerning homosexuality. Miss Keeton, a Christian, has been ordered into a 'remediation' program and to undergo 'diversity training' where supposedly she will be 'sensitised'.

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 066 | Wed 28 Jul 2010*

Christian pastor assassinated in Dagestan, Russia

Compass Direct News Service report that Artur Suleimanov, 49, pastor of Hosanna Christian Church in Makhachkala, the capital of Dagestan, Russia, was shot on the evening of 15th July 2010 while leaving his church building. Pastor Suleimanov's church was known as the biggest Protestant church in the region, successfully reaching out to Muslims and comprised mostly of former Muslims. As an ethnic Avar, Suleimanov was considered by many Muslims to be an apostate and therefore deserving of death.

Prayer points:

- Pastor Suleimanov is survived by his wife, Zina, and five children. Pray for God's comfort and protection over the grieving family.

- Pray that the Lord will encourage and strengthen believers from Hosanna Christian Church in spite of the fear and the pain after their pastor's assassination.

- Pray for protection over the Church in Dagestan, and pray that the Christians will not be intimidated by this act of violence.

+ *WEA Religious Liberty Prayer News August 1, 2010*

URCNA Synod 2010 Strongly Rejects Federal Vision Theology

The United Reformed Churches in North America Synod 2010, meeting in London, Ontario, Canada, 26-30 July 2010, on 30 July 2010 adopted the report of the Justification/Federal Vision Study Committee, with strengthening language added by the report's advisory committee, '... rejecting Federal Vision and all of its associated points as error.'

+ *URCNA Synod Reports urcnasynodreports.wordpress.com, URCNAREports@gmail.com*

+ *United Reformed Churches in North America, urcna@shaw.ca*

First Covenanter Communion Service Commemorated

The first recorded Reformed Presbyterian communion service to be held in the Western Hemisphere occurred 23 August 1752 at the 'Junkin Tent' on land owned by Joseph and Elizabeth Junkin in what is now New Kingstown, Pennsylvania. The service was conducted by Covenanter Minister John Cuthbertson, who had arrived 5 August 1751 after a forty-six day sea voyage from Derry Lock, Ireland. Cuthbertson was the first ordained Covenanter minister in the New World.

A celebration of the event will be held 21 August 2010 in New Kingstown, Pennsylvania, in an area behind the St. Stephen Lutheran Church, the original location of the 'Junkin Tent,' and will feature the dedication and unveiling of a Pennsylvania historical marker commemorating the communion service, and a speech titled 'The Covenanters — Then and Now' by David A. Weir, Ph.D., Elder of the Ridgefield Park Reformed Presby-

terian Church in Ridgefield Park, New Jersey.

For further information, please see: <http://www.newkingstownprojects.org/2010celebration.htm>

+ *New Kingstown Projects, info@newkingstownprojects.org*

+ *Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)*

Tensions high in Papua (Irian Jaya), Indonesia

Papuans are ethnic Melanesians and predominantly Christian. Their land, which was annexed by Indonesia in 1969, is being strategically, purposefully and rapidly colonised by Javanese Muslims, resulting in Islamisation and marginalisation. TNI (Indonesian military) and BRI-MOB (militarised police) forces are presently conducting 'sweeping operations' in the central highlands region of Puncak Jaya. Thousands have been mistreated and displaced as the Indonesian security forces hunt for 'separatists'. On 18 June many thousands of Papuans rallied in Jayapura to reject Indonesian 'Special Autonomy' status (which has failed) and to call for fresh dialogue. Tensions are high. The Papuans have been betrayed and abandoned by Western human-rights-affirming nations intent on acquiring lucrative mining concessions and other economic and political interests. Please pray for the Church in Papua.

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 065 | Wed 21 Jul 2010*

Child abuse link to same-sex encounters

New research suggests people who are homosexual or have same-sex encounters are more likely to have been victims of abuse as children. The study by the University of Otago, in Christchurch, involved face-to-face interviews with almost 13,000 people aged 16 and over, in order to explore aspects of sexual orientation. Prof. Elisabeth Wells says the research found that the more adverse events experienced in childhood, the more likely someone

was to belong to a non-exclusively heterosexual group. ...Family First spokesman Bob McCoskrie said there should always be concerns around the possible outcomes of childhood abuse.

