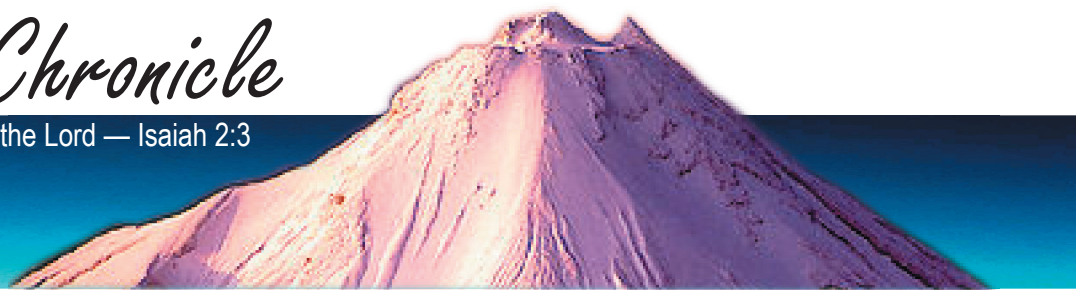


The Summit Chronicle

Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord — Isaiah 2:3



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"I shall pay my vows to the Lord, oh may it be in the presence of all His people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones"

—Psalms 116:14-15

Contact Us!

If you have any questions that you would like answered by any of our writers, please feel free to contact us via email on:
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CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

by Dave Bell

The debate of whether we should or should not reintroduce the death penalty for murder has been going on for 50 years. Many are for its reintroduction while others are not. Many argue that it is not a deterrent and on that basis alone propose that it is ineffective and therefore that it not be reintroduced to the New Zealand statute book.

The first execution in New Zealand was that of a young Maori man named Maketu convicted in 1842 at Auckland. The last was in 1957 at Mount Eden prison of a Walter Bolton for the murder by poison of his wife. All told there have been 83 executions—82 men and 1 woman, Millie Deans, the infamous "baby killer," of Invercargill.

The offences that constituted the death penalty were: murder, treason, and piracy. This was in step with English common law at the time. The Labour Party opposed capital punishment and when it came to power in 1935 it abolished it and commuted all death sentences to life imprisonment. The National Party reinstated it in 1950, and from 1951 to 1957, there were 8 executions. Following this in 1961, the issue was put to a "conscience" vote and capital punishment was removed from the statute book.

At the end of 2005, however, a "Close up" programme polled viewers and the

result was that out of 9,685 viewers, an overwhelming majority of viewers, 7,063 voted for capital punishment with 2,622 saying "no."

Now the argument used against the death penalty is usually based on the fact that it is not a deterrent to murder. This is true. However, it is also a very bad argument. If we applied that kind of reasoning to all crime then we would not have prisons. Why? Because prison is not a deterrent for any crime at all. In fact the argument is an old one from the utilitarian school of philosophy.

Jeremy Bentham an English utilitarian said of punishment that: "All punishment is mischief and evil." He went on to say, "the deliberate infliction of suffering on a person who has committed an evil act such as murder merely adds more evil and suffering to the world. Therefore, punishment can be justified only if it is the only way to remove an even greater evil."

At least Bentham is true to the outcome of his argument here. He then went on to propose a prison system based on reform and rehabilitation which was sanctioned by an act of parliament in 1791. The prison however, was never built. (Jeremy Bentham, "An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation.") This is the argument now being used in New Zealand and more and more prisons are being built.

Interestingly, however, John Stuart Mill, another English utilitarian and student of Bentham did not oppose capital punishment. He believed that capital punishment outweighed the harm in not practising it. In 1868 Mill told the House of Commons that the death penalty was appropriate for brutal crimes. He argued that it DID have a deterrent affect. (*John Stuart Mill "Parliamentary debate on capital punishment within prisons bill." Hansard 1868.*)

John Locke in his (Second Treatise of Government) was nearer the truth when he said: "Every man has the right to punish the offender, and be executioner of the law of nature. Thus it is that every man in the state of nature has the power to kill a murderer, both to deter others from doing the like injury, which no reparation compensates. And also to secure men from the attempts of a criminal, who having denounced reason, hath by unjust violence and slaughter he hath committed on one, declared war on all mankind. Therefore he is to be destroyed as a lion or a tiger one of those savage beasts, with who man has no security or sovereignty. Upon this is grounded the great law of nature: "Whosoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood be shed." (Genesis 9:6.)

Another philosopher, Immanuel Kant, rejected all the consequentialist arguments for capital punishment. He argued that a murderer must die. Not because of any social benefits that would accrue as a result of capital punishment, but because this was the only way to satisfy the requirements of retributive justice. Kant says in his (Philosophy of law): "The penal law is a

categorical imperative, and woe to him who creeps through the serpent windings of utilitarianism to discover some advantage that may discharge him from the justice of punishment, or even from the due measure of it. For if justice and righteousness perish, human life would no longer have any value in the world."

Kant then is maintaining that not only does the state have the right to punish, wrongdoers also have the right to be punished. Punishment including capital punishment. Thus Kant is affirming the criminal's dignity by acknowledging that unlike children, the mentally incompetent, or wild animals, they are responsible for their actions."

Kant is on the proper path here and so was Locke. However, there is also a compelling case for capital punishment that is found in the Scriptures. Not only is it compelling, it is an explicit command from God Himself. Genesis 9:6: puts the case in favour of capital punishment this way: "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed. For in the image of God He made man."

The Hebrew word for shed here is *shaphak* and it has the meaning in this context to spill forth (blood), to commit slaughter (murder). Now the proposition of Genesis 9:6 simply put is this:

All persons who shed man's blood by murder—by man (government) his blood will be shed.

This is a universal affirmative proposition applying to all and every person. Further the reason is given very specifically for the

punishment and is enthroned in creation law. That reason is this: Because man is created in the image of God. Therefore when "A" murders "B" then "A" must be executed for murdering one created in the image of God Himself. Further we find in Romans 13:1ff. that God has empowered the state to act on His behalf by giving the state "The power of sword." This is simply the right for the state to carry out God's explicit command that all murderers be executed. This accords with the proposition in Genesis 9:6.

From the evidence of these things then we find without doubt that: God requires the enforcement of capital punishment of all murderers given by Divine decree. Therefore any nation that does not enforce it is disobeying the explicit command of God; it is just that simple.

So we see that there are two aspects for capital punishment (1) the murder itself and (2) the fact that man is created in the image of God. We see too that the death penalty itself has two aspects to it: (1) It is retributive justice for the crime—this is its primary function. (2) It is also to act as a deterrent—this is its secondary function.

It is well known that the death penalty does not deter all persons from committing murder but this, as we have said, is only a secondary purpose of the command. True it is hoped that it will deter others but it doesn't in all cases. That is why the primary purpose of capital punishment is retributive.

