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The APC News

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THE PICTURE ABOVE shows some of the children who were recently taken to the Raptor (Wildlife) Centre near Kinross by the Dundee congregation.

The children were first entertained at a barbecue in the home of one of the congregation's members. The children were shown a display of bird-handling and had the chance to hold various types of hawks and other birds. They were also thrilled to see the snakes, owls and rabbits. Please pray for these children who live near the Dundee church and attend the Sunday Club.

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Christian Identity, Culture, Technology, Worship

RECENTLY A GROUP OF evangelical Christian leaders gathered together in one of Scotland's cities. The object was to pray and seek God's blessing on their city. They came from various Christian backgrounds and all were seriously concerned for the spiritual welfare of their parishes and communities, and had risen early that morning for united fellowship.

There was the usual small chat before prayer began, while some sat in silent contemplation, others tapped on their electronic diaries. For two hours they prayed and waited on the Lord. It was a peaceful and profitable time.

However, before leaving, one elderly gentleman complained that while he acknowledged them all as Christians and was happy to be associated with them, he felt it was a great mistake that none of them had a Bible and therefore the Word was not central to their meeting.

One leader replied graciously and said that he actually did have a Bible - it was on his electronic organiser! He had been looking up the Word and that some of his petitions had been generated by what he read! The elderly Christian had misread the situation because of his assumption that

God's Word only comes in the form of the printed page! He did not associate such devices with God's Word!

We forget that at one time the image of a leather-bound Bible was something new which only the literate could use. Scrolls were the initial form of the written word, but locating a particular verse quickly was not possible as unrolling scrolls was awkward.

While we are accustomed to a 'quiet time' with the Word conveniently arranged in book form, to study certain passages, the early Christians knew nothing of leafing through pages in search of texts etc. None of them would have had personal complete Bibles. Their devotional time simply included prayer, meditation and recitation from memory of the words of Jesus and the Apostles. Handwritten copies were not plentiful and reading a printed page did not come until around the 15th century.

The new 'technology' of dividing Scripture into verses and chapters was only introduced around the 13th century and was a great help in locating particular verses, but brought the problem of uncontextualised interpretation! Then the printing press made God's

Word much more readily available although at a price. Now we have the microchip and all the conveniences of data processing and searching. *“Unto whom much is given much will be required”* [Luke 12:48]!

We can also learn from this incident how easy it is to judge by outward appearance. The prophet Samuel was rebuked for thinking Eliab was far more likely to be the chosen of God than his brothers because of his physique [1 Samuel 16:7].

How ready we are to judge from the outward appearance. We are too quick to judge people by the way they dress and we make assumptions from hairstyles and other ‘codes of identity’.

We need to be constantly aware of the distinction between practices that come from a culture and practices that come from Biblical principles. The message is one thing, the means and the method of communicating it is another. Bible reading can now be done electronically, prayer can be offered up through a telephone and sermons can be published on the internet. Keyboards have replaced the pencil, and cassettes and CDs can replace an auditorium.

We can now be edified hearing God’s Word while driving the car, or doing the housework. We can worship God at all times, day or night through the various means of communication now available.

Each new technology brings benefits. We must never forget the kingdom of God has

advanced through science and invention. The Reformation would never have been so successful if the printing press was not invented and Christians did not make use of it.

The microchip can do today what the printing press did at the Reformation - provided there is the same zeal, wisdom and *“understanding of the times”* [1 Chro 12:32]. The means for spreading the truth has multiplied over the last fifty years.

Sp there can be much misunderstanding today regarding ‘many things including codes and styles of worship. We must not make judgments from traditional standpoints but from a Scriptural basis. We may need to return to a more Biblical practice than our current habits allow us.

When Christ taught that true worship is in *“spirit and in truth”*, He did so while actually breaking cultural barriers which had been erected centuries before. He was speaking to a woman in public who was also a Samaritan [John 4:23]. He further clarified on that occasion, that the place we worship in is unimportant *“neither in this mountain nor at Jerusalem”*. It is who we worship and how we worship that is important.

We can worship God anywhere at any time. Whether we are in a church building or at the sink or in the office. The ‘holy place’ is no longer a geographical location, but the place where our hearts meet with God.

Where Was God?

THE RECENT HORRENDOUS events of September 11th and the murders of the two Cambridgeshire girls have caused several questions to be asked.

One common question is 'Where was God, when these things happened?' I suppose it is natural that people would bring God into the equation. Such evil does provoke deep enquiry into the very nature of mankind.

Bible believers can reply that God has withdrawn His protecting hand over us as a nation, and has left us to 'go it alone'. We will no longer enjoy His former preserving care. We do not after all, want Him to be deeply involved in our lives. We would rather work out our own salvation without reference to His Word. The removal of God's common grace, is the cause of so many tragic events.

When a covenanted nation ignores, and then legislates against God's laws, and refuses to confess their sins, then He is rightly offended and will remove Himself from being their protector. Hosea told Israel that God said *"I will return again to My own place till they acknowledge their offence"* [Hos 5:15]. Micah was called to warn the rulers in Israel that *"they will cry to the Lord, but He will not*

hear them; He will even hide His face from them at that time, because they have been evil in their deeds" [Mic 3:4].

