



Faithful Centurion Anglican Orthodox Church

# The Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Sunday Report



Today was the Third Sunday after The Epiphany. Sunrise temperature on Mount Olympus was a very nice 39°F under bright blue skies with calm winds. By the time church was over, it was a very nice 55°F under those same blue skies, although with the calm winds and sun it seemed warmer. The weather apparently agreed with all as we had our customary three in attendance.

### *Gathering Song*

Jack Arnold played *Amazing Grace* for the gathering song.

### **Amazing Grace**

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found  
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come  
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far  
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we've first begun.

As everyone knows, we love *Amazing Grace!* It is a favorite among sinners.

### *On Point*

Someone asked, where do the quotes come from? The answer is from the people who uttered them. But, how did you find them? Oh, that. Some from Bishop Jerry, many from Rev Bryan Dabney, a few from other places, some from Rev Geordie Menzies-Grierson, but overall



mostly from Bryan. He always has a few great ones to share. On to the On Point quotes

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### *On God*

I remember once when I had been giving a talk to the RAF, an old, hard-bitten officer got up and said, 'I've no use for all that stuff. But, mind you, I'm a religious man too. I know there's a God. I've felt Him: out alone in the desert at night: the tremendous mystery. And that's just why I don't believe all your neat little dogmas and formulas about Him. To anyone who's met the real thing they all seem so petty and pedantic and unreal!'

Now in a sense I quite agreed with that man. I think he had probably had a real experience of God in the desert. And when he turned from that experience to the Christian creeds, I think he really was turning from something real to something less real. In the same way, if a man has once looked at the Atlantic from the beach, and then goes and looks at a map of the Atlantic, he also will be turning from something real to something less real: turning from real waves to a bit of coloured paper. But here comes the point. The map is admittedly only coloured paper, but there are two things you have to remember about it. In the first place, it is based on what hundreds and thousands of people have found out by sailing the real Atlantic. In that way it has behind it masses of experience just as real as the one you could have from the beach; only, while yours would be a single glimpse, the map fits all those different experiences together. In the second place, if you want to go anywhere, the map is absolutely necessary. As long as you are content with walks on the beach, your own glimpses are far more fun than looking at a map. But the map is going to be more use than walks on the beach if you want to get to America.

*Jack Lewis*  
Mere Christianity

If the citizens neglect their duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted. ... If a republican government fails to secure public prosperity and happiness, it must be because the citizens neglect the Divine commands, and elect bad men to make and administer the laws.

*Noah Webster*

Manna was a thing unknown to Israel when they went into the wilderness; neither had their fathers known it, and they themselves could do nothing toward producing it - they were dependent. Had God omitted to send it, even for one or two mornings, they must have perished. The water from the rock was equally miraculous. There was no water in the desert, and God gave it by a miracle. There was no path marked out in the wilderness, and they might have wandered from the way; but God performed another miracle, for a cloudy pillar was their leader. But it was not only in great things that God took care of them, or that He does so of us in the wilderness; we have to admire His precious care in the smallest things, and in our tiniest wants. There is a particular, as well as a general providence (see Deu 8:4). "Thy raiment waxed not old." It may be that, the Israelites had taken but little notice of the fact, and so it is with us. How many details of God's care for us pass unobserved by us!

Christian Truth Magazine

Marriages may be made in heaven, but man is responsible for the maintenance work.

*Anonymouse*

When a woman rules the marriage roost, she is sitting on the wrong perch!

*Anonymous*

The Christian married couple can be a powerful weapon in the hand of Jesus.

*John Benton*

TO RUTH BROADY: Lewis's last letter to a child about Narnia.

26 October 1963

Many thanks for your kind letter, and it was very good of you to write and tell me that you like my books; and what a very good letter you write for your age!

If you continue to love Jesus, nothing much can go wrong with you, and I hope you may always do so. I'm so thankful that you realized the 'hidden story' in the Narnian books. It is odd, children nearly always do, grown ups hardly ever.

I'm afraid the Narnian series has come to an end, and am sorry to tell you that you can expect no more.

God bless you.

*Jack Lewis*

The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Volume III

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

*I St. John 5:12*

If we take care of our souls, we may leave it to God to provide for us food and raiment.

*Matthew Henry*

17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century English pastor and author.

We are more than the sum of our institutions, we are our parents and our grandparents, we are the things we read and the things we believe, we are the sense of mission that brought our ancestors through thousands of years of trouble and we are their strengths and their weaknesses. It's not our institutions that make our successes possible. It is our beliefs that make all the difference.

*Daniel Greenfield*

21<sup>st</sup> century American commentator.

### *Propers*

Each Sunday there are Propers: special prayers and readings from the Bible. There is a Collect for the Day; that is a single thought prayer, most written either before the re-founding of the Church of England in the 1540s or written by Bishop Thomas Cranmer, the first Archbishop of Canterbury after the re-founding.

The Collect for the Day is to be read on Sunday and during Morning and Evening Prayer until the next Sunday. The Epistle is normally a reading from one of the various Epistles, or letters, in the New Testament. The Gospel is a reading from one of the Holy Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Collect is said by the minister as a prayer, the Epistle can be read by either a designated reader (as we do in our church) or by one of the ministers and the Holy Gospel, which during the service in our church is read by an ordained minister or our Deacon Striker.

The propers are the same each year, except if a Red Letter Feast, that is one with propers in the prayerbook, falls on a Sunday, then those propers are to be read instead, except in a White Season, where it is put off. Red Letter Feasts, so called because in the

Altar Prayerbooks the titles are in red, are special days. Most of the Red Letter Feasts are dedicated to early saints instrumental in the development of the church, others to special events. Some days are particularly special and the Collect for that day is to be used for an octave (eight days) or an entire season, like Advent or Lent.

The Propers for today are found on Page 112-113, with the Collect first:

**The Third Sunday after The Epiphany.**  
*The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Dru Arnold read the Epistle for today, which came from the Twelfth Chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans beginning at the Sixteenth Verse.

The Epistle shows the way to Christian action in life. Paul lays out a hard path, but one that goes where we want to be in the end.

**B**E not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Hap Arnold read the Holy Gospel for today which came from the Second Chapter of the Gospel of St. John beginning at the First Verse.

**A**ND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.



### *Sermon – Reverend Jack Arnold - Time and Action*

Today's sermon brought the Collect, Epistle and Gospel together and is partly contained in the forewords above.



Consider these words from the Collect:

... mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us ...

In the Collect, we are asking God to set aside our failure and protect and aid us in all we do with His strong hand. God is perfect, thus so is His counsel. When we acknowledge our imperfection and ask Him for help, we should look to the written record of His Son, our Savior. We should do our best to follow His example, to be honest, hard working, peaceful and helpful. When we do this, we will prosper, not only in this world, but in our hearts. When we pray for His Help, we need to listen for the answer, then act on it, not ignore it because it is not the answer we wanted. This is a very common theme throughout the collects and by extension, the Bible. As we have always the same problems, we have the same need, which is to turn to God for help! Therefore,

the theme will be similar, asking God to open our hearts, souls and minds to Him, that in Him, we might get the help for our sinful bodies and souls.

Why the continuous emphasis on action? Simple. The line of time stretches from the far distant and unknown past to the far distant and unknowable future. Yet, God is there, He has always been there and He will always be there. Where His finger touches that line of time is today. That is where we live; it is the only place where action can happen in our time space continuum. Today. Not tomorrow nor the past, but today. That is why worrying does nothing productive, we cannot act in the future nor in the past right now, but only in the one dimension, that of the present. Therefore, let us not worry about the past or the future but think about what we can do and act within the present time. Let us keep ourselves busy doing God's work, so that we have no time at all to worry or fret, but act. The time we spend worrying or fretting is time taken away from possible actions we could perform in the present.

God, our God, is a God of Action. No less is His Son one of action. All throughout the Bible, you find Jesus doing things, not just talking about them. His faith, shown in the action of His giving His Life that we might live, speaks through His actions. No matter where you turn while reading the Bible, what you find is Action, not Diction. Recall the second half of the Book of Luke. It is known as the Acts of the Apostles, not thoughts, not prayers, not meditations, not wishes or anything else; The ACTS. He expects us to act in our lives, not talk.

So, when we act, how should we act? To the extent you are able attempt to do good to all. We are not Christ, but if we do our best emulate His earthly actions, we do well. If you treat your enemies with respect and kindness, you oft make them your friends, with treating them with that respect and kindness. It like many other things Jesus taught is hard to do, it is easy to say however. But we must do our very best to do this, for we shall become better people of His Flock for doing so. We have the right of self-defense, not of vengeance. Bring them up, don't lower yourself. That is the goal, to raise us all up and not lower ourselves to the low standards of this world, but to raise those around us to the heavenly standards.

Like Jesus at the well, remember that your purpose is to help bring people to salvation. Any step you take today may have future consequence. Your witness, your testimony, your actions can bring people to the point they accept the Holy Spirit or not. Your interface may only be one small step; but do your best to make it a step towards God, not away. Therefore, let us think about our actions and the possible consequences they could have for people turning to or away from Him.

Error is error, wrong is not right. But, a person's final destination is up to God, not us. Fortunate for each of us, it should be considered. During the journey of life down that time space continuum, we need to do our best to keep ourselves and those around us moving towards God, not away from Him. The direction is always clear, sometimes we just do not want to read the signs.

If we understand we are less than perfect, actually far less than imperfect, we have a good start. We know we need God in our lives to give us direction. We need His guidance to direct our ACTION.

Read the Bible, find out what He wants you to do, then Do It. What can you do today to carry out His Will? There are a multitude of things you can DO to carry out His Will, but the question is, "Will you?"

### **Be of God - Live of God - Act of God**

#### *Bishop Ogles' Sermon*

We are off fortunate to get copies of Bishop Jerry's sermon notes. Today is one of those Sundays. Today's sermon starts off with the collect, and like always, it will give you a lot to consider in your heart.

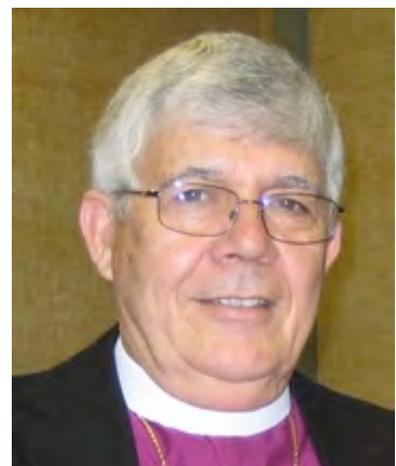
#### **Sermon Notes**

Third Sunday after The Epiphany  
26 January 2014 Anno Domini (In the Year of our Lord)

#### **The Third Sunday after The Epiphany.**

##### *The Collect.*

**A**LMIGHTY and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



The Epistle  
*Romans 12:16-21*

**B**E not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

The Gospel  
*St. John 2:1-11*

**A**ND the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.** His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, **Fill the water-pots with water.** And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, **Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.** And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, **Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!** 48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, **Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.** 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. 50 Jesus answered and said unto him, **Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.** (John 1:47-50)

I consider the lectionary texts today to be of stellar importance. They represent the beginning of the ministry of Jesus at Cana. The ancient Prayer of Collect opens with a petition for the provision of safety and necessity from the Hand of the Lord. It further appeals for mercies on our common frailty in life. If we remembered to pray this prayer first each morning, it would suffice for our daily bread. Whether by profound miracle, or by the common miracles of God's nature, our daily needs are all provided by the right hand of God.

The following selection from the day's Epistle has profound meaning for the Christian professor: **17 "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."** Some hearers today will not

know, or remember, the term 'hickory stick' due to the fact that its memory has not been indelibly etched on the hide of their legs, but I remember! It was the punishment of choice in the mountain country in which I was raised. The mention of it would strike terror into the hearts of its victims. If I, or my sisters, or brother, misbehaved, we could expect mother or father to go outside and break a thin, limber limb from the hickory tree. This became a sort of whip that was used to evoke repentance for deeds of disobedience. It was not possible to outrun the persistent lashing of the 'hickory stick.' Once after an argument with my younger brother of five years of age, I told my mother on him for some secret misdeed. Mother said, "Jerry, go outside and find me a hickory stick." Gleeful at the opportunity for maximum revenge, I sought out the prickliest limb I could find, and adorned with especially hateful spurs. When I handed the branch to my mother, she took one look at the dreadful instrument of torture and said, "OK, Jerry, YOU are FIRST!" I will never forget that lesson of willful revenge on my part. I believe God teaches us the same lesson. *"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him."* (Prov 24:17-18)

Now we come to the glorious Gospel, so full of Light and Hidden Manna for the early riser – for Manna comes with the mist of the morning. *"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."* (Psalms 63:1-2)

The text describes a marriage celebration in Cana of Galilee to which Jesus and His disciples have been invited. The event is heralded as Jesus' first miracle among a host of miracles. Of course, the text is referring to those profound suspensions of natural law that Jesus evoked by the power of His Word. But we must not forget that the pre-Incarnate Christ was the agent of First Cause in the Creation of the world, the heavenly bodies, and all life. (John 1:1-03) The changing of the elements of pure water into wind demonstrates our Lord's eternal sovereignty over the Creation which He has made. It was sensational and stunning to man who deals more commonly in the physical realities of life; however, I will suggest that this is the second recorded miracle of the Gospel of John. In fact, I will claim that all of the life of Jesus was an ongoing miracle of eternal proportions. Remember Nathaniel in the first chapter of John? *"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. 50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these."* (John 1:47-50)

Please observe that the Hidden Miracle here is one of the Spirit and not of the elements of the physical world. It is this miracle that supersedes all others. So what is the profundity of this miracle? It is summarized by a comment by the Rev. Matthew Davis of Rhode Island yesterday on the AOC Forum: *"Matthew 16:17 'And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.' Unless God first reveals Himself they will never understand the truths of the Creed or His Word."* The Rev. Davis got it right. First of all, it is a miracle that God loves us. Secondly, that He deigns to reveal Himself to us by way of His Word and the natural world. An anonymous love letter, addressed to no one in particular, may be beautiful for thought and prose, but it

bears little meaning unless revealed to its intended beloved. The most difficult challenge to the modern Christian is to see that God's personality and truth are just as clearly intended for his heart as it was for the hearers two or three thousand years ago. Only God can bring that revelation to the heart.

