

Love Hurts

ONE OF THE leaflets published this past Easter was entitled 'Love Hurts'. It appropriately showed a picture of a crown of thorns. There are two ways to look at these two words. One is that 'Love' can be hurt by the one it loves. The second way is that, 'Love' can hurt the one it loves.

First, true love can be hurt by the one it loves. When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, God, who is love, was really hurt. His affection and love for Adam was bruised. Not that God was in anyway weakened or crippled. He is omniscient. But He was hurt none the less. He did not enjoy the experience. His majesty was insulted.

The very creature that He had made for His own pleasure had lifted up his heel and rebelled against all the love that was shown to him. God's love was hurt. God, like the creatures He made in His image, has feelings and self-respect and could not be anything else but hurt by the insult of rejection.

One of the chief characteristics of God is His faithfulness. The very essence of Adam's sin was rooted in faithlessness. Distrust! Adam, decided, after consideration, meditation and consultation with his wife and the devil, that God was not to be absolutely trusted - certainly not in the matter of eating fruit.

Adam's sin was not in eating fruit - but in denying the trustworthiness of what would result in eating fruit from the tree in the centre of the Garden. His sin was unbelief. Distrust of God - and giving credence to the devil.

Once Adam heard an alternative proposition, he became suspicious of God - the God who had made him and put him in a lovely garden with all the best of fare and a wonderful promise that it would last for ever! This must have been most hurtful to God. If such a thing would hurt us, as it most certainly would, then it would hurt God much more for He is much purer and more sensitive to sin than we are.

The sin of Adam and Eve was not only distrust of God, but trust in their own judgment about the facts of reality. They believed they could find out for themselves which of the two propositions before them were right. This sin is seen today in mankind's self-assurance regarding reality.

Our generation believes that we, the human race, are the highest and greatest of all animals and are capable of understanding all truth. There are no greater 'beings' than humankind. As a race, we are growing full of knowledge and understanding and will soon dominate and control all nature.

We need to remember King Solomon's words *"There is a way the seems right to a man but its end are the ways of death"* [Pro 14:12]. Man's problem is that he **thinks** he knows everything, but Scripture warns us not to think of ourselves more than we ought to think.

Yes, true love, the love of God was hurt. And that love still hurts today. Every time you and I sin, it hurts God - for it is the very contradiction of Himself and all that He stands for. Every time we feel hurt by a loved one's remarks, let us remember that God too feels hurt by our sins against Him.

The second way of looking at the phrase, 'Love Hurts', is to consider that true love can hurt the one it loves! While this may seem strange, on consideration it is a principle we accept almost every day. For example, parents with very ill children, will allow them be put through painful healing processes, such as surgery, out of real love and care for them.

The principle of 'love hurting the one it loves', must be put in perspective. This love looks at the long term goals. A little temporal suffering can surely be worth a lifetime of future suffering, and so, hospitalisation and surgery can be a great blessing.

Similarly parents can love a child and put him under discipline in order to prepare him for the years ahead. The discipline may be 'painful' for him, but he will thank the parents for the long term benefits.

But of course the greatest example of 'love hurting the one it loves', is seen at the centre Cross on Calvary. Here we have the essence of the gospel - God 'hurting' the One He loved - His only beloved Son.

Although sin was the reason for the suffering of the Cross, it was not the Person on the Cross who did the sinning! Christ was representing sinners on the cross and endured the wrath of God in their place.

This may seem 'unfair' to many - but that is because they do not understand the nature of true love. God so loved the world that gave His only begotten Son to be a sin-offering. It was just because there was no other way in which God could forgive sinners their sin, that God gave, at a cost, His only begotten Son as a substitute.

Yes, love hurts. That is why Jesus cried out Why have You, My Father, forsaken Me, Your only Son? The pain Jesus suffered was such that His suffering appeared a mystery to Him as the Son of God. Yes, love is a mystery. Why should God love any sinner? The mystery of God's love.

God's love and Christ's love of course, are the same and are unique. God's love is manifested in His plan to save man from His sin. Christ's love is seen in His willingness to take the place of sinners, even when it meant the torment of the cross.

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" [1 John 4:10]. God's heart and Christ's heart is full of love - even when it is hurt!

THE BOOK OF JOB

By Revd Archie McPhail, Oban

THE BOOK OF JOB raises some of the most important questions people have ever asked. They are personal and practical as well as philosophical.

Person; enemy; trouble; reaction

Job: 1,2

The man's character and conduct is described first. That is his most important characteristic and Satan will contest it. He is genuine, a man of integrity who respects God and avoids evil. His concern for his family has to do primarily with their relationship with God. Scene 2 is set in heaven - as if to say that the matters under review are the most important of all.

The background to what happens is Satan's challenge to God. He alleges that Job is insincere - that no one really loves God or shares God's righteous character; that even Job is motivated by selfishness. Satan is shown as envious, twisted, deceitful and malicious. He can influence humanity and the powers of nature. The test would be whether Job would continue to serve God when stripped of every benefit God had given.

God allowed Satan to test Job. Job lost his property, workers,

family and health. The people he depended on became a hindrance rather than a help.

Job's reaction was not to curse God but to worship him. He recognised he was no worse off than when he was born and that God has a right to do as he wishes with his own property. Job's righteousness was his true wealth. Jesus said, "*A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.*"

Like Job, we see only part of what God allows to happen. His people may experience trouble that is not their fault for reasons they do not know. It may challenge their faith, but nothing can destroy it. More important than anything is righteousness - to relate in a right way to both man and God. There is such a thing - God's character is seen among men. That is evidence that God lives. That basic truth must be our guide in life.

