



Our Messenger

No 104 May 2011



Clock tower in Caernarfon

**I will never leave you, nor
forsake you**

Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV)

From Pastor's Desk

April 2011

'...comfort each other and edify one another...'

1Thessalonians 5:11

Dear friends,

One of the most important aspects of church life is that of mutual edification. It forms a major part of the work of God's gifts to the church, her Pastors and Teachers (Ephesians 4:11-12). They have a double duty before God towards the flock. They are to equip the saints, the individual members, and edify the body, the corporate membership. It is also the responsibility of the members of the body to each other (Ephesians 4:15-16).

We should all speak the truth in love and play our part in order to cause growth of the body. It is something we must seek to be constantly doing privately and collectively.

The subject raises important questions.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN 'TO EDIFY'?

The whole passage in Ephesians 4 is dealing with the growth, development and stabilisation of Christians. Those three words give us a simple definition of edification. Edification brings us to...

- ...a deeper unity amongst ourselves, a fuller knowledge of the Son of God and greater maturity as spiritual people (Ephesians 4:13).
- ...spiritual maturity and stability (Ephesians 4:14).
- ...growth in all things into Christ and thus becoming ever closer to Christ (Ephesians 4:15).
- ...becoming a stronger unit [body] that develops and multiplies (Ephesians 4:16).

Plainly Christians do not exist for ourselves but for each other.

WHY DO WE NEED TO BE EDIFIED?

We can think of a number of reasons with regard to our own personal Christian life and walk.

- None of us has yet attained to the full *'unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'* (Ephesians 4:13).
- We are all vulnerable to the winds of doctrine that blow and threaten to knock us off course (Ephesians 4:14).

- We all need to develop a closer union and communion with Christ (Ephesians 4:15).

There are also good reasons when we think of the church itself. The church is not static but as a living organism is either growing or declining. When she is working like a well oiled machine she is effective to the glory of God (Ephesians 4:16). If it is otherwise with us we are dishonouring our Lord. We are either a cohesive unit, or body, working well for the Lord or a creaking rheumatic old carcass that is going nowhere. Edification is the fruit of love and results in greater love for the Lord and each other (Ephesians 4:15-16). Each member is therefore either weakening or strengthening the church of which it forms a part.

HOW CAN WE EDIFY AND BE OF BENEFIT TO EACH OTHER?

We all have a role to fill in this. A short list comes to mind which embraces us all.

- ‘Pastors and teachers’ equip the saints to serve and edify each other (Ephesians 4:11-12). It is vital therefore that we come regularly and frequently under their teaching ministry.
- All of us must be constantly speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). This demands that we are often in each other’s presence. Meaningful fellowship is of vital importance and needs to be fostered and encouraged.
- We must all interact and work together (Ephesians 4:16). A brief hello and goodbye after a service is insufficient. Brothers and sisters we all need one another if we are to grow, mature and be stable as Christians. Every member not only has a function but must fulfil that function (1 Corinthians 12:1-27).

I believe this is so important that another article in the magazine has been given to the subject (see pages 8-9). Please prayerfully think through these issues and let us together take up the challenge they present to us. To begin with we need to be part of the covenant body of Christ, the church. That relationship is expressed in our covenanting together with our fellow saints in the local church—but that’s another thought which might perhaps challenge us.

The Lord be with you all,

Pastor.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Mission - Kenya

Following Pastor and Rachel's visit to Kenya in March

WITH THE ANDERSONS IN ELDORET



After the testing times of the past few months it is encouraging to be able to report that David, Liz and the family have now joined in a new work on the Pioneer Estate which lies on the outskirts of Eldoret. Working alongside Abraham and his wife Lilian they are seeking to



plant a church in this needy area of town. The work is still very much in its early stages and they need much prayer as they seek to establish it. A thriving children's work has begun and regular services are being held. We shall no doubt be hearing much more in the days to come from the Andersons about this new ministry. Please be in

earnest prayer for them all and that the Lord will bless their endeavours to His greater glory. Pray too that souls will be saved and brought into the Kingdom of God's grace.

