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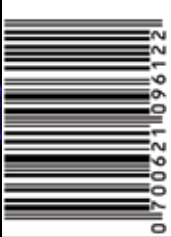
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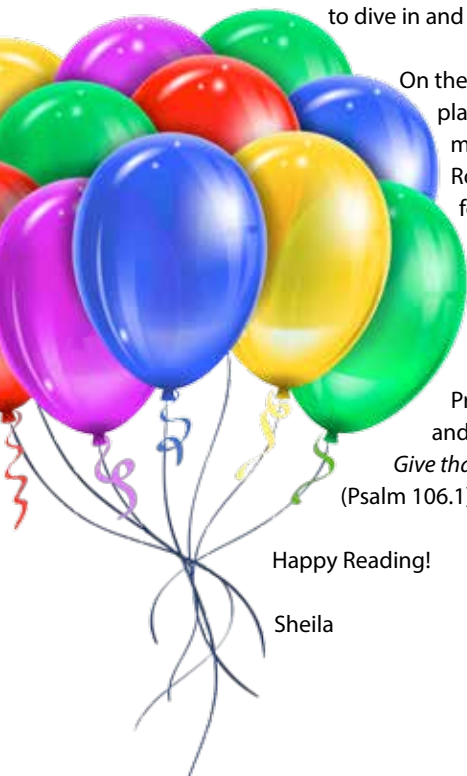
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Editor's Note

Dear Readers

Birthdays and anniversaries offer the perfect opportunity to pause and reflect on the past year. I find that by doing this I become more aware of the blessings in my life and all the reasons I have to be grateful. This year is the 20th anniversary of the Counselling Centre and as you will read in the free booklet, the journey has provided many instances of God's faithfulness. He has never failed to deliver on His promises. What a privilege to see His goodness first hand, both in the story of the Centre and in our own lives.

We decided it would be appropriate to focus on the theme of 'Thanksgiving' this issue. I have heard it said, "It is not the happy who are thankful but rather the thankful who are happy." I couldn't agree more. The articles and testimonies we have received have been truly uplifting and I can't wait for you to dive in and enjoy them as I have.



On the theme of gratitude: in our last issue we placed an appeal for donations to support the magazine. We would like to thank Rosemary Rowe, Barbara and Jeff Kockott and others for their generosity that has enabled us to 'keep the light burning.' We continue to need financial support and if you think you could help, we would be truly grateful.

Praying you are blessed by this publication and that, like the Psalmist, you will be able to *Give thanks to the Lord for He IS good!*

(Psalm 106.1)

Happy Reading!

Sheila



About The Christian Counselling Centre

We are a Registered Trust. Our team of counsellors, drawn from many denominations, are all trained to an Advanced Level in Biblical Counselling. Counselling is open to anyone (whatever their religion) who would like to talk confidentially to a counsellor. The counselling costs \$15 a session, payable in advance. To see a counsellor, please phone the numbers below. If you would like to attend any of our seminars, courses, etc. please register and make payment at the Centre.

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The views expressed in this publication don't necessarily reflect those of the Christian Counselling Centre.

Your Kingdom Come!

By Ian Wilsher

Most of us know the Lord's prayer in which we pray, "*Your Kingdom come.*"

What are we asking?

When Jesus began His ministry, He proclaimed, "*The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!*" (Mark 1:15).

Jesus came to establish His Kingdom. However, He did not come to rule in a geographical location: He rules in the hearts and lives of those who are willing to submit to Him as their King.

We are born ruling our own lives, following the dictates of our own selfish and sinful nature. This sinful nature makes it impossible for us to obey His commands, especially the two main commandments to love Him and others. The sinful nature is the antithesis of love: it is selfish, rather than 'other'-orientated. Jesus proclaimed His Kingdom and said that if we want to belong we must do two things:

Repent. This is to abdicate the throne of our own lives; it is to decide not to follow our own selfish way (which eventually leads to death); it is to turn away from what we know is sin, and to submit ourselves to His authority and rule.

Believe the Good News. Believe that He is the Ruler and King, believe that He loves us enough to die for us, believe that He took the punishment for our sin, believe that He will forgive us, believe that He will lead us in His Kingdom. This is not just believing the

facts about the Lord Jesus but, rather, trusting Him personally. Trusting Him means resting in Him, relying on Him to save us from our sin, relying on Him to give us life, trusting Him to live His life through us. It is inviting the Lord Jesus to establish His Kingdom in us, whereby we receive His grace and love and power so that we can live as He wants us to live.

Being a Christian is not following a list of rules, nor undergoing certain religious rituals, nor even being nice or good. Christianity is about a relationship with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. We establish that relationship by doing what Jesus commanded us to do:

'Repent and believe the good news.' If you have never done that, why don't you take time right now to do so?

I grew up going to Church, but never had a real or personal relationship with God. It was only when I went to university that I first really understood the Gospel. One night, lying in bed, before going to sleep, I prayed a prayer in which I told the Lord I no longer wanted to go my own way, but rather wanted to hand my life over in trust to Him. That brief, silent, very inarticulate prayer was the most important thing I ever did. It was the start of my walk with the Lord, in which I have come to know Him. It hasn't always been easy. I haven't always been consistent. I've sometimes taken backward steps, but, in it all, I have come to know and experience something of God's love and grace and mercy and faithfulness. You can too.

Ian is the Director of The Christian Counselling Centre.

HOW DO
WE ENTER THE
KINGDOM?

the GOODNESS OF God.

Anonymous

I feel very privileged to have been asked to share my story and the journey that I have been on in my life. My prayer is that my journey from darkness into God's glorious light will be able to help and encourage many others.

As far back as I can remember I felt I was a nuisance. I felt constantly rejected and this emotion was threaded throughout my life. I became dependent on myself alone in order to survive. My family life was far from normal and often around the dinner table there were many a fight between my Mom and Dad... there seemed to be very little love. I was sexually abused as a little girl and I had no-one I could run to for protection. I felt so terribly alone! At school I was dyslexic, however on the sports field and in a place of school leadership I excelled. But deep down as a teenage girl I felt I never fitted in. I have since realised that when suffering from rejection you are always looking for affirmation and approval from others and you push yourself to try to receive this.

I met my husband while I was still at school and the moment I left school he was at my front door. I became his trophy to be shown off to his colleagues and peers. Once engaged I found myself pregnant.

Marriage soon followed but relationships were strained all round. My husband's father died of an asthma attack five days after the wedding. I was made to believe I was to blame. Four months later my mother died. She was an alcoholic and killed herself while drunk. Six weeks later our son was born. I realised at this time how much shame, grief, and disappointment was in my life. The birth of my son had now kicked me into terrible post-natal depression. I felt I had failed as a daughter, wife and now as a mother. The devil loves to throw guilt, fear and shame in our faces.

Both my father and husband were bullies and I felt I could never live up to their standards. My husband began to reject me sexually. He had also begun to drink very heavily and had started having affairs. I just felt like I didn't exist. Hopelessness consumed me.

I was in intense emotional pain and felt so unloved and

**I FELT
CONSTANTLY REJECTED.
HOPELESSNESS
CONSUMED ME**

subsequently looked for something to dull the heartache and to fill the empty void deep inside. I reached for over the counter drugs and also became totally addicted to sugar. From a petite frame I became large from overeating, my daily life was dulled and controlled by the power of drugs, and this pattern continued for 37 years. However, behind my mask of pretence, deep down I was slowly but surely falling apart and dying inside.

Isaiah 54: 6 (amplified) *"For the Lord has called you like a woman forsaken, grieved in spirit and heartsore, even a wife (wooed and won) in youth, when she is later refused and scorned," says the Lord.*

I was in a deep pit of miry clay and it was here that Jesus reached down and saved me with His amazing grace (Psalm 40: 1-2). I had thought I was a Christian before, but it was all talk and no walk. I started having a real relationship with my Lord and Saviour. It was in this new place that I had the revelation that I was truly unconditionally loved for who I was - the broken one!

Then my husband became terminally ill with cancer and it was during this time I discovered he was in a long-term affair. It was a very stressful time for both me and my son, but I made the decision through it all to nurse him even though we both knew the affair was going on.

Two months before his death, I gave him an ultimatum - her or me? He chose me. He asked for forgiveness, rededicated his life to the Lord, and insisted on renewing our marriage vows. In the last two months of his life he inexplicably changed and fell in love

with me again. There was great reconciliation with our son and deep emotional and spiritual healing for us both. Soon after this he died peacefully in my arms.

Once he was gone I felt devastated. I was still totally addicted to the drugs and sugar, and this continued unabated until I became desperately ill and nearly died from sepsis. Once again I cried out to the Lord and reached up for His hand which had always been there. He opened my eyes to see what was left of my life... pain, suffering, hopelessness, fear, guilt and shame.

I decided to seek help and went for Christian counselling. This was traumatic and painful as I laid my life down as an open book, trusting in the Lord to finally and completely set me free. It has been a long journey to finally know Him and to step into His glorious light of redemption. I am so thrilled to share with you that God is faithful. He has done a great work of healing in my life. I am now free from legal drug abuse. I have lost tremendous weight after joining a gym and working on my sugar addiction. I have learned to love myself so that I may love others. I have walked the journey of not only forgiving God, others, but myself. My relationship with the Lord grows stronger daily as I journey on knowing I am in the grip of His grace and I would have lost hope if I hadn't seen the *goodness of God in the land of the living!*

I am 62 years old now. It is never too late to be set free and be healed. Looking back, I see God's fingerprints throughout my life. He loves me, He always has and always will.



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Be Glad of Life
by Praise U

My day had been busy; we were working hard and were three days from completing the research we were conducting in a rural area. We often had to use candles for light when there was no electricity. I never realised the danger and risks posed by this, until that day, the skirt I was wearing touched the candle that was on the floor. I never noticed and the next thing I saw were orange flames towering above me. I sustained 30% second-degree burns.

The rest is history...the hospitals, the pain physically, mentally and emotionally not only to me but also to my family and friends. I will not dwell on this because it is now a year after this life-changing incident. The past has birthed the new me, it has opened my eyes, my ears, my spirit and in fact my whole being to have a new attitude, to simply, "Give thanks for life, for without life there is no tomorrow".

I ask people, "How are you doing?" and the reply is "Ummm...so...so," and my reply sounds as though I am living in another world because it is a chirpy, "I am doing great thanks!" They look at me puzzled...thinking that I must be pulling their leg with the current hardships in the economy, but the bright look in my eyes must reflect the sincerity of my response. I normally do not recount the trauma of the past year but I try to explain by saying, "Just being alive is more than enough for us to be thankful for."

Yesterday I was in the queue to withdraw money from the ATM. As the new rule now requires, the guard asked a man to show his identification to prove that the ATM card belonged to him. The man shouted at the guard who was only doing his job, this job that would help him fend for his family. The guard smiled back politely and gave a brief explanation while the others in the queue started shuffling with impatience. The thought that came to my mind was, "You were able to come to the bank, probably in your car, you will make your withdrawal and go back home"...in this brief statement there are already four things to make you thankful.

As I walked to my car I saw some beautiful pale pink rose buds and I stopped to smell the scent. My heart soared with gratitude to God for giving me the opportunity to do this. To have the eyes to see the roses and the sense of smell to appreciate their scent and the gentle breeze that kissed my face, were a few things

that I suddenly became aware of. Wow! The bright sun and the beautiful collage of the scenes in the shopping centre unfolding before me... I could go on and on...the spring in my step and the song in my heart. There was so much to enjoy and look forward to as long as I had...life! As I turned on the ignition the music in my car was amazing. I raised the volume a little more and smiled to myself.

A year ago and before that, I had been one who aimed for perfection to a fault. I easily became irritated and impatient with those who are slow - but now I ask myself, "Is life about being fast?" My eye and ear were quick to criticise a spelling mistake or a wrong note. Yes, I am still aware of these but I try not to be negative and judgmental. Instead I go back to my inner self and she whispers, "You are far from perfect, girl. Live! Enjoy!"

I have on my fridge pictures of things that make me smile as I walk into my kitchen - my children, my granddaughter, a picnic, family holidays... One thing strikes me though, without life there would be none of these.

I stuck the following quotation by Henry Van Dyke on this same fridge many years ago and think I have a tiny clue of what could have been on this man's heart when he wrote it. (I'd never heard of him. Have you? It doesn't really matter).

"Be glad of life, because it gives you the chance to love and to work and to play and to look up to the stars; to be satisfied with your possessions; to despise nothing in the world except falsehood and meanness, and to fear nothing except cowardice; to be governed by your admirations rather than your disgusts; to covet nothing that is your neighbour's except his kindness of heart and gentleness of manners; to think seldom of your enemies, often of your friends...and to spend as much time as you can with body and with spirit, these are little guideposts and footpath to peace."

Again for the umpteenth time I read it and say to myself, "Wow!"

My motto is summarised in Ecclesiastes 3:12 *I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live.*

There is also a song that is speaking to me a lot in this season, "I have made You too small in my eyes. O Lord, forgive me. I have believed in a lie, that You were unable to help me. O Lord, be magnified."

I encourage whoever is reading this (myself included) to be glad of life...to give thanks in everything... keep adding to this endless list with each moment as you live.

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

Praise trains adolescents in life skills for NGO's and she is a mother of two and has recently been blessed with a grandchild.

From Victim to Thanksgiving

Anonymous

Thanksgiving is a choice, they say. But how was I meant to express gratitude to a God who had allowed me to be sexually abused?

This is my story of how I moved from being a victim to a place of thanksgiving:

The Oxford dictionary defines thanksgiving as:-

- 1. The expression of gratitude especially to God;**
- 2. An annual national holiday marked by religious observances and a traditional meal (in North America).**

So how does this relate to our lives, especially in Zimbabwe, in Africa? What do we have to be grateful for? We certainly don't celebrate a day set aside especially for thanksgiving to God.

We have all been through times when we are far from having an attitude of thanksgiving - especially with the everyday trials people have to face. That is unless you are a really positive, upbeat person, one of those annoying people who always looks on the bright side, 'the glass half full kind of person.' Let's face it, it's the minority who seem to be grateful and give thanks for what life has handed them... or is it?

I was born into a middle class family, my father a Government employee, my mother a 'stay-at-home mom/home-school teacher'. I grew up in a grounded secure home, my family making ends meet each month with the help of my Mom doing extra sewing to earn my school fees, so I could attend a good High School. We were an average family, the same as many others in our community church in Hatfield. However, things aren't always what they seem as although I had a secure home and a good grounding at church, I was an angry child, growing up to be a rebellious teenager, and I wanted nothing to do with my

childhood teaching and certainly not with a God.

How was I meant to express gratitude to a God who allowed me to be sexually abused?

How was I meant to be grateful to a God to whom I had prayed so many times, begging Him to let me die?

How was I to have an attitude of thanksgiving, when I was so deep in depression that I wanted to die?

How could God allow these things to happen to me, and why was my life in such a mess? If He truly loved me, as the people around me "taught and preached," then how could this all be?

Many of us have felt this way about different events, not just abuse. Like losing someone special, or losing a job, or a relationship, life not going the way we planned it. Let's face it, life is not a bed of roses, there is so much that goes wrong in each one of our lives. So how do you get to a place of thanksgiving?

Well for me, it all started in wanting a divorce. I had met my husband at the age of 15 and to start with, used him as an escape from my life. This as you can imagine was a disaster. As a teenager, I thought being in a serious relationship would fix all my problems. However, he came with his own set of problems, he had his own childhood baggage, and was looking to me to fix them for him. We were married ten years later in 2002, and by 2009 were discussing divorce, as we were making each other miserable. Seventeen years is a long time to throw away, so we sought marriage counselling, ending up at the Christian Counselling Centre. We both worked on our issues from our childhood, and worked hard at having a good and happy marriage. I came for



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counselling over a period of 4 years, and this is when I really came to believe and trust in God. My husband and I started attending a church and living with God in our lives, which was a first in our marriage. Also, in dealing with my issues, I felt He was calling me to something more - to become a vessel to help others. So I began the counsellor training, which was such a journey of self-discovery; I learnt things about myself I never knew and I have changed in so many ways. My husband says, "It can only be a miracle!"

I eventually reached a place of true thanksgiving, which for me was when I could say, "Thank you God for the abuse, the depression, the hopelessness, the helplessness that I went through, as You can use these past experiences." I am grateful, as working through these issues has helped me to be a better person and better equipped to help others who may be in the same position as I was.

Once I got to this place of peace and understanding, knowing that God is in control, that He can see the bigger picture for our lives, it has been easier to accept the hard things that life throws my way, like not being able to have children. I trust that there is a reason. Only God knows what that is, and He will show me in His own time.

It has not been easy getting to a place of Thanksgiving and Peace, it's really hard work, but it's SO WORTH IT... So even when I am having a really bad day, in our wonderful country, and getting frustrated with the problems and issues we face in our everyday lives, I just have to think back to those feelings of despair, then I am able to give thanks for what I have or don't have in my life right now, and truly believe that God is in Control.

Getting Out of the Pit!

By Tony Roberts

At the end of 2013, after a prolonged time of being under pressure from a struggling business, I ended up in deep depression - needing counselling and medication!

If you had said to me in my youth or middle age, that one day I would get depressed, I would have said you're talking to the wrong person, I don't get depressed. I am a fairly easy-going, fun-loving guy and enjoy life. I generally accomplish a lot and thrive on challenges.

