

HOUSE TO HOUSE

Heart to Heart



“... from house to house... with gladness and singleness of heart...” (Acts 2:46).

Volume 11, Number 2

A publication
of the...
churches of
CHRIST

Founder: Christ – Mt. 16:18

Place: Jerusalem – Isa. 2:1-3, Acts 2:5

Time: A.D. 33 – Dan. 2:44, Acts 2

Head: Christ – Eph. 1:22

Organization:

Christ as head – Eph. 5:23

Elders oversee local church –
Heb. 13:17, Titus 1:5

Deacons as servants –
Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3:8-13

Members compose body –
Col. 1:2

Name (group):

Church of God – Eph. 3:15

Body of Christ – Eph. 1:22-23

Churches of Christ – Rm. 16:16

Bride of Christ – Rm. 7:4

Name (individuals):

Disciples – John 15:8

Saints – Rm. 1:7

Brethren – Lk. 8:21

Children of God – Gal. 4:26

Christian – Acts 11:25-26

Creed: Jesus/Bible – Acts 8:37

Rule of Faith & Practice:

Word of God – 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Worship: Jn. 4:24

Sing – Eph. 5:19

Pray – Acts 2:42; 1 Thes. 5:17

Teach – Acts 5:42

Communion – 1 Cor. 1:23-26

Contribute – 1 Cor. 16:1-2

Mission: Save Souls – 1 Tim. 4:16

Warning: Be Faithful – 2 John 9

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GOD



hath put all things
under Christ's feet,
and gave him to be the

head over all things to the church

Read Ephesians 1:15-23

Got Grace?

Allen Webster

The hungry prodigal knew his rich father wouldn't go to bed without supper that night. *He would.* The more he thought of it, it dawned on him that nobody on his father's farm would fall asleep with a growling stomach. *He would.* Even his father's servants had "bread enough and to spare" (Luke 15:17). *He didn't.*

Since the *father* in the parable represents the *Father* in the Bible, we can draw some interesting conclusions from the phrase—"bread enough and to spare." God has never been stingy with His blessings. He "...giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not" (James 1:5; cf. 1:17). Take bread, for instance. When Israel's children needed some in the wilderness, they had all the manna they wanted: "Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer¹ for every man . . ." (Exodus 16:16). When a widow shared what she thought was her last meal with Elijah, God refilled her meal barrel and—no matter how much she dipped out—it stayed full until the famine ended (1 Kings 17:15-16). When Jesus fed 5,000 men (plus women and children), the famished people ate all they wanted and still had twelve baskets left (Matthew 14:20). When He "opened His buffet" to 4,000 another day, they, too, ate their fill² and had seven baskets extra (Matthew 15:37).³

When we think of man and see the magnitude of his sin, we can hardly understand how a single sinner can be saved; but when we think of God, and see the magnitude of His love, we can hardly understand how a single one could be lost. Have you considered that God loved sinners better than He loved His own Son? "How can you say that," you ask? He "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Romans 8:32), but He spares sinners. He poured out His wrath upon His Son and made Him (the Innocent) the substitute for sinners, that He might lavish love upon us (the guilty) who deserved His anger.

Since God "freely gives us all things" (Romans 8:32) and withholds "no good thing . . . from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11), what can we count on when we make the journey back to our Father from the far country?

After all these years, is there still "bread enough" on God's table of grace? Isaiah issued this invitation twenty-seven centuries ago: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (55:7). It still stands. God offers "abundant grace" (2 Corinthians 4:15) and "abundant mercy" (1 Peter 1:3; cf. Titus 3:5-6), yea, "exceeding abundant" (1 Timothy 1:14); He is able "to save them to the uttermost"⁴ that come to Him (Hebrews 7:25). Peter said "an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly⁵ into the everlasting kingdom . . ." (2 Peter 1:11). Paul concluded: "Where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound"⁶ (Romans 5:20).

Let's put this "plenteous grace" to the test in a real world of really bad sinners. Did God live up to His promises?