Continue to pray for the issue of work permits. At the time of writing things are looking more hopeful on that front but things will not be certain until the necessary papers are in their hands.

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH KISUMU



Remember these dear folk in your prayers, especially Pastors Sam Oluoch and Paul Odera. A worthy and faithful work has been going on now for a number of years, initially spearheaded by our

good friends Les and Ann Beard alongside Pastor Sam. Sam is highly regarded among the churches in Kenya and needs our prayerful support and encouragement to keep faithful to the Word. A work among a group of teenagers has recently begun in Pastor Sam's home.



INJILI BAPTIST CHURCH KAWANGWARE

We enjoy reading and praying over Sukesh's weekly newsletters and rejoice that their new building is nearing completion after the fire at the beginning of the year. Pray on for the growing witness on the estate and God's blessing on the literature ministry which is proving so beneficial.



AFRICAN CHRISTIAN TEXTBOOKS [ACTS] ANDREW & DANIELLE GULLETT AND FAMILY

Andrew is doing a great work especially among the Bible Colleges in Kenya as he distributes good literature for which there is a great hunger and demand. Pray that he will be given wisdom, together with Stephen the bookshop manager as they go on in this ministry.



GRAHAM AND SALLY JONES—MISSIONARIES IN KISUMU



Graham and Sally are well known to us since they went to Kenya some five years ago. Their ministry of training and teaching pastors continues to be used of God amid some difficulties. Please pray for them as they serve the Lord and for their safety as they travel here and there. Remember too the rural churches whose pastors they are seeking to encourage.

What gifts has God given

One of the most important things in church life is to be sure that we all pull our full weight in the work and ministry that is given to us. The twin tasks of edifying each other and evangelising the lost. We have all been given gifts which should be utilised to those ends. They should all be developed and used to their full potential. It is the use of our various gifts that I want to just look at briefly in this short article and bring some thoughts from the Scriptures.

Please read Romans 12:1-13 before continuing

THE GIFTS REFERRED TO

These gifts are not the sign gifts uniquely given to the apostle. Those apostolic signs and wonders ceased with the apostolic era. Nor are they our spiritual gifts. Those gifts and graces are given by the Holy Spirit to all the people of God. We more properly call them the fruit of the Spirit. The gifts which Paul refers to here are the natural gifts and abilities, or talents, which are given to individual men and women to use in the service of God and for His glory.

THESE NATURAL GIFTS ARE DIVERSE

We do not have space to look at each gift mentioned here in detail. Suffice it to say that Romans 12:4-8, and especially v7-8, all refer to practical service. The word 'ministry' is drawn from the word from which we get our word deacon. We could coin a word and say that Paul is referring to 'deaconing', teaching, exhorting, giving, leading and caring. I wonder what gift you have that you can use for God's glory in the church and for the benefit of others?

WE MUST RECOGNISE THESE GIFTS

We are rarely the best judge of our own gifts. It is not for us to impose our gifts on the church or others but they should be recognised as we submit ourselves, and our gifts, to the church for its assessment and use. Paul is clear that the leaders of the church had clearly recognised the gifts that Timothy had and set him apart to exercise them in their midst (1 Timothy 4:14). The church and its leadership has a great responsibility to recognise gifts amongst its members and then to positively address their usage. This is a challenge to all church leaders. Are we serious about finding and using the gifts folk have? Members, are you ready to use those gifts when they are recognised?

'We have a great responsibility to recognise gifts am

'We must use our gifts appropriately, generously, c

WE MUST NOT NEGLECT OUR GIFTS BUT DEVELOP THEM

We must not be careless about our gifts and abilities for it is a sin for the leadership to neglect and pass over gifts in the church just as much as for the members not to use them for the good of the church. Are you guilty of not using your gifts for the good of the church and glory of God? We must use the gifts present amongst us and positively encourage and develop them. Those with gifts must in their turn willingly, positively and devotedly put them to the use of Christ and His church. Are we doing all we can to encourage each other to use and develop the gifts we have?

