

THE EVANGELISTS

M A G A Z I N E

Issue 17 July - October 2014

The Reality of Hell

Lessons from the Home
Being Born Again

Waiting upon the Lord
and His Promise

THE Parable
of the SOWER

The Commission with Tim Knowing

THE EVANGELISTS MAGAZINE

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SOTC Aims:

Soldiers of the Cross, founded by Tim
and Leah Knowing, is dedicated to
evangelising the lost and seeing the
church become the mighty, mature and
fully-functioning army of God it is meant
to be, in a war that has already been
won through Christ's atoning death and
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Soldiers of the Cross

*"But ye shall receive power, after that the
Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall
be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem,
and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto
the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8*

Since this publication's inception,
we have made no bones about the
fact that we believe it has been
the responsibility of every genera-
tion of believers since Christ himself spoke
these words, before His ascension, to carry
the baton of the Great Commission.

If it wasn't for the obedience of the first
century church, much of the world would
still be in darkness. One only has to look at
history over the last two thousand years to
see how the message of Jesus Christ has
transformed and shaped nations.

Great men of God such as Whitefield and
Edwards, Wesley and Spurgeon are re-
membered even today for the impact they
made on their own generation.

The challenge for us in our day is, are we
willing to enlist in this great army of God
and be used by Him in continuing the work
of those who have gone before us.

The passage above, even gives
us the model I believe
for this work.

1. The disciples
were to go in the
power
of the Holy
Spirit.

2. They were to bear witness unto
Christ.
3. They were to start where they were,
or where they lived (Jerusalem).
4. Then they would go to neighbouring
regions (Judea & Samaria).
5. Then the rest of the world.

Sometimes when people think of the
'mission field', they are thinking of distant
lands. Yet there are people all around us
who have not yet heeded the call to re-
pent and believe the Gospel. (Mark 1:15)

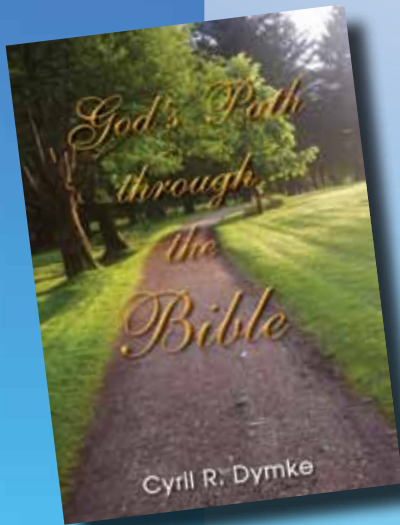
In this issue of TEM I would particularly
like to introduce Nicholas Onyango who is
the Pastor of 'Soldiers of the Cross Church'
in Nairobi, Kenya. I trust that his mes-
sage on 'Waiting Upon the Lord and His
Promise' would be an encouragement to
our readers.

This issue we also feature part 1 of a clas-
sic C. H. Spurgeon sermon, 'The Parable of
the Sower'. Leah also continues her 'Les-
sons from the Home' series.

We continue to praise God for His faith-
fulness in providing for us to continue in
producing and sending TEM freely to all
who request it.

Till next time

God's Path through the Bible



This new condensed overview of the Bible by Cyril Dymke is ideal for new believers. It is written in easy-to-read language with the purpose of introducing people who perhaps have never read the Bible before, or at least not completely, to the common thread that is found throughout scripture.

The Bible consists of 66 books by various authors from different backgrounds, including kings, shepherds and fishermen, over a period of approximately 3000 - 4000 years. Whilst one would expect to find vast differences in such a work, it is not so, as Cyril points out.

There is a common thread throughout scripture - God's Path through the Bible - simply because it is God Himself who is its author.

2 Peter 1:20-21 says, *"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*

To download your free copy or to view it online, go to:

www.godspaththruthebible.com





"And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: a sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."—Luke 8:4-8

In our country, when a sower goes forth to his work, he generally enters into an enclosed field, and scatters the seed from his basket along every ridge and furrow; but in the East, the corn-growing country, hard by a small town, is usually an open area. It is divided into different properties, but there are no visible divisions, except the ancient landmarks, or perhaps ridges of stones. Through these open lands there are footpaths, the most frequented being called the highways. You must not imagine these highways to be like our macadamized roads; they are merely paths, trodden tolerably hard. Here and there you notice bye-ways, along which travellers who wish to avoid the public road may journey with a little more safety when the main road is infested with robbers: hasty travellers also strike



A Classic Sermon by Charles H. Spurgeon

out short cuts for themselves, and so open fresh tracks for others.

