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The APC News

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ON SATURDAY 5th JULY the Dundee congregation had their annual barbecue with some of the local community joining them. This year the congregation invited the parents of the children who come to the Sunday Club. The above picture shows most of the group who gathered for

the barbecue. Despite having an excellent summer, the weather that day was not very good - but there was no problem in managing to get the meat cooked! As usual we had a lovely feast and everyone enjoyed the best of fare with shelter being provided by the marquee. The parents of the children made special mention of how much they enjoyed being with the congregation.

A fuller report of the congregation's activities with the community and the Sunday Club children is given on page 12. Prayer is asked that the contacts made over the summer would result in real spiritual blessing.

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Do We Want Revival?

I SAIAH desperately wanted revival. He cried agonisingly to God for it. *"O that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down!"* [Isa 64:1]. But revival did not come in his day! The next chapter tells us when it was answered - when the Gentiles turned to the Lord (*"those who did not ask for Me...those who did not seek Me...a nation that was not called by My name"* [Isa 65:1]. A sovereign God rules.

Why did Isaiah cry so fervently? Because no one agonised in prayer *"There is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You"* [Isa 64:7]. How many today in our land 'stir themselves up to pray'? Are there loud cries from the bottom of many hearts for God's mercy and forgiveness in our land today? How many Christians 'go out of their way' to pray for long periods of time? How many Christians wrestle for hours with God in prayer? How many Christians fast in order to concentrate and 'lay hold of God'? How serious are we when we say we need national revival?

While it is true that God is sovereign and that there is no guaranteed 'formula' for revival, the Scriptures teach that God does respond to earnest concentrated prayer. The context of James' well

known verse *"the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much"* [Jam 5:16], is to pray to the Lord in time of trouble. James encourages us to call on the Lord.

James of course tells us in the previous verses that we must confess our sins at the same time.

Unconfessed sin does block our communication with God. Isaiah likewise mentions that God has hidden His face from us and has consumed us *"because of our iniquities"* [Isa 64:7b]. Even our good deeds (righteousnesses) *"are like filthy rags"* to Him. Unless we acknowledge and confess as a nation our sins, we cannot expect national blessing.

Repentance is absolutely essential. If, as in Isaiah's day, *"our iniquities like the wind, has carried us away"* then we need to repent of these iniquities. There is little doubt but that our sins have carried us far away from God and His Word.

We are living in similar days as Isaiah. Our society like Israel in the time of Isaiah *"calls evil good, and good evil; (and)...put darkness for light, and light for darkness"* [Isa 5:20]. We are totally ignorant of the true character of God and His anger towards us. The ass and the ox know their masters, but Israel does not know its Creator and Lord.

Our nation needs to learn about God once again. Our generation is generally ignorant about God and His law. We will never repent of sins which we don't realise are sins. And we will never realise what sin is until we know what God and His law is. We have been so carried away with falsehoods that we have 'forgotten' the truth.

Yes, we need revival - but we need to **persevere** in prayer. As Isaiah again says *"You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth"* [Isa 62: 6b]. We must give God no rest through constant prayer. Not only must we persevere but we must be serious earnest and passionate.

The Psalmists constantly instruct their readers to *"shout aloud"* and to *"Raise your voice"* and to *"shout joyfully"* and to ask God to *"bow down Your ear to me"* so that our genuine desires may come up before Him. Of all the people in the world that should be passionate, God's people are the ones who should show the most passion. We live in an age that shows its passion in all types of ways for all types of issues, sporting and political. How sad when the Church has no passion for the only things worth being passionate about!

Isaiah also reminds us about the chaos national revival would bring? Isaiah says it will be like mountains shaking, the earth trembling and water boiling. *"When You did awesome things for which*

we did not look, You came down and mountains shook at Your presence, as fire burns brushwood, as fire causes water to boil" [Isa 64:3]. There will be upheaval.

Imagine the counselling sessions that will be necessary to sooth the hearts broken over sin! During Christ's ministry on earth, the disciples were inundated with requests and enquiries. There were occasions when they were so busy they had no time to take their meals *"Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread"* [Mat 3:20].

Are we prepared to make the necessary sacrifices that revival would bring? Many of our priorities would have to change. Many of our favourite TV programmes would never be seen, holidays will have to be cancelled, late hours will need to be kept to get everything done. But how glorious will the work be in revival times! Serving the Lord with all our hearts.

There will be rewards for those who faithfully persevere in prayer waiting on the Lord - the Lord will act on their behalf *"for since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who **waits** for Him"* [Isa 64:4]. Let us be serious in our prayers for revival. Let us not think we are wasting our time calling on God to bless our land. *"I will bring the one-third through the fire... They will call on My name, And I will answer them"* [Zech 13:9].

Comfort and Desperation

By Jill Carattini

I WAS REMINDED recently that we are comfortable— perhaps even ridiculously comfortable. As the radio sounded a brief report on the future of luxury automobile options aimed at easing the discomforts of city driving and long commutes, in the middle of Atlanta traffic, I was curious. And I must admit, I was thoroughly intrigued by the promise of seats that offer back and neck massages and cars that offer aromatherapy at the command of one's voice.