In reading the Gospel text, we see that those who are followers (disciples) of Christ share in the courtesies to which He is invited. They were ALSO invited to attend this, presumable, friends and family event. If we are in Christ, we are accounted a part of His family and circle of friends. *"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."* (John 15:15) Christ is all in all to us. He is first, a Friend; but more than a Friend, He is our elder Brother in the family of God; and more than a Brother, He is our Lord and Sovereign. He is a *"Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."* (Proverbs 18:24) If He is the second Adam (which clearly He is), He becomes literally the Father of all who are quickened in the Spirit to eternal life.

### **JESUS CARES FOR THE COMMON NEEDS OF ALL HUMANITY:**

So the marriage celebration at Cana reveals the Glory of His All-Sufficient Grace to us in all conditions, big and small, of our lives. It places an exclamation mark on the Institution which was God's first in the Garden at Eden. Marriage is so illustrative of the union that exists between Christ and His Church that Jesus uses the occasion to demonstrate its importance by performing His first material miracle. I love the beauty and reverence provided in the Book of Common Prayer for the Solemnization of Matrimony that reflects this truth:

**D**EARLY beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this Man and this Woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church: which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Galilee, and is commended of Saint Paul to be honourable among all men: and therefore is not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined. If any man can show just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.

3 *"And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine."* The Greek term used here for 'wanted' is: **uJsterevw** (*Hustereo*) which means to fall behind or lack an essential something for a particular need. The need may not be a profound necessity, but it is a necessity for the conditions of the present moment – in this case, wine, the lack of which would have been a signal embarrassment to the family of the couple getting married. To the consternation of many of our Baptist brethren, this wine is not unfermented grape juice, but the real deal. The warmth and comfort of the fruit of the vine is illustrative of the same which is granted, in a more marked degree, by the Holy Ghost. But the issue of wine is not the focus of this event, but the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in His role as Creator and Sovereign over all powers – even His natural law. *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."* (John 1:14)

### **JESUS DESIRES US TO COME IN PRAYER TO HIM FOR ALL OUR NEEDS:**

Another interesting point in this comment of Mary to her Son is the familiarity

which family associations breed. When we are part of the family of Christ, we can approach Him with even mundane requests. Our every 'want' may not be always supplied, but we have the privilege to seek it out and understand His will in the matter. You will observe that Mary did not make ANY overt request but only expressed a need. He knows our every need and will supply according to His will. If we express our need in prayer, He will be more acutely keen to satisfy that need if He deems it beneficial to us.

The miracles of Jesus are not to be regarded as the most prominent proof of His Lordship, but as secondary revelations of His power and grace. The greater revelation is in His revealing Himself to us as He did to Nathaniel, to Nicodemus, and to Peter. The modern church that seeks signs and wonders is not a church of faith and holiness: *"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."* (Matt 12:39-41) Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of the whale. Jesus was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. But Jonah came up from the whale's belly, and Christ was the first born of all the family of God in His resurrection. Is this not enough iron on which to hang our faith? Why do we insist on God constantly proving Himself? Should the case not be reversed?

**THE KEY TO GAINING THE BEST FROM THE MASTER'S HAND IS OBEDIENCE:**

*4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.*" Jesus' response is not unimportant to us. He seems to hesitate in His response to His mother, but she perseveres and counts her prayer as already answered. She knows the nature of her Son to provide all necessary wants. So she says to the servants (as well as to you and me): *"Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."* Has the modern church done this? Have you done this in your personal walk of faith? Remember, 'WHATSOEVER' covers every Word of Scripture revealed to us. Of course, the greatest 'WHATSOEVER' that Jesus has commanded is that we *"Love one another."* *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* (John 13:34-35) How many Christians fail of this commandment? How many churches?

Notice that Jesus commands authority – even among those who may not know Him. *6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.* No one had ever issued such an unbelievable command to these servants before, yet they obeyed immediately and without question. When Christ calls us into unknown paths, we do not stammer and falter, but rise immediately in obedience. If we hesitate, He may send His "Hounds of Heaven" on our trail until we do obey.

**OBEDIENCE RESULTS IN THE BEST ALWAYS BEING AHEAD:**

Do you truly LOVE God? Love possesses a sacrificial quality. It foregoes self and exalts the object of its affection. We have no means of loving the unlovely, but Christ is LOVELY. In fact, *"we love Him because He first loved us."* (1 John 4:19) If we obey and

keep His Commandments, we shall always have the best to which to look forward. *“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”* (1 Cor 2:9-10) Who are we to enjoy such blessings! Do you desire the BEST, or do you prefer the sordid leftovers of the world? *“If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.* (Isaiah 1:19)

This great truth is made certain in these verses: 9 *“When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”* This is absolutely true. The world sets forth its shiniest and best false pleasures before us first of all, but the blessings and benefits of God are ever increasing in splendor and beauty.

Regardless of the victories and reverses of your life heretofore, the Lord can make those victories and benefits pale in comparison to what He has to offer those who love Him and are obedient to His Word.

### *Bishop Dennis Campbell's Sermon*

Bishop Dennis is a brilliant speaker. He is able to take biblical precepts and make them perfectly understandable, even to me. Oft he provides the text of his sermons and I take the utmost pleasure in passing them on:



#### **They Have No Wine**

Psalm 43, Romans 12:16-21, John 2:1-11

Third Sunday after Epiphany

January 26, 2014

Most people don't know what to do about Jesus turning water into wine. Some insist it was grape juice. Others are embarrassed because it seems to bless the use of alcoholic beverages. Still others are overjoyed because they think it shows Jesus was a party animal, and that's the kind of Jesus they want to follow. But the passage is not even really about alcohol. The passage is about the nature and ministry of Christ.

The meaning of the passage begins to unfold for us in John 2:3 where Mary comes to Jesus and says, "They have no wine." If you think about this for a moment you can see that it expresses the moral/spiritual/intellectual need of all humanity. They have no wine. They lack the one thing that makes sense out of life and death and sorrow and joy. They lack that one thing that life is about. Therefore their world is collapsing around them. Having no rule of life except that which they make for themselves, they are tossed about by every wind of doctrine, first identifying with one movement or fad, then going to another. First adopting one self-identity, then abandoning it for another. It's because they don't know who they are or what they want in life. That's why, as they grow older, their life identity is found more and more in materialism. Materialism is the pursuit of pleasure through entertainment and possessions. Materialists used to believe meaning in life could be found in pleasure and wealth. "Give me a fine house, plenty of disposable income, a family and a few friends," they thought, "and life will be good and I will be happy." The new

materialists have given up trying to finding meaning, or even happiness. They have concluded life is meaningless, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Therefore, they live for pleasure. "Gather the things that give you pleasure," they say. "Get cars, houses, jewelry, designer clothes. Eat, drink, and be merry. Sex, drugs, rock and roll. Entertain yourself to death. Fill your life with pleasure while you can. Nothing else matters." That's the new materialism. Nowadays we are seeing a reaction against materialism. We hear people talk about "giving back." We see a social conscience developing. But it is based mostly on guilt, on the idea that it is unfair to have much while others have little. Guilt is the foundation of liberalism in America and Europe. And it leads people to make small, mostly symbolic acts to help others. And that makes them feel good, but it doesn't accomplish much because it doesn't change their life identity. They are still materialists, and still find their meaning in things. Furthermore, they assume all people are materialist, and giving everyone more material things will solve the world's problems. But this view is an empty wine bottle. It lacks substance. It promises, but it doesn't deliver. They have no wine.

To say they have no wine is the same as saying they dwell in spiritual / moral / intellectual darkness. It is the same as saying they are lost in a spiritual / moral / intellectual wilderness. It is to say they have no real goal, no real plan. Nor do they even believe a real goal or plan is possible. To them life is just a shot in the dark. You take your shot, and hope for the best.

"You're wrong," they say, "we do have wine. The new materialists say, "We have our drugs to drown out the realization of the meaninglessness of our existence. And we have our toys and our mind-numbing music and mind-numbing entertainment and our sexual indulgence. These are our wine."

The old materialists would have said, "We have education. We have philosophy. We have art and literature and culture and religion and friends and family. These things make our hearts glad. These things are our wine."

It seems to me the new materialists are simply following the footsteps of Rome as it fell into decline. And it seems to me the old materialists are saying just what the Jews were saying in the time of Christ. They were the children of Abraham. They had history. They had a noble heritage. They had culture. They had the Law and the prophets and the Temple and the Covenant of God. They were the chosen people. They had wine.

But the wine ran out. John 2:3 says they "wanted" wine. "Wanted" is used here in the old English sense of not having enough. It is used as it is in Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." The Coverdale translation, which predates the King James and is preserved in our Prayer Book says, "The Lord is my Shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing." So "want" in John 2:3 is not about a desire for wine; it is about a lack of wine.

There is great symbolism here. It shows that the world cannot give ultimate and lasting happiness. Its wine runs out, and very quickly. But even more, it says the Old Testament cannot give what people ask of it. It cannot provide that one most needful thing in life, the forgiveness of sins that equals peace with God. The Old Testament was never meant to be the final word, the end of the story. The Old Testament was the time of preparation. It was a Testament of promise. Yes, its promise was clothed in shadows and symbolism, but it was also very real, and the Jews understood that its promise had not yet been fulfilled. During the era of promise its wine was good. The law, the prophets, the Temple, the people and the calling were the sweetest wine that could be had on earth at that time. But they knew it would run out one day. And they knew

God would give them new wine and better wine. Well, in Cana of Galilee, the wine ran out. The time of promise was over. It was time for New Wine.

Now we are ready for the point of this miracle, Jesus is the New Wine. If we look at John 2:10 we find two very important ideas. First is the idea of the good wine. As the ruler of the feast noted, it was common practice to serve the good wine first. This was not because people would get drunk and not notice bad wine latter. Drunkenness was frowned upon at Jewish weddings in those days. The best wine was served first because it was the first impression of the feast, and the host wanted to make a good first impression.

Spiritually speaking, Jesus is the good wine. Everything the Old Testament promised is fulfilled in Him. The sacrificial lambs of the Old Testament were symbols of Him, the Lamb of God. The altar of sacrifice was the symbol of the cross on which the Lamb of God was sacrificed for our sins. The Temple was the symbol of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. The high priest was the symbol of Christ entering the true Temple to make atonement for our sins. The Old Testament sacrifices and priests and altars could never give peace with God by their own merit. They were only effective as they looked forward to the one Sacrifice of the One Lamb of God that could take away our sins. Their wine was good, but it was limited. Jesus was the new wine that accomplished the Old Testament promised. In Him, the new era, the new age, the new time of fulfillment had come. Now that He has died for our sins, we don't need to sacrifice sheep anymore. We don't need a Temple or an altar or a high priest anymore, for Jesus is all of these things for us. He is the good wine.

The second idea in John 2:10 is "now." The best wine has been kept until now. We would say, God has kept the best for last. We could talk about this for a while, but let me confine myself to one very important point; Jesus is the last. He is the final and full revelation of God, and with Him the Old Testament wine has run out. We don't need its forms and rituals anymore, we have Christ. I am trying to say something here that has been said before, and said better, so let me turn to one who has said it best, Hebrews 1:1 and 2.

"God, who at Sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers, hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son."

From this point onward the book of Hebrews is about the superiority and finality of God's ministry and word to us in Christ.

So we have God's best wine now. We can taste its fullness and richness through our faith in Christ. We can taste it in the pages of Scripture because the Bible is a spiritual/moral/intellectual light unto our path. Because we have Jesus, and because we have His life and ministry and teachings preserved for us in His Bible, we don't have to make up an identity, a phony self. We know we are His people, loved by Him and destined for Heaven. We're not lost in a moral wilderness because we know right from wrong and we know how to make good decisions and how to treat people based on the moral teaching of the Bible. We're not lost in intellectual darkness because we know the Truth and we know where to learn about truth. We're not in spiritual darkness because we know the Father of all spirits, and our spirits are united to His Spirit. We know we are loved and accepted by God. We know our home is in Heaven and we know we are going there to dwell with Him forever.

In short, we have the Good Wine. And our Wine will never run out.

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+Dennis Campbell

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Bishop Roy is pastor of the biggest AOC parish West of the Mississippi and is in charge of the Diocese of the MidAmerica.

**Third Sunday after Epiphany**  
26 January 2014

Psalter 42,43,11,12 Isa. 41:8-10,17-20  
John. 4:1-14

8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

What a wonderful opening statement in our selected passage from Isaiah. ‘...Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend...’ Look at that for a moment. You are my servant God tells Israel/Jacob. You serve me. But I chose you and more importantly, you being a descendant of Abraham...my friend.



God is calling Abraham His friend. Not a buddy, not a pal, but a person who is friends with the Creator of the universe. Wow, that should make us feel small. Our Creator chose us to be His friend.

Who can claim that promise ? We can. We are the spiritual descendants of Abraham. If you follow the heritage of the Hebrew people, through whom God chose to bring salvation to the world ,this makes us spiritual children of Abraham. As modern day believers we can trace our lineage back to the days of Abraham.

God promised him that through him the whole world would be blessed. Even though Abraham was without any heirs God promised him that his family would one day be as numerous as the stars in the heavens and the sands of the sea.