OUR GIFTS MUST BE EXERCISED IN A RIGHT WAY

In Romans 12:6-13 Paul explicitly says that our gifts must be used. This raises the question of how we should use them. Let me give you some simple words that arise out of this passage. We must use our gifts appropriately, generously, diligently and cheerfully (v6-8). Then they must be used lovingly and honestly in humility (v9-10) and always diligently to the glory of God, never for self-satisfaction (v11). Our gifts should also be utilised joyfully, patiently and prayerfully (v12). I wonder

what our attitude is towards the exercise of our gifts. Is it biblical or otherwise?

FAILURE TO PROPERLY USE OUR GIFTS HAS CONSEQUENCES

Firstly God who has given them to us will be dishonoured and the church will be weakened. We shall be in danger of losing that gift and being useless. How would we face the Lord who gave us those talents in the Day of Judgment then? Don't forget we shall have to give an account of our stewardship one day. Furthermore the church's testimony in the world will be weakened and our brothers and sisters in the Lord may well lose heart because of us. Don't be a weak and unwilling member of the church of Christ but devote yourself and your all to Him and His service with joy and alacrity.

If only the various gifts were properly and rightly channelled and used what a change would come over the church in the inward aspect of its work of edification, and its outward aspect of evangelism. One of the great burdens on many hearts is that gifts are neglected and withheld from being used in the Lord's work.

- C**reation—In the beginning God created...and God saw that it was good
- C**orruption—By one man's disobedience many were made sinners
- C**atastrophe—[God] destroyed all living things...only Noah and those with him in the ark remained alive
- C**onfusion—Babel...there the Lord confused the language of the earth
- C**hrist—You shall call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins
- C**ross—by one man's obedience many will be made righteous
- C**onsummation—Then I saw a new heavens and new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away

The following letter has been received from Habil Odera

You will remember that two years ago we helped our brother Paul Odera in funding an operation on a cancerous growth in his son Habil's mouth. As a direct result of that operation Habil came to know the Lord. He readily acknowledges this and has written this letter to us in thanks for the part we had in the operation which Paul tells me has been completely successful. I give just as Habil has written it.

Dear my friends,

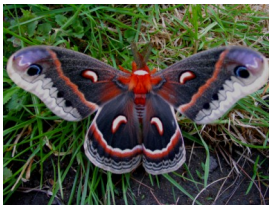
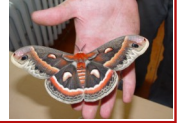
I trust that the Lord will bring you safe to Kenya. I am fine at school, though since I became a Christian many of my school mates find it hard to believe what I am telling them about the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray for me so that my words and my life at school will give God glory.

I thank you personally through our God for the help that I received from you that helped me to be operated. I would have died not knowing Christ. May the Lord bless you so that you can help others who are in need.

Greet others whom I don't know but have had about my operation. Thank you very much. I am looking forward to read from you!

Habil Odera Onyango

Lessons in adversity from the Cecropia Moth



One of the many fascinating events in nature is the emergence of the Cecropia moth from its cocoon, an event that occurs only with much struggle on the part of the moth to free itself. The story is told of someone who watched a moth go through this struggle. In an effort to help, and not realizing the necessity of the struggle, the viewer snipped the shell of the cocoon. Soon the moth came out with its wings all crimped and shrivelled. But as the person watched, the wings remained weak. The moth, which in a few moments would have stretched those wings to fly, was now doomed to crawling out its brief life in frustration of ever being the beautiful creature God created it to be.

What the person in the story did not realize was that the struggle to emerge from the cocoon was an essential part of developing the muscle system of the MOTH'S body and pushing the body fluids out into the wings to expand them. By unwisely seeking to cut short the moth's struggle, the watcher had actually crippled the moth and doomed its existence.

The adversities of life are much like the cocoon of the Cecropia moth. God uses them to develop the spiritual "muscle system" of our lives. As James says, "The testing of your faith [through trials of many kinds] develops perseverance," and perseverance leads to maturity of our character.

We can be sure that the development of a beautiful Christ like character will not occur in our lives without adversity. Think of those lovely graces that Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. The first four traits he mentions, love, joy, peace, and patience can only be developed in the womb of adversity.

How important is Church membership?