The comforts and resources of this great land are, indeed, vast and promising. And while I certainly enjoy many of its conveniences, I wonder if the atmosphere of vast and viable comforts can also mislead us. Because it seems quite possible that we can become so comfortable that we lull ourselves into stupefaction, into believing that this is it — what we work for and pine after — or worse yet, that this is what we deserve, such that we would even choose comfort over reality.

For it is often in this environment where we hear statements like, "I am most comfortable with this religion" or "I am uncomfortable with that belief." The questions are voiced from a similar starting point: "Does Christianity make its followers

happy?" "Will Christianity do me any good?"

Do you see how this is completely missing the point? When comfort is the end, it quickly becomes more important than reality itself. And that is ridiculous. Either Christianity is true or is it the biggest falsehood ever to be bought into. Either Christ was serious when He claimed to be the very way to life itself, or He was not. And if He is who He says He is, life is not about being comfortable, but about following Him to the ends of the earth. This is what we must first decide.

But even after you have made this decision, the other danger of comfort becomes familiarity. We can become so familiar with words and doctrines and beliefs that we lose touch with the magnitude of their meaning, the reason we believe them in the first place.

Leonard Ravenhill tells a sobering story in his book, *Why Revival Tarries*. He describes the routine of a prison chaplain who was to read aloud several Scripture passages on the last morning of the criminal condemned to die. But on this morning, Charlie Peace stopped the pastor to ask what he was reading. "The Consolation of Religion" was the chaplain's reply. Shocked at the way the dry-eyed

pastor so calmly and professionally read of life and hell, truth and eternity, Charlie Peace was visibly taken aback. "Sir," he responded, "if I believed what you and the church say that you believe, even if England were covered with broken glass from coast to coast, I would walk over it, if need be, on hands and knees to deliver that message to even one soul who had not heard..."

Can we lose touch with the enormity of the reality we proclaim? Absolutely. Glimpses of those who have received the message of Christ because of the men and women who saw the need to carry it through broken glass further this truth. Returning recently from a country torn apart by disease and civil unrest, a friend of mine described the scenes of entire villages dancing

and shouting in worship, a people clinging to the hope of the Gospel, visibly transformed by the person of Christ. And my friend said this: "I am convinced that God is not found in the ease of our accommodation but in the level of our desperation for Him."

Jesus once boldly stated, "*I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly.*" How desperate are you to know what He is talking about?

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Christian Sacrifice?

"OUR PRIORITIES IN LIFE are holiness and evangelism. Those are the passions that marked the saints of old, great ones like Henry Martyn. Why are there so few like him today? Could it be because our eyes are not fixed on the future? We have become worldly Christians. We still go to church, we still believe the right things in our heads, we still believe in heaven intellectually, but our actions suggest otherwise. We are more concerned with happiness than holiness, with security than souls. Ours is a laid-back religion that seeks to be served, rather than to serve. We want a church that makes us feel good, rather than one that challenges us. So often we opt for religion that costs us little. 'Sacrifice' is a word that is not often on our lips.

We stress our rights, not our responsibilities; our freedom in Christ, not our debt to Christ; our security, rather than our sacrifice. Is it not time that we redressed the balance? It is time to think about Moses. He turned his back on the very things that most people spend their lives pursuing; prestige, pleasure, prosperity. Instead he chose to go God's way, leading a nation of slaves who most of the time were profoundly ungrateful for his sacrifice."

Vaughan Roberts in 'Distinctives'

Scripture and Tradition - Scripture Alone - or Both?

THE REFORMERS DID NOT reject tradition; they rejected one particular kind of tradition over another kind of tradition. The debate at the Reformation was over two different concepts of tradition. So concludes Keith A Mathison in his book 'The Shape of Sola Scriptura'.

The author is very concerned that the adherents of Calvin and Luther have lost the true concept of tradition. He believes that evangelicals today have moved away from the true doctrine of tradition. He also believes that much of the divisions in the evangelical church today is because we have not followed the Reformers in their understanding of tradition.

He shows that there were, and still are, three concepts of tradition in the Church. There are what he calls, Tradition O, Tradition I and Tradition II. There is also a Tradition III! Tradition I is the true Biblical view of tradition that the early Church believed and taught during the first 3 centuries. Calvin and Luther tried to turn the Roman Church back to Tradition I.

The true Biblical view of tradition (Tradition I), is that Scripture is the sole and alone **source** of revelation. Scripture alone has authority. However,

Scripture must be interpreted, and it is the Church's role to **interpret** it according to the 'rule of faith' (regula fidei) and that 'rule of faith' is the apostolic faith. The faith handed down from the apostles. Paul warns the Thessalonians to withdraw from every brother who does not walk "*according to the **tradition** which he received from us*" [2 Thes 3:6].

During the middle ages, a **two-source** theory of tradition began to emerge in the Church. An extra - scriptural source - the Church! The Church was not only to be the interpreter but a **source** of revelation (Tradition II) also! The struggle during the 16th century was between these two views of tradition. Protestantism was associated with the early Church's view, ie Scripture is the sole source of revelation but the Church interprets it according to the 'rule of faith' (Tradition I). Roman Catholicism was associated with a two-source view of authority, Scripture as a source, and the Church as a source (Tradition II). The Church also provided the interpretation of Scripture.