When the sower goes forth to sow he finds a plot of ground scratched over with the primitive Eastern plough; he aims at scattering his seed there most plentifully; but a path runs through the centre of his field, and unless he is willing to leave a broad headland, he must throw a handful upon it. Yonder, a rock crops out in the midst of the ploughed land, and the seed falls on its shallow soil. Here is a corner full of the roots of nettles and thistles, and he flings a little here; the corn and the nettles come up together, and the thorns being the stronger soon choke the seed, so that it brings forth no fruit unto perfection. The recollection that the Bible was written in the East, and that its metaphors and allusions must be explained to us by Eastern travellers, will often help us to understand a passage far better than if we think of English customs.

The preacher of the gospel is like the sower. He does not make his seed; it is given him by his divine Master. No man could create the smallest grain that ever grew upon the earth, much less the celestial seed of eternal life. The minister goes to his Master in secret, and asks him to teach him his gospel, and thus he fills his basket with the good seed of the kingdom.

He then goes forth in his Master's name and scatters precious truth. If he knew where the best soil was to be found, perhaps he might limit himself to that which had been prepared by the plough of conviction; but not knowing men's hearts, it is his business to preach the gospel to every creature—to throw a handful on the hardened heart, and another on the mind which is overgrown with the cares and pleasures of the world. He has to leave the seed in the care of the Lord who gave it to him, for he is not responsible for the harvest, he is only accountable for the care and industry with which he does his work. If no single ear should ever make glad the reaper, the sower will be rewarded by His Master if he had planted the right seed with careful hand. If it were not for this fact with what despairing agony should we utter the cry of Esaias, *"Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"*

Our duty is not measured by the character of our hearers, but by the command of our God. We are bound to preach the gospel, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. It is ours to sow beside all waters. Let men's hearts be what they may the minister must preach the gospel to them; he must sow the seed on the rock as well as in the furrow, on the highway as well as in the ploughed field.

I shall now address myself to
the four classes of
hearers men-

tioned in our Lord's parable. We have, first of all, those who are represented by the way-side, those who are "hearers only"; then those represented by the stony-ground; these are transiently impressed, but the word produces no lasting fruit; then, those among thorns, on whom a good impression is produced, but the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of the world choke the seed; and lastly, that small class—God be pleased to multiply it exceedingly—that small class of good-ground hearers, in whom the Word brings forth abundant fruit.

I. First of all, I address myself to those hearts which are like the WAY-SIDE—*"Some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it."* Many of you do not go to the place of worship desiring a blessing. You do not intend to worship God, or to be affected by anything that you hear. You are like the highway, which was never intended to be a cornfield. If a single grain of truth should fall into your heart and grow it would be as great a wonder as for corn to grow up in the street. If the seed shall be dexterously scattered, some of it will fall upon you, and rest for a while upon your thoughts.

'Tis true you will not understand it; but, nevertheless, if it be placed before you in an

THE Parable of the SOWER Part 1

interesting style, you will talk about it till some more congenial entertainment shall attract you. Even this slender benefit is brief, for in a little season you will forget all that you have heard. Would to God we could hope that our words would tarry with you, but we cannot hope it, for the soil of your heart is so hard beaten by continual traffic, that there is no hope of the seed finding a living root-hold. Satan is constantly passing over your heart with his company of blasphemies, lusts, lies, and vanities. The chariots of pride roll along it, and the feet of greedy mammon tread it till it is hard as adamant.

Alas! For the good seed, it finds not a moment's respite; crowds pass and repass; in fact, your soul is an exchange, across which continually hurry the busy feet of those who make merchandise of the souls of men. You are buying and selling, but you little think that you are selling the truth, and that you are buying your soul's destruction. You have no time, you say, to think of religion. No, the road of your heart is such a crowded thoroughfare, that there is no room for the wheat to spring up. If it did begin to germinate, some rough foot would crush the green blade ere it could come to perfection.

The seed has occasionally lain long enough to begin to sprout, but just then a new place of amusement has been opened, and you have entered there, and as with an iron heel, the germ of life that was in

the seed was crushed out. Corn could not grow in Cornhill or Cheapside, however excellent the seed might be: your heart is just like those crowded thoroughfares; for so many cares and sins throng it, and so many proud, vain, evil, rebellious thoughts against God pass through it, that the seed of truth cannot grow.

