

THE EVANGELISTS

M A G A Z I N E

Issue 8 Spring 2011

New
Creatures
in Christ

Hidden
Christians

Samuel Logan Brengle's Classic Sermon

Why should we be Holy?

THE COMMISSION

By Tim Knowing

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Editor:

Timothy Knowing

Layout & Graphics:

Leah Knowing

Article Contributors:

Timothy Knowing
Leah Knowing

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**For more information on this ministry,
please contact us at:**

Mail:

The Evangelists Magazine
P.O. Box 5353
Red Hill Rockhampton, Qld, 4701

Email:

contact@soldiersofthecross.com.au

Website:

www.soldiersofthecross.com.au

Mobile:

0488 048 412 (Tim)
0407 025 910 (Leah)

Subscriptions:

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Soldiers of the Cross

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At the time that this editorial was
written I was watching in the news
all the uncertainty that there is over
the Global stock markets and the monetary
system in general. Stocks and shares have
dropped value in the tens of billions and
people speculate whether there is going to
be another recession.

In recent times we have seen nations de-
faulting on their loans, because they are
carrying so much debt, and then having to
be bailed out. There are many ordinary folk
out there also that have been rattled as a
result of all this, and wonder where it will
all end. It would seem that the things of this
world are currently being shaken.

The Bible tells us of a time when God will
shake the Heavens and the Earth. *"Then [at
mount Sinai] His voice shook the earth, but
now He has given a promise: yet once more
I will shake and make tremble not only the
earth but also the [starry] heavens. Now
this expression, yet once more, indicates the
final removal and transformation of all [that
can be] shaken-- that is, of that which has
been created-- in order that what cannot be
shaken may remain and continue."* (He-
brews 12: 26-27 AMP)

Now depending on what you place your
trust in, there is good news and bad news
in these couple of verses. If our trust and
confidence is in the things of this world, we
will one day be sadly disappointed.

Recently, I read a story of a Christian man
who had visited Russia in the mid-1930's.
As he observed the communists building a
new world without God, one of their lead-
ers said, referring to Christians, "Your day is
over, now its our turn."

This man was shaken by this statement, but
it caused him to search the scriptures and
he was encouraged when he read that God's
Kingdom is an unshakeable kingdom (He-
brews 12:28). The scriptures remind us
elsewhere, where true value lies.

Matthew 6:19-20 says, *"Lay not
up for yourselves treasures upon
earth, where moth and rust doth
corrupt, and where thieves break
through and steal: But lay up for
yourselves treasures in heaven,
where neither moth nor rust doth
corrupt, and where thieves do
not breakthrough nor steal."*

In the light of the above scrip-
ture, I have had to ask myself
the question, 'Am I devoting
time to things that have eternal
value?' It is so easy to get caught
up with the affairs of daily life that
we forget that the decisions we
make in the 'here and now' will have
eternal consequences.

This is equally as true for the believer as
it is for the unbeliever. For those who are
outside of Christ, a terrible eternity awaits
them unless they repent and put their faith
in Christ. But for the Church, the onus is
on us to tell them that God, who is rich in
mercy, has made the way of escape for all
who will humble themselves before Him.

It is this very thing - the saving of souls -
where I believe true treasure lies. Indeed,
what price can you put on a soul? Make
no mistake - when we give time to making
known God's redemptive plan of salva-
tion, we are laying up for ourselves eternal
riches.

This issue we cover the blessing of what it
means to be a 'New Creature in Christ' (see
page 8) and on page 4, we have a former
Salvation Army Commissioner, Samuel
Logan Brengle's classic sermon 'Why Should
we be Holy?'

Leah in her article "Hidden Christians" gives
insight into why some professing Christians
look no different to the rest of the world.
In case you may have been discouraged in
evangelistic endeavours in the past, read
the back page story about what happened
to Dwight L. Moody, the famous American
Evangelist c. 1800 -1900.

On page 15 Leah reports on some of the
places we have been able to share the
Gospel in 'Making the most of every op-
portunity.'

Finally, as you can see from some of the
letters, 'The Evangelists Magazine' is now
being read not only in Australia, but also
in Africa and USA. We thank the Lord for
His faithfulness in opening these doors and
for His great provision towards us. We also
thank you, our readers, who pray for us that
God will continue to provide, so that we
can send this publication freely to all who
request it.



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Impacted to the brim

Why Should We Be Holy

Samuel Logan Brengle's Classic Sermon

We should be holy because God wants us to be holy. He commands it. He says, 'As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.' (1 Peter 1:15-16)

God is in earnest about this. It is God's will, and it cannot be evaded. Just as a man wants his watch to keep perfect time, his gun to fire true, wants his friends to be steadfast, his children to be obedient, his wife to be faithful, so God wants us to be holy.