There is yet a third reason for using the death penalty for murder and that is, by not imposing it, it allows innocent blood to remain

unavenged in the land. That blood cries out to God for retribution, just as Abel's blood cried to God after he was murdered. Look at Exodus 23:7 "Do not kill (murder) the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty." If God will not acquit a murderer, then we ought to do as He does and put the guilty to death. Then in Deuteronomy 19:13 we are told in explicit terms: "You shall not pity him (the murderer), but you shall purge the blood of the innocent from the land that it may be well with you."

II Kings 2:31 says the same thing: where Solomon says, concerning Joab's execution, "fall on him (kill him) and bury him (why?) That you may remove from me (the king) and my fathers house (House of David) the blood which Joab shed without cause (That is innocent blood).

Here we plainly see that God requires (demands) retributive justice and not just simply a deterrent (the secondary feature of the command). Therefore it is incumbent on every nation including New Zealand, to execute those who commit murder since they have murdered innocents (in the case of children) and also those created in God's image.

If we look at our country, we have had 50 years of the government not purging the land of innocent blood by denying them the retributive justice that God has said to give them. The question remaining then is this: How long can the New Zealand government continue to increase the amount of innocent blood in our land? Eventually the land will vomit out that blood and many will suffer as they do now by

being denied the justice they are entitled to. The legislators need to look long and hard at this question and get back to obeying the express command of God on the issue. God has not revoked one word of what He has said in Genesis 9:6 or in Romans 13:1ff.

We need to remember that.



HOMESCHOOLING

by Dan Jenkins

On February 28, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in California ruled that homeschooling violated the laws of that state. Over 200,000 children face the possibility of being removed from parental teaching and molding of their lives and being forced to let the government assume these chores. The issue is headed for the California Supreme Court, but the implications are astounding.

The latest information from 2007 shows that Florida has nearly 56,000 children from about 37,000 homes where children are being home-schooled. Palm Beach County has more children (4,070) from more homes (2,996) than any county in the state. The increasing popularity of this method of rearing children (the average annual increase since 1986 is 20%) shows the concern many parents have about what is happening.

All of this has got me thinking. There are those in government who think they know far more about the needs of children than the parents of those same children. Their view is that parents simply are not equipped to ensure children are prepared for life.

Educationally, this concept may be true. However, consider the fact that these same entities believe that morality and ethics should come from the state. They feel that their morals standards are what children need. Let the state, through its schools, teach children about homosexuality, birth control, origin, situational ethics, etc. The tragedy is that far too many parents have abdicated their God- given responsibilities in these very areas.

Parents, think about this for a moment. Are you homeschooling your children? I am not asking about educational homeschooling, but about using your homes as a school where children learn about God, self-control, kindness, selflessness, purity of speech, respect for the aged, respect for the infirmed, and reverence for God. Is it possible that when our children began school, we forget the most important "school" of all! Don't be fooled. In the absence of spiritual emphasis around the dinner table and other social times with your children, Satan will ensure he uses every possible means to capture the souls of your precious children. Every Christian parent should be involved in "home-schooling" his/her child!

‘FAITH’ & ‘THE FAITH’

by Hugo McCord

Two principal dictionary definitions of “faith” are: (1) an “unquestioning belief in God, religion, etc.,” and (2) “a religion or system of religious beliefs.”

In the New Testament, when the meaning of “faith” is “an unquestioning belief in God, religion, etc.,” the word “faith” often is without the definite article “the” (Mark 11:22; Acts 6:5; 11:24; 20:21; Romans 1:17; 3:28; 5:1; 1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 2:20; 3:11; Ephesians 6:23; 1 Timothy 1:5; 6:11; Hebrews 10:38).

In the New Testament, when the meaning of “faith” is “a religion or system of religious beliefs,” the word “faith” is often preceded by the definite article “the” (Luke 18:8; Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 15:9; 16:5; 24:24; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Colossians 1:23; Jude 3).

“Faith,” as “an unquestioning belief in God, religion, etc.,” is personal, subjective, and internal, while “faith,” as “a religion or system of religious beliefs,” is impersonal, objective, and external.

I. “FAITH”

“Faith” (*pistis*) is “conviction,” “belief” (Thayer), “trust,” “confidence” (B-G-D). In relationship to God, faith holds “that he exists, and that he rewards those who seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). In relationship to Christ, faith says “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37), and that “no one comes to the Father except through” him (John 14:6).

Personal salvation (justification, righteousness) a sinner obtains by his “faith” (Acts 16:30-31; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). But salvation is not by faith alone. The “worst” of sinners (Paul’s own estimate of himself, 1 Timothy 1:15-16), having seen the Lord in the sky, had faith only for “three days,” but still was in his sins until they were washed away in baptism (Acts 9:1-9; 22:16).

Then, from the moment of Paul’s baptism (at about age 33), he lived “from faith into faith” (Romans 1:17), that is, faith all the way, from his baptism until he died, at about age 68. In “the reign of Nero” he was “beheaded with the sword” (BIBLE DICTIONARY, p. 97). John wrote that “the victory that overcomes the world” is “our faith” (1 John 5:4).

Christians are exempt from obeying the Old Testament law of Moses, as Habakkuk prophesied some 600 years in advance: “the righteous shall live by his faith” (2:4), which verse Paul quoted: “Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, for ‘The righteous shall live by faith’” (Galatians 3:11).

Actually, no law, Mosaic or Christ’s or any other, has any saving power: “If a law had been given which could make alive, righteousness would truly have been by law” (Galatians 3:21). If any law had inherent saving power, God would have thought of it, and would have saved his praying Son from the cross (Luke 22:41-44). Only Jesus’ blood has saving power (Hebrews 9:22).

But law has its place, and salvation is dependent on “the law of faith” (Romans 3:27), a law requiring obedience (Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; 8:2; 16:26), called “the law of Christ” (1 Corinthians 9:21;

Galatians 6:2):

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins may be forgiven (Acts 2:38, NIV, 1978 edition). Be faithful until death, and I will give to you the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

Those today who eliminate “the law of faith” (Romans 3:27) from “faith” must also eliminate three inspired statements:

1. “Where there is no law, neither is there transgression” (Romans 4:15).
2. “Sin is not imputed when there is no law” (Romans 5:13).
3. “Sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4).

As a valid faith is not faith only (James 2:19), and as a valid faith is not lawless (Romans 3:27), so a valid faith is not without works (James 2:20). But in the works which God has commanded (Philippians 2:12), and without which we cannot be saved (James 2:20), there is no saving power (Hebrews 9:22):

When you have done all things that have been commanded, say, “We are unworthy servants. We have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17:10).

The only saving power is “the precious blood of Christ, as an unblemished and spotless Lamb” (1 Peter 1:18-19). But human works are required before the blood washes sins away:

1. Faith itself is a human work, a work of the mind with no saving power, but without which “you shall die in your sins” (John 6:29; 8:24).
2. Repentance itself is a human work, a work of the mind, with no saving power, but without which “all of you will perish” (Luke 13:3, 5).
3. Baptism also is a human work, with no saving power, but without which there is no salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21), and all those who reject baptism class themselves with those who, in John’s day, “rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized by him” (Luke 7:30).