▶ The **publicans and sinners** were acknowledged (by others) and admitted (by themselves) as notorious transgressors of God's Law. Yet when they came to Jesus, they always found "grace enough and to spare" (cf. Luke 15:1-2). More than any other group, they satiated themselves with the Bread of Life (John 8:12; cf. Matthew 9:10-11; 11:19; Mark 2:15-16; Luke 5:30; 7:34).

▶ Take the cases of the **sinful woman** whose reputation (quite literally) followed her (Luke 7:36-50) and **the woman who got caught in bed** with someone not her husband (John 8:1-11). Would grace cover such scandal? Yes! Both found that Jesus had grace enough to cover their fleshly—but forsaken—sins.

▶ What about a **traitor**—one of the inner circle who forsook the Lord "with his eyes open," even after he had been warned (Matthew 26:34)? Peter was all these; he denied his Master three times the night the Friend of Sinners most needed a friend. He cursed and swore that he did not even know "the man" (Matthew 26:72). Could grace cover such a high-handed misdemeanor? Yes. Jesus forgave Peter. But surely he was on probation; certainly he was counted second-rate . . . damaged goods. No, less than two months later, Jesus tapped him to be the keynote speaker at the greatest revival of all time (Acts 2). He featured him as the key character of the first half of Acts of Apostles, used him to write two Scripture books, and placed him as an elder in a local congregation (1 Peter 5:1-2).

▶ Those on **whose hands God saw crimson stains** that matched His Son's blood-type were told: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). Three thousand washed their hands "in the fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins" that very day (2:41; cf. Zechariah 13:1), and many others took Him up on His offer in coming weeks (Acts 2:47). It would be hard to imagine a case today that would equal that of the Pentecost sinners.

▶ What about **moral delinquents**? Without doubt, perverts, swindlers, and drunks are not welcome at the Father's banquet, right? Again, we find they are—provided they are penitent. Paul wrote of some who had been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals,⁷ thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). But, by God's grace, they had been "washed . . . sanctified . . . justified" (6:11).

No one has gotten up from God's table still needing a snack of grace. Is your case a difficult one? Have your sins been shocking and frequent? Are your spiritual diseases strange and complex? Consider He who made the earth, stretched out the heavens like a tent to dwell in, has no bound to His strength, nor limit to His might.⁸ In six thousand years,⁹ He has never failed at anything—will His first failure be saving you? Will you prove too strong for omnipotence, boggle the omniscient mind, or be unlovable for omni-benevolence? If He made you (Genesis 1:28), He can remake you (2 Corinthians 5:17). If He claims you (2 Cor. 6:18), He can cleanse you (Acts 22:16). "His hand is not shortened that it cannot save . . ." (Isaiah 59:1).

Endnotes:

¹ *omer*, is literally, "a heap." It could also be translated "a sheaf."

² *chortazo*, "to gorge; supply food in abundance."

³ Since Jesus knew all things, could He not have prepared "just enough?" Perhaps these nineteen baskets are in the Bible just to show us that God always gives extra.

⁴ *panteles*, "entire, completion." ⁵ *plousios*, "copiously, richly."

⁶ There is a beautiful play on words that is not immediately seen in the translation. The first "abound" (*pleonazo*) means, "be more, increase." The second "abound" is a different word (*hyperperisseuo*). It is a compound word made up of *hyper*, "over, above, beyond," and *perisseuo*, "to superabound, be in excess, be superfluous." Thus this word is an intensified hyperbole carrying the meaning, "to be beyond excess."

⁷ The phrase "abusers of themselves with mankind" translates the word *arsenokoites* which taken literally means, "two males on a couch." It refers to sodomites.

⁸ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Miracles and Parables of our Lord*.

⁹ Since creation, but you could say ten billion times ten billion. He is eternal, of course.

THINK ON GOOD THINGS

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Before We Judge Others

Heavenly Father,

Help us remember that the jerk who cut us off in traffic last night is a single mother who worked nine hours that day and is rushing home to cook dinner, help with homework, do the laundry, and spend a few precious moments with her children.

Help us to remember that the pierced, tattooed, disinterested young man who can't make change correctly is a worried 19-year-old college student, balancing his apprehension over final exams with his fear of not getting his student loans for next semester.

Remind us, Lord, that the scary looking bum begging for money in the same spot every day (who really ought to get a job!) is a slave to addictions that we can only imagine in our worst nightmares.