It is surely unreasonable to deny the existence of God in our daily lives and then, when something terrible happens, to start blaming Him for it! This is the logic of unbelievers who ask 'Where was God when.... happened?' Such hypocritical reasoning reveals the natural awareness in the soul of man of an omnipotent Power controlling events.

The real reason why so many tragic events are taking place in our land today and why God has been silent regarding many of the prayers for our nation, is that we are determined to go our own way, which is opposed to God's way. He is leaving us to the consequences of our own folly. It is the 'working out' of *"But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you"* as indicated in [2 Chron 15:2].

Not until there is national repentance can we expect God to answer our prayers for revival and can we expect His special protection. We will have to learn that *"God is not mocked, whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap"* [Gal 6:7]. Let us earnestly pray for repentance.

What's In It For Me?

The Selfist Philosophy

"I'M JUST NOT growing in this relationship," Kevin told his wife Diane. And after ten years of marriage and two kids, he left his family. And he did it, Diane discovered, with the blessing of his therapist.

If Diane had been up on the state of modern psychology, she wouldn't have been so surprised. One Christian psychologist says the spread of what he calls "the selfist philosophy" has gravely damaged many American families.

Dr. Paul Vitz is the author of a newly updated book 'Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship'. In it he describes modern psychology's deep commitment to self-worship, or "selfism." All the major theories of motivation and personality, he says, assume that reward for the self is the only functional ethical principle.

These values are hostile to our ability to form permanent relationships, or to commit to such values as duty and self-sacrifice. Instead, he says, "with monotonous regularity, the selfist literature sides with those values that encourage divorce" and the breaking of family ties.

Part of the problem is the nature of the therapeutic process. The psychotherapist is typically preoccupied with an individual

patient, and he seldom challenges his version of the facts. He doesn't listen to children, parents, or the spouse who might be involved.

Second, Vitz writes, many psychotherapists are themselves divorced or alienated from religious traditions. The temptation for them is to affirm their own choices by encouraging their patients to make the same choices.

Worse, some therapists encourage divorce on theoretical grounds. They teach that if either spouse feels the relationship has stagnated, then the marriage isn't worth saving.

Selfist ideals give some counselors a strong bias against parents. In recovery group settings, patients are under pressure to describe how badly their families treated them. Patients thus become self-pitying "victims"—with a strong sense of moral superiority.

The result, Vitz writes, is a parody of the words of the Prodigal Son: Instead of the son saying, "*Father, I have sinned ... [and] am no longer worthy to be called your son*" [Luke 15:21], today's young man is likely to say, "Father, YOU have sinned, and are no longer worthy to be called my father." With its emphasis on treating individuals in isolation, and its hostility to social bonds, modern psychology has

caused untold damage to our society.

Vitz invites his readers to imagine a different kind of therapy, one based on love, gratitude, respect, and forgiveness—a therapy that strengthens a patient’s family instead of destroying it.

This approach follows the biblical vision of human relations — one that is radically different from that of the therapists. It does not give anyone an “out” if they think they’re not “growing” in their relationships. Instead, we’re told in First Corinthians to love one another unconditionally — to be patient and kind and not insist on getting our own way.

The rise of selfism means that Christians need to be cautious of whom they seek counsel. And we need to see how deeply this message has permeated our entire culture.

If you find yourself asking, “What’s in it for me?”, stop and remember the rest of Paul’s message: “*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things*”—and above all, “*love never fails*” [1 Corinthians 13:7-8].

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Adjust Yourself to People and Things

AS LONG AS YOU insist that things must always be a certain way, you’ll live in endless frustration. You’ll also lose some great opportunities to grow in wisdom, patience and compassion. Think of the energy you’d have for other things, if you didn’t waste so much being upset over the way things are!

Jesus said “*I will never leave you nor forsake you*” [Heb 13:5]. Do you believe that? Really? If you believe that He’s with you in every situation, then why do you keep trying to change things or complain about the way they are? When God is with you, you can have the same peace in the storm as you do on the shore. Listen: “*Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?*” [Luke 12:25-26NIV]. Calm down! Work on becoming more flexible! Learn to bend or you’ll break. Flexibility is just strength preserved and redirected toward a better purpose.

Paul writes “*...I’ve become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life*” [1 Cor 9:19TM]. There you have it - the ultimate reason for being flexible is so that you can be used by God.

Bob Gass

“...unless your righteousness exceeds...”

THE SERMON ON THE mount is one of the most challenging passages in the whole of Scripture. Jesus was speaking to His disciples in front of a large multitude of people and was calling them to live lives worthy of the name of Christian.

In His address He said *“except your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven”* [Mat 5:20]. Many people believe that when Jesus said this He was referring to the imputed justifying righteousness which believers receive through faith in Christ.

However, the remainder of the sermon will not allow us to adopt that interpretation, for He went on to say many things which show us that He was referring to our daily conduct in the world. He was not giving a discourse on the doctrine of justification by faith alone, but rather explaining the type and standard of lifestyle He expects from His people.

Jesus was contrasting the type of righteousness which the ‘churchmen’ of His day were demanding from their followers, with true righteousness. Jesus showed that it was not so much an outward conforming to the habit

and tradition of a church culture, as to the inward and spiritual discipline of the heart.