Throughout the history of redemption God has dealt with His people in a corporate way: Noah and his family, Abraham and his family, Israel as a nation, and now with His Church. To the three Persons of the Trinity the Church universal is essentially one (Ephesians 4:1-6). Every local church is a microcosm of the whole. All the churches should be to one another what believers are to one another. That is the ideal. The situation is enormously complex because of so many serious differences. Yet every believer is duty-bound to adjust as best he can to membership in a local church for 'each member belongs to all the others.' Every member derives his spiritual life from the same head and every member has been baptised by the Spirit into the same body and 'we were all given the one Spirit to drink' (1 Corinthians 12:13).

The closely interwoven life and interdependence of the members upon each other is vividly expressed in the text, 'From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work' (Ephesians 4:16). Think of the influence of other Christians upon us in the sphere of sanctification. We are taught together through the preaching. We benefit together from the ordinances. We learn from one another in fellowship. We serve together. We run the race together. We rejoice together and we suffer together. We gain inspiration from leaders and outstanding members not only in real life but through literature. We are warned and corrected by cases of discipline. If we analyse the channels by which we are sustained and built up through fellow members, we would see that there is hardly anything of spiritual value that does not come through the body of the Church.

We can well understand why giving up meeting together is regarded as a disaster in Scripture. In effect that is the road that leads away from the life of God's people. It is the road of apostasy (Hebrews 10:25).

The uniqueness of the church

1. The church is a spiritual household—a family of those called to be saints (1 Corinthians 1:2)
2. The church is an ordered household with elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-13)
3. The church is the house of the living God (1 Timothy 3:16)
4. The church is the pillar of the truth (1 Timothy 3:16)
5. The church is the foundation of the truth (1 Timothy 3:16)

THREE JOYS OF BEING A SON OF GOD

[A lightly edited extract from the puritan George Newton on John 17 published by Banner of Truth]

1. GOD WILL HEAR OUR PRAYERS

Being the sons of God in Christ, we may be sure that God will hear our prayers in, and by, and through Christ. He always hears His Son Christ, and never puts Him off with a denial. This our Saviour, Christ, Himself professes and as the Father always hears his Son, so He always hears His sons in Christ. And truly, if the first be once admitted, the latter follows unavoidably, for Christ the eldest Son is intercessor for His brethren. In all their regular requests He never fails to put in with them, so that they cannot be denied unless He be denied too. Christ and they must either stand or fall together.

2. GOD WILL PROVIDE FOR US

Being sons of God in Christ, we may be confident He will provide for us. He has provided very well for Christ. He is not His Son only, but He is His heir too, yea, He is heir of all without exception. As Christ is the Son and heir of God, so we are sons and heirs of God in Christ, there is not a younger brother among us. 'Thou

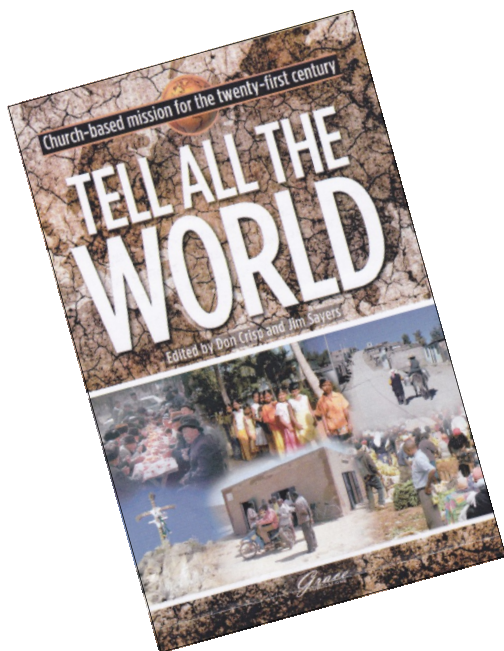
art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Galatians 4:7). If sons of God through Christ, then heirs of God through Christ too. Yea, we are heirs of all, as Christ is, and therefore it is added, 'heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ'. Jesus Christ, as Mediator, is not heir to anything but we are joint-heirs, and have a joint-right with Him. Indeed 'All things are yours...for you are Christ's and Christ is God's' 1 Corinthians 3:21.