Help us to remember that the old couple walking annoyingly slow through the store aisles and blocking our shopping progress are savoring this moment, knowing that, based on the biopsy report she got back last week, this will be the last year that they go shopping together.

Heavenly Father, remind us each day that, of all the gifts you give us, the greatest gift is love. It is not enough to share that love with those we hold dear. Open our hearts not to just those who are close to us, but to all humanity.

Let us be slow to judge and quick to forgive, showing patience, empathy, and love.

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ..." —Matthew 7:12

GOD'S PLAN FOR SAVING MAN

God's Grace	— Ephesians 2:8
Christ's Blood	— Romans 5:9
The Holy Spirit's Gospel	— Romans 1:16
Sinner's Faith	— Acts 16:31
Sinner's Repentance	— Luke 13:3
Sinner's Confession	— Romans 10:10
Sinner's Baptism	— 1 Peter 3:21
Christian's Work	— James 2:24
Christian's Hope	— Romans 8:24
Christian's Endurance	— Revelation 2:10



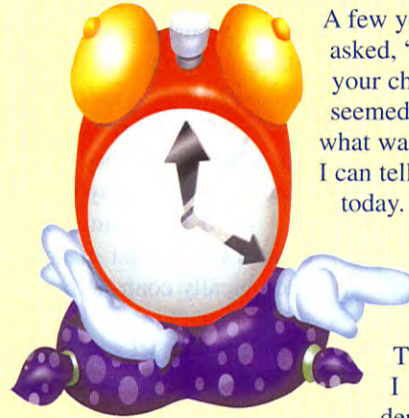
Fireflies

Two boys from the city were on a camping trip. The mosquitoes were so fierce the boys had to hide under their blankets to keep from being bitten. Then one of them saw some lightning bugs, and said, "We might as well give up, they're coming at us with flashlights!"

"A merry heart doeth good ..."

—Proverbs 17:22

What Time Is It?



A few years ago, there was a commercial which asked, "It's 10 o'clock; do you know where your children are?" This commercial has always seemed to stick in my mind. I could not tell you what was being advertised in the commercial, but I can tell you that it has a real application in lives today. For many today the time in their lives is 10 o'clock, and soon their souls will be required. Perhaps we are nearing 10 o'clock ourselves. Do we know where we are?

The lifespan of a person is around 74 years. I am sure that this fluctuates somewhat depending upon location or vocation, but

this is the average age. Moses wrote about the brevity of life, "For it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10). The point is this: Man at best will not be here long, and truthfully is not guaranteed a moment. The clock may stop at any time. I can name friends who have passed from this life before they really had a chance to begin to live. Many of those, unfortunately, had not made preparation for the life after this one and will be lost, and so will we if we lay not up treasures in heaven.

Perhaps we think that we will live long enough to make things right. That is a great risk. The time to be saved is now for each one of us. Someone has made a mathematical parallel of the lifespan with a 24 hour day. It is as follows; see what time it is in your life.

- ▶ If you are 15 years old..... it's 8:51 a.m.
- ▶ If you are 20 years old..... it's 11:08 a.m.
- ▶ If you are 25 years old..... it's 12:25 p.m.
- ▶ If you are 30 years old..... it's 1:25 p.m.
- ▶ If you are 35 years old..... it's 2:59 p.m.
- ▶ If you are 40 years old..... it's 4:16 p.m.
- ▶ If you are 45 years old..... it's 5:43 p.m.
- ▶ If you are 50 years old..... it's 6:50 p.m.
- ▶ If you are 55 years old..... it's 8:08 p.m.
- ▶ If you are 60 years old..... it's 10:00 p.m.
- ▶ If you are 70, you are getting near..... MIDNIGHT

While we are not all 60-years-old, I will repeat the earlier question. "It's 10 o'clock; do you know where **you** are?" How many people have wondered where the time went? James 4:14 shows the brevity of life in certain terms, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is a vapour, that appeareth for little time, and then vanisheth away." It is my hope that you will make the most of today and look to God for salvation.