In addition, there is no saving power in the “good works” that follow saving faith (Ephesians 2:8-10), but unless they follow, “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26).

Nothing that any human can do has any saving power, but no one “will enter heaven’s kingdom” except “the one who does the will of my heavenly Father” (Matthew 7:21). Every saved sinner delights in his “work of faith, and labor of love” (1 Thessalonians 1:3), though he knows his work and labor are without saving power.

Moreover, he knows that he must “work out” his own “salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). As God’s “righteous one,” he lives “by faith,” a faith that is “conjoined with obedience to Christ” (Thayer), but he knows that “if he shrinks back,” the Lord

has announced that “my soul has no pleasure in him” (Hebrews 10: 38).

II. “THE FAITH”

“The faith” (he pistis) is “the substance of Christian faith,” or “what is believed by Christians” (Thayer), or “the common faith” (Titus 1: 4), or “the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27). What is believed by Christians “comes from Christ’s teaching” (Romans 10:17) and “the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42).

Jesus announced that “the message which I have spoken will judge” each person “in the last day” (John 12:48). Also he announced that the apostles’ doctrine originated in heaven before it reached the mouths or the pens of the apostles:

Whatever you bind on the earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on the earth will have been released in heaven (Matthew 18:18).

Four apostles (Matthew, John, Paul, Peter) wrote 21 books of the New Testament. The apostles by hand-laying could impart miraculous gifts (Acts 8:18), and one of those gifts was “prophecy” (1 Corinthians 12:10). Among those having the gift of prophecy were Mark, Luke, James, Jude, and the author of the book of Hebrews, who wrote 6 books of the New Testament. Thus all 27 of the New Testament books make up the “apostles’ doctrine.”

The warning that the apostle John gave about anyone’s adding to or subtracting from anything in the book of Revelation ought to alert every uninspired person about the sin of adding to or subtracting from any Bible book (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Revelation 22:18-19; cf. 1 Corinthians 4:6, ASV).

The 27 New Testament books set forth “the substance of the Christian faith,” “what is believed by Christians” (Thayer), and so those books describe “the faith.” The alleged latter day revelations written by Joseph Smith in his BOOK OF MORMON, or of Mary Baker Eddy in her book, SCIENCE AND HEALTH, are not part of “the faith.” Instead, if “an angel from heaven” (“Moroni” of the Mormons?) “preach any other gospel” than “the gospel which” the apostles “preached” (1 Corinthians 15:1-2), “let him be accursed” (Galatians 1: 8).

“All things that pertain to life and godliness” have been put in written form in the 27 books of “the faith,” with the result that “the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:17). As a result, humble men of God speak only “as the oracles of God,” and dare not open their mouths except by book, chapter, and verse from the New Testament (1 Peter 4:11). They speak where the Bible speaks, and are silent where the Bible is silent.

Oh! the preciousness of “the faith”:

1. After Jesus had said that God will “grant justice to his chosen people,” he became pessimistic: “But, when the Son of Man comes, will he find the faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

2. Soon after the day of Pentecost, May 28, 30 A.D., in Jerusalem, “a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

3. On the island of Cyprus, in the city of Paphos, Elymas, a sorcerer, tried “to turn” Sergius Paulus, a proconsul, “away from the faith,” causing Paul to call him a “son of the devil” (Acts 13:6-11).

4. As Paul and Barnabas concluded their first missionary journey (49 A.D.), “they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God’” (Acts 14:20-22).

5. At the Jerusalem conference, Peter testified that circumcision was not necessary for the Gentiles to “be saved,” for God made “no difference between us [the Jews] and them [the Gentiles], having cleansed their hearts by the faith” (Acts 15:9).

6. As a result of the preaching of Paul and Silas in Phrygia and Galatia (51 A.D.), “the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily” (Acts 16:5-6).

7. While Paul was a prisoner in Caesarea in 57 A.D., Governor Felix, with his wife Drusilla, “sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ” (Acts 24:24).

8. Paul wrote about “the word of the faith which we are preaching” (Romans 10:8), which he did for about 35 years, and was able to write to Timothy “I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

9. James wrote about “the faith of our glorious Lord, Jesus Christ” (2:1).

10. Peter wrote about “the precious faith, in the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:1).

11. The author of the book of Hebrews wrote that Jesus is the “originator and completer of the faith” (12:2).

12. Jude wrote of the “most holy faith,” “of the common salvation,” as he exhorted Christians to “contend earnestly for the faith, which was entrusted once for all to the saints” (Jude 3, 20).

“O the depth of the riches both of God’s wisdom and of his knowledge” (Romans 11:33), the embodiment of “love” (1 John 4:8), “not willing that any should perish” (2 Peter 3:9).

“If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain ‘Remove hence to yonder place’ and it shall remove. And nothing shall be impossible to you”

—Matt 17:20



I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU AS ORPHANS

by Edwin Jones

One of the more intriguing promises made by Jesus is found in John 14:18. Curiously, it is often overlooked as far as its implication for the church today is concerned. Some think the promise refers to the Resurrection, others consider it to be a promise intended only for the Apostles. I believe, however, that there are good reasons for rejecting both of these conclusions in favor of one that has substantial biblical support. Let's have a look.

First, I do not see the sense of applying this statement to the Resurrection. What comfort would it give to know that Jesus would return to the Apostles for a few days before leaving yet again? The way that they would not be left as orphans would be that Jesus would Himself be with them. Yet how could this be if Jesus were going to be with the Father (Jn. 14:28; 17:5; Acts 2:29-33). There must, therefore, be a way that Jesus would be with the Apostles even after the Ascension.

Second, neither do I think that this promise has implications only for the Apostles. Unlike John 14:26, which of necessity could apply only to those who had been with Christ in His personal ministry, this passage has no such inherent limitations. This can be readily seen by the fact that Jesus return to be with the Apostles is tied to loving Him and keeping the commandments (Jn. 14:15, 21-23). This is not, therefore, a miraculously received promise.

What then can explain how Jesus would be with His Apostles

even after His Ascension? It can only be through the Spirit's ministry in the revelation of the word (Jn. 14:16-17, 26; 16:13-14). The Spirit's revelation of the full truth for the Christian Age would be the vehicle for Jesus' return to be not only with the Apostles, but with all believers.

*"I will not leave you as orphans.
I will come for you."*



The work of the Holy Spirit in bringing "the unity of the faith" (literally, "the faith as a unit") would be a work bringing about a mature knowledge of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13). The strengthening work of the Spirit would be tied to Jesus residing in the hearts of believers (Eph. 3:16-17; cf. Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Col. 1:27).

