

# In Touch...

...with the Worldwide Church of God

October 2008 Edition



## Belfast Fellowship Day by Bill and Jennifer Beattie

On Sunday the 17th August, the Belfast church had a very refreshing and spiritual fellowship day, at Brown's bay, near Island Magee. We had very bad weather over the previous week, but we all prayed that the Lord would grant us a good day, and he was true to his word as always. We were blessed with sun and a nice warm breeze for most of the day. We were able to play a few games on the beach, and had a walk along the beautiful Irish seacoast, and even got to have a go with a kite as well as good food and spir-

itual discussions. This was a great Christian fellowship day all round.



## Edinburgh Life Club



The Edinburgh church began its fifth year of hosting Life Club on August 30th with a lively club chaired

by Lucy Keen with Scott Thomsen as the Toastmaster. Table topics, which were shared by Katie Mill and Emily Keen, elicited a lot of discussion and lively participation. Speeches ranged from a highly entertaining impromptu by Fiona Jones, to a moving account of nursing care by Ashleigh Thomsen. John Woolford gave a very informed biography of Joe Tkach Sr. and Duncan McLean explained why he has always been called lucky. A special addition

was the new trophies that have been made specifically for the Edinburgh Life Club and which the recipients are allowed to keep until the next Life Club. The atmosphere for the whole club was fun, informative and interesting. Everyone who came thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon.

Gary Sloan, Ashleigh Thomsen, and Duncan McLean were the first to receive the new trophies.



## Community Lunch Club by Margaret Gibbon

The Worldwide Church of God, Luton Church, has been meeting at the Methodist Church, Farley Hill, Luton for about 5 years now. We (WCG) have become good friends with the Methodists and share in their social activities where possible. A previous Methodist minister set up the idea of a community lunch club which has been very successful for the last couple of years. Our ladies now do a great part of the cooking for this event.

livan invited the club to their home in Hulcote. Tina put on a delicious lunch of salmon or chicken with vegetables followed by fruit crumble or fruit salad. Then the sun came out enabling the guests to go for a short walk and then back again for tea and cakes.

The Methodist social secretary who arranges the lunch club has given us half of this year's profits. We have decided to donate this (£50) to SEP.

This summer during the August break, Tina and Harry Sul-

# 14:27

“On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith...” (Acts)

## Scammonden Youth Weekend by Fraser Murdoch

Following on from last year, it was requested that the Christian Youth Weekend in Scammonden become an annual event. That request was duly granted and so forty people from across the UK got together on the 12th-14th September at Scammonden Scout Camp in Yorkshire for a weekend of fun and spiritual enrichment. The great thing about the timing of Scammonden is that it is barely five weeks after S.E.P Loch Lomond and gives everyone a chance to catch up, enhance friendships, make new ones, and assess our spiritual journeys. Scammonden is an ideal opportunity for young Christians to grow in their relationship with Jesus.

The programme for the weekend was well planned and many thanks must go to Steve and Moira Hudson and their team from the Leeds/Bradford congregation for working so hard. Friday evening saw the arrival of all the young people, including a mini-bus full of youth from Scotland. There were snacks and drinks on arrival along with lots of smiles and hugs as everyone renewed their friendships. Following a weekend orientation everyone was off to bed (although some went to sleep later than others....).

On Saturday morning, Hannah Mill and the Scottish young people led a fifteen minute worship time including songs, prayers, readings and an excellent sketch which illustrated the need for ongoing communication if a relationship with God is to flourish. After worship many staff and teenagers went sailing on the water right outside our camp building, and a few got rather wet!

By 2pm, after lunch had gone down well, members of the Leeds/Bradford congregation joined us for our church service, swelling the numbers considerably. Laura Hudson and Adele Dewhurst did an excellent job preparing and leading the service and a message on the Fatherhood of God was given by Fraser Murdoch.



A Life Club was held later in the day. Chairperson was David Francis, and Mark Francis asked some of the most thoughtful table topics questions many people had heard. Among them was the question; “If you were your favourite historical figure, what would you make of today’s society?” Speeches were given by Dorothy Dewhurst, Lucy Keen, Jonathan Carion and a hilarious double-act by Laura and Matt Hudson entitled “How to drive like a moron!” The evening activities were a campfire, a table tennis tournament and some time to be with friends.