Truth spoken falsely

Job 5:17, 27

Job's friends came to comfort him but only added to his grief. His suffering was so remarkable it seemed to demand an explanation.

They knew God rewarded righteousness and punished sin so they concluded that Job must be a hypocrite. They knew an important truth but applied it falsely.

Eliphaz urged him to examine himself to discover his sin. Bildad suggested it was his family who had sinned. They said his complaints against God for allowing this trouble proved that he was not sincere. They speculated as to what the sins might be.

The question that puzzled them was largely academic and tended to pride - why had God done it? It would have been better to be practical - to listen humbly to God and comfort the sufferer. The gospel is immensely practical (as is the call to repent, because God does punish sin).

There were weaknesses in the way they approached it. They thought only of God's justice and ignored other aspects of his dealings with humanity. They assumed they were able to know God's ways perfectly, and were entitled to make a final judgement on another man's character. They gave no comfort, unlike God who is the Father of mercies.

There was some merit in their approach. It did make use of moral concepts and categories. People who refuse to do that fail to understand human life and react inappropriately to good and evil.

They made an important statement (re God as judge) but applied it wrongly. Job was 'a good

man' (note Psalm 37:23) though not sinless. And there are other reasons why God allows suffering. But the point they made is vital - God does bless goodness and punish sin. God calls us all to repent. Sin may consist in proud self-sufficiency. Refusing grace means losing grace. God calls us to humble ourselves and seek him earnestly.

The sufferer and his God

Job 19:25

The Bible presents Job as an example of how to endure suffering. His conduct bears a resemblance to that of Jesus.

He pled in vain for the support of his friends. That reminds us of our duty to our neighbour, and also of our sinful weakness. Job dismissed their 'wisdom'. Not only did it misrepresent the facts, it also misrepresented God. He warned them that if God acted towards them as they were acting towards him it would go ill with them. At last he prayed for them - his regard for God overcame his distaste for them.

He felt bewildered. Sometimes he wanted to die, at other times to live. Just like Jesus he asked, "Why?" It all seemed so pointless, yet he sensed that was not the final answer. He seemed confused about himself but his self reproach had nothing to do with his friends' accusations. He was unable to find God. He had a deep

conviction that God was just, but felt that justice was delayed.

He felt unworthy. But he knew he was not inferior to his friends - it was in relation to God. God is the true standard by which we should measure ourselves. Seeing ourselves from His perspective develops the pleasant qualities of humility, gratitude and love. God is so much greater than us that we may feel overwhelmed. He is the standard for conduct and character - no one can have a right to sue Him at court.

He felt hopeful. The moral greatness of God led Job to expect a just verdict. He looked for God to provide whatever it was He was demanding - the gift of grace. Faith in a coming redeemer led to the belief that God would raise him from the grave - with no sin.

God, not humanity, was his place of safety. Integrity, not success, had priority. Tension between faith and a 'this world' view point were ongoing but faith won. God was seen as utterly reliable in spite of it all.

God reveals his splendour

Job 42:5-6

Job's troubles were so extraordinary they raised all sorts of questions. But when God appeared it put everything in a new light and transformed the situation.

Initially Satan had said, 'Job will curse God.' His friends asked,

'What is Job's sin?' and Job asked, 'Why does God let the innocent suffer?' We recognise the situation: criticism, complaints and anxieties are part of the fabric of life. But when God spoke their questioning ceased.

God spoke first through the man Elihu, then directly. It was a demonstration of his majesty - the splendours of creation are only a faint reflection of the glorious Creator. Job had known all those things before; now there was a presence that was overwhelming. It was a similar experience to Simon Peter's when he recognised Jesus and said, "*Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord*". When we 'see' God nothing else appears significant by comparison.

The immediate effect was to silence all who had complained about God's actions. The long-term effect was a change in roles. Those who criticised God found themselves judged; those who tried to teach others became learners; the matters that agitated them became yesterday's questions. God was seen to be in charge, correcting, giving fresh hope and raising new issues.

There is such a thing as God making himself known; its effect is profound. Revelation may be indirect - what we learn of him from the Bible. Or it may be 'face to face' - when we recognise its author. Unless we flee, the effect is to draw us to him in love, penitence and confidence.

It raises issues for us. Are we ready to learn from God? Or do we

think we know it all? Is our conduct like his? - for that is the measure. Are we investing for eternity? - for only Christ's kingdom will last. Are we reconciled to God? - for he will certainly appear. Therefore, *"Seek the Lord while he may be found."*

What is our wisdom?

Job 22:21

Like us, Job and his friends were taken up with matters that seemed very important. They spoke about God, but God seemed to be absent. When he appeared the whole picture changed. God dominated the horizon, and their accepted wisdom was seen to be foolish. We also underestimate God. The Book of Job is telling us to live in the fear of God at all times, not only when we are aware of his presence. How should we do so?

'Become acquainted'. That is a call to have personal dealings with God - search for Him. It implies a particular attitude - respect for God as someone far superior to us, and a readiness to respond positively to Him. There are great reasons for doing so - it is only right that we would; it is our wisdom to do it; and God is good - we will receive good from him.

How? Remember that God is personal and we must treat Him as a person. Ask Him to come - *"Speak Lord, your servant is listening."* Listen to what He is saying - in the Bible and when He gathers with His people. Find out from the Bible what we can expect, and wait for it.