Although Luther attacked the pope, he did not attack the Church. He held to the ancient view of Scripture and the Church. In fact he said "We do not reject everything

that is under the dominion of the Pope. For in that event we should also reject the Christian Church... much Christian good, nay, all Christian good, is to be found in the papacy and from there it descended to us" [quote from p 96]. Luther did not reject true Catholic tradition; he rejected certain traditions. Luther opposed a theory of the papacy that had become divorced from the Biblical teaching of the Church.

Continuity with the early Church had been broken by the Roman Church during the middle ages. The battle at the Reformation was for a **return** to the ancient and apostolic belief that Scripture was the sole source of authority and revelation, with the Church as its interpreter. What happened during the middle ages was the Church began to usurp equal authority with Scripture.

However, at the Reformation, and at the other end of the spectrum there were the radical reformers. They also believed that Scripture alone had authority but they did not believe the Church had any right to interpret Scripture at all. All that was needed was the Bible on its own and man himself could interpret it. The Church and the 'rule of faith' had no role whatever to play. Each individual had the right to interpret the Bible by himself and for himself - this was 'Tradition O' which allows no role whatever for any tradition.

The Creeds and Confessions of the early Church can be abandoned if we do not agree with them. Their battle-cry was 'Scripture alone', or

sola scriptura! However, the true meaning of sola scriptura is Tradition I.

Mathison makes the point that many evangelicals today are ignorant of the true meaning of sola scriptura and he makes a 'play' on the new alternative view calling it 'solo scriptura' (Tradition O). He maintains that modern evangelicalism too often follows 'Tradition O' as the Biblical position when in fact Tradition I is the ancient and true Christian orthodox position.

The radical reformers believed that Luther and Calvin did not go far enough in opposing the Roman Catholic view of Tradition II. Tradition II held that what the Roman Church taught **was** tradition, having equal authority with Scripture. Tradition O resulted in individualism and private judgment concerning what Scripture taught. Ancient views, thrashed out in Councils over the first few centuries could be set aside.

Mathison shows how rationalists like Socinus (modern day Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons, etc), have arisen because of this view of 'solo scriptura'. A rejection of the ancient creeds on the person of Christ, etc are set aside and novel views of the individual have as much authority as these ancient creeds. Private judgment rose above the corporate judgment of the Councils regarding the meaning of Scripture.

Mathison believes that the current emphasis on individual

interpretation of Scripture is more akin to Enlightenment rationalism than Reformed theology. In quoting Charles Hodge, he reminds us "Christians do not stand isolated, each holding his own creed. They constitute one body, holding one common creed. Rejecting that creed, or any of its parts is the rejection of the fellowship of Christians, incompatible with the communion of saints, or membership of the body of Christ. In other words Protestants admit that there is a common faith of the Church, which no man is at liberty to reject, and which no man can reject and be a Christian" [page 147].

Mathison makes a strong case for his position and states "It is one thing to assert that Paul commanded the Church to hold fast to the 'traditions'. It is quite another to demonstrate that these are what Rome refers to when she speaks of her traditions" [page 181].

He also shows that the Church does have some authority, contrary to the understanding of many evangelicals today. He quotes Paul writing to Timothy saying the church is "*the pillar and ground of the truth*" [1 Tim 3:15] and adding "the Church is not identical to the truth. She is the pillar and ground of the truth in the sense that she is called to uphold and proclaim the truth, but she is distinguished from the truth she upholds...The Church is the place where the truth may be found, but it is the truth which has the ultimate authority" [page 204].

The fallibility of the Church

does not render her authority invalid. A mother has been given authority to raise up her children, but she is imperfect. The Church, like a mother must correct itself when shown to be in the wrong. In spite of her imperfections, the Church has been given authority by Christ - but it does not supercede Scripture.

In connection with the Church recognising and testifying to the canon of Scripture (and therefore having equal authority), Mathison maintains the Church did not create the 'rule of faith' or the canon. Defining a thing does not mean creating it. Scientists define the laws of physics but it did not create them.

Mathison continues "Rome has made the mistake of confusing the recognition of authority with the conferral of authority. John the Baptist was chosen to prepare the way for Jesus the Messiah [Mat 3:3]. And John the Baptist recognised the Messiah, saying "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" [John 1:29]. But the fact that John recognises Jesus does not imply that John is greater in authority than Jesus. Neither does the fact that the Church recognised the divine inspiration of of Scripture imply that the Church has greater authority than Scripture. The sheep hear and know the voice of their Shepherd [John 10:4], but this does not place the sheep on a level of authority equal to or greater than the Shepherd" [page 265].

The Roman Catholic position on Scripture shares an equal flaw

with the modern evangelical position - each results in autonomy. The Roman Catholic position results in the autonomy of the Church, the modern evangelical position results in the autonomy of self or the individual believer.

Individuals are no more infallible than Rome. The Pope of Self can be every bit as dangerous as the Pope of Rome. We all come to the Scriptures with our own weaknesses and frailties and blind-spots and ignorance.

Before the first book of the New Testament was written the gospel was preached, based upon the traditions handed down by the Apostles. The Apostles' understanding and interpretation of the Old Testament was the basis of their theological foundations. The false solo scriptura view is no more than a mere opinion denying any

real authority to the ancient ecumenical creeds of the Church.

The true Biblical view of what Mathison terms Tradition I, guards the Church against individuals and groups who would tear the Scripture out of its context, twist its meaning to fit their their own notions about what Christianity is or should be, and falsely propagate those very notions under the name of Christianity.