It seemed to come out of the blue and the intensity was alarming. I found myself in a situation where I could hardly get up in the morning and every task seemed too big for me. I did not know what to do. I would sit at my desk and struggle to do anything. Any small piece of work seemed huge. I was caught up in anxiety, worrying about tomorrow, wanting to sleep all day to get away from the problems. I'd wake up in the early hours of the morning with a knot in my stomach and my mind racing, worrying about all the problems that might happen once the new day started.

I remember on a number of occasions, the whole bed shaking, with me in a kind of panic attack and my wife, the most amazing lady, holding on to me and praying fervently for me to calm down.

I remember at one time lying on the lounge carpet at 3.00 or 4.00 in the morning just wanting it all to end. Not that I contemplated suicide but I would have been happy to die and go to heaven and be away from the fear and anxiety. I lost my appetite and lost weight. Nothing would 'get my spirits up' as it were.

Our first grandchild was born on the 13th December and yet I had no joy even in this happy time. I managed to attend some social events with difficulty but it was a blur and I couldn't enjoy myself. Christmas 2013 was an event with no excitement! I had many chats with friends and tried to get myself to perk up in some way. I never felt the Lord had left me but I was somehow stuck in this valley I could not get out of.

I always thought as a Christian I should not take medication as I should be able to get over this on my own. However, at some point, my wife insisted I go to the doctor. (I thank her for her support and commitment to me through this time.) It was encouraging to hear from the doctor that a number of his patients were on anti-depressants. The doctor prescribed some medication for me but it takes a while to kick in (three weeks at least) so I carried on with life in a lower-than-par kind of way, praying for a breakthrough. One morning I woke up and heard from the Lord that it was over!

From that day on, I started to climb out of the pit I was in. I read a book called *The Effects of Praise* by Andrew Womack which I found particularly helpful. It made me change my focus, from the troubles around me to looking to the Lord. My challenges and difficulties were still there but my ability to deal with them started to change. I remember one of my 'chats' to Ian Wilsher and he spoke about the '3Rs': **Recognise** a negative thought, **Reject** it and then **Replace** it with a truth.

I realised that how I felt was much more about what I chose to dwell on, than the circumstances that happened that day. I had a few every-day examples that helped me see the need to take control of my thinking and not let the devil get into my head.

I remember one day reversing out of someone's gate and because I was so busy watching to see if the gate was going to close, I scraped the side of my car against the wall on the opposite side. I then drove forward and was still able to reverse before the gate closed!

I drove off down the road and started to get angry with myself. But I thought, "No, let me stop and have a look at the damage." As I looked at the scratches on the car I thought, "I have a choice: I can get angry, kick the wheel, scream and shout (but the scratches would remain.) Or I can choose

to focus on God and His goodness and not allow Satan to ruin the rest of my day."

I looked up and saw a beautiful Jacaranda tree in full bloom. I thought about the 3 Rs and how I need to recognise when the devil is starting his game in my head, reject his negative barbs at me and replace them with something good. In this case an amazing tree!

Another significant shift in my thinking was this: To live for today. I don't know about tomorrow and I am choosing to live today the best way I can, for His kingdom and His glory. The devil is good at taking us down a road that leads to anxiety, anger or bitterness and we end up being no witness at all.

If I had allowed the devil his way the day I scratched my car, how would the rest of the day gone? I would probably have hit a pothole and got even angrier. And then, more than likely, gone through the rest of the day being miserable and irritable about everything.

I had a picture of one day getting to heaven and looking back on my last day and thinking, "What a waste. I've been a grumpy miserable person, I didn't brighten anyone's day and now I am here in heaven."

I don't always get it right of course and do slip up now and again but I really want to live each day as if it was my last.

We all have a choice as to how we respond to the daily challenges we face! It's not easy in the world. The Lord tells us, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Under the guidance of my doctor, I stopped my medication after about a year.

I want to encourage anyone who is depressed, don't stay caught in the devil's trap of making you feel unworthy or a failure in some way. We may fail but that does not make us a failure. You may need to seek help.

We read in Psalm 118:24, *This is the day the LORD has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.* Make it your choice to focus on Him!

Tony is a Trustee of The Christian Counselling Centre.



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RELEASED TO BE ME: PART 1

By Kudzanai Matsike



Therefore, I am now going to allure her. I will lead her into the desert, and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards and make the valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will sing as in the day of her youth, the day she came up out of Egypt. In that day, declares the Lord, you will call me 'My Husband,' you will no longer call me 'My Master.'

I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness and you will acknowledge the Lord. (Hosea 2:14-16, 19-20)

At the time the Holy Spirit led me to this passage I didn't realise that God was telling me what He was about to do in my life. I thought it was simply a word to encourage me through the major crises (yes, plural) that I was going through at the time. Little did I know that it was literal. My life had clearly fallen apart but God was doing a work. He (God) started at the very core of my being - my sense of identity.

And so at the age of 30, I went through an identity crisis. There, I said it. Yes, identity crisis at 30! Who would have thought? I had been confronting some rather unsavoury issues in my personal relationships, which sent my world crashing brutally to my feet, not to mention the loss of my personal finances. My sense of self-worth as a woman, a wife, and a mother were all shattered. I was depressed, constantly anxious and constantly guilt ridden about my obvious failures on all three fronts.

So I eventually did what any woman does when she needs a 'pick me up' - I went to the hair salon. Tired of the weaves, I opted to cut

and style my own hair, and even that, the hairdresser botched. I walked out with yet another weave, with green streaks down the front to boot - her idea, not mine. By then I had neither the energy nor the inclination to protest. But by the time I got home that night I was seized with an overwhelming compulsion to go completely green as regards my hair. Clearly I was not thinking straight!

Yet it is amazing the things that God will use to get our attention and get His point across. In utter anguish, (because this weird thing going on with my hair was really the pits for me, what with everything else that had happened) I fell tearfully to my knees and cried out to God. There were no words, just moaning and groaning. And in that place He came, and He spoke.

He spoke to me about my life, about how he had directed my steps so He could get me to the place I was at in my life - ready to step out fully into the things He had called me to; how He had been developing and adapting my character to suit His purposes and needs; how it was He who had made me to be the way I am because it had everything to do with the person He wanted me to be in the world and in His kingdom; that He had made me the person I was, simply because it was His delight to do so and that He delighted in me.

You see, I had always felt like a fish that swims against the current (in my values, beliefs and actions) and the emotional and social

backlash that came with that had worn me down. I had often struggled between just being myself and wishing I could melt away into the crowd or even better, that the ground would swallow me whole. But here He was, telling me that He liked my green hair. Whoa! That this was a revelation is an understatement. Not only did He explain that the struggles in my life had been part of His design for my growth and maturity but He affirmed me. He delighted in me. Oh there is nothing like our Father, God Almighty, maker of the Universe, the One who holds the Ends of Time in place, coming in to affirm you Himself, in His own words! The tears and wailing only got louder as His words washed over me. I was completely undone by the love of God.

And so began a process that lasted several months. He dealt with every aspect of my life. He dealt with my identity, my issues of not trusting Him and my tendency towards self-sufficiency, until my heart laid it down willingly. He also dealt with the gifts He had given me, their purpose, use and development, the ministries to which He had called me and, importantly, the rediscovery and expression of my creative side. He explained to me the importance of why we need to live out and express who we are and who He made us to be. Each person is appointed and anointed at birth (Jeremiah 1:5) and when we operate fully as the person He made us to be, the anointing that is upon us flows. It flows out from us to touch the people around us and thereby gives us the ability (anointing) to operate and successfully carry out and achieve our mandate.

I WAS COMPLETELY UNDONE BY THE LOVE OF GOD

Imagine the human body when a finger, elbow, knee or the eye is not working as it should. The body is incapacitated in some way and it doesn't function in full strength. We are all called to be members of the body and so participate and contribute in the Kingdom by our unique combination of gifts, talents, skills, personality and character (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

I discovered that ultimately we can wind up living unfulfilled lives when we don't express completely the person He made us to be; that the people around us and our environment will be deprived of what our contribution is meant to be. He was clearly communicating that His desire was for me to lead a fulfilled life. My direction, focus and priorities were being changed.

And so as the Lord thoroughly processed me, I lay down and surrendered every aspect of my life that He was highlighting. I willingly gave it all over to him. I cannot even begin to emphasise the tremendous depths of peace and freedom that come with laying down your life. This can be a frightening process, as it was for me. But oh the rewards! Walking in fullness of life and love and freedom with Christ! There is nothing better. Indeed, *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom!* (1 Corinthians 3:17)

Kudzanai is a counsellor at The Christian Counselling Centre

The Hobo

A hobo came up to the front door of the neat looking farmhouse and knocked gently on the door. When the owner answered, the hobo asked, "Please, sir, could you give me something to eat? I haven't had a good meal in several days."

The owner said, "I have made a fortune in my lifetime by supplying goods for people. I never give anything away for nothing. However, if you go around the back, you will see a gallon of paint and a clean paint brush. If you will paint my porch, I will give you a good meal."

So the hobo went around back and a little later he again knocked on the door. The owner said, "Finished already? Good. Come on in. Sit down. The cook will bring your meal right in."

The hobo said, "Thank you very much, sir. But there is something that I think you should know. It's not a Porch, it's a BMW."



What's In Your Heart?

by Mark Phillips

Above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life. Proverbs 4:23

Image: Mary Anne Passaportis

Friends let's talk about the heart. How is yours doing? You are the only one who can guard your heart. It is the wellspring of life. Is your heart sweet? If your heart is bitter, bitter water will flow through everything in your life.

It's in the heart that we face our greatest fears, our hurts, our insecurities and inferiority complexes, ourselves - in our own hearts we like ourselves or we don't, we love or we can't. It's in our hearts that we face our addictions, the areas where we've compromised, not lived up to our word, given in to temptation and sinned against God and face our shame. It's in our hearts that we try to bargain with God and try to get Him around to our way of thinking - and we face our selfishness and pride and arrogance. Our hearts are not hidden from God and we cannot pretend, even if we think we are fooling everyone else. It's in our hearts that we take a good hard look at Jesus and see how far short we fall of the King of Kings - who gave up everything and became nothing to serve us. It's in our hearts that we face our willingness to be like Him or not! Jesus is our example. Do you want to be like Him? That's the battle, in our hearts, right there. It's a spiritual battle, the will of the flesh versus the will of the Spirit.

For out of the heart the mouth speaks! Matthew 12:34

How is your heart doing? There's one infallible test - what's coming out of your mouth? Is it perverse or corrupt or horrible? Is

it angry, bitter, frustrated, negative or complaining? Or is it loving, kind, gentle, good, that which is sweet and beautiful? Does it give life and encouragement?

How do you talk to others?

Test your heart today - are you at peace or in conflict, quiet or turmoil, gentle or aggressive, humble or proud, free or in bondage, confident or in fear, negative or filled with hope, love or hate? It will affect everything in your life, most especially those closest to you!

Only you can tend to your heart. And the best place to tend to your heart is in the very presence of God, and with His help.

Ephesians 3:10-12... the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to His eternal purpose In Him and through faith in Him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

God has an eternal purpose - you and I are His eternal purpose, to show the world what a God of love is like - where there is no fear, but a God whom we might approach with all freedom and all confidence. The only place you are going to know all peace, quiet, gentleness, humbleness, love, freedom and confidence in the heart is in the very presence of God - but only if you approach Him!



Friends, how do we approach God - in all freedom and with all confidence?

I so often hear, 'We must approach God with reverence' - which is right, but we need to look and see how this reverence works. We teach our children to respect adults, and this is good. We teach those who are younger to respect their "elders", and this is right. But too often they don't - either because of something in themselves, such as immaturity or rebellion, or because not all elders are worthy of respect and trust - so the juniors go through the motions, they show face, they pretend, they do what is acceptable, what is expected, what they have to do to avoid getting into trouble. With fear they do what they've been taught to do even if they don't want to or understand why they should. Their hearts are somewhere else altogether - so on the surface we get what we want from them, but it's meaningless and worthless - we get the behaviour out of them that we desire, but their hearts are not true.

Reverence is to have deep respect. But God does not ask us to start there - He says, "Do you love me, do you have a deep affection, do you fully trust me, are we intimate, do we have real relationship of the heart - are you free and confident in Me?"

It's when we don't have confidence in relationship, when we don't trust, that we then rely on and look for familiarity in procedure or

process. It's impersonal and worthless - this is empty religion and tradition!

Reverence, respect, has its foundation in love not fear. And the deepest respect can only be for Him Who loves perfectly, Whom we can trust fully and have not even one hint of fear. *Perfect love drives out all fear.* (1 John 4:18) Reverence comes when we know about the good, good Father and His perfect love.

How is your heart? Can you approach God in all freedom and confidence? Not because of anything you've done, but because He has done it all, and He loves you with all His Heart. Do you believe that? Do you trust that, do you trust Him?

Or, are you just going through the motions? Are you showing face, doing what's expected, trying to stay out of trouble, doing external religious stuff - or are you in relationship with the living God of love? Has your heart been softened by His unfailing love?

It's how you see 'Dad,' and what's in your heart, that will most profoundly affect your relationships!

Mark is the Senior Minister at Highlands Presbyterian Church and is married with three teenage kids.

Will You Do Something?

By Ian Rea



Image: Mary Anne Passaportis

Are you feeling unhappy with the state of our beloved country? Perhaps you have exclaimed, "Someone should do something!" I have. But who am I expecting to "do something?" Is it not true that we often say this when we are upset but unprepared to take action ourselves?

Since most Zimbabweans claim to be Christian (about 80% we are told), perhaps we are expecting God to do something. Like the religious people in Isaiah's day (Isaiah 58:3), many Zimbabweans are disappointed with God because they have sought Him, yet He does not appear to have acted on their behalf.

God, however, had a very strong message for those who appeared to be seeking Him on the outside whilst seeking their own interests on the inside. Such people followed religious ritual even though their hearts were far from God, seeing Him as a powerful personal assistant rather than their Lord. God called them sinful and rebellious (Isaiah 58:1). He insisted that they truly obey Him and do things that were close to his heart: feeding the hungry; clothing the naked; loosing the chains of injustice and sheltering the homeless. If God's people would do this, He said, "Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say: 'Here am I'." (vs 9)

The lesson we learn from Isaiah 58 is that if God is going to do something, He will do it through the Church. He will do it through people whose hearts beat in sync with His heart - people who are God-serving and not self-serving. In a sense, we will become God's hands and feet on earth, and He will direct the full weight of Heaven towards helping us do something. God may orchestrate other influences and entities to answer our prayers, but the Church will

be the catalyst and at the heart of it all. At this point, you may be wondering who the Church is. The answer is simple: you are the Church. Hence you and I have a choice to make: either we can shift the responsibility and wait for someone else to do something or we can take responsibility and do something ourselves. And this is what God wants us to do. Let us not think of the Church as some nebulous entity which we can blame when nothing has been done. You and I are to blame if nothing is being done, for we are the Church.

But what is the Church's role? This will define the 'something' that you and I will choose to do as we direct our hearts to beat in sync with His.

Jesus tells us that we are to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16). Salt preserves food and brings out the flavour in it. So we are to: i) stop society from rotting and ii) bring out the best in it. Light simply illuminates the safe path to take on a dark night. So we are to make clear God's way and the way to God.

In the context of our situation in Zimbabwe, one of the ways you can be salt and light is to be a conscience and a prophetic voice. A conscience asks, "Is that right?" A prophetic voice calls people back to God's way of doing things. This can be done by both word and action.

Let me give you an example. This is the story of a man we will call Peter, (not his real name). Peter was queuing up behind two cars at the Stop sign opposite the Bridge Spar. The leading car - driven by a black lady - stopped, pulled out into Teviotdale Road and was waved down by the traffic police. The second car - driven by a white lady - stopped, pulled out into

Teviotdale road and was waved down by the traffic police. Peter followed suit, but he wasn't waved down by the police.

Peter's first reaction was to say, "O yes! They saw the two women as easy targets but not me," and he planned to drive on.

