



TLM Daily Devotions

June 2018





Intro to the month

“Depending on God is a life style” – this is how Joydeepa Darlong starts her devotional of the 1st of June.

What better motto could we ever and ongoingly have than this? In our private life, in our mission, church, countries, daily activities and world-sized efforts: depending on God...

Let us be strengthened in this, let this be our permanent lifestyle, and let us grow in ongoingly submitting ourselves in all under His powerful, glorious and eternal Love!

This is the path to real transformation.

Blessed reading!

Marta



Depending on God

Depending on God is a life style

God did not covenant with ourselves to be present only in emergencies but to dwell among us, to be our Lord and for us to be His people. God desires that we should live in a real moment by moment total dependence on Him. David modelled that in his life. Ps 62:10 If riches increase set not your heart on them. Matthew 6:21 Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Dependency is not presumption

From the story of Jericho , we see a miraculous victory with 6 days of circling the city walls in silence and on 7th day with a mighty shout of trumpets , the walls came crumbling down. The next city on the way to Canaan , the promised land was Ai, and it was a small , much less formidable the Jericho, so the Israelites went with their own strategy instead of consulting God , and what a terrible defeat it was. They presumed that God was with them , they presumed victory would be theirs since they had won Jericho. Here is an important lesson for us. God delivers us from difficult situations not to make us presume that He will always do so , but to recognize our inabilities and continue to depend on Him. Dependency is not something that we muster only in emergencies, it is the realization that apart from Him we cannot presume our next breath. Presumption sees Him merely as a resource for dealing in crisis.

Dependency is feeding on His Word

John 15 : 5, 8 Jesus said "I am true vine and you are the branches. Without me you can do nothing and the Father is much glorified when we bear much fruit. Deut 6:5 he desires that we should love Him with our heart , with all our soul and with all our might.

Dependency is a continuous process

Learning from King Asa - He was righteous in the sight of the Lord, did what was right, demolished the high places, and thus there was peace in his kingdom for 35 years. Then there was lots of gold and silver in his treasury. He started making alliances with his neighbours to gain victory over his enemies. For this act of his , a prophet came to rebuke him. But Asa had him thrown into prison. He was just not willing to listen to God. 2 Chronicles 16 narrates the story. From then onwards he was afflicted with a disease, yet he did not return to God , relied on physicians and died a few years later. He started well , but lost his way . It may be true for us if we are not careful.

The most common mistakes that we do

1. Overestimating human ability
2. Forgetting what God has done.
3. Underestimating God's ability.

Prayer – let us learn to depend on Him who is able to deliver us from the impossible.

Joydeeba Darlong Dr - Head Knowledge Management TLMTIndia She worked as Consultant and Deputy Superintendent, for the past 15 years at The Leprosy Mission Hospital, Purulia, West Bengal, India.



Psalm 38

A psalm of David. A petition.

- ¹ LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your wrath.
- ² Your arrows have pierced me,
and your hand has come down on me.
- ³ Because of your wrath there is no health in my body;
there is no soundness in my bones because of my sin.
- ⁴ My guilt has overwhelmed me
like a burden too heavy to bear.
- ⁵ My wounds fester and are loathsome
because of my sinful folly.
- ⁶ I am bowed down and brought very low;
all day long I go about mourning.
- ⁷ My back is filled with searing pain;
there is no health in my body.
- ⁸ I am feeble and utterly crushed;
I groan in anguish of heart.
- ⁹ All my longings lie open before you, Lord;
my sighing is not hidden from you.
- ¹⁰ My heart pounds, my strength fails me;
even the light has gone from my eyes.
- ¹¹ My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds;
my neighbors stay far away.
- ¹² Those who want to kill me set their traps,
those who would harm me talk of my ruin;
all day long they scheme and lie.
- ¹³ I am like the deaf, who cannot hear,
like the mute, who cannot speak;
- ¹⁴ I have become like one who does not hear,
whose mouth can offer no reply.
- ¹⁵ LORD, I wait for you;
you will answer, Lord my God.
- ¹⁶ For I said, "Do not let them gloat
or exalt themselves over me when my feet slip."

¹⁷ For I am about to fall,
and my pain is ever with me.

¹⁸ I confess my iniquity;
I am troubled by my sin.

¹⁹ Many have become my enemies without cause
those who hate me without reason are numerous.

²⁰ Those who repay my good with evil
lodge accusations against me,
though I seek only to do what is good.

²¹ LORD, do not forsake me;
do not be far from me, my God.

²² Come quickly to help me,
my Lord and my Savior.



Psalm 39

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. A psalm of David.

¹I said, "I will watch my ways
and keep my tongue from sin;
I will put a muzzle on my mouth
while in the presence of the wicked."

²So I remained utterly silent,
not even saying anything good.

But my anguish increased;

³ my heart grew hot within me.

While I meditated, the fire burned;

then I spoke with my tongue:

⁴"Show me, LORD, my life's end
and the number of my days;

let me know how fleeting my life is.

⁵You have made my days a mere handbreadth;

the span of my years is as nothing before you.

Everyone is but a breath,

even those who seem secure.

⁶"Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom;
in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth without knowing whose it will finally be.

⁷"But now, Lord, what do I look for?

My hope is in you.

⁸Save me from all my transgressions;

do not make me the scorn of fools.

⁹I was silent; I would not open my mouth,

for you are the one who has done this.

¹⁰Remove your scourge from me;

I am overcome by the blow of your hand.

¹¹When you rebuke and discipline anyone for their sin,
you consume their wealth like a moth— surely everyone is but a breath.

¹²"Hear my prayer, LORD,

listen to my cry for help; do not be deaf to my weeping.

I dwell with you as a foreigner, a stranger, as all my ancestors were.

¹³Look away from me, that I may enjoy life again

before I depart and am no more."



Ten thousand reasons

I've just finished reading "Enlightenment Now" [Allen Lane / Penguin 2018] in which Steven Pinker makes the case that humanism is to thank for the fact that "We live longer, suffer less, learn more, get smarter and enjoy many more small pleasures..." [page 453]. His view is that this has happened despite people of faith, and especially Christians. "... there is no good reason to believe that God exists" [page 421] "Our bodies are improbable assemblies of molecules, and they maintain that order with other improbabilities." "... that the cosmos is filled with so much interesting stuff is due to a set of processes called self-organisation..." [page 18].

Oddly, despite his strongly anti-Christian statements, which many readers will find deeply disrespectful, Pinker quotes liberally from the Bible throughout the book, although he believes that science is our saviour and better still, we worked it out for ourselves! [page 385]

To continue making progress, we need dollops of reason and much less faith [page 436] – although severely diluted Christianity seems okay with Pinker. He gleefully cites figures that indicate that faith is declining, although a rudimentary check would have revealed that 100 million copies of the Bible are distributed each year. [The average U.S. nonfiction book sells less than 250 copies per year and less than 3,000 copies over its lifetime.] At times, the book reads like a hymn that the people of Babel might have sung.