This book should be read by elders and ministers and Church leaders, but it is very hard to obtain. It is published in America by Canon Press, PO Box 8729, Moscow, ID 83843. www.canonpress.org ISBN 1-885767-74-9. It is entitled 'The Shape of Sola Scriptura' by Keith a Mathison. It has 365 pages including bibliography, etc and is clearly written.

Driven by Fear and Love

"THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS DRIVEN by a two-pronged motivation. He was urged on by a reverential "*fear of the Lord*" [2 Cor 5:11] as he anticipated the day when he would stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of his ministry. He was also constrained by the "*the love of Christ*" [v14] , which drove him forward like a raft tossed about on the tumbling white waters of a cascading river. This means a profound renewal of our personal and corporate spiritual lives through our worship and our practice of the spiritual disciplines. If evangelism means those who know Christ introducing Him to to those who don't; then those who are seeking to make Him known must themselves reflect an intimate relationship with the Lord. Otherwise the introductions are likely to prove abortive."

Eddie Gibbs & Ian Coffey in 'Church Next'

Unity and Diversity in 1st Corinthians 12

1 CORINTHIANS 12 is not about unity; Paul takes that as read, having spent the first four chapters of this letter appealing for unity and showing what that unity is based on.

This chapter is about diversity. It is saying that within the body of Christ there are sorts of different people with all sorts of different gifts, abilities callings, just as within the human body there are all sorts of bits and pieces - eyes, ears, feet, hands, kidneys, brain, and so on - that have different functions. And just as all the parts of the human body are needed and important, so that when one part doesn't function properly we describe that body as disabled, so each and every Christian is equally important and equally needed within the body of Christ.

Paul's argument does not really begin with the human body. It begins with God. There is diversity in the Godhead. He is revealed as Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit [12:4-6]. Because the Christian God is a unity in diversity, so His people on earth will be a unity of diverse people. The Trinity, as a model of community and co-operation, to some extent stands behind every New Testament picture of the

church the community of God's people. The point Paul wants to make is that unity does not mean uniformity. A united church is not one where every member is a clone of the minister or leader. Having established the unity in diversity of the Trinity, Paul goes on to show the same principle at work in the human body [12-27].

The point is not to deliver a treatise on the theology of God, still less to give a basic biology lesson. The point is about gifts. Gifts are a sign of diversity, given to help build a unity of co-operation and creativity within the body of Christ. It is precisely because we are not all the same and don't all have the same gifts, says Paul, that we can grow as Christian people in God's world as we meet together, share our experiences and build one another up in our faith (the theme of 1 Corinthians 14). The tragedy is that so many churches force people into a particular mould, saying, in effect, 'If you want to feel welcome here, you've got to be like us.'

This is the opposite of the open, diverse community that Paul was describing in 1 Corinthians 12.

*Simon Jones in
'Why Bother with Church'*

Congregational News

DUNDEE

The congregation are delighted to welcome David Dow into full membership. David was an elder in the Church of Scotland when he came to work with us as an outreach worker, and although he worshipped with us regularly since then, he retained his membership with the Church of Scotland. Recently he handed in to us his disjunction certificate to seeking membership. David has been a great blessing and support to us during the past two years and we trust that he will be blessed in our fellowship.

Just before the summer holidays the congregation invited the parents of the children in our clubs to join their children, and some in the congregation, for an overnight stay at a camp near Dundee. It was the weekend of our barbecue and many more joined us for the barbecue! The weather was excellent apart from the time of the barbecue. However, we managed to get the chicken, sausages, burgers, etc cooked and we had a scrumptious meal.

This time away with the community was an excellent occasion of getting to know them and judging by their comments to us at the end they thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Some of them

shared their problems with us and asked for help and advice. The weekend finished with a service in the church at which 5 of the community attended.

Many thanks to all who worked hard and stayed overnight with the youngsters and made the barbecue the usual feast for which it has come to be known. May God be glorified in all these attempts at bringing His Word to the community.

One evening in July we had the pleasure of hearing from John and Rachel Tainsh, workers in Tajikistan. The Logie & St John's Church of Scotland joined with us for that evening.

INVERNESS

The congregation continues to enjoy the new facilities, and has pressed on in various outreach ministries. The premises are being increasingly used by groups who find it both suitable and pleasant.

Over the summer months, activities such as Ladies Meeting, Men's Breakfast Meeting, and Book Reading Club have had a recess. However, it is hoped that these will resume soon. Following the success of the Drawing Club, which was held over the Easter school holidays, Holiday Clubs were organized for

the first week of the summer school vacation, one at Kingsview and the other at Drakies, where the Sunday Club has continued for years, and where there have been good Summer Clubs.

There were six American students on mission work in the congregation and they were helped by a number of our own young people. Because the response at Kingsview was small, the children from there were transported to Drakies and the one Club catered for both groups. The outreach bimonthly magazine, The King's View, continues to be circulated in the area, and we pray that the seed sown will soon bear the promised fruit.

The building contractor has been on holiday, so there has not been much progress on the Annex over recent days. However, the site has been cleared, a retaining wall been built, and hopefully, by the time this is being read, the foundations will be in place and there will be more visible signs of the Annex taking shape.

We continue to see the Lord's provision in so many ways, from funding and furniture for the Annex, through to items which mean that the venue is well equipped for large Conferences and smaller group meetings.