For Christians today this relationship with Jesus begins as we are baptized into Him (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27). We then "partake of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4) as we participate in a daily walk of transformation toward Christlikeness (II Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29). Christians individually and the church collectively are like the temple, a place where God is present (I Cor. 6:19; 3:16; Eph. 2:19-22; I Pet. 2:5). Thus Jesus is present with His people even as is

the Father (Matt. 28:20; Acts 18:9-10; Heb. 13:5-6; Rom. 8:31-39).

An additional word about this presence or indwelling of Christ might help us to better understand the particulars of the relationship. When Solomon dedicated the temple he acknowledged that God did not exhaustively or totally dwell in an earthly house (I Kg. 8:27-30). Similarly, the totality of Jesus does not dwell in a Christian or in the church as a whole, He is after all in Heaven at God's right hand. We must thus see indwelling essentially as a matter of quality.

Consider how God is present everywhere in His omnipresence. And yet He is with a Christian with much greater quality than with an unbeliever (Rom. 5:1-2). Additionally, when a Christian dies, he goes into a quality of God's presence that is greater than in this life (Phil. 1:23-24). But even that is not the end of it, in Heaven God's presence with His children is of even greater quality (Rev. 21:1-4).

Christ has not left His followers as orphans! He returned in a spiritual sense through the work of the Holy Spirit. As we love Jesus and keep His word we become Christians and then live in fellowship with the Christ. In that fellowship we open up our hearts to Jesus as we continue to express our love to Him by living by His guidance in the word. Jesus is in that way with each Christian as He is also with the church. He will not leave us or forsake us, neither will He allow any outside force to remove the faithful Christian from His love. We are not alone.

INTELLIGENT DESIGN & THE ORIGIN OF LIFE (Part 1)

by Rex Banks

Cosmogony is defined as “an account of the origin or creation of the universe” (**The Oxford Companion to Philosophy**) and when discussions of this topic make the news, they usually follow a familiar pattern. Typically, media reports of such debates take the form of a kind of morality play in which the forces of sweet reason and blind prejudice struggle for the minds of the young, the impressionable and the uninformed. In one corner of the ring stands the composed objective scientist who is devoid of all preconceptions and prejudices and committed to following the evidence wherever it may lead. His calm deliberations have convinced him that the universe is the product of random unguided processes and his arguments are rational, compelling and grounded in the scientific method. His opponent is of course the wild-eyed religious fanatic pushing his faith-driven agenda with a blind ardour born of ignorance, superstition and wishful thinking. Unable or unwilling to accept the truth about the human condition, this pitiable but potentially dangerous zealot contends that the cosmos is the product of *design*, and he employs impoverished, outmoded arguments to bolster his position. To reinforce the lesson of this morality play, some “leading scientist” is often quoted to the effect that defenders of the design hypothesis belong in the same camp as flat earthers, alchemists and phrenologists. In morality plays there is little danger of confusing hero and villain.

But although teleological explanations of origins represent a challenge to the dominant belief system of most contemporary western societies, informed support for the Intelligent Design (ID) hypothesis has grown enormously in the past few decades. Significantly, many design proponents have no prior religious commitments and they insist that their position reflects a conscious decision to follow the evidence wherever it leads.

The Intelligent Design Hypothesis and the Origin of Life

In 1871, **Charles Darwin** wrote in a private letter:

“It is often said that all the conditions for the first production of a living organism are now present which could ever have been present. But if (and oh what a big if!) we could conceive in some warm little pond, with all sorts of ammonia and phosphoric salts, light heat electricity, etc present, that a protein compound was chemically formed ready to undergo still more complex changes, at the present day such matter would be instantly

devoured or absorbed, which would not have been the case before living creatures were formed” (*The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, Francis Darwin).

When Darwin speculated about the chemical origin of life in “some warm little pond,” he shared the view of his contemporaries that life was fundamentally a simple self replicating substance called *protoplasm* which made up the sole content of a cell. “Darwin’s Bulldog on the Continent” **Ernst Haeckel**, popularized the idea that the gap between inorganic non-living matter and the simplest living organisms was filled by “a shapeless, mobile, little lump of mucus or slime, consisting of albuminous combination of carbon” and possessing no organs at all (**The History of Creation**). **Thomas Huxley**, Darwin’s other “Bulldog” said:

“If it were given to me to look beyond the abyss of geologically recorded time to the still more remote period when the Earth was passing through physical and chemical conditions... I should expect to be a witness of the evolution of living protoplasm from non-living matter” (*Discourses*).

This widespread 19th century conviction that life was made up of a simple protoplasmic substance reminds us that Darwin’s generation knew nothing of the complexity of life at the cellular level. Biochemist **Michael Behe** explains that “To Darwin... as to every other scientist of the time, the cell was a black box” (**Darwin’s Black Box**). The expression *black box* is “a whimsical term for a device that does something, but whose inner workings are mysterious – sometimes because the workings can’t be seen, and sometimes because they just aren’t comprehensible” (*ibid*). Because Darwin and his contemporaries were unable to observe the workings of life at the micro level, they were unaware of the infinite complexity of living organisms. Their simplistic speculations about the origin of life were unhampered by the knowledge that every cellular process is controlled by enormously sophisticated molecular machines. However, succeeding generations of researchers have had to deal with the realities of this Lilliputian world.

By the early 20th century, scientists possessed a better understanding of cellular complexity and Russian biochemist **Alexander Oparin** suggested a more refined (but equally naturalistic) version of chemical evolution involving many chemical reactions over a vast period of time.

“In 1924 Oparin proposed the sequence of events in the origin of life: first cells, then enzymes, and

finally genes. Oparin suggested the first protocell began by the accumulation of more and more complicated molecules within an oily liquid called coacervate droplets” (Walter James ReMine, *The Biotic Message*).

Supposedly the building blocks of complex molecules emerged from the action of ultraviolet radiation from the sun upon an environment consisting of such gases as ammonia, methane, water, carbon dioxide, and hydrogen. Oparin proposed that these building blocks arranged themselves into coacervates or simple cell-like structures which grew more complex as they competed for survival. In 1952, Stanley Miller appeared to supply evidence for the Oparin hypothesis by demonstrating that an electrical charge passing through a mixture of methane, ammonia, water, vapour and hydrogen produced a few of the amino acids which occur naturally in proteins. Further experiments produced more amino acids and fatty acids. (These experiments, based upon Oparin’s work, proceeded on the assumption that the earth’s early atmosphere was made up of reducing gases and had almost no free oxygen, an assumption which has been seriously challenged in recent years).