Too many, however, the command seems harsh. They have been accustomed to commands accompanied by curses or kicks, or blows. But we must not forget that 'God is love,' and His commands are not harsh, but kind. They come from the fullness of an infinitely loving and all-wise heart. They are meant for our good. If a railway train could think or talk, it might argue that running on two rails over the same road year after year was very commonplace.

But if it insisted on larger liberty, and so jumped the track, it would certainly ruin itself. So the man who wants freedom, and refuses to obey God's commands

to be holy, destroys himself. The train was made to run on the tracks, and so we were made to live according to God's commandment, to be holy, and only in that way can we gain everlasting good.

Oh, how tender are His words! Listen.

'And now, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes for thy good?' (Deuteronomy 10:12-13.)

For thy good! For thy good! Do you not see it, my brother, my sister? It is 'for thy good.' There is nothing harsh, nothing selfish in our dear Lord's command. It is 'thy good' He is seeking. Bless His name! 'God is love.'

We should be holy, because Jesus died to make us holy. He gave Himself to stripes, and spitting, and cruel mockings, and the crown of thorns, and death on the cross for this purpose. He wants a holy people. For this He prayed.

'Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth.' (John 17:17.)

For this He died. 'Who gave Himself for

us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' (Titus 2:14.)

'He loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it,..... that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish,' Let us not disappoint Him. Let not His precious blood be spent in vain.

We should be holy, in order that we may be useful.

Who have been the mightiest men of God of all the ages? They have been holy men; men with clean hearts on fire with love to God and man; unselfish men; humble men, who forgot themselves in their love and toil for others; faithful men, whose lives were 'hid with Christ in God.'

Moses, the meekest of men; Paul, who would gladly pour out his life a sacrifice for the people; Luther and Fox, and St. Francis and Wesley, and the General and Mrs. Booth, and ten thousand times ten thousand other men and women, who were 'great in the sight of the Lord.'

These are the ones whom God has used.

d
r?

“He gave Himself to stripes, and spitting, and cruel mockings, and death on the cross for this purpose.”

So long as there are any roots of sin in the heart, the Holy Spirit cannot have all His way in us, and so our usefulness is hindered, but when our hearts are clean, the Holy Spirit dwells within, and then we have power for service. Then we can work for God and do good, in spite of all our ignorance and weakness. Hallelujah!

A plain, humble young Irishman heard about the blessing of a clean heart, and went alone, and fell on his knees

“To save a soul is better than to command an army, to win a battle, to rule an empire, or to sit upon a throne.”

before the Lord, and cried to Him for it. A man happened to overhear him, and wrote about it, saying, ‘I shall never forget his petition. “O God, I plead with Thee for this blessing!” Then, as if God was showing him what was in the way, he said, “My Father, I will give up every known sin, only I plead with Thee for power.” And then, as if his individual sins were passing before him, he said again and again, “I will give them up; I will give them up.”’

‘Then without any emotion he rose from his knees, turned his face heavenward, and simply said, “And now, I claim the blessing.” For the first time he now became aware of my presence, and with a shining face reached out his hand to clasp mine. You could feel the presence of the Spirit as he said, “I have received Him; I have received Him!” ‘And I believe he had. for in the next few months he led more than sixty men into the Kingdom of God. His whole life was transformed.’

To be holy and useful is possible for each one of us, and it is far better than to be great and famous. To save a soul is better than to command an army, to win a battle, to rule an empire, or to sit upon a throne.

Again we should be holy that we may be safe. Sin in the heart is more dangerous than gunpowder in the cellar. Before Peter got the blessing of a clean heart and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he yielded to the sinful nature within, and cursed and swore, and denied Jesus.

Before David got this experience, he too fell into awful sin, and nearly lost his soul.

Remember that holiness is nothing more nor less than perfect love, for God and man, in a clean heart. If we love God with all our hearts we shall gladly keep all His commandments, and do all His will as He makes it known to us. And if we love our fellow-men as we love ourselves, we shall not knowingly do any wrong to them.

So we see that this holy love is the surest possible safeguard against all kinds of sin, either against God or man, and we cannot count ourselves safe unless we have it. Without it, Peter and David fell; but with it, Joseph and Daniel resisted the temptations of kings’ courts, and the three Hebrew children and the fire-baptized Stephen and Paul gladly faced death rather than deny their Lord.

