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GOD IS GOOD // BETTER THAN YOU THINK
HE SHOWERS US // RESTORED: A FOCUS ON CUBA
DO WE KNOW HOW GOOD GOD REALLY IS?

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Editor-in-Chief

Keri Jones

Producer

Timothy Jones

Creative Editor

Bethan Jones-Erlenbach

Designer

Debbie Swift

Editor

James Aubrey

Copy Editor

David Raynor

Contributing Editors

Richard Anniss
Roger Aubrey
Graham Deakin
Matthew Ling
Tony Ling
David Lyon
Trevor Lloyd
Gavin White

Offices

Times of Restoration
P.O. Box 4252
Cardiff
CF14 8FA
office@timesofrestoration.com
Phone: +44 (0)29 2052 4101

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The church is growing more rapidly today than any other time in history. Times of Restoration brings you the good news of what is happening in our world, giving fresh teaching on what the Spirit of God is saying to his church today. We believe that restoration is still a key need for the church and that Christ continues bringing us to completeness, ready for his glorious return.

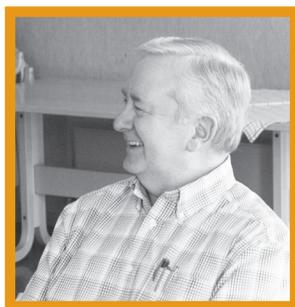
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The magazine is a collaborative expression of ministries without borders®, and interrelated Christian churches, who are committed to serving the purposes of God. We seek to build on the inheritance we have received to shape the church into that which will herald the return of the King.

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FROM THE EDITOR *I was woken by the telephone ringing and a voice informed me of the sudden death of my friend. There was a numbness, a shock, an immediate expression of grief; and yet, deep within, a peace because I knew he was with his Lord and Saviour.*

It is in experiences like these that we find not only who God is but also what really holds us together: his Spirit within. Life is not always routine, but experiences are sudden and intrusive. These situations cause different emotions to well up and be expressed. There are times when we cry and laugh, feel joy and pain; yet in all these times and circumstances we know that he works 'all things together for our good' (Rom 8:28).

Goodness is an innate quality of our God. Who he is, is unchanging. At all times he works towards us from the basis of his goodness. Even those who do not know him are beneficiaries of his love and goodness for, 'he sends the rain on the just and the unjust' (Mt 5:45). His goodness has been seen by the world, principalities and powers when God sent his son into the world to die, take its sin and rise again to prove he had done it. All this to demonstrate his love and goodness (John 3:16). It was Jesus who 'went about doing good' (Acts 10:38).

God has a plan for each of us. As we discover it and pursue its outworking we experience that it is 'good, acceptable and perfect' (Rom 12:2). God is not only the greatest – he is the best. Due to him being good, loving and faithful we can be strengthened to fulfill our task in life.

Not all things that happen to us find their origins in God but he is able to make all things work together for our good.

It was the English preacher CH Spurgeon who said 'we must never tolerate for a moment an instant's unbelief as to the goodness of the Lord. Whatever else may be questioned, this is absolutely certain, that Jehovah is good. His dispensations may vary but his nature is always the same.'

Through reading the following articles I trust you will be encouraged to understand again the reality that God is good, and that he who began a good work in you, now desires to do a good work through you. Remember your good deed could well be another person's miracle.

Enjoy the read. Enjoy his goodness.

Ken

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God is Good

by Roger Aubrey



'Roger is a good student, but he could do better.' A regular feature of my annual school report: I tried my best but my best was never good enough. Even in the subjects I was good at there was always room for improvement. That is the thing about being good at something: good is fine, but best is better.

If we were to write God's 'annual report', however, we could not ask him to do better. To do so would imply that he needs to improve; that while he is good, he is not as good as he could be. When the Bible says that God is good, however, it tells us something fundamentally important about the nature of God. To know that God is good is necessary for all our right thinking about him. It will affect the manner in which we relate to him, because if he is not good then nothing else makes sense. He can be all-powerful and infinite; but if he is not good then he is not God. To be God, he has to be good. God's goodness is the motivating force for the way he is and the way he acts. He is good in all his nature; everything he does is, therefore, good.

If we were to describe our ideal God, we would want a God who never harms us or thinks badly about us; who is always kind; who does not bless us one day and neglect us the next. Our God would not make us ill or forget us when hard times came. He would be kind and generous. I have good news for you: the God you want is the God you already have!¹ God is perfect, without any faults. Therefore, he is capable only of being good and doing good. It is impossible for God to have a bad thought or do anything bad. He cannot be any other way than the way he is. God is good; he does not know how to be anything else. God's nature is to be kind and generous.² God delights in being kind. He loves to bless us and make us happy. He created us to be successful. He takes a genuine pleasure in us. God is a 'how much more' Father. Jesus described him this way:

Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!³

Each day I experience the goodness of God in my life. He feeds and clothes me; he gives me air to breathe. He has given me a wonderful family and placed me in a fantastic church with good friends who love me. God blesses me each day financially so I can be blessed and be a blessing. I have my health. God loves the fact that my life is good. The Psalmist tells me to 'taste and see that the LORD is good'.⁴ The goodness of God is tangible; I experience it in very real ways each day. My whole life is a demonstration of the goodness of God. And this is all because:

1. See Jeremiah 29:11-12

2. Isaiah 63:7; Jeremiah 9:24

3. Matthew 7:9-11

4. Psalm 34:8

It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.⁵

And if I lost it all tomorrow, God would still be a good God. If he never did another thing for me he would still be good. I do not calculate his goodness only by the blessings he pours out on my life. God is good because he is good. He loves to do good. I remember some years ago one of my Bible School students cried when I said this in class. She was afraid that God had a 'negative side'. She had imagined that he was only partially good. When she realised that she had believed a lie she was freed from her fear.

Many Christians live like that. Whenever they hear the phrase, 'God is good', it is like a knife going through them. Something has happened to them in their life that causes them to question it: the loss of a child; a long term sickness; a seemingly unanswered prayer. They have concluded that God let them down by failing to keep his promise; or even worse, that he was the one who caused their situation in the first place. That is why to know that God is good is key for all our right thinking about him: it will affect the manner in which we relate to him, because if he is not good then nothing else makes sense. But he is good, and our circumstances, good and bad, have no bearing on his goodness.

One of the most beautiful, but most misquoted passages in the Bible is:

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.⁶

Sometimes, when I have been going through tough times, well meaning people have quoted this verse to me. They said, 'Well, God works all things for your good', meaning, 'God has brought this into your life to teach you something. So accept it's come from him and resign yourself to it'. They have made it a fatalistic verse, and that I should resign myself to my bad circumstance. But a good God never inflicts bad circumstances on us. The key to understanding that verse is the phrase: 'and we know'. We must be realistic and accept the fact that bad things happen to good people. Jesus told us so:

Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.⁷

The New Testament writers told the early believers that persecution, suffering and patient endurance are part of belonging to Jesus. Christians are not immune to life. The key is how we respond when things go wrong. If we know that God is good, then we also know that he is not to blame for the situation, that he has not absented himself from our circumstance. We do not entertain the thought that

5. Philippians 2:13

6. Romans 8:28

7. John 16:33

somehow God has engineered this bad situation to teach us a lesson. Bad circumstances have no bearing on the goodness of God.⁸ God loves us, and wants us to succeed. He does not put obstacles or traps in our way. He loves to bless us. He is for us, and is determined that nothing will come between us and him.

Bad things happen to good people. But if bad things do not come from God, then where do they come from? They come from the devil. Just as it is impossible for God to do evil, it is equally impossible for the devil to do good. The devil is your enemy. He is a liar, a deceiver, a stranger to the truth, and your accuser. He hates God and he hates you. Jesus said of him:

He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.⁹

Satan's aim is to destroy the character of God and frustrate God's eternal purpose in Christ. We are the battleground where the devil fights God, because we Christians are the instruments of the kingdom of God. If the devil can make us less effective, he thinks he can thwart God's kingdom plans. So he attacks us and his tactic in doing so is to make us doubt that God is good. If the devil can convince you that God is not good, he has put enough doubt in your heart to render you ineffective.

The Bible gives us a very clear and simple principle of how to live in the goodness of God and keep our hearts free from the devil's manipulation. I call it the attitude of gratitude, and it is a key for unlocking the goodness of God in our lives. Many times in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms, you will find this phrase:

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.¹⁰

In fact, God has determined for us the attitude we have to adopt whenever we come before him, and the reason for such an attitude:

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.¹¹

8. Romans 8:37-39

9. John 8:44 NASB

10. Psalm 118:1

11. Psalm 100:4-5

Paul goes further by saying that we must give thanks all the time; that in every circumstance we find ourselves in, good or bad, thanksgiving to God for his goodness should come pouring out from us:

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.¹²

God is good to everybody, not only to Christians. His goodness extends even to those who hate him or do not believe in him. Our attitude towards God makes no difference to his goodness towards us:

Love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.¹³

God does not love Christians more than he loves unbelievers: he is equally good to all. Paul declared to the unbelievers in Lystra:

He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.¹⁴

Their response was to attack Paul and almost kill him! But God still sent them rain from heaven to water their crops. God is not good because he wants something from us in return. He is good to all because he is good. The power of God's goodness, expressed in his kindness, is amazing:

God's kindness leads you to repentance.¹⁵

God is good! Make that a confession that comes from your heart and mouth each day. There is an old song that says:

*Count your blessings;
Name them one by one.
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

Take time to recall all the goodness of God in your life. Even the breath you are breathing right now is an expression of his goodness, so be grateful. God is good.