With all of that, there is one thing we crave for above all else. We long for a mighty work of the Spirit to revive the church and awaken the dead. Please join with us in that prayer.

STORNOWAY

The congregation probably had the best weather ever for its Barbecue on Friday 8 August. Sandy Gillies, one of its members, has returned from climbing Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzanire to raise funds for Mission Aviation Fellowship. The trip was a great success.

The Stornoway Communion is on the last Lord's Day of August and Revd Graham Hind from Thornton Heath Evangelical Church and Revd John Scott from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales in Chelmsford are expected to preach over that period.

There are several Missionaries expected to address the congregation over the autumn and the Fellowship evenings after the Sunday evening service are expected to start soon. The congregation is meeting on 11 September to discuss the possibility of using the "Christianity Explored" course over the winter months.

HARRIS

The congregation were encouraged to see visitors over the summer which increased their numbers considerably. They look forward to its Communion on the last Lord's day of September when Revd A N McPhail from Oban will be with them for the weekend.

"No More Games: Living and walking as people of the light"

THE TOPIC ON THE table today is personal purity. Answer this question as honestly as you can. As we study God's Word, if you hear God calling you to a pure life, will you respond? If the Spirit of God exposes an impure habit, will you break it off? Before you read any more it would be good to get this issue settled.

If you're not willing to give God's Word and God's Spirit the authority to change the way you live, then you might as well read some thing else. But if you are, then get ready to taste and see the goodness of the Lord as He directs your life to pure living. You'll never be satisfied with life mixed with any of the world's ingredients again.

The apostle Paul laid it out clearly in Romans 12:1: *"I appeal to you by the mercies of God to present your body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world [don't mix in anything worldly], but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."*

After we become a follower of Christ, it is amazing how personal

habits quickly set in. And you should know this that God knows too. If your life pleases Him, then you're like a fragrant offering rising up to His nose. As one writer said, "He breathes in your sacrifice. He receives your life as pure worship." Let's be done with anything not fitting God's called-out ones. Holiness means no more games.

So where do you stand in this regard? Are you committed to living a pure life? Make a habit of reading and living Ephesians 5. Look at verse 9 and 10: *"Walk as children of light . . . discern what is pleasing to the Lord."* Walking in the light is evidence of incredible transformation. You may not look really different. But your walk will. Finding out what pleases God . . . and then doing it is all you really need to know.

So practically, what does that mean? Take a deep breath and answer these questions honestly - I make no apology for being so blunt:

1. When was the last time I made a crude joke or laughed at one? Do people think I will tolerate it?

2. When was the last time I sat

through a sexual scene on television completely undisturbed?

3. Men especially—do my eyes look over someone attractive in a way that would make them uncomfortable if they noticed?

4. Are there words in my vocabulary which link me to the world and not to Christ?

5. Do I rationalize my enjoyment of books that tell immoral stories?

6. Am I struggling with an attraction or a relationship with a person who is not my spouse? Or if you are single, someone who's not a Christian?

7. Are my topics of conversation honouring to others? Do they give

grace to those who hear? [Ephesians 4:29b.]

8. How do my convictions about appropriate entertainment differ from someone who doesn't know Christ?

9. What do I do that I would not do if Jesus Christ were visually present with me? (I say visually because He *is* present whether you recognize it or not.)

I think you get the drift? Do you have some things to work on? One writer said, "Nothing tastes as sweet or smells more fragrant to God than a pure life. *"Walk in the light, as He is in the light"* [1 John 1:7]. No matter where you are, start today."

Walk as people of the light!

Gems from Gurnall

"NATURAL MEN'S HOPE is in this present life. They are so rooted in this world that there wish is that God will never take them out of it. Even when they say they hope to be saved, their consciences tell them they had rather stay here. They desire salvation more out of dread of hell than from hope of heaven. Of course they are not so insane as to prefer damnation in hell to life in heaven - but the truth is that they like the world better than either".

"EVERY PROMISE IS DATED, but with a mysterious character; and because we cannot understand God's chronology, we think He must have forgotten us. It is as if a man should set his watch by his own hungry stomach rather than by the sun, and then it is noon and complain because his lunch is not quite ready. We covet comfort and expect the promise to keep time with our impatient desires. But the sun will not move any faster if we set our watch forward, nor the promise come sooner if we antedate it."

"IN A WORD, PEOPLE EMPLOY, an abundance of wisdom and discretion in ordering their worldly affairs; yet when it comes to the business of heaven and the salvation of their souls, they are not like the same men."

William Gurnall

Its About Time!

Worldview and the Clock

IN JONATHAN SWIFT'S classic book *Gulliver's Travels*, when Gulliver arrives in Lilliput, the Lilliputians see his pocket watch and conclude that it must be Gulliver's god. After all, Gulliver told them that he never did anything without consulting it first. I often feel like that.

Is the clock your god? I believe that there is probably no other part of our lives so thoroughly co-opted by a secular worldview than our notion of time. We say time is a gift from God, but most of the time we treat time as a club rather than a gift—something that we chase, and once we catch it, it beats us up. It's a notion of time that is contrary to a Christian worldview.

To properly understand time, we need richer language than the language of management. We need biblical language that reflects the God who grants us life hour by hour, minute by minute.