Finally, we should be holy, because we are most solemnly assured that without holiness ‘no man shall see the Lord’ (Hebrews 12:14), and God has made all things ready, so that we may have the blessing if we will thus leaving those who refuse or trifle and fail without excuse.

I bless Him that years ago, He wakened me to the infinite importance of this matter, sent holy people to testify to and explain the experience, enabled me to consecrate my whole being to Him, and seek Him with all my heart, and He gave me the blessing,

Will you have it, my Comrade?

If so receive Jesus as your Sanctifier just now.

My idols I cast at Thy feet,
My all I return Thee who gave;
This moment the work is complete,
For Thou art almighty to save.
O Saviour, I dare to believe,
Thy blood for my cleansing I see;
And, asking in faith,
I receive Salvation,
Full, present, and free.



**Samuel Logan Brengle
(1860–1936)**

Samuel Brengle was a commissioner in The Salvation Army and a leading author, teacher and preacher on the doctrine of Holiness. As a teenager, he was saved during a revival meeting and began a life of dedication to the Lord. Educated at De-Pauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, he was an exceptional scholar and while a number of opportunities were open to him, he felt that his calling was to be a preacher.

Following university he became a circuit preacher for the Methodist church but later on he was encouraged to study theology and so he enrolled at the Boston Theological Seminary. Following his graduation he received offers to pastor some of the largest Methodists churches in the US. However, he turned them down as he became interested in the work of The Salvation Army. Around this time he had met a young Salvationist by the name of Elizabeth Swift and had asked for her hand in marriage.

Brengle soon travelled to England where after meeting with William Booth was accepted and made his home at the Salvation Army Training Barracks in London. After training he was appointed back to the United States where it is said he laboured for the salvation of sinners and the sanctification of saints.

Early on, many began to recognize the spiritual gifts and ministry of Brengle and later on he was taken out of church work and given a unique spiritual ministry. His books include ‘The Soul Winner’s Secret’, ‘Helps to Holiness’ and ‘Heart Talks on Holiness’.

Source: Wikipedia

Are You A Good Person? Tract

ARE YOU A GOOD PERSON?

MEET MR. NICE GUY. IF GOOD PEOPLE GO TO HEAVEN, HE WILL BE FIRST IN LINE.

WELL...I TRY TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT.

HAVE YOU EVER TOLD A LIE?

PRETTY MUCH.

REALLY? DO YOU MIND IF WE LOOK AT THEM?

UM...ALL RIGHT.

HAVE YOU EVER TOLD A LIE?

YEAH, WHO HASN'T?

WHAT DO YOU CALL SOMEONE WHO LIES?

A LIAR.

HAVE YOU EVER STOLEN ANYTHING?

NOPE.

BUT YOU JUST TOLD ME YOU'RE A LIAR.

HAVE YOU EVER LOOKED AT SOMEONE WITH LUST?

OF COURSE.

JESUS SAID, "WHOEVER LOOKS AT A WOMAN TO LUST AFTER HER HAS COMMITTED ADULTERY WITH HER IN HIS HEART." (MATTHEW 5:28)

HAVE YOU EVER USED GOD'S NAME TO CURSE?

***! WATCH IT, MORON!

THAT'S CALLED BLASPHEMY. "THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD ANYONE GUILTY WHO MISUSES HIS NAME." (EXODUS 20:7)

BY YOUR OWN ADMISION YOU'RE A LIAR, A THIEF, A BLASPHEMER, AND AN ADULTERER AT HEART. AND THAT'S JUST FOUR OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

OK, SO I'M NOT PERFECT.

ACTUALLY, IT'S WORSE THAN THAT...

SIN ISN'T JUST DOING THINGS WE SHOULDN'T. IT'S ALSO **NOT DOING** THE THINGS WE SHOULD.

"ANYONE WHO KNOWS THE GOOD HE OUGHT TO DO AND DOESN'T DO IT, SINS." (JAMES 4:17)

THERE'S MORE...

SUPPOSE WE COULD PUT A DEVICE IN YOUR BRAIN THAT WOULD RECORD ALL YOUR PRIVATE THOUGHTS FOR A WEEK...

...AND THEN PLAY THEM ON A MOVIE SCREEN FOR YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO SEE.

THAT WOULD BE EMBARRASSING!

"GOD KNOWS THE SECRETS OF THE HEART" (PSALM 44:2)

WELL...COMPARED TO SOME PEOPLE I'M A SAINT!

TRUE, BUT THE STANDARD IS GOD'S LAW, NOT OTHER PEOPLE.