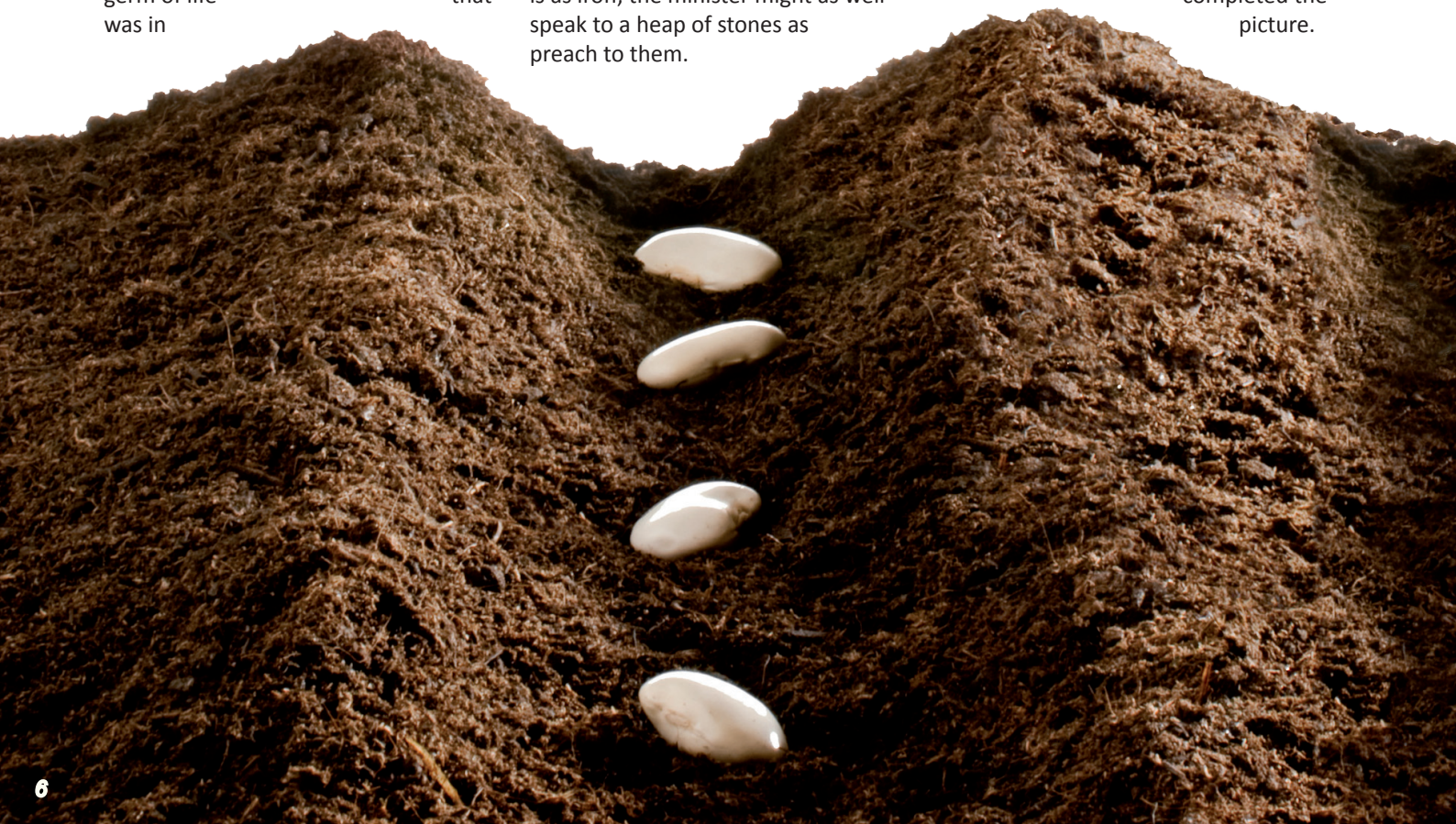
We have looked at this hard road-side, let us now describe what becomes of the good word, when it falls upon such a heart. It would have grown if it had fallen on right soil, but it has dropped into the wrong place, and it remains as dry as when it fell from the sower's hand. The word of the gospel lies upon the surface of such a heart, but never enters it. Like the snow, which sometimes falls upon our streets, drops upon the wet pavement, melts, and is gone at once, so is it with this man. The word has not time to quicken in his soul: it lies there an instant, but it never strikes root, or takes the slightest effect.