—Daniel F. Cates, Philadelphia, Mississippi

Why people go to church

Some go to church to laugh and talk. Some go there to smirk and balk. Some go there to meet a friend. Some go with time to spend. Some go there to meet a bride. Some go there a fault to hide. Some go there for speculation. Some go there for observation. Some go there to doze and nod. The wise go there to worship God.

"... worship God" —Revelation 22:9

The  HOME  PAGE

Train Up a Child

The Hebrew phrase “train up” came from farming terminology, which referred to training a tree or vine to grow in a particular shape or direction.

If you have ever been to Disney World, you have seen those fascinating shrubs shaped like animals and various Disney characters. Recently, I had the privilege of going backstage at Disney World, and I saw how those bushes were formed. Of course, those bushes don't grow that way by themselves! (Even Disney doesn't have that kind of magic).

Over a ten-to-fifteen-year period, from the time those bushes are planted, they are shaped, trimmed, pruned, and “trained” in the way that they should go. Some parts are removed, other parts are cultivated, and still other parts are trimmed away; finally, the entire plant conformed to a wire mesh in the shape of the desired animal or character.

That is exactly the process by which we are to train our children. It must begin early. To put it another way, “If you wait till they date, it's too late.”

—James Merritt

“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it . . .”

—Proverbs 22:6

Just Trying to Help . . .

The preacher was walking down the street one day when he noticed a very small boy trying to press a doorbell on a house across the street. The boy wasn't very tall and the doorbell was too high for him to reach. After watching the boy's efforts, the preacher stepped across the street, walked up behind the little fellow, and, placing his hand kindly on the child's shoulder, leaned over and gave the doorbell a solid ring. Crouching down to the child's level, the minister smiled and asked, “And now what, my little man?” The boy replied, “Now we run!”

“Rejoice evermore” —1 Thessalonians 5:16



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

Is Your Marriage Going Broke?

Have you noticed that newspapers report that personal debt is at an all-time high and so are divorces? Do you think there might be a connection? In marital surveys, money and usually come up as the top two reasons for major discord between a husband and wife. Not only are there more divorces, couples are also calling it quits much earlier in their marriage than ever before.

One of the biggest problems facing couples today is the huge amount of debt they bring into their marriage. One sure-fire way to ensure a rocky start for a marriage is to have tens of thousands of dollars in debt (from student loans, credit cards, or other bills). Even a thousand dollars in debt can cast a dark cloud over your relationship if you don't have the means to repay it quickly.

Consider the rate of suicide during the Great Depression. The stresses of mounting debt have pushed people to take their own lives and have been a major cause in the death of many, many marriages.

If you want to have a blissful relationship, you will need to get your debt under control (or at least make a plan to do so). Otherwise, your debt will physically and psychologically control you. Here are some tips for getting and staying out of debt.

- ▶ When you get a paycheck, the first thing you do is set aside money for God. Doesn't seem logical but it works (Proverbs 3:9-10).
- ▶ Sit down with your partner and discuss all aspects of your family budget. Only when you analyze your spending habits will you fully realize where you are wasting money. It's a great opportunity to talk about your goals and dreams (1 Peter 3:7).
- ▶ Realize that frivolously spending money can be a sign of disrespect for your marriage and mate (cf. Proverbs 21:5).
- ▶ If you would like a bigger diamond ring or a fancier car, ask yourself why (Proverbs 21:17).

Take a quick inventory of all the items you own but could really live without. Consider how much you paid for them. What if you didn't buy those items and had all that money in savings instead? Would it make a difference in how you view your job, your family, and your future?

—adapted www.50secrets.com

Celebrate Your Mate

Do you struggle to suppress a yawn when your spouse crows about a hole in one? Here's a reason to summon up some enthusiasm: Reacting positively to your spouse's good news strengthens your relationship.

Researchers at UCLA found that when spouses respond supportively to their partner's happy news, husbands and wives are significantly more likely to feel that their marriage is satisfying, intimate, and fun. According to author Shelly Gable, an appreciative response “allows the one celebrating to relive the experience.” That ego boost creates tender feelings toward the supportive partner.

“But it isn't enough to listen passively,” adds Gable. Even if you aren't a golf fan, show you're happy—hug your mate or give a high five. Then everyone scores.