BESIDES, EVEN IF YOU SIN JUST FIVE TIMES A DAY...

...IN ONE YEAR, THAT'S 1825 SINS! IF YOU LIVE TO BE SEVENTY, YOU'LL HAVE BROKEN GOD'S LAW OVER 127,000 TIMES!

YOU'LL HAVE TO ANSWER FOR EVERY SIN ON JUDGMENT DAY, WHEN "EACH OF US WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD." (ROMANS 14:12)

BUT WON'T GOD JUST FORGIVE ME?

I KNOW I KEEP BREAKING THE LAW, BUT CAN'T YOU JUST LET IT SLIDE?

TRY THAT IN COURT...

ONLY A CORRUPT JUDGE WOULD DO THAT. A GOOD JUDGE WOULD SAY...

JUSTICE DEMANDS THAT YOU PAY FOR YOUR CRIMES.

GOD IS A HOLY, RIGHTEOUS JUDGE. HE HATES SIN! JESUS WARNED THAT GOD, IN HIS WRATH, WILL CAST ALL WHO SIN AGAINST HIM INTO ETERNAL FIRE "WHERE THERE WILL BE WEEPING AND GNASING OF TEETH." (MATTHEW 13:42)

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY...

IF A **SINLESS PERSON** OFFERED TO TAKE YOUR PUNISHMENT, THEN JUSTICE WOULD BE SERVED AND YOU COULD GO FREE!

THEN HE ROSE FROM THE GRAVE - DEFEATING DEATH!

GOD LOVES YOU SO MUCH, HE SENT HIS SON JESUS TO SUFFER AND DIE FOR YOUR SINS...

YOU CAN'T EARN ETERNAL LIFE. IT IS GOD'S GIFT TO ALL WHO HUMBLE THEMSELVES AND COME TO JESUS. "TURN TO GOD IN REPENTANCE AND HAVE FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS" (ACTS 20:21). HE WILL FORGIVE YOUR SINS AND GIVE YOU A NEW HEART! "IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION!" (2 CORINTHIANS 5:17)

THEN READ THE BIBLE AND OBEY IT. FIND A GOOD CHURCH TO HELP YOU GROW, AND TELL OTHERS THE **GOOD NEWS!**

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"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold all things are become new."
2 Corinthians 5:17

◆ Tim Knowling

As one of the founders of the ministry that produces this publication, it would be no surprise that I have often given much time to meditating on what it means to be born again. I have come to the conclusion that this work of God is one of the greatest of all miracles that are performed. The scriptures attest to many great miracles that have taken place, but when a sinner repents it says "all the angels rejoice".

I love the passage in 2 Corinthians 7:10, which says that *"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death."* The emphasis being repentance leads to salvation.

Studying our main text however, gives us a greater understanding of the way that God works by His Spirit in affecting a great change where we are said to be 'New Creatures'.

Therefore if any man be in Christ.

When someone is born again they are said to be 'in Christ'. However it could be said that there are three stages of the human soul in connection to Christ.

Firstly, in our natural unregenerate state we are without Christ. This is a place where every believer was at one time, and where much of the world still is, unless they submit to His Lordship.

The second state of the human soul is the place where, as our text says, we are 'in Christ'. We are in a position of grace, where we have put our faith and our trust in Christ as the only one who can save us, because of His redemptive work on the Cross.

The third state is where we are with Christ, we are in glory. This is the place where every saint who has died now dwells and is the hope for those of us still alive. Being 'in Christ' leads to the third state, which can never be reached without this second state.

In this world there have been and are many leaders. But it has never been said of those who follow them, that they are

New Cre

in them (their leader). This is because the follower of Christ becomes something more than an imitator of Him. To help us understand this, the scriptures give us symbols or types to reveal spiritual truths.

Consider the first man, Adam. The scriptures tell us that we were, all of us, in Adam. When Eve was deceived and Adam rebelled by taking of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they

fell from the place they once enjoyed in their relationship with God - it was now broken. As the Father and Mother of the human race, the sentence imposed on them became imposed on us also. When they fell, we fell with them.

The Bible, though, refers to Christ as the second Adam who came to restore that which had previously been broken by the first Adam.



atures in Christ

"For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Corinthians 15:22

We also have the example of Noah's Ark, where God preserved a remnant from the judgment which he brought upon the earth. The Bible says that the Lord shut them all in. In the Ark they were safe and secure from that which was happening outside. God floated them to perfect safety.

In the same sense, Christ is the Ark of God provided against the Day of Judgment to come. Just As Noah believed God, we also by faith believe that Christ is able to save us.