Yes, yes I know sceptics will say that there is no number to the stars, they are beyond counting. But at the time of Abraham, visible stars {without the aid of a telescope} would be at least a billion. Today those who are categorized as Christians in the world are about 1.5 billion. An interesting fact. You can verify that through any number of sources.

God may have also being using allegory to express a large number of those who could trace their lineage to Abraham. Have you ever said it is raining cats and dogs ? The rain is so heavy that everything is coming out of the clouds. In the same sense God could have been saying that the numbers of Abraham’s descendants are going to be huge.

9 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Here I think that Isaiah is pointing to the future church. As a people, the Hebrew were confined to the eastern Mediterranean. Who is being taken from the ends of the earth? Who is God calling to be his servants, he has chosen and has not cast them away? He is calling all believers, from all sectors of the earth. Our particular branch, the AOC is very much represented around the world... "to the ends of the earth..." Then God gives the promise of strength and help and support, and He tells us to fear not, be not dismayed, for He is our God.

17 When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

18 I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

Here in these next two verses we see the foreshadowing of the coming gospel. Remember when Christ spoke of the 'waters of life'? He is the water of life. As he explain to the Samaritan woman at the well, He would give her water so that she would never thirst again. Of course he was speaking of himself as that water. Once a person has become a believer they will never again thirst because they have the waters of eternal life. Now who is poor and needy ? We all are. There is no one righteous...no not one. All of us come to the Lord with nothing. All that we have will be dust when we are gone. So when Isaiah writes of the poor and needy he writes of us. Verse 18 gives the promise of peace and plenty as in a spiritual way as explained by the waters of eternal life. The water that gives life, eternal life.

19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together:

It is interesting to notice the types of trees that God will plant in the wilderness and the desert. Cedar is very clean smelling. Fir, pine are also very clean and fresh smelling. No matter what time of the year all these trees have their needles, they are evergreen. That characteristic speaks of eternal life. Any product or furnishings made from the wood of these three trees are also very fresh and clean smelling. Think of hope chests or other containers made of this wood used to protect and secure fine linen, woolens and other delicate fabric.

There is a certain restfulness and comfort that one gets from the fresh smell of pine, fir or cedar. God uses all our senses to help us understand his way. The sense of smell can evoke great memories or flood the mind with past images. I think that He can use our five sense in what ever capacity to help us understand His word.

In this case the feeling of peace and life is imaged in the trees that are listed in verse 19 with the express point being made in verse 20.

20 That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

We began this message with the idea that Abraham is God's friend.

Then we see what God has done for us. He has called us from all the corners of the world.

He has blessed us with eternal life, the living waters of eternal life. And further more He has given us peace and plenty in our spiritual lives. And it all ultimately comes down to the final verse. That all of this can be seen, known, considered and understood that God did this and He created it.

What a powerful message of our God and Redeemer. He loves us, He helps us, He sustains us, He has done all of this so that we will know that He is God.

Let us pray:

**T**HE Almighty Lord, who is a most strong tower to all those who put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, do bow and obey; Be now and evermore thy defense; and make thee know and feel, that there is none other Name under heaven given to men, in whom, and through whom, thou mayest receive health and salvation, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen*



### *Rev Bryan Dabney of Saint John's Sunday Sermon*

We are fortunate to have Bryan's Sunday Sermon. If you want people to come to The Truth, you have to speak the truth, expound the truth and live the truth. This is really a good piece and I commend it to your careful reading.



### **Third Sunday after Epiphany**

In our gospel (St. John 2:13-17), we read where our Lord cleansed the Temple of those who were making merchandise of the people who had come to worship and sacrifice to God. In St. Luke's gospel account we find another version of this event where the Lord Jesus said, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves (19:46). Our Lord was angered by the profanation of the Temple by those who were providing animals for sacrifice, as well as special coins which did not bear the superscriptions of earthly potentates. These articles were, of course, supplied at premium prices which benefitted the supplier at the expense of the faithful. As the apostle John observed, And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the table; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise (vv.15-16).

Clearly, our Lord was not against the just keeping of the law, only the injustice of profiteering. The faithful came to pray and be received of God via their sacrifices under the Mosaic system. That system forbade any deceitful practice in an Israelite's conduct

of business. Matthew Henry once wrote concerning this event that, “Merchandise is a good thing in the market, but not in the temple... it was sacrilege, it was robbing God. It was to disturb and distract those services in which men ought to be most solemn, serious, and intent. It was to make the business of religion subservient to a secular interest...”

Calvin Coolidge once opined that, “The business of America is business.” What he was referring to was the successful way in which Americans had profited and prospered in their manufacturing and marketing of their finished goods around the world prior to the Great Depression. And well before the advent of that terrible tragedy, a number of Christian denominations had been actively engaged in enterprises that focused less on the spiritual and more on the secular in order to attract new congregants. Their methods mimicked those practices that were popular in the secular world of business and marketing which resulted in a growth in their membership rolls as well as an increase in their Sunday collections.

Still, their quest created only an illusion of success. As E. M. Bounds explained, “When collecting money, building churches, and counting attendance become the evidence of church prosperity, then the world has a strong foothold [there], and Satan has achieved his purpose.” Bounds also stated that, “God’s church must continue to do [the primary] work of converting sinners and perfecting the saints in holiness.” He also warned that, “Whenever this work becomes secondary, or other interests are held to be its equivalent, then the church becomes worldly.”

Further, Bounds reminded his readers that, “The original churches were faithfully spiritual. Their only purpose was to strengthen and cultivate all the elements that combine to make a deep and clear experience of God... The early church took it for granted that all who came to them really desired to flee from the wrath to come (Matthew 3:7) and were sincerely yearning after full redemption...”

But on account of the groundwork that was laid by modernist pastors from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their spiritual descendants of this century have gained access to the pulpits of many once solidly Bible-based denominations.

These pastors have transformed their churches from “houses of prayer” into “dens of thieves” and on account of that, they rightly earned the title of “wolves in sheep’s clothing.”

Now some might ask, “What’s so wrong with improving a church’s membership numbers? Isn’t that its job: to call out to those who are unchurched, or who have no religion?”<sup>1</sup> Absolutely. We are indeed to witness to said folk as God gives us the opportunity. But mere numbers are not the measure of a successful church. Using Bounds’ standard, a truly successful church is one that maintains its doctrinal purity in the face of an increase in those who are as yet unschooled in orthodox Christian doctrine. Doctrine matters. Doctrine cannot be parsed, cherry-picked or set aside because it is not “politically correct.”

The Bible is about nothing else than God’s ordering and understanding of his creation as well as how he wants us to view it, and live within the boundaries he has put in place. God desires that we have an abundant life, and to gain that we must remain

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<sup>1</sup> To call them to God, not carnival.

faithful to his expressed will as found within the pages of Scripture. For we will all be judged by the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. He lived and walked in the light of the Father's will and pleasure. He was obedient unto death. He came to fulfill the Law and to open the way for all mankind to reach out and find God. He came to be sin for us as we had no means of redemption otherwise. He came because he first loved us before we ever loved him. All God asks of us is that we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and be obedient to his word and commandment. Difficult words indeed, but doable if we are in Christ Jesus. And if we are sincere in our seeking of him, he will make himself known to all who would desire him.

Our Lord made a knotted cord and drove the wicked from the Temple precincts. He did not drive them out because they were sincere worshipers of God who were struggling to worship properly under bad instruction. He did not drive them out because they were supplying a benefit to their fellow Israelites. No, he drove them out because they were engaged in theft, in blasphemy, and in greed for gain at the expense of their fellows. In theft, because they were overcharging in every instance for their wares. In blasphemy, because they were engaged in conduct that was clearly prohibited by the Law. In greed for gain, because as a part of their theft, they were seeking to materially benefit through their business monopoly which they had gotten from the religious authorities. Temple worship was not established so that a select few might receive an exorbitant benefit at the expense of those who came to worship.

But just as those merchants of wickedness found their way into the Temple during our Lord's earthly ministry, so too are there those within the various churches of today who are also guilty of the very points mentioned above. They are guilty of theft via their misrepresentation of the tithe as a viable Christian practice when it is not. To take resources from those who can ill afford to give them is not and has never been sanctioned by the LORD. The Bible clearly says, Thou shalt not steal (Exodus 20:16). And any unjustifiable taking is theft. If one urges people to give to support the church in an open an up-front way, that is acceptable and proper. But pastors and boards who twist God's word to improve their church's balance sheet are being devious at best and lying at worst. There is no such thing as lying to support a "good cause." The lie removes any sort of godly value or indication. And worse, it is putting words in God's mouth which he did not say.

And in that vein they are guilty of blasphemy through their repeated assertions that God has spoken to them concerning this program or that; this activity or that. God does indeed speak to us, but to claim this when its verification is questionable can open the door to error. As Dave Guzik has written, "What are the standards a prophecy should be judged by? First, it should be judged according to God's established, revealed word. God will never contradict Himself. Also, He will not give the same gift of perfectly hearing Him He gave to the apostles and prophets who wrote the New Testament and gave the foundation for the church (Ephesians 2:20). It is wrong to assume anyone perfectly hears God, so it is also wrong to put too much trust and faith in a prophecy. It is probably a bad idea to record them, and meditate on them."

Pastor Guzik then cited Tom Stipe, who penned the forward to the book Counterfeit Revival, regarding this problem. He stated in part that, "After only a couple of years, the prophets seemed to be speaking to just about everyone on just about everything. Hundreds of ... members received the 'gift' of prophecy and began plying their trade among both leaders and parishioners. People began carrying around little notebooks

filled with predictions that had been delivered to them by the prophets and seers... Not long after 'prophecy du jour' became the primary source of direction, a trail of devastated believers began to line up outside our pastoral counseling offices. Young people promised teen success and stardom through prophecy were left picking up the pieces of their shattered hopes because God had apparently gone back on His promises. Leaders were deluged by angry church members who had received prophecies about the great ministries they would have but had been frustrated by local church leaders who failed to recognize and 'facilitate' their 'new anointing.' After a steady diet of the prophetic, some people were rapidly becoming biblically illiterate, choosing a 'dial-a-prophet' style of Christian living rather than studying God's Word. Many were left to continually live from one prophetic 'fix' to the next, their hope always in danger of failing because God's voice was so specific in pronouncement, yet so elusive in fulfillment. Possessing a prophet's phone number was like having a storehouse of treasured guidance. Little clutched notebooks replaced Bibles as the preferred reading material during church services."

How sad indeed it is for those who put their trust in "human" messages about the actions of God rather than on trusting God to act on their prayers, and then to wait on him in patience. God always hears our prayers, but he may not answer them in the ways we desire. Pastor Charles Stanley once noted that, "God knows both sides of our requests." Our task as Christians is to present our petitions for this or that and then let him in his time address them. But going to another human being seeking "a word from the Lord," or receiving from such a "prophecy" regarding some thing, or activity can result in our being disappointed in the main, or at worst deceived if God's prescription for such is not followed. The Bible supplies the means for evaluating a "prophecy" from another person. In I Corinthians, the apostle Paul wrote, Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. In any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints (14:29-33).

Pastor Guzik also supplied a anecdote from Tertullian, a second and third century Christian writer, concerning a woman who would prophesy to the people. "We have now among us a sister whose lot it has been to be favored with sundry gifts of revelation, which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstatic vision amidst the sacred rites of the Lord's Day in the church; she converses with angels, and sometimes even with the Lord; she both sees and hears mysterious communications; some men's hearts she understands, and to those who are in need she distributes remedies. Whether it be in the reading of the Scriptures, or in the chanting of psalms, or in the preaching of sermons, or in the offering up of prayers, in all these religious services matter and opportunity are afforded to her of seeing visions ... After the people are dismissed at the conclusion of the sacred services, she is in the regular habit of reporting to us whatever things she may have seen in her vision; for all her communications are examined with the most scrupulous care, in order that their truth may be probed... the apostle most assuredly foretold (1 Corinthians 12:1-11) that there were to be Spiritual gifts in the Church." ["Treatise on the Soul," chapter 9 - Ante Nicene Fathers, Volume III, page 188] Pastor Guzik continues, "This passage seems to describe an exercise of spiritual gifts, which is both dynamic and tempered with Biblical balances. We note an individual who is practicing prophecy. She hears the Lord's voice, sees visions, and is speaking forth words of knowledge and encouragement. Of special note, her 'revelations' are not shouted out in the midst of the congregational meeting, but are meekly presented to the

church leadership after the general assembly is adjourned. The church leadership does not incredulously receive her sayings, but judges them with wisdom and discretion. God can still speak this way."

Are modern charismatics following the aforementioned methodology for determining if a "prophecy" offered by a fellow believer is to be accepted? Unfortunately, in too many instances they are not. Moses said not to accept a person who claimed to speak on behalf of God and did not tell the truth. We ought to do the same. Where is the reverence for God's word when anyone can say something and have be counted as coming from him without scrutiny. Our Lord warned us to, Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits (St. Matthew 7:15-16). So let us follow the Lord and not the minions of the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4).

And last but not least, these churches are guilty of greed for gain as they have profited from their deceptions which were used to advance their various agendas at the expense of their congregations. Nowadays, many pastors receive large salaries, cell phones, memberships in various social organizations as well as health insurance and an assortment of other perks. This makes it doubly problematic for them if they are taking from their congregations via deceitful pronouncements and deceptions of every sort. Look at the damage that can be done when those in authority make merchandise of their congregations? How many have turned away from the true faith because of the false messages of those who claim that they represent our Lord?

So what should we be doing? First of all, let us truly seek to be made right with our good and gracious God this day. Let us confess our sins and then partake of the Communion with hearts ready to go forth and proclaim the good news of the risen Christ to a sin-darkened world. Let us seek to daily study his word for our edification and for the furtherance of our Christian witness. And let us avoid doing or saying anything that will detract from our witness and call into question our truthfulness.

