

Christian Odyssey

VOL. I, NO. 7

Exploring Life and Faith

JULY-AUGUST 2005

INSIDE

Christian living

A blinding light
—Page 3

Children's ministry

Relate to children at their level
—Page 5

Church History

'Great Schism' of the church
—Page 10

Discipleship

Peace in Christ
—Page 11

Lessons from Mark

Lesson 28: A lesson about hope,
Mark 5:21-43
—Page 12

Book Review

*How to Read the Bible for All Its
Worth*—Gordon Fee and Douglas
Stuart
—Page 13

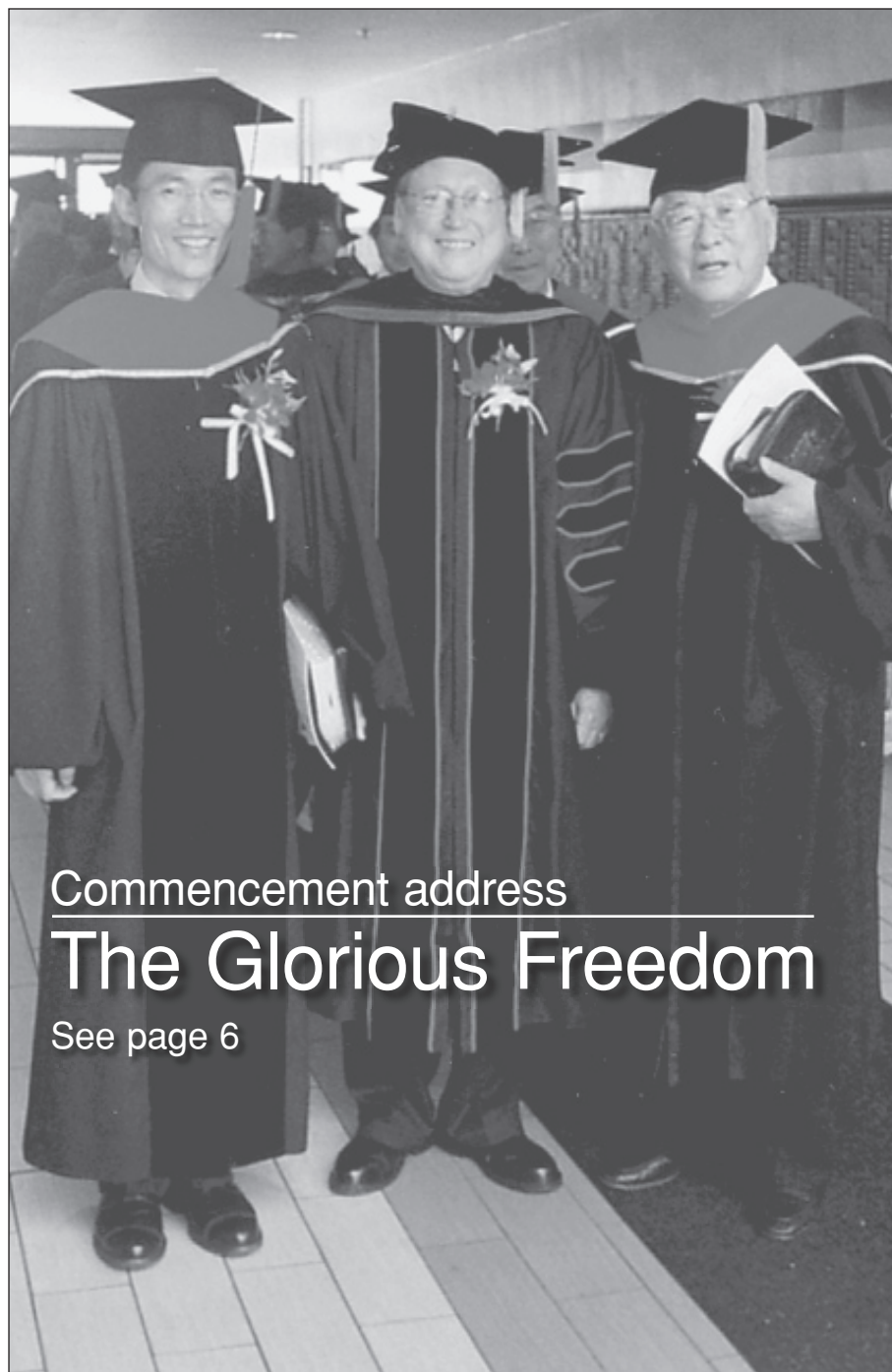
Bible Study

What kind of Messiah?
—Page 14



WORLDWIDE
CHURCH OF GOD

Living and Sharing the Gospel



Commencement address

The Glorious Freedom

See page 6

We like to hear from you

You can write to *Christian Odyssey* at Box 111, Pasadena, California, 91123, telephone *Christian Odyssey* at 1-626-304-6199, extension 5772, send us electronic mail at tom.hanson@wcg.org or fax us at 1-626-304-6130.

For changes of address please call 1-800-924-4644.

Christian Odyssey gratefully accepts contributions to help meet publication costs. If you would like to join our team of supporters, send your contribution to:

Christian Odyssey
Box 111
Pasadena, California, 91123

Christian Odyssey

Circulation 16,000

Christian Odyssey is published monthly by the Worldwide Church of God, 300 W. Green St., Pasadena, California, 91123. Copyright © 2005 Worldwide Church of God. All rights reserved. *Christian Odyssey* is available on the Internet at <http://www.christianodyssey.com>

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Michael Morrison

EDITOR: Tom Hanson

SENIOR EDITORS

Paul Kroll
Randal Dick
Terry Akers

DOCTRINAL ADVISOR: John E. McKenna

ART DIRECTOR: Ronald Grove

Published by the Worldwide Church of God
President: Joseph Tkach
Media Coordinator: Mike Fezell
Personal Correspondence: Paul Kroll

Notice: *Christian Odyssey* cannot be responsible for the return of unsolicited articles and photographs. Subscriptions are sent automatically to contributing members of the Worldwide Church of God. Address all communications to *Christian Odyssey*, Box 111, Pasadena, California, 91123.