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man."
Luke 17:26

In the New Testament, the Lord Jesus

explains the phrase of being *in himself* in another way. He presents us as being in him as, in the vine.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5

It would be of no use that the branch be placed close to or even strapped to the

“It is to trust Him (Christ) for salvation, as Noah trusted the Ark.”

side of the trunk; it must be actually *in it*, by vital union so that it can receive life from the parent stem. And this is the illustration of Christ and his people, in which the very life of Christ flows into us.

Then we have Christ as the Building. We may be ‘in Christ’ also as the stone is in the building. Christ is described as the chief cornerstone, the stone which all the other stones are placed next to. The stone which gives support to the other stones, but together are built into one wall. They become one rock, one temple.

From all of these examples we can see what it is to be “in Christ.”

It is to trust Him for salvation as Noah trusted the Ark. It is to derive real life from Him as the branch does from the stem. And it is to lean on Him, and be united with Him as the stone leans on the foundation and becomes an integral part of the structure.

He is a new Creature

There are many changes which a person may undergo, but none are radical enough to be worthy of

describing the person as a new creature. The world can even appear successful in the way in which people have been reformed from drug and alcohol addictions, but even this doesn’t go deep enough to be able to call the reformed person a new creature.

We can teach good morals and see great changes in people as a result of that, but still this is not what the Apostle Paul is referring to in this passage.

To become a new creature, the change must go far deeper than the outward life. Without this he is not saved, he is not a new creature, and therefore, he is not in Christ.

The consequences of all this are far reaching because it is a root change, not just the branches only. And it is not just an alteration of the walls; this radical change goes to the very foundation. When someone is a new creature there is a change even within the nature of a person, for as Charles Spurgeon once said, the things that “were once irksome have now become winsome.”

If you go to a country like India you will find that it is a normal practice for new Christians to even change their name, such is the realisation that they have not only died but risen with Christ, and that the person that they were previously no longer exists.

Old things are passed away

We have already established that there is no good to be had from trying to pretty up the old sinful nature. This old life has to die before we can experience the new birth. We die to that old nature through repentance, faith and baptism. Therefore, because we have been pardoned through Christ’s

blood shed on the cross, we now desire to serve and obey Him. We have a new Ruler and we no longer wish to serve the former. When we examine the lives of the early Church we can see how this outworked in their lives.

When we look at the lives of Jews who put their faith and trust in the Messiah, we see that their former prejudices against Christianity had now passed away. The best example of this is seen in the life of the Apostle Paul who, prior to conversion, was zealous in his persecution of Christians. Jews carried within them a great pride because they were God’s people. They were also attached to all the various rites and ceremonies that went with their religious practices.

But now, for those ‘in Christ’, their dependence on them had passed away, as the Apostle Paul said he considered all these things as ‘dung’ compared to knowing Christ (Philippians 3:8).

The Gentiles who placed their trust in the Saviour, found release from the bondages that formerly enslaved them. Their attachment to their many idols was broken. No longer were they dependant on their own works as a means of justification.

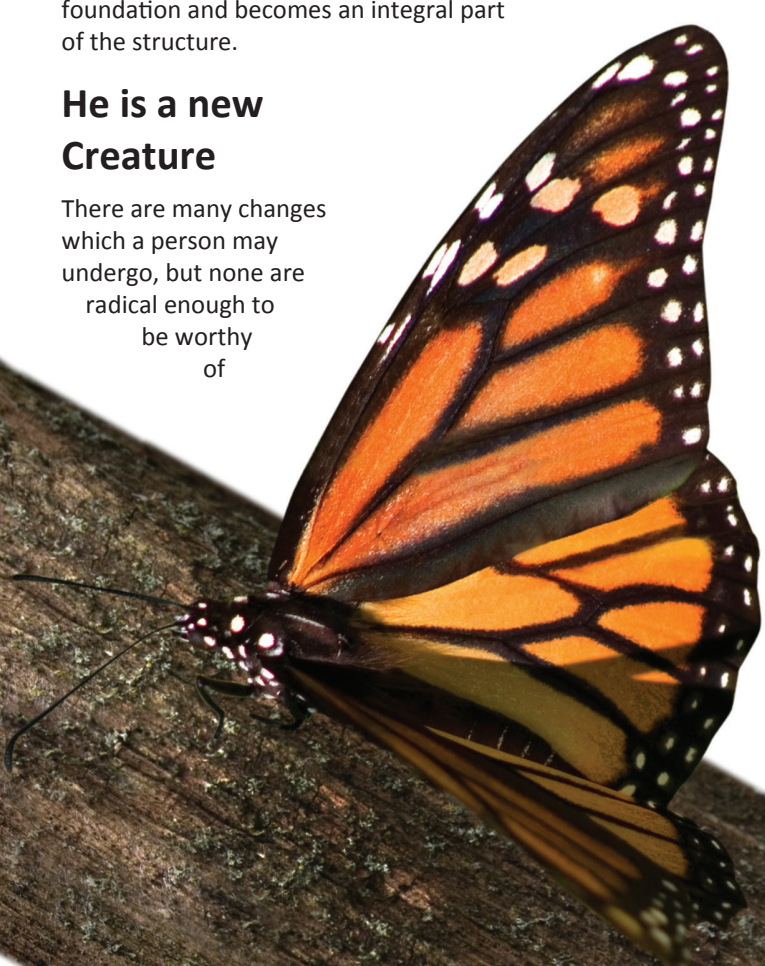
For all who call upon the name of the Lord, it will be equally true that our supreme love of self will pass away, the sin that we once loved will pass away, our love of the world and the pleasures it offers will pass away and even our attachment to earthly friends, rather than God, will pass away.

