



TLM Daily Devotions

July 2019





Instead...

Dear TLM Family, Readers of The Bridge,

You have been receiving The Bridge each month since Advent 2015. It is my privilege to organise and put it together, as per the call of God on starting it and ministering with it within TLM worldwide.

This time unfortunately you receive the set with a slight delay. Being on summer leave, I had no internet for a couple of days while travelling. Now “settled down” in my transitional “home”, this is the first opportunity I can add the in between arrived devotionals, and click on sending the set off.

But I removed the piece of today, as most of you around the Globe will receive the set later in the day when morning devotions are over...

Blessed reading for the resting 30 days!

Marta



Domine, Quo Vadis?

John 13:36 “Lord, where are you going?”

Just south of Rome, is the church of “Domine, Quo Vadis?” (*“Lord, where are you going?”*), where Jesus is said to have met Peter fleeing the persecution of Christians under Emperor Nero. Jesus is said to have replied, *“I am going to Rome to be crucified again.”* We might expect it to have been the Lord’s question to Peter, “Where are you going?” rather than the other way round. In life, in decisions, in our calling we may sometimes feel the Lord saying, “Where are you going?” But in the legend the question is Peter’s, escaping threat, and seeing the Lord heading into it, “to be crucified again”.

So the question for me is not where am I going, but where the Lord is going, for me to follow? Is his way my way? Of course, his call for me will not be anyone else’s; his way for one life will be to different places and spheres of service than for another.

Peter had asked “Quo vadis?” once before. In John 13:36 Jesus is trying to explain to his disciples what is about to happen. Peter asks that same question: *“Lord, where are you going?”* He is told, *“Where I am going you cannot follow now, but later you will follow.”* How true for Peter, in more ways than he could realise, -and it is true for us.

Of course, we cannot follow Jesus through his atoning death; he alone can do that on our behalf. But then he says, *“...later you will follow”*. What does he mean? Having died the reconciling death, and having been restored to life, Jesus leads us (as Paul puts it) *“in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.”* It is into new life that Jesus says *“later you will follow”*, through death to self and into risen life in Christ; following in his ways. So if I ever sense that he is travelling in another direction, -that is the direction and the journey to which I must turn. *“Lord, where are you going? –I must follow!”*

There are several records of those who said to Jesus that they would follow him, only to be challenged as to whether it was true. That is where I have to examine myself. The first time Peter asked the question was natural... Jesus was going on the journey only he could take, but Peter (and we) would (and should) follow later. The second (legendary) time Peter asked, it led to a challenge. Jesus had said, *“Later you will follow”*... but now Peter was going the wrong way. That challenges me too.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:19, *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself ... and he has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation.”* And then, in 6:1, *“(I) urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain.”*

I wonder what Peter did after that legendary encounter near Rome. Tradition has it that he was martyred under Nero’s persecution of Christians in 64 or 65 AD, -in Rome. So perhaps we may guess the answer, but that’s not the issue for me. My question is, *“Lord, where are you going? Will you give me grace and strength to follow? May God call and lead and bless us all on his, our, journeys.”*

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 TLMI by leading retreat days and other such things as opportunity allows. He now pastors a Church in S-W England part time, and continues as a volunteer speaker for TLM.



Lost and found

I'm sure you've noticed that *Luke 15* contains a 3-in-1 message:

3 parables (as sub-points) with the same theme: LOST AND FOUND!

The obvious difference in them being the reduction of their odds:

1 in 100, 1 in 10, 1 in 2 (or is it actually 1 in 1?) !

Jesus' audience at the time was made up of the licentious, the legalists and the disciples – but actually, you and I are included in this mix too!

1) A lost sheep! (*vv3-7*)

Because humans, like sheep, are VULNERABLE, they tend to “get lost”!

They/we are stubborn, insolent, hard-hearted, rebellious, malicious, etc. (cf. Ezekiel 34:11,12,15-24,31)

Yet they/we are loved and pursued and rescued by THE GOOD SHEPHERD Jesus.

Notice how the Second Person of the Trinity deals with us (John10:10-18,27-30)!

2) A lost coin! (*vv8-10*)

Humans, like coins, are VALUABLE (Psalm 139:14), but they too can “get lost”!

And who wants to lose their hard-earned money?! Especially not this bride-to-be – it was part of her dowry!

So she searches for it until she finds it!(Moms know where to find ‘lost things’ at home, because they practise looking for things in their own handbags!)

The Holy Spirit (the 3rd Person of the Trinity) is represented by this diligent sister:

The Holy Spirit yearns for permanent connection with our spirit (cf. James4:4-10).

3) A lost son(s)?! (*vv11-32*)

Since The Fall all humans are spiritually lost and need to be found (Rom.3:23;6:23)

Thankfully, man has been given the grace of choice—we are VOLITIONAL creatures!

The Bible urges each one of us: “Choose ye this day whom you will serve!”

Here, God the Father(the 1st Person of the Trinity) wills us to make best choices!

However, He remains true to His Character throughout the story – generous, just, long-suffering, patient, merciful, gracious, forgiving, protecting, restoring, etc.

Sadly, only one of His two sons chose to cultivate a loving relationship with ‘Dad’!

Please don't remain LOST, but be FOUND today!

God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

wants to have an ongoing relationship with you(cf.Jer.31:3 and Jer.33:3).

Let's pray: "Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed;

Save me, O LORD, and I shall be saved –

For You are now my Praise!" –Amen.



My calling to care for leprosy

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” Matthew 4: 19

Born and raised in a Christian family, I have heard about Jesus since I was little, but I never understood that I needed to make a decision to ask him to be my Savior. I made a deep commitment when I was in nursing school; I discovered what it meant to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I was ready to believe in Jesus enough to trust my life and future to him. So, I surrendered my life to him and to follow his call to be a missionary in 1993. - Before going to the mission field, God let me have the chance to involve in a wide-ranging sphere of Christian short-term missions in ministries and evangelism including: volunteer at Drug addict rehabilitation gospel camp in Thailand; Support volunteer medical work in India and Nepal, running Bible study group in HK hospital and had been a member of church mission committee.

After my four short mission trips (India, Thailand, Japan and Nepal) in the 1984-1987, God gave me a very clear confirmation of His calling to serve Him overseas for the poorest of the poor. After all those short trips, I returned to my job in Hong Kong, during that time I had become the Nursing Officer in the Orthopedic ward. I continued praying for more confirmation to care for the leprosy affected.

One morning, as usual, I went to work in the ward and was surprised to find that the location of some hospital beds had been moved. With the exception of a 70-year-old male patient with a bed left in the center, the other beds were placed against the wall. I immediately questioned a nurse, only to know that this patient has been affected by leprosy 40 years ago, but other patients stayed away from him, as they thought they would be infected. In fact, this old patient was admitted to hospital because of arthritis, but was discriminated and isolated by others, even his relatives also rejected him. I also clearly remember that when he was about to be discharged from the hospital, I contacted his daughter-in-law by phone, but the other side unexpectedly answered me loudly: "Tell him to die!". I felt very shock about her response and realized the stigma towards leprosy affected people was still so strong in Hong Kong.