—Ladies' Home Journal (January 2005)

Cheap Medicine

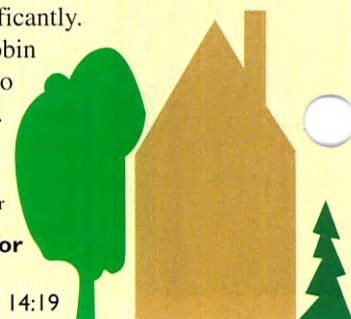
Hugging is the cheapest medicine available to us today. It relieves many physical and emotional problems. I love the bear hug where you use both arms, face your partner, and perform a full embrace. Researchers discovered that when people are touched, the amount of hemoglobin in their blood increases significantly.

(Helen Colton, author of *The Joy of Touching*.) Hemoglobin is part of the blood that carries vital supplies of oxygen to all organs of the body—including the heart and the brain. An increase in hemoglobin tones up the whole body, helps prevent disease, and speeds recovery from illness.

—Sandra Schrift, “Monday Morning” newsletter

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another”

—Romans 14:19





Can a Person Know She is Saved?



Although it may sound arrogant to say, "I know I am saved," the Bible teaches that one can be confident of salvation. The Christian can know that heaven awaits. John wrote, "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that

believe on the name of the Son of God; **that ye may know that ye have eternal life**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:11-13). Christians can know that they have eternal life!

Having confidence in salvation results from learning and submitting to God's will. John wrote, "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3). Thus a Christian can be sure that he has salvation—that he "knows" the Father—if he obeys Christ. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus asked him, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God**" (John 3:3-5).

One is "born again"—"born of water and Spirit"—when he is baptized into Christ. His sins are washed away, and he is a new creature in Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Thus begins a life-long journey of the "babe in Christ" growing into a mature Christian (1 Peter 2:2; Galatians 5:22-23). No Christian is perfect. We still sin, but God forgives these mistakes as we confess and forsake them (1 John 1:8-10). God requires a forgiving attitude of Christians (Matthew 6:12-15); He is a forgiving Father for His children.

Salvation does not depend on how few sins or mistakes we make, but upon whether we accept God's grace and are obedient to Christ. As we continue to serve Christ, the Lord continues to forgive us. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:5-7). If we walk in the light, following the Gospel, His blood continues to cleanse us of sin.

Many Christians have doubts because they are moving backward instead of maturing. This often happens when a person does not give his whole heart to Christ. Jesus said, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:24). **The person who tries to live as a Christian while not fully surrendering his life to Christ must have doubts because he is walking partly in the light and partly in the dark.**

—Bob Prichard, P. O. Box 3071, Oxford, AL 36203



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Send us your answers (address on front). We'll grade and return all entries and randomly select one to receive a Bible, New Testament cassettes, or Bible Dictionary.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Questions Taken from the King James Version

Starts with the Letter "O"

Find answers in Exodus 16:16; 28:9-12; Leviticus 11:13; Numbers 11:5; Deuteronomy 3:1, 8; Judges 3:9-11; Ruth 1:14-15; 2 Samuel 18:9; 1 Kings 6:33; 16:24; Proverbs 15:17; 23:22; Ecclesiastes 7:1; Nehemiah 6:2; Obadiah 1:1; Matthew 28:20; John 3:16; 17:20-21; Acts 1:12; Romans 12:21; Ephesian 5:2; 2 Timothy 1:16; Philemon 1:10-17; Hebrews 1:9; 5:9; James 3:2; Revelation 1:8, 11 (not in order).

1. _____ Type of tree Absalom's hair caught in
2. _____ A prophet who spoke against Edom
3. _____ Amorite king of Bashan
4. _____ Type of tree the temple posts made from
5. _____ Last letter of the Greek alphabet
6. _____ King of Israel who built Samaria
7. _____ Slave of Philemon; converted by Paul
8. _____ Refreshed Paul when he was in prison
9. _____ Food Israelites missed in the wilderness
10. _____ Plain where Sanballat wanted to meet Nehemiah
11. _____ Type of stone on the priest's ephod
12. _____ Ruth's sister-in-law
13. _____ An unclean bird under the Old Testament law
14. _____ First judge of Israel
15. If any man _____ not in word, the same is a perfect man.
16. Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an _____ and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.
17. God anointed Christ with the _____ of gladness.
18. A good name is better than precious _____.
19. "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled _____ and hatred therewith."
20. "Be not _____ of evil, but overcome evil with good."
21. For God so loved the world, that he gave his _____ begotten Son.
22. Christ is the author of eternal salvation unto all that _____ him.
23. "Teaching them to _____ all things whatsoever I have commanded you."
24. Christ ascended back to heaven from the Mount of _____.
25. Despise not thy mother when she is _____.
26. _____ Amount of manna each was to take.
27. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be _____."