Email feedback@familyfirst.org.nz
+ *Newstalk ZB / NZ Herald 22 July 2010*

Parents of Down Syndrome Kids Have Joy & Resilience

The tumultuous feelings parents have when they first learn their child will be born with Down syndrome give way to joy and resilience, according to preliminary data from a study by researchers at Kansas State University and Texas Tech University. Briana Nelson Goff and Nicole Springer, both mothers of a child with Down syndrome, can attest to the findings. Goff is associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Human Ecology and professor of family studies and human services at K-State, and Springer is director of the Texas Tech University Family Therapy Clinic. The two researchers, who met while completing their doctoral work at Texas Tech, reconnected after learning of their personal connection as parents. Their study is called 'My Kid Has More Chromosomes Than Yours! The Journey to Resilience and Hope in Parenting a Child with Down Syndrome.' 'The goal of our study is to help parents and professionals understand that having a child with Down syndrome isn't the end of the world; it can be a very positive experience,' Goff said.

The researchers collected data through an online survey for parents of children with Down syndrome. Together with their student teams, they are analyzing the more than 500 responses they've received since the survey went live October 2009. The researchers found that the parents' experiences in first learning their child had Down syndrome had similarities, regardless of whether the diagnosis was before or after the birth.
<http://www.newswise.com/articles/view/567058/?sc=dwhr;xy=5045378>
+ *Kansas State University 3 August 2010*

+ *Family First NZ*

Grim News from North Korea

North Korea Intellectuals Solidarity

(NKIS) has learned that 23 residents of Kuwal-dong, Pyung-sung, South Pyongan Province, North Korea, were arrested in mid-May for their involvement in religious activities. After interrogating the believers, the regime executed three 'leaders' who had reportedly been converted while on business in China and incarcerated the others in concentration labour camp 'No. 15 Kwanliso in Yoduk', where they will surely also die. Pray for North Korea's incarcerated Christians in their extreme suffering, for those grieving the loss of loved ones and for those gripped by fear. May our ever-present God be their strength, enabling them to rise above their circumstances (Isaiah 40:27-31; Habakkuk 3:19). May God deliver North Korea (Isaiah 35:4).
+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 068 | Wed 11 Aug 2010*

Growing Faith

Teaching our children about Jesus is the most important responsibility a parent, carer or grandparent has in their family. Yet, with the myriad other activities our families are involved in, it is sometimes easier to leave Bible teaching to the leaders in our church and schools. Graham Stanton, Principal of Youthworks College and father of three young children says, "As parents we spend a lot of time trying to teach our children to be cooperative, to eat vegetables and not watch too much television. But we can easily overlook the job of teaching them to pray, to learn how to read and understand the Bible, to understand God's love for them and to trust his promises".

Growing Faith is the umbrella brand for Youthworks' new family ministry initiative. Underpinned by a free subscription-based parenting e-newsletter, Growing Faith resources seek to directly equip and encourage Christian parents, grandparents and carers to take their responsibility to disciple children seriously. "When I speak to other parents, I'm often asking them what they do in their families to talk about Christian faith and life together. Most people have a couple of things that have worked for them, but often feel like they're short on new ideas. I figured that we could all benefit from a forum to share some of those ideas with each other", says

Graham. Each month, subscribers will receive useful information and articles, practical tips, plus reviews that will enable parents to raise their children in 'the fear and instruction of the Lord' (Ephesians 6:2).

As part of the Growing Faith initiative, Youthworks has also released Bible Bites: 365 devotions for Aussie families by Ladeane Lindsay. These studies are designed to make family devotions a fun and interactive time learning about God and his plan for us all. Ideal for families with kids aged three to 12, Bible Bites is the first in a unique series of books written by Australian parents and children's ministry workers for Australian families. Retailing for \$19.95, Bible Bites will be available for purchase online at www.cep.youthworks.net or at local Christian bookstores from September. To sign up to the free Growing Faith monthly newsletter, simply go to www.growingfaith.com.au or phone 02 8268 3347

Faith United Presbyterian Church Dedicates Outdoor Labyrinth

A 6 August 2010 article by Christie Campbell in the Observer-Reporter titled "Faith U.P. Members Dedicate Labyrinth Outside Church" reports that Faith United Presbyterian Church (Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)) of Washington, Pennsylvania, in early August 2010 dedicated a labyrinth outside the church for use in prayer and meditation.