At that time my hospital had patient fellowship every Saturday, allowing patients to participate freely. Once, as usual, I informed the patients in the orthopedic ward that there was fellowship, but all the patients made excuses not to go, and the only patient who had been affected by leprosy told me that he was keen to hear the good news about Jesus, and I was surprised to arrange for him to worship immediately. He was the first leprosy affected I have ever met in Hong Kong, because leprosy is rare in Hong Kong. This incident also made me understand that people affected by leprosy are the most rejected and under discrimination and prejudice, and that their hearts need the most healing and the gospel. This confirmed the answer I have been looking for since 1984, and I responded to the Lord: "Lord, I am willing to share your great love with people affected by leprosy."

At the same time, my church was very supportive and thought I'm ready to be a missionary. In early 1988, I applied to "The leprosy Mission International" in London. It turned out that this Mission had been praying for three years, seeking someone from Asia, and I was the best person for them.

From my first short term mission in 1984 to the end of 1993, I set foot as the first missionary from my church, and I went through nine years of long waiting time, during which God gave me a step-by-step guide to equip me, so that my spiritual life can be created and grown, so that I understand that becoming a missionary is not by my own ability, but by total obedience. Those who are willing to serve the leprosy affected people are only from the calling of God, because even the local health care workers in their own countries are not willing to take care of them. In addition,

God led me to dedicate my youth to care for them, and I feel that the value of life is to fulfil what God's plan for me, have my life to the full.

Yuek Ming Poon (Hong Kong) Worked with TLMI for 22 years. 1993 – 2000 seconded to INF to work in Nepal in leprosy clinic as Clinic Manager. 2002 – 2004 worked with TLM as POID Technical Officer in India, 2005 – 2012 worked with TLM as Country Leader in China and Laos, 2013 -2015 worked with TLM in PNG as Capacity Building Advisor. June 2015 left TLM and then studied in Vancouver Regent Bible College from September 15 to April 2016, and then back to HK involving in Nepali ministry. 2017 back to Nepal as Leprosy Nursing Advisor in Green Pastures Hospital with INF.



The Story Behind The Leprosy Mission Prayer

The Leprosy Mission Prayer is well-known to TLM staff, personnel and supporters alike – in both implementing and supporting countries. But where does it come from? And who wrote it? Was it Wellesley Bailey himself?

The original TLM Prayer was actually written by the Most Reverend Foss Westcott, Metropolitan of India and Bishop of Calcutta – sometime during the period when Mr Donald Miller was serving the Mission in India (1922-1942).

The circumstances surrounding the prayer are told by Mr Donald Miller, General Secretary of The Leprosy Mission, in May 1970 at a Conference held at Hildenborough Hall, UK, immediately following the formal opening of the new Headquarters of The Leprosy Mission at 50 Portland Place, London. [*See Explanatory Footnotes below for more detail]

Donald Miller relates a fascinating story – of a time in the Mission nearly 100 years ago, and of a humble, godly man whose heartfelt prayer for people affected by leprosy, is still as relevant today as it was when first prayed in Calcutta Cathedral, India.

This is his account:

“I was privileged to know, over a course of 20 years, that quiet saint of a man, the Most Reverend Foss Westcott, Metropolitan of India and Bishop of Calcutta. In him the grace of simplicity abounded. It was that which enabled him to give himself for others and bear much fruit. Here is an illustration. After we had begun making the 14th Sunday after Trinity Leprosy Hospitals’ Sunday, I asked one year if it would be possible for the Bishop himself to preach the sermon at Calcutta Cathedral. He readily consented but said he would need to ensure that he had a fresh contact with the work to get his impressions and facts right; and might he come and stay with my wife and myself at Purulia?

That involved a full night’s journey in a rickety train, then a day tramping around the great Home [Purulia] and preaching by interpretation in the afternoon to “the brethren” – as we always called the patients – then a night in our home and the next day largely spent in preparing the manuscript for his sermon, before again taking the jolting night train back to Calcutta. All done so simply, and so thoroughly - a constant consequence of simplicity - for a fifteen minutes’ sermon! And this by a man loaded with large responsibilities. His refreshment and freedom for fruitful work came from his rest in God.

It was the Bishop’s duty, because of his high office, to live in a house of large dimensions – Bishop’s House, across the road from the Cathedral. There he dispensed a wide hospitality. Guests who came to stay were taken up the wide staircase, past the great reception room, and library-cum-committee room on the first floor and on to the spacious bedrooms on the second floor. Over their doors were the names of past bishops. “You are sleeping in Heber” you would be told.

After I had stayed there several times, I once said to the chaplain, “Where does the Bishop sleep?” “Come, and I’ll show you”, he said. And he led me up beyond the second and third floors to the roof. On it was a small, thatch-roofed structure, with roll-up blinds at the sides instead of walls. Under the roof was a very plain bed and a small table with devotional books and writing material. There the accoutrements of office were totally laid aside. He returned to the simplicity of the people among whom he had worked as a missionary in Chota Nagpur. His rest was not in pomp and circumstance, but in the retreat to the simplicities of private worship, and in the rest and refreshment of quiet trust in God.

“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.”

I like to think that it must have been up there that the Bishop prepared the special prayer for *Leprosy Hospitals' Sunday* now used in many lands.

This is the prayer the Bishop prepared and which we will now offer :-

Almighty Father, Giver of life and health: look mercifully upon those sore stricken with leprosy: Stretch forth Thy hand to cleanse and heal them as did Thy blessed Son of old: Grant wisdom and insight to those who are seeking the cause and cure of this disease: Give tenderness and sympathy to those who minister to the sufferers: Restore again to the fellowship of their relatives and friends those who have been separated from them: Quicken in the minds of all men a lively sympathy with the work of The Leprosy Mission, that it may never lack either the men or the means to carry on its succour of the afflicted, in accordance with Thy Holy Will. We ask all for the sake of Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord. Amen. "

Janet Walmsley. November 2018

Kindly forwarded to The Bridge by June Nash

* [Note, this is the original version of *The Leprosy Mission Prayer*. Some of the wording has since been updated.]

Transcribed from the published booklet, "Every Disciple Has Two Homes"

– Eight Devotional Talks given by A. Donald Miller [Pp 16-17]

Given at a Conference of National Secretaries held at Hildenborough Hall, May 1st- 5th, 1970,

immediately following the Formal Opening of the new Headquarters of The Leprosy Mission 50 Portland Place, LONDON W1N 3DG

[Booklet Printed by Wm.Carling & Co., London & Hitchin.]

Transcriber's Note:

* The theme of the eight devotional talks on the occasion of the formal opening of The Leprosy Mission's new Headquarters and official 'home', was that of "spiritual home-making".