Information

But like Darwin before him, Oparin lacked any real understanding of the complexity of life at the cellular level. Prior to the 1950s and 1960s, the structure and function of proteins was a mystery, and it was only after James Watson and Francis Crick demonstrated the structure of DNA in 1953 that scientists were able to discover how protein is synthesized in the cell. Everyone today has heard of DNA, the molecule within every living thing which functions as a *carrier* of information. Often pictured as a *ladder twisted into a spiral*, with “rungs” made up of four bases (A, T, G and C), DNA carries a chemical code with instructions. The cell contains the machinery necessary to read this information and to manufacture the physical components of a particular organism. For example, information encoded upon the DNA molecule determines the sequence of amino acids in protein molecules and the function of an individual protein is determined by the particular sequence of amino acids. Physicist and popular science writer Paul Davies says:

“Although DNA is a material structure, it is pregnant with meaning. The arrangement of the atoms along with the helical strands of your DNA determines how you look and even, to a certain extent, how you feel and behave. DNA is nothing less than a blueprint, or more accurately an algorithm or instruction manual, for building a living, breathing, thinking human being.

We share this magic molecule with almost all other life forms on earth. From fungi to flies, from bacteria to bears, organisms are sculpted according to their respective DNA instructions” (*The Fifth Miracle*).

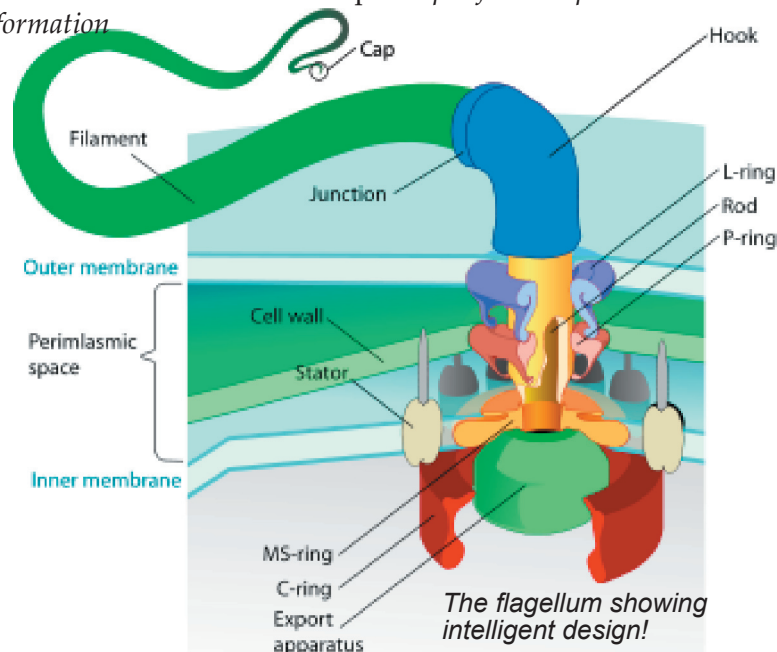
This may not be the whole story:

“It would be more accurate to say that a developmental program is written into the structure of the entire fertilized egg – including its DNA, microtubule arrays, and membrane patterns – in a language of which we are still largely ignorant” (Jonathon Wells, *Making Sense of Biology* in *Signs of Intelligence*, edited by William A. Dembski and James M. Kushiner).

The bottom line is that *life is essentially a chemical code at its core. Life is inseparable from information.* Thus to explain the origin of life it is necessary to explain the origin of this chemical code and for this reason, ID proponents insist that understanding the concept of *specified complexity* is central to origin of life studies. **Ravi Zacharias** (Jesus Among Other Gods) has the following quote from *Medusa and the Snail*, authored by the late **Lewis Thomas**, a distinguished medical doctor, researcher and poet:

“The mere existence of that cell should be one of the greatest astonishments of the earth. People ought to be walking around all day, all through their waking hours, calling to each other in endless wonderment, talking of nothing except that cell... If anyone does succeed in explaining it, within my lifetime, I will charter a skywriting airplane, maybe a whole fleet of them, and send them aloft to write one great exclamation point after another around the whole sky, until all my money runs out.”

In Part 2 we discuss the concept of *specified complex information*



EVANGELISM AS A WAY OF LIFE

by Edwin S. Jones

Church growth has to do with the way the church survives from generation to generation. If there is no evangelism, there will be no earthly manifestation of the church. If we find no evangelism, we realize that there will be no salvation. There can therefore be no doubt but that there is a great need for evangelism. The only real question for our consideration is the one that makes inquiry into the specifics of this fulfilling this need. Just what must happen for evangelism to thrive in the Lord's church?

HAVE WE SEEN WHAT THE BIBLE REVEALS?

When we see the various ways that evangelism is promoted and defined among us, we ought to ask ourselves why the New Testament does not address evangelism the way we commonly do? Where, for instance, do we find the rhetoric of today in the New Covenant record? Where are all the verses urging us to remember to take the gospel to our friends and neighbors? Where are all the "deathbed" stories? And where do we find that inspiration's favorite inquiry is, "If you died tonight would you be lost?" Odd, do you not think, that such things, and many more modern areas of emphasis, are conspicuous by their absence in the Bible? What will we discover when we take a fresh look at Scripture?

We need to take another look at the Bible and see what is actually there. Surely we would agree God's word is the very place we would expect to find the plan for evangelism. It is in Scripture that we will learn what we need to do in church growth.

When we leave behind our preconceived notions about evangelism and take a close look at the inspired truths of the Bible,

we see a picture of evangelism that is both personal and practical. We discover that the most basic needs in evangelism are not for more programs, better methods, bigger and fancier campaigns, or an increasing reliance on mass media. The main need, the most central component of evangelism, is found in our daily living out the tenants of Jesus. It is the daily practice of biblical Christianity that the Scripture emphasizes.

God's goal for the church has always been that Christians would be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). It is therefore no coincidence that the Bible gives us "the knowledge of the Son of God to a mature man, the measure and stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). We have, consequently, "the mind of Christ" revealed in the New Testament (I Cor. 2:16).

The "mind of Christ" is, however, not intended to be something that is found only on the printed page. We are to have Christ's mind in us (Phil. 2:5). Paul's prayer for brethren was that they would have Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith (Eph. 3:16-17; cf. Rom. 10:17). Paul intended that every Christian would be a living epistle (II Cor. 3:1-4)!

The "process" of this transformation is most significant. We learn in our studies that it is a daily walk with Christ that changes us from the inside out. As we look to the Lord as the model or pattern for our change, we become transformed. "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (II Cor. 3:18; cf. Rom. 12:1-2). In this process, we are to "in humility receive the word implanted," and "prove ourselves doers of the

word and not merely hearers" (Jas. 1:21-22).

Paul could well relate to this process of transformation for he was a zealous participant: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). Paul practiced what he preached, but we must also realize that the preaching of this process of transformation was not a lesser concern—it was central to Paul's message.

In Colossians 1:24-29 we find the Apostle relating the plan he used when he worked with newly formed congregations. We are more accustomed to thinking of Paul as a congregation starter. However, we need to see the rest of the story—how Paul worked to bring congregations to maturity. This methodology is vital to understanding our need for evangelism.