3. GOD WILL PROTECT US

Being sons of God, we may be confident He will protect us. Fathers protect their children, if they can. God can, and therefore will. As Naomi laid Ruth's child in her bosom, (Ruth 4:16), so God lays His children, (Isaiah 4:51) and that is certainly a safe place. As the eagle spreads her wings over her young, and carries them upon her wings (Deuteronomy 2:11), so God throws His children under the wings of His protection, and carries them above the reach of danger. This is very sweet comfort. Be your troubles what they will, you have a Father that is able to secure you, that is very tender of you, and has set a guard upon you.

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 1 John 3:1-2

A new book on Church-based mission to celebrate 150 years of Grace Baptist Mission



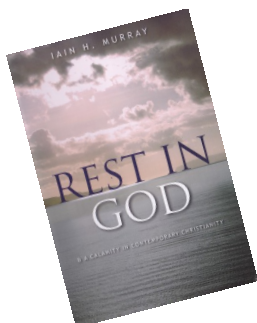
This book has been eagerly awaited and should be available at the beginning of May. Edited by Don Crisp and Jim Sayers and published by Grace Publications to commemorate 150 years of Grace Baptist Mission, contributors include a number of GBM Missionaries to encourage and stimulate interest in the Biblical concept of Missionary work. To quote from the advertising literature:

*'God's plan as set out in Scripture is to put the local church at the heart of world mission. The biblical pattern is for local churches to send out missionaries, and for missionaries to be answerable to the local churches that send and support them. This was the conviction that changed Grace Baptist Mission into a church-based mission back in the 1960s and 70s. To celebrate GBM's 150th anniversary, **Tell all the world** has been put together to*

explore the biblical principles of mission, to apply them to a wide range of different cultures, and to show how church-based mission works out in practice.'

The book is recommended and important reading for all burdened with the spread of the Gospel. The cost is not expensive at £7.99 and we hope an order for a number of copies will be sent in from the church here.

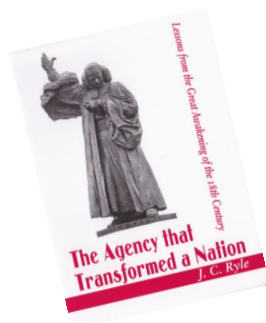
See Pastor or Martin Cook for more details.



These two little booklets are available for you to pick up and read on the church booktable.

'Rest in God' is a short 34 page treatment of the vitally important matter of the Lord's Day by Iain Murray and 'The Agency that Transformed a Nation' a brief extract from J C Ryle's 'Christian Leaders of the 18th Century'.

Both are important reading for today!



The Sunday School Page

*And you, who once were alienated and enemies...
yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death...
Colossians 1:21-22*

On 24th April we held our joint Easter and Prizegiving service. This year there was a change to the format with the children from the top three classes mixed together and reading to us an account of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from Marks gospel.

Pastor then spoke to the children and all that gathered—including some parents and family members which was an encouragement—about the great divide that exists between God and man due to man's sin and God's holiness. Pastor likened this divide to a great river that cannot be crossed. What was needed was a bridge and we were reminded that in the same way we need a bridge to cross the divide between God and man, that bridge is the cross of Christ.

All were urged to come to God recognising their sin and their inability to come to Him themselves but rather to come through Jesus and His cross. Please pray with us that the children and parents alike will realise their sinfulness and their separation from God and come to Him by the way he has given—His Son the Lord Jesus Christ that they may be truly reconciled.

Upcoming Events

- Saturday 14th May - Outing to Blackberry Farm (Rachel's Class only)
- Sunday 5th June - Open Air Sunday School at Maurice Thornton Playing Field
- Saturday 11th June - Outing to Tilgate Park (all other classes)
- Saturday 16th July - BBQ
- Sunday 17th July - Break Up

Prayer requests

- Safety and good numbers for the 2 outings
- God's blessing on the open air Sunday School (5th June)
- New children and the regularity of current children in the last months of this Sunday School year