Jesus said to His disciples:- "Make your home in me, as I make mine in you" John 15.4 [Jerusalem Bible]

Each chapter focused on a particular aspect of a "home": eg. The roof, the door, the bed, table and stool, etc. as an image of ministry and fruitfulness in the Lord's service; and on men and women Donald Miller had known whose lives and fruitfulness had touched the Mission. The story of the Bishop and his Prayer is told in Chapter 5: "The Bed" - with the theme 'Simplicity' [hence the reference to the Bishop's sleeping arrangements!]



Psalm 119 – Part 14

Nun

¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.

¹⁰⁶I have taken an oath and confirmed it,
that I will follow your righteous laws.

¹⁰⁷I have suffered much;
preserve my life, LORD, according to your word.

¹⁰⁸Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth,
and teach me your laws.

¹⁰⁹Though I constantly take my life in my hands,
I will not forget your law.

¹¹⁰The wicked have set a snare for me,
but I have not strayed from your precepts.

¹¹¹Your statutes are my heritage forever;
they are the joy of my heart.

¹¹²My heart is set on keeping your decrees
to the very end.



Psalm 119 – Part 15

o Samekh

¹¹³ I hate double-minded people,
but I love your law.

¹¹⁴ You are my refuge and my shield;
I have put my hope in your word.

¹¹⁵ Away from me, you evildoers,
that I may keep the commands of my God!

¹¹⁶ Sustain me, my God, according to your promise, and I will live;
do not let my hopes be dashed.

¹¹⁷ Uphold me, and I will be delivered;
I will always have regard for your decrees.

¹¹⁸ You reject all who stray from your decrees,
for their delusions come to nothing.

¹¹⁹ All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross;
therefore I love your statutes.

¹²⁰ My flesh trembles in fear of you;
I stand in awe of your laws.



Explanation of God

This was written by an 8-year-old named Danny Dutton, who lives in Chula Vista, CA. He wrote it for his third grade homework assignment, to 'explain God.' I wonder if any of us could have done as well.

EXPLANATION OF GOD:

'One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up His valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.'

'God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.'

'God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.'

'Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista . At least there aren't any who come to our church.'

'Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K.' 'His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important.'

'You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.'

'You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God!

Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides, the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.'

'If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared, in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.'

'But...you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases. And...that's why I believe in God.'

Thank you Laurie John for sharing this with us all.

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.



Explaining God - 1

Making people to take care of the world

Genesis 1:26-31

Trying to explain God is difficult if not impossible — yet 8 year old Danny Dutton from California has come up with some good ideas; I will reflect on some of them.

Danny was given an assignment to « explain God. »

His first statement is :-

‘One of God’s main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn’t make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn’t have to take up His valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.’

Taking care of things on earth — for centuries man has been occupied with both filling the earth and using its resources, sometimes for their individual good, sometimes for the support aid and development of others and often without being aware or thinking of the consequences on the whole of the cosmos. Was or is man too zealous in the way he/she has and does filled the earth and subdue it ?

An example is the deforestation of North African during the expansion on the Roman Empire starting in around 500 BC clearing land to provide food, and also using the trees for ship building. Yet we haven’t learnt form that experience. There continues to be over use without really thinking of how the generations to come will survive. Today more people are aware of our need to care for our world and in the May 2019 European elections there more Green members elected than previously.

We still read and talk about deforestation and the consequences. For some it is a way of getting enough to survive for themselves and their families, like the illegal gold seekers using mercury in French Guiana. As gold is very near the surface, it is easy to clear a small bit of the forest and dig down. But then the poisonous results are immediate as mercury is used to isolate the gold which contaminates the water which is then ingested by fish and that becomes part of the food chain.

Do we really take care of things on earth, thinking of generations to come or do we just think of enjoying things for today? Ideas need to be carefully thought through; a change in use of materials has a knock on effect. What are we going to use to replace our plastic kitchen utensils? Bamboo, it grows quickly; it also spreads quickly so can easily get out of control can that upset the local fauna?

We need to wake up to Danny’s challenge,

we have been made by God to take care of things on the earth.

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Explaining God - 2

Our duty to teach people in the way they should go.

Deuteronomy 11:19 and Ephesians 6:4

At the end of the same paragraph Danny reminds us that we are created as babies so God's time is not taken up with teaching everyone. *'He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up His valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.'*

In Danny's thoughts, as well as having been made to care for the earth we have been made to assist others in their roles in life. We are here to teach others, some professionally others as parents. How many of us teach others completely unaware of what we are doing. My husband often comments that I have taught him a lot about music, all I have done is talked about it and answered his questions when listening to or playing something. At other times a comment made to someone who is a bit stuck turns out to be really helpful and finally we teach by example. This is on top of all the times when we have gone out of our way to teach, come I'll show you the way.

As Danny reminds us bringing up children takes time and patience: God delegates this duty to us. The book of Deuteronomy is full of suitable verses to illustrate this *Deuteronomy 11v 19 You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up.*

There is also a responsibility in how we instruct others whether our elders or children and the writer to the Ephesians reminds us in 6:4 *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

The teaching can be many things and it links very much to the above comment on looking at how can we really take care of things on the earth.

In a life where I have traveled round the world I have seen many different ways in which we can teach and not all are mentioned by young Danny. As we leave and teach others we also learn. In this series we learn from an 8 year old

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Explaining God - 3

Listening to our prayers

Psalm 66:19

Danny's second point is *God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.*

There are times when I wonder as I listen to prayers if God really needs to be told so much! Danny's picture of God is very human, and of course as we grow older our visions of God changes and develops, but still we can learn from this 8 year old.

Prayer is important, and is not simple. Danny at 8 is already aware that *God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.*

This is a child's point of view, but relevant all of our life. When we don't like what is going on there is a temptation to pray in a way that is not helpful, or have a shopping list, or be conflictual. In a small community there was a conflict on whether some trees should be cut down, as they were not safe, by the municipality. Two people at a prayer meeting were very steamed up, one for the trees to be chopped down and other for them to be left. They were both personally involved, and it became vicious. Both ended their prayers with the phrase in your will O Lord: Danny has learnt that is not the way we should pray pray.

Then he reminds of the importance that you can pray anywhere at any time. You do not need to be in a special place or position to pray *'You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.'*

A morning prayer, by Danny,

Dear God, So far, today, I've done all right. I haven't gossiped or lost my temper. I haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, or self centered. I'm really happy about that so far. But in a few minutes I'm going to be getting out of bed and then I'm going to need a lot of help. Thank you! Amen

Would the world be a better place if we followed his example?

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Explaining God – 4

Can we do something for God

Matthew 5:13-16

'But...you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases.

And...that's why I believe in God.'

There are two point in his final paragraph I will enlarge on.

1. The need to be a light, today I meditated on a picture of a light house with its light beaming out across a dark choppy sea.