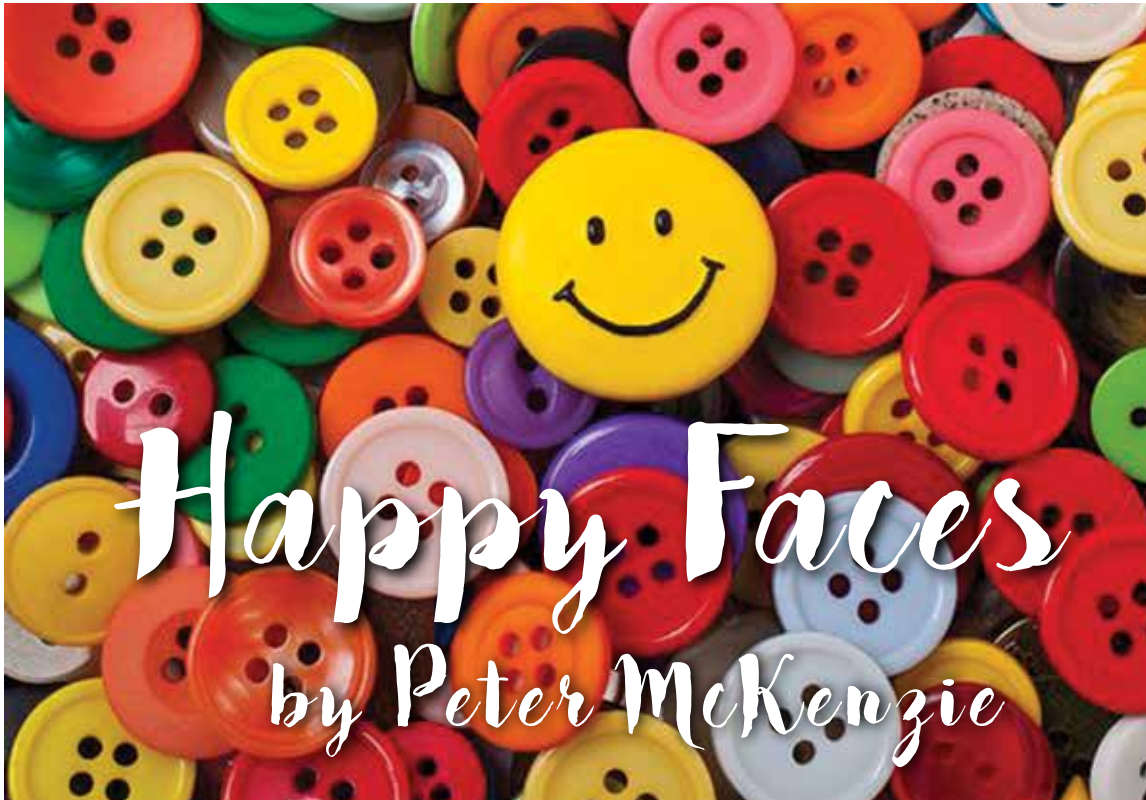
But then he felt indignation at the injustice the women were suffering because he had seen them stop. They had obeyed the law yet it seemed they were being targeted for extortion. So Peter went back and offered to be a witness for each lady in turn with the result that they were both permitted to drive on without paying anything.

Can you see that in a small way, Peter was "loosing the chains of injustice" and providing both a conscience and a prophetic voice? Further, his actions clearly communicated that injustice is injustice, irrespective of a person's race. Instead of pointing a finger at corruption and expecting somebody else to change, Peter asked himself how he could change and what he could do.

After all, there would be less corruption in our nation if ordinary citizens refused to feed it. This begs the question, what am I doing to feed corruption? Further, there will be less violence in our nation because you and I refuse to be violent, and if we are prepared to stand up for and identify with the victims of violence.

You and I are the church and God wants us to change rather than expecting others to change. We must take responsibility rather than shift it. So let us seek God to see how we can feed the hungry; clothe the naked; loose the chains of injustice and shelter the homeless.

Ian is a Pastor at Harvest Fellowship Church



I have heard some amusing phrases that describe the way Christians sometimes look. For example, 'You look like you have been baptised in lemon juice,' or 'You know just enough about God to make you look miserable.' Or what about, 'I am happy on the inside, my face just doesn't know it yet.' We even used to sing a song, which began, 'Smile awhile and give your face a rest...' I could go on, but you get the point!

The fact is that Jesus died to save us from sin and eternal judgment. He came to give us life and life more abundant, which means that no matter what we are facing and no matter how tough the situation, we have more than enough reason to rejoice and be glad. Nothing in this world can separate us from His love. We can spend every moment of every day celebrating His forgiveness and grace towards us. It is incredible!

We read of young Daniel, taken into captivity away from his beloved home and family, and into the midst of what was the most barbaric and ungodly nation of that day. There, in the King's court, he refused to eat the food of heathens not wanting to identify himself with the Babylonians in any way. He was warned that, if anyone realised his decision because of his sad countenance, he would be put to death. But on the contrary, Daniel had a face that exuded joy and the presence of the Lord in the midst of deprivation.

You see, it's easy to focus solely on our current situation, which is only temporary. And while the pain or distress we may be

experiencing is real, so is the plan of the Lord, which is eternal. The Apostle Paul suffered imprisonment, beatings, shipwreck and all types of hardship, but his eyes never strayed from the Lord and thus he was able to refer to these grave events as 'light afflictions'. We need to always shift our focus to the eternal realities, which are the source of our joy.

Recently I read the story of James Fraser, a young missionary to China in the early 20th Century. He endured all manner of disease and terrible persecution but was able to continue because he had learnt to drink with joy from the wells of salvation. (Isaiah 12:3) One day, while walking through the hills alone, as was his practice and singing praise to God, he came across another missionary accompanied by many servants and helpers. The other missionary was distressed by his difficulties, but was soon shamed to silence when he heard the sound of joy in the young James' voice. It was said of James that his life 'reaped a large harvest, although many tears had first to be sown through his labours.'

O Lord, help us! Help us to serve You with gladness and not make room for complaining and grumbling! We have so much to be grateful for. Just start thanking the Lord for what He has done for you: His gift of salvation, His life, joy, peace, and strength - there's no end to the list!

Well, that's the way I see it!

Peter is a husband, father, grandfather, coffee connoisseur and dedicated preacher of the message of the cross in Africa and beyond.

Perfectionism

By Brenda Smith

For Workaholics, Perfectionists and People Pleasers

Many perfectionists have been produced by overly harsh parenting which leads to fear; fear of not being good enough, not measuring up to unreachable standards, being constantly in trouble and trying to stay out of trouble, or trying to prevent mom's angry outbursts. In my case, I created my own set of people-pleasing behaviours. I am relieved to see how I have changed so much through the Lord's love, and gaining a healthy fear of the Lord. I acknowledge the help I received at the Counselling Centre.

Now what is the difference between the Pursuit of Excellence and Perfectionism?

They look the same, until you block the person's goal and then you see a different response. Deeds done because of a desire to pursue excellence will give way to other desires, not competing to prove a point; whereas a perfectionist is meeting his own need for acceptance by impressing others and if his goal is thwarted, he may react with an angry outburst and possibly with verbal abuse! So the responses are different because the motives are different. One is to please God, because you love

Him and want to please Him, while the other motive is to meet a subconscious need to be "well thought of".

Perfectionism is an attempt to meet your own needs for Security, Significance and Self-worth. The bottom line is, if you get 'it' perfect, you'll be a success and be happy. What is 'it'? It is .. looks, status, achievement, money, fame, sportiness, clothes, possessions etc. Sadly, it leads to approval addiction and it's hard to break the habit and get rid of the voices that tell you, "You are lacking and unworthy." It can become so strong that it's hard to relax. It causes people to become controlling, believing that they can and must prevent any discomfort or inconvenience. Further, they must never be wrong or make a mistake, for that makes them 'terrible' and not worth employing or marrying. I wonder if this is what is responsible for so many unhappy marriages? We separate ourselves from God and try to make rules and expectations for ourselves and others that are too hard to keep or reach. You can identify these by the constant use of words like.. 'you should, 'ought' and 'must.'

Our school system adds more pressure. Is the amount of homework given really possible to do in an hour? Can you really afford to do all the extra-mural activities? (Time-wise and stress-wise?) Can education really be assessed by the top marks obtained by the top ten schools in the world and whether you are attending one of them?

I see stressed mums that are flying without a plane. This gives new insight into the words, "Who, by worrying can add an inch to your height or an hour to your life?" I see dads that are in debt to meet the family needs. When is enough, enough? If we build a life to impress people through works, like any idol it soon demands more and more. Anxiety comes when we are not sure any more when we have done enough. We can never be sure we have covered every eventuality. It also makes us angry toward those that let us down.

So what was the root? It was wrong dependency on self, other people and circumstances to make me happy. Trying



to control situations and circumstances is another relative of perfectionism. It arises when things go wrong. The gravy is lumpy at the dinner party and so the party is a total flop. This is 'all or nothing' thinking. If it's not all right, it's all wrong. If my reputation depends on gravy, I am indeed a sorry creature! Perfectionism is a hard task-master. It comes with challenges to be the slimmest, best dressed, funniest, sportiest, very best Mom, having the nicest job/car/ biggest house (which of course is clean and tidy all the time). Who can win this rat race? Only rats! Perhaps a hamster can, as it goes round its wheel? It seems people have become like hamsters; each day we tread from morning to night, only to drop into bed and tomorrow to start again. Ecclesiastes 2 has a great teaching on moving from meaningless to meaningful. Verse 24 says *a man can do nothing better than to eat, drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too is from God, for without Him who can find enjoyment?* Romans 12:2 says, *Don't be conformed to this world, fashioned after external, superficial customs but be transformed by renewing your mind.* This has to do with

new goals and attitudes that are acceptable to God. Romans 8 is so valuable for learning how to live in His love and by His Spirit and how to kick the 'people-pleasing' lifestyle. He is for us, who can be against us?

We are all needy people. We have a hole in the soul, which can only be filled by a constant supply of love, acceptance and approval and to be needed and regarded as a worthwhile person. Nothing, (although sugar is nice) can fill that gap! I have found that learning how much God loves and cares and is with me, makes me full and content. It's joy. Reaching out to drink from that Living Water is such fun and brings that joy. It takes time, and perfectionistic people have little time. Jesus makes life soooo worthwhile. I am sorry I didn't develop a hunger earlier in my life. I regret the years I spent arranging deck chairs on the Titanic. It really was a chasing after the wind. Being a Christian really isn't about doing stuff, it's about needing and finding Him. He was here all the time, if only I had sat still long enough to meet Immanuel. Then the works we do

will flow from a well of love and not from being driven. 2 Corinthians 5:14 says *His love compels us.* I found as I died to 'making life work' and living by faith in Christ, He took over and freed me from this addiction to look perfect. I realised I had been under a false gospel of works. Yes I knew Jesus took my sin and gave me His gift of righteousness, but I had to have the appearance of a hard worker to have people believe I was good enough and approve of me. Derek Prince once described **religion** like a world tour, where you take the map and equipment but find your own way, getting into frightful circumstances before you cry out for help. He compared **a relationship with the Lord** with doing the world tour with a tour guide who knows the way. He takes all the stress and strain and trouble from the trip, when you stay behind Him .

I am learning to 'stay behind' Him and let go of false sources of life. His acceptance is all I need to make life meaningful.

Brenda is a counsellor, mother of three children and grandmother of eight.



Appreciating Each

By Jan Wilsher

Paul and Noma worked together and had fallen madly in love after admiring each other from a distance. They married, and two years later started a family. Noma was engrossed in the hectic life of a young mum and Paul worked hard both at work and his studies. He obtained an accounting degree and then, after a short break, started working towards an MBA.

Home was usually noisy and chaotic with three children all wanting attention. After supper Paul would go off to his study. When he did have a break from his hectic routine, he wanted to get out and away from home.

Noma began to feel cut off from him. She felt trapped at home, with no adult conversation, and resented the fact that all the household chores and care of the children were left to her. She began to complain and nag about 'never seeing him.' Paul was angered by these accusations, as he said he was doing it all for the family. His reaction to her criticism and nagging was to either withdraw further or become critical of Noma and complain about what she did or didn't do.

The tension in the home would rise and eventually erupt in angry words as they shouted at each other and called each other names. They would apologise and make up after these times but nothing

really changed. Every now and again, the tension would spill over when they were in company. They gradually lost respect for each other, and their disrespect was reflected in their words and actions.

Ways we disrespect each other:

1. Taking each other for granted

As Paul and Noma busied themselves with their own lives and responsibilities, their perception of each other began to change. All they could see were the negatives and the things they did not like and they lost sight of just how valuable they were to each other. They failed to appreciate what the other was doing for the marriage and family, they began to take these things for granted.

2. Using people

When we use people as a means to an end, we want what they can do for us more than wanting them personally. So, Paul was glad that Noma was there to look after the children and to do the housekeeping and cook the meals, but he had lost touch with Noma herself. Noma appreciated the security of the regular income that Paul brought home, but she had come to expect it and wanted the provision more than she wanted to relate to Paul.



Image: Mary Anne Passaportis

3. *Criticism and fault-finding*

Opposites attract and often people who marry have very different personalities and characteristics. So an 'early' person often marries a 'late' one; an outgoing, sanguine person will often marry a quiet, melancholic person who is happy with his own company and so on. While these opposites or differences initially attract us to each other, after a while the negative features of those same traits can begin to irritate. Instead of appreciating (valuing) the positives, we focus on the negatives and it is easy to become critical and continually find fault. So, while Noma initially admired Paul for his hard work and commitment, later she came to resent it. Paul initially appreciated Noma's frankness and her willingness to talk about issues; later he became irritated by her talkativeness and rather wished she wasn't so outspoken about what she thought.

How do a couple like Paul and Noma restore the respect they once had for each other?

How do we restore the respect?

It is important to intentionally remind ourselves of the positive aspects of our spouse and then to deliberately communicate our

appreciation of them to our spouse. When couples come in for counselling, I often suggest they make a list of those things that first attracted them to their spouse. It helps to change their focus from those negative problems (about which they obsess!) to the positive aspects of their spouse. We need to consciously and deliberately ensure that our communication has the following content:

Affirmation

Paul and Noma had become critical of and negative towards each other. To restore their respect for each other, they needed not only to recognise and concentrate on the positive traits, but to speak words of praise to each other. They needed to draw attention to their strengths and gifts by commenting on them. We are often very quick to point out a person's faults or failures. Rather, we need to notice when they do something right and be quick to point out their strengths and successes. It takes practice because we are so unused to doing it. There is great power in the spoken word and affirmation is using that power to build up instead of tear down.

Appreciation

So much of what happens in the home and family is routine and we can, like Paul and Noma, begin to take what our spouses do for us as our right. But those regular duties and responsibilities take time and effort. Saying 'thank you' is acknowledging the benefit of what that person has done. Noma could prepare a special meal to show appreciation for the hard work Paul does to provide for the family. Equally, Paul may take Norma out to dinner, to thank her for her tireless care of the children. Showing appreciation is demonstrating how you value what the other person does for you.

Admiration

We can so often denigrate those traits that are different from our own. Admiration is doing the opposite. It is recognising and declaring where we think our spouse is better at something than we are. It is looking up to them and saying: 'I so admire about you and so glad you bring that trait into our relationship and family.' Paul came to admire Noma for her ability to do artistic things which were fun and educational for their children. Noma admired Paul's dogged perseverance and refusal to give up on a project or task.

Acknowledgement

This is giving your spouse recognition, praise or commendation in public or before other people. We often hear people complaining about their spouses at a dinner party or at the office. To praise them to others instead would build them up and declare their great worth publicly.

Write a letter?

Why not take time to write a letter to your husband/wife to express those things you love and appreciate about them. This will be a reminder to you and an encouragement to your spouse.

Ian is the Director of The Christian Counselling Centre



My Faith and Motherhood

by Sheila Yeatman

Having children has had a huge impact on my faith. The realisation that I have been entrusted to shepherd these little people to spiritual maturity is sobering.

My example will have a large impact on their eternal future! Every time I speak badly of someone, or ignore a need, or complain about my situation, I influence how my children live their lives. Perhaps it's rather high-minded of me to think I have to do this job alone but I don't think I am totally wrong in recognising my potential influence. Needless to say, with this understanding I set myself rather high standards and ideals with regards to how Christianity should look. Man, was I in for a surprise! Children don't care much for our agendas. Church every Sunday? Not without a few tantrums, (and not just from the children!) Getting lost in praise and worship has become a thing of the past. Fellowship with other believers? From the confines of the baby room? Not exactly. Let me tell you, unmet expectations can lead to less than Godly emotions. I would come out of church feeling like a hypocrite. And kids can smell hypocrisy a mile off!

I made the mistake of confusing my relationship with my Creator with a religious 'to-do list': quiet time - tick, attend church - tick, attend bible study - tick. Trying to fulfil these obligations was,

well, a challenge. I had forgotten there is no cookie cutter recipe for sainthood. However, reading Isaiah 40:11 *He will... take up the lambs on His breast, gently guiding those with young*, gave me permission to offer myself grace in this life stage. This verse paints a picture of what He desires for mothers of young children, the opportunity to hold our little ones close as He tends to us. What God wants for mothers of little ones is peace, not manic chaos and tears and pretence of having it all together on a Sunday morning.

Quiet times aren't so quiet anymore and my church attendance record is far from perfect, but I'm learning to seek God from where I am. The wonderful thing I have discovered is that He finds you where you are too. It's a mistake to separate our lives into two distinct times: those that are religious (Sunday morning) and those that are not (the rest of the week). Deuteronomy 11:19 encourages us to teach our children God's Word when you *sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up*. I personally don't think it's the end of the world if we don't make it to church every week. I do think it's important to walk and talk with the Lord along life's way and to grab opportunities that arise to talk to our children about the Lord and His Kingdom. I think 'living the walk' is what matters more, particularly at this

logistically difficult stage.

So now that I've admitted to you all the things I don't manage to do, perhaps I can encourage you with some of the ways I attempt to 'live the walk'. I understand that before I can teach my children to love God, I have to have an authentic, well-developed relationship with Him myself.

* When we do make it to church I try to make sure that I'm not the one looking after the kids each time - dads, grandparents and friends are a great help. And if I don't make it to church, I can get the recorded sermon on a flash drive or listen to an online podcast.

* I don't find much time during my day to quietly focus on reading my Bible, and for a long time this was a great cause of guilt in my life. Also, lack of sleep makes it difficult to focus on reading long passages. Now, most nights when I put my girls to bed I pop my earphones in and in the dimly lit room, listen to an audio Bible reading. They know I'm 'spending my special time with God' and go straight to sleep without disturbing me (usually). I don't want my quiet time to be hidden from them. I want my faith to be fully visible and to be imprinted on their lives.

* I also pray with the girls several times each day, for example, before bed, in the

car, when we hear an ambulance or when a particular need arises. I allow time within their prayers for my prayer too. I want them to see my relationship with God is alive and personal.