The control of anger and bad language and the reconciling of Christian brothers has first to be dealt with even before we present ourselves in God’s house, *“first be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift”* [Mat 5:24]. It is not only the actual act of adultery but the secret lusting of it in our hearts that needs to be crucified. Such directions reveal the concern Jesus had for the practical walk and daily life of the believer.

AN IMPERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS COMMENDABLE TO GOD

This leads us to consider the distinction between absolute perfect righteousness (justifying righteousness) and the righteousness which Scripture sometimes calls ‘upright’ and even ‘perfect’. No one, but no one, lives a perfect sinless life. All have sinned and come short of God’s glory.

Yet, God also called some people ‘perfect’ and ‘righteous’ and ‘upright’. Abel *“obtained witness that he was righteous”* [Heb 11:4], Noah was *“perfect in his generation”* [Gen 6:9], Job was

“blameless and upright” [Job 1:1], Ezekiel tells of *“a righteous man (who) turns away from his righteousness”* [Ezek 18:24]. Zacharias and Elizabeth were *“both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless”* [Luke 1:6]. Finally Peter says *“in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him”* [Acts 10:35].

So the Bible does call some people righteous. In fact throughout Scripture there is a regular contrast made between the righteous and the wicked. Paul teaches that there will be eternal life to those who continually do good but to the self-seeking and those who do not obey the truth, there will be indignation and wrath [Rom 2:7-10].

The righteous are those who habitually serve God, albeit imperfectly. The tenor and intent of their life is oriented to pleasing God as best they can, even although they fail and sin often. The course of their life is toward God. The wicked are those who live selfishly and habitually disobey God, not considering His law or His Word.

As John Piper points out, many speak disparagingly of all human righteousness as if nothing at all in sanctified human effort pleased God and that He only saw everything we do as horrible and ugly. Such people cite [Isaiah 64:6] *“all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”*, something which is very true regarding our justification, but hardly true regarding Zacharias

and Elizabeth’s lives when it was recorded they *“walked blamelessly”* before the Lord [Luke 1:6].

There is a righteousness that is not filthy rags. There is a righteous way of life that is pleasing to God. Piper illustrates “When my sons do what I tell them to do - I do not call their obedience ‘filthy rags’, even if it is not perfect. Neither does God. All the more because He is *“working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight”* [Heb 13:21]. He does not call His own Spirit-wrought fruit ‘filthy rags’ ”.

This should be a great encouragement to us that our Father in heaven is not impossible to please. *“He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust”* [Psa 103:14].

There can be a tendency for us to wallow in the mire of our own ruination by going beyond what Scripture says. Redemption does redeem and equip us to serve God. Paul prayed that God would *“do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us”* [Eph 3:20]. Paul obviously believed there was a power at work in the lives of Christians which could bring glory to God. There is a grace that teaches us how to live soberly and righteously in this present evil world [Titus 2:11].

So when Jesus said that we must have a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, He was not referring to justifying righteousness but to our daily walk with God.

Where Will the 'Human Rights' Movement End?

A peek at 'Human Rights' and the pursuit of human happiness

WE ALL WANT to be happy. But do we have a right to be happy? Certainly, God intended us to be happy, and still desires our true happiness.

But our human race has forfeited its rights to all happiness by the rejection of our Creator as the Sovereign of our lives. We chose to disobey Him and have been paying the price ever since. In His love and mercy, God has sent redemption through His Son and true happiness can once again be found. But we don't deserve it - we are unworthy of it. It is a gift through grace alone.

Jacob said *"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant"* [Gen 32:10]. Jacob came to realise that he was unworthy of the very least of God's blessings. He knew he was a sinner and deserved nothing.

We live in a culture that believes not only that life owes us a living, but a happy and good living. Our culture, it seems, believes it is a human right to be happy about everything that happens to us.

"If current trends continues", writes Mick Hume in *'The Times'*, "we will soon have the

human right not to feel unhappy about anything... Any little whinge or petty complaint can assume the authority of absolute truth if it is couched in the language of human rights. Any law, convention or principle that has served society perfectly well can be trampled on by the UK or European courts, in the name of upholding the inalienable human rights of a single 'victim' of unhappiness."

The latest example of human rights is the desire of two women who want to get pregnant via IVF treatment. Their former partners intend to destroy their frozen fertilized embryos as the men do not want their former partners to have their babies. The women are now appealing that such actions will be against their human rights. They claim it is their human right to have a baby. It is their right to have what they want to make them happy!

The godly American founding fathers promised their people the right to 'life, liberty, and the **pursuit** of happiness', but they knew they couldn't guarantee happiness itself. No person and no court can guarantee that. Only God, in Christ can guarantee that.

God's Biggest Problem

The Moderator of the Scottish Presbytery writes

THIS WEEK'S understatement: Society is in a mess. We need not be surprised. If people are constantly bombarded with sex, immorality, and violence poured into their homes through TV soaps and videos, little wonder if these images and lifestyles influence their own choices. Erosion sets in, and consciences are no longer sensitive.

I am not writing about the "world". I am writing about the professing Christian church, God's society on earth. That is what I mean by "God's Biggest Problem". The church is in a mess.