12. 1Thessalonians 5:18

13. Luke 6:35

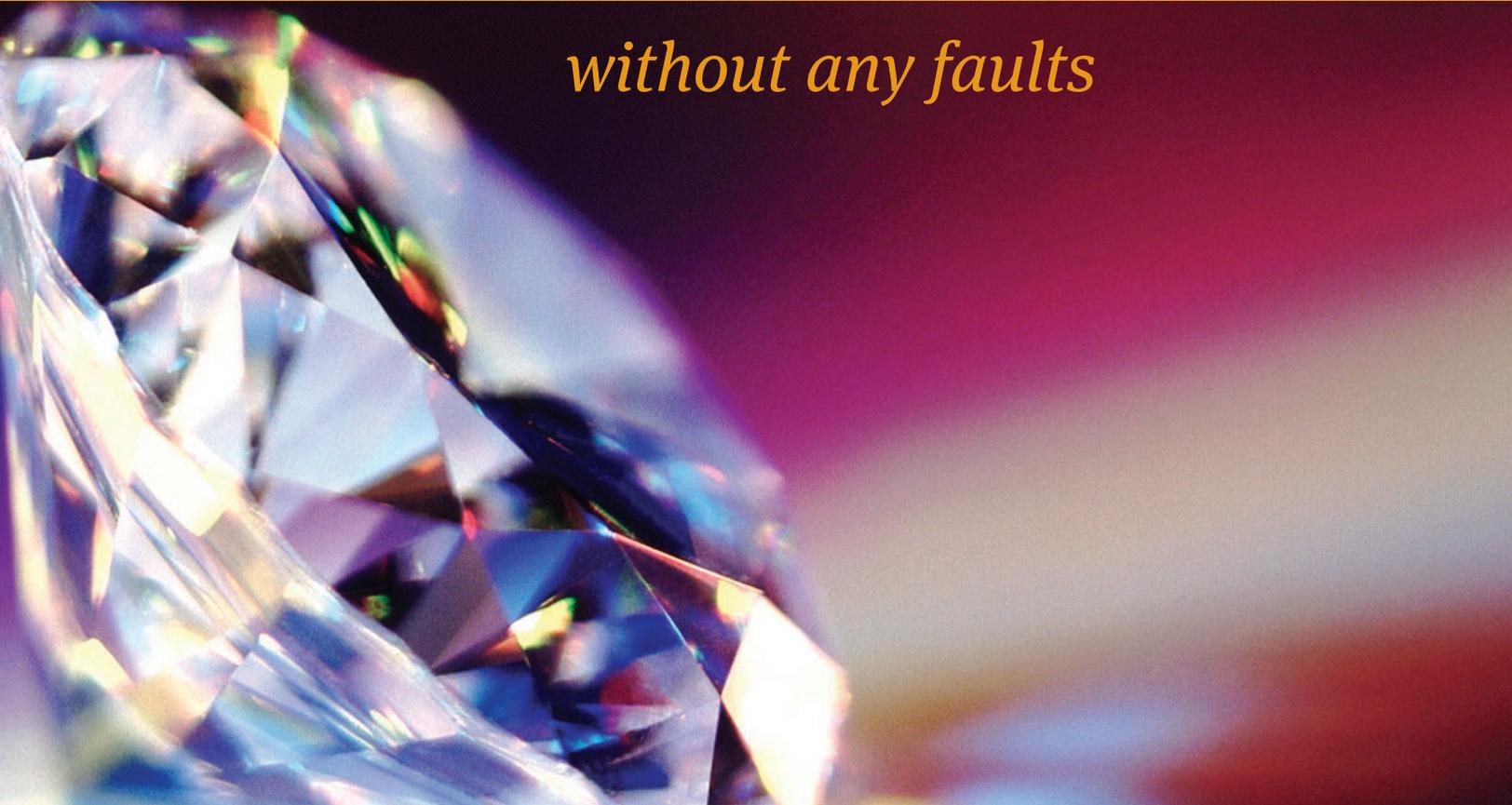
14. Acts 14:17

15. Romans 2:4

RECALL ALL THE GOODNESS

GOD IS PERFECT

without any faults



of God in your life

05

FROM OTTAWA • CANADA

A RESTORED BODY



My name is Marie-Elisabeth (Lizzy) Lubin. On October 17th 2008, I woke up not feeling well, I passed out and came to in the emergency room of a hospital. Nurses were calling my name to keep me awake and I had all kinds of IVs in my arms. My blood had coagulated and my heartbeat was irregular. The morning after they managed to stabilize me, I noticed something was not right: I could not feel or move anything on my left side. Then the doctor came with my test results and told me I had had a Cerebral Vascular Accident – a stroke.

When I heard the news, I said to myself, *'time to put your faith in action.'* Instantly I knew that my Lord was there with me and that he would show me his grace and mercy. Therefore, my main thought was not about the illness, but that I should stop and listen to God. I never cried; I always maintained a positive attitude and when friends and family came to visit me, I always kept a smile on my face. Throughout this ordeal I never looked or felt beaten down. Even the doctors could not comprehend my reaction to the news. I always told everyone at the hospital that Jesus was in control of my situation. The fact that I knew there were so many people praying for me brought me great comfort. I kept thanking my God for I knew he would make me whole again. Family and friends were puzzled by my resilience; some even said I was in denial that I was paralyzed. All the while, I experienced such calmness inside and I kept saying, *'God is in control.'* My family even suggested that I give up my apartment, so I could have a wheelchair-accessible unit. My

answer was, *'no, I will go home on my feet by the grace of God.'*

One night I had a dream. My mother was bathing me and some friends from church arrived. They told me they had come to pray for me and would wait for me upstairs. They started to climb a cord ladder as if it were suspended on something. I said, *'I am half-paralyzed. How could I climb up there?'*, and one of them said, *'have no fear: you can!'* A week later, I had the same dream.

One Saturday night, my friend called me and said, *'we are coming to pray for you.'* Without hesitation my answer was, *'perfect, come.'* When they arrived we managed to find a place that could accommodate us. They pushed me in my wheelchair and as we were getting settled, one of the girls asked to see my hand. I painfully tried to lift my left arm on to the table and she held on to it. We started to pray and I could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. I kept thanking the Lord for his blessings and my left hand started to tremble; I couldn't stop it from shaking. I cried and I told them I could feel my fingers moving. We started to praise God and at the end of the prayer session I crushed a foam cup with my left hand.

After they left I went to bed and fell asleep. I hadn't slept like this since I'd been sick and it was so peaceful. On Sunday evening, I was browsing through a magazine and it started to slip off my lap. It was about to fall and I caught it quickly. I realized I did it with my left arm. Imagine my joy! I could not stop the tears and began thanking God for what just happened. Since I regained the mobility of my left arm, I knew it was just the beginning because my God is not a *'good enough'* God, he is an excellent

God. On Monday, I could wave at my therapist. She was surprised and when she asked me what was going on, I said *'God is at work in me.'* Week after week, my situation improved. My physiotherapist asked me, *'what do you do when I am not there?'* I replied, *'God is working on me.'* As days went by, I stood up longer, then took little steps, more steps and then no longer needed a wheelchair. Then I was walking with a walker and I always had the feeling that my Lord was walking with me. Within weeks, I was walking on my own! All the other patients at the Rehab Centre were clapping when they saw me walking in the hallway. I always knew that I would go home walking.

It was unbelievable to some, but I knew God was an excellent God, my maker and the Lord who heals. Yes indeed, he restored my mind, my heart and my life. I am healthy, happy and ready to serve him wholeheartedly.





SOUTH LEICESTERSHIRE:

The Rock who is alive. *When people hear about Living Rock or see our converted-warehouse building, they often ask, ‘what kind of church are you?’ The answer is, ‘a fantastic one!’ We are based in central England and our mission is captured in the phrase from the heart of the nation...to the ends of the earth. We’re passionate about fulfilling this: seeing thousands of lives changed by the love and power of Jesus here in the heart of the nation, as well as being a church with a world vision, investing people and resources to the ends of the earth.*

HEART OF THE NATION

For many years we met in – and outgrew – various schools and community centres. In 2006, we completed the purchase and refurbishment of a large warehouse in Stoney Stanton, South Leicestershire. This has given us a fantastic facility for training, gathering together and for reaching the community. We were able to complete the £1million+ building project without any bank borrowings – an amazing testimony to the goodness of God and the generosity of his people.

We’re seeking to express God’s unconditional love into the locality through a wide range of initiatives: after-school clubs and youth groups, marriage and parenting courses, a mums-and-tots group, an older-members lunch group, a support centre for the international community, Alpha courses, money-management and debt-counselling courses. As we’ve become more outward-focussed, God has given us a growing compassion and love towards our neighbours and communities. We want to be a church that is positive, relevant and effective.

EXTENDED FAMILY

We also want to be a large extended family, where people of all ages, nationalities and backgrounds can find hope, friendship, dignity, security and – above all – a brand new life through faith in Jesus: the Rock who is alive. We’re privileged to host many visitors every week, who frequently

comment on the wide age-range of the church (especially the number of young people) and the warmth of the welcome they receive. We believe we’re seeing an alternative society coming together and are finding that the world around us is taking notice.

We’ve grown steadily over the last few years as God has saved and added many people to us; we now number more than 400 adults and children. We believe every person has a unique role to play in the life of the church: we’re extremely blessed to have so many people who serve enthusiastically.

Every member of Living Rock is part of a Life Group. These groups meet from house-to-house throughout the week for meals, fellowship, prayer, breaking bread, and discussion and application of God’s Word. These groups are at the heart of the church and help us encourage, equip and care for everyone.

ENDS OF THE EARTH

As part of our wider vision, we’ve sent teams to Zambia and the Philippines. We’ve been able to support missionary work in, among others, Cambodia, Tanzania, Sierra Leone and South Africa. We’re excited that God is opening doors of influence for us among churches in France, Kenya and Malawi.

For the future, a key prophetic word to us is that *'our boundaries shall be our starting places.'* We've taken that as an encouragement to keep expanding: our dream is to build a church of thousands, with congregations planted across the Midlands and a growing influence in other nations. We want to express the goodness of God from the heart of the nation to the ends of the earth.

Looking back, we realise we owe everything to the kindness of God: he has been so faithful in blessing us. We're a fantastic church only because God is doing fantastic things in people's lives. The following testimonies tell some of the amazing stories of his wonderful salvation and healing.

GOD IS DOING FANTASTIC THINGS IN PEOPLE'S LIVES

MAUREEN DEACON TELLS HER STORY OF A POWERFUL ANSWER TO PRAYER.

'For some time I'd been on medication for high blood pressure and five years ago I was diagnosed with two leaking heart valves. These caused an irregular heartbeat and I suffered with blackouts. I was told that an average person would have 15 irregular heartbeats per day but I was having 534.'

My cardiologist decided to take me off the blood pressure medication and I believed God was at work in it all. But on the way to church recently I was suffering with the irregular heartbeat and I cried out to God to meet me that morning.

God spoke that day through a word of knowledge that there was a lady present with a heart valve problem. I was prayed for and have had no problems at all since: Jesus has healed me. I used to have to allow my heart to calm down before I could lie down to sleep, but now I can go straight to bed without any problems. I used to have to be careful about standing still for very long or getting overtired, but these things don't affect me anymore. It's made a huge difference to my life and given me back my confidence. And the cardiologist has discharged me.'

NEIL BOWLES FEELS HE'S DISCOVERED AN AMAZING SECRET...

'A few months ago I was a non-believer: I was very sceptical and didn't need a faith; I felt I could do it all by myself!'