Sunday morning after breakfast, Helen Francis led a very thoughtful worship time which fitted perfectly with the message God had been repeating to us all weekend, that God wants a relationship with us. Geoff Sole then prepared a morning of games including shooting, throwing, ball skills, crazy golf, skipping and more. Congratulations to team Logos for winning.

By early afternoon it was time to pack up and say goodbye as many had long journeys ahead of them. A great time was had by everyone and we are looking forward to getting together again in Perth on 22nd-23rd November for a similar weekend of activities.



# Adventure Camp by Kevin Harris

This year's Adventure Camp took place over the August Bank Holiday, Saturday 23rd to Monday 25th. More than sixty people travelled from many parts of the country (North Wales, Plymouth, Northampton, London) to attend the event, which was held at the Well End Activity Centre near Borehamwood, Hertfordshire. There were 24 campers aged between 6 and 13, along with a large group of teen helpers/campers and staff and all enjoyed a fabulous weekend of fun, friendship and activities. Many were first time attendees which was most encouraging.

Children took part in a wide range of activities: archery, orienteering, field games, candle making and many more. The young adults helped organize and run activities – many thanks to them. Adults and children commented



on the great atmosphere. The weekend also included an engaging interactive church service, organized by Sylvia Lowe with singing, prayers and scripture readings

## Octogenarian Party

August 9th was a very special day for the Manchester congregation when we held an Octogenarian Party. On June 2nd Frank Brennen reached the octogenarian age of 80. He was followed by Eileen Clay becoming the same age 6 days later on June 8th. July 4th saw Cyril Yarwood reach the same milestone. His wife, Alice had become an octogenarian a year earlier. The combined total of all their years as members of the Worldwide Church of God is 108 years.

Our planned celebration of their milestone coincided with the next youngest in the congregation, Joseph Larby, reaching the age of 8. So he was included in the special celebration as he was ten times younger than the four

by children, while Tony Goudie gave the main message. The theme this year was 'The Olympics'.



At the close of the event there was a sad but very grateful and fond farewell. Judy Harper who has helped run, organize and administer Adventure Camp for many years is stepping down from the organizing committee. A beautiful bouquet of flowers was presented to Judy by the children as a token of appreciation for the countless hours of her time she's given to help make Adventure Camp run smoothly. She will be missed!

The whole weekend was a very successful, fun-filled event and the campers have vowed to return. It was indeed a fantastic Camp.

octogenarians. After services we all enjoyed a fine meal together.

After the celebration the members distributed over 300 leaflets entitled "New Neighbours" in some of the houses in the surrounding area as a way of introducing ourselves to the local community. We intend to distribute further leaflets during the year such as "Where is God When Tragedies Happen?," "Why Are There So Many Denominations" and "What Me Pray—You Must Be Joking," etc. Our final distribution for 2008 will be to invite these same 300 households to a Carol Service, combined with members of St. Andrew's Church, on 13th December.



Left to right: Frank Brennen, Eileen Clay, Joseph Larby, Alice Yarwood and Cyril Yarwood.

# ACHIEVEMENTS

*Special congratulations are extended to the following two people who have recently successfully completed degrees in higher education. Both were asked to give a bit of the background to undertaking their educational travels as well as their future aspirations upon completion. A lot of very hard work has gone into these accomplishments and they stand as a source of inspiration to everyone!*



## License in Theology (LTh Distinction)

by Rob Jones

I started studying Theology by distance learning in March 2006 after a period of reflection, on the advice of my then ministerial mentor David Silcox, who deserves thanks for his constant encouragement. I had three main reasons for studying Theology. Firstly, I wanted to be able to represent our church in a professional manner, especially should I be involved in any inter-denominational activities. Secondly, I hoped to become further equipped in studying the scriptures and church doctrine so that I could serve our church and improve my ability to give sound teaching which was scripturally and contextually accurate. Thirdly, I hoped to be personally enriched in my Spiritual life.

The highlights of the course were studying into the letters of Paul, delving into the gospel of Luke, and recognising the likely audience of his gospel. Systematic theology was academically challenging -- you have to learn a new vocabulary! I also found my study of the reformation in Britain and Ireland deeply emotionally challenging, especially when reading of Christian martyrs.

On the 4th July 2008 I was awarded an LTh with Distinction. I couldn't have done this without the practical love, support and understanding of my dear wife Fiona. My plans for the future are to spend more time with my family and in practical ministry, utilising what I've learnt for the body of Christ and especially our precious fellowship.