This change however, is something which commences at the new birth and is carried on throughout our lives by progressive sanctification.

Behold, all things are become new.

It is a wonderful thing to meet someone you may have once known, and then see the fruit of a new creature being outworked in their lives. We must take care

“There is no good to be had from trying to pretty up the old life.”



“For all who have called upon the Name of the Lord, it will be equally true that our supreme love of self will have passed away.”

however, realising that in some, there might be a greater evidence of change than others. A newborn baby is not as developed as a two year old and so it will be for any who have surrendered to Christ. As I once heard a preacher say “It’s about direction, not necessarily perfection”.

However, I do believe that, within those who are said to be a new creature, there will be new desires - a desire for communion with God and a heart’s will to do only those things that please Him. It could be said that we now long for God with the same passion that we exercised in chasing after fleshly sinful things.

This new nature, which is a result of the Holy Spirit residing in us, implants a holy principle within which because it now hates the sin that we once loved, goes to war against it, as we want to be clean of any indwelling iniquity.

When we are a new creature the purpose of our life, and that which we live for, becomes new. Whereas once we lived for our own end and pleasures, the end we now live for is that in everything we do, God may be glorified.

Our priorities change as well. Where once other things came first, God now comes first. Other interests we may have take second place to Him because we are now an exclusivist.

The desire of every new creature will be to fellowship with other new creatures. It is true of many who belong to Christ that they had to leave their old friends behind. And why? Because we don’t want to live that way anymore. We are now part of the family of God and so we desire to be

with His people, because God’s friends are now our friends.

For the new creature in Christ, the Bible will seem to be a new book. Where once they may have despised it, it now contains the words of eternal life. There is treasure to be found on every page and so we read it with intent, knowing that there are words contained within which will bless our souls.

In conclusion, as we saw at the beginning of this article there are three positions in our relation to Christ.

We are either without Christ, In Christ or with Christ. I encourage all, though, to do a self-evaluation as the Apostle Paul said, to “*Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith...*”. (2 Corinthians 13:5)

By repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we can enter into this new life. For those who may have just started this new life in Christ, be sure that He will bring to completion that which He has started (Jude 24). But for all, I finish with the words of the Apostle Paul who said,

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God”.
(1 Corinthians 6:11)

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“For those who may have just started this new life in Christ, be sure that He will bring to completion that which He has started.”

The Christian Life

“The Christian life is more than difficult; it is humanly impossible to live. Only Jesus Christ can live it through you as He dwells within you. The Christian life is not a person trying to imitate Christ; rather, it is Christ imparting His life to and living His life through the person.

The Christian life is not what you do for Him; it is what He does for and through you. He wants to think with your mind, express Himself through your emotions, and speak through your voice, though you may be unconscious of it.”

Dr. Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ

source: The Evidence Bible.

HIDDEN CHRISTIA

◆ Leah Knowling

Many years ago, I was interviewed on a radio station by a youth leader of a local church, who was also a school chaplain. His comments concerned me at the time, but unfortunately still seems to be a trend in the church today.

He was talking about his time in the schools and said that the kids were 'shocked' when they found out he was a Christian. He thought that was somehow cool and something to be proud of. I didn't.

Over the last several years, I have had the opportunity to observe the church in many parts of this nation and to my dismay have found a number of similar stories.

Jesus said *"Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house."* (Matthew 5:15)

So why do some Christians want to hide their light?

I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I know from scripture and experience there are couple of main reasons.