However, after a few weeks of attending Living Rock, I started looking at life in a new light, and developing a new attitude. I decided to attend the Alpha course, not really knowing what was in store, and after a few weeks I asked Jesus into my life. A few weeks later Kim and I were baptised, which was a really empowering experience!

Attending church is now one of my highlights of the week - meeting new friends, a warm welcome, and I love to worship. Now that I understand what Jesus has done for us all - the love, compassion, and so much more - I feel I have started life's real journey. I wish I had discovered it long ago!

INGS IVES

CLAIRE TIMSON HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF LIVING ROCK FOR SEVERAL YEARS. SHE RECENTLY EXPERIENCED GOD'S MIRACLE POWER.

'God healed me in our Sunday meeting when I really wasn't expecting it. His presence was very powerful and there were words of knowledge for people to receive healing. My heart raced and my emotions took over when it was said that God wanted to heal somebody who had one leg shorter than the other, but had no hip or back problems. I knew instantly that it was me. I'd been suffering with a shorter leg for 2 years due to a sports injury, and had seen physiotherapists and other specialists, but nobody had an explanation or cure.

I went forward completely overcome with emotion. As I was prayed for the church gathered around and saw my leg grow to match the other, I knew that God had healed me before I even stood up. The delight and excitement about my healing was awesome and overwhelming. Trusting God that he can do anything is a wonderful way for us to live. He is a God of abundance and nothing is too great or too trivial for him.'

SARAH BUTTWELL TELLS HOW SHE BECAME A CHRISTIAN AND JOINED LIVING ROCK WHILST AT UNIVERSITY.

'Before I became a Christian I thought I was doing fine: I got good grades at school, had a great group of friends and a supportive family. But I felt that there must be more to life than just getting on with it. I went through periods of feeling low, wondering what my purpose was, or if I had one at all. I also felt there must be a meaning behind events that seemed "coincidences." I'd been to church on occasions, but thought that faith wasn't relevant to me, or indeed to modern life.

But when I started talking to a friend at university about his beliefs, I was intrigued. He invited me along to Living Rock, which was so different from how I'd imagined church. There were people of all ages, modern music, and everyone was so welcoming and friendly.

I began an Alpha course. I started discovering answers and reasons behind my life and began to be filled with tremendous hope and excitement about what God had in store for me. My whole outlook was changing; the decision to invite God into my life was easy once I realised this.

Finding God has given me a purpose for living and allowed me to focus on what's important. My values and goals have changed: I know God has a perfect plan for me and is shaping me to be the person I need to be. Finding God and placing my life completely in his hands is simply the most important and freeing experience I've ever had.'

A photograph of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in a snowy landscape. The aurora is a vibrant green, flowing across the dark, starry night sky. Below the aurora, a line of dark evergreen trees is silhouetted against the horizon. In the distance, a small house with warm lights is visible. The foreground is a snow-covered slope. The entire image is framed by a solid orange border.

Better

THAN YOU THINK

by Heather Cursham

*Is God **really** good? Every day we are bombarded with images of disaster from around the world. The devastating famine, the war that rages, the murder of a small child, they all come right into our living room. Closer to home we may find we have lost our job or a family member has just been diagnosed as having cancer. There is plenty of bad news around if you are looking for some. So if there is a God, how can he be good if he allows all this suffering and bad news? Do we want to know a God like this? These are questions that can echo in people's minds. Couldn't God just wave his magic wand and make all the problems go away?*

Is God really good? The Bible says yes, he is better than we could ever think or imagine. Goodness is part of his very nature and everything he does is good.¹ When he created the world, it was good. There was no bad news and he intended us to live forever. He wanted a real relationship with us, so he gave us free will. We were made in his image, with personality and the capacity to choose, not just to respond automatically, like a television to a remote. The Bible tells us that mankind exercised their choice and chose independence from God. Essentially, Adam got what he wanted: independence. Unfortunately, a life lived outside of the presence of God included sin, sickness and death. Man's friendship with God was broken. The devil was delighted with man's rebellion; the devil is not good and he hates God. Anything he can do to cause misery and discredit God, he will do. He revels in disaster and catastrophe, pain and suffering.

When Jesus came to the earth as a man, he came to draw us back into relationship with God. It was a good and kind God that sent Jesus as Saviour.² Jesus came to earth to destroy the works of the devil and provide us with a way back to God.³ As we look at Jesus we see a good God. He stood in the middle of all that was bad and broken and demonstrated the goodness of God. As he healed the sick, delivered the oppressed and raised the dead, he challenged people to repent and come back into right relationship with the Father. So why did God not sort out the problems of the world with one dramatic sweep of his powerful right hand? The answer lies in his kindness. God allows the coexistence of good and bad for a time because he wants everyone to be saved.⁴ When Jesus returns to the earth that will be the end, but until then everyone has time to turn to God.

As people are born again, they discover they are able to interact personally with the Creator of the Universe! In the Old Testament, God said to a rebellious Israel, '*My ways are higher than your ways*'.⁵ There is all the difference in the world between knowing about a historical or famous person and actually meeting and spending time with him. This was what God was trying to communicate to his people. They had

observed God as spectators but failed to come into the place of knowing him. In stark contrast was their leader, Moses. The people of Israel knew God's deeds, but Moses knew God's ways.⁶ Moses had chosen to seek out friendship with God. He was rewarded with a face-to-face relationship with God. He spoke to God as a man would speak with his friend.⁷

The people who really understood Jesus were those whose hearts were ready. They had ears to hear and eyes to see. He taught parables where the plain meaning was deliberately hidden. He was not trying to appeal to the intellect; he was trying to win hearts. When Jesus gave his commission to the disciples, he commanded them first to make disciples and *then* to teach them.⁸ They were to win hearts first, to ignite a friendship with God and then understanding would follow. When Paul visited the Corinthian church, he explained that he did not want their faith to rest in a well thought out presentation of a philosophy.⁹ He did not want their mental assent. They had to experience God! Once you have met the living God, you do not need to be persuaded that he is real. You are consumed with a hunger to know him more and you want to spend your time with him and your energy on him. An encounter with God leads to a testimony of his goodness.

Foundational to our friendship with God is the conviction that he is a good God. Because we know he is good, we entrust our lives to him and place our faith in him. Faith is how we interact with God. Nothing else works. God wants to partner with us, for us to participate in the divine nature.¹⁰ He calls us his friends. God is looking for a people who know him, and with him can transform the world. He wants to demonstrate his goodness through our lives. As Christians we understand God to be good, but sometimes when bad things happen to us, we can start to fear, doubt or worry. These work against faith and can shake our conviction in the absolute goodness of God. But God is for us and rewards those who seek him.¹¹

Some time after my husband Andrew and I were married, we decided we were ready to have children, but we had difficulty

1. Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 118:1

2. Titus 3:4

3. 1 John 3:8

4. Ezekiel 18:32; 2 Peter 3:9

5. Isaiah 55:9

6. Psalm 103:7

7. Exodus 33:11

8. Matthew 28:19-20

9. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5

10. 2 Peter 1:4

11. Hebrews 11:6

in conceiving. After a period of seventeen months I was expecting a baby and yet only a few short weeks later I had a miscarriage. This was very painful and I really questioned God's goodness. He was definitely good to other people, but perhaps not to me. But God is a great comforter and he gave a lady a dream about us having a girl and then after a time, our daughter Kezia was born. We can spend so much time worrying when we stop knowing he is good. If you are facing something difficult, you might need to take the psalmist's medicine: have a shout, let out some righteous indignation, weep maybe and then throw yourself back on the goodness of God and tell yourself to worship him.

God is good and his goodness is so much more than the absence of evil. It flows out of his love and passion and he cannot be any other way. It is reflected in exuberant, colourful life and freedom. It is in his beauty and his creativity. As we grow in intimacy as friends of God we come to understand his way of doing things and our conviction of his goodness will become unshakeable. Sometimes the extravagance of his goodness can take our breath away. My husband Andrew had been fasting for a period of time. After finishing it, he felt very cold and feverish. We were in bed and I became aware of an angel in the room and he was placing a stack of crowns on a table next to me. Andrew asked what I could see and I told him I saw a crown and he asked if it was for him. I said that it was and I got out of bed and took the crown and placed it on his head. As soon as the crown touched him, warmth spread through him from head to toe and the fever left. He was healed. We had not even asked for healing and here God was encouraging us with an exciting encounter and healing Andrew. We need to pray that we might begin to glimpse something of God's detailed intervention in our daily lives.

Sometimes being unfamiliar with God's ways can lead us to miss what God is doing. Jesus warned against being offended by him. Continually he was drawing people away from rules and a nice, neat logical code of behaviour and into a lively, vibrant relationship. God will simply not conform to how we think he should behave. He may use a vision, a dream, a burning bush, or even saliva to heal a blind man. At times he may play a kind of treasure hunt, where he hides a series of messages and gifts for us and we have to find them by interacting with him.¹² He so values our spending time with him and in this way he leads us and draws us. We experienced this last time we moved

12. Proverbs 25:2

house. We were quite amazed at the intimate level which God wanted to be involved in the process. First of all, he identified the house we should buy. Then he made a way financially for us to bridge an impossible gap. Then, in a poor housing market he provided a miraculous chain of buyers and sellers and in all this, our financial advisor and his wife became Christians and were added to the church. His goodness was even better than we could have dreamt!

As we become increasingly convinced of God's goodness, we are willing to rely on his voice. God wants us to be dependant on him because he wants to do good to us and through us. Sometimes his ways seem strange and we often cannot make sense of things with our minds. But as we trust that he is good, simply doing whatever he tells us, we will see amazing things. Taking God at his word will lead to a demonstration of his goodness every time. During the Azusa Street revival in the early twentieth century, one of its leaders, William J Seymour, would enter the room at the start of every meeting and

HE

cover his head with a box. He did this for anything up to an hour. To some this seemed absurd, to others comical, but most understood that he was being obedient to the voice of God. It was through this man's ministry that many amazing signs and wonders were seen by the church.

God designed us to showcase his goodness, both as individuals and as the church community. We can say, *'God is good: just look at my life!'* As we mature and draw closer to the Father, whatever happens in life, we will see that God is good. Having the goodness of God always before us is like approaching life with a filter over our eyes, enabling us to get the right perspective on any situation we may face. Less and less will we be thrown by bad news and more and more will we enjoy our friendship with a good God. May you know the goodness of God above and beyond that which you have ever experienced!



WE ENTRUST OUR LIVES TO HIM

is good

Having the goodness of God always before us is like approaching life with a filter over our eyes, enabling us to get the right perspective on any situation we may face.