God is both with us when life is going smoothly and when it is dark and frightening. We are called to be lights to shine out to others rather like a light house give light to others when they have been flung about by the waves.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5 v 14-16

2. At 8 years old Laurie has a mature understanding of life and death, *God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases.* Are we struggling with the meaning of life here and now and beyond.

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." *Job 1 v 21b*, and found in this sentences at the beginning of the service for the Order for the Burial of the Dead in the Book of Common Prayer 1662

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Psalm 119 – Part 16

Ayin

- ¹²¹ I have done what is righteous and just;
do not leave me to my oppressors.
- ¹²² Ensure your servant's well-being;
do not let the arrogant oppress me.
- ¹²³ My eyes fail, looking for your salvation,
looking for your righteous promise.
- ¹²⁴ Deal with your servant according to your love
and teach me your decrees.
- ¹²⁵ I am your servant; give me discernment
that I may understand your statutes.
- ¹²⁶ It is time for you to act, LORD;
your law is being broken.
- ¹²⁷ Because I love your commands
more than gold, more than pure gold,
- ¹²⁸ and because I consider all your precepts right,
I hate every wrong path.



Psalm 119 – Part 17

9 Pe

¹²⁹Your statutes are wonderful;
therefore I obey them.

¹³⁰The unfolding of your words gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.

¹³¹I open my mouth and pant,
longing for your commands.

¹³²Turn to me and have mercy on me,
as you always do to those who love your name.

¹³³Direct my footsteps according to your word;
let no sin rule over me.

¹³⁴Redeem me from human oppression,
that I may obey your precepts.

¹³⁵Make your face shine on your servant
and teach me your decrees.

¹³⁶Streams of tears flow from my eyes,
for your law is not obeyed.



Lives transformed

The disciples were so amazed by Jesus' life of prayer, one asked Him : *"Lord, teach us to pray"* (Luke 11.1). And Jesus taught the *Lord's prayer* (Luke 11.2-4, Matthew 6.9-13).

To pray is not to submit a "wish list" to God but to develop a relationship with Him. When I pray:

- Do I realise I enter the presence of the Almighty God?
- Do I approach God with humility recognising who He is?

Humility (from humus/ground as Adam which comes from "Adamah": ground) is to see myself realistically as God sees me: a human being created in His image, a sinner justified by Him.

- Do I turn my eyes away from the situation to concentrate on God?
- Do I realise I take the "risk" to be **transformed**?

Most of the time, the situation doesn't change once I've prayed about it, but I see it in a different way. The circumstances we ask God to change are often the circumstances God uses to change us (Max Lucado).

In Matthew 6, the Lord's prayer starts as follows: *Our Father in heaven (and not my Father).*

I'm not alone. God wants me to be in fellowship with others, He wants us to be brought to unity. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one, they are in unity - this is our model. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17. 23) To let people know that God loves them and that He sent Jesus so they can be saved, is that not evangelisation?

So, to be in unity is a way to evangelize people, to call them to change their lives.

It's a privilege to be together: *"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them"* (Matthew 18.20) But it can also bring difficulties. I can be hurt by someone. Maybe Peter remembered such situation when he asked: *"Lord how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"* Jesus answered *"I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven."* (Mathew 18.21-22) (see also Luke 17.3-4) What a good question Peter! Seven times, perfect! But Jesus answered 70 x 7, which means as much as my brother sins against me!

I don't have to count but to be filled with God's grace and to act with this grace.

In order to be in genuine unity we need faith, faith to trust and obey.

Trust: to believe that God is God, that God is love.

What is the greatest act of faith? Raising the dead, multiplying bread? Isn't it believing that God loved me so much that He gave Jesus so I can be in relationship with Him and be transformed; knowing that He forgave my sins? We can't forgive without giving something – there is a giving in forgiving!

Do I realise that I have received from God all I need to give when I forgive?

Obey: Jesus commands us to love one another. A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13.33-34). God is love, He wants to manifest Himself to the world and one way His love is shared is the way we love one another!

All men will know that we are Jesus' disciples, if we love one another, is that not evangelization?

So, loving one another, following Jesus' example is another way to evangelize.

*We need each other to be **transformed** and to keep growing in faith.*



Find your spark

When Elizabeth and I moved house a few weeks ago, we were shocked at how filthy our home was. As we heaved out the fridge and the washing machine, we were so disgusted by the mess that we called a group of professional cleaners to spruce the home for our new tenants. I have seldom paid a contractor with such a huge smile on my face. The cleaners did a stunning job. In the course of the afternoon they transformed our house into a gleaming palace and I padded reverentially through it in my socks as I inspected their handiwork. I was still beaming as I handed the keys to the tenants the next morning, but my smile soon became a grimace as the tenants' moving team got to work. They dropped a packet of sugar at the entrance and merrily spread the contents throughout the house as they dumped boxes, chairs and piano on my beloved tiles. I know houses are for living and not for admiring, but there was a part of me that had hoped that for at least a day, it would have retained some of its pristine sheen. I was thinking about this as I walked past Piccadilly circus this week. The pavement artists had been at work, but they'd gone home and the restless crowds were shuffling over the paving slabs, erasing their pastel portraits, one flip flop at a time. What does it feel like, to return to the same slab of concrete every day and to start your work from scratch?

The Scriptures have much to say about work, so much so that when I was very much younger, there was custom at church to talk about work-ship as a way of highlighting the spiritual aspects of work, reminding us that it is an act of worship.

It's easy to understand this idea when you work revolves around Big Things – building a hospital; restoring the gift of movement to a paralysed hand; leading someone to a saving faith in Jesus. For many of us, I think work feels more like cleaning a house just before careless movers start dragging furniture across the floor or putting the finishing touches on a portrait as the theatres at Leicester Square spill out onto the pavements. At times it may feel like “bitter labour” [Psalm 107: 12] *Psalm 127:2* develops this theme:

*In vain you rise early
and stay up late,
toiling for food to eat—
for he grants sleep to those he loves.*

Take time this morning to mediate on Psalm 127 – in it you will find wonderful assurance that whatever your work entails today, if you are living according to His purposes, your labour is not in vain and it fruits will endure – you will not be “put to shame”. May you be richly blessed in your corner of the Vineyard today. Then take time today to do one more thing – pick up the phone and speak to someone and remind them about Psalm 217 – encourage them – help them put the spark back in their work-ship.

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.



The value of the gift!

The two little pieces put in the offering by a poor widow do not go unnoticed! Today, we still talk about it! "She put in more than the rich", Jesus emphasizes. "She put in her own necessities". Zacchaeus's gift does not go unnoticed either! He, the rich man, touched by Christ, decides to give half of his goods. Today, we are still talking about it!

What about the gift of the Church of Macedonia (2Cor. 8)? The Apostle Paul takes it as an example in his letter to the Corinthians: "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity."

