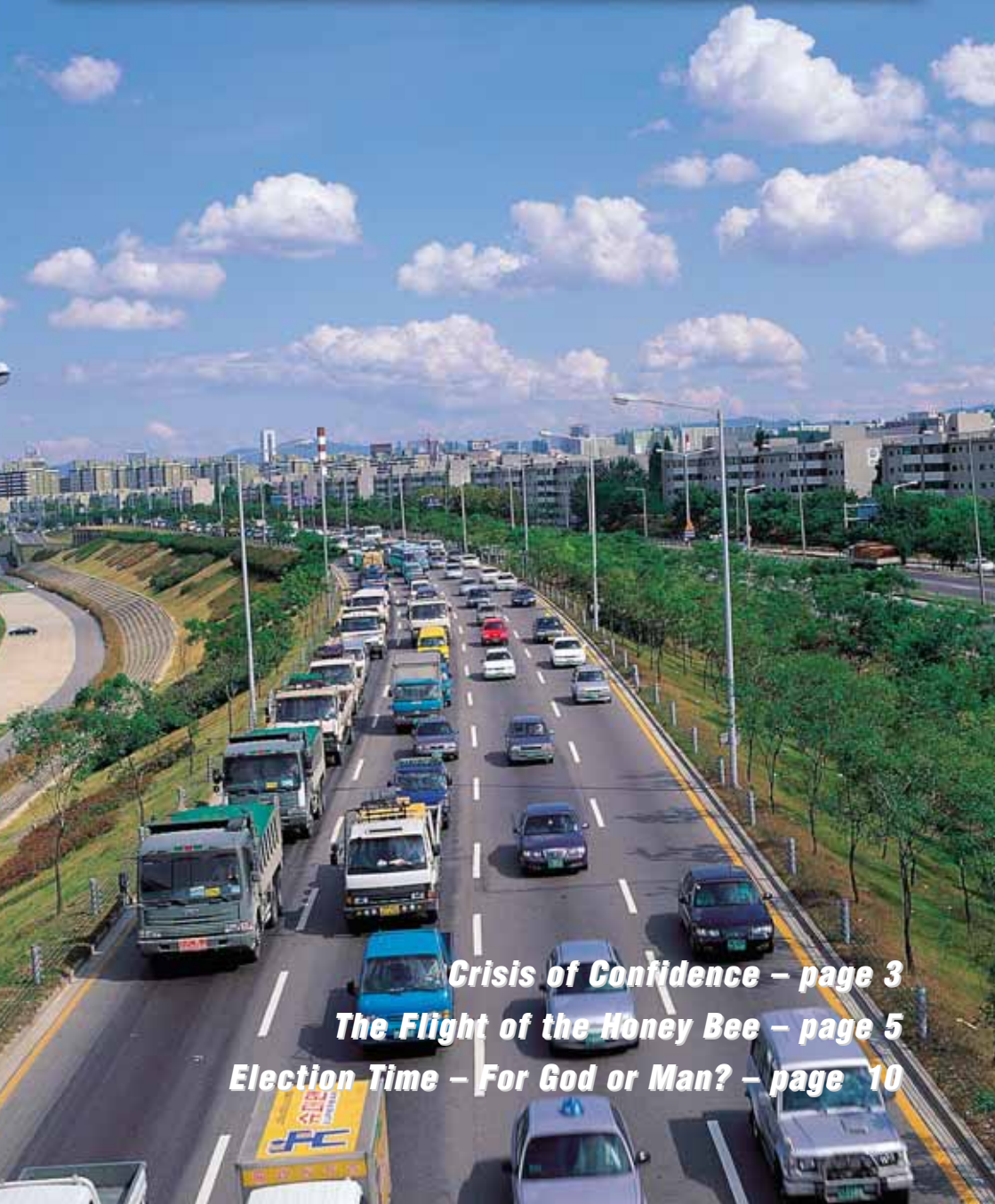


Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1512



Crisis of Confidence – page 3
The Flight of the Honey Bee – page 5
Election Time – For God or Man? – page 10

Glad Tidings

OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

124th Year

E10

1512



A monthly magazine published by the Christadelphians (brothers and sisters in Christ) and available throughout the world.

Its objectives are – to encourage the study of the Bible as God's inspired message to mankind; to call attention to the Divine offer of forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; and to warn men and women that soon Christ will return to Earth as judge and ruler of God's world-wide Kingdom.

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Crisis of Confidence

It can happen to the most successful car-producing company in the world. And it can affect the most important thing in life.

When something goes wrong, like an accident resulting from a problem that then requires a recall of thousands of cars, people lose confidence in the supplier. However big the company, however loud their assurances, however good their previous safety record – when accidents happen, especially if people are killed, things change very quickly indeed.

Most Important Thing?

For some people their car is the most important thing in life. It gets them to and from work and is the key to their leisure-time activities. For others cars are just a way of getting around and, as long as they keep going safely, all is well. So what is the most important thing in life? That's a question that has exercised thinking people over many centuries. We need to go to the Bible to find out, because the Bible is God's Word to mankind.