Why do men come to hear if the word never enters their hearts? That has often puzzled us. Some hearers would not be absent on the Sunday on any account; they are delighted to come up with us to worship, but yet the tear never trickles down their cheek, their soul never mounts up to heaven on the wings of praise, nor do they truly join in our confessions of sin. They do not think of the wrath to come, nor of the future state of their souls. Their heart is as iron; the minister might as well speak to a heap of stones as preach to them.

What brings these senseless sinners here? Surely we are as hopeful of converting lions and leopards as these untamed, insensible hearts. Oh feeling! Thou art fled to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason! Do these people come to our assemblies because it is respectable to attend a place of worship? Or is it that their coming helps to make them comfortable in their sins? If they stopped away conscience would prick them; but they come hither that they may flatter themselves with the notion that they are religious. Oh! My hearers, your case is one that might make an angel weep!

How sad to have the sun of the gospel shining on your faces, and yet to have blind eyes that never see the light. The music of heaven is lost upon you, for you have no ears to hear. You can catch the turn of a phrase, you can appreciate the poetry of an illustration, but the hidden meaning, the divine life you do not perceive. You sit at the marriage-feast, but you eat not of the dainties; the bells of heaven ring with joy over ransomed spirits, but you live unransomed, without God, and without Christ. Though we plead with you, and pray for you, and weep over you, you still remain as hardened, as careless, and as thoughtless as ever you were. May God have mercy on you, and break up your hard hearts, that his word may abide in you.

We have not, however, completed the picture.



“How sad to have the sun of the gospel shining on your faces, and yet to have blind eyes that never see the light.”

The passage tells us that the fowls of the air devoured the seed. Is there here a way-side hearer? Perhaps he did not mean to hear this sermon, and when he has heard it he will be asked by one of the wicked to come into company. He will go with the tempter, and the good seed will be devoured by the fowls of the air. Plenty of evil ones are ready to take away the gospel from the heart. The devil himself, that prince of the air, is eager at any time to snatch away a good thought. And then the devil is not alone—he has legions of helpers. He can set a man's wife, children, friends, enemies, customers, or creditors, to eat up the good seed, and they will do it effectually. Oh, sorrow upon sorrow, that heavenly seed should become devil's meat; that God's corn should feed foul birds!

O my hearers, if you have heard the gospel from your youth, what wagon-loads of sermons have been wasted on you! In your younger days, you heard old Dr. So-and-so, and the dear old man was wont to pray for his hearers till his eyes were red with tears! Do you recollect those many Sundays when you said to yourself, “Let me go to my chamber and fall on my knees and

pray”? But you did not: the fowls of the air ate up the seed, and you went on to sin as you had sinned before. Since then, by some strange impulse, you are very rarely absent from God's house; but now the seed of the gospel falls into your soul as if it dropped upon an iron floor, and nothing comes of it.

The law may be thundered at you; you do not sneer at it, but it never affects you. Jesus Christ may be lifted up; his dear wounds may be exhibited; his streaming blood may flow before your very eyes, and you may be bidden with all earnestness to look to him and live; but it is as if one should sow the sea-shore. What shall I do for you? Shall I stand here and rain tears upon this hard highway? Alas! My tears will not break it up; it is trodden too hard for that. Shall I bring the gospel plough? Alas! The ploughshare will not enter ground so solid. What shall we do? O God, thou knowest how to melt the hardest heart with the precious blood of Jesus. Do it now, we beseech thee, and thus magnify thy grace, by causing the good seed to live, and to produce a heavenly harvest.

Part 2 in the next issue...

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

(June 19, 1834 – Jan 31, 1892)



Spurgeon was a British preacher who remains highly influential among Christians of different denominations, among whom he is still known as the “Prince of Preachers.” In his lifetime, Spurgeon preached to around 10,000,000 people, often up to 10 times each week at different places.

Spurgeon was the pastor of the congregation of the New Park Street Chapel (later the Metropolitan Tabernacle) in London for 38 years.

Spurgeon was a prolific author of many types of works including sermons, an autobiography, a commentary, books on prayer, a devotional, a magazine, poetry, hymnist, and more. Many sermons were transcribed as he spoke and were translated into many languages during his lifetime. Arguably, no other author, Christian or otherwise, has more material in print than C.H. Spurgeon.



"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning." - Psalm 130:5-6

I believe that each and every individual created by God has got personal needs in life, things that they are believing and trusting God to meet in their areas of their lives. And because of these needs we keep on looking unto God, irrespective of time, with faith and hope in Him who can do everything for us. Sometimes others have asked themselves, "How does God answer people's prayers?" If you be one, then this message will be a blessing to you.