## Bachelor of Science in Mathematical Science

by Keith Stevenson

In 1999 I embarked on Bachelor of Science in Mathematical Sciences through the Open University. Studying at home, with a 2 year old son, in a tiny flat, was a challenge. I would have to say to anyone in a similar domestic situation, to weigh the cost carefully. I have been through different motivations for these studies, at different times during this journey including almost giving up on various occasions. It was a journey that ultimately took me nine years.

I graduated with an Ordinary Degree, 10th June 2005, in London's Royal Festival Hall. I had already begun the next two courses for a full Honours degree, which should have taken 2 years. This journey has been very difficult and I had a number of serious setbacks which meant it took me much longer to complete than originally planned. The degree was conferred on 31 July, 2008.

My motivation for these studies was multi-faceted. I felt that a mathematical degree would provide a more solid academic foundation for teaching. I also wanted to increase my mathematical skills so as to improve my understanding of Astronomy, and possibly teach this subject, which I love so much. Additionally, being a dance teacher, I believe that the mechanics of body movement can be analyzed using mathematics, and this could be used to understand dancing at a deeper level.

By reading mainly pure mathematics, I have become fascinated by the abstract ideas I have encountered for their own sake. I also believe that God is behind the discipline, science and art of advanced, abstract mathematics. I wish to find parallels between mathematical thought and Holy Scripture which can be a source of encouragement.

## Wedding Anniversary by Jennifer Beattie

Lily and Alex Clarke from the Belfast church celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary on the 19th September. Alex also celebrated his 80th Birthday on the 28th August. They are both long time members and have been very faithful as servants of our lord, and are still very strong in the faith. They do receive a sermon CD each week from Belfast. They also love to hear what happening from week to week in the church, and both pray daily for God's people. They are both inspiring and cheerful regardless of their very difficult situation. They no longer can get to church because of ill health and distance. May we congratulate them both, on their long and happy married life together.



# BUILDING AN ACCOUNTABILITY FRIENDSHIP

by Simone Royle



**I** needed help. My relationship with Christ had stalled.

This was not the first time it had stalled and the pattern was always the same; my life would get busy and I would compromise my time with God. I lacked the discipline that enabled my relationship with him to grow. “God loves me,” I reasoned, “he understands.” Yet deep down I knew I was missing the point. I wasn’t giving my heart to him.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Where could I begin? During this time I was given a book called “Choose the life” by Bill Hull. His book embraces the concept of discipleship and the discipline that is required to be truly transformed by Christ. The disciplines are not easy, they need to be worked into our lives so that they become habit but getting to this point requires hard work. As disciples of Christ we should help support other disciples follow the doctrines of Christ so that they can truly give their heart to God. We should be accountable to one another (James 5:16), esteem, comfort (1Thess 5:13-14), and agree in prayer with one another (Matt 18:19-20).

For a long time I had been a Christian in isolation because getting to church on a regular basis was difficult (I lived too far away). I realised I was probably not alone in this situation and that there had to be a way around it. Surely in this modern era fellowship did not require a church hall? Moved to do something about this, I met with my old friend and fellow Christian, Cherilee. On meeting we prayed together that Christian friends who lived apart from the church congregation might still be able to grow in faith through fellowship and friendship. I explained to Cherilee all the places where my faith was beginning to fall down. Together we planned baby steps to help bring me back to God. On parting we decided to email each other every week and share our spiritual journeys. Both of us had decided to set aside time just for God every day,

a simple step that I had never managed to stay committed to before.

That regular contact with Cherilee was a turning point in my life. Being able to share the scriptures that inspired me motivated me to read further. From time to time our emails sought reassurance, shared confessions and asked for prayer. Sensitive issues were raised that were crucial to the building of our faith. To ensure God was with us in these times we would pray before every correspondence that he guide our hearts to speak his word only. Throughout Cherilee was an example of Christian love; because of the trust I had in her to respond as Christ would I was able to confront my doubts with her and not feel judged. Through doing this I was able to grow. After a year my faith had reached a new level entirely and both Cherilee and I wanted to share what we had learnt. Although we still keep in touch we have begun to form new accountability friendships in the hope that it will help other people grow as we did.

The idea of accountability friendships is not new. This is just how it worked for me. If you haven’t done so already, why not start an accountability friendship of your own?

“Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.” (Galations 6:2).