* I often use the time we have in the car together to chat to them about God. Many times, when teaching my children something, there is a lesson in it for me too.

* When we're not too busy talking (or when I need a break from that) we often listen to praise and worship in the car, although sometimes that's voted off the sound waves by "The Wheels on The Bus" or "Baa Baa Black Sheep." I'm OK with that too, as a relationship can't be forced, only encouraged and a genuine love can only develop through having the opportunity to voluntarily choose Him.

* If you have a cell or home group where the children need to come along, but the focus isn't on them, don't minimise the impact of them seeing you prioritise your faith. Let them join in where appropriate, perhaps with the singing, but then let them watch a Bible-based DVD

series or just play with the other children. It's healthy to teach them that not all activities revolve around them.

* James 1:27 tells us that *religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.* This means we need to try to be Jesus' hands and feet while on this earth. Involving the children in my ministry work is very important to me. Recently I went with my children to visit a young girl whom we had heard was ill and in desperate need of some company. This experience made me realise that it is possible to learn far more from a simple hospital visit than many hours of lecturing them on privilege. Unless our children see faith impacting our lives in real ways, deciding our actions and softening our hearts, they will never believe it is anything more than a fairy story.

* Try to model the behaviour you wish to see in your children. I don't have all the answers and many times I get it all wrong. I am terrible at apologising but if I want my children to understand God's grace, I need

to swallow my pride and apologise when I've blown it. I also need to gracefully accept their apologies when they don't manage perfection. It is so important that our words and deeds match up.

In conclusion, I would say that having children can be a catalyst for spiritual growth as they expose our weaknesses, faults and desperate need for God. But be gentle on yourself, offer yourself some grace in this difficult (and wonderfully rewarding) life stage. Try to make sure you take care of your spiritual welfare and where possible, include your children so they can develop a faith of their own, knowing that they have a vital and irreplaceable role to play in His Kingdom. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14)

Sheila is Editor of The Centre, a counsellor at The Christian Counselling Centre, and mother of two girls.

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Gogo Boots

by Linda Madhoo

My little counsellee, Simba (name changed), came skipping along the path as usual, a bounce in his step, courtesy of Michael Jackson or someone else much younger than my generation. But suddenly he stopped. He looked at me, shocked, eyes wide open.

Anxiously I asked "What's wrong?" "Linda," he exclaimed "why are you wearing 'gogo' boots today?" And he broke out into chuckles, giggles and finally rambunctious, gut-wrenching laughter.

I looked down at my boots but could not see the funny side. I loved my boots. They were comfortable. (Guess that says it all.)

Sadly, when I got home I put those precious boots at the back of my cupboard vowing never to wear them again.

A couple of days later, as I was looking for shoes to wear I noticed my gogo boots. Definitely not! I thought.

But as I moved away from them I sensed the Lord say to me "Linda, wear your boots today." "I don't think so Lord. You heard what Simba said."

All the old feelings of trying to fit in and be accepted through what I wore or what I said or what I did came flooding back. All the feelings of rejection came flooding back, of desperately wanting acceptance and approval but looking for it from people who could not give it to me even if they tried.

"Wear those boots, Linda."

You know when you have to obey that still small voice. I put on the boots.

And as I did, the Lord reminded me who I was and Whose I was. He reminded me that I was precious to Him, that I was His dearly loved daughter, treasured, cherished. I was His darling girl, His princess, His masterpiece. He didn't care what I wore. He didn't care that I wore "gogo" boots. His love was unconditional. It didn't depend on me. His love for me was totally, completely, unselfish. He was committed to my wellbeing, my fullness, my joy at any cost, at any sacrifice, even giving up His son Jesus to take the punishment for my sins so that I could have eternal life with Him and have abundant life on earth.

I'd learnt about who I was from my journey with the Christian Counselling Centre almost 15 years ago. I was a shy, timid,

insecure woman who was full of anxieties and fears. It was there that I learnt that my emotions, my behaviours, my choices, my thoughts, my beliefs were all tied up with trying to get acceptance, approval, self-worth and significance. I just wanted to matter. I wanted to be valued for who I was. I needed to know I was on earth for a reason. I tried the world's answer to getting these needs met. Work harder and longer than anyone else. Be more perfect than anyone else. Be more beautiful, sportier, and more intelligent than anyone else. Be the perfect wife, perfect mother,

perfect daughter, sister, friend and perfect everything else. Get involved in everything at church, at my children's schools, at work. Entertain more, socialise more. Achieve more, do more, be more. So I did all those things. And still there was emptiness, a craving in me for something more.

But as I worked through these issues through counselling, through the course called Journey into Wholeness, through training as a counsellor and many other courses and seminars and just being a part of the family at the Counselling Centre, I began to be transformed by the One who had called me. It's been a rocky road through the years but I have been supported by so many wonderful counsellors at the Centre and have made so many wonderful friends there who have walked the same path I have.

Today I stand a very different person, secure in the knowledge that I am loved by the Creator of the Universe, my Heavenly Father. I still have a long way to go but I know that. As Paul says, *Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 1:6)

I zip up my "gogo" boots and proudly go to the bank. Waiting in the queue, daydreaming, I am suddenly interrupted by a young woman.

"Cute boots," she smiles.



Linda is a counsellor at The Christian Counselling Centre

The Ferrari and you

An Encouragement to Teens

by Vic Paunganwa

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God has prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

Every now and again I have the privilege of speaking to Grade Seven boys and girls just before they go to high school. I tell them that life in high school is symbolised by the Ferrari, the Wheel and the Pyramid. This is what I teach:

First, The Ferrari Story: Imagine that you have just completed your A Levels and you have received the top grades in Maths, Physics and DT. The best design and engineering university in the world hears about you and offers you an amazing scholarship. While you are studying for your degree you do so exceptionally well that team Ferrari hears about you and pays (even before you finish your degree) for you to come and work for them. On completing your degree you are flown to Italy, given a great apartment and you're commissioned to build the best Formula 1 car ever made. Ferrari gives you a budget of twenty million dollars to do the job.

After two years of creating the greatest car ever made on this planet you proudly call the boss of Ferrari and he tells you to meet him at the race track. On arrival the boss gives you a hearty congratulations and a cheque for two million dollars for a job well done. You are filled with joy at the success of the project. While you're still bubbling, struggling to get to grips with how rich you are, you watch the boss go over to his office and make a call. Five minutes later an elderly woman who you recognise to be the boss' mother comes in, gives her son a hug and receives a little red box with a ribbon on it. They walk out towards you, hand in hand with the old lady showing her false teeth as she smiles

broadly. She comes to you, shakes your hand and congratulates you for designing the greatest Formula 1 car ever made and turns and thanks her son once again for the birthday present. She opens the little red box, takes out the keys to your Ferrari and walks very slowly towards the car. Your mouth is wide open in disbelief as you watch this most surprising scene take place. She climbs in with the help of her son and drives off at 60km per hour.....

Let's rewind the story and return to the point where you arrive and you receive the two million dollars for your excellent work. The boss goes into his office and makes a call. Five minutes later his secretary walks in with Michael Schumacher, arguably the greatest Formula 1 driver of all time. He immediately recognises you and comes to you and is in awe of your amazing work. He receives the keys from the boss, strides purposefully towards the car and excitedly jumps in. When he starts the car it makes that beautiful sound it is meant to make. He takes off and breaks the record of the Ferrari practice track.....

Which is the better ending to the story? YOU are the Ferrari in the story. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Out of the seven billion people in the world there is no one out there with the same finger prints as you, with the same iris pattern as you or the same DNA. Therefore go and be the very best that you can be. Be Schumacher driven, not granny driven!

Secondly, The Wheel of School: The wheel of school is divided into five sections: Spiritual; Social; Sport; Academic and Culture. At any time that you are at school you are involved in one of these areas of school life. Live to the full by giving God the very best that you can throughout

your teen years. Be a light in your school so that others may see your good deeds and achievements and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Be a good friend to others and they will be a good friend to you. The golden rule of relationships is relevant in high school too...*"do to others what you would have them do to you."* Use your talents in sport and culture to glorify God. Remember the parable of the talents in Matthew 25. One day you will have to give an account of what you did with the gifts which God gave you. Finally in your academics, do your very best at all times. Develop a desire to learn and discover new things, not just study to pass exams.

Thirdly, The Pyramid: I encourage you to view your school years as a pyramid. The base representing Forms 1 & 2, the middle being the IGCSE years and the narrow top being 5th and 6th form. When you are in the junior years you must experience all that your school has to offer. Get involved in as much as possible in all areas of the 'wheel of school'. As you go higher start to specialise and do the things that are in line with your gifts and interests. In your final two years manage your time with laser sharp focus and give 100% to the few activities which you allow yourself to do. As you reach the pinnacle of the pyramid and look back at your high school career, have no regrets, knowing that you have lived your life to the full and have fulfilled God's purpose for your school years.

Vic Paunganwa has been in independent education for 19 years having taught at Carmel, Ruzawi and Peterhouse Boys School. He currently runs a study centre in Harare.



THE BOY DONE GOOD!

by Tim Middleton

Ah, the dreaded school report! How often have we waited with fear and trembling (and probably in hiding) for our latest school report? But some reports are good, imaginative even! Take for example this report, “The improvement in his handwriting has revealed his inability to spell.” Or consider this one, “The tropical forests are safe when John enters the woodwork room, for his projects are small and progress is slow.” Another one stated that, “He has an overdeveloped unawareness,” while another declared that, “This boy does not need a Scripture teacher. He needs a missionary.”

It is interesting too, to read the reports of some famous people. Sir Richard Branson, the well-known entrepreneur, was told in his report that, “He will either go to prison or become a millionaire.” John Lennon, one of the Beatles, was advised he was, “Certainly on the road to failure... hopeless... rather a clown in class... wasting other pupils’ time.” The popular author, Jilly Cooper, received a report that included, “Jilly has set herself an extremely low standard which she has failed to maintain.” While the comedian Norman Wisdom was told that, “The boy is every inch a fool, but luckily for him he’s not very tall.”

Then some folk have wondered what Shakespeare’s English report might have been like – most of us would probably have thought of saying that, “He must write more clearly and concisely!” The report of Marco Polo, the great explorer, would probably have said, “This boy will go far!”

We have got to ask therefore, “What would Jesus’ report have said?” While we do not have any record of Shakespeare’s or Marco Polo’s reports, we do actually have one for Jesus, in Luke 2:52: *Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, in favour with God and with man.* If you ever want to know what education is about, go no further than that. Is that not a report of which we would be hugely proud, if it was said of us or our child?

- What that ‘report’ tells us is firstly that Jesus ‘grew’ – education is not static, nor is it manufactured, produced. It is about growth, development, progress, energy, life – not success, achievement, completion. Growth is the goal and in all ways but physical we can continue to grow throughout our whole life. As Einstein said, “Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death.”
- Secondly, Jesus’ ‘report’ emphasised that he ‘grew in wisdom’ – He was not simply clever or intellectual but wise. We must understand that education is not about acquiring knowledge, intelligence or information; it is not merely about developing imagination, insight or ingenuity; it is not even about comprehension, discernment or understanding. Jesus grew in wisdom and that is what we should be doing. Wisdom does not necessarily or automatically come with age, as some like to believe – people can be old but not wise and people can be young yet wise. Brilliant people may not be wise and may not go far as a result. Wisdom is knowing when, why and how to use all the knowledge, understanding and insight that we may learn, not least in our dealings with people. Wisdom is the difference between ‘success’ and ‘significance’. Not least, wisdom will help us to understand Proverbs 3:5 where we are exhorted to *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.*

Those with faith (perceived as 'fools') are the wise ones. Two verses later we are warned though to *Be not wise in your own eyes*. Not only do we need human wisdom but also spiritual wisdom that comes from our relationship with God.

Most of us would be pretty content with our report if that was all, but Christ's 'report' continued to say that, thirdly, *he grew in 'stature'*. The wise might recognise that there is a difference between 'status' and 'stature' but sadly too many people are more concerned with status. Stature is less about reputation and more about respect; it is less about power and more about authority. So, education must be about growing that 'stature' as well as that wisdom – it does not mean a child must become a prefect but rather aim to be perfect (2 Corinthians 13:11), through Christ's indwelling.

Christ's report went on to identify another of those special qualities that were a hallmark of His education, namely that, fourthly, He *'grew in favour with God'*. If nothing else, this highlights supremely how important our spiritual development is – our education must never simply be confined to the intellectual, academic, mental side of school, yet far too often this truth is entirely ignored or neglected. It will come through the wisdom of not trusting in our own understanding. It is not being a 'favourite' of God – the story of Joseph with his multi-coloured coat emphasises the dangers of having favourites. Rather, having God's 'favour' (or grace) is not only recognising and respecting that God has a special plan and purpose for us but also serving Him within it, even while a youngster.

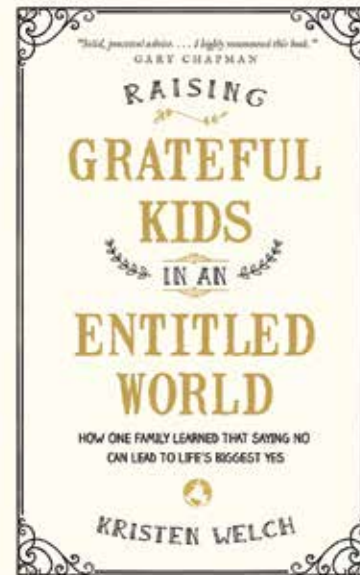
Lastly, Christ's 'report' underlined how He also *'grew in favour with man'*. This did not mean what we would like to think it means today, 'being popular'. It does not mean having special connections, sitting in the pound seats, going to the front of the queue. It meant more that He had opportunities to witness and speak, that people could see He should be taken seriously and heard clearly, through His dignity, humility, service and integrity. He had something worth saying, needing to be said, and He said it profoundly simply.

A soccer manager may not have been exactly expansive (nor grammatically correct) in his 'report' of a player when he famously said, "The boy done good" but the sentiment is part of the goal for us all. Have we 'done good' with our education or do we have, in educational and spiritual matters, 'an overdeveloped unawareness'? Have we set a low standard in our education and failed even to maintain it, by not considering that education is, in fact, all (and only) about growing *in wisdom and stature, in favour with God and with man*? Don't be a fool, however tall or small you are – be wise and get wisdom! It worked for Solomon; it worked for Jesus – and it will work even more for you.

Tim got one B, one C and one D at A level and is now the ED of ATS (Association of Trust Schools) and Head of The Conference of Heads of Independent Schools in Zimbabwe.

RAISING GRATEFUL KIDS IN AN ENTITLED WORLD

BY KRISTEN WELCH



I am confident that most parents, despite their best efforts to raise grateful, selfless children, have caught a glimpse of quite the opposite from time to time. It's easy to fall into the trap of saying "yes" too often to our children's requests. After all, it feels good and loving to continually make them happy, but it is not healthy to give children everything they want. With time, it becomes harder and harder to keep these children happy and eventually nothing is good enough or worthy of gratitude. If you find yourself approaching or even keen to avoid such a scenario then Kristen Welch's book, *Raising Grateful Kids in an Entitled World*, is for you. And don't be surprised if you, like me, have your own entitled behaviours exposed in the process!

With plenty of humour and honesty she encourages her readers that it's never too late to raise grateful kids. She offers practical tips and anecdotes from her family's first hand experiences on a journey of discovering how to bring up children who love God, serve others and grow into hardworking, fulfilled and successful adults. The secret, she is learning, is to give your children perspective. A good place to start is to help them learn the difference between "want" and "need".

So, if you want to cultivate a spirit of genuine gratitude in your family and create a home in which your kids don't just say, but mean, "thank you", then this is a must read!

Book Review by Sheila Yeatman

Helping Your Child Choose A Career Path

by Cathy Marx

It's hard to imagine that one day, not far from now, your child will be entering the adult world of work.

What is your role in propelling him in that direction?

How involved should you be?

What if he chooses the wrong thing?

Let's deal with a few of the myths that tend to add to the pressure we feel as parents.

1. There's a job that is just perfect for my child. I have to help him find it.

It would be lovely to think that there was a job somewhere that was perfect, but the reality is that perfect jobs are as common as perfect spouses! Imagine if it did really exist, and you failed to locate it: that's pressure! In today's world, with the ambiguity of the work place, our kids need to have enough self-knowledge, ingenuity and initiative to be able to find jobs or careers that they can make their own, and the resilience to change direction as the market changes.

2. I know my child best. It's my responsibility to train him toward a suitable career.

This approach worked for Tiger Woods' parents, Frank Lloyd Wright's mother, and Mozart's father, but don't count on it. People will insist on being themselves. There will always be more successful rebels than parent-produced prodigies. Children who see thoughtful moral behaviour in their parents, who are taught to think rationally and feel deeply, tend to follow their parents' moral path, even if not their preferred profession. Know the limits

of parental power: we can nurture and guide our children, but we can't choose their careers.