No matter how long you've been going before the Lord with your needs, and at times you have thought that God just wants you to trust in Him and does not answer prayers, you just have to keep on waiting with perseverance and high hopes, knowing that delay is not a denial. Our blessings are not determined by time but by faith in Him.

Look at this prayer David, one of the anointed fellows in the Bible, is praying to God in the book of Psalms 130:5-6. *"My soul waits for the Lord as a watchman waits for the morn-*

ing." In all our prayers, we have to learn how to wait for the Lord, as did David, with a lot of patience. God is so faithful to all His promises and will not leave any prayer unanswered. His promises to His people are yes and amen (2 Corinthians 2:18-21). All His promises are fulfilled in Christ, therefore no matter what the challenges in life, pits and valleys, ups and downs, we all need to trust and put our faith in Him with perseverance and patience (James 1:12).

Many people tend to give in to the issues of life, but we need to encourage ourselves in the Lord with fervent prayers as did David. Whatever you are going through is just a test to bring a living testimony, so that you can also encourage others facing such issues. David was such an anointed servant of God, but bitterness, distress and agony did not leave him, despite the anointing. The fact that some of us may be anointed doesn't mean that we are miles away from the troubles of life. We need to wait on the Lord who keeps His promises.

David said *"I wait on the Lord as a watchman waits for the morning."* There is something unique about every morning that every morning light is assured. In the nights you don't know when the enemy may strike

with evil and you must stay alert and awake like a watchman, with the hope that the morning will always show up. The Bible says *"sorrow might endure for a night but joy comes in the morning."* (Psalm 30:5)

We all have to understand that each and everyone of us has a unique morning and also face nights which are full of worries and anxiety. God always has an appointed time for each and everyone of us and we don't need to be in a hurry or in haste with His promises. We need to allow His will to take place in our lives as we wait on Him. We need Him ahead of us and not us ahead of Him. We should follow His desires and not our self-centred desires. In Psalm 40:1-2, David is waiting for the Lord patiently and the Lord turned to him and heard his cry.

No matter what pits you are in, God can lift you out of that mess. Keep on believing and waiting, for this will produce in you character and bring you to maturity in the Lord. Whoever wants to be used of the Lord must be ready to wait with great patience and hope on Him. In Exodus 13:17, when God led the Israelites out of Egypt, He did not lead them in a shortcut way, but chose to lead them through the desert way/wilderness

Waiting upon the Lord and His Promises

By Ps Nicholas Onyango

which was full of challenges and pain. Most people love shortcuts in life but fail to land in the Lord's blessings and their destiny, for they ignore the way of the Lord, which is the desert first.

It is in the desert where God trains you as His soldier, tests your faith and prepares you for what he has called you to accomplish in life. However, you are never alone in that desert but with the Lord. After you come out of the wilderness, any battle in life you may approach, victory is assured, for the Lord will fight on your behalf.

In Exodus 14:15, the Israelites became impatient in waiting on the Lord and began to murmur and complain, which did not profit them. But God encouraged them, through His servant Moses, to tell them to remain firm and to keep moving. We need not to be destroyed by the things we face in life, but to keep on holding onto the promises of the Lord. Then we are able to achieve our God-given destinies and purposes in life as we remain unmovable, for God is a God who remembers His covenant and keeps His promises to those who wait on Him.

People who do not prefer the way of the Lord always sin against the Lord and lose direction in this life as did Jonah. In Exodus 32:1-17,

we see the Israelites lost patience with Moses and decided to make themselves a golden god and God got angry with them. This is the same thing that happens to the shortcut folks.

For example, a good number of preachers out there, especially in Africa, at-

tract a horde of people in the name of miracles by selling things like anointing oils and handkerchiefs to their miracle-waiting congregation and are deceiving them. They are not ready to pay the price for the ministry by waiting on God to bring growth in their ministries, hence they turn on demonic charms to lure people for miracles.

Miracles cannot be bought. Jesus said, *"Freely you have received, freely give."* (Matthew 10:8)

If sincerely the Lord has called you in His service, He will always provide. You don't need to look for ways of making money in the name of promising miracles. Let us learn to wait on God and in due time, he will lift us from that pit.