Accountability does not replace the benefit of fellowship in a full church congregation, but it can help individuals grow spiritually, especially in circumstances where regular attendance is difficult.

*Simone Royle is a Science teacher in Coventry and attends the Birmingham congregation.*

# Who's Afraid of the Schizophrenic God?

by Neil Earle

**Imagine a courtroom scene. It's you who are convicted, facing charges. Problem is, you know you are guilty. But as you walk in, you notice the judge gives you a reassuring nod of recognition, as if he had known you all your life.**

He summons you to the bench. "Don't worry about a thing," he tells you with a warm fatherly smile. "I know all about this case. In fact, I'm going to be your defense attorney." The late theologian Shirley C. Guthrie would explain that this is the way we should picture what the Bible calls the Judgment. "Must we talk about the wrath of God?" Guthrie asked. "Yes," he answers. "But God's wrath is not like that of the gods. It is the wrath of the God who was in Christ reconciling the world to God's self" (Christian Doctrine, pages 261-262).

Through Jesus Christ, the disconnect between the world and God has been removed once and for all.

## Theological strait-jackets

Unfortunately, instead of allowing Jesus' love, compassion and kindness to shape their understanding of God, many Christians gravitate toward what we might call a "forensic" model of salvation. The word "forensic" seems like a penal or legal term, which it is. This forensic model sees God the Father as stern and vengeful, a frightening God from whom we need Jesus to save us. It assumes that the starting place for understanding God is not Jesus Christ, but "the law," by which is meant the Old Testament legal system. This model sees the law as so important that even God is subject to it. Since God is concerned first about the penalty demands of his law and only secondly about the well-being of humans, he will punish them for lawbreaking in the same way that the State and human courts and legal systems do—through a straightforward proving of guilt followed by a guilty verdict.

Front and center in the forensic model is God's anger against sinning humanity. God is offended, and someone must pay. Jesus steps forward and takes the full force of God's wrath against human sin. That means we have had our penalty paid for us, but it does nothing for a restored relationship of love and trust. This "offended deity" picture forgets that first and foremost, God is love (1 John 4:16), that God is joyously working to bring "many sons to glory," and that our salvation was in his mind "before the

foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8, King James Version).

This forensic model also forgets something even more basic—that Jesus Christ and the Father along with the Holy Spirit are the three Persons of the one God, and that the Son or Word made Incarnate in Jesus was the perfect revelation of the Father in human form. The Father is not some angry, vengeful deity that we need protection from; he is just like Jesus. Jesus, remember, is "the exact representation" of the being of God (Hebrews 1:3).

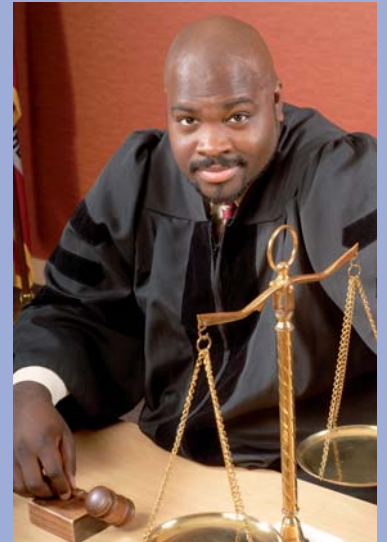
The Father is full of compassion and mercy, a God who "desires mercy and not sacrifice," just like Jesus. Jesus is the starting place for understanding God; the law is not.

God is not schizophrenic. He does not have a split personality. There is not one "good God," Jesus, and one "bad God," the Father. There is one God—Father, Son and Spirit—who loves us unconditionally and has in Jesus made full provision not only for our sins to be forgiven and removed, but also for our full inclusion in the love relationship that the Son has shared with the Father from eternity.

## Adoption

God is not in the business of training obedient valets, but in building a family. The apostle Paul used the word "adoption" in describing the kind of relationship that God has created for humanity in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:4-5). Through the Incarnation of the Son—by Jesus becoming one of us and taking up our cause as his own—God has drawn us into and made us part of the intimate relationship that Jesus has with the Father.

We see the power of this intimate love that God has for humanity in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The repentant son is welcomed home by the Father and restored to full rights of sonship (Luke 15:11-24). This depicts the God who was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). The death of Christ was not a vindictive act



of divine child abuse, as some hostile critics of Christianity have charged. It was a divine rescue springing from God's love for us (John 3:16), an intervention designed to restore a purpose of which we were oblivious in our ignorance and darkness (verses 19-20).