So, I hated the book? Not at all. It is a superbly documented and elegantly written celebration of progress and a salutary reminder of how far we have come in recent years. We are greatly blessed and should be filled with gratitude. Did reason and science get us here? Well, they undeniably played a huge role, but to imply that Christianity was not the well-spring of so many advances, especially those pre-dating the Enlightenment by many centuries, is absurd. To further insist that people of faith are 'enemies' of progress is extraordinary. He could have made his case without attacking the Bible and his insistence that faith is the product of unreason will, I suspect, alienate even his agnostic readers.

It is strange that although he is so intimately familiar with the Bible, that he misses the deeply logical and reasoned connections that draw together the work of 40 authors and their 66 books. Contrary to what so many people imagine, the Bible does not ask us to enter the Kingdom unthinkingly. The theme of the scriptures is very much *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."* [Isaiah 1:18] When the Lord met Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus, He could have revealed Himself to them through a miracle, but instead He reasoned with them: *"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."* [Luke 24:27] Yes, we've been given the gift of reason to investigate the world and to use our knowledge improve life for everyone, but it would be foolish in the extreme to think that God had endowed us with this gift so that it would lure us away from Him. Paul, whose letters must surely rank as some of the most closely reasoned writings of all time reminds us in the opening passage of Romans *"that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them... but [they] became vain in their imaginations."*

The gift of reason has many uses and surely its finest employment is to strengthen and nourish our faith so that we might be of "reasonable service" [Romans 12:1]. As you reflect on the all that the Lord has entrusted to you, thank Him for your ability to reason and ask Him to help you grow in faith as you search His word. *"But we have the mind of Christ"* [1 Corinthians 2:16] words so profound I hardly begin to understand them, but surely they must compel us to think deeply on our faith.

Peter Laubscher - Country Leader, Southern Africa. Peter and Elizabeth Laubscher have worked with the Leprosy Mission since 1981. They are blessed with three children. Peter cruises the waters of False Bay when he's not trying to polish scratches out of telescope mirrors.



Silence

During the recent period of Lent I was challenged on several occasions about silence. Earlier this year I wrote about “being still” and this reflection is also about allowing God to speak to us

Habakkuk 2:20 says “But the Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him.”

In one of the books I read during that period one of the challenges was that “noise” stops us from hearing God speak to us. As I read on, the challenge was, for me very significant. I often play music when I am reading and studying – I always have as I used to find it really difficult to study and concentrate in complete silence as my mind would wander from the subject. I also tend to put the radio on when I am working in my kitchen, whether baking, ironing or cooking.

A few days later I read a devotion which made me think further. It was written by a lady who, like me, listened to the radio when she was doing her housework. Her challenge was what did I hear? How much of what I heard could I remember and how much of it was relevant to my life? Put another way, how much of it was just “noise”? I had to think long and hard about that. I know that sometimes I stop what I am doing to write down something I have heard on the radio, but also I know that sometimes I cannot remember much of what was being broadcast if I have been concentrating on what I was doing. However, taking both of these challenges, I deliberately did not switch on the radio when I was working about the house and I did not put on music when I was reading and concentrating.

While I was still pondering these challenges and trying to convince myself that everyone is different and we all deal with noise differently, I had three experiences of “noise” as a real nuisance. One day I was on the train – I was only going a few stops but it was a busy time of the day. Opposite me a young girl was sitting and she spoke on her mobile phone for all of the time I was on the train – most of the time she was speaking rather than listening to the other person. I found that quite distracting as I was reading. Walking along the prom here on a different day I was annoyed by someone playing loud music on the beach – it obviously annoyed other people as well and someone asked them to turn the music down but instead the people on the beach turned the volume up. The third occasion was when leaving a service during Holy Week. The minister leading the service had asked that to preserve the atmosphere of the service, people should not chat at the end of the service but rather just leave quietly. While most people did observe that, some rather took it literally and as soon as they were outside the door started to converse in very loud voices.

At the end of Lent, I had to make some decisions about the “noise” in my routines.

The big question is not really about noise, rather it is “what stops me/you talking to God and more importantly what gets in the way of me/you hearing what He want to say to us?”



Gladden our Hearts

Acts 3.12-19 and Luke 24.36-48 readings for the 3rd Sunday of Easter Revised Common Lectionary

From the Church of England Collect for that Sunday Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life

Day by day as we read the net or listen to the news it is often hard to find something which gladdens our hearts, (On Easter evening about 5 unions announced they were going on strike in France !) or as the Psalmist writes in Psalm 4. 7 *You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their corn and wine and oil increase.* That's a lot of gladness !

If I had been among the group of Jesus's disciples in Jerusalem after the crucifixion I would have been frightened. Think their mentor, was dead, the person who they believed in and followed accused of blasphemy, and insurrection. He might have led a rebellion against the Roman's the occupying power.

Despite this, all the events recorded in Luke and the Acts of the Apostles show that the disciples stayed in Jerusalem until after the feast of Pentecost; at least 50 days. They stayed put, and even continued worshiping publicly in the Temple *Acts 3.12-19*

This group of dispirited men and women listening with surprise, as others retell their experiences on this first Easter; the women, needed guts to tell the men that the tomb was empty, and they had seen persons in dazzling robes who said to them, *'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Luke 24.5* and suddenly as they were discussing these events, Jesus is there in their midst *37 They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?'*

He, Jesus, invites the disciples to touch him to prove he is alive and not a ghost, then he asks for something to eat; the resurrection of Christ is a mystery, how can someone appear to come through walls, and then eat normally; our resurrection is also a mystery, a mystery of gladness and hope.

Can we hold onto gladness even when we hear, and for some of you reading this actually experiencing first hand strikes, attacks, climate change etc, family and friends living and working in terrifying situations, can you? Can they hold onto a hope of gladness?

He Christ, appeared, not invited He just came; still He comes the Risen Lord and stands among us calming the storms in our minds and in our lives ; declaring *Peace be with you, Look at my hands, touch and see,* a feeling into not just heard but to be seen and touched

Are we gladdened? I was in a group discussing the music for Easter Day in. The Pastor wanted to make sure the service had a real feeling of Joy. The service was joyous with an 8 year old leading her family from a pew to the front in dance and song; to be baptised. Her parents and god parents were gladdened, we all were.

The disciples were gladdened, and stayed to win over Jerusalem. We are gladdened, and may we gladden the hearts of others, and pray that even when there is not much to gladden our hearts we will see something positive.

Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life. Amen

Elisabeth Liz Hichens épouse Barnett, Occupational Therapist worked with TLM at the Philadelphia Leprosy Hospital, Salur, AP India and at RSK Sungai Kunda, Palembang Sumatra, Indonesia. 1979-88. Today, she is retired living in South West France; with her husband James, she is joint secretary of la Mission Lèpre, France.



Real transformation!

I am indebted to Lisa Sharon Harper's 'The Very Good Gospel' for these thoughts.

John 4:1-42 In this time a well is a place where people came to socialize; especially women. This woman comes alone. A well is a place in the community. This woman comes alone. Why would she avoid community?