Time in the global economy is what I call "head-banging time." There are no more days; there is simply productivity—24/7. Time in the global economy never slows down, never rests, and has no rhythm but the relentless beat of commerce.

That is not the biblical idea of time. God has built a rhythm into

the world and into human beings. Eugene Peterson in his book *Working the Angles* points out that in the Bible a day doesn't begin with sunrise. It begins with sunset. The day begins when we go to sleep and God works. We wake up and join Him in the work of the day He began while we were sleeping. We don't begin the day, but rather we wake up and step into God's rhythm of grace, a day already in progress.

This idea that day begins when I go to sleep is a vital worldview concept. Life, success, and productivity don't, in the final analysis, depend on us. They depend on God.

And that understanding allows us to rest—to rest in our sleep knowing that God is at work and to rest on the Sabbath. Because we believe in the providence of God, we can affirm that we have enough time, and we can then receive the day as a gift.

There are at least four applications for this biblical view of time. First, we should honor our bodies by keeping sensible schedules and getting the rest we need. We have enough time to work, rest, love our families and friends, worship, and exercise.

Second, prayer and meditation on God's Word must be built into

our schedules. Keeping God and His Word at the forefront of our minds helps us develop the biblical notion of time.

Third, we can say, no. Our over-scheduled lives are testimony that our notion of time has not been formed by a biblical worldview.

And finally, we can enjoy the freedom of the Sabbath, that foretaste of our eternal rest with God. Time is a profound worldview issue. And this biblical perspective on time will revolutionize the way we live, play, rest, worship, and work.

So the next time you look at

your watch, take a moment to remember who your God is and how He has providentially given you all the time you need.

This commentary was delivered by Prison Fellowship President Mark Earley.

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www.christianity.com/breakpoint

The Wrath of God Revealed

"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness of men who hold down the truth in unrighteousness" [Rom 1:18 RV]. The present tense, *"is revealed"*, implies a constant disclosure, going on all the time; *"from heaven"*, which stands in contrast to *"in the gospel"* in the previous verse, implies a universal disclosure, reaching those whom the gospel has not yet reached. How is this disclosure made? It imprints itself on every man's conscience...No man is entirely without inklings of judgment to come. And this immediate disclosure is confirmed by the revealed word of the gospel, which prepares us for its good news by telling us the bad news of a coming *"day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God"* [Rom 2:5]. Nor is this all. To those who have eyes to see, tokens of the active wrath of God appear here and now in the actual state of mankind. Everywhere the Christian observes a pattern of degeneration, constantly working itself out - from knowledge of God to worship of that which is not God, and from idolatry to immorality of an ever grosser sort, so that each generation grows a fresh crop of *"ungodliness and unrighteousness of men"*. In this decline we are to recognise the present action of divine wrath, in a process of judicial hardening and withdrawal of restraints...If you want proof that the wrath of God...is already working as a force in the world, Paul would say, you need only look at life around you, and see what God has given men up to. And who today, nineteen centuries after he wrote, could challenge his thesis?"

Jim Packer in 'Knowing God'

How Did Christianity Spread?

The following article is written by Lon Allison entitled 'Once Upon a Time...' and is taken from a Reformation & Revival Ministries Newsletter

MOST OF THE TIME Christianity gets a black eye from cultural pundits. The argument usually goes some thing like: If Christianity is a religion of love, explain the Crusades?

If Christianity values all people, explain American and British slavery?

If Christianity is true and Christ is alive, why is the world so evil? They have a point. If our belief in Christ as Lord is correct, then that Lordship should evidence itself in society. The teaching of Jesus turned the world upside down in his time, and we would argue, for the good. But did its impact affect the world after Jesus?

An interesting book speaks to this issue with surprising force. The Rise of Christianity, by sociologist Rodney Stark, seeks to explain how Christianity came to dominate the Roman Empire within 300 years. According to Stark, Christianity grew from **roughly 1,000 believers in A. D. 40, to nearly 34 million by the year 350**. This astonishing figure comprised more than 50 percent of the Greco-Roman empire at that time. What made it grow to such an extent, in so short a

time?

While Stark suggests numerous factors, I will limit my response to three of the most interesting. First, contrary to popular belief, early Christianity did impact the citizens and leaders of the empire. Most historians argue that Christianity reached only the lower classes. However, if that was the case, then why was it not forcefully contained or extinguished by the government? From its beginning, the life and message of Jesus touched every segment of society.

He was as effective with Nicodemus "the" teacher of Israel, as he was with lepers. He intrigued Pilate and Herod as much as the blind and the lame. To reach a society demands the ability to reach and convert leaders and people of influence in the society. Evidently the early Church was effective with multiple classes of people. This should not surprise us at all. Every heart beats with a God-longing. Every person regardless of station in life deals with life-wrenching difficulties. Every soul is irreparably broken by sin.

Part of the reason for Christianity's impact on societal leaders was **because of its**

extraordinary commitment to alleviating social problems. In the early Church era, the life expectancy was about forty years of age. Rampant disease spread quickly because of urban density, lack of medical procedures and poor hygiene. Thus, epidemics were common. A virus could spread quickly and destroy a population in no time. Historians write of this phenomenon.