Firstly, is the person a true Christian or are they a mere professor, a false

convert? Did they come to Christ by way of brokenness over their sins and, through humility and repentance, cry out to the Saviour for mercy and grace? Or did they merely repeat a prayer so they could 'get the good life'? Are they living for Christ or self?

A good indicator of a false convert is one who thinks they need to be like the world, to be relevant, or to fit in, to reach the lost in the world. If you think that getting drunk, going to nightclubs, swearing and tell crude jokes will make you more relevant to the culture, then you are right. You *will* be like everyone else. Everyone that is, except Jesus. But if you think that doing those things will help you reach the lost, then you are seriously deceived and need to *"examine yourself to see whether you are in the faith."* (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Often these people will quote Jesus as being the 'friend of sinners'. However, Jesus didn't mix with sinners just to hang out with them, so they could see he was just like them. No, they could see He was different. Jesus came to draw men out of darkness into His glorious light. The One who is THE light (John 8:12), could not become darkness... and neither should we.

Now, before going any further, let me

qualify what it does and doesn't mean to let your little light shine. Some people wear 'Jesus' shirts, crosses and WWJD bracelets and have multitudes of 'Jesus loves you' and 'Honk, if you love Jesus' stickers on their car. Whilst there may not be anything wrong with some of these things, per sé, for some people they are trying to impress others outwardly, because they lack inwardly.

Some of these same people with 'Jesus' stickers on their cars, will yell and swear if someone cuts them off in traffic. Good witness huh?

Letting our light shine really means to come out of the closet and be a witness for Christ, that through our words and actions, men will see our good deeds and praise our Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16). We need to live the lifestyle of a Christian not just on Sunday, but every day, whether in public or in private, because even if the world doesn't see, God does. However, even if our lifestyle is Christ-like, if we are not actively sharing our faith with the 'whomsoever' that cross our paths each day, then we are still hiding our light under a bushel.

This brings me to the second reason why Christians hide. FEAR!!!



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Fear of persecution, fear of offending others and fear of rejection are just some of the fears that plague the average witness for Christ. And who hasn't been in that position. However, if Christ had given into fear, we wouldn't be saved and would still be in our sins. And that is exactly where the lost in this world will live and die, if we don't swallow our fear and share our faith.

1 John 4:18 says *"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear"*. It was love for you and I and for the Father that drove Christ to overcome and become our Saviour. And it is that same love for the lost, and for the Father, that should compel us to overcome our fears, swallow our pride, open our mouths and speak.

So, if you have been a 'Hidden Christian', I encourage you today to firstly examine your heart and see if you are in the faith. If you are a true Christian who is paralysed by fear, then I encourage you to think hard on the fate of the lost if you don't tell them about Christ. Pray that God would give you boldness and the empowering of His Holy Spirit, and then let love do its perfect work in putting legs to your prayers.



◆ Leah Knowling

Making The Opportunity



The Bible says that God has “*committed to us the message of reconciliation*” (2 Corinthians 5:19). That means every person who is born of God’s Spirit, and has His inner witness that they are His child, is a minister of reconciliation - that is, a witness for Christ.

There has often been many misconceptions about evangelism and any number of excuses why we can’t do it. In a future edition I will address these more fully. However, in this article, I would like to focus on one particular misconception which is close to my heart, share some ways that I, personally, overcome it and, with the Lord’s help, make the “most of every opportunity, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16).

Misconception: *You cannot be truly effective in evangelism unless you are single or have grown children, as young children are a hindrance.*

As a wife and a mother of two young children (one of whom I home-school; the other, a very active 2 year old), I know it can be difficult at times to actively share our faith. However, that is not to say it is impossible. With God all things are possible. If we care enough about the lost and their eternal destiny if they die in their sins, then we will find a way to be God’s witnesses.

Prayer and reading God’s Word daily is essential for the health of every Christian’s soul and relationship with God. However, at no time is it more needed than when we go out into the world to be His witnesses, whether at work or general daily activities.

For me, apart from my normal daily prayer time, I pray daily that the Lord would give

me divine appointments wherever I go and if I am not ‘going’ anywhere, I ask the Lord to bring someone across my path somehow - maybe a telemarketer on the phone, a delivery guy or serviceman or a neighbour.

If I *am* going out, I make sure I have Gospel tracts in my handbag and wallet, so that I can give them to whoever I meet. Sometimes that will be a ‘checkout chick’, bank teller, a salesperson, or someone who is standing in line at a checkout next to me. Good Gospel tracts, such as the ‘Are You a Good Person’ comic on page 7, are great to just leave with someone if there is not enough time to speak to the person at length. However, they are also great as a conversation starter to turn a natural conversation to spiritual matters.