'Be at peace with Him'. Deal with the past. Confess sin. Admit His rights. Accept Christ Jesus His Saviour. Ask for His pardon. Deal with your lifestyle, for this is a relationship that involves the totality of life. Study His word to see what pleases Him and ask for His Spirit's help to do it. Be very personal in your dealings with Him. This is no mere marriage of convenience, so love the Lord and converse with Him in all the means of grace.

'Good will come to you.' If we do these things we will no longer be at odds with the world around us. The Good Shepherd will lead us to more abundant life. It will not be free of trouble but *"my God shall supply all your need; and "godliness with contentment is great gain."*

We will have the privilege of God's personal love around us. Prayers for other people will be answered, as were Job's. And nothing, not even death shall separate us from Him.

"Abraham did not seek a special message from God. He did not ask for a sign or demand confirmation from the Lord. He simply walked close to God and obeyed His Word. These two elements continue to be the essential ingredients of a vibrant faith".

Bruce K Waltke

Don't Waste Your Cancer

By Pastor John Piper

February 15, 2006

WRITE THIS ON the eve of prostate surgery. I believe in God's power to heal — by miracle and by medicine. I believe it is right and good to pray for both kinds of healing. Cancer is not wasted when it is healed by God. He gets the glory and that is why cancer exists.

So not to pray for healing may waste your cancer. But healing is not God's plan for everyone. And there are many other ways to waste your cancer. I am praying for myself and for you that we will not waste this pain.

1. You will waste your cancer if you do not believe it is designed for you by God.

It will not do to say that God only uses our cancer but does not design it. What God permits, he permits for a reason. And that reason is his design. If God foresees molecular developments becoming cancer, he can stop it or not. If he does not, he has a purpose. Since he is infinitely wise, it is right to call this purpose a design.

Satan is real and causes many pleasures and pains. But he is not ultimate. So when he strikes Job with boils [Job 2:7], Job attributes it ultimately to God [2:10] and the

inspired writer agrees: *"They . . . comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him"* [Job 42:11]. If you don't believe your cancer is designed for you by God, you will waste it.

2. You will waste your cancer if you believe it is a curse and not a gift.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" [Romans 8:1]. *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us"* [Galatians 3:13]. *"There is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel"* [Numbers 23:23]. *"The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly"* [Psalm 84:11].

3. You will waste your cancer if you seek comfort from your odds rather than from God.

The design of God in your cancer is not to train you in the rationalistic, human calculation of odds. The world gets comfort from their odds. Not Christians. Some count their chariots (percentages of

survival) and some count their horses (side effects of treatment), but we trust in the name of the Lord our God [Psalm 20:7]. God's design is clear from 2 Corinthians 1:9, "*We felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.*" The aim of God in your cancer (among a thousand other good things) is to knock props out from under our hearts so that we rely utterly on him.

4. You will waste your cancer if you refuse to think about death.

We will all die, if Jesus postpones his return. Not to think about what it will be like to leave this life and meet God is folly. Ecclesiastes 7:2 says, "*It is better to go to the house of mourning [a funeral] than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart.*" How can you lay it to heart if you won't think about it? Psalm 90:12 says, "*Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.*"

Numbering your days means thinking about how few there are and that they will end. How will you get a heart of wisdom if you refuse to think about this? What a waste, if we do not think about death.

5. You will waste your cancer if you think that "beating" cancer means staying alive rather than cherishing Christ.

Satan's and God's designs in your cancer are not the same. Satan designs to destroy your love for Christ. God designs to deepen your love for Christ. Cancer does not win if you die. It wins if you fail to cherish Christ. God's design is to wean you off the breast of the world and feast you on the sufficiency of Christ.

It is meant to help you say and feel, "*I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.*" And to know that therefore, "*To live is Christ, and to die is gain*" [Philippians 3:8; 1:21].

6. You will waste your cancer if you spend too much time reading about cancer and not enough time reading about God.

It is not wrong to know about cancer. Ignorance is not a virtue. But the lure to know more and more and the lack of zeal to know God more and more is symptomatic of unbelief.

Cancer is meant to waken us to the reality of God. It is meant to put feeling and force behind the command, "*Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord*" [Hosea 6:3]. It is meant to waken us to the truth of Daniel 11:32, "*The people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.*"

It is meant to make unshakable, indestructible oak trees out of us: "*His delight is in the law of the Lord,*

and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers" [Psalm 1:2]. What a waste of cancer if we read day and night about cancer and not about God.

7. You will waste your cancer if you let it drive you into solitude instead of deepen your relationships with manifest affection.

When Epaphroditus brought the gifts to Paul sent by the Philippian church he became ill and almost died. Paul tells the Philippians, *"He has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill"* [Philippians 2:26-27]. What an amazing response! It does not say they were distressed that he was ill, but that he was distressed because they heard he was ill.

That is the kind of heart God is aiming to create with cancer: a deeply affectionate, caring heart for people. Don't waste your cancer by retreating into yourself.

8. You will waste your cancer if you grieve as those who have no hope.

Paul used this phrase in relation to those whose loved ones had died: *"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no*

hope" [1 Thessalonians 4:13]. There is a grief at death. Even for the believer who dies, there is temporary loss—loss of body, and loss of loved ones here, and loss of earthly ministry. But the grief is different—it is permeated with hope. *"We would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord"* [2 Corinthians 5:8]. Don't waste your cancer grieving as those who don't have this hope.

9. You will waste your cancer if you treat sin as casually as before.

Are your besetting sins as attractive as they were before you had cancer? If so you are wasting your cancer. Cancer is designed to destroy the appetite for sin. Pride, greed, lust, hatred, unforgiveness, impatience, laziness, procrastination—all these are the adversaries that cancer is meant to attack.