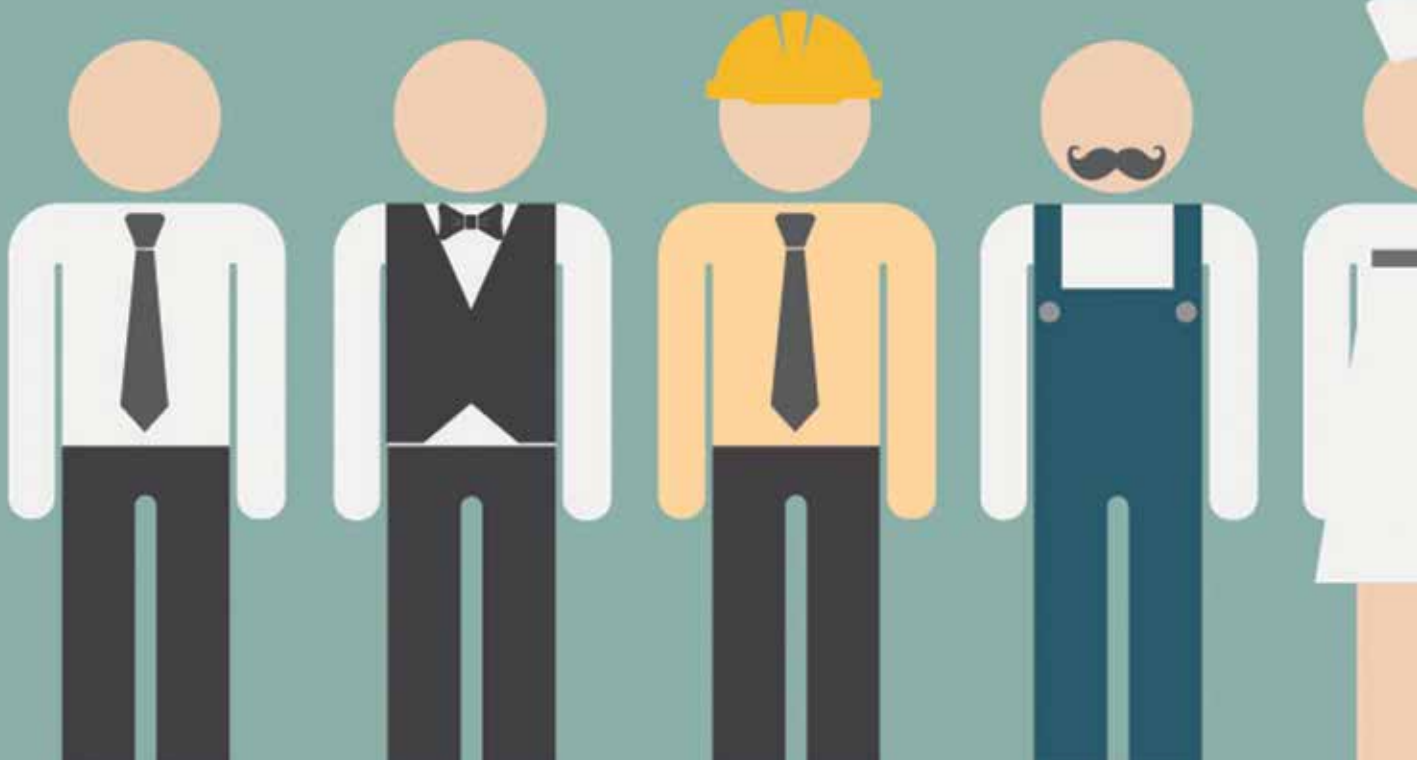
3. Choosing a career is about psychological testing.

No! We have excellent vocational psychologists in town who provide a wonderful service, but they are dealing with your teenager at a specific time in his life. Psychological testing gives you an in-depth picture of his abilities, aptitudes and interests at a particular time in his life. Rather think of career choice as a process which you facilitate and enjoy with him over the years. Testing will hopefully confirm what you both already know, as well as giving you extra ideas, and suggested routes for pursuing them.

4. The main reason people lose their jobs, or fail at a career, is because of a lack of competence.

We worry about our children being 'good enough' to make a success of things, and schools tend to focus on academic ability. Actually people usually fail for other reasons: lack of integrity, lack of initiative, poor inter-personal skills, disrespect, failure to be able to take correction, unpunctuality and clock watching, poor self-discipline, and so on. Schools often overemphasise and reward natural talent- but we need to be smart enough to understand, model, and teach, the value of character.

So just how do we go about helping our children with their career paths?



Step 1: Assessment.

Help your child make a list of things that he enjoys doing in his spare time. (Hopefully some of it will be off-line!) Reasons why are important: they help you get at the underlying motivations that are meaningful to him.

Assist him in making a list of things that he dislikes doing. Try and figure out why.

Help him identify subjects that he enjoys and is good at. At the end of Form Two, most schools will require you to make subject choices. This is difficult, because many students are not yet particularly self-aware. Be careful that the choices are not made simply on the basis of the teachers they like!

Speak to your teenager about what he values most: security, teamwork, family life, flexibility, fame, adventure, routine, discipline, new challenges or familiarity, working with his hands, creating and design, building, repairing, motivating, competition, making a difference, being outdoors- there are so many variables.

Formal testing of abilities, aptitudes and interests, if possible.

Step 2: Exploring Options

Expose your child over a period of time to as many different career options as possible. Encourage interaction with adults in different jobs, and teach them to ask questions unashamedly. Identify broad fields of interests, then within these fields help him select what interests him most and help access information about those specific career choices. You will need to identify:

- Entry level requirements
- Education and training required
- Duration and cost of studies.
- Be realistic.

Step 3: Practical Exposure.

Once you have gained knowledge about a handful of career possibilities, you can help your child get more practical and

first-hand experience of each through:

Related extracurricular activities at school. Interact, charity work, public speaking- even the dance committee- give valuable training in confidence, communication, teamwork, organisation and initiative.

Investigate MOOCs*: the available range grows every year. It is a good indicator of how keen your child really is to follow a particular path. They also add value to a C.V.

Job shadowing – during O break, or normal school holidays this provides an opportunity to experience what a job really entails. The experience also looks good on a C.V.

And a few random thoughts...

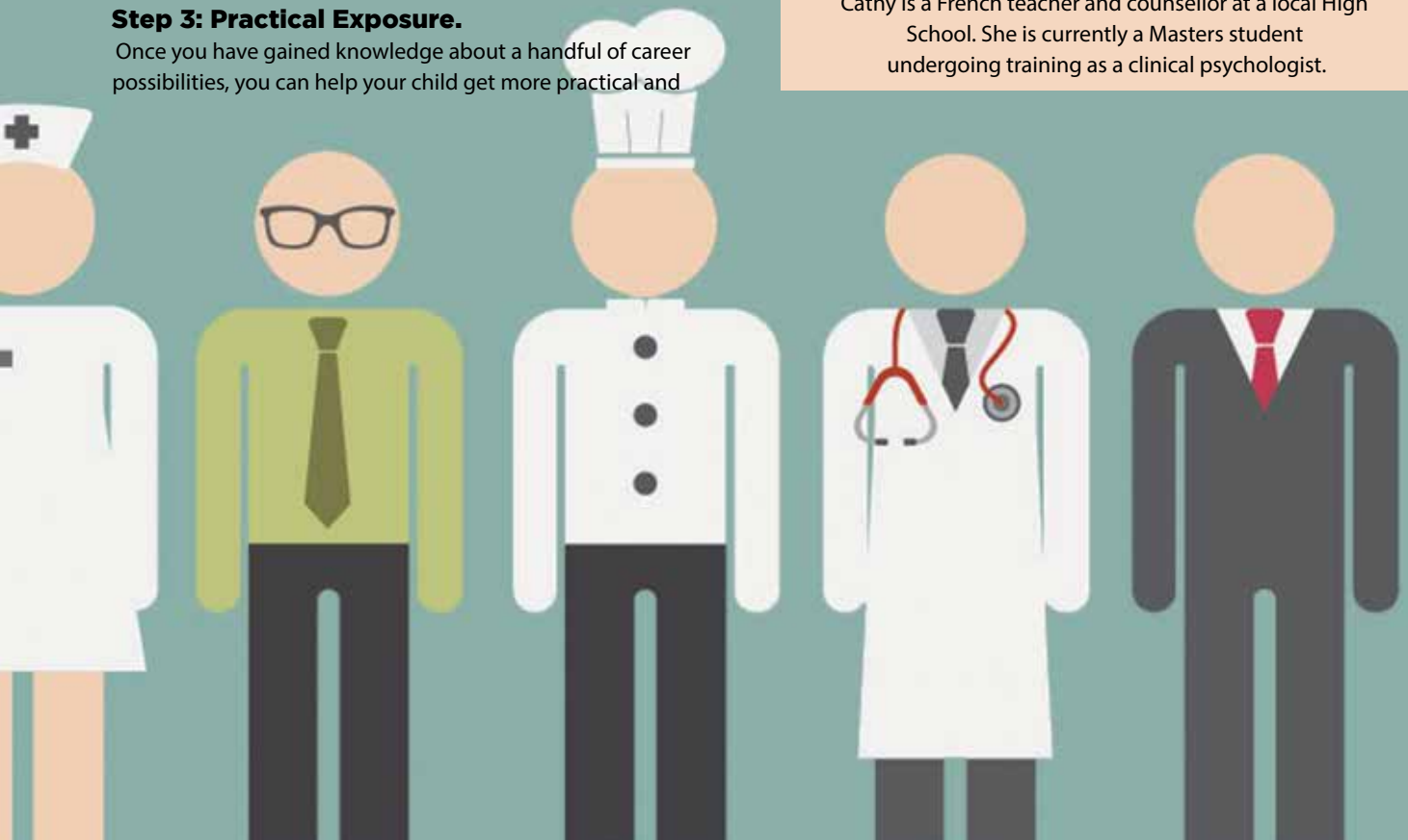
Life today is age-integrated, not age-differentiated. That's just a fancy way of saying that when we grew up, life was divided into:

- a) getting educated, followed by
- b) go to work, and finally
- c) retire and enjoy your well-earned leisure. Today all that has changed. Life-long learning is a reality that we can model and teach our children. In their world, they may have to train and retrain, and learn new skills many times over.

Don't underestimate the value of a gap year. So many possibilities are out there, and a year out in the real world, learning about life away from the shelter of the family, can teach your son or daughter so much that will stand them in good stead as they start tertiary education. Don't be intimidated by peers who look focused and clear about their direction in life. There is no rush!

*Massive Open Online Courses – freely accessible and open-licensed short courses delivered to large cohorts of learners.

Cathy is a French teacher and counsellor at a local High School. She is currently a Masters student undergoing training as a clinical psychologist.



What do you see?

By Belinda Ferreira

Sitting outside one day a father asked his two children, "Tell me what you see?"

His daughter answered - "I see birds, I see trees, I see our lawn and our house, I see the dogs"

His son answered - "Dad I also see our lawn, I see other houses, I see the telephone line, I see clouds Ok, Dad, what do you see?"

Just what he was waiting for - "Ok, I see the birds, but I also hear that they are singing me a good morning song. What I see are trees and how their branches move as the wind blows through them; I hear them softly tell us how much God loves us. What I also see are God's angels that stand guard around our yard - big and strong and they protect us! I can see the painting that God is busy painting for us on the horizon - look how His paint brush is working on those beautiful colours! In particular, I see the Lord Himself, who promised *I will never leave you, watching you with a warm smile on His face*"

Suddenly the children's eyes began to shine and they started seeing what the father was seeing and realised how little they had seen the first time.

So, the moral of this little story which I read in a book written by Jannie Putter called 'Game Plan for your Child's Life' (Wenplan vir jou Kind se Lewe) is that so often we see but we miss what is really there. To see the full picture of life is a choice - choosing to look with eyes of faith, because with the naked eye there is nothing.

This is a 'spiritual eye' and needs wisdom. Satan also knows about this 'spiritual eye' and he uses it to put fear and worry into us and to blind us, so that sometimes it seems impossible to see God. When things seem difficult, remind yourself and your children to ask, "Tell me what you see?" This is the time to see with wisdom, because what we choose to look at - so it will be!

As parents we need to lead by example. When things are bleak and you don't know which way is up, ask yourself, "what do I see?" Look deeper and see with faith and wisdom, see what is beyond.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18)

Belinda is a counsellor at The Christian Counselling Centre and a grandmother to eight grandchildren.



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Parenting Without Fear!

By Laura Albertyn

I have the joy of parenting four little people - Matthew - 8, Zoe - nearly 7, Ella - 4 and Phoebe - nearly 2. I want to write about two aspects of fear in parenting. I hope you can identify with them both!

1. Having a fear of how my child will react if I discipline them - so it's easier to just let the behaviour slide or let them get away with what they want.

2. Using fear to control my young child - threaten them so that they obey.

I do not believe God intended us to parent by either being controlled by fear or using fear to control our children. I know I have fallen into both these camps, often - especially when tired, stressed and juggling balls.

When we fearfully give in to bad behaviour to keep the peace in our home and to avoid embarrassment, we are constantly pulled from pillar to post by our kids, it is exhausting. And when we don't discipline because of fear of the child's reaction and

let things slide, we then fall into the second category because we get exasperated and lose it with our children. We feel like we are losing control of the situation and so begin to use threats and start shouting and screaming and making quite a fuss. Initially we get the response we want - compliance, but what effect does it have on our children's hearts?

When we are afraid of our children's reaction, we are in danger of creating a situation in which our children believe the world revolves around them only - they know that if they whine, whinge, scream and perform enough, mum or dad will eventually give in! It sets them up for a life where they continually try to control people and circumstances to get their own way.

When we use threats (fear) to control our children, we can create a situation where our children obey out of fear of what mum or dad will do if they don't obey. So they will outwardly comply but often the heart connection with the parent is lost.

Both these ways do not engage our children's hearts, they do not keep our love connection with our children and they do not teach them life lessons.

Perfect love casts out fear - but where does perfect love come from? God! Jesus!

Our goal as parents should be to keep our love connection at all times - no matter what our child has done or is doing! These little people will mess up! Each day, from start to finish will contain numerous mess ups. They will make poor choices but how we respond to those mess ups is sooooooo key! It's important to show them how their behaviour affects us but without breaking our connection! So they start to respond from a place of - "Oh my goodness! This choice could potentially end badly for me and my relationship with mum/dad. I'm going to choose something else as my connection with them is so important. This will affect my relationship with God too." Don't we all want teenagers that respond like that - well the training starts before the teenage years - where they are safe to mess up, make poor choices and learn. They obey out of relationship rather than out of fear!

Three years ago I had a bit of a break down and found that my default route became to scream and shout at my kids as soon as I felt out of control of the situation. I remember looking into their eyes, it broke my heart to see what I had done to our

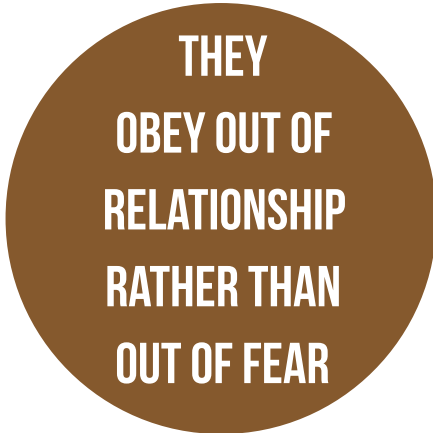
connection. Sadly, sometimes that release of vileness felt good - oh but the guilt afterwards was terrible! I desperately wanted to change and that is when I began to seek God on my parenting and I started to learn how God disciplined me!

So let's take a look at how God disciplines us.

He lovingly leads us and guides us with his shepherd's staff. When we mess up, He lets us face the consequences of our actions. He doesn't scream at us and say I told you so - He keeps loving us, and in His love, allows us to feel the pain of the consequence of our bad choice. So today I want to set before you a different way - parenting as a disciple who disciplines their children - rather than a parent who uses fear and threats. Or does nothing out of fear of the child's reaction.

God disciplines us! Discipline comes from a place of connection. We need to learn to parent in the moment and be able to keep our love turned on - even if inside we are screaming!

Parenting is hard and it is a journey we need to embrace with the help of the Holy Spirit at work in us. We will mess up, get it wrong but our children are so gracious and when we come before them and say "Mummy messed up, will you forgive me" - oh boy they are so forgiving. I don't have



all I have shared down pat but I am working on it and it is wonderful to hear your children say, "Mum you don't shout anymore, I don't feel scared." It doesn't mean it doesn't happen anymore but it is

infrequent now and I seek their forgiveness. Jesus said, *If you love Me, you will obey what I command.* (John 14:15) This principle can be true in our relationship with our children. If that connection is there, if they can say to themselves, "There is no denying Mum and Dad love me so I want to do what they want." It also helps our children see how what they do, affects not only their relationship with us but with God too!

Jesus died so we would be free. It's because He loved us that we love Him and therefore want to follow and honour him. We want the same for our children - they obey out of their love for us and God! You are the best parent your child has - no one can love them like you do!

Laura Albertyn is a wife, a mum to 4 young kids and runs Makomborero Zimbabwe. Her passion is for her family, the outdoors and seeing sustainable change in poor communities!

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Psalm 144:1 *Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.*

Movies and television have for decades depicted martial arts as a superior way of fighting to the use of weapons such as guns, knives and swords. Bruce Lee movies, based on the art of Jeet Kune Do, raised martial arts to a new level of popularity and acclaim. Chuck Norris (who apparently can slam shut a revolving door!) and Jackie Chan took up the baton, sparking a surge of interest in the sport. Jean Claude Van Damme, (Van Damage!) a practitioner of a karate style called Shotokan, continued to strike the hot iron of interest in martial arts. In the late 1980's the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles were introduced to the viewing public. These were four fictional anthropomorphic turtles trained by an anthropomorphic rat in the art of Ninjitsu. The Karate Kid and then, more recently, Ninjago, based on Lego, keeps children updated in these somewhat controversial Eastern Arts.