The church in the Bible is God's new community. Made up of people, united by faith to Jesus Christ, the church is to be a light in the world. How will a world that does not know God see what kind of God He is and what He can do? Look at the Christian church? Oh, no! Not any longer. There are Christians whose lives are a good witness for God, but there are far too many professing Christians whose lives are a dishonour to the Saviour. They misrepresent God.

Does that sound harsh and judgmental? Perhaps so, in this period when "political correctness" has become more important than Biblical truth. Adrian Plaas wrote, "There is a dearth of healthy confrontation in the church nowadays. I was infected, very early in my Christian life, with the

politeness disease". Urged to speak lovingly, we mistakenly often never get round to speaking the "truth in love". Within the church we see the same issues as we see in the outside world. You may argue that that is what the church is for, and it is made up of sinners. Exactly so, but the difference is that Christians profess to be followers of the Lord Jesus. That means they have a new life, a new love, a new way of living.

It means that although Jesus finds them as sinners, he makes them saints in whom, and on whom, he is working to fit them for Heaven. If the professing Christians do not present God as they should, who will? That is why I say that God's biggest problem is not with the "world that does not know him", but with people who say that they do, but whose lives and interests are little different from the ungodly among whom they live.

God sent letters to seven churches in Asia, and to one of them he said that He was sick of their ways, that He would vomit them out of his mouth. I believe that God's call to the Christian church today is that it become a community that reflects Jesus Christ, as the moon reflects the light of the sun. That means I must repent, I must seek a closer walk with God and you must also. Lets walk with God, and not be ashamed of Jesus.

MALCOLM MACINNES, *Moderator*

Congregational News

DUNDEE

In July, our full time worker David Dow ran a youth mission with many in the congregation involved. We had the usual children from around the area attending. A video about the Woman of Samaria was shown and the three day event finished with a barbecue at Crombie Park just outside Dundee.

The weather could have been better but it did not stop the steaks and sausages from disappearing! We were delighted that some of the parents came along to the barbecue and some even brought their neighbours to join us.

One of the decisions we have made after the mission was to appoint an official Child Protection Officer. Eileen won the 'award' having a lot of experience regarding the law etc.

We have had further calls for the 'Six-pack' food hand-out (bread, butter, jam, milk, tea and cheese). One couple were from Ireland and had lived in Skye for some time and asked us to pray for them there and then as we were standing!

We are hoping to hire a mini-bus to take some folk up to the APC Conference on Saturday 7th September DV. Our 'Saturday

Lunches' are still happening on the first Saturday of the month.

David Dow went up to Inverness during August for a week to help the congregation with their children's Mission. He enjoyed his time there and no doubt the Inverness congregation will tell us about their mission. David is available to help any congregation who might need him. There is no fee and the 'Bosman rule' does not apply!

Once again we thank those who sent in donations. The bank has requested that cheques are made out to APC, Dundee or Associated Presbyterian Churches, Dundee and not Dens Road Church.

HARRIS

Please note that the Harris Communion, on this occasion, will be on the 4th Lord's day of September. Normally the Harris Communion is on the last Lord's Days of September and April, but for 2002, the September Communion will be from Thursday 19 to Monday 23 September. Revd John Ross from Tain is expected to preach over the weekend. Please pray for the congregation as they try to recover from a period of much illness.

STORNOWAY

The island of Lewis is still recovering from the shock of discovering that Loganair is to commence Sunday flights in and out of Stornoway in October. A Public Meeting organised by the LDOS is to be held on Friday 16 August to assess local opposition to this move.

The congregation has a busy month in August as it has its Barbecue on Wednesday 14 and looks forward to its Communion with the Revd D C Macaskill from Dundee on the last Lord's Day of the month. The minister is then going abroad to Canada and New Zealand to visit the congregations in Toronto, Vancouver and Auckland. Please pray that this trip abroad will bear fruit. Preaching supply is to be taken by their own congregation and some preachers from the mainland

INVERNESS

Holiday Club:

The Congregation runs a regular Sunday School outreach in a community hall. During the last week of the school holidays, volunteers from the congregation, assisted by David Dow (Dundee), ran a Holiday Club, from Monday through Friday, followed by a bar-b-que on Saturday. The emphasis in the lessons and crafts was on Bible stories about ships, like Noah, Jonah, and then three stories about Jesus. It was a good week and an excellent start for the recommending of the weekly classes. Thanks to all who helped in so many ways.

Kingsview Christian Centre

Tremendous progress has been made on the alterations to the building, and the congregation could be using the building for worship services by mid-November.

We have been given planning permission for the hall, and are looking to the Lord for funding to complete the project. If you can be God's hand in the matter, whatever you give will be much appreciated. The estimated cost for the hall is about £146,000.

The plan is that future church events such as the Conference could be held there, as also camps for young people etc. So, we hope that other congregations will be willing to help us achieve this goal.

It may be that Deacons' Courts can give a grant or an interest free loan, and individuals may wish to make their personal donations. The whole church fellowship will benefit from the complete facility. A special account has been opened, and you may wish to pay directly in to it.

We very much appreciate the donations which people have already given.

The account details are : Kingsview Christian Centre (Royal Bank of Scotland, 29 Harbour Road, Inverness. Sorting Code: 83-23-10, and the Account Number is 10045927) For those paying Tax, the Gift Aid scheme brings additional benefit.