Don't just think of battling against cancer. Also think of battling with cancer. All these things are worse enemies than cancer. Don't waste the power of cancer to crush these foes. Let the presence of eternity make the sins of time look as futile as they really are. *"What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?"* [Luke 9:25].

10. You will waste your cancer if you fail to use it as a means of witness to the truth and glory of Christ.

Christians are never anywhere by divine accident. There are reasons for why we wind up where we do. Consider what Jesus said about painful, unplanned circumstances: *"They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness"* [Luke 21:12 -13].

So it is with cancer. This will be an opportunity to bear witness. Christ is infinitely worthy. Here is a

golden opportunity to show that he is worth more than life. Don't waste it.

Remember you are not left alone. You will have the help you need. *"My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus"* [Philippians 4:19].

Pastor John

By John Piper. ©Desiring God.
Website: www.desiringGod.org.
Email: mail@desiringGod.org. Toll Free: 888.346.4700.

Please book this date!

Dr HELEN ROSEVEAR

Is speaking at the

APC CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

**KINGSVIEW CHRISTIAN CENTRE
BALNAFETTACK ROAD, INVERNESS**

A Very Present Help

IN MY OLD, YELLOWED copy of C. S. Lewis's Letters to an American Lady, I have one sentence underlined that I return to again and again.

Lewis tells his correspondent, who tends to be anxious, "Remember one is given strength to bear what happens to one, but not the 100 and 1 different things that might happen."

I need this reminder often, because I have a proclivity to worry early and avoid the rush. You would be much less likely to find me worrying about something I may face tomorrow than the calamities that may fall on me twenty years from now.

The perils of the future are vivid in my imagination. But because they exist only in the realm of imagination, the only comfort available to me is just as imaginary.

Have you ever looked at someone else's misfortune and thought, "I couldn't handle that"? If so, you were exactly right. God has not given us the grace to handle what He has not yet asked us to bear.

The grace promised to us in Scripture is available only in the present, and only when it is needed. After reminding us that Christ can sympathize with our weaknesses, the writer of Hebrews invites, "*Let*

us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" [Hebrews 4:16]. A literal (albeit awkward) rendering of this verse from the Greek promises the Christian "grace for a well-timed help."

What does a well-timed help look like? Does it look like Superman sweeping out of the sky to rescue the endangered one from peril? Ordinarily not.

If anyone deserved to be removed from suffering it was Jesus, but God in his purposes chose for Jesus to endure through suffering rather than avoid it. More often than not, He chooses to help us endure rather than removing the trial.

I find it fascinating that the same Greek word translated as "help" in Hebrews 4:16 is translated as "ropes" in Acts 27:17. In this scene, Paul travels on a ship that gets caught in a violent storm. The wind and waves are so fierce that the sailors fear the ship will split apart. They pass ropes ("helps") under and around the creaking vessel in order to hold it together like a net. Sometimes, the well-timed help that God provides doesn't calm the waves, but it holds us together until the storm dies down.

The psalmist describes God as "*a very present help in trouble*" [Psalm

46:1]. He will not give us the help before we need it, and He may not remove us out of trouble, but He will be there with us to hold us together. When the troubles do come, we can approach his throne with confidence, fully expecting to receive the grace of his well-timed help.

Betsy Childs - 04/20/06
Copyright(c) 2005
Ravi Zacharias International
Ministries (RZIM).
<http://www.rzim.org>.
Reprinted with permission.

LISTEN TO SERMONS

FREE!

Without downloading any
programmes!

JUST ONE CLICK

Visit
www.stornowayonlinesermons.org.uk

SALARIES, FAITH & PRAYER

The Presbytery are pleased and thankful to report that they have been able once again to raise the minister's salaries by the annual 3% (to compensate for inflation). This has been done this year as well as managing to fund an additional minister's salary, although we have not always been able to pay on time.

We would remind our readers that our minister's are still on a salary that is very much below the national average wage, and although they are happy to serve the Lord in this way, we would love to be able to increase their salaries.

We believe we must continue to preach the gospel and when possible, to reach out to areas where there is no gospel ministry at all. As indicated, our resources at present are stretched, so it requires a large measure of faith that the Lord will provide for new ministries when our present funds are stretched as much as they are.

We therefore ask our readers to pray and to do what they can to increase their givings so that the many sitting in darkness in our land today, may see a great light - the light of the glorious gospel. There are those who are willing to bring the gospel to such areas but funding is lacking.

Congregational News

TAIN and FEARN

Since the departure of Revd John Ross and family to Edinburgh in November 2004, the congregation has been well supplied with a variety of preachers including APC elders and ministers as well as others from outside the APC from time to time. The congregation is also remarkably blessed with 3 elders and 5 others who regularly take services in the congregation and beyond.

Having said that the congregation waits upon the Lord's provision of the man of His choosing who will take the message of the gospel into the community and act as an under-shepherd with a care for the flock of God.

As far as numbers are concerned we have lost a few people including Willie and Barbara MacDonald who returned to the Island of Lewis after 35 years. Others have moved home as well. Having said that we are grateful for those who are loyal supporters of the fellowship in both parts of the congregation and it is worthy of note that on 2nd April 2006 the congregation commissioned Alex Stewart from Balintore to become a full-time missionary with London City Mission in London. This means that he and his family have moved from the congregation and they will be greatly missed but it was a pleasure to have

fellowship with Duncan Cuthill, Director of Ministries of London City Mission who preached in the morning followed by a service taken by Alex himself in the evening of the 2nd April.