Answers to Last Issue: Starts with the Letter "N": 1. Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-11); 2. Nabal (1 Samuel 25:1-11); 3. Naboth (1 Kings 21:1-4); 4. Nadab (Leviticus 10:1-7); 5. Nahum (Nahum 1:1); 6. Nails (John 20:25); 7. Nain (Luke 7:11-17); 8. Naomi (Ruth 1:14-19); 9. Nathan (2 Samuel 12:1-15); 10. Nathaniel (John 1:47); 11. Nazareth (Luke 2:39-51); 12. Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:11-13; Daniel 1:1-3); 13. Needle (Matthew 19:24); 14. Neglect (Hebrews 2:3); 15. Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:1+6:15); 16. Nehushtan (2 Kings 18:4); 17. Neighbor (Matthew 22:39); 18. Net (Proverbs 29:5); 19. Never (Hebrews 13:5); 20. New (John 13:34); 21. Nicodemus (John 3:1-12); 22. Night (Revelation 22:5); 23. Nimrod (Genesis 10:6-9); 24. Nineveh (Jonah 1:1-2+3:5-9); 25. Ninth hour (Matthew 27:46); 26. Noah (Genesis 6:1-8:17); 27. Noad (Genesis 4:16-17); 28. Nose (Proverbs 30:33); 29. Nothing (1 Corinthians 13:3); 30. Now (2 Corinthians 6:2).



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Nobody Made It?

Sir Isaac Newton once had an exact replica of the solar system made in miniature. At its center was a large golden ball representing the sun, and revolving around it were small spheres attached at the ends of rods of varying lengths. They represented Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, and the other planets. These were all geared together by cogs and belts to make them move around the "sun" in perfect harmony.

One day as Newton was studying the model, a friend who did not believe in the biblical account of creation stopped by for a visit. Marveling at the device and watching as the scientist made the heavenly bodies move on their orbits, the man exclaimed, "My, Newton, what an exquisite thing! Who made it for you?" Without looking up, Sir Isaac replied, "Nobody." "Nobody?" his friend asked. "That's right! All of these balls and cogs and belts and gears just happened to come together, and wonder of wonders, by chance they began revolving in their set orbits and with perfect timing."

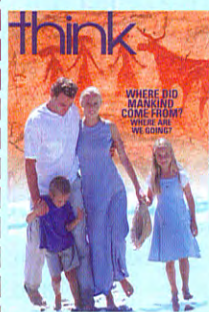
The friend got the message. It was foolish to suppose that the model merely happened (Psalm 14:1), but it was even more senseless to accept the theory that the earth and the vast universe came into being by chance. How much more logical to believe what the Bible says, "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).



Free Downloads!

- ▶ God's Presence with Us; Bible Inspiration, Guy N. Woods
- ▶ The Seven Sayings of Jesus on the Cross, Wendell Winkler
- ▶ Does God Hear Me When I Pray? Wade Webster
- ▶ John 3:16; The Blood of Christ, George DeHoff
- ▶ Just Say "Yes" to Jesus, Allen Webster

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In the Interest of Christian

UNITY



Tell Me More About

ESUS

The "Island" Approach



Is it possible to simply be a Christian today, in the 21st century? Can we avoid being entangled in and weighed down by all the trappings and innovations of man which have found their way into religion over the past 2000 years?

I believe the answer is "yes," and it can be accomplished by taking an "island approach" to Christianity. What do I mean by that? Suppose there was an isolated island filled with people who knew nothing of Jesus. However, one day a chest washed ashore and contained therein was a copy of the Bible. The islanders began reading this book with great interest. After careful study, they came to the point of faith, turned from their sins, confessed their faith in Jesus as the Son of God, were baptized into Christ, and began worshiping God together and committing themselves to the moral standards contained in the Scriptures.