Fathers

Written by Lyndon Bowring and reprinted from 'Care' with permission

LAST MONTH MY parents celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary. My mother now eighty-one years old, wonderfully dedicates herself to caring for my eighty-three year old dad who suffered a severe stroke six years ago that drastically affected his mobility and speech.

He and I have always loved to talk at great length, but these days he can only smile and communicate in words that we cannot understand - although I have no doubt the meaning is crystal clear in his mind. I see frustration etched on his face as he tries to tell me what is in his heart. When it is all too much he stops speaking, holds my hand, and looking right into my eyes, gives me the biggest smile imaginable. In that moment there is no need for words because I know that my dad loves me deeply and he sees my respect and love for him too. I thank God with all my heart for him; for as long as I can remember he has been there for me, a pillar of strength.

The relationship we each have with our own parents is deeply significant. Of course it changes as the years go by in ways that may surprise us. Over the weekend as I pushed my father in his wheelchair through the park, I reflected on the words of James Dobson to me: 'If you and your parents live long

enough the day will come when you will become the parent and they the child.'

PRIVILEGE OF FATHERS

Fathers have enormous pleasure at their special moment when a child says for the first time, 'Dad' or 'Daddy'! They know it indicates the beginnings of a unique relationship of trust, security, affection and intimacy.

Many married couples never become parents and for some this is a source of great grief. Childlessness can, for many, be a form of bereavement and all of us need to exercise great sensitivity and care for such couples.

The gift of children challenges us to reflect our loving Father in heaven as we seek to nurture, guide and care for them. As parents we experience a wealth of emotions as our children grow. We are proud to watch them develop unique skills and characteristics, we are thrilled at their successes, anxious about their pain and at times daunted by their disobedience. We feel anguish and hurt when they turn away from us and from that which we have poured into their lives. Some of us have to go through deep valleys of fear, watching helplessly as our children

pursue a lifestyle that we know will lead to difficulties.

How much more does our Father in heaven feel about us at every turn of our lives? Just as we do, He loves to interact with His sons and daughters. God has allowed us to experience the same kind of emotions that He feels Himself. He rejoices over us as we grow to be like Him and we express our gratitude and affection for Him. Our heavenly Father smiles at our successes and graciously lifts us when we stumble and fall. What is more, He shares our anguish and pain, is torn by the blows that hurt us, and weeps with us in our grief.

If our Almighty God is willing to be such a totally involved Father, then surely we should be will to follow His example - whatever our circumstances and however great the personal cost. If you are the Dad of a child of any age, may I encourage you afresh in this all-important calling? In today's fast changing and troubled culture, our children need all the love, understanding and support they can get - whoever they are and however old they may be - especially from a father's heart. Let's not forget those families without fathers; they need special care, protection and friendship.

PRESSURES ON FATHERS

There are enormous demands made on us as fathers. There is the economic pressure to 'make it' financially and materially to provide

the best for our families. A close friend put it well, 'We can be so busy giving our children what we didn't have that we don't have time to give them what we did have. As our children live in a culture with an abundance of temptations, we need to give them patient guidance. Perhaps one of the greatest weaknesses of our society is the way fatherhood has been undervalued and undermined. For many years, fathers have been regarded of little value save as a potential source of financial support. There are many men who have had their children taken from them and then been denied adequate access.

We are sad that successive governments have understated the importance of marriage. In the CARE briefing on the recent Adoption and Children Bill we emphasised that 'the best interests of the child' must include the provision of a mother AND a father.

The power of the media must not be underestimated, and the caricature portrayal of fathers in many programmes also seriously undermines the crucial role that they have to play in our culture and pays little attention to the serious business of fatherhood.

Fathers are desperately needed today. Sir John Stevens, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, says that most of the crime in London is committed by children under 18 and the vast majority of them are boys with no father at home. That doesn't mean that all children of single parents are

destined for a difficult future, but it does suggest that as Christians we have several great responsibilities in this regard. I believe the Church has a duty to say loud and clear that children do need fathers.

It is important too that we stand with single parents, most of whom are mothers, in their most difficult task, and do all we can to prevent them from feeling marginalised; they need our support. There is also a responsibility that falls to us as Christians; to get alongside young people who have not found life easy because of the absence of a father and share with them the true father heart of God.

PRAYERS FOR FATHERS

The Old Testament closes with these sobering words *"See I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse"* [Malachi 4:5,6].

These verses speak of God's passion for strong loving relationships between fathers and children - and He promises that this will have an impact on a nation - for good or for evil. As we look around our society we see this is so.

I have discovered over the years that there are many people who are not parents of children of their own, but actually have

hundreds of 'children'. And so whatever your situation, please let me encourage you to pray:

For your own father, if he is alive: Find ways to show him respect and care in whatever time there is left to you, whatever the history of your relationship. If your dad has passed away, then honour him in your thoughts.

For other fathers: Ask God to help us be aware of any fathers who may need our help, particularly those who are alone and have children with special needs and problems. Let's also remember those dads and mums who, for whatever reason, are no longer living with their children.

For those of us who are fathers: That we would have the vision to go from strength to strength despite our failings, insecurities and weaknesses - trying our best to become the earthly fathers our heavenly Father made us to be.