I was introduced to martial arts in 1981 and by the time I received Jesus in my life in 1999, I had excelled in four different karate disciplines. At the height of my form I was Sempai (Junior Instructor) of my college Karate Club. During Kumite, (competition fighting) I found that I was able to predict the next strike from my opponent and as a result I was unbeatable at that level. Hidetaka Nishiyama and Richard C. Brown, in their book *Karate, The Art of Empty Hand Fighting* said, "At an advanced level, it is even possible for a karate expert to sense the movements of his opponent before they take place." After becoming a Christian, I began to question this conflict between the martial arts and my belief in Jesus Christ. Can karate's source be divorced from its practice? If it is God who trains our hands for war is it possible that He is the power source behind Karate?

Is it okay for Christians to partake in this art that keeps one fit, alert and prepared for danger? For indeed it is an art and one that originates from the East where pantheistic religions of Buddhism and Taoism are practiced. Here are some of the more popular forms of martial arts:

Fight The Good Fight - God and Martial Arts

By Esoph Makorie

KARATE involves meditation, which can be spiritually dangerous. But, since Karate is primarily a physical martial art, the meditation aspect can be divorced from it.

KUNG FU is very diverse. The more traditional forms stick close to their Buddhist philosophical roots, while the less traditional forms concentrate more on the physical aspects.

AIKIDO means 'the way to union with the universal force.' Chi is used to control both self and environment. Ironically, this martial art is the most compatible with Christianity.

JUDO AND JUJITSU Judo involves many grabbing and throwing techniques. Jujitsu concentrates on the human joint locks and concerns itself with striking and maneuvering procedures. Both of these forms have a very low spiritual emphasis.

NINJITSU is not compatible with Christianity due to its pantheistic worldview, (God is the universe) rather than the Christian view that God is the Creator of the universe (Genesis 1:1-2).

TAE KWON DO is a physical, sport-oriented form of the martial arts. It is one of the most compatible forms of Eastern self-defense with Christianity.

Many of us have seen Tameshiwari displays. This is where participants break boards, blocks of ice and bricks. I have done some of this before and in my experience my only explanation has to be one of mind over matter. In order to smash through the bricks, I had to empty my mind of the thought of either pain or failure, and concentrate all of the energy of my body onto one specific point. Mind over matter is not of God, when Jesus walked on water, that was not mind over matter, that was God over nature.

Martial Arts give people a self confidence in the knowledge learnt, however God continually challenges us to place our confidence in Him.

I put no trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; but you give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame. (Psalm 44:6-7) The Psalmist however still used his bow and sword!

Every time God's people trusted in their weapons and armies, He called them to repentance. Our protection is in daily submission to Him. Psalm 121:1-3 adds: *I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip; He who keeps you will not slumber.*

Conclusion

I asked earlier, can the practice of martial art be divorced from its source? There is a real danger, of course, that practising a martial art as a sport can lead to being sucked into its philosophical and religious roots. So it is important to guard against that. (Deliver us from evil) But kept to a physical discipline, I cannot see the harm of practising a Martial Art if we do it in Him and for Him. The questions we need to ask ourselves are, "What is my source? Whom do I trust for life?" And, "What is my motivation?" Paul tells the Corinthians, "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Esoph Makorie is a director of Switched on Solar. He has been in the electrical trade for 21 years now, including a stint in the UK. He is married to Thelma and has three boys .



The Centre News

Twentieth Year Anniversary

The Counselling Centre opened its doors to the public in August 1996. We are hugely grateful for all that God our Father has done in the lives of thousands of people in that time. Included in this magazine is a booklet that gives you a very brief account of that history. If the Lord has impacted your life through the Counselling Centre, please will you drop us a brief email or letter to tell us about it. It can be anonymous. Even one line will do. "I'd like to praise and thank the Lord because....."

Marriage Alive Seminars

The Counselling Centre recently facilitated a marriage workshop for River of Life Church in Harare. This consisted of six weekly marriage seminars and then a day-away at Bushman's Rock outside Ruwa. The Centre also recently hosted a marriage day for New Life Covenant Church. The Counselling Centre regularly includes marriage seminars and courses as part of its public programme but will also respond to requests from churches to facilitate marriage events. These external events are facilitated by what we call 'Marriage Alive,' a Counselling Centre ministry to marriages and family. We will try to shape the event to suit the needs and requirements of the particular church or organisation. If you or your church is interested in running an event like this, please contact Tony Roberts on 0772206924 or roberts@zol.co.zw



River of Life Marriage Seminar



Ongoing Counsellor Training



New Life Covenant Marriage Seminar



The Building of the Training Centre begins!

It's exciting when a vision begins to be fulfilled. We have been talking for some time about our plans to build a Training Centre and now at last, building has begun. The hope is that we will have a useable/functional building by 10th October. We hope to use it for our 20th anniversary celebration at the end of October. Starting to build is a step in faith as we don't have all the funds we need to complete even Phase One of the project. However, we are trusting that the remaining \$30 000 shortfall to complete Phase One, will come in before we need it.

Thank you to all who have contributed towards this project. It will be a useful facility for our training (our present seminar room only holds 30 people - uncomfortably) and we hope to hire it out to others as well.



Intermediate & Advanced Courses completed

The Counselling Centre seeks to bring healing and growth to people and relationships. Our capacity to meet this need is determined mostly by the number of counsellors we have - which is why the on-going training of Counsellors is such a critical part of our work. We have been running our (two-term) Intermediate and (year-long) Advanced Counsellor Training Course simultaneously. Participants recently celebrated their graduation for both courses. The requirements of these courses are demanding - with weekly classes, homework assignments, required reading, workshops, observation of counselling sessions, peer counselling as well as counselling a client which is recorded and assessed. Each module has a written exam and live role-play assessment. No mean feat! Well done to those who passed and well done to our Course facilitators for getting them through.



THE COTTAGE FAIR





Interview with Sean Waller

by Margi Grobbelaar

Sean Waller is a Christian businessman. His wife, Colleen, is a counsellor at the Christian Counselling Centre. They have four adult children. Margi Grobbelaar had a chat with him.

MG: Tell us about your background, Sean

SW: I was born in Zimbabwe, and grew up on a farm. I went to school at Churchill. I was keen to go farming so tried forestry but it was not for me. I then got a job in Harare with The Old Mutual, selling policies. I enjoyed this and it was really good training.

After eight years I left and a friend and I set up an insurance broking and financial services company called Combined Financial Services. Initially we did well, but with changes in the economic climate and hyperinflation, we eventually closed down.

I then joined another friend who had a franchise for Isuzu and Chevrolet and became a part of AutoWorld.

We own a herd of beef cattle on a ranch in the Midlands. That is my real passion. Something for when I get old!

I am also chairman of the Zimbabwe Hunters' Association.

MG: How did you become a Christian?

SW: I was born out of wedlock and never knew my real father which caused confusion in my life. My mother married my stepfather when I was six. He was a very good man and he adopted me. When I was fifteen, my father became ill and was on his death bed. My mother and I went to the chapel to pray for him to recover. He did get better and I realised that I couldn't call out to God in my hour of need and then turn my back on Him. One of the greatest contributors to the growth of my relationship with the Lord was the book by Norman Vincent Peale - *'The Power of Positive Thinking.'* I know this is a controversial book but it helped me turn my life around. He recommends one learn and repeat

certain Scriptures over and over, which I did, including Philippians 4:13, *I can do everything through Him who gives me strength* and Romans 8:31, *If God is for us, who can be against us?*

MG: Doing business in Zimbabwe can't be easy at the moment?

SW: Business here brings unprecedented challenges. You ask "Where is God? Why is this happening?" You have to try and get to grips with the fact that you can do everything right and it can still go wrong. But never blame God. Romans 8:28 is important - *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him...*

MG: What are the ethical challenges of doing business here?

SW: Dealing with questionable situations has become part of our lives. For example, paying to facilitate a driving licence, when you know that, although you are a competent driver, you won't get it without paying extra. Everyone has to work out for themselves what they believe is wrong or right. I aspire to do things correctly, according to the law, but also think you can't take too rigid a stance. Proverbs talks of the 'laws, the precepts and the principles' of God. As a Christian in business we need to try and figure out what they mean, how they're applicable, and how to practise them in business and in life generally

Violating these principles has consequences even if you are a strong believer. I can remember, years ago, getting to work at five in the morning to pray, calling on God's blessing for our business, dedicating it to Him. We thought we were doing things right and were strong in our faith - but we ran into difficulties. Why, with all that faith and prayer? Looking back, we wanted to grow too quickly. We did not follow the principle, *He who gathers money*

little by little makes it grow. (Proverbs 13:11) We got into debt, so when the hard times came, we were vulnerable.

If things go wrong, you have to go back to basics and correct the principle you have violated. You can have faith, prayer, good intentions, visions, goals, but if you violate the principles, things will go pear-shaped. We have to ask God to show us where our thinking is wrong, what we are doing incorrectly and be willing to change. In Proverbs, we are told to look for wisdom and understanding. We need to cry out for these things. They are worth more than treasure or gold.

MG: What do you think when people talk about Christians who are “in full-time Christian work,” as if those in business are not working full-time for the Lord.

SW: We are ALL in full-time work for the Lord, whatever we are doing. Going to work is part of full time ministry. We all have abilities the Lord can use. Church is a few hours once a week. Business is working together all day, week in, week out, year in and year out. A Christian can have real impact at work.

MG: What sort of impact are you talking about?

SW: People are important. We need to value them and help them develop. You can have the best equipment and facilities, but if you don't have the right people, it's not going to work. Every person in a business has the potential to contribute and make a difference. The quietest guy in the corner, who sweeps the floor,

may have something valuable to say. Business is about valuing people and assisting them to reach their full potential.

MG: What is the Zimbabwe Hunters' Association, of which you are Chairman?

SW: It is an association that looks after the interests of the Zimbabwean recreational hunter. Our flagship is the Rifa Education Camp on the Zambezi River at Chirundu where school parties spend a week at a time, learning about wildlife and the environment

MG: You obviously have a passion for conservation and wildlife, and also enjoy hunting. Isn't it rather contradictory to be a hunter and a conservationist?

SW: Not at all. True hunters are conservationists and are passionate about the bush and animals and usually work tirelessly to conserve them. I believe hunting has to be controlled, sustainable and ethical.

There is much debate between hunters and non-hunters but we actually have the same goal - conservation.

MG: Thank you Sean for taking time to talk to me. I am sure others in business will benefit from this discussion.

Margi is a counsellor at The Christian Counselling Centre.

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Business in Zimbabwe

by Nigel Hough



The starting point for all Christians irrespective of where they are called to serve is total surrender to Jesus as King. I have not always entertained this conviction but I certainly do now! The white flag must be up and our swords and crowns must be laid at the feet of the King of Kings. He is not only Saviour but Lord. We find it much easier to accept Jesus as our Saviour, as He extends His mercy and forgiveness, than we do in bowing the knee to Him as Lord in ruling our lives. The option of taking Jesus as Saviour, but not as Lord is not offered to us. We are called to serve God wherever we are and whatever we do, and business is no exception.

Whether we like it or not, most if not all of us are business people, because we are required to trade constantly in our society to survive and care for our family - in Zimbabwe the decision to leave our money in the bank or hold it in one of a number of currencies can have tangible consequences.

So even though my primary calling is to Jesus, I am also aware that in some measure I have to engage in business. I am convinced that Jesus has established very clear principles for all of us to conduct business and I hope that you will take time to ponder a few.

Principles to Conduct Business.

1. You have been bought at a price.

Our life and our business are not our own. The consequence of this is an enormous responsibility, as I need to run both my life and my business as Jesus requires. I find this very, very daunting. And yet it is liberating - I am merely a trustee. My own selfish ambitions and a fetish for short-cuts hampers our progress as a business. I have to wake up daily and appeal to Jesus to work with me, to iron out my sin, to cut off all that gets in the way of His Kingdom. The basket of challenges we face in Zimbabwe is not the biggest concern to progress - I am! It is my eyes that leave Jesus and gaze at the bottom line. It's me who begins to sink when called into rough waters. Without any hesitation I can say that losing my farm during the farm invasions was a great blessing.

I certainly don't say that lightly, as having no home for a year, being chased and nearly killed and having no source of income was extremely traumatic. At the end of the day however, God used all of these things to draw me closer to Him - the very place where I am going to have the most joy, even fun! I have been bought at a price, a very great price!

2. This is not my home, Heaven is.

And you can't take your assets with you. I am now 53 years old and it seems like a blink. The next blink and I will be called home - to my eternal home. A place where Jesus is the government - there will be justice, beauty and selflessness. While I sojourn here I will encounter injustice, ugliness and selfishness - but my eye must be on the prize. I have had fleeting moments of business success and longer moments of hardship but in retrospect the well-being of my soul is not influenced by either. Of course it matters that we strive to have a successful, God-honouring and socially contributing company, but the fickle local and world economy has no influence over my eternal home. My soul and eternal home always has greater value than my worldly possessions.

3. A good business is a gift to a community.

A good business supplies jobs and dignity to a community. It's the place where people spend most of their waking hours using and developing their God-given talents, finding meaning and purpose and providing for their families. A good business does not happen

by accident. It requires leadership, commitment, vision and service. A good business must make tough decisions - even retrenchment! All of this would be possible for Jesus but it is impossible for us on our own. Jesus equips us with the Holy Spirit and very importantly with other people. We are a body and we can call on a community for guidance. We tell our managers that humility is extremely powerful: humility listens, humility learns and humility leads well. CS Lewis said, "Humility is not thinking less of ourselves but thinking of ourselves less." That's the mystery of a business that is a gift to the community - it becomes an even greater gift to us.

4. All people are created in God's image.

All businesses require people and all people have infinite value. Even if different roles have different economic value and thus are paid differently, this never implies people have different inherent value in how they should be treated. People in a business must feel valuable. The things that make people feel valuable might surprise you: fairness, discipline and consistency are all extremely important. In our first meeting between management and the workers' committee, I said that I did not believe that workers and management would ever agree completely this side of Heaven. In spite of this however I promised to treat all people with dignity and as though they had infinite value. I finished by asking that they would treat us the same. In thirteen years we have both kept our word. They argue, even fight for better conditions for their constituency, the workers. We temper that with making hard choices to try to allow the business the best chance of surviving. This side of Heaven is a messy business, and workers' meetings are no exception but with my hand on my heart I can honestly say that I have no dread of workers' committee meetings - I even find them a blessing!

5. God's Word is a light to my path and a lamp to my feet.

When I walk in the Nyanga mountains I find that while I watch my feet to prevent tripping over rocks I often look up and find I am off track. Equally when I look into the distance to stay on track, I trip over rocks. The same applies in business. It is hard to keep an eye on the detail at the same time as having a vision for the future. God's Word helps us with vision and detail. Detail is important- but it must complement vision. I find very few people who are good at both, and I certainly am not very talented at either. That is why regular time studying the written Word in the presence of the Living Word is imperative. As I have got older my time with Jesus has got longer and more regular, in fact I can honestly say this has now become a habit. This habit was not formed by a good heart but rather by a desperate soul. Through falling and unfaithfulness I have learned the habit. The results of trying to go alone are too painful for me!

Most things I have written about are a consequence of having previously done things very badly! That is why I embrace the gospel - Jesus works with those who get it wrong. I've learned however, that living and doing business His way, submitted to the Kingship of Jesus, is by far the best way to go.

Nigel farms crocodiles in Binga and is an ordained Minister.



"MUM'S & BABES" PROGRAMME

- Educate the parents
- Discipline (no such thing as a naughty child)
- Enter and exit the pool unassisted and safely
- Hold on to the side or any floating object
- Submerge confidently
- Return to the side mind set
- Learn to manage in shallow water (ie: stand up again)
- Learn to float, both on their front and their back
- Jump in and stay afloat or return to the side
- Propulsion

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INTRODUCING OPERATION MOBILIZATION



The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few

By Simon Marijani

Many Christians are aware of the Great Commission of Jesus found in Matthew 28:19-20 where He commands his followers to *“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 yet many “nations”, here referring to all people groups of the world, have not heard of the Gospel, let alone become His disciples.

According to Martin Luther King Jnr, “Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance”.

So, what then is the state of the world in terms of fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus to make disciples of all nations?

The world human population is estimated to be 7.3 billion people in the world today. Of these only 2.3 billion identify as Christians. Despite Christ's command, the remaining 5 billion are adherents to other religions. Some have never heard of the gospel and are waiting for someone to come and tell them. Here is the break-down of how the world stands on religions:

- **1.7 billion are Muslims**
- **1 billion are Hindus**
- **975 million are atheists & non-religious**
- **660 million follow tribal religions**
- **480 million are Buddhists**
- **340 million follow Chinese folk religions**
- **14 million are Jews following Judaism**

Irrespective of these facts, Jesus declared that, *"the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."* It seems there is a lack of Christians willing to go and share the gospel but some are not going only because of "sincere ignorance". This situation led to the formation of church bodies and mission organizations dedicated to educating, training and getting people into the mission field in countries and areas where people do not otherwise have a chance to hear about the message of Jesus.

One such organization is Operation Mobilization. Operation Mobilisation (otherwise known simply as OM), is an international, interdenominational Christian organization that works to motivate and equip Christians to share God's love with others.

It started in 1957 when George Verwer and two friends gave up their school-holiday to distribute Christian literature in Mexico. Today, over 3000 people representing 100 different nationalities are bringing the good news of Jesus to over 110 countries.