Lisa Sharon Harper explains it well. "She had given herself to five men, and five men had thrown her out. How empty must she have felt? How used? How disappointed? How unworthy of love? Five times the woman trusted a man to care and provide for her in a world in which men had multiple wives and concubines but women could have only one husband. Five times she had a home, food, and protection; five times she was thrown away. What were the chances that the man she was with at the moment would follow suit?"

We can see why she might have gone to the well alone. To find some peace with her thoughts. To avoid the other women who would judge her for her barrenness. Who would judge her for her many husbands.

Instead of peace she found Jesus at the well. A traditional enemy of her people, the Samaritans. Remember in the Old Testament we see the kingdom of Judah, and the kingdom of Israel? The kings of Israel often had their seat of power in Samaria. It was where they introduced God's people to idol worship, child sacrifice and other sins. Eventually the Assyrians came and destroyed it. They took many of the Israelites to Assyria and introduced more people groups here. These people groups intermingled with the Israelites who remained. Yes they worshipped Jehovah, but not in totality. They also worshipped other idols and demons. Around when Jesus was born some Samaritans scattered human bones in the temple in Jerusalem during Passover. It's hard to imagine a worse insult to those of a Jewish faith. But this man, who might have been an enemy, brought transformation.

This woman had come to find peace. To avoid others. Instead she finds transformation. Jesus. She finds marriage. Again Lisa Sharon Harper writes, "Jesus had said to his disciples, 'he who has his bride is the bridegroom' (93:29). John's gospel raises the question, Who is the bride and who is the bridegroom? In John 4:7 Jesus answered the question with four words: "Give me a drink".

How is this a marriage proposal? Remember the story of how Abraham sent his servant to fetch his son, Isaac a wife? (Gen 24). Those are the words the servant spoke to Rebekah at a well. This is a story the Samaritan woman would have known.

This is a woman who was lonely. Afraid that once again a man would throw her away and she would be powerless. She avoids community. And now a man is offering marriage. But not any marriage. We see in Revelation the picture of Jesus the bridegroom and the church the bride. This woman is offered living water from God, and she accepts! Praise God. "This hardened woman was created to be loved and to love" (Harper, The Very Good Gospel).

She is so transformed that this "shamed, rejected, marginalized, ethnic enemy became the first person in John's gospel to communicate the very good news and bring transformation to an entire city". That is transformation!

And I wonder if we ever go to a well by ourselves? Weary. Afraid. Ashamed. Worried. It could be for ourselves or for a child, grandchild or close friend. And we long for living water. Remember, we have the bridegroom. Jesus has brought us transformative relationship. We who are hardened are offered transformative living water. And this is true for the people we serve as well.



The Lord is gracious and full of compassion

Psalm 145:8

I would like to share the story of Craig (not his real name), a boy with severe disabilities. He had to be fed through a tube and had very little hearing and eyesight. He could not speak. Numerous times there were medical setbacks which meant his parents had to take him to doctors and hospitals.

His remarkable family cared for him with great love and commitment. However, Craig died at the age of nine.

A friend of the family shared her experience of knowing Craig.

“We were all better for having Craig and his parents as our friends. They allowed us to help in caring for Craig. In this we learnt so much about compassion, unconditional love and deep appreciation for the little things of every day. Children like Craig keep reminding us that this world is not reserved for the perfect, the wealthy, or smart people.”

The story reminded me once more that each person is made in the image of God, regardless of their physical, mental or emotional condition. We all have equal significance and value (Genesis 1: 26 – 27). I keep asking myself this crucial question: Will I allow God’s compassion to work through me to the Craigs of this world?

The Lord’s compassion for weak and vulnerable people is never-ending - Psalm 145: 9: *“You are good to everyone, and you take care of all your creation.”*

Prayer: “Lord, give each of us a compassionate heart. For those of us who have disabilities, we may need compassion for ourselves and compassion for fellow persons with disabilities. For those of us who are in a position to support others, may we do so with the compassion of Your heart. Amen.”

Erna Möller is a social worker with TLM Southern Africa since 1987.



Psalm 40

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

¹ I waited patiently for the LORD;
he turned to me and heard my cry.

² He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.

³ He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the LORD
and put their trust in him.

⁴ Blessed is the one
who trusts in the LORD,
who does not look to the proud,
to those who turn aside to false gods.

⁵ Many, LORD my God,
are the wonders you have done,
the things you planned for us.
None can compare with you;
were I to speak and tell of your deeds,
they would be too many to declare.

⁶ Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—
but my ears you have opened
burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.

⁷ Then I said, “Here I am, I have come—
it is written about me in the scroll.

⁸ I desire to do your will, my God;
your law is within my heart.”

⁹ I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly;
I do not seal my lips, LORD,
as you know.

¹⁰ I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;
I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help.

I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness
from the great assembly.

¹¹ Do not withhold your mercy from me, LORD;
may your love and faithfulness always protect me.

¹² For troubles without number surround me;
my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.

They are more than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails within me.

¹³ Be pleased to save me, LORD;
come quickly, LORD, to help me.

¹⁴ May all who want to take my life
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.

¹⁵ May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!"
be appalled at their own shame.

¹⁶ But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help always say,
"The LORD is great!"

¹⁷ But as for me, I am poor and needy;
may the Lord think of me.

You are my help and my deliverer;
you are my God, do not delay.



Psalm 41

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

¹Blessed are those who have regard for the weak;
the LORD delivers them in times of trouble.

²The LORD protects and preserves them—
they are counted among the blessed in the land—
he does not give them over to the desire of their foes.

³The LORD sustains them on their sickbed
and restores them from their bed of illness.

⁴I said, “Have mercy on me, LORD;
heal me, for I have sinned against you.”

⁵My enemies say of me in malice,
“When will he die and his name perish?”

⁶When one of them comes to see me,
he speaks falsely, while his heart gathers slander;
then he goes out and spreads it around.

⁷All my enemies whisper together against me;
they imagine the worst for me, saying,

⁸“A vile disease has afflicted him;
he will never get up from the place where he lies.”

⁹Even my close friend,
someone I trusted,
one who shared my bread,
has turned^{1b} against me.

¹⁰But may you have mercy on me, LORD;
raise me up, that I may repay them.

¹¹I know that you are pleased with me,
for my enemy does not triumph over me.

¹²Because of my integrity you uphold me
and set me in your presence forever.

¹³Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.

Amen and Amen.



Kintsugi

Job 23:10 "...when he has tested me I shall come forth as gold."

'Kintsugi' (literally: 'golden joinery') is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery using lacquer mixed with the dust of precious metals, such as gold, silver or platinum. The philosophy behind it is to treat brokenness and repair as part of the story, and the beauty, of an object, -'precious scars', not to be concealed or disguised. (If you can find a picture on 'Google images' you'll see the effect!)

It's easy to see the application to our human lives, broken, cracked and damaged as we are by the 'school of hard knocks' and the 'shattering' experiences we go through, even -often- through our own fault. Perhaps our tendency to conceal or disguise our struggles, as a defence mechanism, is understandable, necessary and effective on the outside, although the 'cracks' in our armour have a habit of showing. And it may be a different story with our inner feelings! But there is a beauty and a deepened quality in the character restored and refined through struggle. Such a character develops empathy, understanding, and a maturity that is not quick to judge, reject or condemn.