Recently a young man approached me and told me something quite alarming. He said he got his job through a fake training certificate and since then his job has had no fruits and is full of distress,

Lord promise

**“Our blessings are not determined by time,
but by faith in Him.”**

Ps Nicholas Onyango

due to the shortcut way he took in his life. He cried deeply to me and what could I do except lead him to Christ and help him renounce his evil deeds and furthermore to advise him to be open to his employer and tell him the whole issue. The young man was free after his confession of sin to the Lord and to his employer. And this did not lead to his dismissal, for he was now a new creature in the kingdom of God and God had mercy on him.

As I wind up, I want to tell my readers that shortcuts have no blessings. Better to wait on God, even if for a long time and receive His blessings for you.

If you have been believing God and trusting Him for something in your

life and you feel this message has touched your heart, you can confess the prayer below and God will help you and give you the grace to wait on Him. There is still hope; keep on moving and believing Him. (Psalms 33:20.)

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father,
Thank you for your promises and everlasting love you have for us. I pray that you give the grace and patience to wait for your promises. May your will, and not mine, take place in my life and help me to follow your leading through the help of the Holy Spirit. I bless you Father for hearkening to my cry and in Jesus' name I do pray and believe...Amen.

Nicholas Onyango Ombima

Nicholas Onyango is Pastor of 'Soldiers of the Cross - Kenya', in Nairobi, Kenya, a church plant of Soldiers of the Cross ministry which produces this magazine.



Ps Nicholas has a passion for reaching his community with the Gospel. After much prayers regarding God's calling, God linked him to Soldiers of the Cross in 2011 and in particular to Timothy Knowing, as a spiritual father. Ps Nicholas has a vision to evangelize and advance God's Kingdom in Kenya. Through the leading of the Spirit of God and much prayers, 'SOTC - Kenya' was birthed in 2013 by faith, with a vision and mission of winning the lost. Since then the church has continued to grow by God's grace, training believers and local church leaders in evangelism.

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Samaritan's Purse new DRU

Helping to meet physical and spiritual needs in times of disaster

Samaritan's Purse is a non-profit, Christian organisation providing emergency relief and development assistance to suffering people around the world. Since the early 1970's Samaritan's Purse has been meeting the physical needs of victims of war, famine, natural disaster, poverty and disease with the aim of demonstrating God's love and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. Aid and assistance are given without regard to the race, creed, gender, religion, or ethnicity of the beneficiaries.

In 2011, the year of the tsunami in Japan, the floods in Queensland and the earthquake in Christchurch, Samaritan's Purse in Australia established a disaster relief program, as it was realised there was a need to increase our capacity to respond when disaster strikes in our own backyard.

In July 2014 the first purpose-built Samaritan's Purse DRU (Disaster Relief Unit), arrived on Australian soil where it was commissioned into the service of families and communities in times of disaster.

The DRU is a resource unlike anything else in Australia. Australian Disaster Relief Manager, Kenneth James

said, "The DRU has full-time operational staff and the capacity to support up to 80 volunteers on location whenever a disaster strikes. The Unit then becomes the support base for these volunteers who come in after a disaster to help with clean up. The Disaster Relief Unit enables us to be completely self sufficient with generators, its own water supply and tools and equipment all on board."

The DRU is also fitted out with an office for coordinating their response, and a workshop for maintaining equipment.

During the months of August - October this year, the DRU has been visiting a number of towns across Australia promoting this excellent resource.

Recently they were in Rockhampton where we were able to inspect the DRU and chat with Kenneth and the DRU Caretaker, Jim Winter.

Samaritan's Purse Disaster Relief pro-



gram depends on a continuing supply of tools, items of equipment and materials to equip volunteers. Please pray for the needs of this ministry. You may also like to consider how you may be able to assist, either by volunteering your help or through financial partnership.

Samaritan's Purse works with all agencies and organisations involved in disaster relief to provide an efficient, effective and coordinated response.

For more information go to www.samaritanspurse.com.au



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Lessons from the home

with Leah Knowling



Being Born Again

In the last two issues, I have shared lessons that the Lord has taught me through my marriage and family. This issue I would like to continue with what the Lord taught me through the birth of our second child, Rebekah. And that is, what it means to be born again.

In Issue 2, I wrote an article about being born again, as Rebekah's birth was only a few months earlier and still very fresh in my mind. In this issue, I would like to revisit this most important of all subjects.

Some people get 'put off' or even offended by the term 'born again'. However, it was Jesus in John 3:3 who said, *"I tell you the truth, no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again"*. Jesus never used terms or parables lightly. He was wanting us to

understand a spiritual truth through a natural experience.

The birth process is quite interesting when we stop to think about it, and something that only God could have created. There are some very important truths that can and should be gleaned from understanding the birth process.