Set against this majestic purpose, God's wrath can be seen for what it is—his anger—not at the humanity he sent Jesus to save, but at sin, that which destroys the relationship he has always intended for us in Christ. God is not some resentful, selfish parent in an emotional stew because we have not played by his rules. God is Father, Son and Spirit, loving, faithful and unconditionally committed to bringing humanity into the joy of knowing him for who he really is.

### **Mercy vs. judgment**

God, however, will never be at peace with sin. The great human tragedy is that we have been totally unaware of the pardon and reconciliation the Father has brought about through Jesus Christ. We have loved darkness rather than light and have chosen to ignore what the Father offers us through the Son.

Through Christ, the disconnect between the world and God has been removed once and for all. The great majority of unbelievers are simply those who through weakness or ignorance are resisting the influence of the life-giving Holy Spirit of Christ, the Person of the Godhead who beckons to us to abandon our addiction to darkness and sin—who testifies in our hearts to God's saving, atoning and reconciling work in Jesus on our behalf (John 14:25-27; 15:26).

Jesus did not just bring good news, he was good news. The overwhelming emphasis of his teaching was mercy, not vengeance. His hallmark sayings reflect the God who is love, in whose mind mercy rejoices against judgment (James 2:13). Thus, what was hinted at in parts of the Old Testament becomes the major theme in the Gospels—"I will have mercy and not sacrifice." Jesus' word pictures show us a forgiving father, a Good Samaritan, seeking shepherds and splendidly generous employers, healings, exorcisms, a Great Physician who pleaded "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

## **In other words:**

# **“Mbio za sakafuni huishia ukingoni”**

**By Kalengule Kaoma**

**Recently I visited Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, and spoke to a number of people about what happened in late 2007 and early 2008 when the country endured disgraceful violence that dampened the spirits, hopes, and aspirations of much of the population. Many people lost their properties. Others were severely injured and many lost loved ones.**

Despite the prevailing despair, I noticed something wonderful in several of the citizens I spoke to. They agreed that while they faced severe challenges, problems, difficulties, hardships and trials, they were determined to find lasting solutions.

The coastal people of Kenya have a saying: “Mbio za sakafuni huishia ukingoni,” The translation is, “A race to the sea will end at the seashore,” and the idea behind it is that even the worst things eventually come to an end. Other people have experienced very hard times. One of them, an ancient author, Paul of Tarsus, wrote:



“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us.”

At the end of every dark night will finally come the dawn. Kenyans who confidently say, “Mbio za sakafuni huishia ukingoni!” know that, no

matter how bad things may seem, there is always hope.

*Kalengule Kaoma lives in Zambia, Africa, and is the Worldwide Church of God mission developer for a number of African nations.*

# Urge Protection

by John Halford

**The first intimation I had that something was wrong was when my wife came down to the barn where I was working and announced calmly, “Something weird is going on with the electricity.”**

I ran up to the house. Something weird certainly was happening. Some of the lights were glowing extraordinarily brightly, and others had burned out. Some appliances had stopped working, and others were working and running at double speed. We shut down everything electrical and called the power company.

It turned out that a passing truck had snagged a low-hanging telephone line, which had recoiled and dislodged the power cable that ran from the transformer to our home. This shorted itself out, and put a surge of 220 volts through our system, blowing some circuits and causing others to operate at double power.

It didn't take long to fix. A few appliances were damaged and needed to be replaced, but we are insured for that. My main concern was that our computers—including the one I use to produce this magazine—might not work. Had they been zapped into oblivion?

No, they had not. The vital components containing the data had been protected because the surge protectors had done their job.

God provides us with the ultimate urge protection when temptation suddenly surges into our lives.

As you probably know (you do have one, don't you?), a surge protector is a device that you connect between a power outlet and electronic equipment.

Although most of the time electricity flows at a steady even rate, it is subject to occasional surges and spikes. Like floodwater, electricity has to go somewhere, which is why our homes are equipped with circuit breakers or fuse boxes. But a power surge usually lasts just a few billionths of a second, faster than most breakers can react. If not checked, it will rip through delicate electronic circuits like a tsunami. Those few billionths of a second can cause hundreds of hours of lost work and thousands of dollars of expense.

The surge protector provides an alternate path for the current surge. It destroys itself in the process, but better that, than an expensive apparatus and priceless data going up in smoke. If you don't have a surge protector, may I suggest you get one?