The leprosy world, more than any, is aware of the dangers and devastating effects of judgement and rejection; and those affected by leprosy are the ones most exemplifying the 'kintsugi' principle, with beauty and depth of character refined through brokenness.

Scripture shows this principle in many places. Job, who experienced as much brokenness as humanity can bear, said, "*when he has tested me I shall come forth as gold.*" (Job 23:10). And, speaking of God's capacity to shine light into our darknesses, Paul, a man damaged by his own wrongdoings as well as those of others, wrote that "*we have this treasure in jars of clay*" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Jesus had many opportunities -and reasons- to judge and condemn people who had fallen along life's way, *but he didn't*. The trials he endured added to his capacity to understand and his desire to heal and forgive. *He still does that*, as a human being now in our Father's presence, speaking up for us in our brokenness, forgiving and repairing the cracks in our armour... with gold.

I can't speak for you, but next time I break something -or feel broken- I pray that I will be able to seek beauty, value and maturity in restoration.

With my good wishes and prayers,

David Beazley began involvement with The Leprosy Mission in 1992 when he came as Minister to a Church near the International Office in Brentford. He acted as an informal 'chaplain' to the Office, and served on the International General Council for some years. At the same time he became a member of TLM England and Wales Board, serving as Chairman for six years and on various committees. He chaired the Spiritual Ministry MAWG, and is also able to serve TLM by leading retreat days and other such things as opportunity allows. He now pastors a Church in South-West England part time, freeing time for TLM as a volunteer speaker and continuing on the E&W Board.



Clarity of Vision

Where there is no vision, the people perish: Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

Being appointed as leaders of The Salvation Army for Southern Africa in 1994 provided us with the immense opportunities and challenges facing a denomination in a country reborn. There was a new constitution, a government of national unity and huge expectations all round.

One of The Salvation Army's ways of securing public support is to establish Advisory Boards at regional and national levels. They are comprised of a group of carefully selected business and community leaders sympathetic to its overall purpose. I inherited such an advisory board at national level when I took office. And one of my first tasks was to meet the person recommended by the board when Chris Liebenberg, their previous chairman had resigned.

Chris had been CEO of Nedbank, one of South Africa's major financial institutions, but had been invited by President Mandela to become Minister of Finance.

The work of the National Advisory Board continued, but several months into my appointment I received an invitation from Pretoria. The Minister of Finance wanted to meet me. I joined him in his office overlooking the Union Buildings. Conversation ranged from how he, without political affiliation, was coping with the national finances in a cabinet where political support was crucial to what my plans for the future of The Salvation Army were.

I showed him a simple preliminary leaflet of Vision, Mission and Values I had drafted following extensive listening to the hopes and dreams of many South African Salvationists. My experience with The Leprosy Mission had certainly taught me the value of such statements. Chris took the leaflet, had a quick read and then, looking up at me spoke briefly and quietly:

'A leader has just four things to do,' he explained. 'Cast a vision, put the right person in the right place and set a few reasonable and achievable targets.'

He paused. I was listening carefully.

'And what about the fourth,' I asked.

'Go and play golf,' was his reply.

He smiled; I smiled.

'I'll concentrate on the first three, then,' I said. 'I don't play golf!'

And of the three, the one I increasingly realised is of utmost importance is that of being able to grasp, articulate and share a vision of what it is we are hoping to accomplish together. Without it, as the book of Proverbs reminds us, the people perish. This is true for a denomination; the same is true for a body bearing the name 'mission' in its title.

I still don't play golf, but have slowly discovered the value of taking time for recreation, relaxation and rest. It's sometimes during such times that revelation occurs and vision becomes clearer.

Dr Paul du Plessis is a former vice-president of TLMI. He has held a number of appointments with The Salvation Army. In 1994-98 he and his wife, Margaret, were leaders of The Salvation Army in South Africa and neighbouring countries.



Feet First

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Isaiah 52:7 (NIV)

We'd not long been back in Johannesburg as Salvation Army leaders when the invitation came from a few young people organising a weekend together under the title: Feet First. Please would I be the principal speaker, was their request. 'What's this all about?' I asked.

Of course I was well used to feet. I'd examined hundreds, if not thousands over the years. I'd checked the lateral popliteal and superficial peroneal nerves; I'd used the WHO scale for grading disability - 0 for sensation intact, 1 for loss of sensation with no damage or deformity, 2 for when that was reversible, and 3 for when it wasn't. We'd taught patients to soak them, cream them, to use protective footwear; we'd removed sequestra and arthrodesed joints, we'd done dozens of tendon transfers for foot drop. We'd tried to keep them beautiful, or even make them beautiful.

'No sir,' they'd responded. 'Forget that. Sharing the good news begins with being willing to go somewhere.'

'Okay then! I get it.'

Their motive was evangelistic; it was about mission - being sent.

TLM knows what that means. It follows in the tradition of William Carey who left Northampton for Bengal, and Wellesley Bailey who left Ireland for the Punjab.

In 1994, after years serving in cross-cultural ministry in Zambia, England and India we were back in the country of our birth. I needed reminding that, in the words of my fellow-countryman and missiologist, David Bosch, mission is about 'frontier-crossing' in the spirit of a servant. And there are more frontiers in the world than international borders. We needed to cross the inner boundaries of South Africa. Having crossed the boundary, I would need to extend the hand of friendship.

I left the weekend with a T-shirt. I told them I would wear it, and I did - occasionally. It was a reminder that I needed to get going!

But I did also remind them that there are many whose impairment means that they can't walk, but know how to get out and about.

'How beautiful'

Dr Paul du Plessis is a former vice-president of TLMI. He has held a number of appointments with The Salvation Army. In 1994-98 he and his wife, Margaret, were leaders of The Salvation Army in South Africa and neighbouring countries.



Reconciled with Truth

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. John 8:32 (NIV)

Our appointment in 1994 coincided with the advent of 'the new South Africa' or as some preferred to call it: 'the real South Africa'. Not only was there the challenge of building a better future life for all, but also dealing with the legacy of the past.

I was present when Archbishop Desmond Tutu encouraged leaders at a South African Council of Churches meeting to engage fully with the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. They were authorised to listen to victims and perpetrators of apartheid and, where necessary, to grant amnesty.

Although anxious to preserve our denominational stance of political neutrality, the leadership team quickly agreed to a plan of action. This would include for us a nationwide reflection in thanksgiving for new beginnings, a commitment to facilitate healing, to grasp the evangelistic opportunities in the process and a submission to the commission on behalf of the denomination.

Listening to the stories of 'our own people' gave insight into the deep feelings that lingered: anger to the point of hatred in some; guilt and embarrassment to the point of shame in others. We were grappling with the complex process of forgiving and being forgiven. There were many lessons to learn, not least how difficult both can be, and that both are not 'one-off' events but of living with forgiveness. This is true transformation.

Formulating our own submission was not without its difficulty. Did we have the right to make an admission about something that had passed? But when it came to the crunch, the leadership reached consensus in admission that whilst we did not feel we had committed offences worthy of amnesty, we had been too slow in condemning the iniquities of apartheid. Racism is a widespread human attitude.