More than sixty tons of stone, coarse gravel, and fine gravel were used in the construction of the labyrinth, and church members were asked to bring to the dedication a stone from their own property to add to the rock aggregate as a way of connecting with the labyrinth.

A 6 December 2005 post on The Puritan Board by the Rev. Bruce Buchanan of the Chain-O-Lakes Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Central Lake, Michigan, describes the prayer labyrinth as "an occult path of the dead. Successful navigation of it led one to heaven; the lost wandered it forever in terror, ending up in the center pit from which there was no escape. Arcane knowledge (gnosis) of traversing it or a suitable guide, therefore, was [a] necessary part of pagan religion. In other incarnations, it

serves a gnostic purpose of meditation...not the "inner-peace" type, but the "path"...to enlightenment."

+ *Observer-Reporter*, 122 S. Main Street, Washington, Pennsylvania 15301, 724-222-2200, Fax: 724-225-2077, pburroughs@observer-reporter.com

+ *The Puritan Board*,

+ *The Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, 607 North Easton Road, Building E, Box P, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania 19090, 215-830-0900, Fax: 215-830-0350

Bekasi, Indonesia: Worshippers Assaulted

The 1500-strong Batak Christian Protestant Filadelfia Church (HKBP Filadelfia) in Bekasi has been meeting in homes for the last 15 years because the local authorities will not grant them permission to build a dedicated meeting place. Though the church is ethnic Batak and worships in the Batak language (not Javanese or Indonesian, i.e. not a local language) local Islamic fundamentalist groups have accused it of 'Christianisation'. Now the church is not even permitted to gather for worship in a home because the local authorities claim the local residents don't want a church in their area.

Over recent weeks, a small core group from this fellowship has been meeting for prayer and worship in the open air on the church's own land. On Sunday 31 July the group worshipped in the open, guarded by some 300 police, while a mob of Islamic fundamentalists chanted Islamic Arabic slogans. The New York Times reported

(31 July): 'As the congregants filed home, a knot of Muslim men pushed forward with raised fists at the passing Christians, but were bottled up by a linked-arm chain of other Muslims.' So it seems a significant number of local Muslims are not only happy to have the church meeting in their area, but are willing to risk their own bodies to defend it.

On Sunday morning 8 August at least 300 militants from the Islamic People's Forum (FUI) and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) pushed through a police barricade and attacked the 20 Filadelfia Church Christians worshipping the Lord on the church's land.

The hundreds of police present were either unable or unwilling to prevent the attack. Armed with sticks and stones, the militants chased, caught and beat the fleeing Christians, several of whom required medical treatment for their injuries. Berliana Sinaga (22) suffered bruises to her face after several militants caught and beat her. Risma Silalahi (45) is still in pain after militants beat her around the head. Franky Tambunan (26) was struck in the face and kicked while trying to protect his elderly father. The attack was well orchestrated with the militants dispersing quickly afterwards. The Islamic fundamentalist and militant organisations are not only hoping to terrorise the church into submission, they are also testing the authorities to see how far they can go. The government has to choose: will it uphold the constitution and guarantee religious liberty or will it yield to the Islamists? If the government refuses to guarantee the consti-

tutional rights of Indonesian citizens, if it shows weakness and buckles in the face of Islamic belligerence, then West Java's Christians will be at risk, especially as Ramadan progresses.

This is a watershed moment for Indonesia. The government can no longer straddle the ridge. It must come down either on the side of religious freedom and equality before the law, or on the side of Islam and dhimmitude.

PLEASE PRAY SPECIFICALLY THAT:

* God will deliver the Church in West Java from this terrible threat, so the believers can worship in peace, and so West Java might retain the light, salt, yeast and Good News that the Church brings into its midst (2 Thessalonians 3:1-3).