It is my prayer for each of you that our heavenly Father will guide and protect you in your quest to be made right with him via the work of his dear Son, and that the Holy Ghost will assist you daily in every word and work.

Let us pray:

**O** LORD our God, who hast made all things according to your will and pleasure; give us minds and hearts so governed by thy most holy Spirit, that we would honor you with our lips, our lives and our substance; and that further, we would properly witness on your behalf to those who are as yet in darkness; and these things we ask in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Have a blessed week, Bryan+

### *After Church Hospitality*

Sadly, no after church snacks. The same story every week, is it not? The fact is that we are supposed to be on a low carb diet and there really aren't any low carb snacks that appeal to us. So, with no fatted dog nut in sight, we were out of luck! Please someone, between now and next Sunday invent some no-carb dog nuts.

After church goodies providers as currently signed up:

Date  
2 February 2014

Name

**Opportunity Available – The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, commonly called The Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin - Superseding the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany – Even more commonly called Dru’s Birthday!**

*People in our Prayers - <http://faithfulcenturionprayerteam.blogspot.com/>*

**Why? Prayer is an extremely important activity.**

It is not that God knows not our needs, for He surely does. Yet, Jesus commanded us to ask God for those same needs. In addition to the obvious of asking God for help, offering thanksgiving and the like, prayer helps us focus our thoughts on how we might do God’s work.

The Prayer Team of the Church of the Faithful Centurion was established to help our members and fellow Christians pray for those in need and to give thanks as well for the blessings we have been granted.

**Who can be on the list? Do I have to be a member of the Church of the Faithful Centurion to be prayed for?**

No! The only qualification to be on the list is that you want our prayer team to pray for you. We are Christians and are happy to pray for you, no matter who you are. If you want help from God, you are our kind of people.

**What is the commitment from the prayer team?**

Each member of the team will pray for the desired outcome at last once per day.

**How do I get myself or someone else on the prayer list?**

You can email one of the prayer team leaders: Jack - [jack@faithfulcenturion.org](mailto:jack@faithfulcenturion.org) or Dru - [dru@faithfulcenturion.org](mailto:dru@faithfulcenturion.org), or call the church office at (619) 659-3608 or fill out a prayer card at church.

**What should I ask for?**

Depends on what you want. Some people merely want God to be asked to heal their ills and be mentioned by their first name, others want a specific outcome and / or have more of their personal information known to the team. Ask for what you want. It is your desire and need for prayer the team is attempting to meet. For typical examples, see the list below.

**Updating the Team**

If you are on our prayer list, or if you have submitted a person that you have asked us to pray for, please update one of the team members or Hap in person, by telephone or email. It helps to be able to pray specifically for these individuals including their specific needs; plus if they get better, it is nice to give thanks!

Please note that on the yellow (maybe green or orange if you get an old one) cards at church, you can ask that those to be prayed for have their names disseminated to the prayer team. Those names will be said in church and appear here. Or, you can ask that their names and purpose be kept confidential, then only Hap will know to pray for them.

***Prayer List Notice – If you have someone on the prayer list and their needs have changed, please let us know. We’d like to update our prayers to reflect the need and most important to give thanks!***

### **Marriage**

*Brian and Mel Smith* were married on 25 August 2013. Please pray that they might be brought together as one in God that their marriage might prosper.

### **Travel**

*Hap, Dru and Jack Arnold* are on travel to Seattle this week.

*Tuck Arnold* is on travel to Seattle this week.

*Bishop Eduardo Dominguez* of the AOC travels to Peru from 22 January 2014, to 2 February 2014 visiting our two AOC missions there.

### **Birthday**

*Hap Arnold* celebrated his 64<sup>th</sup> Birthday on 27 December 2013.

*Betsy Lane* celebrated her 87<sup>th</sup> Birthday on 16 December 2013.

### **Anniversary**

*Doug and Veronica Lambert* celebrated their 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 22 September 2013.

### **Move**

*The Thomas Family* is now in Okinawa for a second short tour. Please pray for this new assignment to go well for Kurt and for Mary and the kids to make new friends. In particular pray that Kristyna and Mitchell will develop good friends and schoolmates there so as to further their development as both Christians and citizens. Give thanks the safe move and ask for continued good developments.

### **Departed**

*Col. William Raymond "Ray" Bean, 70*, passed away on 18 January 2014, following a long struggle with pancreatic cancer. Ray took over Hap's Flight at RAF Bentwaters in 1977 and was a really great fellow. A POW in North Vietnam as a navigator, on repatriation, he went to pilot training, then F-4 school, then RAF Bentwaters. After a thirty year career which took him all over the globe, Ray's final assignment with the Air Force brought him and his family to Maxwell Air Force Base. He later retired and joined Civil Air Patrol (CAP) and was their Director of Cadet Programs for 9 years. Finally really retiring, Ray played golf followed Auburn University football, traveled, fished, attended weekly bible study and volunteered at the Montgomery Archives. Please pray for comfort for those he left behind, in particular his wife of 37 years Mindy, daughter and son-in-law Peyton and Tyler Turner; granddaughter, Olivia; brothers, Paul, Al and David, and sister, Cindy. Ray is a great guy, he will be missed by all.

*Bob Jenkins* passed away recently. Please pray for his wife and family who of necessity remain behind. Pray that they can let God carry their worry, sadness and concern so they can move forward here on earth.

### **Nearing the end of their time here on earth**

*Alan* is a victim of metastasized colon cancer already destroying his liver. His youngest sister has put aside her hard-earned career to care for her brother in these days on earth. Please pray for him as he prepares to go home to be with his family who have gone before him. Please pray for comfort, understanding, strength and guidance for Alan and his family who will of necessity remain behind.

*Paul* has dementia and does not remember to eat. He has been in the hospital the last few days and will return to the Nursing Home today. Pray he will eat and that his family will be together in one accord as they take care of him. He is being moved from one hospital to a larger one this morning because of blood issues.

*Saundra* is in ICU with congestive heart failure after a heart operation. She is aged and frail. Saundra is near the end of her time here on earth. Please pray for comfort, understanding, strength and guidance for Saundra and her family who will of necessity remain behind. Pray for the love of God to stay foremost in their hearts.

*Polly* is in hospice care with dementia and spinal stenosis. Please pray for her as she prepares to go home to be with her family who have gone before her. Pray for the faith of her family to build and the transition to be good.

### ***Homebound or Infirm***

*Marian* has moved to a nursing home in Fresno where her niece Cathy can keep an eye on her and visit more often. She is weak and tires easily. Marian seems to not be interested in this world. Cathy would like her to stay with us and enjoy here time here on earth. Pray that the Holy Ghost might be able to enter into Marian's heart and bring light to her; pray also she might gain strength. Pray that Cathy might be given inspiration on how to help and the strength to do so.

*Joan* has had serious medical problems that have kept her confined. On 26 September 2013, she took a fall and fall and after test and time in the hospital she does not have any broken bones. Please pray that in the weeks ahead her health will remain stable.

*Lou* has aspiration pneumonia. Please pray for the infection to be knocked down and for her continued recovery.

*Frank* has been coping with various ailments from older age. He is in his 90s and it has been a difficult year. Pray he will find comfort in God, that those who provide care to him will pay attention to him, do their best and give him the love we all desire. Pray that the coming year will provide relief to him.

*Norma, Sara's mother* is in a state of deteriorating health, both physically and mentally, with both dementia and Alzheimer's. She is slowly drifting away, though she still recognizes Sara and prayer gives her a sense of peace. Please pray for both Sara and her mother to put their cares and worries on God's shoulders so they can deal with the many problems involved.

### ***In need of a miracle or understanding of God's Plan***

*Levi* was cancer free for 4 years and just discovered he has kidney cancer. Levi has a great deal of faith and said whether he is healed or God takes him home he will be fine. Please pray for the medical team to pay attention and to their best and for a good outcome. Pray also that Levi and family will be able to put their worry on God's shoulders. In particular, please pray for pain relief; Levi is 22 years old.

*Ray Daley* is a member of the Royal Canadian Legion and served his country during the Korean War era. Ray is taking chemotherapy treatments for cancer. Meanwhile his son Trevor is in the hospital in a coma and seems to have lost the will to live. As volunteer chaplain, I have been asked to visit this family and offer prayers and encouragement. Thanks for your prayers in advance.

*Pat* has been under treatment for colon cancer for sometime. He has had major complications the last few days and your prayers will be appreciated by family and friends.

*Sasha* a young lady with a husband and two children had diagnosed with breast cancer whose cells have spread. They are now in the bone marrow, without a miracle from God she will be leaving soon. Her spirit is still strong and asks you continue to keep her in your prayers. Please pray for a miraculous remission; that her remaining time here on earth might be good. Help Sasha and her family, particularly her husband, put their trust in the Lord and let Him carry their worry. Sasha is grateful for all who pray for her and asks you continue to pray for her remaining time here on earth.

*Dorothy* had pneumonia, on checking her lungs they found tumors which permeated the lung area. Further investigation found a primary site in the colon, with the lung being secondary. It would appear there is no viable treatment at this time. Please pray for a miraculous remission; that her remaining time here on earth might be good. Help Dorothy and her family put their trust in the Lord and let Him carry their worry.

*Scott*, one of our Lord's ministers who collapsed a week ago and is in the ICU of a Medical Center since he had a pulmonary embolism, with a concurrent infection of several bacterial agents. He has stopped breathing on several occasions, and may have undergone brain damage. He currently is on DNR. Please pray for recovery so that he will continue to do his Lord's calling.

*Becky* has fourth stage metastasized lung cancer and is not doing well with chemotherapy treatments. Please pray for Becky and her husband as they are together during this difficult time in their lives.

*Larry Howes* suffered a fairly severe stroke. 4 December 2012, doctors replaced a valve in a shunt that had been put in about two weeks before, and Larry responded very well. He was able to go home.

Pray also for confidence in our Lord for Larry and his family. Larry needs a miracle, pray for one. Please.

*Colleen* has been battling pancreatic cancer over the last year and it has now spread to one of her lungs. Please keep her and her family in your prayers.

*Christine* has cancer of the colon, which spread to her liver; she is receiving chemotherapy and is having difficulty eating. Please pray for the medical team treating her to pay attention and do their very best; pray also for confidence in our Lord for Christine and her family.

*Todd* and *Kenny* have both been fighting osteocarcinoma for over five years and have been told their time here on earth is nearing its end, absent a miracle from God. Both are ready to go home and leave the pain, but would like to stay. Please pray for them and their families.

### ***Surgery***

*Melody Summers* of Gold Creek, Montana has been diagnosed with a brain tumor. She is a very special person in the Gregr family's lives. Please pray for the surgical team to pay attention and to their best and for a good outcome. Pray also Melody and her family will be able to put their worry on God's shoulders. Pray for a special miracle for her and her family.

*Mario* has early-diagnosed prostate cancer and will have surgery this week. Let us offering thanks for this early diagnosis. Please pray for the surgical team to pay

attention and to their best and for a good outcome. Pray also Mario and his family will be able to put their worry on God's shoulders.

*Priscilla* was released from the hospital and is now walking and without pain. She is waiting for doctors to come from the USA and will then have an operation. Priscilla and her family thank you for your prayers. Please pray for the surgical team to pay attention and to their best and for a good outcome. Pray also Priscilla and her family will be able to put their worry on God's shoulders.

*Dustin* who was injured in a work accident when stainless steel sheet metal fell on his right hand. His thumb was severely injured as some of the bones were crushed. Dustin will have surgery on Thursday 22 August 2013, to reconstruct and reset his thumb. They do not expect him to lose his thumb. Please pray for the surgical team to pay attention and to their best and for a good outcome. Pray also that Dustin and family will be able to put their worry on God's shoulders.

*Dave Pressey*, a bishop with the Anglican Episcopal Church, one of our close fellow jurisdictions, had cataract surgery; his retina tore and he had emergency surgery on Memorial Day. He still has only very blurred in his eye and has headaches. Please pray for healing for his retina and for peace of mind for Dave and his family.

*Eddie* has upcoming bladder surgery. Please pray for the surgical team to pay attention and to their best and for a good outcome. Pray also that Eddie and family will be able to put their worry on God's shoulders.

### ***Testing and Treatment***

*Mark* had swelling and fluid buildup in his lungs. It appears things may be getting under control. He needs to use a Bi-Pap mask to breathe until his lungs clear and he hates it. Pray that he will be able to adapt so his lungs can clear. Please pray for peace of mind and trust in the Lord for Mark, as well as for his family, and for God's guidance for the medical people treating him that they might find the best course of treatment.

*Preston* is reacting poorly to recent neck surgery. Please pray for the medical team to pay attention and to their best to determine how to help Preston and for a good outcome. Pray also that Preston and family will be able to put their worry on God's shoulders while Preston does his best to facilitate a return to good health.

*Marianne* is hospitalized with a perforated colon. Please pray for peace of mind and trust in the Lord for Marianne, as well as for her family, and for God's guidance for the medical people treating her that they might find the best course of treatment.

*Erica* has a non-malignant Brain Tumor. The tumor is growing and she is scheduled for an operation in January. Please keep her and her family in your prayers.

*Penny's Mom* is having an MRI on 18 November 2013, to explore a knot in her upper leg that appeared after a procedure last week. An MRI gives her stress and claustrophobia and your prayers will be appreciated.

*Brenda* is in the hospital because of bleeding on her brain. Please pray for peace of mind and trust in the Lord for Brenda, as well as for her family, and for God's guidance for the medical people treating her that they might find the best course of treatment.