Our signing of the submission by the leadership team concluded with a deeply spiritual moment, celebrated with the 'agape' - a love feast of bread broken together. The truth had set us free. Tensions would emerge again in time. We needed to live as people reconciled.

I sometimes wonder whether anything like this will ever happen for those who have lived with the stigma of leprosy.

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New Opportunities

I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. (Revelation 3:8 NIV)

If South Africa, 1994 presented us with immense challenges, there were also great opportunities. It was for all a time of dramatic change. Some revel in the excitement of change; most of us seem to prefer the status quo.

For one thing, freedom of movement brought with it changes in the social fabric of congregations. But the priorities of a government intent on pursuing a 'reconstruction and development plan' also forced us back to the drawing board for social service programmes.

In the dying days of its rule, the outgoing government had allocated significant grants. One enabled the redevelopment of an eventide home; another was the upgrading of a residential centre for alcohol and drug rehabilitation; the third was set aside for HIV/AIDS. But early in the life of the new government it became clear that subsidy of residential care would be reduced. A long term Salvation Army emphasis on homelessness was under threat. Doors were closing. Even windows would have to be boarded up.

The advice of the National Advisory Board was clear: undertake a strategic review, examine core business and go from there. Did this sound familiar to someone with many years of association with TLM? Allowing the process to unfold with a blend of leadership and participation was challenging in itself. The words to John on the island of Patmos were encouraging: *'I know your deeds.... I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.'*

We reached consensus as new priorities emerged. Now we had to take the steps to move ahead. *'.... See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut.'* The plans of man were matched by the grace of God!

The Salvation Army was among the first to respond to the care of children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic. But what about the grant from the previous government laying unused? Once again we built on models developed elsewhere from working with leprosy. Home-based care, spearheaded by the Women's Ministry Department emerged. My wife, Margaret, was in her element. She was applying her background in social work, her experience in women's development and strong commitment to family life. The door opened. She walked through it, taking others in her team with her.

The Family Health Programme she started may have changed its name, and been scaled down in time. Times have changed yet again, and successors need to look for other doors to open.

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Psalm 42

For the director of music. A maskil¹ of the Sons of Korah.

¹As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.

²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When can I go and meet with God?

³My tears have been my food day and night,

while people say to me all day long,

“Where is your God?”

⁴These things I remember as I pour out my soul:

how I used to go to the house of God

under the protection of the Mighty One^e with shouts of joy and praise

among the festive throng.

⁵Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him,

my Savior and my God.

⁶My soul is downcast within me;

therefore I will remember you

from the land of the Jordan,

the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.

⁷Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls;

all your waves and breakers have swept over me.

⁸By day the LORD directs his love,

at night his song is with me—

a prayer to the God of my life.

⁹I say to God my Rock,

“Why have you forgotten me?

Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?”

¹⁰My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me,

saying to me all day long,

“Where is your God?”

¹¹Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,

for I will yet praise him,

my Savior and my God.



Psalm 43

¹Vindicate me, my God,
and plead my cause
against an unfaithful nation.
Rescue me from those who are
deceitful and wicked.

²You are God my stronghold.
Why have you rejected me?
Why must I go about mourning,
oppressed by the enemy?

³Send me your light and your faithful care,
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy mountain,
to the place where you dwell.

⁴Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God, my joy and my delight.
I will praise you with the lyre,
O God, my God.

⁵Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.



At The End Of The Day! – Part 1

Psalm 4

Do you find that you often rush through the day?

Then end up exhausted.

Rush to go out.

Try to pull the pieces of the day together

It's the children, husband, wife, life...

Horror of horrors, what about the unfinished work!

Fearful of what tomorrow will hand you...

I don't think this is what the LORD wants for us!

He made the night to sleep, to rest to restore our minds & bodies.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures...

A few clues for a good night's rest from *Psalm 4*

The psalmist asking God

1 Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

The enigma, the mystery, the riddle, the puzzle of seemingly unanswered prayer!

Even King David seemed to struggle.

There is a constant desire and need for relief from the many kinds of distress in life:

Unsaved spouses, children, family, friends.

Lack of physical health and healing, instability, battle in our minds.

Financial needs.

Just living life!

...have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

God replying to the king

2 How long will you people turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods?

How do I turn God's glory into shame?

When I don't trust & obey Him for the WHOLE of my life & being!

Even when nothing seems to be working out right!

When my world is falling apart I must & need to trust God.

3 Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.

This is the key to maintain my focus on God's glory, to keep me away from delusions & seeking false gods!

You have to know this, it must be a axiom in your life, the most stable point in our relationship with God.

Nothing in life must be allowed to change this!

God hears our prayers!

God knows us!

A Few Clues For A Good Night's Sleep!

Clue # 1 – **"Search your heart"**

4 Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts

What does this mean?

At the end of the day – **Make Right with God!**

Confess sin, get cleansed by the precious shed blood of Jesus.

Wash me whiter than snow!

Be a peace with God.

Allow Him to adjust you – fine tune you – ready for tomorrow.

At the end of the day – **Make Right with Your Fellow Beings!**

If you can sort it out – do it or plan & make the needed adjustments to your life. Search your heart!

Dan Izzett - Zimbabwe. Retired pastor. I was diagnosed with lepromatous leprosy in 1972. Served on TLMI board for eight years and on the Zimbabwe board for 15 years. I now serve on the ALM board and do advocacy for them.



At The End Of The Day! – Part 2

Clue #2 – **Be Silent!** *...and be silent.*

Dial down! Slow down.

Be gentle have a soft landing.

Shut out the busyness of the day

Put the day behind you – turn off your TV, computer, iPad, kindle... what ever some time before you go to bed

Clue #3 – **Offer Right Sacrifices**

5 Offer the sacrifices of the righteous

What are they?

Thanksgiving.

Appreciation.

Adjustments to ways & lifestyles, thinking & attitudes.

Become righteous in doing life “**God’s way – the right way**”

The way that makes God happy

Clue # 4 – **Trust God**

...trust in the LORD.

If you don’t go to heaven during night – you’ll have to face tomorrow! Be confident of this:

When you wake up God will be with you and He has a plan for you!

His peace & His provision is your portion.

He will provide for you & protect you.

His pardon & passion is towards you.

You can trust God for tomorrow!

Fully trusting God for life is “**right sacrifices**”

God loves it when His children “**just trust Him**”

Clue #5 – **Let Joy Fill You** The psalmist talking again *6 Many, LORD, are asking, ‘Who will bring us prosperity?’ Let the light of your face shine on us. 7 Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound.*

Let the joy of the Lord put you to sleep.

Rock you until you're asleep.

Fall asleep with **joy** – your spouse won't mind – they may be happy for a change!

The joy of the Lord is your strength!

Clue #6 – Enjoy Peaceful Sleep

8 In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Enjoy the night with God!

Sleep He'll look after you – He looks after the whole universe – I'm sure He can look after you!

Choose this day blessings or curses – choose life – choose God's ways! Have God-type sleep

Clue # 1 – “Search your heart”

Clue # 2 – Be Silent!