When an epidemic occurred it was common for healthy family members to leave the sick in their own home and flee to the countryside. City leaders did the same but not the Christians. Stark writes that Christians had longer life spans. Evidently, their communal nature meant that they cared for one another in sickness and in health! I also believe that the sovereign plan of God was for his people to be more resistant to disease. But the real evangelistic dimension occurred because they cared for the sick outside of the Church community. They were unafraid of the plagues and cared for the sick regardless of affiliation. Imagine the gratitude and respect the sick and their families felt for believers. The early church showed the gospel as much as they spoke it, and this was and is

the trademark of authentic Christianity.

Women and children were more esteemed by Christians. Much has been written on this subject, but suffice it to say that Christianity elevated the value of women and all children significantly. In a world practicing rampant abortion and infanticide especially of female children, the Church valued all life. Women were not to be cast off in marriage, widows were provided for, and little girls mattered as much as little boys. Thus women were drawn to Christianity in large numbers. They influenced other family members for Christ. Finally, in a culture where the number of men exceeded women because of genocidal practices, Christian young women were marriage prospects for men outside of the faith community. The flow of the gospel moved through each of these connections resulting in thousands, and eventually millions, of conversions to Christ.

Once upon a time, Christianity transformed a culture. By the time Constantine formally declared the empire would become Christian, it was a foregone conclusion.

Once upon a time, is meant to be "all the time."

"IS IT POSSIBLE THERE can be any earnestness in the hearers, when there is none in the preacher? 'How is it', said a minister to an actor, 'that your performances, which are but pictures of the imagination, produce so much more effect than our sermons, which are all realities?' 'Because', said the actor, 'we represent fictions as though they were realities, and you preach realities as though they were fictions'!

Extracted from 'Power Preaching'

No Greater Love

ILLUSTRATION: Love, Sacrifice

In September 1992, Jack Kelley, foreign affairs editor for USA Today, witnessed firsthand the famine in Somalia. "Our photographer had a grapefruit, which he gave to the boy. The boy was so weak he didn't have the strength to hold the grapefruit, so we cut it in half and gave it to him. He picked it up, looked at us as if to say thanks, and began to walk back toward his village.

When he entered the village, there on the ground was a little boy who was close to death. It turned out that this was his younger brother. The older boy knelt down, bit off a piece of the grapefruit, and chewed it. Then he opened up his younger brother's mouth, put the grapefruit in, and worked his brother's jaw up and down. We learned that the older brother had been doing that for the younger brother for two weeks.

A couple of days later the older brother died of malnutrition, and the younger brother lived. Perhaps this is a prime example of what Jesus was saying, 'There is no greater love than to lay down our life for somebody else.' "

(Turning Point Daily Devotional, 7/30/03)

Taken from
'[Preaching Now Website](#)'

Law on the Side of Street preachers - in the USA

A FEDERAL COURT judge in California has ruled against the City of San Diego for violating the civil rights of seven street preachers, according to an August 14 story in Agape Press.

Last August, seven members of West Coast Baptist Church in Vista, CA, were singing and preaching on a public sidewalk in Oceanside, a suburb of San Diego. Police arrested four of the street preachers and threatened to arrest the remaining three.

Brian Fahling, an attorney with the American Family Association Center for Law & Policy, reports that the federal court recently sided with the street preachers. He says the recent decision sends a signal to other cities that may seek to violate the constitutional rights of similar activities.

"With the judgment of the court being entered in favor of our clients and \$35,000 being paid out by the city, the message is that street preachers shouldn't be treated as common criminals. They have the same rights as everybody else to speak in the public square," the attorney says.

Taken from
'[Preaching Now Website](#)'
19 Aug 2003

Don't Forget This Date!
SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER

APC
CONFERENCE 2003

10am to 4pm

KINGSVIEW CHRISTIAN CENTRE, INVERNESS

Theme: EVANGELISM and SCRIPTURE

Programme:

- 10.00 Coffee
- 10.15 Welcome and Devotions
- 10.30 *The Holy Spirit and Evangelism*, Professor Andrew McGowan
- 11.15 Questions and discussion
- 11.45 *Called to Care*, Catherine MacInnes
- 12.15 Questions and Discussions
- 12.45 **Lunch Break**
- 14.15 *The Holy Spirit and Scripture*, Professor Andrew McGowan
- 15.00 Questions and Discussion
- 15.30 Summary
- 15.45 Coffee
- 16.00 Departure

Cost £5 (including fee, coffees and a sandwich lunch)

Forms from treasurers, ministers, or

D C Macaskill 01382 451798 dcmacaskill@apchurches.org.uk

Ministry Training Fund

Congregations are reminded of the six-monthly collection for the Ministry Training Fund to be taken in **October** on whichever Lord's Day in the month suits the local situation.

And continue to pray that the Lord would raise up and equip those who would proclaim the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"And how shall they hear without a preacher?" [Rom 10:14b] Please give as the Lord enables. KM

ADVERTISING RATES

Charges for advertising in this magazine are as follows

Full Page **£30**

Half Page **£16**

Quarter Page **£9**

Eighth Page **£5**

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**APC NEWS
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ARE NOW DUE

**Please see page 2
for instructions**

**The Next Issue of
The APC News**

will be the October issue and is
due out on

11th October

Congregational Details

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Revd Dr Malcolm MacInnes,
Drumalin, 16 Drummond Road, Inverness IV2 4NB,
Tel 01463 223983, Fax 01462 226939
Email: mmacinnnes@btinternet.com
Community Centre, Tulloch Street - 6pm, Tue 7.30pm in Free
Church Hall. Treasurer: D M Macdonald, Scoraig, 8 Kinnettas
Square, Strathpeffer IV14 9BD, Tel 01997 421847.