In the First Century the gospel of salvation spread rapidly, moving out of Jerusalem into Asia and then into Europe. Christian missionaries came up against cultures and philosophies which saw life very differently: many of the people who were encountered had their own religions and belief systems.

So how was the true gospel to be preached in a way that rang true to people who had no knowledge of all that had been happening during Old Testament times?

Finding Common Ground

The apostle Paul was a master communicator. He and his friends brought the gospel to areas where nothing was known about the Lord Jesus and all that God had achieved with him.

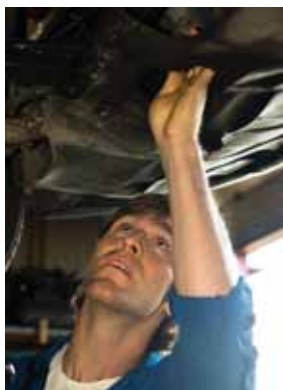
Paul used every available technique to get the message across, including trying to find common ground. On one occasion he quoted from a Greek poet who had said something about human

existence that agreed with Paul's understanding of God's purpose. Long before, the poet had written that *"in Him we live and move and have our being"* and *"We are also His offspring"* (Acts 17:28). Using that as a link, the apostle then explained that God is indeed very close to mankind and wants to have a meaningful relationship with people. But we must change our way of living for that to happen. In Bible language, we

are to:

"... Repent, because (God) has appointed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained (Jesus). He has given assurance of this to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:30,31).

Notice that Paul gives evidence to back up his challenge. God wants us to have confidence in the Bible record, and assures us that His offer of eternal



life is genuine and deliverable *because* He has raised Jesus from the dead. God doesn't expect us to believe when there are no good reasons to do so. Examine the accounts of the resurrection; think through the circumstances and the reactions of all concerned, and you might well come to the conclusion that the only thing that makes sense is that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. Many people who began as sceptics became believers when they really applied their minds to the facts.

Or examine some of the features of the natural world – like the flight of honey bees, featured in this issue – and you have real evidence of design. Things did not just happen. Examine them closely and it is obvious that they have been designed, and design is evidence for the existence of a Designer. That's how we can build up our confidence in the existence of a powerful and purposeful God.

Losing Confidence

But confidence is a fragile thing. If you can lose confidence in a motor vehicle, just because it occasionally behaves badly, you can also lose confidence in God as many people have. Something might go wrong in life, like an accident or an illness, or you might have a personal tragedy to cope with that comes on you unexpectedly. Happenings like that have caused many people to lose their faith in God. Their reasoning goes along these lines: "If He didn't solve this problem for me, He can't exist," or "He doesn't care, so I don't want to know Him".

We hope that any vehicle in which we travel is always going to obey the driver's instructions and be perfectly responsive to human command. If it acts otherwise, we lose confidence.

Nobody wants a vehicle that thinks for itself or has a mind of its own. Yet everybody wants that degree of personal freedom. We all want to make our own minds up about things. We consider freedom of choice one of the most important things in life and we have that freedom because God has given it to us.

He could have made us otherwise: programmed us to be perfectly obedient to His way of thinking; made us so that we would always love Him and love one another. But that sort of love would not have been freely given: we would have had no alternative and would have exercised no choice. God gave mankind a choice, so that we can love Him of our own free will and love one another too, if we want to. Sadly, many people have chosen to love themselves instead, and to do their own thing, which has resulted in a world full of danger and difficulty.

Not God's Fault

We cannot blame God for things that go wrong in life. Often those things are the result of decisions taken by nations or companies who are concerned about their own well-being. If a car, for example, crashes into you because of a mechanical fault resulting from poor workmanship, it cannot be God's fault. If your illness is caused by some chemical that has harmed you, it is not God who should be blamed.

The world in which we live is full of dangers and opportunities and it is for each of us to make the most of life. When all else is uncertain, we can be confident of one thing. God never breaks His Word; never fails to deliver; and will always be there for us, if we put our unreserved trust and faith in Him.

Editor

Part One

The Flight of the Honey Bee



*Evolution is taught as fact in schools and is widely accepted. On the surface it sounds like a sensible theory. However, scientists have made some astonishing discoveries in the natural world, discoveries which raise some fundamental questions about the plausibility of the theory of evolution. In this short series, **Lawrence Cave** examines just one example from nature which we believe makes it difficult for anyone with an open mind to believe in evolution.*

- ❖ Until about 15 years ago, scientists found it difficult to explain how bees can fly.
- ❖ What is more, their wings can support a cargo of pollen as well as their own weight.

Recent research has revealed some of the complex mechanisms that enable bees to fly:

1 wing movements

- ❖ bees flap their wings in a very complex and precise way;
- ❖ with each wing beat they change the angle of the wing;
- ❖ they hover, move and turn by subtle changes to this angle.

2 wing structure

- ❖ bees have two sets of wings coupled together;



- ❖ they have eight sets of muscles that move these wings in the precise way necessary for flight.