Apart from country-based teams in over 110 countries of the world, OM has a Ships' Ministry. OM Ships sail across the seas bringing knowledge, help and hope to the port cities and to the interior.

The Ship visits each port for several weeks each and opens the gangways to hundreds and sometimes thousands of visitors each day. On average, over one million visitors have been welcomed on board every year. The floating book fair offers over 5,000 titles, providing many visitors their first-ever opportunity to purchase quality educational and Christian literature.

OM Ships not only supply vital literature resources but encourage cross-cultural understanding, and provide needed relief while sharing a message of hope in God wherever there is opportunity.

In Zimbabwe OM was launched in 1995. It pioneered the first ever National Day of Prayer. Over the years, OM has been involved in redeeming broken lives through ministry to the poor and disadvantaged, while challenging the Zimbabwean church to take her role in the Great Commission.

OM Zimbabwe believes that now is the time for the church in Zimbabwe to grasp her God-given mandate to start giving the bread of life to the world-wide Kingdom, not only receiving it. However, a good number of churches in Zimbabwe have little or no concept of the extent of the task to reach the nations.

OM Zimbabwe has thus been developing relationships with churches with a goal to expose the church to the need for the gospel in the nations. Since 2010, OM have seen God raise over twenty-eight Zimbabweans to go and serve on a short or long-term basis in countries such as the UK, Germany, Somalia, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Chad, Djibouti, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and others. Hundreds of others have participated in outreaches to real people in real need in the least evangelized or totally unreached communities in Zimbabwe and across the Southern African region.

OM Zimbabwe's mission is to see vibrant local communities of Jesus followers among the least reached. Their vision is to mobilize to see God mobilize, equip and send out 500 missionaries from Zimbabwe to the nations of the world by the year 2020.

To achieve this, OM through the Church Mobilization Department, conducts Bible-based talks and presentations on topics such as Stewardship, Evangelism, and Sharing the Gospel Cross-Culturally. As a next step, they also offer short-term exposure outreaches among real people in real need in poor and marginalized communities.

For those who want to be involved on a long-term basis, the Missions Discipleship Training (MDT) is OM's entry level – a five month training program which prepares and equips people for long term missionary service in any of the over 110 countries where OM exist or on-board any OM Ship. The MDT helps followers of Christ to live a disciplined and growing life in Christ. At the end of the training, participants have a Christian worldview, having a burden to reach the lost with the gospel and are able to function as pioneer missionaries in least evangelized communities.

The task of world evangelization is huge. What can a mere Zimbabwean have to do with this?

But does God not choose *the foolish things of the world to shame the wise*; does God not choose *the weak things of the world to shame the strong*? (1 Corinthians 1:27) As in many other things, the temptation is to wait for someone else to begin, but at a time when 5 billion people are drifting towards the gates of hell, the time for waiting is past. If you want to build on the bedrock that is Christ, now is the time to answer the call.

OM has a place for all to serve. Our diverse teams across the world have places for the young and old, the handy-man or professional and clergy or laity.

Contact us today at communications.zw@om.org or phone 0775474536 for more information .

Simon is the Head of Communications at Operation Mobilization Zimbabwe.



Makomborero,

Education for Talented Students from Disadvantaged Homes

By Laura Albertyn



A pivotal moment for me and my growing passion for the poor occurred when the late Simon Petit came to Zimbabwe to speak at River of Life's five-year anniversary and preached on God's heart for the poor. I remember standing in that tent – moved with emotion and passion for the poor and asking God to use me to impact the poor in this nation. Isaiah 61:1 burned deep onto both my husband and my hearts and still stirs emotion and passion in us: *The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.* That was 17 years ago and at the time, I did not realise the journey that prayer would take me on! My heart had moved from a place of 'Missionaries do that' to 'Oh boy we are God's hands and feet!' That journey resulted in Mark (my husband) and I setting up Makomborero. Makomborero Zimbabwe is a small local Trust, which we established in 2011 – to see lives and families changed through education.

At the core of what we do is the belief that "Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of

farmworkers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another." *Nelson Mandela Long Walk to Freedom*

We are currently working in the following areas:

A level scholarships - Our primary work is to provide A level education to talented students from orphaned or disadvantaged backgrounds. Gateway, Hellenic and St Georges, are the three private schools in Harare that kindly provide the academic scholarships to the students. We have a boarding house where our 16 students live during the week and benefit from pastoral care, food and incredible resources. We also financially support (through paying school fees, examination fees and providing textbooks) a further 16 students each year at local government schools.

Local University Grant Scheme - Many of our past students have since received full scholarships to study overseas, while others are enrolled at local universities and benefit from the Makomborero University Grant Scheme; a few are in industry working and studying.

Mobile Science Laboratory - Makomborero Zimbabwe is in the process of pioneering a Mobile Science Laboratory which will travel around high density schools giving laboratory time to Biology students. It is hoped to extend this further to another two laboratories – Physics and Chemistry. This is a great opportunity to reach out to a huge number of students.

Giving back - We are proud to be able to give back to the communities our students come from by running Revision Schools during the August school holidays, as well as blackboard painting at rural schools, around the outskirts of Harare.

Choosing to impact the poor comes at a huge cost but also requires a big step of faith. When we started Makomborero, we started with nothing – no furniture, living hand to mouth for the first TWO years. Even this year we have a budget deficit of \$50 000. But God has never let us down and we believe that if we continue to hear His call and obey, He will be faithful! At times we have doubted His call and whether we have heard right. Those were incredibly tough times but looking back we see His hand at work through it all – His grace at work through all the circumstances.

When you choose to open your hearts to the poor you choose to embark on a journey that is unknown but also incredibly rewarding. I have formed deep friendships that I never expected to make - the barrier of cultural divide being broken. We have also made mistakes but God's grace has been there!

So how is our story relevant to you?

James 2:15-16 says, *Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?*

I truly believe we are all called to impact the poor! All of us has a role to play in the lives of the poor in this nation. They are all individuals with hopes and passions, desires and dreams. It is not the big things – we are not saying to set up a charity like we have – it's in every day contact that we all have with the poor, especially when unemployment is running at 97%. Listen to the Holy Spirit, He will lead and guide you.

A few months ago a vendor approached me wanting to sell me some wire work. I didn't have cash and really didn't need anything but I felt prompted to start talking to him, find out his story, his passions, his dreams. It took about seven minutes of my time and all I gave him was compassion, a desperate prayer to God to break into his situation and a smile. I was so challenged that day – he thanked me for caring enough to talk, he said I had made his day, made him feel like he had worth, and he gave me one of his wire things – which now sits on my dining room wall. I learnt a big lesson – it's not about what we don't have to give – it is what we do have! I shed a few tears as I drove off, praying God would provide work for him somehow.

"People who really want to make a difference in the world usually do it, in one way or another. And I've noticed something about people who make a difference in the world: They hold the unshakable conviction that individuals are extremely important, that every life matters. They get excited over one smile. They are willing to feed one stomach, educate one mind, and treat one wound. They aren't determined to revolutionise the world all at once; they're satisfied with small changes. Over time, though, the small changes add up. Sometimes they even transform cities and nations, and yes, the world."

Beth Clark's Kisses from Katie, a story of relentless love and redemption.

Laura is married to Mark, mum to four wonderful kids and co-founder of Makomborero Zimbabwe.





DISABILITY AWARENESS

BY SIHLE NYASHANU

Being a mom of two amazing boys affected with different degrees of autism has brought out a side of me I wasn't aware of - enjoyment in raising the profile of issues, not only to do with autism but disabilities in general. I also never thought I would enjoy being a teacher but surprisingly enough I am almost always overwhelmed when my younger son, whom I am home schooling, gets right or applies appropriately what I have taught him. That not only gives me confidence but makes me more aware of the fact that God is faithful and His grace is sufficient for me. Disability is indeed not inability.

Disability is one of those difficult topics that the majority of us feel uncomfortable talking about yet it is a reality within our societies no matter where you come from. It is my hope that through this article our understanding and view of those affected changes and that all of us make a concerted effort to reach out to such people as well as their families.

We don't after all earn the right to be treated with respect because of our strength or our desirableness or how easy we are to care for. We have an intrinsic worth because we are on this planet, because we are alive and because God breathed life into us*.

WHAT IS A DISABILITY

This refers to a condition characterised by loss of physical functioning or difficulty in learning and social adjustment. It significantly interferes with normal growth and development. Disabilities can either be acquired (from accident or disease after birth) or are congenital (one is born with that condition).

MAJOR CATEGORIES OF DISABILITIES

INTELLECTUAL COGNITIVE DISABILITIES

This type of disability is characterised by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. Some examples of adaptive skills are communication, self-care, social skills, functional academics, health and safety and interpersonal relationships. This disability originates before the age of 18. Examples of intellectual disabilities are Autism or Down's Syndrome.

LEARNING DISABILITIES

This type of disability is manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning and mathematical abilities. The academic performance of those affected lags behind their peers, they have problems in developing learning and problem solving strategies, they also face challenges in expressive and receptive language and in addition, they may fail to master higher level skills in Maths and English. Those affected benefit from remediation and in some cases therapy or one-on-one sessions. Examples of Learning Disabilities – Dyslexia (difficulty in reading), Dyscalculia (difficulty in maths).

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

This condition interferes with an individual's ability to use his/her body or parts of his/her body. Some physical disabilities may be present at birth and others may be caused by disease or accident. An example of an assistive device that can be used is a wheelchair.

VISUAL DISABILITIES BLIND AND PARTIALLY SIGHTED

This disability refers to blindness (total loss of sight) or partially sighted persons who require assistive devices to aid and improve their sightedness. Examples of the assistive devices that can be used are spectacles for the partially sighted and a cane for the totally blind.

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

When someone is described as deaf it means they have a total loss of auditory sensitivity and use sign language as their mode of communication. Those who are hard of hearing have residual hearing which may be improved by the use of hearing aids. Those who are deaf acquire information through vision.

MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

This refers to when one is affected by more than one of the above mentioned disabilities that hinder the attainment of one's full potential.

WHERE TO GET HELP

In Zimbabwe, there are places where you can get help if your child is affected or if you are not sure, especially in conditions like

intellectual/ cognitive and learning disabilities which are not apparent to the naked eye. Assessments will give way to appropriate interventions and early intervention is the best as it increases the chances of independence!

- St. Giles Rehabilitation Centre
- Harare Hospital Children's Rehabilitation Unit
- Parirenyatwa Annexe – free assessment clinic on Tuesdays
- A few medical practitioners when it comes to other conditions which fall under intellectual disabilities like autism
- Educational psychologists
- In other places in Zimbabwe the major Government Hospitals are a good place to start as they have Rehabilitation Units in them

INTERVENTION METHODS USED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (OT)

This form of therapy focuses on promoting skill development and independence to those affected in all daily activities. Examples of activities that OT addresses vary from activities like toilet training, dressing, cutting with scissors, social skills to activities to do with leisure, home making and work.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

This form of therapy focuses on promoting mobility, function and quality of life through use of methods such as exercises and massages.

APPLIED BEHAVIOURAL ANALYSIS

This form of therapy focuses on improving socially significant behaviours through reinforcement. For example positive reinforcement (e.g. praise) after a good behaviour will make the affected child be aware of the positive reaction received and this will push the child to keep doing well. The opposite is also true.

SPEECH THERAPY

This form of therapy seeks to address all challenges related to speech and language.

REMEDICATION

This is where a child who is affected gets assistance in order to achieve expected competencies in core academic skills such as literacy and numeracy**.

Depending on how a person is affected, some may require more than one intervention method. For example, my younger son does OT activities to help in his daily living as well as Speech Therapy to address challenges he has in speech and language.

For further information or comments I can be reached on sihle.nyashanu@gmail.com

*Adapted from the book: Women on Life: A call to love the unborn, unloved and neglected.

**www.wikipedia.com

Sihle is married to Kuda and they have been blessed with two boys. She is studying for a Bachelor's in Special Education as she has a particular interest in disabilities.

Pumpkin Pie

Pumpkin pie isn't something we traditionally eat here in Zimbabwe, but seeing as this issue looks at the theme of *Thanksgiving* it makes sense to include a traditional *Thanksgiving* recipe. I'm quite sure that when you've tried it once, you'll wonder why we don't have it more often!

I always make mine with butternut instead of pumpkin because I prefer the richer sweeter flavour, so I guess it's not really pumpkin pie at all! I'm pretty sure it's completely rude to change another country's recipe and then say its improved, but I'm going to do that anyway! My apologies to any North Americans reading this.

Ingredients

- 2 cups of cooked butternut (or pumpkin if your prefer)
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 (23cm) shortcrust pastry crust



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 220°C.
 2. Whisk butternut, condensed milk, eggs, spices and salt in medium bowl until smooth. Pour into crust. Bake 15 minutes.
 3. Reduce oven temperature to 180°C and continue baking 35 to 40 minutes or until knife inserted 2cm from crust comes out clean.
 4. Allow to cool and serve with whipped cream.
- Leftovers should be kept covered in the refrigerator (if there are any).



OUR BANTING JOURNEY

BY BELINDA FERREIRA

We started the Banting diet because of my husband's health issues, which include heart problems, high blood pressure, diabetes and being overweight. It has definitely helped him. Jan's weight has come down by about 15kgs. His daily insulin dose has been halved along with his heart and BP medicines. The only downfall for us is that his cholesterol is still a bit high. Having said this, we do not stick strictly to the diet and do still have the odd carb (which is not good). We continue to see many benefits and I personally have found that my IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) is so much better, only bloating when I cheat.

I am no expert nor can I even begin to pretend that I know a lot about Banting. I have not done any courses but just tried to read up on the many Facebook and internet sites available online. I have tried to make this lifestyle change 'user friendly' for Jan and myself by adapting some of our old recipes over to a more Banting-friendly way of eating.

In a nutshell Banting, as I understand it, is cutting back on carbohydrates, starches, grains, sugars and processed food and concentrating more on nuts, seeds, non-saturated oils like butter, coconut oil and fresh cream as well as meat, veggies and salads.

There are things that we find really difficult to adjust to, like not having a wide variety of fruits. Jan especially struggles with not having bread, rice and sadza. I also find that I have to plan ahead more and do plenty of baking of Banting breads, muffins etc. over the weekends. Jan says it has a different taste, but he is slowly getting used to it.

We have found that if we have a good breakfast and dinner we really don't need or feel like snacking in between. I do however, send something with Jan for lunch so that his sugar levels stay stable.

A typical menu for us is:

Breakfast - Eggs (fried in butter), omelettes, poached or scrambled), Banting mug bread, bacon - every other day, mushrooms, tomatoes and Greek yoghurt.

Lunch - Avocado, ham, nuts or leftover meat.

Dinner - meat, (stew, steak, pork or chicken) cauliflower, avocado, salad or any Banting friendly veggies.

Snacks - nuts, biltong, cheese.

Overall, I would definitely recommend the Banting diet, not only for weight loss, but for the many health benefits we have experienced. I am by no means saying this lifestyle is for everyone, but it is one of the best we have found that works for both of us. Research, research, research and speak to your doctor or dietician to find the best way forward for you.

I thank the Lord for putting many people and Doctors in our pathway on the way to helping with Jan's health.

Belinda is a counsellor at The Christian Counselling Centre and a grandmother to eight grandchildren



Healthy Herbs

by Carola Bogezi

I first arrived in Zimbabwe for a three-month training program with the medicinal herbal garden out at River of Life Church in Westgate. Since then, I have become intensely fascinated by the world of herbs. In Zimbabwe in 2007 affordable healthcare was hard to find and pharmacies were as good as empty. The herbal clinic was flourishing and my skeptical scientific brain was forever transformed seeing the goodness of herbs with my own eyes. Whilst life in Zimbabwe was tough, the struggle we went through was a catalyst to search for what God gave us for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Everything good coming straight from nature around us!

Biblical examples

Herbal medicine is the oldest medicine known. Nobody is surprised to hear that grandmother's concoctions still work against coughs today. One hundred years ago, doctors were only for broken bones and severe diseases. Flu, coughs and many infections were successfully treated at home. The Bible teaches and encourages us to use herbs and plants for healing and restoration. In Kings we read the story of King Hezekiah's illness and how Isaiah tells him to make a poultice of fig leaves and Hezekiah recovered (2 Kings 20:7). The Bible speaks several times about the leaves of the tree being for the healing of the nations. (Ezekiel 47:12 and Revelation 22:2) The Israelites in the desert complained about the diet of manna, remembering the variety of food in Egypt - the garlic and onions (Numbers 11:5). These of course are great for flavouring but also strength-giving health foods.

Artemisia

A great example is *Artemisia annua*. *Artemisia* is a very bitter herb related to the wormwood mentioned in the Bible. It is effective in the treatment of malaria. As a traditional Chinese medicine, the herb has been successfully used for more than 2000 years to treat simple diseases like viral infections as well as severe malaria and even cancer. There is no known documentation of this causing any resistance.

Artemisinin is the active ingredient and since its isolation, the pharmaceutical industry produces semi-synthetic derivatives using dried *Artemisia* crops. These crops are also grown right here in Zimbabwe. They make billions producing synthetically what was originally discovered in nature and then try to sell their product back to those that have been growing it in their backyard. WHO

acknowledged that the extracts from the plant may even be effective against resistant strains of malaria (WHO fact sheet 271, 2002). So it is cheaper, easier to access and safer to use when growing in your back garden.