* if there is to be no deliverance at this time, then may God fill the believers with faith, courage and peace, protect and comfort them in the midst of the persecution and reassure them of his everlasting love.

* God will take what man intends for evil and use it for his own good purpose. As Islam shrouds the people in the darkness of dictatorship, may the light of Christ just shine ever more radiantly, visibly and attractively.

'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' (2 Corinthians 12:9 ESV)
+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin* | RLPB 068 | Wed 11 Aug 2010

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia FAMILY CAMP

at

**The Tops Conference Centre,
Stanwell Tops, NSW**

5 pm Monday 3rd January to 2 pm Friday 7th January 2011 (DV)

Theme: The Holy Spirit in Biblical Christianity

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

Enjoy Fellowship with other Christian families

Be seriously challenged in your thinking and lifestyle

Afternoons free to relax – games, bushwalks and pool

**Missions night Psalmody Good food Peaceful surrounds
Children's programme**

**Please pray for guidance and blessing from the Lord as we plan for this event.
(Youth & Fellowship Committee)**

Prescribed Search / Youth Work

SEPTEMBER 2010

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 6 and 7)

MATTHEW 20:20--34

1. What did the Son of man come to do?
2. How did the two blind men near Jericho receive their sight?

Chapter 21:1--22

3. Write out the verse in Zechariah 9 fulfilled by Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.
4. What words from Psalm 118 did the multitudes cry out?
5. What would the disciples be able to do if they had faith and did not doubt?

Chapter 22:15-46

6. What use did Jesus make of a coin when asked whether it was lawful to give tribute (pay taxes) to Caesar? (3 verses)
7. Quote the words from Exodus 3 that Jesus used to prove the resurrection.
8. Which is the first and great commandment? Which is the second, like (to) it?

JUNIOR

MATTHEW 18:10--22

1. Who did the Son of man come to save?
2. How many times was Peter to forgive his brother?

Chapter 21:1--22

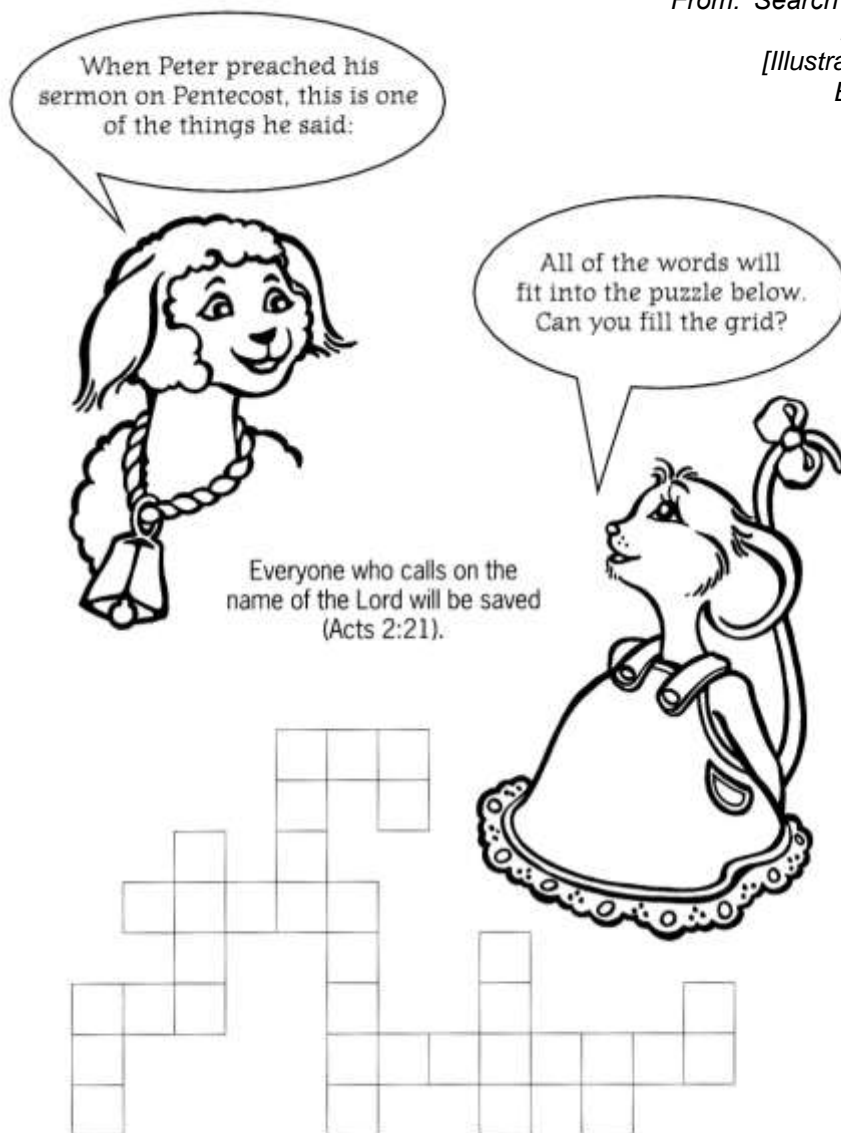
3. What animal did Jesus ride on when he entered Jerusalem?
4. What did Jesus do to the fig tree that had nothing on it but leaves?