Clue # 3 – Offer Right Sacrifices

Clue # 4 – Trust God

Clue # 5 – Let Joy Fill You

Clue # 6 – Enjoy Peaceful Sleep

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The Apostles: Crafted for Commission – 1.

Romans 10:14-15 “But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

Why the Apostles?

Through the saving grace of death on the cross and the resurrection of Jesus; God has opened the path of transition from the ancient “law” to the new community of “grace”. Jesus is the message of grace (unmerited favour) for the salvation of mankind (Ephesians 2:8). Jesus had appointed the Apostles to carry the Good News that through Jesus we can be saved and have the righteousness of God. The message was the person of Jesus Christ. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13). His ministry cannot end with His ascension to the heavens. Much more needed to be done. Apostles were His messengers. Apostleship is not a title, but a responsibility to sow the seed for expansion of God’s kingdom in the hearts of people.

There were 12 patriarchs of 12 tribes of Jews in the Old Testament (Genesis 48). Jesus possibly had appointed 12 Apostles because His message of grace was to be taken to the Jews (the chosen people of God) first and then to the Gentiles (Acts 1:8, Romans 1:16). All those who disown Jesus as the Messiah are still loved by God, both the Jew and the Gentile.

What was special about the 12?

They were all ordinary folk, commoners from different walks of life, working hard for their daily living. Not highly educated. No scholars. No priests. No learned men. They were Jews, followers of the Mosaic Law. They came from different professions-they must go to meet people from varied professions later. Persons with action orientation. When they heard the call of Jesus, they obeyed it (Matthew 4:20, 9:9). They were the doers of the Word and not mere spectators. Theory must be practiced-grace to be demonstrated. They knew the harsh realities of life. Action oriented. Work ahead of them would be hard ground level work. When they were sent to preach the Good News, they were told not to carry anything with them. No staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt (Luke 9:3). They were rough and tough people but with a soft heart. They saw Jesus in all His attributes; love, compassion, miracles, teaching, prayer, humility, gratitude. The Apostles have experienced (love) giving nature of God through Jesus. Love is to be demonstrated and experienced; and just theorized and spoken.

They had more of commitment than qualification. They were teachable more than scholarly. Humbled themselves to serve Jesus. Sacrificed everything to follow Jesus (John 11:16). For them it was “Jesus First”. They were saved. Turned a new leaf. They were far from perfect. They were not infallible. They were willing to be moulded like the clay by the potter. The clay has no great intrinsic value. Its value addition comes when it is moulded/crafted for a purpose. Not knowledge and wisdom; but faith in the person of Jesus had differentiated them from others.

God wants my availability and not my ability.

He gives me the knowledge, skills and resources at the right time when I serve Him.

In gratitude, for His grace.



The Apostles: Crafted for Commission – 2.

Romans 10:14-15 “But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

Apostles were selected and not elected

Each of them was first a disciple before being chosen as an apostle (Luke 6:12-13). Disciples are learners and followers; apostles are disciples who have been given a specific assignment – The Great Commission. It was first given to the Apostles and then to the wider Church that they had established.

Jesus needed right people for the key positions in His ministry. Disciples were chosen by Jesus to be Apostles after prayer and receiving God’s guidance. Jesus did not use even His judgment. It was important for Jesus to hear His Father’s voice before making the decision. It was not a random selection nor by a popular vote. It was through divine intervention. They were carriers not of a moral code of conduct to people but a Holy Spirit inspired revelation of being right with God in the person Jesus (John 1:12-14). It would mean that the role Apostles have been chosen for is unique. It needs specific characteristics which were revealed by God to His Son. The 12 were unique in the sense that judging by the manner they sacrificed their lives (in love) for Jesus. Their relationship with Jesus was not based on by their material and spiritual needs being satisfied; but in advancing the purpose of God for mankind i.e., reuniting man with God. The love for their Lord Jesus took them to sacrificial deaths for the sake of the Gospel (only John died in his old age and all others were martyred).

Jesus was their source and resource

Jesus mentored them to grow in knowledge and faith in Him. They were made to face challenges of the real world. Their failures to exercise the power of God was not condemned but put in the right perspective i.e., in faith nothing will be impossible for them (Matthew 17:19-20). In other words, they must depend on Jesus completely to exercise His authority (Matthew 22:18-19). The source of their ministry was Jesus himself (John 15:4). Only when they remain in Him, He will remain in them (John 15:4). Preaching the Gospel was their ministry but only as the messengers, conduits. Their belief system must be rooted in Jesus for them to excel in their work (John 14:12). The transition from enthusiasm to competency was through faith in the person of Jesus. They must exercise the power given to them for demonstrating the grace of God and expansion of His kingdom. They acknowledged the person of Jesus as their author and perfecter of their faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Conviction of the Apostles

The deep conviction that the Apostles had was out of the gratitude to the saving grace of Jesus; His unmerited favour to them. Peter had claimed that he would never disown Jesus (Matthew 26:35), but he had done it 3 times in one single night! Jesus forgave him and gave him the responsibility to feed His sheep (followers) (John 21:17). Thomas refused to accept the bodily resurrection of Jesus unless he personally verifies the crucifixion wounds. This was the level of unbelief in the words and works of Jesus. But the personal encounter with Jesus convicted Thomas to respond, “*My Lord and My God*” (John 20:28). He accepted the divinity of Jesus and yielded himself to His authority. His master in this world was the Almighty God himself.

Their conviction for the Gospel emanated from the deep sense of gratitude in their hearts for the saving grace of Jesus. Wherever they went, they gave their lives for the Gospel, even unto death; just the way Jesus went to the cross obeying His Father’s will.

Are you an Apostle of Jesus Christ?

In gratitude, for His grace. **Dr PLN Raju** - Former Director (Resource Mobilization) The Leprosy Mission Trust India New Delhi



What the Beatles taught the Fundraiser

"I don't care too much for money, coz money can't buy me love"

Like many of you, I grew up with the Beatles. Not because I lived in the era of their "hey-day" but because my dad is a big Beatles fan. He collected all their records - nice 45" vinyls. We used to play them and dance and sing as a family. I'd stand on my dad's feet and he'd move me around the lounge room to his favourite tunes. "Can't Buy Me Love" was favourite for us both.

I don't have any biblical references for this one - perhaps the rich man who couldn't pass through the "eye of the needle" might somehow back me up....but I just love the idea that The Word is a living breathing person and He can speak to us through anything - any time - and perhaps this is one of those times...

Money is so important to us fundraisers. It can achieve so many things. It can buy food, medicines, training, education and livelihoods. But it CANNOT buy LOVE...

Do you LOVE people affected by leprosy and disability? Do you LOVE your donors? Surely what they both need is "LOVE, LOVE, LOVE."

"LOVE is all you need." And the money will come.

LOVE first and LOVE will be put in ACTION. It cannot return to itself void. LOVE will provide the resources, LOVE is the answer. LOVE is why we are here.