When King David planned to build the temple, he first made great goods available for the realization of this project, then he invited the people to take up this challenge as well. *1Chronicle 29:5 "Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord? The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord."*

The offering of the poor as well as the rich, as well as those who have gone through difficult time of suffering, takes on all its importance when it is made out of generosity of heart. The amount does not matter in God's eyes. It is the intention that is decisive.

In our supporting countries as well as in the implementing countries, this is a message to send to all those with whom we are in touch. Each of us can bring his contribution to this wonderful job that the mission has been doing for 145 years now.

We have just agreed to a global strategy 2019-2023 with the slogan "leprosy defeated, lives transformed". Let us all be renewed in our motivation to give glory to God through our commitment. May the Lord fill us with his joy and his peace.

"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" said Jesus.

La valeur du don !

Les deux petites pièces mises dans l'offrande par une pauvre veuve ne passent pas inaperçues ! Aujourd'hui, on en parle encore ! "Elle a mis plus que les riches", souligne Jésus. "Elle a mis de son nécessaire". Le don de Zachée ne passe pas non plus inaperçu ! Lui le riche, touché par le Christ, décide de donner la moitié de ses biens. Aujourd'hui, on en parle encore également !

Et qu'en est-il du don de l'église de Macédoine (2Cor. 8) ? L'apôtre Paul le prend comme exemple dans sa lettre aux Corinthiens. « A travers le grande épreuve de leurs afflictions, leur joie débordante et leur pauvreté profonde ont produit avec abondance de riches libéralités de leur part. »

Lorsque le roi David projetait de construire le temple, il a premièrement mis de grands biens à disposition pour la réalisation de ce projet, puis il a invité le peuple à relevé aussi ce défi. *1 Chronique 29 :5 « Qui veut encore présenter volontairement aujourd'hui ses offrandes à l'Eternel ? v9. Le peuple se réjouit de leurs offrandes volontaires, car c'était avec un cœur bien disposé qu'ils les faisaient à l'Eternel. »*

L'offrande du pauvre comme celle du riche ainsi que celle de ceux qui ont passé par l'épreuve prend toute son importance lorsqu'elle faite par générosité de cœur. Le montant n'a pas d'importance aux yeux de Dieu. C'est l'intention qui est déterminante.

Dans nos pays de support de la mission comme dans les pays de soutien, voilà un message à faire passer auprès de tous ceux avec lesquels nous sommes en contact. Chacun d'entre nous peut apporter sa contribution à ce travail magnifique que la mission exerce depuis maintenant 145 ans.

Nous venons d'accepter une stratégie globale 2019-2023 avec comme slogan « lèpre vaincue, vie transformée. »

Soyons tous renouvelés dans notre motivation de rendre gloire à Dieu par notre engagement. Que le Seigneur nous comble de sa joie et de sa paix.

"Toutes les fois que vous avez fait ces choses à l'un de ces plus petits de mes frères, c'est à moi que vous les avez faites" dit Jésus.

Eric Chollet - I'm retired since four years. I used to work with TLM Switzerland for 32 years. During that time, I have had the privilege to stand in different committees (e.g. executive committee - directorate) with TLMI, which has been very rewarding. All along these years of service, I have met a lot of wonderful and dedicated people. May God continue to bless the mission for His glory.



Jesus' instructions

What do you do when you get a new “gadget” or a new piece of equipment? Some people are very careful and methodical and after unpacking but before using, they read the instructions and then are sure of what they are doing. I’m afraid I am not like that and reading the instructions is the last thing I want to do. Just last week I was cooking a big lunch for 8 people and needed to use the big oven of my cooker – I don’t use it very often and could not understand why it would not heat up. Reading the instructions identified that I needed to set the clock before the oven would heat. As I reflected on that, I realised that I needed to read the instructions every time I used that oven.

Yesterday I was recalling that to mind and I wondered about the instructions Jesus gave to His disciples and the people He came in contact with. That started me on a little Bible Study as it was not something I had ever thought about before. Here are some examples:

To the paralysed man lowered through the roof to Jesus, He said: *“get up, take your mat, and go home”*;

To the man who had been possessed, He said: *“return home and tell how much God has done for you”*;

To the 10 people suffering from Leprosy, He said: *“go show yourselves to the priests”*;

To the disciples, He said: *“take up your cross, follow me and go make disciples of all nations”*.

Jesus instructions were simple, clear and easily understood by those to whom they were given. He did not complicate them by telling how they were to be carried out. He did not say you need to go to Bible College or get a degree in communication. He did not say you need to become a preacher or a teacher. He did not say to the disciples you all need to do this in the same way, He just promised them the help of the Holy Spirit.

So it is for us – we are called to carry on that commission to take up our cross, follow Jesus and make disciples of all nations. The Holy Spirit graciously interprets those instructions into each of our lives to show us individually how to carry out those instructions. For some of us it might mean literally going to other lands, for some it might be leading us to ministry, for others it might be staying at home and encouraging someone or helping another. Sometimes it is doing something so simple that we do not even realise what we are doing. Recently while I had a visitor staying I took her to call on someone. At the end of the visit we were told how much our visit had helped and encouraged the person. A few days later, I met a neighbour of the person we visited and she told me how much that person had been helped – the neighbour said she had noticed such a difference in the person we visited and wanted to know what we had done or said – the answer I gave was that we had prayed with the person we visited and from there we had quite a long conversation. While my visitor was here we entertained a few people one evening and a Thank You card from one of them told me how her depressed spirits had been raised as we exercised our “chuckle muscles”!! (we had some good laughs).

Don't complicate Jesus' instructions, let the Holy Spirit inspire and lead you day by day.

Father, we pray that each of us would be led and inspired by the Holy Spirit in our actions and words today that we might continue to carry out the instructions Jesus gave us to follow Him and make disciples. Amen

Christine Osman, formerly Treasurer of TLMI



The Family of God

What does family mean to you? Maybe you've had a positive experience. Or perhaps, you do not have happy memories of your family. One of the truly remarkable features of the good news is God brings us into his family, and you are included in this family whatever your history, whatever your ethnicity, whatever your gender. God sees us all as his children (Galatians 4). Knowing Jesus, and being in the Family of God means we are called and able to support each other, what our role. And we are in this family, no matter how far apart geographically we might be.

I grew up as an expatriate which meant I was always geographically distant from my extended family. I only saw them every few years. When we did go meet them, though, they were always welcoming. We were included in family events, and always welcomed. It never felt they were less than family, even though they were many thousands of kilometres away.

In the same way, then, as Christians, however far apart we might be geographically, we are family. We are loved by people thousands of kilometres away, even if we might never meet them. We are upheld before God by people who might never be in the same room as us. We pray for people in the Global Fellowship at our devotions everyday. In Jesus they are our family, no matter we might never meet them.