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

Peter's Sermon

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



Books in the Banner

'Stop Dating The Church!' by Joshua Harris

Here's a taste of what's in this book: Robert lives in Gilbert, Arizona. He likes his friends to call him 'Fat Bob.' He loves life and people and enjoys laughing at himself. He's got a good job and faithfully attends church. But if you really want to see Robert excited, ask him about his Jeep. He talks about it like it's a person. 'She's my baby,' he says affectionately. He searched for over two years to find just the right fellow and black Wrangler. 'It was spotless. Just gorgeous,' he recounts. 'Once I got the Jeep...well, of course I

had to join the Jeep club,' explains Robert. The local club had over fifteen hundred active members. It offered meetings, parties, trail runs, and a website where members could exchange Jeep tips. 'It's a whole Jeep community,' Robert says. Through the club, Robert was hooked up with guys who taught him the finer points of four-wheeling. As his Jeep-discipleship intensified, Robert's commitment only deepened. 'I was totally hooked,' he says. 'Every free moment was consumed. I was either working on a Jeep, planning a Jeep run, hang-

Reviewed by Sjirk Bajema

ing out and talking Jeep, or going on-line to check our Jeep website.'

Unhooked

I met Robert at a Christian conference. He came with a group from his church to hear me speak. On the final night I gave a message about the importance of the local church. I started by asking, 'Are you married to the church? Or are you dating the church?'

The question unsettled Robert, 'God started speaking,' he remembers. 'He was asking me, 'Robert, what

are **you** married to?' And the only thing I could think of was the Jeep club. It was obvious, but I'd never seen it before. I was married to the Jeep club, and I was dating the church!'

So, what's your club? What are you passionate about? Is it your church or that sport or hobby? It's not hard to work out. You know the answer.

Joshua Harris penetratingly exposes a major weakness in Christian lifestyle today. In seven short and sharp chapters, with excellent illustrations, he really gets under your skin. From considering what we miss when we have the dating mentality, seeing the

Church from Heaven's perspective, the vital place of the local church, the difference your passionate involvement makes, how you choose the right church – with 10 very good key indicators, the difference that comes through respecting Sunday, and the commitment that needs to be made now, Harris really challenges us.

An excellent study

This would be good for a young adult's Bible study. Indeed, it would be good for an older adult's study too. You can download study group questions from Josh's website.

It would be good to give to that Chris-

tian friend who goes from church to church, never seeming to be able to settle down. It's good simply as a great and quick read.

With so much that's good about it, what can I complain about? Well, the price is a bit much. But then again, it's only a quarter of what a plumber gets for an hour. And the results of this work are going to last a lot longer!

'Stop Dating The Church! Fall in love with the Family of God' by Joshua Harris, Multnomah Publishers, 2004

Churches in the Banner

A missionary visit, youth group report & a wedding!