Prayer is requested for Alex as he works in London and the congregation is looking forward to having regular reports from him so that our prayers may be informed and specific rather than general.

It is also worth taking this opportunity of expressing our thanks to God and to those throughout the APC and elsewhere who remember us in prayer. Also we are thankful for the privilege of regularly meeting for prayer together with other congregations in the Seaboard Community on the last Wednesday of the month and in the Town of Tain on the 1st Wednesday of the month.

These have been times of special blessing and encouragement and we trust that the Lord will provide for His Church in these parts so that the day will soon come when "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose".

LAIRG/ROGART

Many thanks to the Lairg/Rogart congregation and to all throughout our denomination for your invaluable prayers and support over

the last couple of months.

My induction, after its initial postponement due to the snow, was a truly memorable and glorious occasion for which I thank the Lord and you all. I am delighted and feel privileged to be part of the APC and Margaret, the children and I have settled in and feel very much at home here in Lairg. Please do pray that the Lord would continue to bless the ministry of the word and prayer here that we might see much fruit in the months and years to come. Please note that we now gather for worship on the Lord's Day at 11am and 6pm in Lairg and at 4pm in Rogart which I hope and pray may entice a few more folks to come along and join with us.

In addition to the warm support and encouragement of my own congregation, I have welcomed and been greatly heartened by the fellowship and friendships developing between ourselves and the other churches in Lairg and Rogart. I have had the privilege of preaching in the Free Church in Lairg on a couple of occasions and of taking the odd prayer meeting there. I hope to meet up with an elder from the Free Church and the Church of Scotland minister for prayer too on a fairly regular basis.

A few of us from the APC enjoyed an evening of praise and fellowship in Rogart Free Church recently when we went along to hear the testimony of Donald Saunders who was a teenager at the time of the great Lewis Revival of 1949-1952. The highlight for me however was

leading a special inter-church service in the Free Church on Sunday 14 May in support of Kevin McLennan and Alan Sutherland who are going off to Malawi with the Navigators at the end of May.

The APC were well represented in the service as Mr Murray was also called upon to pray. Somewhere in the region of 150 people attended the service which was a truly wonderful occasion. I have also recently been involved in an inter-church venture here in the village seeking to establish a youth club with a Christian ethos.

Margaret and Alison (Mackenzie) are liaising together in the work of the Sunday School and have also established an inter-church ladies Bible study which has been meeting at our manse every second week. Do please pray that the Lord will be with us in all these things and that He might give us the vision and means to further the cause of Christ's gospel in this part of the vineyard; that our little church would indeed be a city upon a hill.

Yours appreciatively in
Christ our Lord, Wayne.

EDINBURGH

We are presently preaching through the gospel according to Mark, and very recently we looked at the parable of the sower which reminds us of the different responses people make to the gospel. With some Satan causes the word to have an unbelievably negligible effect. Others seem more promising, but a little persecution and ridicule causes them

to give up.

Yet others are even still more promising, and it is only after a prolonged period that they are eventually drawn after riches and the cares of this life and the lust for other things. Praise God, for those that neither Satan, nor persecution, nor the love of the world causes to turn back, they go right on to bear fruit some thirty, some sixty and some hundredfold. This parable helps us not to despair when the interest that people have fades away, and also to keep hoping and praying for more good ground hearers.

The next passage is the "lamp on the stand," which is a timely reminder to us to let our light shine. God's word has to be hidden in our hearts, but it must also be shared with others since it is one of the hidden things that must be disclosed and one of the concealed things that must be made open. This is totally in line with confessing Christ, and should be as natural to us all as setting a lamp on a stand. May God in His mercy enable us to naturally speak about Christ.

The last passage we touched on was, the parable of the growing seed. The seed sown by the farmer grows although the farmer does nothing more to the seed and does not know how it grows. *"First the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head."* This reminds us that we can only do so much, and we must leave things in God's hands and be patient.

It also reminds us that there is mystery in every single conversion

that only God understands. If you are at a loss to fully explain how and why you became a Christian don't be too surprised! Just be thankful that God has worked in your life and brought you to have faith in Christ.

Also may we not be looking impatiently for the head or the full kernel when we should be marveling at the blade or the stalk. It will all come in God's perfect time. What joy and satisfaction when harvest comes. Then the farmer is deeply satisfied and well rewarded. How much more rewarding to sow God's word and see one soul saved.

The current Christianity Explored course for young people will probably be completed by the time you read this. Please pray that fruit follows. Just to have it held in the shop with young people attending is a huge encouragement, and really something we could have hardly dreamt of a year ago and certainly encourages us to ask and look for even greater things.

We were asked to have a thanksgiving service at a birthday party and this proved to be an excellent opportunity to share the gospel with many people. Far and away the largest gathering we've spoken to since coming here. The subject was the second birthday that we must have if we are to enter the kingdom of God. Incidentally, we did point out, that many do not know the precise time when they were born again.

One of the fascinating things since we came here is, how the most incidental and sometimes very

negative happenings has led to a substantial connection with somebody or other. This repeatedly encourages us, so forgive us if we have mentioned it already.

We would be most grateful if you would pray for Revd Iain Penman, the parish minister here, who has now been off work for nine weeks. The years of endless work in this parish have taken their toll. We would love to see him back, at what we believe is, his God given calling.

The view we got before coming here, of some areas of great spiritual bareness, sadly still holds true. The tragic and unspeakably sad murder of a father and very serious wounding of two men in South Edinburgh on 22nd and 23rd of April were right within the parish where we are located, and less than twelve months since the previous murder in the neighbouring Pub, which is even closer to the shop.