What you could do at home

Healthy living has become a trendy slogan that might tempt us to buy expensive products as food supplements from international sources. What a joy it is to see locally produced moringa powder on the shelves in the supermarkets! Does it challenge you to start growing your own 'supplements'? A moringa tree grows fast and the leaves are easily harvested. It is probably the best supplement you can get your hands on in regards to vitamins, proteins and minerals.

Growing your own Aloe vera as a first aid remedy or immune booster in some pots outside your kitchen gives your family easy access to this miracle plant. A little herb garden just outside the kitchen door flavours your favourite family meals and can be used for every-day ailments. It really is easier than you think.

Hands on

Have you ever had the feeling you are wasting your money on store-bought cough syrups? After trying every available cough syrup in the pharmacy with little result, I resorted to what I learned in those early days in Zimbabwe: Garlic honey. So far we have come through the winter months with just a few coughs, but not bad enough to keep the children home from school. And more importantly my own recipe has maintained their health and avoided chemical antibiotics.

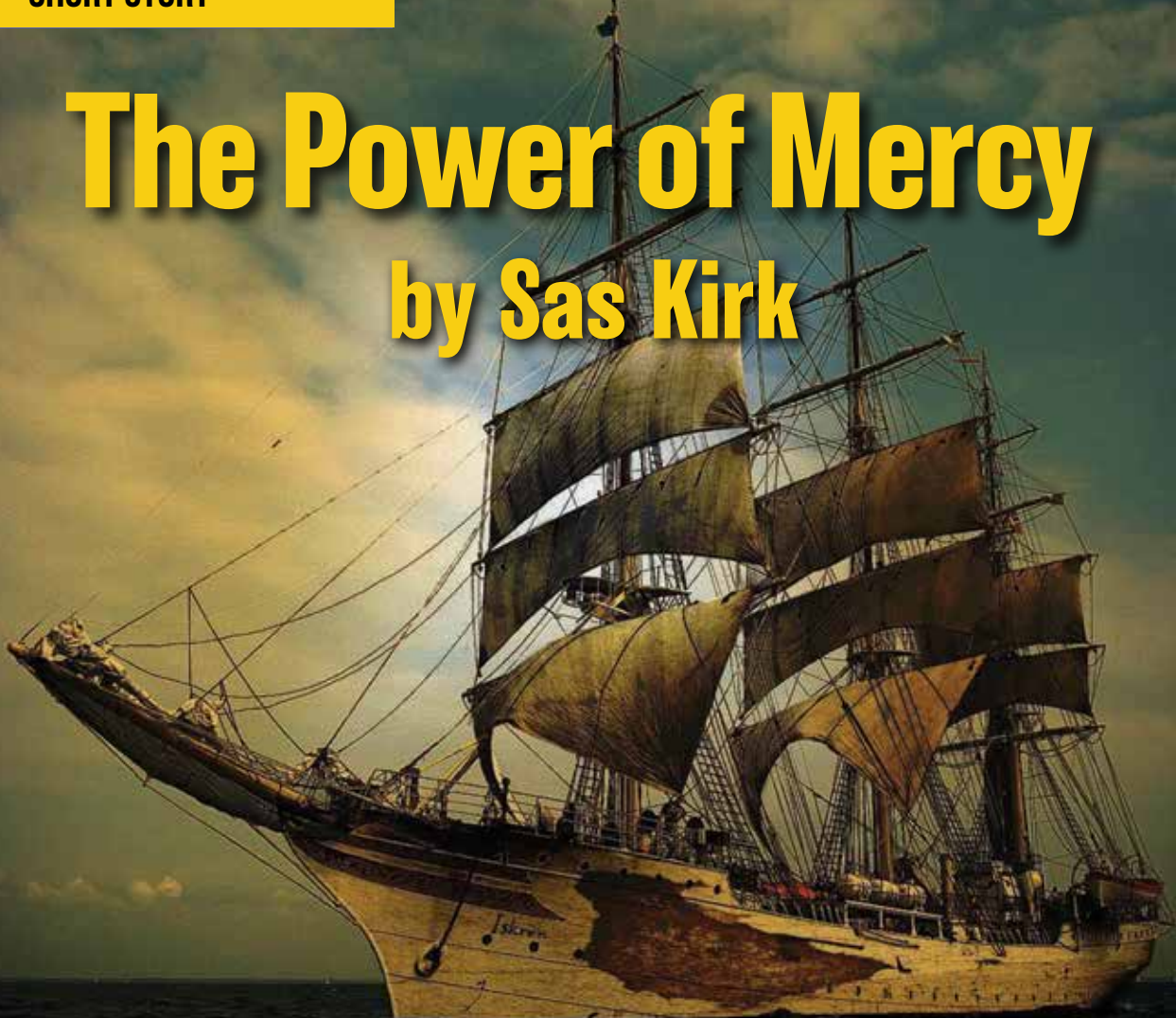
Garlic Honey Cough Syrup

1. Peel and chop enough garlic to fill a peanut butter jar to the bottom rim.
2. Pour enough honey in so as to cover the garlic
3. Leave to stand for 8 hours. The honey becomes syrup-like
4. Make a 1:1 dilution with fresh lemon juice
5. Give 5ml maintenance dose or a 2 x 5ml treatment dose a day. Make fresh every 5 days and keep in the fridge if possible

Carola, a trained molecular microbiologist, is based in Harare with her family. Her passion is to bring people to a place of wholeness using what God has given us.

The Power of Mercy

by Sas Kirk



The word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai, “Go to the great city of Nineveh, and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa and found a ship bound for that port. (Jonah 1:1-3)

The sea danced blissfully to an orchestrated jingle as the ship’s massive beams creaked out their harmony and rigging slapped an accompaniment against the masts. The ship’s massive beams creaked, the wind behind was steady and strong, pushing the vessel forward in its undulating voyage. They would reach the island within the week.

On deck, a man leaned against the sides, his gaze fixed steadily at an horizon that had already gloriously welcomed the sunrise. He had not slept and the hunger on his face spoke of a need far stronger than the measly sustenance the ship’s galley could satisfy.

“See how calm she is today. Can you believe that only three days ago we thought the storm would send us to our graves.” Another sailor had quietly approached from behind and took his stance next to his companion. He too gazed outward, toward the orange crescent that was their horizon. His face squinted into the growing light as he continued. “Zebah, for two nights you have

kept your watch here. Neither food nor sleep has relieved you. What is it that consumes you?” A pause, as if he were afraid to bring up more pain. “You were not responsible for the Hebrew’s death. We all made the decision to throw him overboard. We had no choice.” His voice faltered, as if he too could barely revisit the horror of that moment.

Zebah said nothing, his eyes straining as if to get the first glimpse of the port that lay before them. The ship had been diverted to the small island Manos, 50 miles off the coast of the great stretch known as Messapia. The crew would be hard pressed to find enough provisions to keep them fed on their remaining 500 mile journey to Tarshish. They had jettisoned everything but essentials in the midst of the raging onslaught that the sea had hurled at them. Now they steered towards safety, provisions, and a few, remarkably few, ship repairs.

Zebah straightened and swung his gaze towards his companion. His ravaged face softened as he saw the concern. “Hamu, my friend, do not fret. I see my way clearly now and the

**HE IS
LIKE NO GOD I
HAVE EVER
ENCOUNTERED**

battle that has raged for days inside me is stilled. I know what I have to do." His voice grated, as if crusted with salt, but his tone was firm and his eyes held a peace that Hamu had not ever seen in his volatile friend. Hamu dipped his head in a question and Zebah sighed and turned back to the pull of the glowing horizon. "Did it not shake you to the core, Hamu?" he murmured after a pause.

"The death of the Hebrew, yes." Hamu's voice was low. "And the miracle that came immediately after...the stilling of the wind and waves, as if a mighty hand had suddenly enclosed us and held us steady..." Hamu shuddered as the fear returned, "Such a mighty hand..."

Zebah said nothing at first. He too was engulfed with memories of that night. Finally he sighed deeply. "It was not the memory of the storm that brought me to this position over the past few days, nor the guilt of the Hebrew's death, not even the miraculous stilling of the storm." He paused, as if choosing his words carefully, "Hamu, this God that the man Jonah spoke of, the God of Heaven, who made the sea and the land... He is like no God I have ever encountered."

"Indeed," his companion nodded, "Nor I, never have I seen such might and power. Never have I known such command of our elements."

Zebah shook his head, "Not that. That is not what has moved me. Did it not strike you, Hamu, that not one life was taken, except that of the Hebrew who confessed his disobedience. Not one bone was broken, not one mast was stripped. There should have been much pain and suffering, death, injury..." He turned to Hamu again and the passion in his voice rose, "Yet here we are, all whole." Now he gripped his friend's shoulders and the urgency in his voice was raw. "What kind of God shows such over-reaching mercy? It is not His power that astounds me. It is His mercy!"

Moments passed and Zebah realised that he still had his friend in a tight grip. He laughed ruefully and released him, "Forgive me, my friend. I find this new concept baffling and I am only slowly learning how to deal with it." His face turned once more to the horizon and his voice grew thoughtful. "I know my path now, Hamu. I have seen the power of the Hebrew God, this great Creator of our world. More importantly, I have seen His mercy, His...love for unknown sailors who did not even acknowledge His existence. This is the God I want to follow. This is the one true Deity that I will commit all to." Hamu recognised the surety of his friend's words and his response was subdued. "What will you do?"

"I will go back to my people. As soon as we dock at Manos, I will get off and find another ship back to our mainland. Then I will make my long trek home, back to my own people. I want them to hear about the brave Hebrew. Mostly, I want them to hear about the merciful God he served." His voice had strengthened and it was a face of joy that swung back to Hamu. "I am determined, my friend. I will go back and share with my people the mercy of the one true God. I will go back home, to Nineveh." And the wind joyously captured and tossed heavenward the words of God's newest prophet.

Sas Kirk is a Counsellor at Chisipite Senior School.

Church Signs

"No God - No Peace? Know God - Know Peace."

"Free Trip to heaven. Details Inside!"

"Searching for a new look? Have your faith lifted here!"

"People are like tea bags - you have to put them in hot water before you know how strong they are."

"Fight truth decay - study the Bible daily."

"Dusty Bibles lead to Dirty Lives"

"Come work for the Lord. The work is hard, the hours are long and the pay is low. But the retirement benefits are out of this world."

"It is unlikely there'll be a reduction in the wages of sin."

"Do not wait for the hearse to take you to church."

"This is a ch__ ch. What is missing?" ----- (U R)

"In the dark? Follow the Son."

"Running low on faith? Step in for a fill-up."

"If you can't sleep, don't count sheep. Talk to the Shepherd."

SUDOKU

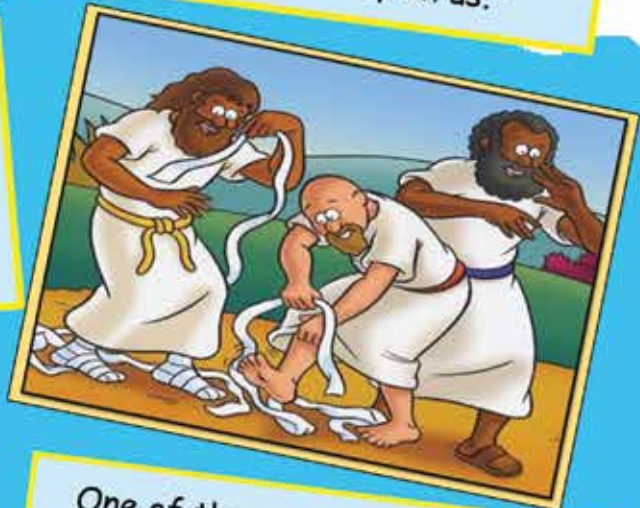
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Only one said thank you!



Jesus was making his way to Jerusalem between Samaria and Galilee. As he crossed the border and went into the village ten lepers, shouted out to Jesus, "Jesus, Master, please have mercy on us."

Looking at them he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." As they went on their way they noticed that their skin was being healed.

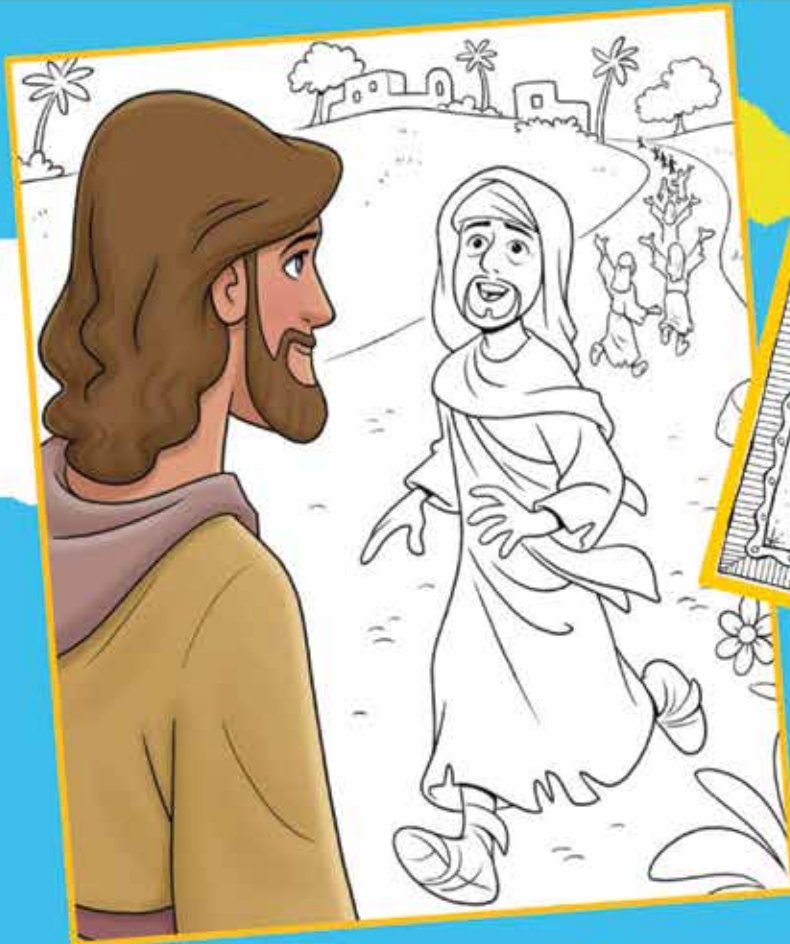


One of them, a Samaritan, was so amazed at his healing that he ran back to Jesus shouting praises to God.

He fell down at Jesus' feet and thanked Him. Jesus asked, "Ten men were made clean, weren't they? Why did they not come back to give glory to God—only this outsider came." Then he said to the cleansed leper, "Get up. Go on your way. Your faith has healed and saved you."

Are you grateful to Jesus for all He has done for you? Do you remember to thank Him?





We have so much to be grateful for. Colour and decorate the pictures and while you do –tell Jesus all the things you are thankful for.

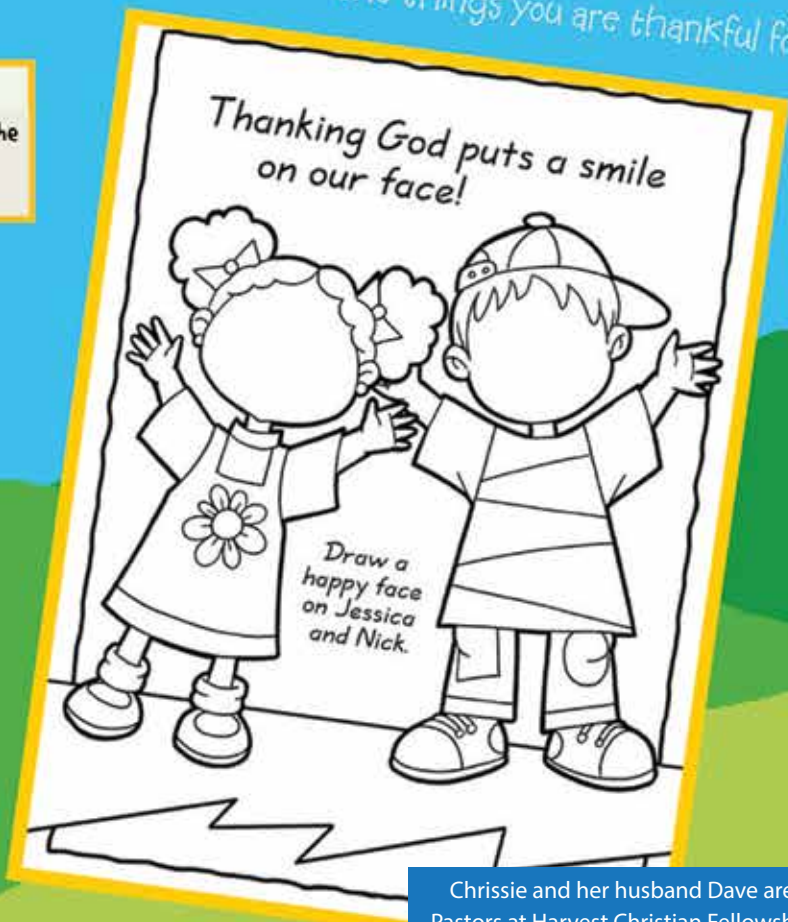


LEPROSY

.. is a skin disease. Lepers lose the feelings in their limbs.



Thank you God for everything—for family, friends and fun—But most of all for Jesus, my Saviour, Your Son.



Chrissie and her husband Dave are Pastors at Harvest Christian Fellowship.



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