We love, because God first loved us. Okay, I concede this IS biblical. Thanks John! (The disciple - not Lennon) But perhaps they were inspired by the same idea, the same thought, the same thing/person? *(Controversial!)*

God loved us first, so we can love Him and, in turn, love ourselves and others.

Start from that place and the finance will follow.

It's Kingdom thinking - but it's the biggest bank there is!

Trust in the currency of LOVE and ALL debts are paid, all good things are purchased. Everyone is redeemed and every good thing is restored.

LOVE is ALL we need.

God IS LOVE.

LOVE NEVER FAILS.



Psalm 44

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A *maskil*.

¹We have heard it with our ears, O God;
our ancestors have told us
what you did in their days,
in days long ago.

²With your hand you drove out the nations
and planted our ancestors;
you crushed the peoples
and made our ancestors flourish.

³It was not by their sword that they won the land,
nor did their arm bring them victory;
it was your right hand, your arm,
and the light of your face, for you loved them.

⁴You are my King and my God,
who decrees victories for Jacob.

⁵Through you we push back our enemies;
through your name we trample our foes.

⁶I put no trust in my bow,
my sword does not bring me victory;

⁷but you give us victory over our enemies,
you put our adversaries to shame.

⁸In God we make our boast all day long,
and we will praise your name forever.

⁹But now you have rejected and humbled us;
you no longer go out with our armies.

¹⁰You made us retreat before the enemy,
and our adversaries have plundered us.

¹¹You gave us up to be devoured like sheep
and have scattered us among the nations.

¹²You sold your people for a pittance,
gaining nothing from their sale.

¹³You have made us a reproach to our neighbors,
the scorn and derision of those around us.

¹⁴You have made us a byword among the nations;
the peoples shake their heads at us.

¹⁵I live in disgrace all day long,

and my face is covered with shame
¹⁶ at the taunts of those who reproach and revile me,
because of the enemy, who is bent on revenge.
¹⁷ All this came upon us,
though we had not forgotten you;
we had not been false to your covenant.
¹⁸ Our hearts had not turned back;
our feet had not strayed from your path.
¹⁹ But you crushed us and made us a haunt for jackals;
you covered us over with deep darkness.
²⁰ If we had forgotten the name of our God
or spread out our hands to a foreign god,
²¹ would not God have discovered it,
since he knows the secrets of the heart?
²² Yet for your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.
²³ Awake, Lord! Why do you sleep?
Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever.
²⁴ Why do you hide your face
and forget our misery and oppression?
²⁵ We are brought down to the dust;
our bodies cling to the ground.
²⁶ Rise up and help us;
rescue us because of your unfailing love.



Psalm 45

For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies." Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil. A wedding song.

- ¹ My heart is stirred by a noble theme
as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.
- ² You are the most excellent of men
and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever.
- ³ Gird your sword on your side, you mighty one;
clothe yourself with splendor and majesty.
- ⁴ In your majesty ride forth victoriously
in the cause of truth, humility and justice;
let your right hand achieve awesome deeds.
- ⁵ Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies;
let the nations fall beneath your feet.
- ⁶ Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.
- ⁷ You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy.
- ⁸ All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia;
from palaces adorned with ivory the music of the strings makes you glad.
- ⁹ Daughters of kings are among your honored women;
at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir.
- ¹⁰ Listen, daughter, and pay careful attention:
Forget your people and your father's house.
- ¹¹ Let the king be enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord.
- ¹² The city of Tyre will come with a gift, people of wealth will seek your favor.
- ¹³ All glorious is the princess within her chamber; her gown is interwoven with gold.
- ¹⁴ In embroidered garments she is led to the king; her virgin companions follow her—
those brought to be with her.
- ¹⁵ Led in with joy and gladness they enter the palace of the king.
- ¹⁶ Your sons will take the place of your fathers;
you will make them princes throughout the land.
- ¹⁷ I will perpetuate your memory through all generations;
therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever.



Sent by Jesus

Jesus said in his prayer to his Father before his suffering on the cross: "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. Joh 17:18"

After his resurrection Jesus said to his disciples: "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Joh 20:21"

So this is an amazing truth that we are sent by Jesus as he was sent by his Father. Jesus was sent with a specific task to fulfill in a very specific time *"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son" Gal 4:4*

How then was Jesus sent to the world?

1. Jesus was sent anointed by the Holy Spirit and he send and equip us with the same Spirit

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" Luke 4:18-19

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

2. He was sent to serve and he is sending us with the same task to serve

"just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matt 20:28

3. Jesus was sent to the whole world with salvation and he gave the same task to his disciples in every generation

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matt 28: 19

"Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. Marc 16:20



"All roads lead to Rome"??

Our 50 years of married life have been punctuated by a "few differences of opinion". Many of these have occurred when I was driving and she was "navigating" "I think you should have turned left at the last intersection" "You never give me the information in time" "You are always too proud to ask for directions" Verbal exchanges that stimulate our relationship while we explore the countryside.

The advent of GPS may have contributed to saving some marriages as well as time and fuel but it has definitively made our travels - and relationships - less exciting.

The Romans developed one of the best road complexes in the world. While it is true that the claim "all roads lead to Rome" was exaggerated, it is a fact that their road network facilitated control of the empire.

Today many of the people who still accept the existence of God have formulated another statement. "All religions lead to God." Most religions do contain principles and ideas helpful for life and relationships BUT if the above statement is true, then we have to reject Christianity.

Jesus declared *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* *John 14:6*. If there are other possibilities, Jesus is a liar and Christianity becomes a system based on the teachings of a man who cannot be trusted.

Those who have taken Him at His word have experienced that He is indeed THE WAY to the Father.

Jesus is the only "GPS" that can guarantee that we reach our eternal destination.

Silvano Perotti

Secretary for Europe then Deputy International Director and Director for Support and Development TLMI

Born in Italy - retired in Switzerland.

Worked with TLMI until 1990.



Masimani, Mister Amazing Grace

Psalm 42

We celebrated the day of Pentecost again. At that day, each year again, we remember the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Many Christians celebrate this in meetings in which hundreds or thousands of people are together. We are then among a *“huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith”* (Hebrews 12:1, from NLT). We have to remember them, those people of faith.

I met with such a man of faith. His name was Masimani. They call him Mister Amazing Grace, or in his own language: Umosomangilisyo.

How did I meet with him? I read about him, in ‘Music at Midnight’, written by Donald Miller and Reginald Ford. I wonder whether Music at Midnight is still available. It’s a dear treasure at my desk.

I know what ‘music at midnight’ means to me. All through my life I have often been awake in the night, hundreds of nights, because of severe migraine. Often I would swing backward and forward seated at the edge of my bed, singing softly Psalm 42, from NLT, *“But each day the Lord pours his unfailing love upon me, and through each night I sing his songs, praying to God who gives me life.”*

Masimani contracted leprosy and was brought to Temb-alehle, The Place of Good Hope, where “he opened his life to the invitation of the Gospel of Our Lord”. He could sing and one could hear him sing, always. He sang his own tunes, used his own words. His favourite hymn was ‘Amazing Grace’.