HE SHOWERS US

Recounting His Goodness

by Zephyr D'Souza

It was 22nd April 2009 and a day of celebration! We had completed twenty years serving the Lord in Jaipur: certainly a day to remember and celebrate the goodness of God, a day to lift our hearts and thank God as we brought to mind the many ways he showered us with his goodness. And that is exactly what we did in the company of our house church family that evening. Many indeed were the stories that we recollected of God's incredible goodness towards us.

We remembered how excited we were as we began our journey from Mumbai on the morning of 21st April 1989. Our furniture was already on its way to our new home in Jaipur in the North Indian state of Rajasthan. We were to spend that day with my wife Brenda's aunt, at her home closer to the airport, before flying out the next day. We got into the taxi with our two children and started on our way. The taxi driver was busy talking to his friend in the front seat and, as we neared the exit of our road to get on to the highway, I saw a truck speeding towards us from the left. It was signalling a turn into our road, just as we were turning to the right to get onto the highway. The driver was still busy talking to his friend. I shouted, 'be careful!' He stepped on the brakes just in time, screeching to a halt to let the truck zip past the bonnet of the cab. Whew! That was a close shave!

We knew that the Lord had indeed saved us! But we only realised just how much he was directing our steps that morning when, a month later, we received a postcard, redirected to our address in Jaipur. It was from a women's group in Chennai and it had just one line written on it. 'Dear Brenda,' it read, 'we prayed for you and your family this morning.' It was dated 21st April 1989! They did not know anything about the day of our departure. It immediately reminded us of the start of our journey when we were unwittingly passing through the dark valley of death. The Good Shepherd had protected us from the enemy's murderous attack.

We can only marvel at the goodness of God and join with the psalmist in praising him:

How great is the goodness you have stored up for those who fear you. You lavish it on those who come to you for protection, blessing them before the watching world. You hide them in the shelter of your presence, safe from those who conspire against them. You shelter them in your presence, far from accusing tongues.'

Trying to understand the goodness of God apart from his actions is indeed a sterile exercise. The dictionaries will tell you that goodness is an intrinsic

1. Psalm 31:19-20 NLT

part of God's character, his benevolence, his kindness towards his creation. This is all true. But goodness by itself is abstract and must necessarily be associated with action involving others. However, God is not good because we experience his goodness in our lives. He is good! And because he is good we experience his goodness in our lives all the time. We experienced it in his protection that day as we left Mumbai. In fact we can truly say that we have experienced his goodness in our lives everyday, in every way.

When my wife and I announced our decision to go to Jaipur, both our families were not very happy. One could understand their natural way of thinking. How would we manage? I had resigned my job and I had a wife and two children to care for. How long would our savings last? This was not what they had bargained for when they had agreed to my marrying their daughter! But Brenda and I were very sure that this was what God had directed us to do and that he would provide all our needs. And that is exactly what he has done over these last twenty years.

The Lord had impressed on my heart that I should serve him full time and that I should not take a salary from the church, any organisation or any man. And this is our testimony: he has prospered our investments in such a way that we have been able to send our four children to some of the best schools in the city. I have been able to build my own home without borrowing a single rupee. I recently invested in a second house, again without taking a single rupee in loans! God has taken care of all our needs. Even at a time when the world's markets were crashing all around and we lost a major portion of the value of our investments, we had everything we needed.

Not only that, God in his goodness from time to time would impress on brothers in the body to bless us generously so that we have always had over and above all we could ask or imagine! Our daughter Jessica has been blessed with scholarships in her first year in college so that we received back more than half of the fees we had paid! Our elder daughter Rebekah won a prize for a writing competition: an all-expense-paid ten day literary tour of England and a 50% scholarship to attend the two week C.S. Lewis seminars at Oxford and Cambridge! She was

You lavish

then blessed with the other 50% as well through the generosity of brothers in the body.

God is not only our provider: he leads us along the right paths bringing honour to his name. When we had discerned that the Lord wanted us to go to Jaipur, I told my boss, Sarat, who was a Christian. He was concerned and suggested that I go and talk to Alfie Franks, the director of Operation Mobilisation, that he may help us in discerning whether our move was of God or not. I did; and Alfie confirmed that it was indeed of God. He then gave me the name of a pastor of a Pentecostal church in Jaipur with whom, he suggested, I could work.

I tried my best to get in touch with this pastor during our first six months but failed for one reason or another. I only managed to contact him in October 1989 when he was organising a festival of praise, which I thought would benefit me if I attended. It was at that conference that God had ordained that we should meet Bryn and Keri Jones. The rest as they say is history and it is amazing how God, in his goodness, directed our paths: from Sarat, a Catholic Charismatic, to Alfie Franks, an Evangelical, to the Pentecostal pastor, and then Bryn and Keri Jones. Praise his name!

You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honour me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings.²

Yes indeed my cup overflows with the goodness of the Lord. We started our ministry with a bicycle, graduated to a moped, then a scooter, a motorcycle and now a car! I am so grateful that very early in our Christian life, the Lord taught us about tithing and sowing as a lifestyle. We are blessed so that we can be a blessing to those that God has joined to us. I had a desire to go to Bible school but due to family responsibilities, I could not. But in his goodness and in his time he prepared a feast for me, taking me around the world to equip and anoint me to do his will. I have attended conferences and training programs in the United Kingdom, in North America, in Indonesia, not to mention travelling in India

2. Psalm 23:5 NLT

and Nepal with my friend and mentor, Erling Thu. Everywhere I have gone I have been received with so much love and honour, which I know I could never have received but for God's goodness towards me.

God has blessed us with an ever increasing spiritual family that is incredible in its diversity. Each one has come because they have experienced God's love and goodness in their lives. Each has a story to tell. Many have seen whole households coming to the Lord. They have found rest and strength in the shadow of the Almighty, Like Ali. His twenty one year old son was oppressed by demons and Ali had spent thousands of rupees trying to get him healed. Eventually he landed at the mental asylum, where he was seen by one of the sisters in our fellowship. She directed him to some believers' home where his son was prayed for. The Lord delivered him and healed him. He is now back at his business. Through this testimony more than fifty of Ali's extended family have come to the Lord! Among them is Maya, who was literally tied up in chains all over her body – a part of the occult treatment she had been through to get free of demonic oppression. She was prayed for by the sisters in our house group. They had to use pliers to cut through the chains – more than a handful – and she experienced the peace that only Jesus can give. She has been instrumental in telling many about the goodness of God and many have believed because of her testimony!

My heart overflows with gladness and gratitude for the way God showered his goodness on us. Right from the day we were born again in the Catholic Charismatic movement in Mumbai, when he used our group leader Terry D'Souza to teach us and to lay a good foundation of his Word in our lives, to the present day when he is using us to lay the same foundation of his word in the lives of his people, we have tasted of God's goodness. We could write volumes about the blessings that we have received everyday which we have not deserved. The story of our lives is the story of God's goodness towards us. In fact his goodness and mercy have not only followed us all these years, they have overtaken us according to his promise. He is a good and faithful God. All glory to his holy Name!

HOW GREAT IS THE GOODNESS
HOW GREAT IS THE GOODNESS

you have stored up for those who fear you.

RESTORED: A FOCUS ON *CUBA* BY JAMES AUBREY



**TO MANY PEOPLE,
CUBA REMAINS
SYNONYMOUS WITH
CASTRO, COMMUNISM
AND CIGARS: A STARK
REMINDER OF THE
COLD WAR. BUT CUBA
IS EXPERIENCING
A GREAT MOVE OF
GOD: MULTITUDES
ARE BEING SAVED,
BAPTISED AND ADDED
TO THE CHURCH.
PEOPLE FOR WHOM
THEIR ISLAND HOME
IS ALSO A PRISON
ARE NOT ONLY TAKING
THEIR NATION FOR
CHRIST, BUT ARE ALSO
READY TO REACH OUT
TO THE WIDER WORLD.**





Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean and has a population of just over eleven million people. In 1959, the American-backed dictatorship of General Fulgencio Batista was overthrown by a revolutionary group led by four men: Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos. After years of unrest, attempted coups and civil war, Fidel Castro led a nine thousand-strong guerrilla army into Havana, forcing Batista to flee. Since 1959, Cuba has been a one-party, communist state and, in 1961, the United States enforced an economic embargo upon Cuba that is still in effect today. Only in the last few months has US president Barack Obama relaxed limits on Cuban-Americans' travel to the island and increased the amount of financial support they can give to family members still living in Cuba. After the embargo, Cuba survived, initially, with support from the USSR and, during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, the decision to put Russian nuclear missiles on the island – only ninety miles from the coast of Florida, after all – led the world to the brink of nuclear war. Even during the period of Soviet support, Cuba was an incredibly poor country. After the dissolving of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Cuban people were left with almost nothing. In recent years the Cuban government have formed alliances with China and Venezuela. According to the BBC, the former has invested in the nickel trade, while the latter provides cheap fuel.¹ In February 2008, after almost fifty years in power, Fidel Castro stepped down as president of Cuba in favour of his brother, Raul. Regardless of this – and regardless of eye-catching changes of policy on mobile phones, computer access and freedom of movement – things in Cuba remain the same for many as far as politics, economics and social status are concerned. Food is still rationed, it remains illegal to kill a cow for meat and, in order to survive, goods are bought and sold on the black market.

1. 'Country Profile: Cuba' http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/country_profiles/1203299.stm

If you have any preconceptions of what the Methodist Church in Cuba is like or any preconceived ideas about what their meetings may look like, now is the time to forget them all. Following a sovereign outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the late 1980s – which began with a few key leaders being baptised in the Spirit in isolated incidents – the whole of the church has embraced the baptism of the Holy Spirit, without any split or division. Whilst the baptism in the Holy Spirit is accompanied by all manner of spiritual gifts, its key feature is that it has empowered the believers in Cuba to be witnesses of Jesus, with the result that the church has grown fivefold in a period of twenty years. Take the region of Pinar del Rio. Fifteen years ago there were five churches with a total membership of six hundred. Today there are thirty five churches and the membership totals six thousand! There are one hundred and ten full time pastors and missionaries working in the region of Pinar del Rio alone. The Methodist Church in Cuba plant churches by sending missionaries to a new town to preach the gospel. When they have twelve believers they can have a pastor appointed and are considered a church.

For the past ten years, the Methodist Church in Cuba has been led by Bishop Ricardo Pereira. In 2004, he met Keri and Carol Jones. Keri and Carol came to Cuba after they received a word from God that he would open doors for them into the nation and that God would lead them to the man they were meant to meet. On the last day of their trip, Keri and Carol saw a car with a fish symbol on it – an unusual sight in Cuba. On enquiring as to who owned the car they found themselves meeting a lady who helped them. She gave them the name and address of the Bishop of the Methodist Church in Cuba – Bishop Ricardo – and told them that this was the man they needed to see. Phone calls were made and an appointment was set up to see the Bishop immediately. Keri and Carol felt an immediate joining of heart with Bishop Ricardo and his wife Maritsa. They asked if there was any way that they could show God's kindness to them whilst in Cuba. The Bishop shared how they needed a vehicle and how he had applied for a special permit; however, his funds had run out for his pastors and their families, so the money he had saved for the vehicle had been used to support them instead. He was now in the position of being granted the permit but he no longer had the funds to pay for a vehicle.