In Colossians, Paul pointed out that Christ "in" a Christian was a believer's hope of glory (Col. 1:27). Paul saw his ministry to the saved as being one of presenting them "complete in Christ" (Col. 1:28). It was for that very purpose that Paul would "labor and strive" (Col. 1:29). This work or labor of developing Christ in a Christian was what Paul engaged in after he planted a church (cf. Acts 20:17-35).

This plan that Paul pursued with such diligence is reflected in his striking remarks to the churches of Galatia. The brethren in Galatia were being led astray by Judaizing teachers who sought to take them into a legalistic, Old Testament oriented manifestation of Christianity. Paul knew that their only real hope was in

bringing them to maturity in Christ. His words still ring with passion, "My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). Paul well understood that if the Christian life was to be lived successfully, people had to be brought to maturity. The maturing process would not only provide great preventive medicine against false teachers and false doctrine; it would equip the saints for their work of service (Eph. 4:12).

It is with the positive aspects of Christianity that we find the Bible's central teaching about evangelism. As we "grow up in all things unto Him who is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15), one of those "things" is evangelism. As we become more like Jesus, we become better able to relate to the lost in Jesus' own way.

In taking another look at the way of Christ concerning evangelism, we must be careful to understand the seriousness of reviving this vital pattern of evangelism. We would be most remiss if we saw the value of the pattern for becoming a Christian, organizing the church, and worshipping God, but did not esteem God's pattern for evangelism. Even as Moses was instructed by God to "make all things according to the pattern" (Heb. 8:5), so we must give "much greater attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (Heb. 2:1). There is a great need for the church to return to God's pattern for evangelism.

THE CHRIST-CENTERED EVANGELISTIC PLAN

The New Testament pattern for evangelism is what the church needs. This pattern centers in personal Christ-likeness. All through out the record of the New Testament the church is constantly and passionately admonished to live in a manner compatible to the nature of Christ. That is what walking in the light and

fellowship are all about. "If we walk in the light as He, Himself is in the light; we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son, cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Consider the wisdom of this plan. Who could do a better job with God's work than a person who sought to live like Jesus? Is there a better plan than that? Of course not! There could be no better way of conducting the Father's business. Whether the service to God would involve benevolence, edification or evangelism, the best way to conduct the business of God is to do it as Christ would do it. Jesus' entire earthly mission was followed by a singular devotion to the will of the Father (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10). We cannot do better than to follow His example.

As we come to see the significance of the Christ-centered New Testament plan, we come to see certain well-known techniques in a broader light. For instance, consider the Bible's teachings on Christ as the head of the church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19; I Cor. 11:3). We realize that this means that there is only one head and thus only one church. This is devastating to modern denominationalism, but there is more to this teaching than just what it rules out. There is much that is ruled in.

By studying the headship of Christ as it relates to the need for the church to practice biblical evangelism, we readily think of a number of applications. One example is how a body cannot function unless it receives instructions from the head. Likewise, the church cannot carry out God's will unless it understands the thinking of the head, Christ. Without a strong connection to Jesus, the church is capable of only spasmodic movements that cannot accomplish God's purpose.

Remember the slogan for the United Negro College Fund, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste"? That memorable phrase has an application

to our subject. The church has been given the mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:16) and it is to take up that mind in each Christian (Phil. 2:5). What a waste it would be if Christians looked to themselves and their own devices in evangelism, rather than to the thinking of Christ.

Another thing in this evangelistic rethinking of ours concerns Christ as the Master Teacher. We readily acknowledge that Jesus is the master teacher, the greatest teacher that ever lived. Are we, however, really using what we know about this in our evangelistic efforts? To what extent are our evangelistic patterns compatible with the practices of Jesus? Do we traditionally begin with a look at the Christ, or with a look to something man-made?

When we think of personal evangelism, a number of things come to mind that are associated with commonly used methods. These would include: The Open Bible Study of Ivan Stewart, the Fishers of Men approach, and the film strips/video method developed by Jule Miller. All of these have good things about them and many have been converted through them, but what do we first learn from Jesus about methods? Would not we expect to learn something very important about approaches by looking to Jesus before we searched elsewhere? All profitable methods are legitimate only to the extent that they honor the methods of Jesus.

What we do learn from Jesus is that He did not have any one-size-fits-all method. While He was always seeking to get people to arrive at the same place, Heaven, His methods were as numerous as the people, circumstances and situations He faced. The truth never changed, but the way Jesus addressed the many conditions He encountered was forever changing. Is that not one of the main reasons we call Him the "Master Teacher"?

I realize that Jesus' approach requires maturity and growth before a Christian would be able to go at personal evangelism in such a flexible way. I also know that the various program methods available can be helpful in getting us to a more confident, mature, flexible approach. However, I even more significantly know that we rarely give priority to the flexible teaching example of Christ. We speak of Christianity being a lifestyle, yet rarely see the obvious connection with evangelism being a lifestyle. We might go as far as to say that Christianity is God's plan for evangelism.

Methods can sometimes get us in a rut. A thing that might help us to grow can, at times, actually become a crutch. Studies have shown that the most effective means of study is one person sitting across the table from another with an open Bible between them. Good, old fashioned Bible studies that use the Bible as the "equipment" most closely approximate the pattern of the New Testament. This approach takes more effort, but it offers a higher quality return on the investment. Let us learn from Jesus, the Master Teacher, about how we can be more flexible and personable in our teaching of others.

ACTS OR EPISTLES?

When it comes to learning about evangelism, we all know that the book to go to is Acts, right? I do not think so. I really do not think that Acts is where most Christians will learn the daily evangelism we are asking for in this study. Let us think about this together. Acts primarily deals with preachers preaching to crowds who are unbelievers, many of whom have never heard about Jesus. Few Christians will preach to crowds who do not know about Jesus. Few Christians are preachers. Not even many preachers commonly preach to crowds of unbelievers. As great as the

book of Acts is, it does not major on the local congregations outreach into its community.

Additionally, Acts centers on the response of faith that adds a person to the church (Acts 2:47, etc.). Christians can use Acts to marvel at the early growth of the church, to show people how baptism is part of the response of faith in becoming a Christian, and to be encouraged at how God opens doors for the gospel. Christians, however, already know what to do to be saved—they have already done it. What we do not primarily learn from Acts, we do learn from the Epistles. In the Epistles we see how to live before a lost world.

It is the Epistles that develop the Christ-like emphasis we have been developing in this lesson. In the Epistles we learn of the daily walk of faith that is the expression most applicable to the average Christian. It is the character of life that both equips the "person on the pew," and presents opportunities for them to speak a good word for Jesus.

The verse that most readily presents this idea, and therefore the verse I believe most perfectly represents the evangelism emphasis of the Epistles is I Peter 3:15. This verse reads, "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."

First Peter 3:15 shows that it is the responsibility of every Christian to be able to defend their hope in the Lord. The context of this verse shows that such a defense may be required in front of those who are hostile to Christianity (vv. 13-14 and 16). Most brethren today state that they just cannot teach others. Inspiration says we must acquire that ability and that our ability must be able to function in adverse circumstances. We need to give more attention to God and less

time for excuses. We need to practice New Testament evangelism.