3 control in flight

- ❖ bees fly on the edge of aerodynamic instability;
- ❖ they must have complex control systems to ensure they stay in the air.



There is no evidence from the fossil record that this complex flight system gradually developed. Insects such as bees appear fully functional. Look at the facts and see if you agree that they point to a Creator.

Wing movements

The theory of the flight of aeroplanes is fairly simple compared to that of bees. Aeroplanes have fixed wings that are pushed through the air by engines. Bees do not need engines because they flap their wings. But this is not a simple action. They must move their wings up and down in a very complex manner to be able to fly.

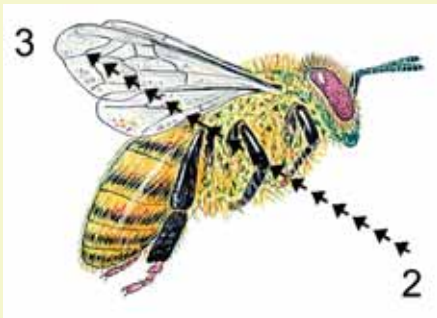
Bees are able to hover, move forwards and turn. They use their wings to control these movements.

Basic Wing Movements

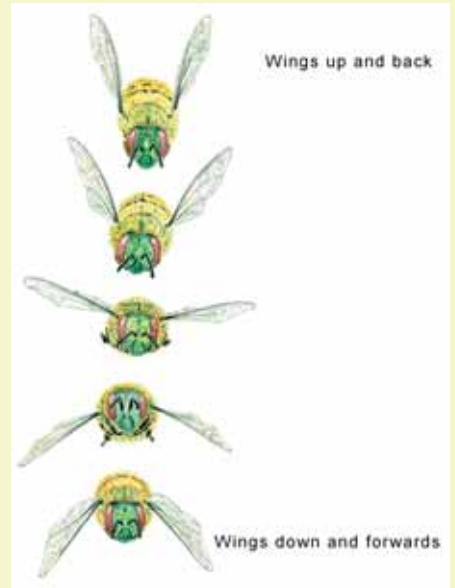
As the bee's wings move down they also move forward (from point 1 to point 2 on the diagram).



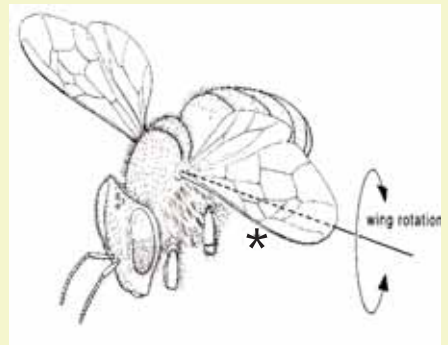
As the wings move upward they move backward (from point 2 to point 3 on the next diagram). This is the reverse of the downwards stroke.



The pictorial sequence that follows shows this cycle.



The bee is also able to rotate its wings. The diagram below shows this.

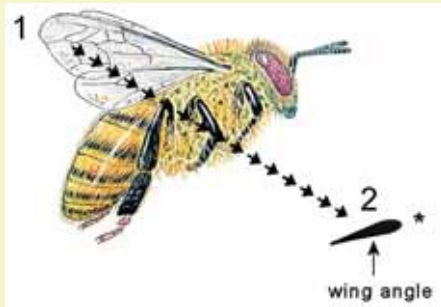


(The asterisk (*) indicates the front or leading edge of the wing.)

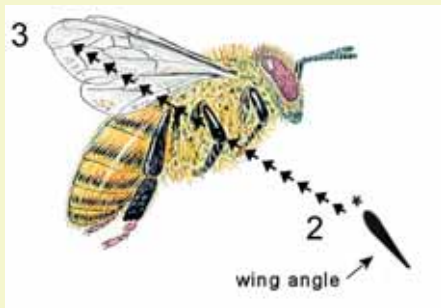
The diagrams on the next page show how the bee's wings rotate between the up and down wing strokes that we have just looked at.

More Wing Movements

On the downward stroke, as the end of the wing goes from point 1 to point 2, the front or leading edge of the wing faces forwards. (The asterisk shows the leading edge.)



On the upward stroke, as the wing goes from point 2 to point 3, the wing faces backwards (again the asterisk shows the leading edge). This gives lift on the upward stroke.



So we can see that the wing flips through approximately 120° at the end of each stroke.

The bee performs these precise wing movements a staggering 200 times a second.

Slight variations in the actual angles of the wings determine whether the bee hovers, moves forwards or turns. But there is more to honey bee flight than this! Researchers have found that

bees use no less than three other principles to gain extra lift to be able to stay airborne. These effects are too complex to explain in detail.

One mechanism is called “delayed stall”. This occurs as the insect sweeps its wings forward at a high “angle of attack”, cutting through the air at a steeper angle than that of a typical aeroplane wing. A “leading edge vortex” is formed which gives additional lift.