*Traci* underwent her one year endoscopy on Friday 15 November 2013. Tracy did well on 18 November 2013, with second endoscopy. Both biopsies the doctors feel will be alright. One more to go next week is a mammogram. She and her family will appreciate it if you will continue her in prayer.

*Mackenzie* is a young girl with leukemia. Please pray for peace of mind and trust in the Lord for Mackenzie, as well as for her family, and for God's guidance for the medical people treating her that they might find the best course of treatment.

*Anita* was operated on for an Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma tumors and has been in remission for sometime. After a biopsy of her left lung, three nodules were located in one lung and two in the other. She and her husband are traveling a long distance on 25 September 2013, with hopes of being admitted to a research study at a major hospital for Genome Mapping of Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma. Furthermore, Anita is scheduled for surgery on 30 September 2013. Please keep Anita and her family in prayer as they travel tomorrow and the week ahead.

*Mack* has had diabetes most of his adult life. Circulation in his legs is very bad and doctors are considering amputation. Please pray his medication will help and he will not face amputation. Please pray for peace of mind and trust in the Lord for Mack and for God's guidance for the medical people treating him that they might find the best course of treatment.

*Michael* has been diagnosed with lung cancer recently after making it through gastro intestinal cancer last year. Please pray for peace of mind and trust in the Lord for Michael and his wife Gayle; as well as for God's guidance for the medical people treating him that they might find the best course of treatment.

*Ken Strauch* has been tired and is anemic, he had a colonoscopy which found a pair of polyps which were removed and are being tested. Just for good measure they found he has a hiatal hernia with ulcers, basically part of his stomach is pushed up into his esophagus and is bleeding from there. Sounds there may be surgery involved. Please pray for peace of mind and trust in the Lord for Ken and for God's guidance for the medical people treating him that they might find the best course of treatment.

*Adriano* is in the hospital due to high sugar and high blood pressure. He is very weak and will appreciate your prayers.

*Heather* recently found out she has cancer. Please pray for peace of mind for her and for the medical team treating her will be guided to the right solution.

*Jim* has had an aneurism and blood clots. Pray that healing will come.

*Bob* has experienced several Transient Ischemic Attacks<sup>2</sup> (TIA) recently. Please pray for peace of mind and trust in the Lord for Bob and for God's guidance for the

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<sup>2</sup> A transient ischemic attack (TIA) is a transient episode of neurologic dysfunction caused by ischemia (loss of blood flow) – either focal brain, spinal cord or retinal – without acute infarction (tissue death).

TIAs have the same underlying cause as strokes: a disruption of cerebral blood flow (CBF), and are frequently referred to as mini-strokes. TIAs and strokes cause the same symptoms, such as contralateral paralysis (opposite side of body from affected brain hemisphere) or sudden weakness or numbness. A TIA may cause sudden dimming or loss of vision (amaurosis fugax), aphasia, slurred speech (dysarthria) and mental confusion. But unlike a stroke, the symptoms of a TIA can resolve within a few minutes or 24 hours. Brain injury may still occur in a TIA lasting only a few minutes. Having a TIA is a risk factor for eventually having a stroke or a silent stroke.

medical people treating him that they might find out the source of the problem and best course of treatment.

*Laurie* has been ill for two years and was admitted to the Emergency Room the night of 23 July 2013, for dehydration. She received a CAT scan, which turned up a spot on her lung. Laurie is an oncology nurse and fears the worst. She has had numerous tests and the Physicians think it would be too risky to operate. Some other problems have been discovered and it is hopeful that new medicine will give her healing. Please continue Laurie in Prayer. Please pray for peace of mind for Laurie and for God's guidance for the medical people treating her that they might find out the source of the problem and best course of treatment

*Mark Wilson* was hospitalized with stomach problems. They turned out to be a set of very bad ulcers, for which he is grateful as they are eminently treatable. He is out of the hospital and recovering. Please give thanks for the good result and pray he will be able to follow the medical advice.

*Georgia* has liver and pancreatic cancer. The doctors are evaluating whether to do surgery and how to tackle the disease. Georgia is a faithful Christian and she will appreciate your prayers. Pray for God's guidance for the medical people treating her that they might find out the source of the problem and best course of treatment. Pray also for peace of mind and trust in God for Georgia and her family.

*Lana's* doctor found something on her lymph nodes and ovaries. Pray for God's guidance for the medical people treating her that they might find out the source of the problem and best course of treatment. Pray also for peace of mind and trust in God for Lana and her family.

*Sarah* wife of Rev Geordie (AOC – UK) has been treating for ovarian cancer. The chemotherapy drugs she has been taking do not seem to be reducing the cancer cells the way it was hoped. She is going to stop taking them until January 2014; when they will start with new drugs. It is hoped that will shock the cancer into remission. In the meantime, she will be taking Avocet should keep the cells from increasing or multiplying. She will continue building fluid in her abdominal area which will have to be drained. This is turning into a lifetime of treatment kind of thing, rather than a one shot deal. This has been a difficult surprise for Sarah, but she is adjusting very well with God's help. There are a number of drug combinations to try, but she has a hard road ahead. Please pray this new plan for chemotherapy will work and Sarah can tolerate the treatment. Sarah and Geordie both trust all will work out in the end and ask God's help for the interim. They ask He guide them and the medical team treating Sarah and that the team pay attention and do their very best. They both ask you pray they will be able to let God carry all their worry.

### *Healing*

*Brian* finished the chemotherapy and final radiation treatment for his upper lung and bronchial area cancer. A biopsy and CAT Scan the week of 9 September 2013, turned out to be a re-occurrence of the cancer in a slightly different location. He cannot have any more radiation, but is on a course of a different chemotherapy, one week on, three weeks off and repeat. He made it through the eighth week of treatment, one on, two off; Brian asks we pray for strength to undergo the new process. He is weak and tired; his spirit remains high. Brian had developed an abdominal pain, the potential source of which concerned him, but a CT Scan on

22 January 2014, showed the cancer virtually gone, although there is fluid buildup. He says he can deal with the pain, but is looking forward to having the fluid drained on Monday, 30 January 2104. Please also pray Brian will rest and not over extend himself. Please pray for peace of mind and trust in God for Brian and his new wife Mel, so he can rest and gain strength; pray for the medical team treating him to continue to pay close attention and do their very best; pray also he can quit smoking NOW.

*Barbara Apple* fell the week of 11 January 2014, in her home, breaking her right humerus (the large upper arm bone) in a spiral fracture, which cannot really be set. Movement is very painful and due to a total lack of energy, she is more or less bedridden. Please pray for Barbara to put her trust in the Lord, look to Him for strength and for her to gain energy so she does not lose the mobility she has; pray for a full and rapid recovery. Please pray also for her husband Bob who is taking care of her that he might be comforted and strengthened in this time of stress.

*Mary Thornell* had surgery on 30 October 2013, at the Riverside Community Hospital to remove a huge mass along with about ½ her colon and part of her lower bowel. Mary starts chemotherapy this week and it will go for six months, every other week. Pray for strength and guidance for Mary as she works hard at recovery. Pray for peace of mind for Mary and her husband Jim, as well as daughter Janice and son Jimmy, she begins her recovery. Please pray also for a full and rapid recovery.

*Luis Martinez* had a heart attack on 1 November 2013. It appears there may be valve or blockage issues, so they ask that you pray for guidance for the medical team treating him. Please pray for proper treatment, full recovery and peace of mind for Luis, as well as for trust in the Lord for him and his wife Selma, and the rest of the family.

*Alwin Jack* has had a stroke and recently has had a relapse. Please pray for those who treat Alwin that they might chose the best possible treatment and pray for peace of mind for Alwin during the recovery phase.

*Jere Wolf*, Melanie Zimmer's dad had bacterial pneumonia, which him to go into congestive heart failure. An echocardiogram indicates his aortic valve is narrowed and needs replaced as they say a 1mm narrowing is cause for replacement and he is at 8mm and if it does not get replaced (in California) the vicious cycle of congestive heart failure (CHF) will repeat itself. The doctor also said that the CHF could have made it look as though he had a heart attack, but they think he just went into CHF. His heart function is at 30% down 10% from a few months back. An ultrasound of his remaining kidney shows a cyst. The greatest news is that all the doctors agree that he can fly home, as at first they were saying we would need to drive back and with the stops needed to prevent blood clots it would have taken at least 6 days so the news is good. Thanks again for sharing your prayers with us.

*Sylvia Lee*, Sandra Lee's mother, had been suffering from undiagnosed kidney failure; doctors finally figured out what the problem was and offered her "hospice care", a second opinion suggested dialysis. She is now on dialysis. Please pray for strength and vitality to return to her and for peace of mind for Sylvia and her family, as well as their continued faith and in God as the Great Physician. They

pray for help to listen to God's voice and guidance through this journey together.

*Carolyn* has Multiple Sclerosis with complications. Pray Carolyn and her children will be close to our Lord Jesus Christ as they and family members help to ease the problems.

*Jeong* was in an auto accident and sustained a serious back injury. Please pray for a full and rapid recovery.

*Dale* was hospitalized Sunday 25 August 2013, after a heart attack. Please pray for guidance for the medical team treating him and for peace of mind for Dale and his family.

*Gil Garcia* developed a bed sore which precludes sitting and is now confined to his bed. Gil has very smooth and delicate skin, please pray for a rapid healing of the sore so he can get out of bed and move around in his chair. Gil spent almost a year in the hospital the last time this happened. His faith and his attitude are almost beyond belief, he is an example to us all. But, we pray this time he will heal quickly. Pray also for his lovely wife Mary who takes care of him. Pray for both of them also for strength to deal with the loss of their son Bernie.

*Bill* had malignant growth removed from a lip last month and seems to be experiencing a re-growth of the cancer. He asks your prayer for the medical team treating him and for peace of mind for himself.

*Sarah* was in remission but it has appeared again and she will begin chemo again..

*Hank* has osteoporosis, which has caused him a great deal of pain and inconvenience in the past few years. Pray for his healing and that his medical bills will be met.

*Evelyn* is an elderly woman who has had problems with her eyes and is now blind. It appears some sight will return shortly, pray for that to happen!

*Joanne* has begun kidney dialysis as a result of kidney failure due to extensive chemotherapy. Additionally she cares for an adopted drug addicted baby who is now nine years old. Please pray for her to keep her faith, to let the Lord carry her worry and concern and to give her strength. Pray also for those treating her that they might pay attention and do their best.

*Mr. N. Anand* is in the hospital and is seriously ill. He is being encouraged to pray for repentance of his sins and to depend upon our dependable God for a cure and recovery of his health. Pray that he will be a strong witness for Christ.

*Jacob* has been going through some dental procedures and has some pain and aggravation with the numbness. Please pray for comfort and strength for him, as well as for guidance for the medical team treating him that they might pay attention and do their best.

*Jean* fell and broke her ankle in three places. She will be in the hospital for rehabilitation for the next 6 weeks. Please pray for comfort and strength for her, as well as for guidance for the medical team treating her that they might pay attention and do their best.

*Bud and his wife* for their continued welfare and enthusiasm. Bud has been advised of an aneurism in his heart of a size not mandating immediate surgery. This comes at a time when he has sole care of his wife who recently broke two vertebrae and thereafter sustained pneumonia.

*Virginia* has Sinus and Allergy problems giving her severe problems. Pray that the Doctor will discover why it continues and find a cure.

*Steve Thornell* had a brain aneurysm, which was found before it burst. He is home from the hospital and working hard on recovery. He lacks energy from seven days in the hospital. His doctor told him he has to make serious life changes. One of the two main arteries in the back of the head is now completely closed. He must take blood thinners, he has thick blood and recent chemotherapy made it worse. Steve has always operated at 110 percent, he needs help to slow down. Please pray for trust in the Lord and a full and rapid recovery. Pray for peace of mind for Steve and his family.

*Arlen* is receiving treatment for lung cancer and recently experienced a ruptured colon during treatment. She is alone in Oregon but does have a friend who has traveled a great distance to be at her side. Please pray for guidance for the medical team treating her and for strength and trust for Arlen.

*Oscar* discovered some time ago he had blood clots in his leg and lung. He has been treated for them and has not been cured. He now will be facing surgery. Please keep him in your prayers.

*Angela* had an ischemic stroke (clot). Please pray for guidance for the medical team treating her and for strength and trust for Angela. Please pray also that she and her family might put their worries on our Lord's back so she can work hard towards recovery.

*Nora* had a stroke mid February 2013. Please pray for guidance for the medical team treating her and for strength and trust for Nora. Please pray also that she and her family might put their worries on our Lord's back so she can work hard towards recovery.

*Linda* has been hospitalized for several days with a gastrointestinal problem. Please pray for guidance for the medical team treating her and for strength and trust for Linda.

*Dester* is suffering from unknown skin and diseases. Please guide the medical team treating him to find out what the problem is and cure it. Pray also for Dester to trust in the Lord.

*Lee* has Arterial Fibrillation; the medical people are not sure how to help her. Please pray for guidance for the team treating her and for Lee and her family to make the right decisions regarding treatment.

*Nell* recently adopted two children and has just been diagnosed with multiple myeloma.

*Sarah* is recovering from a stroke, but fell and broke bones. Please pray for her peace of mind and rapid and full recovery. Pray for trust in God for her and her family.

*Mary Lou* has been suffering with seizures. She was in the hospital with a 24 hour monitor and is being sent home from the hospital with two medications and orders to return in 2 months for another MRI to review whatever is going on in her brain. Please pray for guidance for the medical people treating her, as well as peace of mind and trust in God for her and her family.

*Kathleen* has spent the last two weeks in the hospital. She has been diagnosed with colitis, shingles and possibly colon cancer. Pray she will be comfortable and

begin to heal.