Question: What denomination were these islanders when they obeyed the Gospel? What "brand" of Christian were they? It is a silly question, isn't it? They would not be a part of any denomination, sect, or party. They would simply be Christians, and Christians only. Friends, if people on an isolated island can be "Christians Only," then why can't we be "Christians Only" in our communities? The fact is, we can. However, it will require that we do what they did: open the Bible and unite on what it teaches, leaving behind those practices and doctrines that are not found therein.

—Steve Higginbotham, Glasgow, Kentucky

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me . . ." —John 17:20-21

Parting with Tradition

Bayer Corporation has stopped putting the cotton wads in their Genuine Bayer bottles. The company realized the aspirin would hold up fine without the maddening white clumps, which it had included since about 1914. "We concluded there really wasn't any reason to keep the cotton except tradition," said Chris Allen, Bayer's vice president of technical operations. "Besides, it's hard to get out." Longstanding traditions in the church often create more hardship than help. —Citation: Ed Rowell, from *The Tennessean* (9-12-99)

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" —Colossians 2:8

That's How He Hurt His Hands

Many of us have seen or heard about little boys plucking flowers from the earth to give to their adoring mothers. A little known song recounts a similar story of one small boy who came running to his mother with tears streaming down his cheeks and roses in his hands that he had gathered as a gift for her. The tears were shed because he had cut his hands on the thorny stems of the beautiful red roses. The song's refrain says, "He was showing his love, and that's how he hurt his hands."

In my mental images of Jesus I often think about His hands and how He used them out of love for others. With his hands He cleansed a leper (Matthew 8:3). He placed His hands on the tongue and ears of the deaf mute, causing him to hear and speak. With His hands He gave sight to the blind (Mark 8:23). To the failing faith of a sinking man, He extended His hand in assurance (Matthew 14:31). To a maiden asleep in death, His hand had the power of life (Mark 5:41). But at no time were those hands more precious or more loving than when they were nailed upon the cross for you and me. Those bleeding hands, that bloody brow, His stricken back, and that sword pierced body were given as a sacrifice for my many sins. Indeed, He was showing his love, and that's how He hurt His hands. Let all of us see more clearly the love in the hands of Jesus. He truly loves and cares for you.

—John W. Moore

"Behold my hands . . ." —John 20:27

Follow Me

The runners in an NCAA cross-country track championship held in Riverside, California, came to a turn that was not well-marked. Mike Delcavo knew the way and waved frantically for the other runners to follow him. Only four did. One hundred twenty-three out of the 128 runners took the wrong turn and lost their opportunity to win the race. Delcavo later said his competitors were laughing as he chose to take what he knew was the right way.

In the spiritual race we are running, the crowd may be small or large, but the size of the crowd is not how we determine the right path. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Whichever way He goes is the way we want to go. —Turning Point Daily Devotional

Follow me . . ." —John 1:43





All I Need



Steve Winger, a student from Lubbock, Texas, was taking a challenging class in logic. The course and teacher were known for exacting and demanding exams. The final exam was looming, and the professor mercifully told the class that each student would be permitted to bring a single 8.5 x 11 inch sheet with as much information as they could put on that one sheet for help during the test.

On exam day, the students came to class clutching their precious pieces of paper covered with as much information as possible. Some students had crammed lines and lines of font so tiny and so numerous onto that single sheet that you had to wonder how they could read it.

Steve walked in with a single blank sheet and a friend, a senior student who had an "A" in logic. Steve bent down and placed that single, blank sheet of paper on the floor next to his desk. His expert friend stood on the paper.

The professor noticed the extra body in the room and asked what he was doing. Steve piped up, "You said we could bring in what ever we could fit on a single piece of paper for help on this test. Well, this is my help and he can fit on the paper!"

He had followed the instructions to the letter and was the only student in that class to score an "A" since he had his expert friend standing beside him.

Jesus is like that friend, standing beside us, supporting us, and guiding us.

—adapted from eSermons.com