And while we are on the subject, what about urge protection?

## Surges and spikes of life

Like computers, we human beings prefer to operate in calm and predictable conditions. But life is not always like that. It has a way of putting us in situations where our equilibrium is suddenly and unpredictably thrown off balance. We are driving along minding our own business when someone cuts in front, setting us up for a possible flash of anger and perhaps a deletable expletive. Or a lie offers the opportunity for an escape route from an awkward situation. Sometimes surfing the internet or channel hopping with the TV remote, we may be unexpectedly confronted with some gratuitous pornography. You don't have to go looking for these temptation-creating situations—life is full of unexpected situation-induced urges to cheat, to steal, to covet, to lust—let's call them what they are—urges to sin.

The Bible calls this *temptation*, but the temptation, *of itself*, is not sin. The letter of James makes that clear: “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed” (James 1:13-14).

The temptations we face in life stem from the fact that our nature is hard-wired to provide a ready path for sin. James



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continues: “Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

Paul, a man who took his spiritual health very seriously, was forced to admit that he was “sold as a slave to sin” (Romans 7:14). “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it” (Romans 7:18-20).

Yes, sin may do it, but it is still our doing because it is we who are doing the sinful deeds. Thankfully, we are protected from the ultimate consequences of sin. Jesus took care of that. But there are the secondary consequences to the sudden urges to sin.

“A man reaps what he sows,” Paul wrote in Galatians 5:7. Proverbs 6:27 puts it like this: “Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?” That flash of anger, the moment of lust, a sudden outbreak of envy or pride—these can produce effects that last a lifetime, and even beyond.

“I tell you the truth,” said Jesus, “everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever” (John 8:34-36). As

brothers and sisters of Jesus, we belong to God’s family. And we are not alone. “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.... The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:18, 26).

Through the Holy Spirit, God provides us with the ultimate urge protection when temptation suddenly surges into our lives. “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). A heart guided by the Holy Spirit is insulated by the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Each of these offer protection, providing a safe alternative path to potentially destructive waves of temptation. But the Spirit guides—he does not demand or insist, any more than a surge protector will plug itself in. Whether to listen to his prompting, whether to follow his lead, is your decision. We are free to simply let temptation have its way with us, and sadly, we often give in.

I don’t know exactly how long a person has, to either nip temptation in the bud or let it blossom into sin. Scientists who have studied our brain’s neural networks tell us that the speed of thought is less than that of electricity. So we may have a bit more than a few billionths of a second. Whatever it is, it is long enough for us to be able to hear God remind us, “That is not the way we do things in this family.” And to let those urge protectors do their job.

# Kitchen-Bin Guidance

by Kerry Gubb

**As I keyboard these words, I can hear the faint sounds of my little granddaughter learning from her mother that she doesn’t really need to climb into the kitchen garbage bin. This is but one of many *déjà vu* moments my wife and I have savored during our delightful visit to see our family.**

I say *déjà vu* because her daddy—my son—also had to learn the same thing about kitchen garbage bins. So did I. We all had to learn not to climb into the bins, so they had the same allure for all of us. Only the outsides of the bins looked different because home décor has evolved over 50 years.

In my day (that’s a phrase grandfathers use!) the bin was yucky green, with a fascinating pedal that made the lid pop open. When my son was a little boy, he was smitten by the bright colors of cartoon-painted fruit on the can. His own little girl is, at this very moment, enchanted with a bright, shiny, stainless-steel bin that’s bigger than she is, in which

she can see her own comically-distorted reflection. A truly wonderful experience!

Three generations of us were lured into kitchen garbage cans by a fascinating, alluring exterior. We were all anxious to climb in, explore and play joyously in what is, in the final analysis, garbage.

Of course, we were all toddlers when we unthinkingly climbed into the kitchen garbage cans. By the time we’re old enough to have joined the workforce, we’ve outgrown yucky green, cartoon-painted fruit and stainless steel. We understand that toddlers speak, understand and think as toddlers. Then they grow up. They “put away childish things.”

Don’t they? Didn’t we? Yes and yes. But, curiously, kitchen garbage bins have their grown-up echoes from time to time. And sometimes we are as fooled by our fascinations when we are adults every bit as much as we were as toddlers.

Not surprising, really. A spiritually blind world deploys some of its most clever minds to package the garbage of ruinous living in the most alluring ways.