My dad's family is very outspoken, and any family gathering is full of people talking loudly. Every family has certain tendencies, even when we are distant from them. This is true of God's family as well. Whether it is gathering to worship under an acacia tree in Turkana. Or in an air conditioned building in Victoria. The language might be different. The songs might not sound the same. But that familial feeling and the joy in the Lord is there.

This family feeling means we are able to be one body, supporting one another no matter how far away we are.

John wrote, to an unknown church, these words *"Beloved, when you are doing all that you do for family members, even when they are strangers, you are doing a faithful work. These people have borne witness to your love in the presence of the assembly, and you will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. They went out for the sake of the Name not accepting help from outsiders. We ought to support people like that, so that we may become fellow workers with the truth"* (The Bible for Everyone).

When we support each other as family members, all as God's children, we are supporting each other in the good work of the Gospel.

Tim Collison – Engagement Coordinator, TLM Australia



Psalm 119 – Part 18

Y Tsadhe

¹³⁷You are righteous, LORD,
and your laws are right.

¹³⁸The statutes you have laid down are righteous;
they are fully trustworthy.

¹³⁹My zeal wears me out,
for my enemies ignore your words.

¹⁴⁰Your promises have been thoroughly tested,
and your servant loves them.

¹⁴¹Though I am lowly and despised,
I do not forget your precepts.

¹⁴²Your righteousness is everlasting
and your law is true.

¹⁴³Trouble and distress have come upon me,
but your commands give me delight.

¹⁴⁴Your statutes are always righteous;
give me understanding that I may live.



Psalm 119 – Part 19

Qoph

¹⁴⁵ I call with all my heart; answer me, LORD,
and I will obey your decrees.

¹⁴⁶ I call out to you; save me
and I will keep your statutes.

¹⁴⁷ I rise before dawn and cry for help;
I have put my hope in your word.

¹⁴⁸ My eyes stay open through the watches of the night,
that I may meditate on your promises.

¹⁴⁹ Hear my voice in accordance with your love;
preserve my life, LORD, according to your laws.

¹⁵⁰ Those who devise wicked schemes are near,
but they are far from your law.

¹⁵¹ Yet you are near, LORD,
and all your commands are true.

¹⁵² Long ago I learned from your statutes
that you established them to last forever.



The Strength of Faith

Kasper Mayr was one of the unarmed opponents of Hitler. He was secretary of the International Fraternity of Reconciliation, an ecumenical mission that promotes non-violent approaches to conflict resolution and overcoming political and social injustice.

The Mayr residence, with its large garden and fruit trees, is still in a suburb of Vienna. At the end of March 1945, while Russian troops were increasingly approaching the Austrian capital, which had been one of the major cities of the Third Reich, the Viennese citizens had good reasons to be afraid. Even those who, like Kasper, had opposed Nazism. Hitler's army, in fact, of which many thousands of Austrians had been involved, had caused at least twenty-five deaths in Soviet Russia, destroying industrial centers, and devastating a large number of cities. "What approached was a victorious army that would make its own revenge, which would make its way to the center of the city," recalls Hildegard, Kasper Mayr's daughter.

Despite the fear in the city snaking what a common feeling, Kasper did not close the door to the door; Hiding his wife, daughter and some guests in the cellar, he was upstairs, as he was waiting. When the Russians arrived in front of his house and beat the shots at the door with weapons, Kasper opened and stood still in front of them. He pushed the shotguns side by side and invited them to enter as if they were expecting guests. The soldiers, who usually suspect in such circumstances, felt intuitive gestures to accommodate Kasper that perhaps their fear was not necessary. Look inside the house to see if it was a trap. They found out that it was not. Kasper, according to her daughter Hildegard, found that they were relieved. He removed their rifles, called others, family and guests, from the base. With his gestures, he managed to create an atmosphere of trust, love, belonging. The Russian soldiers saw how Kasper and his family were slim and hungry, as Vienna had been cut off from food commissions for a long time and shared their wounded wounds. Also, noticing a Russian icon hanging from the living room wall, a soldier made the sign of the cross and prayed in front of the icon. Others joined him.

If Kasper Mayr had been armed, Russian soldiers would confirm their fears. Instead, with his inner strength and calm, drawing from an intense prayer life, he managed to resurrect their humanity and get them out of the terrible mode of war.

Kasper's experience is the experience of all men and women who, in the face of their fears, face an objectively critical and dangerous, even mortal, daring choice of love, welcome, and mildness. A choice that originates from the faith. And faith, says the Apostle Paul in the Letter to the Romans, comes from listening, listening, in turn, to the word of God (cf. *Rom 10: 17*).



Jesus: Word and Bread

Mt 14,13-21

Jesus has just received the news of the assassination of John the Baptist. It's a tremendous news for him. John is his master and friend, whom Jesus loved and esteemed to the point of telling him that he was the greatest among by women born. He will also say, "They did what they wanted of him", also presenting in the innumerable fate of John the prophetic sign of his own. Jesus therefore needs to be alone, a human need necessary to weep, to pray, to think, because that event hurt him in the intimate. And he tries to be away.

But when he finds out that the crowd has followed him, he immediately renounces his sacred right to be alone, and submits to the situation. And the gospel tells us why: because he felt *compassion* for them.

This annotation is capital: the Gospel is the narration of how Jesus told us the God of Abraham and Israel, and we know that compassion for Jesus is at the heart of God's purpose in all that he has done and said. Compassion urges Jesus to do what is in his power to serve this great crowd of people, curing their sick, consoling them and their loved ones. In the parallel text of Marc it is said that the same emotion pushed him to preach to them for a long time, as probably here is understood. To talk to them about the Kingdom of God that has approached in him, and to treat the sick listening to the evils, are his two ordinary ways of caring for people, and they are also the ones he will give as mandated to his disciples.

Much more now that, after John's death, he sees them as sheep without a shepherd.

And when the disciples urges Jesus to let the crowd get to eat, Jesus surprises them by saying to them, "*Give them yourselves to eat.*" We know how this story ends. But we must be careful about what is being said. The gospel does not refer to anything remarkable, or rather, anything that we are called to call miracle, and this is confirmed by the silence of the crowd, of which no wonder or confession of praise and faith has been reported.

The action Jesus performs is breaking the loaves. Jesus did not multiply them, but after breaking them, he divided them among them. The gesture to break them and share them, distributing them has made enough bread for everyone. This is the miracle, the sharing of the little you have, to which the Gospel invites us to reveal that this gesture is within our reach as disciples of Jesus. The narrative episode is a sign, the sign that Jesus, to feed the human crowd. Always hungry with bread and word, peace and meaning, makes bread for us and for all. That his whole life, and not only his death and resurrection, lived in freedom and for our love of the world, is the real food for our lives.

It is an Eucharistic sign to break bread, in which the center is not what happens with the bread but with Jesus who makes himself bread for us. His life lived for us is the bread of life for us. All that in the Old Testament it is said of the Word of God, which is bread, water, light, salvation, and strength, which only the Lord God can bestow. The Gospels tell of Jesus, the Word of God made man among us, give us as word and bread.