Additional lift is also produced when the wing rotates at the end of each beat. This effect is known as “rotational circulation”. The third mechanism to produce extra lift is called “wake capture”. As the wing moves through the air, it leaves whirlpools or vortices of air behind it. The wing is rotated before the start of the return stroke and intersects with its own wake, capturing extra uplift to keep the bee in the air.

Summary

To be able to fly, honey bees:

- ❖ *Move their wings forward on the downstroke;*
- ❖ *Move their wings backward on the upstroke;*
- ❖ *Rotate their wings correctly on both strokes;*
- ❖ *Do the above accurately 200 times a second.*

If you want to read more about these amazing complex mechanisms, try “*Form and Function in the Honey Bee*” by Lesley Goodman published by the International Bee Research Association (ISBN 0 86098 243 2). If you want to read more about the Creator of the Honey Bee, read the Bible.

Lawrence Cave

Turning the Other Cheek

I have a friend who lives in a country where people's lives have been disturbed by turmoil and bloodshed. Its political leaders seem more interested in power for themselves and rewards for their families and friends than in making things better for all. Economic weakness, ethnic and religious tensions add to the mixture. Bribery to get things done or to bend the law is widespread. Sadly, it's a familiar story in so many places.



Falling in love

As a student, Goran fell in love with a girl whose father was a wealthy man – the result of money he inherited. But Asim, we'll call him, did not work, preferring to hang around with his friends in bars, often returning home drunk. His wife and three girls regularly suffered beatings and abuse. Goran struggled to know what to do. The traditional culture of the community left a man to do what he liked with his wife and children. He discussed his ideas with me. I urged him not to take the law into his own hands, to pray about it, to seek guidance from the wisdom in the Bible about how to handle the situation.

Goran succeeded in getting Asim's wife and daughters out of the house where they had lived in terror. He married the daughter he loved and they set up home in a small apartment. But one day, while he was sitting in a café, Asim, now his father-in-law, came up and started insulting him.

Suddenly Goran lost his cool, jumped up and hit him. In the fight that followed, he injured Asim so much that he needed treatment in hospital.

My friend had won the fight but lost the battle. For now the police became involved and he found himself faced with a court appearance because of his use of excessive force. In the meantime he was harassed day and night by Asim and his friends. He realised he had made a bad mistake in attacking the man. I urged him again to seek God's help, to learn the wisdom of

Bible teaching, to consider the example of Jesus and find strength in him. When Jesus had to cope with abusive opponents he did not lash back at them:

"To sharp words he gave no sharp answer; when he was undergoing pain, no angry word came from his lips; but he put himself into the hands of the judge of righteousness" (1 Peter 2:23).

A Moral Victory

When it came to his court appearance, Goran managed to ignore the provocation thrown at him by Asim. He admitted that what he had done was wrong, even though he had done it to a man who had given so much grief to his wife's family and himself. He kept calm and simply asked the court to accept his plea of guilty. His manner so impressed the judge that he was given the lightest sentence possible.

Asim, however, continued to try to

provoke him, finally paying two men to claim Goran had pulled a gun on him. Investigation by the police proved that the claim was impossible. But Goran had to appear in court again. Asim was found guilty of mis-representation and harassment. The judge asked Goran what he wanted by way of retribution. He remembered what he had learnt from the Bible. He said that he bore Asim no ill-will, despite all that had happened. He simply wanted to be left in peace, along with his wife and her mother and sisters. The judge was impressed. Asim was given a suspended sentence but added to it was the condition that he must not go anywhere near Goran and his family. Without doubt, my friend had scored a moral victory. He has not been harassed since.

Learning Experience

It had been a hard road and a difficult learning experience. But in the end Goran had realised how much wisdom there is in the words of Jesus:

“Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

We use the phrase ‘turn the other cheek’ to describe reacting in a non-violent way to insults and attacks. We may not realise that these are the words of Jesus. Just about everything Jesus taught has its roots in the Jewish scriptures - what we refer to as the Old Testament. This was the Bible that Jesus grew up with and knew so well. The first five books of the Old Testament are known as the Torah, or the Law. Here we read:

“You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children

of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:18).

The New Testament was written soon after Jesus lived on earth and was completed by the end of the First Century. The books of the New Testament tell us about the life and teaching of Jesus and how that teaching spread. The 66 books of the Old and the New Testament taken together are ‘the Word of God’. Jesus made it clear that to understand the significance of his teaching and of his life and death we need to understand ‘the Scriptures’. After his resurrection from the dead Jesus explained to his disciples that the Old Testament had long ago predicted his life’s work:

“Before their eyes he took a meal. And he said to them, ‘These are the words which I said to you when I was still with you, how it was necessary for all the things which are in the writings of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms about me, to be put into effect. Then he made the holy Writings clear to their minds’. And he said to them, ‘So it is in the Writings that the Christ would undergo death, and come back to life again on the third day” (Luke 24:43-46).