After his discharge the staff of the hospital did not hear from him again, until he called for them, when he was dying. Msibi, the driver, traveled a great distance and had to walk by foot until he found an old, tumble-down hut. Msibi, himself affected by leprosy, carried Masimani or what was left of him, after the old man had lived with rats around him.

Back in the hospital, after days and weeks of tender care, Masimani was able to speak again whispering a few words: “I have come home”. After a while he started singing again:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me;

I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

Why do I share this with you? The Author of the book wrote: “Well done, Mr Amazing Grace, your story will be told right across the World!”

Keep that story moving.

And when you are troubled in the night, remember Psalm 42.

My migraines disappeared completely, immediately after retirement! Prayers of friends are answered!



We should always stay awake

“Watch therefore for you do not know when the master of the house will come.” Mark 13: 33-37

Here is a quiz for you. You are sleeping. You are dreaming. A big lion is chasing you. You try to run away and you see a tiger coming in front of you. You turn sideways, but every side you turn to, you find a ferocious animal coming after you. How can you escape? The answer is: Wake up! By waking up one enters a whole new world of reality, different from that of the dream world. What was a huge problem in the dream state becomes a non-issue in the waking state. Dream state concerns and priorities lose their importance and new concerns and priorities take their place. For example, you discover that your problem is no longer how to escape from wild beast but how to beat the morning rush and arrive early for work. We can relate to a change between a dream consciousness and a wake consciousness. A similar and even more significant change occurs when we move from a state of being spiritually asleep to that of being spiritually awake, when the soul is awake and alert to spiritual reality.

In the gospel Jesus admonishes and encourages his followers to remain alert in the spirit. He was about to leave them for a certain length of time. By their faith and commitment to Jesus, his followers are like people who have roused themselves from spiritual slumber. But the time of his absence would be a time of trial for their faith life when they would be tempted to doze off. He enjoins them to remain awake and watchful so that whenever he comes to them he would find them not sleeping but watching in faith, ready to welcome him.

Mark's portrait of the doorman watching out to open for the Lord whenever he “suddenly” appears is an image of what we are expected to be doing all year long. The doorman keeps awake in order to recognize and welcome the Lord at his coming.

Faith, likewise, transforms us into people who are able to recognize the Lord and willing to receive him. Recognition is crucial because the Lord does not always come in easy recognizable ways. At Bethlehem he came in the form of a baby and people did not recognize him. In the parable of Last judgement, he said he came to people in the form of the most needy and disadvantaged of this world and many did not recognize him. But true people of faith did recognize him and serve him in this people who live in the blind-spot of society. Faith is first a way of seeing, and then a way of leaving.

The “wicked” who were consigned to hell in the Last judgement were probably waiting for the final coming of the Lord and failed to recognize him in his day-to-day coming. The shocker in that parable is that Christ comes into our lives in the form of the ordinary people and events of our everyday life. We need to be awake in faith to recognize and serve Christ in these commonplace and routine encounters since it will do us no good to recognize him on the Last Day if we do not recognize and serve him day by day.

Before we conclude, let us say a word about Jesus' saying *“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the father” (Mark 13:32)*. This saying can be understood literally to mean that Jesus did not know the date of the end of the world. It can also be understood as a strategy meant to discourage the disciples from further inquiring into the matter. In either case the implication for us is the same: Put an end to idle speculations regarding the date of the Last Day. Open your eyes in faith to see God present and active in your life and in your world. Open your heart and your house to the Lord who comes to you daily in the form of the needy man or woman. This is the best way to prepare to welcome the Lord when He comes on the Last day.

Moses Onoh, MD, is a former Country Leader of TLM Nigeria. He is currently with USAID/KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation Nigeria; serving as the Regional Director for South West Nigeria.



JESUS CALMS A STORM

Matthew 8:23 – 27

(v23) “And when He got into the boat His disciples followed Him.”

Jesus’ followers, follow Him anywhere, anytime, throughout the day. Those who earnestly seek to be in His will, are known as His family (Matth.12:50).

(v24) “And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but He was asleep.”

Even when Jesus is sleeping – God is still awake! From Lazarus’ sickness, death and resurrection (John 11), we learn that even when Jesus was 4 days late – He was still on time to perform that miracle!

In this world we will have trouble, but take heart, Jesus has overcome the world (John16:33)!

(v25) “And they went and woke Him, saying, ‘Save us, Lord: we are perishing.’”

As God’s children, the Bible urges us to pray constantly, in any situation, briefly or at length, for divine intervention. - Prayer is like spiritual breathing – and it works (eg. Jonah Ch.2)!

(v26) “And He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid?, O you of little faith?’ Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.”

Here, once again, our great Creator God shows Himself omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent – nothing is too hard for Him (cf. Psalm 139)!

In the storms of life, keep resting and relying upon Him (Philp.4:13).

(v27) “And the men marvelled, saying, ‘What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey Him?’”

From now on, let’s seek to get to know our Lord Jesus better and better!

This is what David learnt about God: Psalm 18:30 -32 “This God – His way is perfect; the Word of the LORD proves true; He is a shield for all those who take refuge in Him.

For who is a God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God? – the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless.”

In conclusion, let’s unite with David and pray.....

Psalm 18:1-3 “I love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in Whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

I call upon the LORD Who is worthy to be praised, and I’m saved from all my terrors.

- Amen.



Psalm 46

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamothe. A song.

¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.

⁵ God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.

⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

⁸ Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.

⁹ He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.

¹⁰ He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

¹¹ The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.



Authors in Alphabetical Order

Textuarium

Allan Ekstedt	25 June		Job 23,10	11 June
Belinda Pettman	22 June		Psalm 4	18, 19 June
Christine Osman	5 June		Psalm 38	2 June
Dan Izzett	18, 19 June		Psalm 39	3 June
David Beazley	11 June		Psalm 40	9 June
Elisabeth Barnett	6 June		Psalm 41	10 June
Erna Möller	8 June		Psalm 42	16 and 27 June
Joydeepa Darlong Dr	1 June		Psalm 43	17 June
Moses Onoh Dr	28 June		Psalm 44	23 June
Otto Kingsley	229 June		Psalm 45	24 June
Paul du Plessis Dr	12, 13, 14, 15 June		Psalm 46	30 June
Peter Laubscher	4 June		Psalm 145	8 June
Piet Both Dr	27 June		Prov 29,18	12 June
Raju Dr PLN	20, 21 June		Isaiah 52,7	13 June
Silvano Perotti	26 June		Habakkuk 2,20	5 June
Sons of Korah	16, 23, 24, 30 June		Matthew 8,23-27	29 June
Tim Collison	7 June		Mark 13,33-37	28 June
			Luke 24,36-48	6 June
			John 4,1-42	7 June
			John 8, 32	14 June
			John 14,6	26 June
			John 15,5-8	1 June
			John 18,18	25 June
			Acts 3,12-19	6 June
			Romans 10,14-15	20, 21 June
			1 Cor 2,16	4 June
			Revelation 3,8	15 June

The Bridge - TLM Daily Devotions

Editor: Marta Risko - Theological lector: Allan Ekstedt - Grammar proof: Christine Osman, Mo Lewis.