For the children of our nation: Asking God to protect them from evil, to help them choose good paths and grow into the destiny He has prepared for them. Some of them will be prodigals and specially need our loving prayers.

"He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers".

May God grant a new outpouring of His grace and mercy upon our children and our fathers.

Yours in His name

Lyndon Bowring

Doing God's Will

THE SECRET OF GREAT ministry lies in what we are willing to sacrifice to respond to God's call. There are evangelists, pastors and workers, who never wrote a book, sold a tape, drew a crowd or gained fame, but they made the sacrifice!

Like Noah, whose membership never exceeded eight souls, they ministered faithfully. They wanted to do more. They had hoped to go further than they did. But they laid it all aside, in order to serve the few. They said, "If I am not called to help everybody, then God, please let me help somebody."

What are you willing to give up and sacrifice in order to serve the few God has placed in front of you?

A Word in Season

R A TORREY TELLS of an experience he had which changed his whole attitude to saying a word in season. He was dining in a restaurant with some friends, when he had an urge to speak to the waiter that served them who was looking very depressed. However, he decided to say nothing.

An hour later at the end of the meal, he inquired from another waiter as the first waiter had not returned. He was told. "We found him dead in the back of the restaurant. He hanged himself!"

"The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary"
[Isaiah 50:4].

EVANGELISM!

THE COMMITTEE for Evangelism would like to inform all those who are interested in evangelism that they hope to run a Training Day on **Saturday 12th October** probably in Inverness. Each congregation will be sent full details soon. If you are at interested in evangelism, please keep this day free. The Evangelism Co-ordinator with Evangelical Alliance, John MacKinnon, has agreed to lead the sessions.

TRAINING FOR MINISTRY

THE PRESBYTERY would remind congregations of the Special Collections for the Ministry Training Fund.

These are to be taken up twice per year - in April and October, on whichever Lord's Day in these months suits the local situation.

Please pray that the Lord would raise up and equip those who would proclaim the gospel. Please give as the Lord enables.

KM

CALVARY

The poem below was written by Alistair Grewar who worshipped in our Inverness congregation. The poem was sent in by a friend - it appeared in 'Cheering Words'. Alistair went blind when he was 21 years old and passed away last September. He was a widower for 25 years.

It is enough that I shall see
The nail-pierced hands that beckoned me;
By saving grace I trembling came
To Calvary.

My Saviour hung upon that tree;
By faith I saw it was for me
He suffered in my room and stead
At Calvary.

He came to set the captives free;
He died for sinners such as me;
Sharp thorns did pierce His blessed head,
At Calvary.

Just as you are without one plea,
He calls aloud 'It is for thee
I've suffered scorning, sweat and pain"
At Calvary.

It is enough; my eyes shall see
Christ on His Throne, not on a tree;
He bore my sins and paid my debts
At Calvary.

O sinner, to this refuge flee,
There yet is room for you and me;
His work's complete, He finished It
On Calvary.

Such wondrous love shall never be
Exhausted in eternity,
And all because our Saviour came
To Calvary.

For My Faculties

The poem below is from Ray Chaplin who has contributed to this magazine before. He has written many booklets of poems and meditations. He is farmer from Stowmarket in Suffolk and continues the ministry of a forebear Mrs M A Chaplin who composed many hymns and poems in defence of the faith.

Whilst on this glorious earth O Lord
So many things I see.
May I to Thee give praise and thanks
With every faculty.

When with my eyes I do behold
Earth's beauties here displayed.
May I give glory to Thee Lord
By whom they all were made.

And when a shower in the spring
Brings fragrance fresh and pure.
For lovely scents I can enjoy
My Maker I'll adore.

Whilst listening to the songs of birds
In notes both sweet and clear
May I be thankful for the ears
And pleasant sounds I hear.

Yet while I live and can enjoy
These gifts in mercy given.
May I from earth lift up mine eyes
And think on things of heaven.

And may I learn of richer things
Than earthly things can tell.
And in a Saviour's love rejoice
Who saves from death and hell.

Thus while below I'll praise my God
For all Thy care and love,
And soon a greater joy I'll know
A glorious world above.

For Younger Readers

Dr MACKAY'S BIBLE

The article below was sent in by Mr William Taylor, and appeared in Evangelical Times and is reprinted with permission

INTELLIGENT AND popular, seventeen year old William Mackay was about to leave his home in Montrose. The year was 1856 and William was due to begin medical studies in Edinburgh.

As she helped her son to pack his belongings, his anxious mother slipped a parting gift into William's trunk: a Bible. Inscribing it carefully with both her son's name and her own, Mrs Mackay added a verse of Scripture: a beacon to guide the young man through the maze of temptations which otherwise might entangle a youth from a sheltered and godly home.

CRAVING

Quickly absorbed with his new surroundings and studies, William paid scant attention to his mother's gift. The friends he made were far different from the company he remembered from his childhood days. Soon the young man cast aside any lingering pangs of conscience, and spurned the faith he had learnt at home. A lot of whisky became an invariable companion as William studied or socialised. But gradually alcohol became his master, and his

slim student finances could not stretch to indulge his craving. In a half drunken stupor he glanced round his room one day, wondering what could he pawn to buy a little more whisky? His eye fell on his Bible. Hardening his mind against any remembrance of the hand that had inscribed both his name and hers in its flyleaf, William Mackay took the Bible to the local pawn shop.