Now, as for children being a hindrance. Personally, I have found some of my greatest witnessing opportunities have been in a playground or at a public family event.

Playgrounds are great where you can let the kids have a play and talk to the Mums, Dads and Grandparents who are there with their children. While you are watching the kids play, natural conversations can quickly turn to spiritual matters if you listen for an opportunity. Sometimes you will get interrupted if a child has a fall, etc, but even these can be used for the Glory of God.

One example was when Tim and I took our kids to a playground. Our son had a fall and got a bleeding nose and another family there having a picnic gave us some ice to stop the bleeding. This eventually led to me sharing the Gospel with the 12 children with them and giving each child a tract.





Other examples of 'family witnessing opportunities' are public family events that the kids would enjoy, but where there are heaps of people with whom to share the Gospel.

Recently we had two such events, where the kids had great fun, we handed out heaps of tracts and shared the Gospel with a number of people.

One event was at an Open Day for the Australian Defence Force in our city. Every year, the ADF holds Army Exercises just outside of Rockhampton. This year was a combined effort between Australian and US forces. Prior to its start, they held an open day at the Showgrounds where families could come and see the machinery, helicopters, tanks, etc and talk with the soldiers. It was a little boy's dream come true.

Hundreds of people turned out for the event and there were hundreds of soldiers from both nations. In the natural it was a great day to see things, hop in a tank and get lots of pictures of the kids having fun. In the spiritual, it was a harvest field.

We went with the intent of evangelism, but at the same time to let the kids have fun. And guess what happened? We handed out so many 'Million Dollar Note' tracts that we ran out. We met some really great people, including Army and Navy chaplains, and talked about the Lord; and the kids *did* have fun. While we were waiting in line to enter the grounds, I went along and handed tracts to people for 'something to read while you are waiting' - only one refusal.

The other event was another 'Open Day', this time at Rockhampton's Heritage Vil-

lage. As they were opening a new addition to the village - the original Rockhampton Fire Station - the area was also used for a competition of Fire Officers from around the state, as well as fire-fighting and safety demonstrations. Again, it was a great opportunity to hand out tracts, especially to those manning stands.

One interesting experience was a van that had been 'converted' to look like a 2-storey house - with a very low ceiling. The Fire and Safety people use a smoke machine to fill it with smoke and get everyone to crawl through it to teach children about what to do in case of a fire.

I took my son, Samuel, through it and handed a Good Person comic tract to the Fireman sitting upstairs beside the Fire Alarm and Smoke machine. The kids going through it saw the comic tract and wanted one too. So, I ended up staying there for a few minutes (with Samuel) and got to give out about a dozen tracts. Praise God!

Both Tim and I were able to not only hand out lots of tracts, but share the Gospel with a number of people throughout the day, which was very fruitful. The kids had great fun and are also learning how to witness at the same time.

My point is 'Every opportunity is a good opportunity for the Gospel'. Don't wait for people to come to you. Jesus said "GO" (Matthew 28:19). If you keep your spiritual eyes open and ask the Lord for opportunities or divine appointments every day, He will answer.

Then go and "make the most of every opportunity" (Colossians 4:5).



EVANGELISM

DISCOURAGEMENT

◆ Harry Albus

One night when [Dwight L.] Moody was going home, it suddenly occurred to him that he had not spoken to a single person that day about accepting Christ. A day lost he thought to himself. But as he walked up the street he saw a man by a lamp-post. He promptly walked up to the man and asked, 'Are you a Christian?'

"Moody did not find soul-winning easy. In fact, even Christians often criticized him for having zeal without knowledge. Others called him 'Crazy Moody'. Once when he spoke to a perfect stranger about Christ, the man said, "That is none of your business... if you were not a sort of preacher I would knock you into the gutter for your impertinence.'

"The next day, a businessman friend sent for Moody. The businessman told Moody that the stranger he had spoken to was a friend of his. 'Moody, you've got zeal without knowledge. You insulted a friend of mine on the street last night. You went up to him, a perfect stranger, and asked him if he were a Christian.'

"Moody went out of his friends office almost broken-hearted. For some time he worried about this. Then late one night a man pounded on the door of his home. It was the stranger he had supposedly insulted. The stranger said, 'Mr. Moody, I have not had a good night's sleep since that night you spoke to me under the lamppost, and I have come around at this unearthly hour of the night for you to tell me what I have to do to be saved.'"

Source: The Evidence Bible.

www.soldiersofthecross.com.au