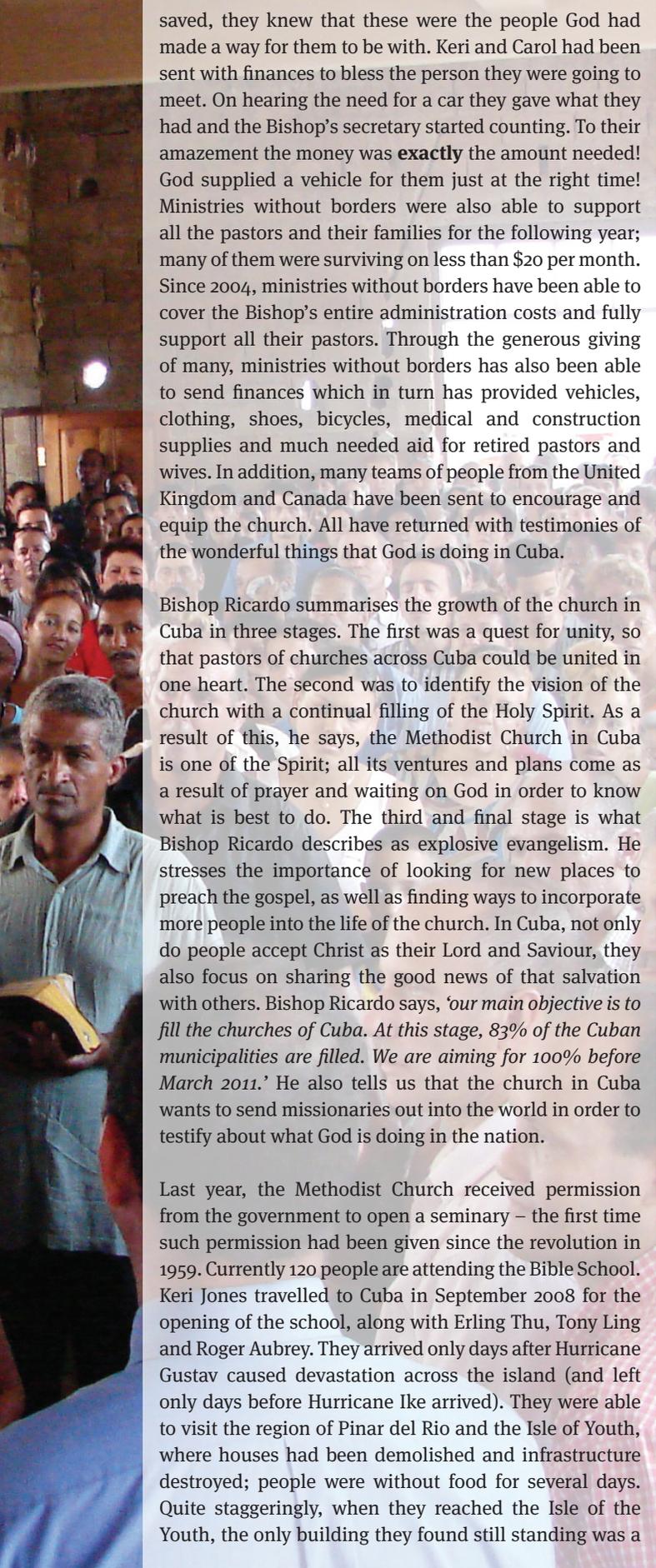
When Keri and Carol heard of this need and the thousands of people that these godly men and women were seeing



a sovereign outpouring of the Holy Spirit
EMPOWERED THE BELIEVERS IN CUBA TO BE WITNESSES OF JESUS

TESTIMONIES OF PEOPLE CHANGED

by the power of the Holy Spirit



saved, they knew that these were the people God had made a way for them to be with. Keri and Carol had been sent with finances to bless the person they were going to meet. On hearing the need for a car they gave what they had and the Bishop's secretary started counting. To their amazement the money was **exactly** the amount needed! God supplied a vehicle for them just at the right time! Ministries without borders were also able to support all the pastors and their families for the following year; many of them were surviving on less than \$20 per month. Since 2004, ministries without borders have been able to cover the Bishop's entire administration costs and fully support all their pastors. Through the generous giving of many, ministries without borders has also been able to send finances which in turn has provided vehicles, clothing, shoes, bicycles, medical and construction supplies and much needed aid for retired pastors and wives. In addition, many teams of people from the United Kingdom and Canada have been sent to encourage and equip the church. All have returned with testimonies of the wonderful things that God is doing in Cuba.

Bishop Ricardo summarises the growth of the church in Cuba in three stages. The first was a quest for unity, so that pastors of churches across Cuba could be united in one heart. The second was to identify the vision of the church with a continual filling of the Holy Spirit. As a result of this, he says, the Methodist Church in Cuba is one of the Spirit; all its ventures and plans come as a result of prayer and waiting on God in order to know what is best to do. The third and final stage is what Bishop Ricardo describes as explosive evangelism. He stresses the importance of looking for new places to preach the gospel, as well as finding ways to incorporate more people into the life of the church. In Cuba, not only do people accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour, they also focus on sharing the good news of that salvation with others. Bishop Ricardo says, *'our main objective is to fill the churches of Cuba. At this stage, 83% of the Cuban municipalities are filled. We are aiming for 100% before March 2011.'* He also tells us that the church in Cuba wants to send missionaries out into the world in order to testify about what God is doing in the nation.

Last year, the Methodist Church received permission from the government to open a seminary – the first time such permission had been given since the revolution in 1959. Currently 120 people are attending the Bible School. Keri Jones travelled to Cuba in September 2008 for the opening of the school, along with Erling Thu, Tony Ling and Roger Aubrey. They arrived only days after Hurricane Gustav caused devastation across the island (and left only days before Hurricane Ike arrived). They were able to visit the region of Pinar del Rio and the Isle of Youth, where houses had been demolished and infrastructure destroyed; people were without food for several days. Quite staggeringly, when they reached the Isle of the Youth, the only building they found still standing was a

church building ministries without borders had helped construct a year before. Ministries without borders were able to give \$90,000 USD to help towards hurricane relief.

For the church in Cuba, the future is very bright. The Bishop relayed to us a word from God he has been sharing with all the churches across the island: *'you won't die before seeing your dreams fulfilled.'* In one particular location where Bishop Ricardo shared this, there were some men present almost at the point of death. When they heard the Bishop's words, strength returned to their bodies – a resurrection took place! The church on the island of Cuba is enjoying a resurrection because of the life of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit evident among them.

Though Geonel Santana had lived with his parents all his life he had never found peace. He loved rock music and used to dress in torn clothing and lots of ear and eye rings. Geonel used to visit places where people would dance and use drugs. He would spend days in these parties where they would drink homemade alcohol beverages. Geonel's family used to worship idols and that made him become a *"palero"*: a religious status you receive through a ceremony where you are to prove you are accepted by receiving in your body twenty one machete beatings and many knife cuts. He also spent lots of money on herbs and animals to offer his idols, hoping his life would improve. He spent two and a half months in prison and after that everything was even worse. Relationships with his parents were terrible. He would even try to keep part of their house for himself. And he would steal as much as he could from his sister. One day he was invited by his family to a marriage vows confirmation in the church in Camagüey. A month later, he quit smoking and to the surprise of everyone his life started to change. All his family became Christians – even his father who, since retiring from the police force, had become an alcoholic.

Everything in Geonel's home is peace now. His family all serve Jesus and enjoy all God's blessings as they glorify him.

Pastor Miguel Arango from Camagüey tells us, *'everyday there are new testimonies of people changed by the power of the Holy Spirit: An old lady healed from breast tumor; very young couple rescued from the occult; atheist people who are boldly proclaiming Jesus as Saviour and King; people who worked for the secret police who are now walking in light. All that and more just in the last weeks. What a future!*

'One man received an invitation for the healing service as he was passing by the church building. As he heard the instructions he laid hands on his right eye where he had a malignant tumour. He checked and saw his eye was exactly the same. So he thought, "this God won't help me."



We are so thankful to our King.

And he decided to go the next day to the appointment with his doctor for him to remove the tumour. When he woke up in the morning he discovered the tumor had disappeared! At the hospital the doctor asked him, "where did you go? who did the surgery to you?" And his sister replied, "Jesus Christ healed him last night!"

'We were celebrating a party in Camagüey: the first Sunday of January 2008 we challenged the present congregation of 335 people that everyone would win one for Jesus in a year period. Last Sunday, the first one of 2009, every member brought their fruits to the Lord. And surprise! We were 950 people in the morning service! And another group of 100 people who were not able to come during the morning came to the evening service.! What a joy to know that the church is growing and the kingdom is been established. We are so thankful to our King. And we are planning to grow even more this year. We have now challenged everyone to win two during 2009. If they would only do this, in January 2010 we will be triple. But the thing is that if we win them during the first six months and we teach them to do the same thing, the church will grow six times this year!'



CARDIFF:

Claiming the Capital for Jesus. *It is said that you can judge a city's progress by the number of cranes on the skyline. We certainly have our fair share here in Cardiff. The city is enjoying substantial investment in our infrastructure in order to be one of global significance. But take another look and you will see the arms that are reaching into this city are not only mechanical. Look beyond the concrete and steel and you will see a regeneration of a different kind: of a spiritual city, All Nations Church. Here you will find anointed people from many nations; and we're claiming the capital for Jesus.*

We began in the 1970s when a group of Christians in Penarth, South Wales, were baptised in the Holy Spirit. Recognising they needed help and direction, they contacted Arthur Wallis, who introduced Keri Jones to them. Ever since, Keri has provided apostolic oversight to what has become All Nations Church. In the early 1980s the church was joined by another group who had themselves recently been baptised in the Spirit. After meeting in various schools across Cardiff, we acquired some land and, in 1991, All Nations Centre opened. Under Keri's apostleship the church has continued to grow and, in line with our name, currently has over thirty nations represented in our membership. Today, All Nations Church comprises people of all ages from different social and cultural backgrounds.