To reinforce the point about personal responsibility, let us have a look at Hebrews 5:11-14: "Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing." This passage pointedly reveals that Christians are to become able to teach within a certain reasonable amount of time. We are to progress from babes in Christ to mature, capable Christians (Eph. 4: 14-15; I Pet. 2:1-2). No Christian is exempt, all are to "proclaim the excellencies" of God (I Pet. 2:9). But let us not forget another element of our key text, I Peter 3:21. The key of this key text is, "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts."

It is the very process of our personal transformation into mature Christ-likeness that readies us and prepares us for evangelism in the biblical way. The Scriptures know of no shortcut. There is no method, or apparatus, or machinery that will ready us God's way. It is Christ that transforms us into useful servants as we are conformed to His image. We do not need to be browbeaten, put on a guilt trip, worked into an emotional frenzy, intimidated, frightened or any other such coercive activity to get us to behave like Jesus. If we have in fact come to be like Jesus, proper behavior will be present. It is the natural way of being our Christ-like selves that is the most powerful, personal ingredient in evangelism.

NATURALNESS AND PRACTICALITY

There are two books I have encountered that have put into words some of the biblical principles I have been discussing. One is a book by Rebecka Manly Pippert called Out of the Salt Shaker which emphasizes the naturalness of effective evangelism. The other is Living Proof by Jim Petersen that gives practical understandings to the application of

biblical principles. Both books are written by people in denominations, so there are aspects of both that I cannot endorse. Nevertheless, I have found both to be helpful in offering practical suggestions for personal evangelism.

Concerning the “naturalness” of evangelism, Pippert rather humorously shows how many people feel that evangelism is not something friends do to friends. She speaks of the unnatural, contrived, and manipulative tactics that many use to evangelize. These things only make people look weird and unnatural, hardly an engaging combination of characteristics for doing the work of Jesus.

Petersen develops the practical side of things and comes up with a very helpful concept he refers to as “mini decisions.” Petersen may logically and biblically show that people who make a commitment to Christ are most usually people who have made several smaller steps in that direction before they make the last big step. His list of “mini decisions” are instructive:

- 1. He’s okay.
- 2. I’d like to get to know him better. I feel comfortable with him.
- 3. He accepts me.
- 4. I’m going to find out why he’s so different.
- 5. It seems that he gets his outlook on things from the Bible.
- 6. He’s a Christian, but he’s okay.
- 7. Being a Christian sure has its advantages.
- 8. I like his friends. I envy their confidence.
- 9. It might be interesting to look at the Bible someday.

And then there are more mini-decisions:

Once the non-Christian has begun to examine the Bible with us, we can expect a new series of mini-decisions to occur. We might expect him to say, for example:

- 1. The Bible isn’t impossible to understand after all!
- 2. The Bible says some important things.
- 3. What the Bible says about life fits my experience.
- 4. Jesus seems to be the key. I wonder who He really was.
- 5. Jesus is God.
- 6. I need to do what He says.
- 7. I will believe in him.

These steps well illustrate how daily decisions lead others toward Bible studies and beyond. By looking back at Jesus and His ministry I believe we will be able to see people going through a variety of individual steps on the way to making a final step of commitment. I believe we can also see in the Parable of the Sower that people’s hearts are at different places of development and that most are not ready the first time they hear the gospel to do something about it.

Petersen also develops another useful way of describing a very biblical aspect of evangelism. He shows how evangelists like Paul would go about preaching the gospel and establishing congregations. He likens those congregations to “beachheads.” From those “beachheads” Christians would be brought to maturity and then would move out into the surrounding world to win victories for Jesus. The victories would come through the vehicle of their consecrated lives as they demonstrate the sanctification of Christ in their hearts (cf. Acts 8:4).

One last author, a brother in Christ, Flavil Yeakly, has contributed much to the practical application of Bible principles to evangelism. His statistical work has well illustrated a variety of important biblical teachings. Among them:

- 1. People feel most comfortable and respond most favorably and lastingly to a friendly Bible study where the Bible is the only tool.
- 2. Manipulative methods lead to resentment and dropouts.
- 3. Mere transmission of facts leads to little or nothing.
- 4. A study between friends accomplishes more in the long run than any other approach.
- 5. Growing churches emphasize the personal, friendship aspects of evangelistic methods.
- 6. Stagnant churches do little besides give out information in an impersonal manner.
- 7. Some of the churches that seem to be growing really aren’t because they have high dropout rates due to their use of manipulative methods.

CONCLUSION

Brethren, the need for evangelism is great, but evangelism needs to be understood by first listening to God. The slower, less sensational way of the New Testament is to be chosen over a supposed quick fix that comes from mere men. We of all people, who stand for a pattern theology, we should make every effort to get back to the Bible to learn the old way of evangelism.

“Thus says the Lord, ‘Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it’” (Jer. 6:16a).



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THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US

by Hugo McCord

The love of Christ—who can describe it? It supercedes sexual love (*eros*), and family love (*storge*), and friendship love (*philia*). It is what God is: *agape* (1 John 4:8). It is selfless service, undying concern, and unending commitment. It is unconditional, impartial, and never failing. It has been called the “in spite of” love.

When the love of Christ takes hold of a sinner’s heart, he confers “not with flesh and blood,” but immediately he rushes, even at midnight, to the water of baptism (Acts 16:25-34).

On arising from the water, he is never the same again! From that moment he lives “no longer” for himself, but only for him who died for him (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). He has “crucified” and “buried” his “old” self, and is “renewed in the spirit of his mind” (Galatians 5:24; Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:22-23). He is a “new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Everlastingly grateful, he describes to all who will hear “the excellencies of him who called” him “out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). He exclaims that Jesus “loved me, and gave himself for me,” yet not for him alone, “but for the whole world” (Galatians 2:20; 1 John 2:2).

He may be criticized or even spurned by his blood-kin, but what Jesus has done for him means everything. He is grieved, because of mother love, if he has to turn away from mother’s religion, but his decision has been made, and he will not turn back. One man, some 24 years after the love of Christ mastered him, was still grieving about his kinfolds:

I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brothers’ sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh (Romans 9:2-3).

Oh! How much he wanted his kinfolds to be taken over by Christ’s love! He wrote, “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved” (Romans 10:1).

All the rest of his life, after Christ’s love

took over, for some 34 years, he suffered prisons, lashings, and even stoning. But the constraint of Christ’s love, “an urge with irresistible force,” made him say, about all the threats against him,

None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).

The word “constraineth” is variously defined as taking hold, ruling, controlling, compelling, urging, seizing, inciting, and driving. But something more meaningful than all dictionary definitions is to see sinner in action after the love of Christ has captured him. For example, spend some time with a man named Epaphroditus.