Arianna Bobba, Programme Advisor TLMI



Who Are You?

Luke 1: 26-38 (NIV)

I have a passport. It tells about my full name, my height, when and where I was born, and it has my picture and my signature. The passport shows I'm a citizen of Sweden and gives evidence of my identity. Showing my passport, I can identify myself at border controls and it helps me convince the officials that I am the one I claim to be.

Identity is important. It's important to know who you are and to feel secure in that. As I grew up, I have the sense it took some time for me to realize who I actually am and to become secure and content with that. There were many distractions and impressions, trying to lead me in different directions. And I believe this is a problem many young people face in these days. Many different forces are fighting to get their attention and too many young people find themselves lost without a safe and secure identity.

The passage from Luke 1 tells about the young woman Mary. She was quite a normal young lady, growing up in her parents' house. She had met the carpenter Joseph and was about to be married to him in a short while. The whole life laid before her with all the excitement and expectations. Suddenly an angel from the Lord appeared to her and started to tell her that God had chose her to become the mother of His son, Jesus. Mary was very confused, and it was difficult for her to take in and understand what the angel said to her, although the angel tried his best to explain about what should happen.

Finally, even if Mary hadn't quite and fully understood the message from the angel, she replied: *"I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said."* An important element of her identity was thereby stated: *"I AM THE LORD'S SERVANT"!* *Mary was still the young woman in Nazareth, who was going to get married to Joseph. Bu she also was aware that she had a role in God's plan and was His servant.*

Once I came to the US and showed my passport to the immigration officer. He became a little suspicious, as I had a stamp from Afghanistan in my passport. And he started to ask questions about myself and why I had been to Afghanistan. And I could tell him, in addition to all information about myself in the passport, that I am a missionary and that I had been to Afghanistan in the Lord's service. He then smiled and stamped my passport and said I was welcome to the United States.

Who are you? What's your identity? I may be various, but I hope you can clearly say about yourself:

"I AM THE LORD'S SERVANT"!



The parable of the Mustard Seed – Part 1

'The Kingdom of heaven is a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seed; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches' Matthew 13 : 31-32 (NKJV)

When Christ was talking or giving a parable about the kingdom, He is setting up or trying to reveal to His audience the principles of how God's kingdom functions. Just as we have the law of nature, we also have the law or principle of the Kingdom. We will breakdown this parable to get a good interpretation and application to our lives and Ministry.

'A mustard seed'- We are the seed; our Ministry TLM could also be regarded as the seed

'A Man took and sowed in His field'- I believe this Man represents God who took us and planted us in His field. It is God's responsibility to place us in the places and position that He wants. Once we yield our lives to God, he will take us like a seed and plant us into His own field. The best place a man could ever live and thrives is where God planted him. Location has a lot of impact in what a man or a Ministry becomes in future. If we want to be fruitful and a blessing to our generation we must remain where God planted us; it does not matter what we seemingly think we are missing in the other field, we can only prosper where God locate us.

'the Least of all the seeds'- God does not always look for a perfect man/woman, a holy or complete person to do His work, God looks for the least, a man or woman who does not have confidence in him/herself but absolutely depend on God. It is the least, the unqualified, the weak and sometimes the most vulnerable ones that God always picks.

'When it is grown'. When God plants us in His field, we go through the process of growth, the principle or process of kingdom growth is usually in stages; there is the stage of *planted*, that means bury (died to self) unseen, dark, and obscure. This is the stage where some of us wonder what is God doing with our lives, we seems to be in dark but we know God has called us to what we are doing but everything seems unclear. At this stage we need to completely die to self, to our own idea, to the world system of operation and sometimes our attitude may not make sense to many, but as we yield our lives or our Ministry to Christ completely not holding back, *we get to the next stage* where the life of Christ that we've taken on will spring up in us and

we will experience growth and our lives and Ministry will be rooted in God's and then we shoot up, but still very fragile.



The parable of the Mustard Seed – Part 2

'The Kingdom of heaven is a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seed; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches' Mathew 13 : 31-32 (NKJV)

The next stage of growth occurs when we face pressure from the world system that seemingly wants to uproot us from where God planted us, but as long as we remain and resist every temptation; one of the common temptation at this stage of growing is pressure to change our identity, we sometimes want to do things the way the world system is doing, because this kingdom growing stage can be very slow (but progressive), the pressure to look at other ways to speed up the growth process can be very strong, this is where we need to keep getting our root deep in God and looking up with determination to God who gives us strength to resist temptations and also overcome trials.

- 'is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree'; After we've grown, God's desire for each of His children is that we will become a fruitful tree; with branches all around. We can become great in His kingdom as long as we abide in Him, the benefit to us is that our lives will be stabilized, we will become mature in faith, no longer tossed here and there with winds of doctrine, we will have an identity that cannot be hidden.
- 'the birds of the air come and nest in its branches'; beyond personal benefits derived from growth in the kingdom, the growth is not complete if no one benefits from it. God's ultimate goal for investing in our lives is such that we can be a blessing to others; God's purpose is to make our lives or Ministry a place where other people can nest, rest, be encouraged, fed, equipped and energised to face the challenges of life. If all we live for is to please ourselves and immediate family; God has wasted His resources. While we are not called to meet the needs of the whole world, I believe we are called to meet specific needs of some people that God brings our path, just as the tree has no control on the birds that nest on it, but shelter each one of them as long as there is space likewise we are not to refuse people that God directs to our path but we should make rooms in our lives to be a blessing to them.

I pray the Lord who has planted us in TLM and invested so much of His grace on our lives, will cause us to grow and become who He wants us to be, may He also grant us a discerning spirit to know whom we should allow to nest in our branches so that they will also experience God's comfort and grace. (Amen)

Bunmi Oluloto - Servant of Christ planted in Niger Republic TLM Country Leader Niger and Chad



Psalm 119 – Part 19

Resh

¹⁵³ Look on my suffering and deliver me,
for I have not forgotten your law.

¹⁵⁴ Defend my cause and redeem me;
preserve my life according to your promise.

¹⁵⁵ Salvation is far from the wicked,
for they do not seek out your decrees.

¹⁵⁶ Your compassion, LORD, is great;
preserve my life according to your laws.

¹⁵⁷ Many are the foes who persecute me,
but I have not turned from your statutes.

¹⁵⁸ I look on the faithless with loathing,
for they do not obey your word.

¹⁵⁹ See how I love your precepts;
preserve my life, LORD, in accordance with your love.

¹⁶⁰ All your words are true;
all your righteous laws are eternal.



Psalm 119 – Part 20

ψ Sin and Shin

¹⁶¹ Rulers persecute me without cause,
but my heart trembles at your word.

¹⁶² I rejoice in your promise
like one who finds great spoil.

¹⁶³ I hate and detest falsehood
but I love your law.