*Rachel* has Mitochondrial Myopathy. This is a hereditary disease of the muscles and they do not have a cure for it. Part of her pain is her family does not believe she is indeed ill, as she appears to be just fine. Please pray her family will learn the truth and be supportive of her; pray also the medical people treating her will find the right measures to minimize the disease. Most particularly pray for Rachel's trust in God.

*Nicolas* is in the hospital with serious symptoms of a heart disorder. Please pray for peace of mind for him and guidance for the medical team looking for the cause and cure.

*Mrs. Baek* an elderly women fell and injured her spine. Doctors cannot repair the spinal injury due to her age. She fell again the morning of 12 December 2012, breaking her collar bone which is also untreatable. Mrs. Baek is in severe pain and will appreciate your prayers.

*Juanita* is a young girl who was in a coma because of a blood disease. She has not come out and is gaining strength. They are awaiting results from blood samples. Her family thanks you for your prayers and asks that you continue.

*Barbara* had a accident while cooking and the pressure cooker blew up in her face, causing second and third degree burns over her face and upper body. Because of this she has incurred kidney problems and may need a transplant.

*George* had foot surgery. Please give thanks for the surgery and pray for a full and rapid recovery.

*Nellie* is in the emergency room of a hospital in a great deal of pain. Please pray for peace of mind for her and guidance for the medical team looking for the cause and cure.

*Lauralee Meade* underwent a lumpectomy on Friday after Thanksgiving. A further anomaly has been discovered and she had additional preventative radiation treatment. Please pray for a complete remission of the cancer. Pray also Lauralee will maintain her great attitude and trust in God.

*Kevin Gerhart* discovered cancer on his neck. He underwent radiation and chemotherapy. Please pray for the medical team treating Kevin that they might pay attention, do their very best and find the source; that the treatment might be successful and he might live a long and healthy life to His honor and glory. Pray also for trust in God and peace of mind for Kevin, his wife and family.

*Bill, Sara's husband*, had a third abdominal surgery on 22 November 2011, to remove a tumor. Bill is doing better keeping the doctor's instructions, for which we are all grateful, including taking chemotherapy once a day for two more years. He has radically decreased the consumption of alcohol and eating at least mostly properly. Please pray for help for him to continue do all this. Please pray also that Bill might turn his heart outward to help those around him, as well as live a long and healthy life to the honor and glory of God. Pray also for peace of mind for Bill and his wife Sara.

*Kay Denton (Mrs. Kay)* has had a chest infection, perhaps viral, but seems to be getting better. She actually sent an iMessage last week, but did not hang around for a response a minute later! Please pray for continued peace of mind for Mrs. Kay

and her family. Give thanks for her trust in the Lord and her positive attitude.

*Matt Alcantara*, age 15, came back with ZERO SCANS again in December 2013! Matt has Osteosarcoma (bone cancer), a very rare and often lethal form of cancer with limited treatment options. This is a disease that is about 90 percent fatal in a couple of years. He has no hip joint on one side, but he walks and swims! Courage? Guts? You bet! Please also give thanks for the great faith of Matt and his entire family. Their faith and trust is a wonderful example for each and every one of us. But, now is not the time to stop praying. Actually, it never is the time to stop praying!

*Judith Clingwall*, is afflicted with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). She is currently in Laurel Place, an extended care facility in Surrey, British Columbia. Judith's condition has worsened recently. Please pray for her to take an active part in her own life, for her strength, peace of mind, trust in God and remission of the disease so she might return home to her family. Pray also for strength for her husband Martin as he deals with all the problems and stress of Judith's situation.

*Vince (age 15)*, reoccurrence of Osteosarcoma, recent testing found a nickel sized tumor in his lungs. The doctors are consulting with a specialist in Houston. Please pray for guidance for the medical team and for peace of mind for Vince and his family.

### ***Thanksgiving and Continued Healing***

*Erica* had surgery on 7 January 2014, with ten surgeons and a huge surgical team for what is estimated to be a ten hour operation for a non-malignant brain tumor. They got most, but not all of the tumor, things seem good for now. Please give thanks for the surgical team paying close attention, doing their very best and for a good outcome. Pray for peace of mind for Erica's family as healing and treatment continues.

*Otto* had massive blood clots in both lungs and a smaller one in one of his legs, treatment worked and he is recovering at home, he tires and is still on medication, but able to sleep and be free from hospital routines. His family and friends thank you for your prayers. Please pray for peace of mind and trust in the Lord for Otto, as well as for his family, and for continued recovery.

Please join together in thanking the Lord for strengthening *Christopher*, a young man with psychological problems who departed meds to a bad effect, for his maintaining healthy discipline the last six months, and join together in praying that he continue to be infused with strength and rationality.

*Pat* underwent successful major heart surgery on 25 September 2013. Please give thanks for the successful outcome and pray for continued healing and a complete recovery for Pat.

*Jane*, US Army Korea, had a tumor. She returned to the CONUS, underwent five hours of surgery which went exceedingly well. The tumor came out completely, on the surface it appears non-malignant, testing will be done to confirm. Please give thanks for the surgical team doing a great job and the great result. Pray for a complete recovery for Jane.

*Dennis* has heart problems; now the medical people treating him discovered a large mass on his liver which turned out to be a cyst, just like Kathy above! Please give thanks for this great development and pray for peace of mind and trust in

the Lord for Dennis and for God's guidance for the medical people treating him that the contemplated surgery might go well.

*Dwight* had major oral surgery, for which he gives thanks. He is recovering slowly and asks your prayers to speed the process.

*Joyce* broke her left leg and sprained her right foot in a fall and had surgery the morning of 24 July 2013. She asks you to give thanks for the surgery having gone well and asks you also pray for her continued healing, she will be spending several weeks her right leg in a walking boot and several months with her left leg in a cast.

*Mike* was very ill in hospital. He is doing much better now and his family asks you to give thanks for the miraculous recovery. Mike is a veteran who has served his country when she called. Please pray he will open his heart to God so He can make Mike's crooked road straight and pull him towards the summit rather than to the pit.

*James* had surgery the morning of 4 April 2013 at Cancer Treatment Centers of America which appears to have gone well. The pathology report found the high grade carcinoma cancer was confined to the bladder. There was no sign of cancer in surrounding areas, tissues, organs, etc. The Sovereign King of heaven and earth has blessed Jim immensely; he will not have to endure chemo or radiation, he will continue with various tests and see the physicians. Please give thanks for the good result and the work of the surgical team paying attention and doing their very best. Pray for James' continued recovery and for him and his wife Dawn to be able to put their worry and concern on His Back.

*Jeff* had successful surgery on Monday 4 March 2013, at Vanderbilt Medical Center to remove his esophagus as the doctors felt this is the only remedy for pre-cancerous and cancerous cells in his esophagus and stomach. Please give thanks for the successful surgery and pray that his pain level will go down and he will recover quickly. Pray for Jeff and his family to keep their faith in God and let him carry their worries.

*Rick* is recovering from hip replacement surgery in the middle of February 2013.

*Buzz Baron* had C5-6 surgery the morning of 3 March 2013, which went well. Please give thanks for the surgical team paying attention and doing their best and for a good result; pray also for a full and rapid recovery.

*Karen* had surgery the afternoon of 1 March 2013 to remove a spot on her lung; the surgery went well and the spot was benign. Please give thanks for the great result. Pray also for continued trust in God and peace of mind for Karen, as well as a rapid recovery.

*Dick's* left arm was amputated after treating for Merkel Cell carcinoma over a year. He is now believed to be cancer free and is waiting to be fitted with an artificial arm. Please join Dick and his family in giving thanks to Our Lord Jesus Christ for his recovery as well as for their trust in God.

*Traci* had surgery colon cancer on 27 December 2012. The surgery went very well and she appears to be cancer free. But, she had a pulmonary embolism and another clot in the artery to the spleen which will keep her in the hospital for at least several days. Traci is beginning to be weary of her medical situation. Please pray that she will not become despondent. Pray that she will open her heart to God's Grace that He might enter in to her heart and strengthen her.

*Bob Smouse* had shoulder surgery on 28 November 2012. He would appreciate your thanksgiving prayers. While the surgery apparently went well, he is still in pain and would also appreciate prayers for continued healing and the pain to subside. He promises to work very hard on recovery therapy.

*Carol Stone*, the sweet wife of Mike Stone, recovered far better than expected from a severe brain bleed, but fell recently and broke her hip.

Please pray for peace of mind and trust in God for Mike, guidance for the medical team treating Carol and strength for Carol as well as faith and trust. No one can ever understand the why of these things here on earth. Sara who passed this request on asks that you pray in both faith and hope.

### ***Business***

*Mark's* business is in difficulty. He works in a shrinking field, of which he is one of the country's true masters, but there is little work available. He asks that you pray that he can find a way to survive in his industry, which he loves and needs his talents. Pray he can find new sources of business and new ways of doing things, perhaps someone to partner with to better use his talents. Pray also for those who work for and with him that they might do their best to help.

### ***Financial Guidance and Employment***

*Charlie* is in need of both financial guidance and employment. After many years in the aerospace industry, he is looking for a place to employ his talents to the mutual benefit of a company. He asks that you pray for God to guide him to a new place to allow him to gain an even financial keel.

*Chris* and several others at his firm were let go after many years of faithful service. Please pray that they might find a company that can use their considerable skills and dedication to their mutual benefit. Pray also for those who remain behind that they might find peace in the confusion caused by the departures.

*Doug* recently became unemployed from his job of 18 years. He has been applying for jobs, but unable to get one at this time. His wife is working; this is not enough for the family. Please pray he will find employment with a firm that will be able to use his considerable skill and hard work to benefit both the firm and the family.

*Catherine and Lewis* are at a low ebb due to a struggle for employment. Your fervent prayers will be appreciated.

*Lori* is considering a potential change in her employment. Please pray for God's guidance in considering all aspect of her potential work.

*Rodriguez Family* are looking for work. It seems many obstacles have been put in their way of finding employment. Please pray they will find employment with a firm that will be able to use their considerable skill and hard work to benefit both the firm and the family.

*Sarah* is concerned about the future with her company. She would appreciate prayers for her continued employment and that her firm might find more and better ways to use her considerable skills.

### ***Financial Guidance and Healing***

*David and Lorna* are having financial problems. They are trying to find a smaller home which may be more affordable. *Lorna* has had an ongoing battle with brain cancer, her trips back and forth to the hospital have drained their finances to the point they sometimes struggle to have enough food in the house. Pleaser pray

for Lorna's healing and guidance on how they might handle the financial difficulties in which they have found themselves.

### *Guidance*

*Helene and her family* ask your prayers for them as they deal with the loss of Alan, husband and father.

*Stephanie* seems to be very deeply into post partum depression after her baby was born prematurely. Please pray for her Mother in Law who is going a great distance to help Stephanie and her new Grandson. Pray that Stephanie will be able to direct her attention outward, rather than inward.

*William* is an elderly man living with his Son and Daughter in-law. William is causing trouble in the family because of his demanding ways and continually using bad language. The family is at wit's end to know how to handle him and will appreciate your guidance and prayers.

*Caitlin* is in the grip of the Prince of Darkness; she thinks there is escape from reality in drugs. The saddest part is that reality is not as she sees it. Her family is despairing as they can do nothing to help her and ask that you pray for the Holy Ghost to enter into heart and show her the need for change before it is too late.

*Nathaniel* is in spiritual turmoil. His family and friends will appreciate it if you will keep him in your prayers for him to find the root of his trouble and accept God's help to heal his heart.

*Sam* and her *two children* that have been living in a shelter and are to lose their place there. Please pray a place will be found they can stay in and recover.

Please pray *Darlene* will surrender her life to Christ.

*Norrie* is facing daily exams in the weeks ahead. Pray for calmness and concentration and to do the best possible.

*Jonathan* is addicted to drugs. He is now in jail awaiting trial. His parents and friends will appreciate it if you will keep him in your prayers for him to find the root of his trouble and accept God's help to heal addiction.

*Beth* is suffering from ungodly treatment in her marriage. Please pray God will guide her in her behavior, actions and thoughts that she might be able to lead her husband to God so her marriage might prosper to the benefit of them.

*Brandon* a young man from a Christian family who married a year ago and almost immediately became estranged from his family. As a result he has had a serious problem with keeping the civil law. Please pray for Brandon that he will return to the Lord and the many problems will be eventually settled. Pray the hurt he has caused so many will be helped with our Lord's care and love.

*Dennis* has some decisions to make and will appreciate our Lord's guidance.

*Earl* to read and understand Scriptures he has been given.

*Jeanette* has had many members of her family die from diabetes and several are near death now. Jeanette does not know the Lord and is despondent and perplexed about her family and herself. Please pray she can open her heart to allow the Holy Ghost in to bring her knowledge and understanding.

*Christy* just lost her sister in an automobile accident; this follows closely the loss of two family. Please pray she can let our Lord Jesus Christ carry all her sorry, worry and care at this extremely difficult and stressful time.

*Dr. Elizabeth Raj* is teaching a biblical approach to the psychological problems facing many in our society today. She is battling against the growing influence of worldly psychology adopted by the churches themselves. Elizabeth constantly stresses answers are found between the covers of that precious Book, the Holy Bible. Please pray for encouragement, strength, fortitude and courage for her.

*Daniel and Danielle* are experiencing family strife as a result of custodial issues with a daughter. Please pray they and those they strive with might look to the child's best interests in their time of difficulty and disagreement; to work for her best interests and not use her as a weapon amongst themselves.

*Abigail* is a teenager who has behavior problems. She feels she is in an area of mental darkness. Please pray that she might look to God for help and not within herself.