The parents of Epaphroditus, apparently residents of Philippi in Macedonia, named their son in honor of Aphrodite (Venus), the Grecian goddess of love. In the Lord’s providence, Paul and Silas in the 50’s preached Christ’s love in Philippi. Lydia and a jailor and others yielded to that love and obeyed the gospel (Acts 16:11-34). Epaphroditus did also, turning from his parents’ pagan religion (Philippians 2:25-30).

We hope that the parents of Epaphroditus became Christians also, but we are certain that Christ’s love captured the heart of Epaphroditus, moving him to live for Jesus who had died for him (Philippians 2:25-30).

In the spring of 61 A.D., Paul arrived in Rome, a prisoner in chains, but, instead of being imprisoned, he was allowed to rent a house and live there (Acts 28:30). However, rent had to be paid, and food had to be bought. Paul’s money ran out. He could not follow his trade of tent making, for the authorities kept Paul chained to a soldier (Acts 28:16, 20). Even when he had company and made a speech to visitors, the chain was visible (Acts 28:20).

Over at Philippi, Christians had not forgotten the man who introduced them to Jesus. Somehow they heard that Paul

was a prisoner in Rome and needed money badly. Those loving Christians, constrained by the love of Christ, took a collection of money for Paul, and they asked Epaphroditus to carry it to Rome. He was to be their messenger (literally, their apostle, *apostolos*, Philippians 2:25).

What a trip! Over 400 miles! By land and by water. And after he had arrived, a disappointment! The money was not enough! What to do? Christ’s love constrained Epaphroditus to get a job in Rome to earn money to assist Paul. Very likely he held down two jobs, for he became ill, very ill.

Paul insisted that he go home, and he wrote a letter to the Philippian Christians, asking them to

receive him in the Lord with all joy, and hold such people in honor. He was near death for Christ’s work, risking his life, that he might make up your lack of service to me (Philippians 2:25-30).

Paul esteemed Epaphroditus highly. He wrote to the Philippians what that man meant to him personally, saying he “is my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier” and “servant of my need.” And he let the Philippians know how greatly he was relieved when Epaphroditus had recovered:

God had mercy on him, and not only him, but also on me, so that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow (Philippians 2:27).

We hope that Epaphroditus was able to make the arduous trip back home. However, we will not know until we talk with him in heaven.

Besides Epaphroditus, many early Christians, constrained by Christ’s love, made themselves “living” sacrifices (Romans 12:1). Some became dead sacrifices, as Antipas of Pergamus, not loving life “so much as to refuse to die” (Revelation 12:11). Jesus looked down from heaven and saw Antipas “slain,” and sent word to John on the isle of Patmos that Antipas was “my faithful martyr” (Revelation 2:13).

Psalms 70

O God hasten to deliver me
O Lord, hasten to my help!

Let those be ashamed and humiliated
Who seek my life

Let those be turned back and dishonored
Who delight in my hurt

Let those be turned back because of their
shame who say "Aha, aha!"

Let all who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in
Thee and let those who love Thy salvation
say continually "Let God be magnified"

But I am afflicted and needy
Hasten to me O God!
Thou art my help and my deliverer
O Lord do not delay

—Psalms 70

Isn't it interesting in the life of David that whenever he was confronted with trouble, he consistently called out to the Name of the Most High God?

Numerous times in the Psalms you read of David's emotional pleas to God for deliverance... quite often in tears.

I've been thinking about this lately in that we as Christians perhaps don't put enough emotion into our prayers to God. Yet when I read the Scriptures, David **pours out his heart, soul and spirit** into his prayers when he cries out to God.

Read carefully how deep the words are that he uses when addressing the Lord God. He shows great reverence and addresses God in a holy manner.

1Sam 13:14 gives us an insight regarding God's attitude towards David in that God literally sought David out. Why? Because he was a man after God's own heart.

David's whole outlook to life was God! The Rock of his salvation, his Redeemer, his Savior, his Deliverer, his Provider... **God was everything to David!** And his writing in the Psalms clearly shows that with his undying love for Jehovah.

Psalms 70 is just one example of David's relentless cries to the Most High for deliverance. How can you apply this to your Christian walk? Is your heart right with God? Does God mean the world to you? Is He truly your 'everything'?

—Ed

Before John died, he went to Smyrna and appointed Polycarp as an elder of the church there. He is another wholly motivated by Christ's love, but living in a time when Christianity was both unpopular and illegal. Both the Jews and the Roman government tried to stamp out Christianity.

The Roman consul gave Polycarp a choice: "Swear, and I will release you: curse Christ!" Polycarp replied,

Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never once wronged me. How then shall I blaspheme my King, who has saved me?

The old man was ordered to be burned at the stake. The Jews helped gather logs for the fire. Today at Smyrna (present day Izmar), on the slope of Mt. Pagus, are the ruins of a theater and a stadium close by the spot where Polycarp died in flames on Saturday, February 23, 155 A.D.

Many centuries later, on a farm out from Dickson, Tennessee, a mother told her children about the work of J. M. McCaleb, who left comfortable America in 1892 to live in pagan Japan, being constrained by Christ's love. One of her daughters, Sarah Andrews, was baptized at age 14, and told her parents she wanted to do what J. M. McCaleb had done. What! A female missionary! In a foreign language? Thousands of miles from Tennessee! Alone! What nerve!

That was 1904 and she would not change her mind! At age 25, sponsored by no congregation, supported only by her parents, on Christmas Day, 1915, she left alone for Japan. There she served unrelentingly for 46 years, teaching neighborhood women, boys, and girls. Mack Wayne Craig, her nephew, wrote,

Because she was a single woman, much of her work was devoted to teaching girls and women. She used her house to teach them to cook and sew, as well as to help them learn of the Savior. . . . When war broke out, she was interned as an enemy alien, and confined to her house.

Wounded soldiers were brought to her house for her to be a nurse for them. "I did my best," but "because of a lack of food, I broke down."

My body began swelling, which is one sign of starvation. . . . I weighed only 75 pounds. . . . There was a duration of almost three years that I had no word from the homeland whatsoever.

Today there are three congregations in Japan that she helped to establish. The church in Dickson, Tennessee, supported her for the last 25 years of her life. When she was asked to retire and to move back to Tennessee, she replied, "It is just as near to heaven from Japan as it is from America.

An orphan girl, Oiha San, mothered by Sarah in her home, grew up and loved Sarah deeply. At Sarah's grave in Shizuoka, Oiha and others erected a monument in her memory. Ten years later, at the Sunday morning service in Shizuoka, December 26, 1971, Hugo and Lois McCord met and hugged and reminisced with the gray-haired Oiha San. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," all being constrained by Christ's love (Revelation 14:13).

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the council of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree firmly planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither and whatever he does, he prospers.

The wicked are not so. They are like chaff which the wind drives away.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgement nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish.

—Psalms 1:1-6