All thought of the Bible soon faded as William became engrossed in his work, his friends and his prospects. The years passed and eventually, despite whisky addiction, the young man graduated with high honours in his medical studies and gained a prominent position in an Edinburgh hospital.

Now he openly disparaged the faith he had been taught in his youth. The God in whom his mother trusted became a subject for ridicule. In addition Mackay became a leading member of the society known as the Infidel Club.

SUPERIOR POWERS

With no belief in God, the young doctor pitted his medical skill

against man's last enemy: death itself. Whenever against all odds, he could drag a patient back from the very gates of death, he would revel in his conquest. It proved, so he thought, that man can master his own destiny by his innate ability.

William Mackay gloried in a further opportunity to demonstrate his superior powers over the course of nature, when he could be the centre of an admiring circle of colleagues, all congratulating him on his incredible achievement.

LIFE or DEATH

Again there was a flurry of activity in the hospital as a young man, critically injured was admitted to the hospital. The lower half of his body was horribly crushed, probably in some industrial accident: he could not have many hours to live. William Mackay hurried to the scene - surely he was the right man to deal with such a situation. The victim was in desperate pain, but one thing startled the doctor. He had observed the faces of many as they wracked in agony from multiple injuries. But here was a strange look on this man's face - serenity that defied explanation.

What's the diagnosis doctor?' Asked the injured man. 'Oh I guess we will pull you through', replied Mackay cheerily. 'No, doctor, I don't want any guess. I want to know if it is life or death'. Mackay looked at his patient with astonishment. 'Just lay me down

easy. Anywhere, doctor. I am not afraid to die. I trust in the precious shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I have to die, I know I am going to be with him. But I would like to know the truth; just what is my condition?'

THE BOOK

Able to cope with most contingencies, William Mackay scarcely knew how to answer this calm-faced man. Then he said 'You have at the most three hours to live'. 'Thank you doctor' replied the dying man quietly. Even the hard and cynical medic was suddenly touched.

Is there anything special you would like us to do for you?' He asked kindly. 'In one of my pockets is a two-week's pay packet' replied his patient. 'Please could someone take it at once to my landlady to pay for my lodgings. And yes, there is one more thing. Could they ask her to send me the book?' What book is that?' Asked the surprised doctor. 'Oh, just the book, she will know' the man replied.

STRANGELY FAMILIAR

As he carried on his duties around the hospital, William Mackay could not erase the sight of that calm face. Nor could he shut out the sound of those words, 'I am ready, doctor. Just lay me down'. Ready for death? A concept that Mackay had long since rejected from his code of life.

Returning to the ward, he surprised the nurse in charge by asking after the casualty placed under her care. 'He died a few minutes ago' was her simple reply. 'And did he get his book?' enquired the doctor. 'What was it? A bank book?' 'Yes, he got his book' assured the nurse. 'It arrived shortly before he died. But no, it wasn't his bank book. It is still there under his pillow if you want to look at it'.

Reaching the dead man's bedsie, Dr Mackay felt under his pillow and pulled out the book. It was a Bible. It looked strangely familiar. He opened it, and there on the fly-leaf he was startled to read his own name, and the name of his mother, together with the Scripture text she had given him so long ago. This was the very Bible he had pawned for whisky as a student.

A MAN IN DEBT

With shocked shame, Mackay put his Bible under his coat and hurried to his private office. Choking with emotion he fell on his knees and begged God to forgive him his sins and have mercy upon him. William Mackay was a man in debt - a debt to the unexpected mercy of God - a debt to the men and women of his generation.

Shortly after this he gave up his medical career and entered the Christian ministry, accepting a pastorate in Hull. With the desire to make good the wasted year, Mackay also travelled the length and breadth of the country preaching the gospel he had once despised. Before his own premature death in 1885, he published a collection of his sermons in a book entitled 'Grace and Truth'.

PRAISING OUR GOD IN PSALMS

THE GROUP CALLED Highland Harmony continues to meet for practice on the last Saturday of each month in the North Kessock Free Church Hall at 3.00pm. It is encouraging that, out of a membership of more than fifty, up to forty five usually manage along each month. New members are always welcome - particularly more men to sing the bass part.

In May of this year Highland Harmony joined with Psalm-singers in Glasgow at the Psalmody Recital in St Vincent Street Free Church. A total of about ninety voices, right across the age spectrum, assembled together, along with a large congregation, to sing praise to the One who is worthy of all praise and honour [Psalm 95:1,2].

A Festival of Psalms is to take place, God willing, in Dornoch Free Church on Friday, 4 October at 7.30pm. The praise, which will be led by Highland Harmony, will include some congregational singing. Selected verses from fifteen different Psalms, using fifteen different tunes, will be sung. Some of these are: Psalm 100 (Zion's Temple), Psalm 51 (St Kilda), Psalm 119 (Belmont), Psalm 27 (Resignation), Psalm 119 (Ellers), Psalm 92 (Orlinton) and Psalm 89 (Newington) - just to whet your appetite! All are very welcome to come to Dornoch, and prayer is sought that the evening will be to the glory of God.