*Sara* asks that you pray for guidance for her as she deals with the stresses of her family and life. Pray that she can separate those things which she can affect from those things which she cannot and give her grace to accept that she cannot do everything and can only change those things within her control. She asks for God's help to grow her business while keeping up with the needs of her mother and husband and healing her own problems.

*Jacquie* to open her heart to God and accept His Love and Grace.

*Hap* asks you to pray he might be able to trust God will help him make the right decisions at the right time and not to worry uselessly, to change those things he can change, accept those things he cannot change, sleep well to be able to do the correct things with a clear head and that he will open his heart to the Holy Ghost.

### **Consecration**

*Rev Roy Morales-Kuhn* will be consecrated as a bishop on 19 January 2014, at Canterbury Chapel in Alabama. Roy will be the Bishop of the Diocese of the Midwest. Please pray for guidance for him as he takes up this responsibility and ask the God to send the Holy Ghost into his heart for strength and singleness of purpose. Roy is a great man, but this job needs God's Help; with it he will prevail.

### **New Ministers**

*Bishop Eduardo Dominguez* of the AOC travels to Peru later this month to ordain, God willing, on 26 January 2014, two men to the presbyterate (ministry or office of priest) of the Church of God Renato de la Jara and Antonio Garabito. He will be assisted by the Rev Brian Gomez, of Arequipa. Brian is a long standing member of the AOC who introduced Bishop Neel to the AOC.

*Don Fultz* was ordained on 15 December 2013, at St. Peter's Anglican Orthodox Church in Statesville, North Carolina, by Bishop Jerry L. Ogles. Please pray for Don to do his very best at fulfilling the special responsibilities he has taken on and give thanks for his commitment.

### **AOC Congregations**

*Rev Paul Thompson*, pastor of Christ Anglican Church (AOC) in Oakland, Iowa, asks you pray for the Holy Ghost to enter the hearts of their congregation that they might find better ways to serve our Lord and bring the Word to those around them.

*Rev Rick Reid* asks that you pray for Saint Andrews Anglican Church in Newton, North Carolina. They would like to see their congregation grow to the point is it self-sustaining and vibrant. The congregation asks that you pray for the Holy Ghost to enter into their hearts and inspire them to do their best to further His Will.

*Nathan* in Wake Forest, North Carolina needs God's Help to find others who are interested in having a Bible believing Church in the Anglican tradition. He would like to develop a congregation to associate with the Anglican Orthodox Church.

*Saint Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Orthodox Church* is under a lot of stress. We all are, but they need even more prayer. Rev Roger Jessup, their wonderful minister, is pressed by the duties of a primary care giver, in addition to all the worries of this world. They have one of their family's primary breadwinners who will be soon unemployed, absent His intervention. Roger's niece will lose her job at the end of the year when her tech center shuts down. As Rev Roger said so eloquently, "We must pray for those who mean us harm and deprive us of our property are our enemies: Our LORD has so commanded us." We must pray they will see light and cleave to it while turning their backs on the Prince of this World. Equally important, we must pray that the Lord will raise up a political leader from among us as He has done in the past. Pray also for trust in God for each member of the parish and for them to find economic relief.

### ***Armed Forces & Contractors***

Airman Donny Patton (Hulbert Field, Florida), Jordan (USMC – Fleet Marine Force - Pacific), Trevor (USAF - KC-10 Boom Operator – New Jersey), Trevor (USN – Whidbey Island, EF-18 Pilot), Kurt Thomas (USN – Camp Foster, Okinawa)

### ***Thanksgiving***

*Tuck Arnold, Albert Esquivel and Alan Ridenour* give thanks for safe travel to London this past week.

### ***Persecuted***

Around the world, Christians are under attack, not only in the Muslim world, but from Hindus and others in India. Also, they are under continual attack in the name of "Separation of Church and State" in the western world, as it becomes actively atheist or pro-devil buddy. Please pray for God's guidance and protection for all persecuted Christians and those around them.

### ***Various Special Requests***

This is a horrible time for the *people of India, Christians in particular*; they are having problems with Hunger, Bank Closings, Transportation and Schools not functioning. Pray for the Leaders and Members of our Church in Eluru Andhra Pradesh. Pray their basic needs will be met and God will be close to them in this time of need.

*Lisa* discovered her 9 year old daughter *Mariah* had been raped. This is in the court system now and we know that prayers are needed for this family. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" James 5:16 Lisa says she feels the power of your prayer in God's hand on her heart.

Please pray for *all the people of Egypt*; Bishop Mouneer Anis of Egypt is asking your prayer as the supporters of the deposed Mursi government, with the support of the United States government, have been attacking Christian churches--Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox. They destroyed the car of Anglican priest Rev. Ehab

Ayoub. The people of Egypt, the people of the United States need our prayers, even more so the people of the Muslim Brotherhood that they might repent of their evil and know God so the rest of the people may live in peace.

We ask that you pray, please ask God that the Holy Ghost might give you insight into how you might make the lives of your friends and family better. Remember helping others is not just those who you don't know!

Please join us in praying that the *Free Teen Guitar Class* will be continue to be an opportunity for God to work in the lives of the kids and their families. Please ask God to guide the class to new opportunities to make Him known to others. Help us to let the love of our Lord shine through us into their lives, putting Him first, so that He might enter in to their hearts and lives.

### *Question that only you can ask*

What would you like to know about our history, what we believe, what we do or how we operate? Hap is looking for material for the continuing education class and *Thought for the Day* material. Help us help you. Please send your question to Hap so we all can get an answer. Just because you don't know the answer to your question doesn't mean you are the only one who doesn't know. But, if you don't ask, no one will know.

### *Saint Paul*

We celebrate Paul's conversion to Christ on the Road to Damascus every 25 January, this year is no exception. Paul is one of my very favorite people, I can certainly identify with him<sup>3</sup>, he started out Saul, Chief of Sinners<sup>4</sup>; ended up Paul, Chief of Apostles; writing about half the New Testament.

For whatever reason, he did not say, Rev Geordie Menzies-Grierson, our good friend from the UK also has an interest in Paul and passed on this quite interesting article in [Christian Truth Magazine](#):

### *Saul of Tarsus*

In contemplating the character of this most remarkable man, we may gather up some fine principles of gospel truth. He seems to have been peculiarly fitted to show forth, in the first place, what the grace of God can do; and, in the second place, what the greatest amount of legal effort cannot do. If ever there was a man upon this earth whose history illustrates the truth that salvation is by grace, "not by the works of the law," Saul of Tarsus was that man. Indeed, it would seem as though God had specially designed to present, in the person of Saul, a living example, first, of the depth to which a sinner can descend, and second, of the height to which a legalist can attain. He was, at once, the very worst, and the very best of men - the chief of sinners, and the chief of legalists. He traveled down to the lowest point of human wickedness, and climbed to the loftiest summit of human righteousness. He was a sinner of the sinners, and a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

Let us then, in the first place, contemplate him as

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<sup>3</sup> Just for the record, it is Paul's first half I really identify with having done at least as good a job at being bad as Paul. It is a comfort to me, paraphrasing the words of John Newton, that "Although I am a great sinner, Jesus Christ is an even greater Savior." If God used Paul, He will use me. All I have to do is see the light, so to speak or perhaps literally and there by the Grace of God go I.

<sup>4</sup> Paul started out life as a Pharisee, and a fast burner at that. He was right there when Stephen the first to be killed for Christ was murdered, he held the cloak for at least one of the stoners.

### *The Chief of Sinners.*

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1Ti 1:15.

Now let the reader note particularly that the Spirit of God declares, concerning Saul of Tarsus, that he was the chief of sinners. It is not the expression of Paul's humility, though, no doubt, he was humble under the sense of what he had been. We are not to be occupied with the feelings of an inspired writer, but with the statements of the Holy Ghost who inspired him. It is well to see this. Very many persons speak of the feelings of the various inspired writers in a way calculated to weaken the sense of that precious truth, the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture. They may not mean to do so; but then at a time like the present, when there is so much mental activity, so much of reason, so much of human speculation, we cannot be too guarded against aught that might, even in appearance, militate against the integrity of the Word of God. We are anxious that our readers should entertain the very highest thoughts respecting the inspired volume; that they should treasure it in their hearts' affection, not as the expression of human feelings, however pious and praiseworthy, but as the depository of the thoughts of God. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2Pe 1:21.

Hence, therefore, in reading 1Ti 1:15, we are not to think of the feelings of man, but of the record of God; and this record declares that Paul was the chief of sinners. It is never once stated that any one else was the chief of sinners. No doubt, in a secondary sense, each convicted heart will feel and own itself the vilest heart within its entire range of intelligence; but this is quite another matter. The Holy Ghost has declared of Paul, and of none other, that he was the chief of sinners; nor does the fact that He has told us this by the pen of Paul himself, interfere with or weaken, in the smallest degree, the truth and value of the statement. Paul was the chief of sinners. No matter how bad any one may be, Paul could say, "I am chief." No matter how low any one may feel himself to be - no matter how deeply sunk in the pit of ruin - a voice rises to his ear from a deeper point still, "I am chief." There cannot be two chiefs, for if there were, it could only be said that Paul was one of them; whereas, it is most distinctly declared that he was "chief."

But let us mark the object of all this dealing with the chief of sinners. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." The chief of sinners is in heaven. How did he get there? Simply by the blood of Jesus; and, moreover, he is Christ's "pattern" man. All may look at him and see how they too are to be saved; for in such wise as the "chief" was saved, must all the subordinate be saved. The grace that reached the chief can reach all. The blood that cleansed the chief can cleanse all. The title by which the chief entered heaven is the title for all. The vilest sinner under the canopy of heaven may hearken to Paul saying, I am chief, and yet I obtained mercy; behold in me a pattern of Christ's long-suffering. There is not a sinner at this side the portal of hell, be he backslider or aught else, beyond the reach of the love of God, the blood of Christ, or the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

We shall now turn to the other side of Saul's character, and contemplate him as

### *The Chief of Loyalists.*

"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." Php 3:4. Here we have a most valued point. Saul of Tarsus stood, as it were, on the very loftiest crag of the hill of legal

righteousness. He reached the topmost step of the ladder of human religion. He would suffer no man to get above him. His religious attainments were of the very highest order. (See Gal 1:14.) No one ever got beyond him in the matter of working out a self-righteousness. "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more." Is "any" man trusting in his temperance? Paul could say "I more." Is "any" man trusting in his morality? Paul could say, "I more." Is "any" man trusting in ordinances, sacraments, religious devices, or pious observances? Paul could say, "I more." Is "any" man proudly wrapping himself up in the pompous robes of orthodoxy, and trusting therein? Paul could say, "I more." In a word, let a man mount up the hill of legal righteousness as high as the most towering ambition or fervid zeal can carry him, and he will hear a voice falling upon his ear, from a loftier height still, "I more."

All this imparts a peculiar interest to the history of Saul of Tarsus. He lay at the very bottom of the pit of ruin, and he stood on the very summit of the hill of self-righteousness. Deep as any sinner may have sunk, Paul was deeper still. High as any legalist may have stood. Paul stood higher still. He combined in his own person the very worst and the very best of men. In him we see, at one view, the power of the blood of Christ, and the utter worthlessness of the fairest robe of self-righteousness that ever decked the person of a legalist. Looking at him, no sinner need despair; looking at him, no legalist can boast. If the chief of sinners is in heaven, I can get there too. If the greatest religionist, legalist, and doer that ever lived had to come down from the ladder of self-righteousness, it is of no use for me to go up. Saul of Tarsus came up from the depths, and down from the heights, and found his place at the pierced feet of Jesus of Nazareth. His guilt was no hindrance and his righteousness no use. The former was washed away by the blood, and the latter turned into dung and dross by the moral glory of Christ. It mattered not whether it was "I... chief," or "I more." The cross was the only remedy. "God forbid," says this chief of sinners and prince of legalists, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal 6:14.

Paul had just as little idea of trusting in his righteousness as in his crimes. He was permitted to win the laurel of victory in the grand legal struggle with his "equals" in his own nation, only that he might fling it as a withered, worthless thing at the foot of the cross. He was permitted to outstrip all in the dark career of guilt, only that he might exemplify the power of the love of God and the efficacy of the blood of Christ. The gospel has a double voice. It calls to the slave of vice who lies wallowing in the mire of moral pollution, and says, "Come up." It calls to the busy, self-complacent religionist who is vainly endeavoring to clamber up the steep sides of Mount Sinai, and says, "Come down." Saul was no nearer to Christ as the chief of legalists, than he was as the chief of sinners. There was no more justifying merit in his noblest efforts in the school of legalism, than in his wildest acts of opposition to the name of Christ. He was saved by grace, saved by blood, saved by faith. There is no other way for sinner or legalist.

Thus much as to Saul of Tarsus in his twofold character as chief of sinners and chief of legalists. There is one other point in his history at which we must briefly glance in order to show the practical results of the grace of Christ whether that grace is known. This will present him to our notice as

### *The Most Laborious of Apostles*

If Paul learned to cease working for righteousness, he also learned to begin working for Christ. When we behold, on the road leading to Damascus, the shattered fragments of the worst and best of men - when we hear those pathetic accents emanating from the depths of a broken heart, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" - when we see that

man who had just left Jerusalem in all the mad fury of a persecuting zealot, now stretching forth the hand of blind helplessness, to be led like a little child into Damascus, we are led to form the very highest expectations as to his future career; nor are we disappointed. Mark the progress of that most remarkable man; behold his gigantic labors in the vineyard of Christ; see his tears, his toils, his travels, his perils, his struggles; see him as he bears his golden sheaves into the heavenly garner, and lay them down at his Master's feet; see him wearing the noble bonds of the gospel, and finally laying his head on a martyr's block, and say if the gospel of God's free grace - the gospel of Christ's free salvation - does away with good works. Nay, my reader, that precious gospel is the only true basis on which the superstructure of good works can be erected. Morality, without Christ, is an icy morality. Benevolence, without Christ, is a worthless benevolence. Ordinances, without Christ, are powerless and valueless. Orthodoxy, without Christ, is heartless and fruitless. We must get to the end of self, whether it be a guilty self or a religious self, and find Christ as the satisfying portion of our hearts, now and forever. Then we shall be able to say with truth,

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,  
More than all in Thee I find."