What a grim testimony to the spiritual darkness of the area and that Scotland is becoming more and more a mission field. These incidents adversely affected the attendance at the Christianity Explored, because parents were very naturally afraid to let young teenagers go out in the evening.

May all God's children, more than ever, pray and work for better days. *"My dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain."* [1 Cor 15:58].

John Ross

DUNDEE

Each year in May, we hire premises near the church as a Charity Shop. We printed A4 size cards and inserted them into every bag. Here is what Kevin wrote:

Thanks for Coming into Our Shop

It is spring at last!! The weather men predicted that the winter we have just come through would have been the worst for ten years. We were meant to get arctic winds and sub zero temperatures followed by snow for months on end. Thankfully it never happened. Now the weathermen are predicting a heat wave in the summer so you'd better buy a brolly. Many people are governed by the weather, their families or their finances.

The message on your carrier bag is from a talk that Jesus gave, that his friend John recorded in his gospel. In the tenth chapter of the book of John at verse 10 it says *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* Living life to the full is very important today but very hard to achieve. Everything is instant but it doesn't last, fashions change, seasons change, life never stays still for long. When Jesus said that he can give people life to the full, He is talking about something far deeper than the next outfit you'll buy. Jesus is talking about completing your life. Jesus wants to be part of your life. He wants to know about your problems with your family or your finances. He is a great listener – He is always free to talk to. He is more reliable than the weathermen because He controls the weather!

The Bible says 'this is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son [Jesus], His one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in Him, anyone

can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again'. How can Jesus complete your life? He can make you right again if you believe in Him, if you realise that you do things in your life that are wrong, these are sins, and that you need help to rid yourself of these sins. Jesus came to forgive the wrong things in your life and give you life to the full both now and forever more in heaven.

If you would like to chat about this leaflet or know more about Jesus or our church then please speak to one of the staff in the shop or phone our minister Donald Macaskill on 01382 451798. Our church services are held each Sunday at 11am and 6.30pm at Dens Road Church.

Please continue to pray for us.

INVERNESS/DINGWALL

The congregation were shocked and saddened recently by the sudden death in car accident of two sisters who worshipped regularly at Kingsview. Catriona Robertson and Susan MacLennan were close-knit sisters whose care for others was obvious.

Catriona never married. When she was about twenty, and Susan was 12 years old, their mother died, and Catriona who was at the time engaged to be married, gave up her immediate prospect of marriage and returned to the family home to care for her father and the other family members. While still a young woman, Catriona had shown that she had a heart to help and serve other people. Both worked in areas of life where they had regular con-

tact with others, and they were obviously highly thought of.

Susan married Alex MacLennan from Laide, Gairloch, and they had two girls, Ruth and Mairi. Alex's testimony of God's saving grace in his life was printed and went into 25,000 homes in the Inverness area in the early 1990s. He passed away to be with his Saviour in 1999.

Both Catriona and Susan were very attentive on the worship services and activities at Kingsview Christian Centre. The large number of mourners who came to the funeral service on Tuesday, 16 May, was clear evidence that they were both held in high esteem. Susan's remains were buried at Daviot beside those of her late husband, Alex.

The following day, another large crowd of people gathered at the cemetery in Breakish for the burial of Catriona's remains. To the two brothers, Lachlan and Donald, we express our deep sympathy, and pray for them that they will find spiritual help and comfort in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We express our heartfelt sympathy to the daughters, Ruth, her husband David, and their little daughter, Lexy, as also to Mairi and her fiancée Steven. May the Lord bless them all richly, and may we all learn to apply our hearts to wisdom. May Christ will be our only help and hope.

Our words to them as to all who mourn are the words recorded about the disciples of John after his death. The Bible says that "*they took the body, they buried it, and they went and told Jesus*".

From the Moderator's Desk

'My Church'

Mr William Byers, Fearn

MY DEAR FRIENDS, I have now reached my valedictory article for the APC News, as moderator of the Presbytery and Assembly. How the ecclesiastical year had sped, with all new experiences and challenges for me that I, never anticipated or expected. To be confronted with in my journey here in our beloved land.

I remember as a Christian of fairly recent profession, taking an aged gracious, godly believer to the Tain communion in July 1963 from Dunvegan in the Isle of Skye. John MacKay was a very close and experienced, exercised follower of Jesus Christ; an elder of many years standing in the Vatten congregation in Duirinish parish

In these days there was a sizeable congregation in Vatten of about 80 people on a Lord's Day morning, with no young people professing Christ there. When we got to Tain, John found a goodly number of young people professing Christ, which so delighted him.

He was in his early 70's at the time and was a very long standing friend of the late Archie Robertson who was a much respected missionary in Tain at the time.

At the fellowship meeting on Friday morning, John in speaking to

'The Question', said how delighted he was to see so many young people following the Lord. He said 'I have followed Christ for over 40 years. I commend Him to you, as I have found Him to be a good Master.'

I never expected to be in the Moderator's chair, but as the ecclesiastical year runs out, I can only say with John of the Lord Jesus 'I have followed Christ for over 40 years. I commend Him to you, as I have found Him to be a good Master, and that despite my sins and shortcomings.'

I remember reading about an English bishop who was travelling south in a coach from Wick many years ago, and condescendingly asked a local gentleman travelling with him in the coach, 'Is that the church of Bruan my man?' 'No,' he replied, 'that is the Kirk of Bruan' - the church is the people! How we too, have by common usage of words fallen into the trap.

The church is not ours, it belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ. He has proprietary rights over it; has bought it at enormous cost, He can truly call it 'My Church'. *"He is head over all things to His body, the Church"* [Eph 1:22,23].