When Jesus said this, ‘the Writings’ were the Old Testament. It is important, then, that we realise that the New Testament is built on the foundation of the Old. In those Old Testament writings we find many examples of faithful people in times past who learned how to manage in adversity and we will look at some of them next month, God willing.

Michael Owen

Quotations from the Bible in Basic English

Election Time - For God or Man?

Even the most cursory glance at the history of our planet will prove beyond any shadow of doubt that the last two centuries have seen some of the greatest changes ever in the whole of human history.

That's true whatever sphere of activity we look at: personal, political, social, industrial, religious. Or take the world of communications, or economics. Things had stayed much the same for centuries. The world was a big place and people were quite unaware of countries thousands of miles away.

One group in society or one individual would grow in power in his or her own small part of the world and would be revered or at least obeyed by ordinary people – subjects or slaves – for a while. Then things would change, often through war and bloodshed, and another ruler would assert his or her will, and take control.

Revolution!

From 1789 onwards the situation changed dramatically. Men were still seeking their own Utopia. Listen to today's politicians anywhere in the world. Each has his hope of "putting things right" and every party, in a democracy, says they will make the necessary changes. Yet the pace of change is such that any legislation is out of date almost before the ink is dry.

In many countries governments have changed from dictatorships to democracies or from monarchies to republics. "Government by the people" is now

more common in the world than ever before, so that democracy envisaged first by the Greeks well over 2000 years ago is widely championed. Yet, strangely, almost everywhere we look in the world, the authority of such people-appointed governments is under challenge, not least in the UK where a succession of revelations about wrongly-claimed MPs' expenses and financial mismanagement have seriously undermined the standing of Parliament as a whole.

All Change!

Religions too have changed. They have lost their local nature. Europe was a continent which became Christian in name at least over the centuries despite many wars. Even in Britain, which still has an established "Christian" church, the moral values of religions from the Middle and Far East compete with traditional, so-called Christian, values as if on equal terms. Western politicians today, however, speak very differently from their predecessors.

➤ **George Washington** (1732-1799) said *"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible"*

➤ **William Gladstone** (1809-1898) added *"I have known 95 of the world's great men in my time and of these, 87 were followers of the Bible. The Bible is stamped with a Speciality of Origin, and an immeasurable distance separates it from all competitors".*

Today many members of the British Parliament do not acknowledge God and even deny that He exists, despite their parliamentary sessions opening with prayer. Political parties also, with their different ideologies, set out their social and economic policies in their manifestoes. One writer somewhat cynically suggested that politics is about the acquisition of power, rather than its useful employment.

But whichever party comes into power, the only values which are taken into account are materialistic. Everything talked about is expressed in monetary terms. It all has to do with balancing the budget and getting rid of the country's huge debt. Yet these things do not even begin to address the real issues.

World Astray

The state of world affairs of whatever sort has now reached such a pass that wherever one turns there are problems of the most gigantic proportions. In:

- * **African countries** (political unrest and disease),
- * **China and Burma** (the abuse of human rights),
- * **Russia** (the strange unstable mix of communism and capitalism),
- * **Europe** (corruption and increased bureaucracy),
- * **Iran** (military dictatorship in the guise of religion),
- * **Israel and Palestine** (continuous conflict),
- * **South America and Mexico** (drug barons),



- * **Northern Ireland** (constant political and religious turmoil, despite the Peace Process),
- * **Britain** child abuse, antisocial behaviour, thieving, muggings and murder are plumbing new depths.

Many areas in the world have not only political and religious problems but also insuperable problems of poverty, famine and a rapidly increasing population.

Men and women say to me, "There cannot be a God in heaven because, if He is as good as we are given to understand then why doesn't He do something? Here is a world in the

most dreadful state - corruption, selfishness, greed, violence, unrest, drought, famine and disease - so, if He's there, why doesn't He do something?"

Divine Action

The message of the Christian gospel is that God has done so much already to remedy our individual situation and that more is yet to come! But when I tell those to whom I speak of the message of personal salvation from our sins by the willing sacrifice of Christ, they say, "Yes, that's all very well but it isn't that that I'm thinking about. It's all the unhappiness and unrest in the world, the inability of man to discover the secret of peace and harmony amongst the nations of the world. Why doesn't God, if He's listening, do something about that!"

Professor CS Lewis was right when he wrote nearly 70 years ago: "Man has tried to invent some sort of happiness for himself outside God, apart

from God. And out of all that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history – money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery – the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy”.

Christadelphians believe that two things are inextricably linked together:

- ❶ personal salvation from our flawed nature, and
- ❷ the consequent serious problems of mankind as a whole.

These two things are brought into focus together and find their solution in the work of the greatest man ever to live – Jesus Christ – and by no one else!

Coming World Ruler

The world was designed to be God-centred and there will come a time when man with his empty philosophies has to answer for choosing to forget that. Man rejects the whole idea of Jesus Christ as a judge. No one likes Jesus when he says that this way is wrong and this other way is right.