Thus it was with Saul of Tarsus. He got rid of himself and found his all in Christ; and hence, as we hang over the impressive page of his history, we hear, from the most profound depths of moral ruin, the words, "I am chief" - from the most elevated point in the legal system, the words, "I more" - and from amid the golden fields of apostolic labor, the words, "I labored more abundantly than they all."

**Thanks again to Rev Geordie!**

*What is in a Bishop? Would a rose by any other name not ...*

Before you read the article, here are my comments: The three orders are established in Scripture. Although there are no records, it seems the most plausible that the succession does go back to the Apostles, thus to Christ. The important thing though is that the spiritual succession be there.

And here are Bishop Jerry's comments: I failed to peruse all of Mr. Salter's comments having been drawn most exclusively to his very cogent remarks hinting of the necessity for "doctrinal apostolic succession" as a trump to the formal laying on of hands. It is quite clear that the latter has no authenticity if it is not successive doctrinally of the teachings of the Apostles; however, I do disagree that apostolic succession was not a direct product of the Apostles and was not practiced by their immediate successors.

One would like to agree completely with Salter's comments when viewed through the prism of error and apostasy of the modern episcopacy of the ECUSA; but that episcopal government long ago departed from the will of God. Without episcopal authority, I doubt Bishop Dees could ever have founded a church whose apostolic succession was coherent with the established doctrines of Holy Scripture as revealed in the Thirty Nine Articles. The ancient Offices of Deacon, Priest, and Bishop remain inviolate from the time of the apostles until now, but all who call themselves apostolic are not necessarily so having sold their souls to burning ambition and compromise.

With those reservations, I believe the letter addressed serious 'spots on the garments' of the modern church - both episcopal and congregational.

The episcopacy is not so different from every other form of government that we find in the political sphere. The notable difference is that this is the government ordained by God for the government of His Church. It is a monarchy, pure and simple - the Lord Jesus Christ being its legitimate Head and Sovereign. If those under-shepherds are of his appointment, the kingdom will be ruled according to Godly will. If those under-shepherds are of the type described in Jeremiah 50, then they do not rule over God's church, but some other. If the head is rotten, how can the body live?

The Church is neither a democracy nor a republic. The direction of its judiciary is not based on common appeal or desire, but originates at a level above the mind of man and rests upon the Commandments of God. There is no authority in the Church except that of God. His ministers have the authority of His Word, but that authority ends at the last punctuation of His Word.

That is a simple truth - perhaps too simple for the Oxford professors who love to nasalize profound theories that no man can understand while sober.

We take much comfort in the AOC in being a Biblically-centered church. We have been able to defend against error from within and without all those years since the courageous Bishop Dees brought us "out from among them." But that can only be due to the fact the Lord is our King and Chief Shepherd. The day that this ceases to be the case will be the day the AOC is no longer a Church of God. The birds that nest in her branches (Matt 13:31,32), are faithful in depositing their droppings at every place that they can make the tree less pure. So we must be vigilant.

I believe Mr. Salter has very well articulated the order of ministry in the true church.

### **The Article - APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION: Bishop Bunyan**

"That it may please thee to rule and govern thy holy Church universal in the right way".  
-- The Litany

By Roger Salter  
January 21, 2014

An astounding comment was once overheard, in an Anglican place of worship, to the effect that John Bunyan ought not to be read as he was "outside the [true] Church". Such a shocking statement begs the question as to what is the Church?

Ecclesiology is perhaps the weakest point in most Christian theologies, academic and personal, and the majority of Evangelicals today probably disparage too much attention being given to the Church as an entity. The general trend is toward an individualism that owes no real loyalty to the visible community of faith in any serious sense. One may church-hop willy-nilly according to the slightest whim or grievance without any awareness of rending the body. Serial church-hopping is tantamount to a casual form of schism which divides, wounds, and impedes the Church in its local expression.

The case for the Church in terms of rigid institutionalism is vastly overstated and an episcopal regime, such as developed approximately 200 years after the demise of the apostles, is unimaginable in the simple and normal reading of Holy Scripture, and was subsequently imposed upon the Pastoral Epistles as a response to the threat of Gnosticism in an attempt to conserve apostolic truth and acquired Christian tradition.

There is no early recorded lineage of bishops and such a list only began to be compiled after the influence of Irenaeus who saw "apostolic succession" as a means of protecting Christian identity as a community in an alien society. It is most likely that early church governance was pragmatically, as opposed to ideologically, presbyterial, as Rupert Davies, former president of the Methodist Conference in England, suggested in his comments on early church administration.

Certainly Jerome limited the prerogatives of bishops in his time and declared the virtual equality of presbyters and bishops, even claiming that the former were empowered to ordain candidates to the ministry as much as the latter, for both "ranks" were in the "apostolic succession" together. This is close to averring that "apostolic succession" inheres in the accurate presentation of the word and the right ministrations of the sacraments as adjuncts to the word. And it is very hard to imagine the early church operating or functioning in the manner of developed Episcopalianism, in any denominational form, as in our day.

The congregations of the first two centuries scarcely resembled or envisaged anything future like St. Peter's Basilica in Rome or All Saints Church of England in Margaret Street, London (where Laurence Olivier's sense of drama was captured as a student at the choir school). This is not to deny that All Saints has had good incumbents such as Michael Marshall and David Hope, both in essence Bible men. Modern congregations familiar with certain Sunday norms can easily overlook the fact of historical evolution in matters doctrinal and devotional and can be anachronistically minded in defending cherished positions.

The early Church was flexible, discerning spiritual gifts among believers and guiding them to practical use. Those mature disciples displaying requisite holiness and sobriety and displaying the Spirit's donation of talents for preaching, teaching, and leadership were set aside as elders for the edification and discipline of the flock in various local congregations. The monarchical bishop (for good or ill) was a creation of later times. The noted German New Testament scholar, formerly of the University of Zurich, Eduard Schweizer (1913-2006) in his book *The Spirit of God* (Holy Spirit in English translation) noted the mood of flexibility in the church of the immediate post-apostolic period and alleged that in the true sense of the word its officers were appointed by charismatic selection, recognition of gifts, and not by formal arrangement and succession.

"So if we consider that the office of bishop, as understood in modern times, is a good institution which has stood the test of centuries, then it is at least worth discussing. Only then we must be quite clear that it belongs, at the most, to the Church's *bene esse*, not to its *esse*. Where institution is regarded as an unconditional necessity, the same situation exists as in Gal 2:3ff. For the church that does not possess the apostolic succession it would mean, not the renunciation of cherished ideals for other people's sake, but a declaration that something for which it can see no basis in the New Testament is necessary for salvation. Here the concern of the Church to which the apostolic succession is important must certainly be heard, for continuity is essential to the church of Jesus. But it is the succession of believers in which the message that is handed on from generation to generation. A person will hardly attain to faith unless a living witness of the message mediates it to him by his words or by his whole existence. The only way to guarantee that this handing on does not wander away from the

original gospel is. indeed, to go back constantly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and ask what is the witness of the apostles themselves in the New Testament" (Eduard Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament*, Wipf and Stock, Eugene, OR, 2006, page 2190).

The Church, like Israel, has its visible and invisible aspects, but the biblical emphasis is on the spiritual nature of the true people of God (For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel: Romans 9:6, So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace: Romans 11:5, What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did: Romans 11:7, A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly . . . . No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly: Romans 2:28-29). The simplest and best definition of the Church comes from John Wycliffe - the whole company of the elect.

That is why the believers of Bedfordshire and neighboring counties could refer affectionately to John Bunyan as "Bishop" Bunyan, their trusted pastor who so manifestly bore all the marks of a godly man and a shepherd in Christ. He was an elect servant of God ministering to God's chosen and bidding others into the flock. As Charles Spurgeon commented, "Prick him anywhere and the blood of John Bunyan is bibline". Bibline is to be the blood type of every bearer of the true "apostolic succession". Clearly that is not the case with so many, countless many, who have received the magical touch on the clerical cranium.

The ordination that matters in the Church, in all its branches, is the touch of the Holy Spirit and a tongue to tell forth the truth of the Gospel.

Bishop Bunyan will be able to attend a convocation of true bishops on "cloud nine" in the celestial gathering of non-episcopally ordained ministers of the Lord Jesus who individually and collectively probably brought more converts to the Saviour than any bishop or number of bishops you care to mention, wrapped in their ecclesiastical costume and answering to the title "your Grace". For grace is not a mere appellation but the announcement and action of divine mercy, and it is also the origin of the gracious attitude and demeanor of the servants who proclaim the saving goodness of God.

Grace is not administered in mechanical fashion but through the gift of faith consequent upon regeneration as the work of the Spirit, who freely works when and where he will, upon whom he will. "You must be born again. The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3: 8). We might also add, that so it is with anyone called of the Spirit to any mode of Gospel service, for the Christ whom we are quoting distributes spiritual abilities among his people, and so many of these ministerial gifts are evident in abundance among those who never befriended a bishop or sipped a sherry in the garden of Bishop's House.

It is the personal conviction of this writer that given the various options in church polity, and cognizant of the fact that human sinfulness mars any form of ecclesiastical government however ideally conceived, that Episcopal order is preferable, though not prescribed as mandatory. As with so many things not bearing on our salvation, Holy Scripture permits freedom. Each variety of administration within Christendom has its advantages and disadvantages. Each style of oversight and leadership requires "good men" for it to work.

But think of the good men, by grace, who never received episcopal authorization, or any official authorization, but ministered according to the consent of their congregants and public supporters. Certainly, there is a fair share of uncertified renegades who bring a shameful reputation to the Gospel, just as there are priests and bishops who do so. However, there is a cloud of witnesses who so aptly declared the grace and glory of God to the eternal welfare of lost sinners.

Most famous among them are such persons as Billy Bray the Cornish tin miner, William Jay the Wiltshire stone cutter, Thomas Olivers the working man hymnist, and John Stittle the Cambridge preacher who could read but not write, and was sometimes ridiculed by pompous university students. This is the man whom Charles Simeon called the shepherd of the strays from his parish and whose ministry he supported financially. Men of this humble stamp stood with John Bunyan the tinker as true bishops of the flock of the Lord Jesus. Add to these worthies John Gill, William Carey, Andrew Fuller, Charles Spurgeon, and Gypsy Smith all of whom had no formal preparation for their immensely valuable and effective outreach for the Redeemer. Each of these men was not distinguished by doctorates and official documents of ordination, but they were amply possessed of demonstrable ability. The universally highly esteemed Primate of All Ireland James Ussher did not see the necessity to re-ordain Presbyterian ministers he received into the Anglican system and even waived academic qualifications for one candidate whom he deemed eminently suitable for ministry in the Irish Church. As Eduard Schweizer noted in one of his works, where the Spirit is there is flexibility.

The Church is more than any denomination or organization. It overlaps formal institutional entity and exists in fellowship and community groups that meet regularly for worship and biblical edification. It consists of every soul united to Jesus Christ. "Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of they Son Christ our Lord" (The Collect for All Saints' Day). The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same" (Article 19).

The pure word governs the genuine ministration of the sacraments. Authentic Anglicanism with its loving adherence to Scripture and deep devotion to worthy worship of Almighty God is well-suited to a generous ecumenism. While it cherishes its own Reformed Catholic heritage it can rejoice in any people or place where Christ is adored and commended. It maintains its Confessional standpoint faithfully but willingly holds hands with any who truly confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. That spiritual oneness does not deny diversity or insist on institutional conformity.

*The Rev. Roger Salter is an ordained Church of England minister where he had parishes in the dioceses of Bristol and Portsmouth before coming to Birmingham, Alabama to serve as Rector of St. Matthew's Anglican Church.*

*I'd like to get a different point across or announce something*

If you have a different point of view, I would be happy to give you room to get your point across. While this publication is my perspective on events, I recognize not everyone may agree and that some people would like to express their own opinion. If you want to write something, please forward your item to Hap (with a note as to whether or not you would like editing help) to: [hap@faithfulcenturion.org](mailto:hap@faithfulcenturion.org).

## *Epistleers*

We post the list of Epistle Readers in the Sunday Report each week so you can either plan your attendance or your pre-reading as the spirit so moves you.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reader</b>
2 February 2014	Dru Arnold – The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, commonly called The Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin - Superseding the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
9 February 2014	Dru Arnold – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
16 February 2014	Dru Arnold – Septuagesima
23 February 2014	Dru Arnold – Sexagesima
2 March 2014	Dru Arnold – Quinquagesima
5 March 2014	Dru Arnold – Ash Wednesday

## *The near future, as well as Next Sunday*

2 February 2014 – The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, commonly called The Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin - Superseding the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, more commonly recalled as Dru Arnold's birthday and Ground Hog Day, the day she comes out of the house, if she sees her shadow, six more weeks of winter – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

9 February 2014 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

16 February 2014 – Septuagesima – Holy Communion - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

23 February 2014 – Sexagesima – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

2 March 2014 – Quinquagesima – Morning Prayer - Service start time 1000 (10:00 am); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 0945 (9:45 am); **Time 1000 (10:00 am); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**

5 March 2014 – Ash Wednesday – Evening Prayer - Service start time 1900 (7:00 pm); welcome or gathering songs before the service at 1845 (6:45 pm); **Time 1900 (9:00 pm); Location – 10603 Burrell Way, Descanso, CA**