The visible church consists of all who profess Jesus Christ as Saviour

and Lord. They are become part of it by the external call of the Word of God. The spiritual invisible church, universal, worldwide, consists of true believers by the internal call of the Holy Spirit. Invisible but real in the world.

As Cecil Spring Rice wrote of the kingdom and church of Jesus Christ:

And there's another country,
I've heard of long ago-
Most dear to them that love her,
Most great to them that know-
We may not count her armies;
We may not see her king-
Her fortress is a faithful heart,
Her pride is suffering-
And soul by soul and silently
Her shining bounds increase.
Her ways are ways of gentleness
And all her paths are peace.

There is the church militant here on earth, visible and invisible, and although the spiritual aspect is invisible, yet it is real.

There is also the church triumphant in glory. Jesus says to His people, *"I am the true vine and you are the branches"*. If we are to be fruitful, we must abide in Him, grafted into the true vine. Remember Joseph again, he was a fruitful bough hanging over the

garden wall. Oh, to be like him - in the world, but not of it. In the church and very much of it.

"My Church" says blessed Jesus. Well may we look on and marvel. What a glorious structure this is, of God's design and workmanship. I will build it says our Lord. Here is an edifice that will stand for ever. The gates of hell will not prevail against. The Lord Jesus is the one foundation and the chief cornerstone. Every stone is a living stone, however small, it is just perfect, because it has been set there by the Master's hand.

As I lay down my moderatorial pen, I humbly and sincerely thank you for your prayerful support over the past year as again and again I had an awareness of it in the course of my duties. I plead with you again to make sure work of Christ. Do not come short here. Just come as you are, a needy sinner to the fullness that is in Jesus Christ. You will find there is enough and to spare. Prove for yourself those gracious words of His *"Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out"* [John 6:37]

God's blessing on you rest:
We in the name of God the Lord
Do wish you to be blest.

[Met Psa 129:8]

GENERAL TREASURER'S POST

As the present APC General Treasurer would like to retire from the position, any person interested in undertaking these duties is invited to contact

Kenneth MacLean, PO Box 2, Gairloch, IV21 2YA
either by letter or by e-mail for further information, at
kendunedin@aol.com .

'PC Fundamentalism'- Enemy Within

In the guise of protecting minority interests, political correctness is a spreading disease that threatens the very foundations of democracy and human rights

A REPORT RECEIVED in January 2006 by the social policy think-tank, Civitas, claims that political correctness is threatening British society by 'poisoning the wells of debate' and encouraging a 'victim mentality' which discourages people from taking responsibility for their own lives, suppresses free speech and distorts public debate. The report states that political correctness has gained a 'vice-like grip', censoring public discussion of crucial issues.

The study warns that political correctness is increasingly dominating schools, hospitals, local councils, the Civil Service, private companies, the media, the police and the military. It claims that by encouraging multi-culturalism rather than racial integration, political correctness 'allowed the creation of alienated Muslim ghettos which produce young men who commit mass murder against their fellow citizens.

Anyone who speaks out is in danger of being branded racist, sexist or homophobic and is 'deemed a viable target for personal abuse'.

This report is written by a journalist, Anthony Browne, and is entitled 'The Retreat of Reason'. The report accuses the BBC of pandering to the PC agenda by attacking groups such as Migrationwatch, that dare to question orthodox views.

Migrationwatch campaigns for a reduction in the high levels of immigration into the UK. I would add that the majority of these immigrants come from Islamic communities, escalating the number of Muslims in the UK and accelerating the Islamisation of this country.

Mr Browne writes that Migrationwatch - along with Christian family groups - are among the 'politically incorrect' pressure groups allowed little exposure by the left wing media and the BBC while groups which follow the PC agenda enjoy 'endless invaluable free publicity.'

FREE SPEECH UNDERMINED

Finally, somebody is willing to challenge the pervasive and authoritarian impact of political

correctness.

At its heart, political correctness is anti-democratic and anti-human rights, as it undermines freedom of speech, expression and religion and attempts to control debate. The PC agenda deems the rights of certain minorities to be far more important than that of other rights, including the rights of some other minorities, such as evangelical Christians.

For example, the PC brigade tries to stop criticism including even balanced, factual, criticism, against Muslims, Islam and homosexuals.

The Government's Racial and Religious Hatred Bill, which criminalises the incitement to religious hatred, is one example of the powerful impact which political correctness has had on Britain's political scene. The majority of MPs (mostly Labour MPs) in the House of Commons have allowed this Bill to pass, despite the dire effect it will have on our freedom.

Only in the Lords did the Bill meet stiff opposition and received major amendments to reduce the likelihood of its being used to undermine freedom of speech, expression and religion. At the time of writing the Bill has yet to return to the Commons for consideration by MPs of the Lord's amendments.

The Christian Institute is one organisation campaigning against this Bill. To get an update and find out how you can help in this campaign, call the Christian Institute on: 0191 281 5664. Pray that the Government's attempts to criminalise incitement to religious

hatred will be completely defeated. (This Bill has now become law with the Lord's amendments included - *Editor*).

Tony Blair's Labour Government has probably done more than any other British Government to impose the PC agenda on this country through legislation. New Labour is the party of political correctness. Blair has used his large Commons majority to try and systematically remould Britain into a PC state.. For example we have witnessed this in the Government's attempts to criminalise incitement to religious hatred and their introduction of laws to give homosexuals couples the same legal rights as heterosexuals.