The Bible teaches us that human nature is indeed flawed and that only the God of heaven can, through the redeeming work of His Son, put that right and hence put the world to rights. But this cannot be by any democratic process. Democracy has been tried and has failed. It always results in people who are unable to rule themselves and therefore are incapable of ruling others.

True followers of Jesus Christ are not democrats at heart. Putting the world to rights is a matter of divine intervention in the political affairs of mankind, not of man striving after the wind. Just look at some of the prophecies about

Jesus Christ from the Old Testament which tell us what he is destined to do when he returns as king:

“I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to me, ‘You are my Son, Today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; you shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel’”
Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth” (Psalm 2:7-10).

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and he shall not judge by the sight of his eyes, nor decide by the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. He shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked” (Isaiah 11:1-4). (See also Daniel 7:13-14 and Zechariah 14:4,7-9).

God’s Unfinished Business

Some would discard such militant views of the Lord Jesus saying that the picture of him presented by the New Testament is quite different. But just research these passages in the New Testament:



Luke 21:25-27; Acts 1:
6-11 & 17:29-31; 2
Thessalonians 2:7-10;
Revelation 11:15-18

The whole Bible makes it clear that the Creator, the God of Israel, is to powerfully and dramatically intervene in the political affairs of mankind in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is to return to this earth to rule in righteousness. When he came last time, over 2000 years ago, he came as a sacrifice, to resolve the problem of the sinfulness of mankind just as the prophets said he would (see Psalm 22:7,8, 13-18 and Isaiah 53:3-5).

Peacemaker

Jesus, by his outstanding sacrifice, removed that apparently insurmountable barrier of sin and brought the possibility of peace of mind to individual men and women, so that we can come to God.

It is through the grace and mercy of God that my sins can be forgiven. When I have confessed and disowned them, only then can I be freed from the shackles of sin and death. And what is true for me is true for all of us.

Once we have peace with God through the saving work of Jesus the vista really opens up for us all. We can look forward to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and great glory. After detailing dreadful things that were to happen on earth – many of which we have now experienced – Jesus said this:

“... Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up

your heads, because your redemption draws near” (Luke 21:27-28).

Christadelphian Politics

These are my politics and the outcome is absolutely certain. It doesn't depend on the decisions of human governments, however appointed. For this is what the prophets of God promise:

“Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever” (Isaiah 32:16,17).

I cannot give my allegiance to any other political view. My religion and my politics are one and the same. The realisation of my hopes does not depend upon a General Election. Come what may, Jesus Christ will come. Whatever the UN decides, he will come. Whatever the European Community imposes, he will come. Whatever you personally decide about him, he will come. For the Scripture stands sure:

“The LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be – ‘the LORD is one,’ and his name one” (Zechariah 14:9).

Why don't you join all those who share the splendid hope of being a part of that glorious multitude who will welcome Jesus Christ as King when he comes to reign over the world from Jerusalem?

This is the ultimate choice: will you put your trust and confidence in God or man? We urge you to choose to follow the ways of God.

Trevor Pritchard



On Trial before Felix

*The apostle Paul had been arrested in Jerusalem by a Roman Commander who thought he was at the centre of some trouble taking place in the grounds of the Temple. He tried to find out what the problem was by inviting his accusers to state their case, but violence broke out again. Mindful of the fact that Paul was a Roman citizen, the Commander decided that he should be sent under escort to the Judean Governor at Caesarea. **John Hellawell** now explains what happened next.*

To Caesarea

The contingent of soldiers carried out the Commander's orders and escorted Paul towards Caesarea through the night.



The journey through the hours of darkness conveyed him as far as Antipatris, where the foot soldiers returned to Jerusalem, leaving the cavalry to continue to Caesarea. Arriving at Caesarea, they delivered the Commander's letter to the Governor and handed Paul over to him.

After reading the letter, Felix asked Paul from which province he came. On learning that he was from Cilicia, he informed him that he would hear the case when his accusers arrived. He then ordered that Paul should be kept under guard in Herod's palace. This almost certainly would mean that Paul

was being protected for his own safety and would be allowed to receive friends.

It may be significant that Cornelius lived in Caesarea and, as a former centurion, would no doubt have some influence in the Praetorium. Philip the Evangelist and his four prophetess daughters also lived there (Acts 21:8) and it is evident that there was a substantial group of believers in Caesarea (21:16). This would mean that although Paul would be under house arrest he could enjoy the fellowship of the brothers and sisters of the Caesarean church. At the time, it is probable that Paul would not know how long he would remain there. In fact, it turned out to be a period of two years (24:27), so it was a considerable blessing that there was a substantial community of disciples to visit him and care for his needs.