We are claiming the capital for Jesus in many ways. We believe that the good news of Jesus has the power to totally transform a person; we expect, therefore, that when somebody meets Jesus his or her life is completely changed. We aim to produce a church in which people live free from their past and live to please God in the power of the Holy Spirit. They discover that Jesus is concerned with every part of life. Recently, one of our members lost his eleven-year-old grandson in a plane crash. Despite such a tragedy he is able to testify to the goodness and faithfulness of God. A young lady who suffered from Raynaud's disease – a disorder

that affects the blood vessels in the fingers, toes, ears, and nose – received Jesus and was baptised. A few hours later she realised she had been healed. Many of our members testify that despite the current economic situation, they not only retain their jobs but also receive promotions and pay increases. They even get better jobs!

Our life of worship is also important; this is particularly highlighted in our Sunday meeting. At the beginning of the year Keri asked us to create a new wineskin for what the Holy Spirit wants to do among us. This involved changing the format of our meeting. We now begin with the teaching of the Word, and this year's theme is 'the just will live by faith' (Romans 1:17). The teaching is followed by whatever the Holy Spirit leads us into. This has had a significant impact on us: each meeting is different, but the constant characteristic is an increasing sense of God's tangible presence among us. Even guests comment on this; and we find people travelling to us from around the country and other nations because the Spirit has told them to come and see. We are discovering afresh that 'where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom' (2Corinthians 3:17).

Life is to be shared; and this is the heartbeat of our LIFE Groups. God intends for us to experience life together. Real fellowship is much more than Sunday morning meetings: it



WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS

there is freedom

is experiencing everyday life together. It includes unselfish loving, honest sharing, practical serving, sacrificial giving, and learning from one another's experiences. In our LIFE Groups we take a break from the busy demands of everyday life and invest in what is really important: our relationship with God and our relationship with the people around us. To accomplish this, size matters – smaller is better. We work hard to ensure every member of the church is part of a LIFE group because it is here, in small groups, that we experience pastoral care, spiritual growth, relational outreach, and are able to serve one another. It's where we grow and it's essential for our success.

family



that he sent her home that afternoon so she could enjoy the Christmas with her family – something they had not expected or planned. She is now fully discharged from the hospital.

For one weekend we renamed the main road that runs past our building Blessing Street. The whole church mobilized to reach the community on our door step. It was a great way to practically demonstrate God’s love to the community and also a lot of fun for the church. We distributed free breakfasts, newspapers, bottles of water and balloons; we moved 700 students into their halls of residence and ran a free bus shuttle from the train station to university halls. Every blessing we gave away came with a card that explained that we were showing the love of God in a practical way and an invitation to contact us when their next need arose. Over the two days we blessed 5700 people, raising the profile of the church in the community considerably. This is now an annual event in the community, further emphasizing our commitment and consistency to claim the community for Jesus. We also run a Saturday morning Kids Club, a parent and toddler group and, coming later in the year, will be our own coffee shop, called the Life Lounge.

Not only is our mandate to claim the capital of Wales for Jesus; he also told us to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations: hence our name. We are blessed that Keri Jones is based here at All Nations and Keri’s God-given mandate is to take the gospel of the kingdom throughout the world. This church exists to support that mandate through providing people, finances and all available resources. In recent years we have been able to sow people to other churches in the United Kingdom, send teams into other countries and offer monetary support to ministries across the world. We aim to see the Bride of Christ, fully restored, filling this world. It is our privilege to serve the apostolic vision, so that ‘the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea’ (Habakkuk 2:14).

WE AIM TO SEE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, FULLY RESTORED, FILLING THIS WORLD.



We’re also staking a claim for Jesus in our workplaces. Many people from the church work for the National Health Service, so we decided to adopt University Hospital of Wales – the children’s high dependency unit in particular. We first went last December; we arrived with Christmas trees and decorations. We also donated a piece of specialist equipment to the ward. The nurses, doctors and parents, as well as the children, were all blessed. One girl watched as we decorated a tree; without thinking, we invited her to help us. She walked slowly towards us with an IV drip still attached. Her consultant arrived and asked what she was doing; apparently she had not been able to stand for more than a few minutes for a number of weeks, and here she was standing for almost an hour helping us! The consultant was so pleased with this



DO WE KNOW HOW GOOD GOD REALLY IS?

by Gavin White

A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.)¹

1. Genesis 2:10-12

When I was a young boy, I had a tendency to not sit still for very long. If we were out on a trip, my mum would sit me down and say, 'now you sit there, Gavin, and be as good as gold.' And, of course, I did this!

Where does this phrase as 'good as gold' come from? Well, when banknotes were first introduced they weren't considered to be money in the sense we now think of them. They were really just IOUs. Gold or silver was real money as it had intrinsic value: these notes were just promises. British banknotes, like those of many other countries, still include messages like this, signed by the Chief Cashier of the Bank of England: 'I promise to pay the bearer on demand the sum of ten pounds.'

So, 'as good as gold' ought really to be read 'as genuine as gold.' The more usual meaning of 'good' has, however, taken precedence over the years and left us with the usual meaning of the phrase. Here, good means genuine, the real thing – not counterfeit.

What is more important for us though is to realise the ultimate source of all that is good. The Bible reveals this clearly to be God: he is totally and genuinely good. In the opening pages of the Bible, we see the goodness of God being displayed. In Genesis 1, God pronounces seven times over his creation that it is good. God was at work and it was good; indeed he pronounced it all to be 'very good.'² From this place of goodness, perfection and beauty, a river flowed. This river flowed in four directions. The name of the first of these rivers was called the Pishon. This river defined the landscape of a place called Havilah. In Havilah, there was gold, and the gold of that land was described as good.³ The river that flowed from the place of God's creation was full of goodness. The Garden of Eden was created and designed as a place for God to dwell and walk with his people. It was created in perfection and beauty. It was a place of the presence of God being manifest and enjoyed. The river that flowed from this place was always going to be good. It was; in fact, it was as good as gold.

I believe that one of the major truths that we need to understand in our generation is that God is good all the time. It sounds simple, and you would expect there to be a common agreement to this statement in the church. Unfortunately, this is not always so. Bill Johnson writes:

I never realised how controversial the subject of the nature of God could be until I began teaching week after week that God is good, always. Whilst most believers hold the belief as a theological value, especially because it is stated in Nahum 1:7 and elsewhere, they struggle in the light of the difficulties all around us. Many have abandoned the idea altogether, thinking it doesn't have any practical application. The hardest part is saying that he's always good. Some will say he

2. Genesis 1:31

3. Genesis 2:10-11

*is mysteriously good, which is about the same as saying he's good, but not as we think of goodness. This response doesn't help to clear up the confusion over the nature of God.*⁴

God is good, but the world doesn't know it yet. How about the church: do we fully understand the goodness of God? This is an important truth for us to know and for us to experience. The measure with which we understand and run with this truth will determine the extent we can reach out to a hurting and dying world who, on the whole, don't yet know that God is good. Why is this? I believe this is mainly because the church hasn't told them or, more importantly, hasn't showed them.

The Bible exhorts us to 'taste and see that the Lord is good.'⁵ This isn't theory: this is life. This is the reality of God for us to experience. God has destined that his goodness would be both tangible and visible in our lives with him: tangible in that we can touch and take hold of it and visible in that we can see it. When we experience the reality of the extravagant goodness of God in our lives, it shows. It changes our expression and our confession. It radically alters our attitudes and our actions. We can truly testify to the fact that God is good by what we see and by what touch in the way that God deals with our lives in his kingdom.⁶ Just like the anointing that we have from the Holy Spirit, the goodness of God is real, it is genuine and it is powerful.⁷

In Genesis 2:10-12, we see that the river that carried the goodness of God flowed from the presence of God. We cannot separate the goodness of God from his presence. His goodness is his very nature and his nature is experienced by spending time in his presence.

God is at work to bring his goodness into the lives of those that love him and who have been called according to his purposes.⁸ The goodness of God isn't just the nature of God and his theological position – it is also the essence of his action in dealing with his people. He is good in word, deed and action in our everyday lives.

In a world that can often become saturated with bad news, we need to discover afresh the truth and power of bringing the gospel, the good news of the kingdom, to the world around us. God's goodness in our lives means we can testify that he saves, he heals and he provides. I have seen this in my own life and in my own family. I am a walking and talking advert for the good news of the kingdom. My life says to the world: 'God is good.' That's our mandate: to take the good news of the kingdom into the world around us. We experience and receive of his goodness in the meeting place, so we can testify and demonstrate his goodness in the market place. That's the life that Jesus lived. He said:

4. Bill Johnson, Face to Face with God (Charisma House), p. 103

5. Psalms 34:8

6. 1 Peter 2:3

7. 1 John 2:27

8. Romans 8:28

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed.¹

The goodness of God that flows from his presence into our lives will be as 'good as gold' and it will help us understand and experience three things.

1] HIS GOODNESS REVEALS HIS GREATNESS

When we experience his goodness, we see more fully how great and powerful God is in our lives. God is good and he is great. There is nothing too hard for him, nothing beyond his reach and nothing beyond his grace.

2] HIS GOODNESS REFLECTS HIS GLORY

The glory of heaven is revealed in the goodness of God that flows from his presence into our daily lives. His goodness is a reflection of his glory. The fingerprints of his goodness in our daily lives reveal his identity as a good Father who longs to give good gifts to his children.

3] HIS GOODNESS RADIATES HIS GRACE

When we experience the goodness of God, it is as fresh as the dew on a summer day. It is as welcome as the warmth of the sun on a cold winter's day. His goodness radiates his grace into our lives. His goodness reveals his favour towards us as his people. He delights in us. He smiles upon us. God is good and he loves to show it.

The truth of knowing that God is good, all the time, is foundational and fundamental. It is not enough for some of the church to realise this: this needs to be our community experience and our corporate expression. The church needs to fully know and experience the goodness of God. When we meet with God in his presence and know the river of his goodness flowing in our lives, that goodness will flow into and flood the world around us. We will not be able to hold back from speaking of what we have seen and heard. Our lives will display and mirror to the world the realities of heaven on earth. That reality is that God is good *all the time*.