1. Whose work is it?

When Rebekah was born, as with every baby, she was propelled down the birth canal ready to come into the world. She did not have to swim or push or do anything to get herself into position. At the right time it just happened. And then came the contractions and pushing to get out. She didn't do that. That was me.

When Samuel was born, due to the his position, I was given medication to relieve the pain, which sort of worked.

With Rebekah, however, I forgot to ask for pain-killers, as I was busy witnessing to the mid-wives (True story!). This meant I got to experience all the pain associated with contractions and pushing, etc. It's called labour for a reason.

My point is, babies don't do anything to be born. It is the mother who is doing the pushing and screaming. Does the baby feel pain? Obviously and I will get to that. But it is the mother who does the work. And so it is with being born again.

God does and has done all the work needed for us to be born again. He has gone through the pain of the cross, but He is also the One who propels us toward the birth canal of salvation.

In John 15:16, Jesus said, *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and*



bear fruit – fruit that will last...” The idea of ‘making a decision for Christ’ is not scripturally-based, as salvation never starts with the will of man, but always from the will of God.

2. What do we do to be born again?

So if it is God’s will and His work, what part then do we play in our salvation? We must still go through the ‘birth process’.

For a baby to be born is a miracle of God. For some it is like trying to put a camel through the eye of a needle. There is a large baby going through a very small hole. Something has to give. It is interesting that a baby’s skull during the birthing process is soft and pliable enough to mold to the shape of the birth canal. If the baby’s skull was hard, then it would never get through.

Such is the way of salvation. It is the


humble in heart who will enter through the narrow gate. In Matthew 7:13-14 (AMP), Jesus says *“Enter through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and spacious and broad is the way that leads away to destruction, and many are those who are entering through it. But the gate is narrow (contracted by pressure) and the way is straitened and compressed that leads to life, and few are those who find it.”*

Being born again and regenerated by the Holy Spirit is painful. It is simple, but it is certainly not easy. Our proud, self-righteous hearts need to be broken by the law. Then, as the Holy Spirit brings conviction upon our hearts, the scales fall from our eyes as we see our dreadful sin before an infinitely holy God and realise how wretched a sinner we are (see Romans 7:7-13). We die to ourselves, our thinking we are a good

person, our selfishness, our independence and self-reliance. It is a painful process, as we are compressed and contracted by pressure down the birth canal of salvation. But like child-birth, there is joy in the end, if we don’t turn back.

So again the question is, what do we do to be born again? I think King David said it best in Psalm 51:17, *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart. These, O God, You will not despise.”*

As we come humbly before God, recognising our sin against Him, and Him alone, He grants us repentance (Acts 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25) and faith to believe in Christ’s death and resurrection, that we might be saved. And behold a new baby is born into the Kingdom of God.



Some who are enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season will brush off thoughts of God's eternal justice by joking, "I don't mind going to hell. All my friends will be there." Obviously, those who flippantly say such things don't believe in the biblical concept of hell. They are like a slow-witted criminal who thinks that the electric chair is a place to put up his feet for a while and relax.

Their understanding of the nature of God is erroneous, so it may be wise to speak for a few moments about the reasonableness of hell. Explain that the Bible tells us that God will punish murderers and rapists, and the place of punishment—the "prison" God will send them to—is a place called "hell." However, God is so good, He will also punish thieves, liars, adulterers, fornicators, and blasphemers. He will even punish those who desired to murder and rape but never took the opportunity.

He warns that if we hate someone, we commit murder in our hearts. If we lust, we commit adultery in the heart, etc. All are sins that will send us to hell.

C. S. Lewis summed up all the terrors of hell when he said, "There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than the doctrine of hell, if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture and, especially, of our Lord's own words; it has always been held by the Christian Church, and it has the support of reason."

Take the time to tell people of the reality of hell and its biblical description. Some sinners like to picture hell as a fun, hedonistic, pleasure filled place where they can engage in all the sensual sins that are forbidden here. Others accept that hell is a place of punishment, but believe that the punishment is to be annihilated—to cease conscious existence. Because they can't conceive that a

loving God would punish people in eternal torment, they believe hell is just a metaphor for the grave. If they are correct, then a man like Adolph Hitler, who was responsible for the death of millions, is being "punished" merely with eternal sleep. His fate is simply to return to the non-existent state he was in before he was born, where he doesn't even know that he is being punished.