Parents come to know the pressure of designer labels, up-market birthday parties and personal cell-phones early in the life of their children. This is no mystery. Everywhere their kids look and listen, the advertising industry creates dissatisfaction with whatsoever state they're in, enticing them to spend, spend, spend in the hope of fulfillment in material acquisition.

### Garbage, cleverly made plausible.

By the time they're in the workforce, that urge is by no means abated, craving updated sublimation in luxury cars, best entertainment equipment or living in the "right neighborhood."

The content and philosophy of our entertainment has all but eradicated the likelihood that our children will be able to discern right from wrong. Today's promiscuity, desire for instant gratification and completely egocentric thinking are simply the cumulative effect of garbage—cleverly dressed in media magic, airbrushing and great music.

### Garbage, cleverly made plausible.

As for spirituality—we're living in a world that does not like to retain God in its knowledge. As a result, as Eugene Peterson puts it, *"a culture as thoroughly secularized as ours can hardly be expected to come up with its own medicine. For the most part, [we] come up with a secularized spirituality, which is no spirituality at all."*

### Garbage, cleverly made plausible.

If the ads we're watching, the magazines and books we're reading, the lectures we're attending and the values in which we're immersing ourselves are consistent with the sound biblical teaching, all well and good.

That's a big "IF," though, these days, isn't it?

Peterson continues: *"We ransack exotic cultures and esoteric groups in a search for wholeness; but being new at*

*this and without experience, [we] have no way of discriminating between the true and the false."* And, not by accident, chances are fair to good that much of the garbage that will sully our lives is going to be wrapped in professional presentation using plausible, intellectually stimulating language...yet having originated in the minds and morés of a society that has functionally rejected God.

And, not by accident, chances are fair to good that much of the garbage that will sully our lives is going to be wrapped in professional presentation using plausible, intellectually stimulating language...yet having originated in the minds and morés of a society that has functionally rejected God. Kitchen-Bin Guidance Chances are good that much of the garbage that will sully our lives will be wrapped in a professional presentation.

By the time my little granddaughter encounters this array of grown-up "kitchen-bins," I hope she will have also acquired the adult Christian skill of "proving all things." (Pondering this stuff is what grandfathers do!)

In a world that is ignorant of God's love and flounders without a moral and spiritual rudder, is there reason to hope that she'll be able to hold fast to the good and reject what is, in the final analysis, garbage?

On reflection, despite the many fascinations of yucky green, cartoon fruit and stainless steel, I think there is reason to hope. Although she'll certainly encounter these, she will not be completely at their mercy.

At this very moment, her mother is helping her out lovingly in the matter of the kitchen bin. There's a lot more, though. Day by day, thanks to her Mom and Dad, she's also learning about Jesus Christ, the perfect reflection of the God who loves her and will always be with her to help her see through the false allure of life's garbage.

Grandparents everywhere have their apprehensions about what lies ahead for their precious little toddlers.

That's why we're teaching our little one about the great God whose goodness, faithfulness and unceasing love will never leave her, no matter how alluringly life's moral and spiritual dangers may present themselves.



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## Church History:

# The Council of Chalcedon and the “Two Natures” Controversy

By Paul Kroll

**In A.D. 381 the Council of Constantinople rejected the teaching of an elderly bishop from Syria, named Apollinaris. Apollinaris had theorized that Jesus Christ’s divine nature displaced Jesus’ human mind and will. To him, Jesus possessed only a divine nature, and therefore did not truly take on the fallen nature of humanity.**

Controversy about the relationship between the divine and human natures of Jesus continued with Nestorius of Antioch, who was appointed bishop of Constantinople in 428. Nestorius concluded that Jesus had two separate natures and two wills, making him two persons—a double being—one divine and the other human, sharing one body. Nestorius’ teaching was condemned by a church council at Ephesus in 431, but the controversy did not end.

In the 440s, a respected monk from Constantinople, Eutyches, denied that Jesus was truly human. He taught that Jesus did not exist in two natures because his human nature was absorbed or swallowed up by his divine nature. Flavian, bishop of Constantinople, convened a synod in 448, condemning Eutyches’ position, but Eutyches appealed the decision. The fight took a nasty turn when Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, became determined to reinstate Eutyches and his views. Eastern emperor Theodosius II, also favoring Eutyches’ position, called another church-wide council to meet at Ephesus in August 449. He appointed Dioscorus to chair the proceedings and to silence any dissent.