The pervasive PC influence in British society has emboldened those with anti-Christian sentiments to increasingly push the boundaries on how far they can restrict references to Britain's Christian heritage.

A few months ago we witnessed the battle over Christmas celebrations, with some PC types attempting to remove references to Christmas, supposedly so as not to offend followers of other faiths. Late last year, a British schoolgirl was told to remove a small crucifix from around her neck, although in that particular school, Sikh children are allowed to wear items of their religious faith.

In November 2005, Inland Revenue workers in Newcastle upon Tyne were stopped from supporting Operation Christmas Child during their office hours because it

supposedly offended the Government's 'diversity' policy.

The Daily Express reported that a leaked memo from a manager at HM Revenue and Customs stated 'We were informed that people who participate in the Shoe Box Appeal were probably unaware that Christian evangelical literature is distributed along with their gifts and the recipients get follow-up materials encouraging them to participate in Bible Study classes... you will appreciate that as a department we cannot be seen to promote activities that do not broadly fit with our philosophy or which could bring us into disrepute by association.'

The Daily Express reported that Tory MEP for the North-east, Martin Callanan, condemned this move as 'disgraceful' political correctness. Operation Christmas Child is run by an evangelical Christian charity, Samaritan's Purse, which at Christmas sends shoe boxes containing aid to numerous children in the developing world.

ILLOGICAL SUPPORT

The presence in the UK of Muslims and other non-Christian religious groups, is often used as a convenient excuse by 'secular PC fundamentalists' to bash Christians. It seems illogical that the promoters of political correctness are so keen to support Islam and pander to Muslim sentiments, when one considers how diametrically opposed Islamic teachings are to many PC values.

However, they both seem to compete and marginalise Christianity and they both have the same spiritual father, who relentlessly opposes Christianity and does not care which ideology he uses to harm the church, so long as it obtains results.

But not all PC values are bad. However, whatever good PC values exist are far outweighed by the authoritarian way in which the PC agenda is imposed, including its attempts to police people's thoughts.

Furthermore, political correctness is superfluous since all we need to know about the values and a society are already contained in our Christian faith and scriptures.

For over a millennium British society often turned to the Bible and the Holy Spirit's guidance to discern what values it should follow as a nation. Now that Christianity's dominance has been largely removed from British culture, a vacuum of values exists, which political correctness seeks to fill. Some Muslims hope to fill this gap with Islamic teachings and use PC values as a stepping stone to achieving their goal.

Although both Islam and political correctness espouse some values which Christians could agree with, we should heed Paul's warning in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, that there will be widespread ungodly behaviour in the last days, *"having a form of godliness but denying its power"*.

Political correctness and Islam have some form of godliness, enough

to confuse many Christians into sympathising with them, but they deny the power and source of all godliness, which reside only in our Trinitarian God.

Pray against the escalating influence of political correctness, its parent, secular humanism, and Islamisation in the UK. These are

long term, major challenges which we ought to urgently pray and fast regularly about.

This article first appeared in the March/April issue of 'Prophecy Today International' by 'Watchman', and is used with kind permission.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Readers are reminded that subscriptions are now overdue. (They start in January for a year) The cost is **£10** for the 6 issues, and should be seen as a donation. See page 24 for details

ADVERTISING RATES

Charges for advertising in this magazine are as follows

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Full Page | £30 |
| Half Page | £16 |
| Quarter Page | £9 |
| Eighth Page | £5 |

Contact:

Donald C Macaskill
238 Arbroath Road,
Dundee DD4 7SB

Tel 01382 451798
dcmacaskill@apchurches.org.uk
www.apcdundee.org.uk

We apologise for the difficulties some may have had getting on to our website. We are doing our best to rectify the matter and hope before long the problem will be overcome.

Please note that the APC website address does NOT have the 'uk' at the end.

**Also note that to contact our ministers by email from our website, please do not put the 'uk' at the end of the address. eg
jsmith@apchurches.org**

THE NEXT ISSUE of APC News!

It is due out on the

1st WEEK in AUGUST

Subscriptions & Renewals
for APC News

The APC News is published 6 times per year, beginning with the January/February issue. The cost is **£10** per year including postage

Note for Congregations

Each congregation must contribute a minimum of £240 per annum towards the APC News Fund as arranged with the treasurer Mr Donald M Fraser. This is to be considered as a donation towards the sustaining of the magazine.

Congregations can, if they so wish, charge for their own distribution of the magazine, or give them away free.

Cheques should be made out to 'APC News'

and sent to the address below.

Please state if acknowledgement of donation is required.

Mr D M Fraser,
Publications Treasurer,
'Stratharris',

Daviot, by Inverness, IV2 5XQ
Telephone 01463-772253

Email:
donald@stratharris.freemove.co.uk

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Postcode.....

Tel No.....

Publication Details

'The APC News'
is published 6 times per year
in the months of

- January/February
- March/April
- May/June
- July/August
- September/October
- November/December

All the views expressed in this magazine are not necessary those of the editor or the denomination.

The articles are meant to stimulate and provoke a serious study of Holy Scripture. All articles not attributed to an author are by the editor.

Articles can be sent by email (preferable), or on CD in Microsoft Word.

Clearly printed manuscripts, double spaced in one column is also acceptable.

Photographs can be sent by post or by e-mail in .jpeg format.

There is no copyright on any of the articles that do not bear the author's name, and such articles may therefore be reprinted, with or without credit.

Other articles may require the permission of the authors.

Editor:

Revd Donald C Macaskill
238 Arbroath Road, Dundee DD4 7SB

Tel 01382 451798

E-mail:

dcmacaskill@apchurches.org.uk