While it is true that God is love (1 John 4:8), He is also just (Nehemiah 9:32,33; 2 Thessalonians 1:6) and eternal (Psalm 90:2; 1 Timothy 1:17). God will therefore punish the evil doer (Isaiah 13:11) and this punishment will be eternal. It will also be conscious. Scripture tells us of the rich man who found himself in hell (Luke 16:19–31). He was conscious and was able to feel pain, to thirst, and to experience remorse. He wasn't asleep in the grave; he was in a place of "torment."

We tend to forget what pain is like

The Reality of



By Ray Comfort

when we don't have it. Can you imagine how terrible it would be to be in agony, with no hope of relief? Many human beings go insane if they are merely isolated for a long time from other people. Imagine how terrible it would be if God simply withdrew all the things we hold so dear—friendship, love, colour, light, peace, joy, laughter. Hell isn't just a place with an absence of God's blessings; it is punishment for sin. It is literal torment, forever. That's why the Bible warns that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The fate of the unsaved is described with such fearful words as the following:

- *"Shame and everlasting contempt"* (Daniel 12:2)
- *"Everlasting punishment"* (Matthew 25:46)
- *"Weeping and gnashing of teeth"* (Matthew 24:51)
- *"Fire unquenchable"* (Luke 3:17)

- *"Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish"* (Romans 2:8,9)
- *"Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord"* (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
- *"Eternal fire . . . the blackness of darkness for ever"* (Jude 7,13)

Revelation 14:10,11 tells us the final, eternal destiny of the sinner: *"He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone . . . the smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day or night."*

Scripture is quite clear: hell is a real place. It is not mere unconsciousness. It is not temporal. It is eternal torment. If hell is a place of knowing nothing or a reference to the grave into which we go at death, Jesus' statements about hell make no sense. He said that if your hand, foot, or eye causes you to sin, it would be better to remove it than to *"go into hell, into the fire that*

never shall be quenched: where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43–48).

Jesus spoke more of hell than of heaven and spent much time warning people not to go there. After all, if people just stopped existing, why warn them? If hell were temporal, they'd get out in a while. But because it is eternal and conscious, we must do everything we can to warn them. However, a sinner won't see that hell is his eternal destiny unless he is convinced by the Law that he has sinned against God. He may consider hell a fit place for others, but not for himself. That's why we must not hesitate to open up the Law and show that each individual is personally responsible for his sin, and that God's wrath abides on him because of it.

Excerpt from Lesson 23 of 'School of Biblical Evangelism'. Used with permission.

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SHEEP DOG Evangelism

◆ Ray Comfort

I love border collies. They are the most intelligent of dogs. They run rings around other clever canines as well as around silly sheep.

So I was thrilled when the movie "Babe" showed the world that collies are not only brilliant with sheep, but that they have a cool accent. The movie was about "Sheep-dog Trials." For those who didn't see Babe, these aren't trials with a jury but contests for collies.

When I was in New Zealand many years ago, I was at a pastor's home watching a sheepdog trial while the pastor was getting me a soft drink. The shepherd had two sheep corralled.

All he had to do was get another three through a narrow gate, shut it, and he would win a national contest. He was standing like a statue because one wrong move and the sheep would scatter.

I called the pastor into the living room and said, "Watch this pastor trying to get his flock involved in evangelism.

One wrong move and the sheep will scatter."

The pastor looked for a

moment, and then said "Where's the evangelist?" Suddenly a black dog flashed across the screen, barked at the sheep, and they jumped through the gate. I said, "There's the evangelist!"

The local pastor wants his sheep to reproduce, but he can't come down too heavy on his flock because they will go to greener pastures; they will scatter to another church where they won't be made to feel uncomfortable. So what does he do? He calls in the "equipping evangelist."

The equipping evangelist is mentioned in Ephesians 4:11-12 as one of the gifts given to equip the church for the work of the ministry. For years I would go into local churches and bark at the sheep; sharing "hard" sayings like those of Charles Spurgeon, who said, "Have you no wish for others to be saved. Then you're not saved yourself, be sure of that." I could bark my little heart out because I didn't care what the sheep thought of me. I was leaving the next day.

In a sheepdog trial the sheep stomp their two front feet in defiance of the collie. But he's not intimidated. A bark or a snip at the heels and the sheep found out who was boss. In fact, I have seen sheep dogs so confident of their calling that they would run across the backs of corralled sheep. So I didn't mind getting on their backs when I preached. Not for one moment did I feel intimidated by those who defied the Great Commission.

All I was hoping was at the end of the day the shepherd would see me as being faithful to my calling...and remember to toss me a bone for a good job done.



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