Leo I, bishop of Rome, sent delegates to the synod with his *Tome*, an exposition of how the two natures, divine and human, are joined in Christ. Dioscorus prevented the reading of Leo’s letter and rejected his position. Eutyches’ teaching was declared orthodox. Bishops who refused to accept the council’s decision were deposed.

### Council of Chalcedon

An unexpected event dramatically changed the situation. On July 28, 450, while out riding, Theodosius’ horse bolted. The emperor fell, broke his neck and died. His sister Pulcheria became empress with her husband, Marcian, as co-emperor. They were opposed to Eutyches’ teaching and eager to redress the wrongs perpetrated by Dioscorus.

Emperor Marcian called for a church council to meet at Chalcedon, on the outskirts of Constantinople. More than 500 bishops attended—the largest church council gath-

ering to that time. All delegates were from the Eastern Church, except the few papal representatives from Rome and two from Africa. Deliberations lasted from October 8 to November 1, 451.

Leo again sent representatives with his *Tome*, which was read and approved by the council. Chalcedon reversed the “Robbers’ Council” decision and condemned Eutyches’ teaching. It anathematized those who taught that Christ had only a single, divine nature and those “who imagine a mixture or confusion between the two natures of Christ.”

### Definition of Faith

Marcian urged the council to write a statement of faith to provide unity and understanding for the Church. In response, the council produced the “Chalcedonian Definition.”

The Definition affirms that Christ is “complete in Godhead and complete in humanness, truly God and truly human.” He is “of one substance (*homoousios*) with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his humanity.”

Jesus Christ is to be “recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.” The “distinction of natures” is “in no way annulled by the union.” “The characteristics of each nature” are to be considered as “preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence.” They are not to be “separated into two persons.”

In summary, the Definition confesses Jesus Christ is “one person, who is both divine and human.” Though its wording has been criticized as inadequate, it has helped the Church in “setting the limits beyond which error lies” in speaking of the human and divine union in Christ.

The Definition confesses the gospel message that Jesus Christ assumed our fallen humanity in order to save us, for as early church father, Gregory of Nazianzus (329–389), said, “That which he [Christ] has not assumed he has not healed; but that which is united to his Godhead is also saved.”

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:1, 14).

# Speaking of Life

By Joseph Tkach



## The Mystery

In the gospel of Jesus Christ, a mystery has been revealed. According to the apostle Paul, this mystery was hidden for a long time, but at just the right time it was opened to the world.

In Romans 16:25-26, Paul wrote that the gospel is “the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him” (Romans 16:25-26 NIV).

The mystery involves all nations and God’s will for them to know and trust in him, and we find hints about it throughout the Old Testament.

God told Abraham about the mystery when he called him out of Mesopotamia. “...go to the land I will show you,” God said, “and I will bless you ... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:1-3 NIV).

Centuries later, when God brought Israel out of Egypt, he told Pharaoh that he would show his power in Egypt so that “...my name might be proclaimed in all the earth” (Exodus 9:16 NIV).

When Joshua led the people into the land of promise, he said that God had opened a dry path through the Jordan River for Israel so that “...all the people of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful...” (Joshua 4:24).

The shepherd boy David told the Philistine giant, Goliath,

that God would give him the victory so “...the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel” (1 Samuel 17:46).

Many of the psalms mention the mystery. Psalm 33:8 says, “Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the people of the world revere him.”

The mission of the church is based on what God has promised from the beginning – that the entire world would come to know that he is God. Although the Old Testament is focused on Israel, various passages here and there remind us that God has not only Israel in mind.

When we are involved in mission, when we are sharing the blessing he has given us, we are taking part in the mystery revealed in Jesus Christ -- God’s plan to bring salvation to the whole world.

“...sing to the Lord, all the earth.... proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations” (Psalm 96:1-3). “The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.... all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth” (Psalm 98:2-4).

We all take part in different ways, but for each of us, the call is there: Go, preach the gospel, make disciples of all nations, and teach them to do the same thing (Matthew 29:19-20).

The secret is out. The mystery has been revealed. And Jesus want us to spread the good news.

I’m Joseph Tkach, speaking of LIFE.

*This article is derived from Speaking of Life, a weekly video program presented by Joseph Tkach on the Worldwide Church of God website, go to [www.wcg.org/av/spol.htm](http://www.wcg.org/av/spol.htm)*

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