Paul on Trial again

Five days after Paul's safe arrival in Caesarea, the High Priest and some of the elders travelled there to present their case before Felix. They brought with them an advocate named Tertullus who was to act as their spokesman. It seems highly probable that Tertullus was conversant with Roman law and procedures and may have presented the arguments in Latin for the benefit of the Governor. Cae-

sarea was a Graeco-Roman city with all the benefits of the contemporary culture and civilisation and was, therefore, the obvious place for the Governor's residence

Paul's case was "called", the appropriate legal phrase, and Tertullus began to set out the case for the prosecution on behalf of the Sanhedrin, probably in Latin. Luke's transmission of the text in Greek indicates someone who was speaking in a language with which he was not at ease. This could be because Tertullus' first language was Aramaic and he was less competent in Greek, or that he was attempting to cope with Latin and when translated back into Greek by Luke, its poor quality was evident.

Flattery!

Tertullus began with a flattering opening which was intended, no doubt, to curry favour with the Governor.



"And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: 'Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to

hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us" (Acts 24:2-4).

The description of Felix's governorship presented by Tertullus, as might be expected, differs considerably from that which is portrayed by the Jewish historian Josephus and the Roman historian Tacitus! He was the brother of Pallas, the favourite freedman of Claudius. During his term of office Felix fiercely suppressed any attempt at an uprising and this made him unpopular with most of the Jews. He was recalled after a violent but ineffective intervention to quell the riots between Jews and Gentiles in Caesarea, but escaped punishment through the influence of his brother Pallas. He had three wives, all princesses. The first was the granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra and the third was Drusilla, daughter of Herod Agrippa I (see verse 24). Tacitus coined the well known epigram for Felix: *"He exercised the power of a king with the mind of a slave"*.

The Charges Made

After the opening flattery, Tertullus presented three charges. The first two were selected in order to be more meaningful to the Roman procurator rather than the original charge of defiling the Temple by encouraging a Gentile to enter. This charge is also included but is expressed in very general terms.

The charges against Paul were:

- ✓ He is a trouble maker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. Given the character and history of Felix, this would certainly be a serious charge.
- ✓ He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect. Again, mention of his being a ringleader of any potential insurgent group would interest Felix.

- ✓ He even tried to desecrate the Temple! Temple desecration was likely to cause a 'breach of the peace' and this would also concern Felix.

The first two charges would be sufficient in themselves to stimulate the interest of a Roman Governor and, even if Felix cared little for the Jewish religion, the third charge would also be a cause for concern as a potential cause of riots.

Verse 7 is absent from chapter 24 in the text of the Revised Version and modern versions such as the NIV. The text makes good sense without it, as follows:

"...who moreover assayed to profane the temple: on whom also we laid hold: from whom thou wilt be able, by

examining him thyself, to take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him" (Acts 24:6-8 (RV).

In most versions, the missing words are given in the margins and the fuller text then includes the complaint that *"the chief captain Lysias came, and with great violence took him away out of our hands"*. One might have thought it imprudent for Tertullus to complain to Felix of such behaviour on the part of a Roman centurion.

After Tertullus had completed his submission, the Jews added their comments to confirm what had been said. Then it was Paul's turn to present his defence and the Governor signalled for him to speak.

John Hellowell

The Moa and Geological Dating

The New Zealand Moa is an extinct flightless bird similar to the Emu and Ostrich.

It was however, much larger, the tallest ones reaching a height of three metres. Since modern Maoris have no historical knowledge of the Moa, it added to the belief that these birds had been extinct for tens of thousands of years.

Challenging Discovery

In 1866, in a drained swamp at Glenmark, north of Canterbury, a large collection of Moa bones were found and German geologist Julius von Haast investigated the discovery. After carrying out excavations at the site, Haast esti-



mated that the Moa became extinct about the period of the Dinosaurs. According to accepted geological dating this would place the extinction around 130,000 years ago.

When, a few years later more Moa relics were unearthed near South-bridge, at the mouth of the Rakia River, together with bones of man, Haast was obliged to change his views considerably, revising the Moa extinction to the period of Stone-Age man.

This dating also established the approximate arrival period of the earliest Maoris in New Zealand, and the extinction of the Moa was attributed to their destructive hunting methods of firing the scrub to drive the birds out into the open for mass-slaughtering.

Another Discovery

In 1872, in an excavated cave near Christchurch, Moa remains were found in strata that also included tools and implements much more sophisticated than those used by Stone-Age man. Haast, who was by this time director of the Canterbury Museum was forced again to revise his dating for the Moa extinction, to about 1100 AD.

In 1939 a fifteen year old farmer's son named Jim Eyles who lived at Marlborough, discovered nearby several graves containing human remains. In the graves were also found well-fashioned tools such as adzes, chisels, needles and fish hooks, as well as ornaments and necklaces. Also discovered in the site was a Moa egg, which, of all his finds, gave Eyles the most fame.

Rethink!