1. Luke 4:18

The goodness
from his presence

good as gold

ness of God flows
presence into our lives

as gold

all the time

FROM CAMAGÜEY • CUBA

A RESTORED BODY



Everything seemed to be fine for me. I was a girl who lived without God, like many others who live in this world thinking that beauty, pleasures and money was everything in life. I used to live thinking I deserved everything and nothing was difficult for me to obtain. That was until the day a chronic illness knocked at my door. I started feeling unwell and my body became very weak and tired. Dark spots started to appear on my skin. I was tested and the results were terrible: eritro was 148, platelets were 0, and hemoglobin was 3. I was diagnosed with leukemia. Science said there is nothing we can do and my family lost every hope. But when the world says no, Jesus said yes; where there is death, Jesus comes and brings new life. As I was dying in the hospital, Jesus caused me to look for him. I was taken home with no hope but I was supported by great people who desired my recovery. One day I was invited to a miracle and healing campaign conducted by pastor Miguel Arango in Camagüey. Something was about to happen. I was not able to walk by myself so I was carried to the church. It was a night of glory where the Holy Spirit came into my life and I received freedom and healing to rescue me from the death. In my first appointment with the doctor after that night all my tests were negative. Sadness and infirmity had left my body for ever. Everything was different, because when Jesus arrives he changes everything: sadness leaves and joy comes.

After three years I found pastor Arango again and I asked him, 'do you recognize me?' He said, 'no.' When I told him my story

he was overwhelmed to see once again the fulfillment of the words of Jesus: 'He who believes in me, the works I do shall he do. And greater things shall he do, for I am going to the father.'

Today I enjoy the blessings of serving God. He has granted me a wonderful husband and we work together as pastors in the Methodist Church. Through this powerful testimony many of my family have come to the Lord and are serving him. I thank God for the church in Antilla who kept praying and fasting for me. I thank God for my spiritual parents, pastor Julio and Lesvia who gave all their support. I thank God for my sister Gladys who served me and supported me all through my sickness. I thank God for pastor Arango who was an instrument in the powerful hands of the Lord. And I thank Jesus, the most special and wonderful person, the one who brought me back to life.

God bless you abundantly. And may he help you to believe, through this testimony, that everything is possible in Jesus Christ.



“Everything is possible in Jesus Christ.”

Outlines of **RESTORATION**

WE SET OUT TO TRACE GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN

*In this series of Bible outlines, we set out to trace God's eternal plan for 'the restoration of all things' (Acts 3:21) throughout the Scriptures, book by book. As well as giving an outline of the book and identifying its main characters, we will show what it reveals about God's plan, which is unfolded gradually through the Bible. Because the Bible is all about Jesus and because he is at the heart of God's plan for **restoration**, we will also highlight where Christ appears in each book. The Bible also uses recurring themes and images to teach important truths about God's purpose and about the spiritual life, so we will also identify some of these in each book that we consider. You will get most out of this outline if, as well as reading it, you use it as a study guide, looking up the verses referenced on the characters and themes that interest you as a starting point for further study.*

We continue our series of Bible outlines with an overview of the book of Numbers.

NUMBERS RELATES THE JOURNEY OF GOD'S PILGRIM PEOPLE THROUGH THE WILDERNESS FROM MOUNT SINAI TO THE BORDERS OF THE PROMISED LAND OF CANAAN AND COVERS ALMOST FORTY YEARS OF THEIR HISTORY. IT RECEIVES ITS TITLE FROM THE TWO CENSUSES (NUMBERINGS) OF THE ISRAELITES TAKEN, ONE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE BOOK AND ONE TOWARDS THE END. THERE ARE TWO BECAUSE GOD SADLY HAS TO SET ASIDE ONE GENERATION WHOSE UNBELIEF AND DISOBEDIENCE DISQUALIFIES THEM FROM RECEIVING THEIR INHERITANCE. HE THEN PREPARES A NEW GENERATION WHO COULD ENTER THE PROMISED LAND. THE BOOK'S MAIN SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE RELATES TO HOW GOD PREPARES HIS PEOPLE TO ENTER INTO THEIR SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE, THE FULLNESS OF OUR SALVATION. THE FULFILLING OF GOD'S PLAN OF RESTORATION REQUIRES A PEOPLE OF FAITH AND WHOLEHEARTED OBEDIENCE WHO ARE ABLE TO POSSESS THEIR FULL INHERITANCE IN CHRIST.

GOD'S UNFOLDING PLAN

At this point in Israel's story, God's plan is to prepare his people to take possession of the land he promised to their ancestors. For them, this was the literal land of Canaan but God's plan is not focused on a strip of land in the Middle East. His purpose has always been to bless the whole earth through the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3). Christ is this true seed and so are we if we belong to Christ (Galatians 3:16, 29). So this story - along with all of the Old Testament - is written for us (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:7; 1 Peter 1:10-12), illustrating principles of the spiritual life in Christ and God's eternal plan. This particular part of the story is about the kind of people we need to be in order to take possession of all the blessings that we have in Christ. The whole earth is going to be blessed through Christ and his body, the church. The world will be filled with God's glory as the sons of God enter into the fullness of their inheritance. This is what entering Canaan represents for us.

OUTLINE

I. THE OLD GENERATION SET ASIDE (1-20)

- A. Counted (1-4)
- B. Cleansed (5-10)
- C. Chastised (11-12)
- D. Condemned (13-20)

II. THE NEW GENERATION SET APART (21-36)

- A. Their journeying (21-25, 33)
- B. Their numbering (26-27)
- C. Their offerings (28-30)
- D. Their dividing of the inheritance (31-36)¹

KEY CHARACTERS IN NUMBERS

- **MOSES** (Exodus 2:4; Numbers 20:1-12; Acts 7:20-39; Hebrews 11:23-28)
- **AARON** (Exodus 4:27-31; 6:20; 28:1-4; Numbers 12; 17; 20:22-29; Hebrews 5:4; 7:11)
- **MIRIAM** (Exodus 2:4-8; 15:20-21; Numbers 12; 20:1)
- **KORAH** (Exodus 6:21-24; Numbers 16; 26:9-10; Jude 1:11)
- **ELEAZAR** (Exodus 6:23-25; Numbers 3:32; 4:16; 20:22-29; 26:63; 34:17; Joshua 24:33)
- **PHINEHAS** (Exodus 6:25; Numbers 25:7-15; 31:6; Joshua 22:13-32; Judges 20:26-28; Psalm 106:30-31)
- **BALAAM** (Numbers 22-24; 2 Peter 2:15-16; Jude 1:11; Rev.2:14)

1. This outline is taken from W.Wiersbe's exposition of Numbers, Be Counted.

There are at least three key lessons to learn from this book if we are going to enter into all that God has for us. Firstly, from the earliest chapters, the instructions about the Levites and the tabernacle together with the counting of the men 'able to fight' introduce the key theme of worship and warfare. God must always take central place in our lives and, though the land is given to us by God's grace, there are enemies who want to prevent us from receiving our inheritance and we will have to fight for it. When the enemy can't beat us by direct assault, he is often more successful through seduction, and sadly some of the Israelites were seduced to worship false gods.

A second lesson is about the need for faith, the lack of which caused the first generation to be set aside and fail to enter the promised land. They were continually guilty of complaining, grumbling and rebelling against God and his leaders. But their unbelief is most clearly shown in the story of their reaction to the reports brought back by the men sent out to spy out the land. The people chose to believe the bad report of the doubting spies and rejected the men of faith, Joshua and Caleb. It is impossible to enter into all that God has for us without faith.

A third lesson concerns the spiritual leadership of God's people. On their pilgrimage to possess the land of promise, God's people are to be led by God. There is a direct leading of the community through the pillar of cloud/fire, representing the Holy Spirit leading his people. Also, the silver trumpets represent the importance of the prophetic gift in leading us. But what emerges strongly throughout the book is God's leadership through his appointed and anointed leaders. The phrase 'at the command of the Lord through Moses' is frequently repeated (Numbers 3:39; 4:37, 49; 9:23; 10:13). The accounts of the rebellions, like the one of Korah, are significant because they show a rejection of God's chosen leaders. When Moses is going to die, his main concern is that God raises up a leader so that the community of God's people

THE PEOPLE WHO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE PROMISES OF GOD

Having set aside the first generation, God prepares a new generation to enter into the promised land. From the lessons he teaches them as recorded in the second half of the book of Numbers we can find some of the qualities required to enter into the inheritance that God has for us.

Qualities	Reference
Going on to maturity	Numbers 26:1; Hebrews 6:1
Able to fight and armed for battle	Numbers 26:1; 32:27; Ephesians 6:10-18
God-directed worshippers	Numbers 28-29; John 4:19-24
Wholehearted	Numbers 32:11-12; Romans 1:9
Radical and zealous in obedience	Numbers 25; Matthew 5:29-30
Willing to be led	Numbers 27:15; Hebrews 13:17
Full of faith	Numbers 21:32-35; Hebrews 6:12; 11:6

will not be left like sheep without a shepherd (Numbers 27:15-17). Later the Psalmist is to record about this period, 'You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron' (Ps. 77:20, NKJV). Those who enter into their inheritance will be those who know how to rightly relate to spiritual authority.

PRINCIPLES AND PICTURES

01. WORSHIP AND WARFARE – from the beginning of the book we are introduced to the combination of worship (the Levites, the tabernacle, the offerings) and warfare (the military formation, the counting of the fighting men, etc.) and this theme continues throughout. The major lesson is that worship comes before warfare, as Joshua is later to find out (Joshua 5:13-19). If we are going to be successful in the spiritual battles we have to fight, then God must take first place in our lives. It is by praising God that we overcome the enemies and occupy the promised land (Psalm 149:6).

02. WHEN PILGRIMS BECOME WANDERERS – the life of faith is a journey, a pilgrimage. We have to be always ready to move forward in obedience to God. When we start to settle, look back, grumble and rebel against God's leading, then we end up not as pilgrims, but as wanderers. Pilgrims are headed somewhere. Wanderers are not. Sadly, the first generations died without arriving at their destination because they became wanderers in the wilderness (1 Cor.10:2-11).

03. THE CLOUD OF PRESENCE (Numbers 9-10) – the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night is a picture of God leading his people (Exodus 13:21-22). But the cloud is often used in Scripture to speak of the presence of God (1 Kings 8:10-11; Isaiah 4:5; Ezekiel 1:4; Matthew 17:5). The cloud speaks of the both the tangible reality and the unfathomable mystery of God.

04. TRUMPETS (Numbers 10:1-10) – trumpets are often used in Scripture as a figure of the prophetic or proclaimed word of God (Exodus 19:16-17; Joshua 6:4-6; Isaiah 27:13;

Revelation 4:1,8:6-13). In Numbers they are used to gather God's people together, to call them to move forward on their pilgrimage, to set out into battle and as an accompaniment to their worship. Preaching and the prophetic gift continue to serve these purposes.

05. OTHER PRINCIPLES AND PICTURES: The father's house (1:2,4,17; 2:32-34 ESV); cities of refuge (Numbers 35:6-34); mixed multitude (Numbers 11:4; Exodus 12:38; 2 Cor.6:14-18); obedience to Spirit and anointed leaders combined (Num.9:15-23); women as heirs together with men (Numbers 27:1-11; 36:1-12; Galatians 3:26-29; Peter 3:7).