Griselda visits Sydney

In July the Sydney South and Sydney West congregations of PCEA enjoyed a visit from Griselda Dickson, wife of Dr Dickson, missionaries in North India. Griselda shared with us about her work among the slum children of Delhi and, showing us many pictures, brought us up to date on Dr Dickson's work. After lunch the ladies of the congregation enjoyed trying on saris with Griselda's help. Someone must have commented on this beautiful dress worn by Indian women.

The Lord led the Dicksons to move from South India to the North 17 years ago. They were burdened by a concern for the millions in North India who are untouched by the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Dicksons initially served in Allahabad with the Muldoon family and continued this work among the rural poor until moving to serve in the slums of Delhi. They continue to assist Christian families back in Allahabad while advising and encouraging others who labour in the gospel across North India.

Griselda shared with us about the work she is doing among the slum children of Delhi. This city has a population of almost 14 million, many of whom have migrated from the villages in search of work. Some days they get work and others not. They live in single room huts in the slums and their children rarely go to school. Griselda is a teacher and she is seeking to establish a school for such children as

an adjunct to the school where she currently teaches.

After much prayer, and after contacting dairy farmers on the edge of Delhi city, Dr Dickson has opened a small vet clinic in this community. He calls it an **Animal Wellness Centre** because he found many unqualified men giving out medicines from bogus vet clinics. He has recently been given an old car to travel to his work.

Over the years, Dr Dickson has learnt the language (Hindi) of North India and now finds it easy to relate to the local people. There are no Christians among them. Together with his wife, Dr Dickson hopes to bring them the gospel. The Lord has opened the way through his skills as a veterinary doctor and Dr Dickson is encouraging others to join him in this task. The PCEA helps support Dr Dickson in this ministry. Please continue to pray for him and his family.

Knox Youth Group

Following is a little report on the activities of the Knox Youth Group (High School age) over the first half of this year, written by the young people themselves:

"During the first half of this year, we completed our studies on Proverbs and we studied the Matthias Media booklet on 'The God who saves'. Throughout this booklet we were able to explore in depth about our Lord, who is our Saviour, why we need to be saved, and Christ's atoning sacri-

vice. In each lesson we went through a study and discussed questions that allowed us to gain new insights.

On the 6th of July we went to Lake Mountain. Some others who accompanied us were Chuol Chol, Rod Crozier and his grandson Stewart. We met at 8.30am at our rendezvous point and arrived at Lake Mountain around 10.30am. Arriving on the Mountain we passed through a thick fog, but it quickly cleared as we came near to the Lake Mountain's resort. We arrived quite early, so the slopes were perfect for tobogganing — smooth and not too crowded. There was a beautiful layer of snow all over the trees and ferns that gave it a picturesque outlook. We were all giddy with excitement as most of us had not been to the snow before. It was amazing." Connie speaking: Our group meets fortnightly on a Tuesday evening from 7:30-9:30. Each time we start our gathering with Psalm singing and prayer. Singing the Psalms offers opportunity to learn much about their meaning, and opens up discussions which lead to greater understanding of the whole of Scripture. This is followed by an hour of study, closed with prayer in which each of the young people participates. Our evening is concluded with a time of socialising over something to eat and drink. The Youth Group is an enjoyable and enriching time for all

Churches in the Banner (cont)

of us!
 We are thankful for this opportunity to learn from God's Word and grow in our understanding and love for him. Please pray that God will continue to bless us all and help us to grow in the knowledge and wisdom of Christ so that we will be faithful in our service to him in whichever place he has planned for us in our futures.
 Yours in Christ,
 Connie Dekter (Youth Group leader)

even closer with the marriage of Stewart Louden to Eileen Bajema. Many of both congregations were able to join them on this joyous occasion.

with Stewart the son of Mr & Mrs John & Lorraine Louden, long term members (and elder) of the Knox congregation.



Those meeting Mrs Dickson



Knox Youth Group at the snow

Wedding of Stewart & Eileen Louden
 On the 3rd of July 2010 the Knox and Narre Warren congregations became

Eileen is the daughter of the Rev Sjik & Mrs Betty-Ann Bajema



Stewart & Eileen Louden with their parents



Most of the congregation at the wedding

Three of our ministers were involved in the ceremony – Mr Bajema, Mr Andres Miranda, and Mr Rowland Ward.