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, usually
Thu 7pm (confirm on website). Treasurer: Mr Kevin Stirling,
40 Gottenstone Drive, Dundee DD5 1QX, Tel 01382 770381.
Church Office tel no. 01382 200700 www.apcdunee.org.uk
*Communion*s: 4 per year as and when arranged.

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
*Communion*s: last in February and September

FORT WILLIAM

Services held jointly with the Free Church,
High Street, 11am & 6.30pm, Thursday 7.30pm.
Contact: Donald MacNicol, 14 Allour 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.
*Communion*s: Last in April and September

INVERNESS

Revd Dr Malcolm MacInnes,
Drumalin, 16 Drummond Road, Inverness IV2 4NB, Tel 01463
223983 Fax 01463 226939
Email: mmacinnnes@btinternet.com
Kingsview Christian Centre, Balnafetack Road, 11.30am &
6.30pm, Wed 7.30pm.
Treasurer: Mr Kenneth Macdonald, 'Arnish', 16 Drumdevan
Place, Inverness IV2 4DQ, Tel 01463 231364.
www.apcinverness.freeuk.com
*Communion*s: Fourth in January, April, June, September

KINLOCHBERVIE

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

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.
*Communion*s: Lairg: First in June and December. Rogart:
First in July.

LOCHCARRON

(Lochcarron-Lochalsh Congregation) Services held jointly
with Free Church, 11am & 6pm, Wed 7.30pm, 2nd & 3rd
Lord's Day Kishorn 3pm. Treasurer: Mrs Alison Stewart, 13
Kirkton Gardens, Lochcarron IV54 8UQ, Tel 01520 722239
Email: ajs.kishorn@tesco.net

LOCHINVER & STOER & DRUMBEG

Services held jointly with Free Church of Scotland
Morning services alternating between Stoer Free Church &
Drumbeg APC - 11pm. Evening service Lochinver Free
Church at 1700hrs (5pm) Contacts: Mrs E. MacKenzie,
Church Road, Stoer, Sutherland, IV27 4SE, Tel 01571
855279. Mrs I Macauley, Ard Na Mara, Stoer, Sutherland

OBAN

Revd Archibald McPhail,
Fernhill, Polvinister Road, Oban PA34 5TN,
Tel 01631 567076 Email: amcphail@quista.net
Campbell Street Church - 11am & 6.30pm, Wed 7.30pm
Treasurers: N Matheson, Carnish, Glenmore Road, Oban
PA34, Tel 01631 566259 and D Morrison, Glenstruan, Old
Shore Road, Connel, PA37, Tel 01631 710226.
*Communion*s: First in May and November

PLOCKTON & KYLE

(Lochcarron-Lochalsh congregation) Mr. J. van Woerden,
8 Bank Street, Plockton IV52 8TP Tel 01599 544272 Email:
jan.vanwoerden@virgin.net
Plockton: first and third Lord's Day of month 3 pm

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
Communion: Third in August

SKYE

Rev'd 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: Malcolm Nicolson, 4 Heatherfield, Portree IV51 9NE
Tel 01478 612235.
Communions: Portree: third in March and September,
Dunvegan: first in June

STORNOWAY

Rev'd 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
www.stornowayonline-sermons.org.uk
Communions: third in February, last in August

TAIN & FEARN

Rev'd John Ross,
APC Manse, 2 Cameron Gardens, Tain IV19 1NT,
Tel 01862 892199. 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
Communions: second in April and November

WICK & THURSO & STRATHY

Wick Church, Breadalbane Crescent - 11.30pm, alternate
Wed 7.30pm; Strathy Church - 4pm Treasurer: Wick/Thurso:
Mr William Taylor, Dixonfield, Thurso, KW14 8YN Tel 01847
892005. Treasurer: Strathy: Mrs J Jappy, 113 Strathy Point,
by Thurso KW14 7RY, Tel 01641 541316.
Communions: Wick: last in April, Strathy: second in
September

ABROAD

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Church: 2712 Victoria Park Avenue, North York, Ontario, M2J
4A7 Canada. Tel 001 416 491 9778 11am and 7pm, Wed
7.30pm Contact: Mrs Wilma Kling, 52 Chestertown Square,
Markham, Ontario L6C 2R2 Tel 001 905 887 2017

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Vancouver: corner 15th Street & Fraser Street - Lord's Day
11am, and 5pm (alternate Sundays) Prayer meeting Wed 7pm
When announced - contact J Lewis. Contacts: Hugh Fraser
001 604 526 0431 and Jerrold Lewis 001 604 951 4848
www.apcvan.org

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: St Hilda's Church Centre, Young Road,
Mount Wellington - 2pm
Contact: Donald MacLean, Tel 649 524 5747

CLERK of PRESBYTERY

Rev'd A N McPhail, MA, Mth,
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The Next Presbytery Date is
WEDNESDAY 9th SEPTEMBER at 2pm
In Kingsview Christian Centre,
Ballnafettack Road, Inverness

We are on the web
www.apchurches.org.uk