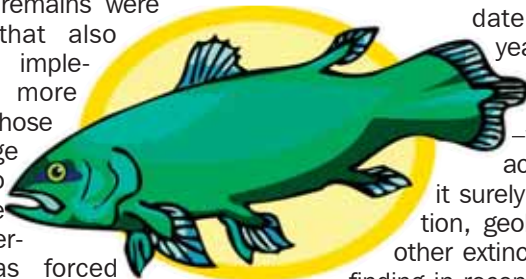
Later excavations in the area turned up bones of other creatures such as eagles, swans and crows, as well as two types of Moa. The ornaments were of Polynesian design and confirmed the earliest settlement date for the original Maoris to be about 1100 AD. This means that the extinction of the Moa could not have been very long after that period. The reason why modern Maoris have no passed-down stories about Moa hunting seems to be that they were largely crop-growers and not hunters. They are believed to have arrived in New Zealand about 1300 AD. Excavations in the North Island have revealed that living Moas of a smaller size than those in the South Island survived until the Sixteenth Century.

Be that as it may, an extinction date of only 800 years ago is a very far cry from the Dinosaur period – whenever that actually was – and it surely calls into question, geological dating of other extinct creatures. The finding in recent times of **living**

Coelacanths, once confidently stated by some geologists to have become extinct 300,000 million years ago, is another such case. This causes one to wonder how much of fossil dating generally is mostly prejudicial guesswork on the part of evolution-prone geologists.

Malcolm Edwards

Further information from the book, "Landmarks" by K.B. Cumberland (Readers Digest Books)



Attraction!

People greet one another differently all over the world. In Australia it might be “G’day”; in the US “Hi!”, in parts of Britain “Hello”, and around where I live it could be a curt “Mornin!” But the rich farmer Boaz, in whose fields Ruth had come to glean, greeted his workers much more formally.

Man of God

He met them with the words: “*The LORD be with you!*” and they answered, “*The LORD bless you.*” Those were days when there was more time to reflect and, with some people at least, more awareness of the presence of God in their lives. Nor did it take Boaz long to spot that there was an additional person present, a young lady he had not seen before. He enquired and was told:

“She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.’ So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest” (Ruth 2:6,7).

So Boaz knew that she had come following the bereavements in the family and, more importantly, that she was prepared to work hard to support herself and Naomi, her mother-in-law. He graciously encouraged her to stay in his fields and kindly permitted her to share the provision he had made for his own workers, assuring her that they would neither molest her nor harm her. There would be no need for her to go elsewhere.

Faith Rewarded

When Naomi had suggested that Ruth should return to her own family and not leave Moab, Ruth had made a pledge of loyalty, both to Naomi and to the God of Israel. She had said:

“Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God” (Ruth 1:16).

Now, from the lips of Boaz, came a response to that pledge:

“All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!” (2:11,12).

The book of Ruth teaches us powerfully that when we truly trust in God that trust is never misplaced.

Generous Treatment

Ruth was to become acutely aware that although she was not of Israel, nor one of Boaz’s maidservants, she was being graciously treated. For when they broke for their meal which consisted of bread, or perhaps just parched grain, dipped in sour wine, not unlike vinegar, she was invited. Gleaners would have been tolerated, for the Law allowed the poor to gather what they could, but

ordinarily they would not have been invited to eat with the workers.

Boaz was clearly attracted to Ruth and gave further generous instructions so that she would have a profitable day. She was allowed to glean amongst the sheaves, which would not normally have been allowed, and the reapers were actually to drop some for her. So, by the end of the day she had about an ephah, or half a bushel of barley, beaten out, ready to take home to Naomi. Twenty two litres of barley would keep them going for some time. Their home would not be as empty as Naomi had declared on their return when she said that they had gone away full and come home empty.

Motherly Advice

Not surprisingly, Naomi was more than a little curious about where all this food had come from when Ruth returned that evening. Having grown up amongst such customs, she must be well aware of what might be expected from a day's gleaning, and an ephah of barley was far more than usual. Asked about where she had spent the day gleaning, Ruth could only tell her that the owner's name was Boaz, and that meant much to Naomi. At once she recognised the hand of the LORD God at work.

"Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!' Naomi also said to her, 'The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers'" (Ruth 2:20).

Redeemer?

We ought to ponder the word "redeemer" for a moment. The Hebrew word *ga-al* has the sense of one who

would buy back, as one might buy back property lost to a family, or one who might marry a widow. It is a word which occurs frequently in Leviticus chapters 25 and 27 in connection with the redemption of property.

Taking care not to rush things, Naomi listened as Ruth told her of Boaz's instruction only to glean in his fields, with his young men. The advice to Ruth was *"It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted"*. Did Naomi think that such proximity to Boaz, probably older than Ruth, would give both opportunities to learn to appreciate each other's sterling qualities? Whatever it was, the arrangement continued through both barley and wheat harvests, possibly even into early June.

The whole harvest period might have lasted up to two months, but when it was over Naomi, anxious for her daughter-in-law as much as for herself, sensed that a little intervention was needed. Her words are telling, for she clearly wanted the best outcome for Ruth:

"My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you?" (3:1).

She wanted the best outcome for Ruth, that she might have rest from all her labours. God wants to give us rest too, as the New Testament explains:

"So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his" (Hebrews 4:9,10).

As things worked out, God had indeed rest in mind for both Ruth, Naomi and Boaz.

Mark Sheppard

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