¹⁶⁴ Seven times a day I praise you
for your righteous laws.

¹⁶⁵ Great peace have those who love your law,
and nothing can make them stumble.

¹⁶⁶ I wait for your salvation, LORD,
and I follow your commands.

¹⁶⁷ I obey your statutes,
for I love them greatly.

¹⁶⁸ I obey your precepts and your statutes,
for all my ways are known to you.



The Wonderful name of Jesus – Part 1

Do you know this could be the last time I'll ever write another article for The Bridge!

◆ Do you know this could be the last article you may ever read?

◆ Anyone of us could pass from life into eternity before the sun rises tomorrow morning or even sets today!

◆ Are you ready for eternity? Are you well saved?

HEBREWS 9:27-28 – Read NB: I have nothing to offer you of any value but Jesus. I wonder how many names there are in the world?

Who knows? Like the grains of sand on the seashores of the world! Yet there's a single name that stands out of all the names in the whole world. This single name is the name Jesus!

Philippians 2:9-11 Read What does that mean to us today in the 21st century?

1. Salvation

Being forgiven of my sins, cleansed by the Blood of Jesus so that I don't have to spend eternity separated from God in hell.

Acts 4:11-13 – Read Paul writes this statement in relation to God & mankind

Acts 13:38-41 – Read

Then the prophet Joel

Joel 2:32 - Read

Paul in Colossians 2:13-15 - Read

Are you saved, are you well saved?

2. Because I've called on the Wonderful name of Jesus I'm a new creation

2 Corinthians 5:17-18

My future because of the name of Jesus is:

- Because I belong to Jesus my sinful past has been erased by His blood. It's gone & it's forgotten & is erased in the eternal records of heaven People on earth may remember but heaven has forgotten them!

Here is a WhatsApp from heaven to you: **Micah 7:19**

Here's another one **Psalms 103:11-12**

And yet another one **Isaiah 1:18**

Because I've called on the Wonderful name of Jesus I'm a new creation! I have no negative, unrighteousness, record recorded about me in heaven! That's why the Heavenly call goes out:

"You must be born again"

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.



The Wonderful name of Jesus – Part 2

3. What more is there to say about the wonderful name of Jesus

First things first I want to quote disciple John, the last verse of the gospel he wrote *John 21:25*
Jesus is an inexhaustible subject! *That's why I'm saying The Name of Jesus is wonderful!*

A. His name has influence with God Our Heavenly Father when we pray *John 16:23-24*

In the gospel of Mark we're given the great commission and Jesus said this:

Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. He said to them...

#1

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

This wonderful name of Jesus needs to be taken to the whole world

#2.

And these signs will accompany those who believe:

When we take this wonderful name of Jesus He backs us with supernatural signs

Mark 16:19-20

"So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."

What are these signs?

#3.

In my name they will drive out demons;

Demons flee at the mention of the wonderful name of Jesus

#4.

they will speak in new tongues;

Christians are given a new language

#5.

they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all;

We need not fear dangers. A snake bit Paul on Malta & he shook it off - no side effects

#6.

they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.

There is healing for our bodies in wonderful name of Jesus, that's why we pray for the sick

Conclusion

We've just heard a little about the Wonderful Name of Jesus

- What's your relationship like with Jesus?
- Is it a mental thing or a living day by day interaction with Him
- How often do you call on that Wonderful Name of Jesus
- What a Wonderful Name is the Name of Jesus

Are you ready for eternity? Are you well saved?



Think twice before you bark

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

Did you know that dogs like watching television? Well, Milli, our new puppy, certainly does. Yes, she really does. She's not very selective and can't use the remote control yet, but she knows what she likes. Rather, she knows what she doesn't like. She doesn't like other dogs on the box. The moment she sees one, or hears one bark, she's there, growling at the screen. She doesn't realise the dogs aren't real - just virtual images as we say - she barks anyway.

We used to have a dog who disliked opera singers, particularly tenors. Whether it was Placido Domingo, or Pavarotti or Carreras, it was all the same to him. When he heard them sing, he sat in front of the telly, head in air, and howled.

But back to Milli. It's not only dogs. Anything large that moves quickly across the screen disturbs her. She just doesn't understand that the threat isn't real, there's no danger. I know people like Milli. People who feel threatened by anything or anyone new or different. And whatever they don't understand they do the human equivalent of barking at it. Even if there's no real threat.

But if I look honestly at myself, I'll find I sometimes do the same. But it's better to be positive, to welcome the new and the different, and to think twice before we bark. Or even learn not to bark at all. That's our next job in training Milli.

*You ask a lot, Lord. Where shall I start?
Maybe with patience – I guess that's where you have to start with me.*

*Extract from Chasing the Leaves first published 2003.
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Eddie Askew (1927-2007) devoted half a century to leprosy and its consequences. In 1950 he and his wife Barbara set sail for India. Eddie's first placement was in Purulia, West Bengal. In 1965 Eddie took up the post of executive secretary at TLM's office in London. His first overseas visit in this new role was to Ethiopia, where he learned of plans to set up a leprosy training centre that would benefit patients and medics throughout Africa. He offered to become a founding member and signed TLM up to support what was to become ALERT (All Africa Leprosy and Rehabilitation Training Centre). The following year, the organisation now known as the International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP) was set up. In 1974 Eddie became general director of TLM. He was keen to develop TLM's work elsewhere, and took a team into the closed land of Bhutan in response to a request from its government. - Inspired by his travels and his Christian faith, Eddie found an outlet for his creativity in painting and poetry. He retired in 1987. From 1998 until his death he was TLM- vice-president, and in 2000 he was awarded an OBE. (Fiona Spence)

Authors in Alphabetical Order

Textuarium

Anne-Claude Jonah	15 July		Genesis 1,26-31	9 July
Arianna Bobba	22, 23 July		Deut 11,19	10 July
Bo Lundin	24 July		1 Chron 29,5	17 July
Bunmi Oluloto	25, 26 July		Psalm 66,19	11 July
Christine Osman	18 July		Psalm 119	6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28 July
Dan Izzett	29, 30 July		Psalm 127	16 July
David Beazley	2 July		Matth 4,19	4 July
Eddie Askew	31 July		Matth 5,13-16	12 July
Elisabeth Barnett	8, 9, 10, 11, 12 July		Matth 13,31-32	25, 26 July
Eric Chollet	17 July		Matth 14,13-21	23 July
Erna Möller	19 June		Luke 1,26-38	24 July
Otto Kingsley	3 July		Luke 11,1-4	15 July
Peter Laubscher	16 July		Luke 15	3 July
Tim Collison	19 July		John 13,36	2 July
Yuek Ming Poon	4 July		Romans 10,17	22 July
			Galatians 5,22-23	31 July
			Ephesians 6,4	10 July
			Hebrews 9,27-28	29, 31 July

The Bridge - TLM Daily Devotions

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