KM

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See page 2 for details

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DUNDEE

Revd Donald C Macaskill, 238 Arbroath Road, Dundee DD4 7SB, Tel 01382 451798, Fax 01382-451764 Email: dcmacaskill@apchurches.org.uk Dens Road Church - 11 Dens Road - 11am & 6.30pm, Thu 7pm. Treasurer: Mr W J Macaulay, 4 Lomond Drive, Carnoustie, DD7 6DN, Tel 01241 853621. www.apcdundee.org.uk

EDINBURGH

Revd Roddy MacRae, 6 Frogston Grove, Edinburgh EH10 7AG. Tel 0131 445 3673. Email: roddy.barvas@blueyonder.co.uk. Viewforth Church of Scotland, 104 Gilmore Place - 12 noon & 6.15pm, Wed 7.30pm in manse. Treasurer: Mr A Cumming, 31 Doune Park, Dalgety Bay, Dunfermline, KY11 9LX Tel 01383 825637. www.welcome.to/edinburghapc

FORT WILLIAM

Services held jointly with the Free Church, High Street, 11am & 6.30pm, Thursday 7.30pm. Contact: Donald MacNicol, 14 Altour Road, Spean Bridge, Inverness-shire PH34 4EZ, Tel 01397 712405.

HARRIS

Contact: Norman MacDonald Tel 01859 530345. Seilabost School - 12 noon & 6pm Tue 7.30pm. Treasurer: John MacKinnon, 8 Stockinish, Isle of Harris HS3 3EN Tel 01859 530211.

INVERNESS

Revd Dr Malcolm MacInnes, Drumalin, 16 Drummond Road, Inverness IV2 4NB, Tel 01463 223983 Fax 01463 226939 Email:

mmacinnnes@btinternet.com St Stephen's Parish Church, Old Edinburgh Road - 12 noon & 6.30pm, Wed 7.30pm. Treasurer: Mr Kenneth Macdonald, 'Arnish', 16 Drumdevan Place, Inverness IV2 4DQ, Tel 01463 231364. www.apcinverness.freeuk.com

KINLOCHBERVIE

Kinlochbervie: Conference Room, Harbour Offices, 11.30am; Treasurer: W D MacLeod, 114 Inshegra, Rhiconich, by Lairg IV27 4RH Tel 01971 521388.

LAIRG & ROGART

Revd Alexander Murray, APC Manse, Saval Road, Lairg, IV27 4EH, Tel 01549 402176 Email: amurray@lairg.freeserve.co.uk Lairg Church - 11.30am, 1st, 3rd, 5th Weds 7pm; Rogart Church - 6pm. 2nd, 4th Weds 7pm. Treasurer: Miss Annie J Morrison, Woodlands, Lairg IV27 4DB; Tel 01549 402362.

LOCHCARRON

Lochcarron Village Hall - 11am & 6pm, Wed 7pm; Kishorn Meeting House 3pm on 2nd Lord's Day of month. Treasurer: Mrs Alison Stewart, 13 Kirkton Gardens, Lochcarron IV54 8UQ, Tel 01520 722239 Email: ajs.kishorn@tesco.net

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Free Church Stoer - 11am; APC Church, Drumbeg - 12.30pm; Free Church Lochinver - 6pm. Treasurer: Mrs E. MacKenzie, Church Road, Stoer, Sutherland, IV27 4SE, Tel 01571 855279.

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Mr J van Woerden, 8 Bank Street, Plockton IV52 8TP, Tel 01599 544272. Plockton 3pm. Email: jjan@vanwoerden.freeserve.co.uk

POOLEWE

Services held jointly with Poolewe and Aultbea Free Church - Poolewe 10.45am, Inverasdale 4.30pm, Aultbea 6.30pm. On 4th Lord's Day of month - Poolewe 10.45am and 5.00pm with APC pulpit supply. Treasurer/Contact: K MacLean, Dunedin, 42 Strath, Gairloch IV21 2DB, Tel 01445 712050. Email: kendunedin@aol.com

SKYE

Revd Angus Cattanach, APC Manse, 20 Glamaig Place, Portree IV51 9PJ, Tel 01478 613258 Portree APC Church, Staffin Road - 12 noon & 6.30pm, Thu 7.30pm; C of S, Dunvegan - 12.15 & 5pm. Contact: Norman MacKay Royal Bank House, Portree IV51 9BX, Tel 01478 612822.

STORNOWAY

Revd George I Macaskill, APC Manse, 36 Newvalley, Isle of Lewis HS2 0DN, Tel 01851 703217, Fax 01851 703775. Email: g.i.macaskill@btinternet.com 72 Keith Street - 11am & 6.30pm, Thu 7.30pm. Treasurer: Mr W K Macleod, 3 Oliver's Brae, Stornoway HS1 2SS, Tel 01851 703796. www.treetapesministry.org

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Revd John Ross, APC Manse, 2 Cameron Gardens, Tain IV19 1NT, Tel 01862 892199. Email: revjr@talk21.com Tain Church, Upper King Street - 11.30am & 6.30pm; Hilton Church 11.30am and 5pm, Wed 7.30pm. Treasurer: Roderick Mackenzie, Geanies House, Fearn, by Tain IV20 1TW, Tel 01862 871000. Email: cfp@geanies.org.uk

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