CHRIST IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE

The shepherd leader – the community of Israel was led by Moses and Moses was concerned that God chose someone to replace him when he died, so that the people were not left as sheep without a shepherd (Numbers 27:15-17). Jesus is our good shepherd (Isaiah 40:11; John 10:11) and the chief shepherd (Heb.13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4). Just as rebellion against Moses led to judgment and failure to enter Canaan, so obedience to the chief shepherd is vital if we are to enter our spiritual inheritance.

The bronze serpent (Numbers 21:14-15; John 3:14-15) – when the people complained against God and Moses, God sent venomous snakes in judgement, but also provided the means of healing, by instructing Moses to make and lift up a bronze snake. Those who looked at it were healed. This became a prophetic picture of Christ lifted up on the cross; when people look to (put their faith in) him, they receive eternal life. Bronze is often associated with judgment and on the cross, Christ took the judgement that we deserved so that we could be healed.

Our inheritance in Christ – for natural Israel, the promised land was Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. But for us - the spiritual Israel - the promised land represents all

Key Words

This section is not an explanation of words that appear in the book of Numbers but will contribute to a glossary that we will build up in these Outlines of Restoration and that are central to understanding God's purpose.

INHERITANCE: to inherit is to take possession of something which has been promised. An inheritance is that which has been promised. When we come into relationship with Christ we inherit all the promises and blessings which are in him and that come by virtue of our relationship to him. We are sons of God and therefore co-heirs with Christ. Although receiving our full inheritance awaits the restoration of all things, we are given the Holy Spirit as a deposit and guarantee, and can begin to enjoy something of our spiritual inheritance in Christ now. Jesus has been promised the whole earth as his inheritance and so the advance of the kingdom of God throughout the world is assured. The sons of God coming into their full inheritance is central to God's plan of restoration.

FAITH: faith means believing God's word on the basis of trusting God's character. It is the only means by which we can receive all that is freely given to us by the grace of God. Without faith it is impossible to be saved and reconciled to God, and without living by faith it is impossible to take possession of all that God has promised us. Faith is the only way to fulfil God's purpose because faith demonstrates that our salvation and restoration is all achieved by the grace of God so that only God gets the glory. We are called to 'imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised' (Hebrews 6:12).

the spiritual blessings we have in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14). The New Testament declares that all the promises of God are 'yes' in Christ (2 Cor.1:20). Like the land, the blessings are given by grace, but they have to be taken hold of through faith and patience (Hebrews 6:12).

Aaron's rod (Numbers 17) - on one occasion God used the dramatic prophecy of making the staff of his anointed leader, Aaron, bud and blossom. Not only does this show that true, anointed leadership is shown through life, it also shows that it is based on resurrection life. It therefore points to the resurrection of Christ and the new life that we can have in him, and that must be the basis for all ministry (John 15:4; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 7:15-17).

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

01. Read through the book of Numbers in 3-4 reading sessions and note down where you find insights into the three key lessons mentioned in the introduction to this study.

02. Make a study of the references to the pillar of cloud/fire, and use a concordance or Bible dictionary to compare them to other passages in the Bible where God's presence is compared to cloud or fire. Start with the references to the cloud noted under 'Principles and Pictures'.

03. Read the story of Balaam (Numbers 22-24), and the references to him noted under 'Key Characters.' What does his story teach us about God, his people, his purpose and the nature and fate of the enemies of God's people and purpose?

THE BOOK'S MAIN SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE RELATES TO HOW GOD PREPARES HIS PEOPLE TO ENTER INTO THEIR SPIRITUAL INHERITANCE, THE FULLNESS OF OUR SALVATION. THE FULFILLING OF GOD'S PLAN OF RESTORATION REQUIRES A PEOPLE OF FAITH AND WHOLEHEARTED OBEDIENCE WHO ARE ABLE TO POSSESS THEIR FULL INHERITANCE IN CHRIST.

RESTORED SENSES



In 1999 our daughter Rosie was born and, just after her first birthday, she was diagnosed with a very rare disorder called Shwachman Diamond Syndrome. It affects many parts of the body, including the immune system, and it explained the numerous infections and general sickness she had suffered as a baby.

By the time Rosie was six, her inner ears became scarred and the bones in her ear drums fused together. Rosie's hearing had deteriorated so much that her consultant performed hearing tests; the results indicated that one ear showed an almost flat trace and the other was significantly reduced. Rosie struggled in school: she could not hear her teacher, her spelling was poor and she was losing confidence.

The consultant told us that Rosie needed two digital hearing aids in order for her to be able to hear. The hearing aids helped but her hearing was still affected. Rosie was plagued with bad inner ear infections which led to her ear drums perforating which, in turn, caused even more infections.

God spoke to us during a time of worship at the Bible Week in Staffordshire in 2008. A man brought a word of knowledge about a child with hearing difficulties; all we had to do was obey. My wife, Kath, collected Rosie from the children's ministry and brought her into the auditorium. As we stood at the front with Rosie, two servants of God came to us. As I told them what God had said, one asked Rosie if she wanted Jesus to heal her, then laid his hands on

her ears. We were instructed to take Rosie outside and test her hearing, so we led Rosie outside. I told Rosie I would call out a number and that she had to hold the same number of fingers. With excitement we removed the hearing aids.

Rosie stood with her back to us and we stepped away. I called out a number; Rosie held up the same amount of fingers. Kath and I looked at each other, not with amazement but with sheer delight. We moved further back and I called another number; again Rosie responded correctly. We moved back again and again until we were almost fifty metres away, Rosie was still holding up the right fingers in response. Kath and I raced to Rosie with tears in our eyes; Rosie's face was pure happiness. We hugged each other and thanked Jesus for his miracle.

We had to testify immediately to God's goodness. We raced to the front of the auditorium and shared what had happened. As I testified, with Rosie next to me, the auditorium resounded with praise and worship to the living God. We believe in a God who is real and our daughter had been healed by the power of his Holy Spirit. God spoke, we responded, he delivered, miracle complete!

A few days later, we were enjoying a fireworks display. At the end Rosie came up and said the most wonderful, yet simplest, of things: *'I didn't know they were so loud, I had to cover my ears.'* When Rosie went back to school we were faced with a decision: put the hearing aids back in and wait for the consultant in case her school work suffered, or continue to praise God for this healing. The decision took all of two seconds: the hearing aids stayed in the box and we were stepping out of one.

At the end of Rosie's first week back in school, I returned home from work to find a very excited mum and daughter. Rosie got ten out of ten in her spellings! Why? Because she could hear every word! The next week she got full marks again. She was moved up in classes and again got ten out of ten. Rosie has not got a single word wrong since being healed. Praise God!

Rosie continued to be plagued by serious ear infections but Kath and I were adamant that Jesus would overcome and that we would continue praising him. Every time we tried to see the consultant to test her hearing, another infection came along. Nothing was going to dissuade us from believing and trusting Jesus. Eventually we managed to take Rosie to her consultant. He completed the same tests as before, the bones were still fused, the scarring was still present, the ear drum still perforated, but the trace was perfect. The consultant stated, *'her hearing has been completely restored.'*

Rosie says, *'since Jesus has made my ears better I can hear everything. But without Mum and Dad's help I would not have gone to the front by myself and been healed.'* Rosie has not worn her hearing aids since August 2008. We as a family know when Jesus heals, he heals. When he speaks and we obey the heavens open and miracles, signs and wonders abound. Glory to God!





This issue's song is written by Dave Palmer. Here's the story of how it was written:

song

Be Glorified

Dave Palmer

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♩ = 132

Verse

Cre - a - tion de - clares the hea - vens pro - claim Ev - er - las - ting King Wor - thy is Your
 name Your name strong and migh - ty Great are Your ways the nat - ions give
 praise A new song is heard and all the earth is changed as You show your glo - ry

Chorus

Be glo - ri - fied Be glo - ri - fied in me... that all the
 world might see... that you are God Be glo - ri - fied Reign in... Your
 Ma - jes - ty... Lord let... Your glo - ry be o - ver... all the earth

Verse 2

The cross where you died - you paid the price
 Yet you rose again that all men may have life
 Life everlasting
 Awake O my soul to tell all He's done
 As I lift my voice I'll awake the dawn
 The peoples will praise Him

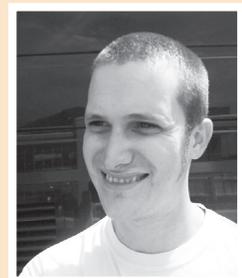
Verse 3

Jesus my King I'm bowing the knee
 Let your Kingdom come here I am use me
 Wherever You take me
 There's no higher call, no greater thing
 Than to worship You - You're my everything
 I live for Your glory

I love the account of Isaiah's vision of God on his throne, filling the heavens and his glory filling the whole earth. He is a big God with equally big plans and purposes for the earth. Isaiah's response is simple: "Here I am, send me."

At times it's hard for us to see how we can reconcile God's grand plans with our own day-to-day lives. Yet the Bible is full of individuals who, just by being obedient in simple ways, saw nations changed and the world transformed around them.

I wrote this song recently whilst preparing to lead worship. God stirred me that he most certainly will use us in great and significant ways. All he requires is a simple, obedient response each day: "Lord, be glorified in me."





Roger Aubrey is an elder in All Nations Church, Cardiff. An acknowledged and popular teacher, Roger is the author of “The Circle of Life” and “Discovering God.” He and his wife Dianne have two children.



Keri Jones is editor-in-chief of Times of Restoration. He works with churches across the United Kingdom and in Norway, India, North and Latin America. Keri is also Chairman of the Board of Governors of Covenant School of Ministries. He and his wife Carol have five children and five grandchildren.



Heather Cursham is a member of All Nations Church, Oldham. She also serves as a learning mentor at Covenant School of Ministries: School of the Word. Along with her husband Andrew, Heather is a recognised pastoral ministry. They have four children.



Trevor Lloyd is an elder in the Community Church, Huddersfield and serves on the faculty of Covenant School of Ministries: School of the Word. He is the author of “The Word of God,” an introduction to the Bible. He and his wife Alison have four children.



Zephry D'Souza is an elder in Living Christian Fellowship in Jaipur and he oversees a number of churches across India. He is married to Brenda and they have four children.



Gavin White is an elder in King's Church, Manchester. He serves on the board of trustees for Ministries Without Borders and teaches at Covenant School of Ministries: School of the Word. He and his wife Rachel have two children.

This magazine is dedicated to the life and testimony of Steve Brady; a dear friend and a faithful labourer in the work of God.

Steven G. Brady (1954-2009)



V:04