Postmaster: Please send address changes and Form 3579 to *Christian Odyssey*, Box 111, Pasadena, California, 91123-0001.

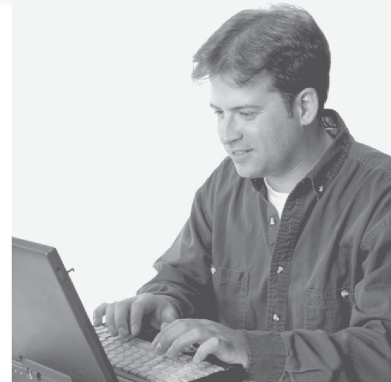
Unless noted otherwise, scriptures are quoted from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Interested in learning more?

Ambassador College of Christian Ministry

www.ambascol.org

Associate Degree in Christian Ministry



The program content emphasizes foundational and fundamental aspects of practical Christian ministry and is delivered in three levels. Completion of each level is a prerequisite for enrollment in the succeeding level.

Level 1: **Foundations of Christian Faith:** four classes

Survey of the Bible
Spiritual Formation
Foundations of Christian Faith
Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ

Level 2: **Introduction to Christian Ministry:** four classes (prerequisite: Level 1: Foundations of Christian Faith)

Small Group Leadership
Effective Communication
Worship
Christian Leadership

Level 3: **Introduction to Pastoral Ministry I** (prerequisite: Level 2: Introduction to Christian Ministry)

Introduction to Preaching
Introduction to Pastoral Care
Survey of Church History
Introduction to Youth Ministry

ACCM courses are primarily delivered through the Internet, and students need to have access to a computer and the Internet to take classes. Check www.ambascol.com for announcements about weekend intensives.



Information and registration online at www.ambascol.org

A Blinding Light

By Joseph Tkach

“I am the light of the world,” said Jesus. “I have come into this world so that the blind will see” (John 9:5, 39). And to demonstrate it, he healed a man who had been born blind. He came to help people see, to help them understand something about God’s love for them.

But Jesus also said that he came to bring blindness: “I have come into this world so that ... those who see will become blind” (John 9:39). This is a hard saying—it is easy to understand a physician who came to heal the sick, but it is hard to understand a physician who came to make healthy people sick.

Whose fault is it?

Let’s review the story in John 9. As Jesus and the disciples walked through Jerusalem, they saw a blind man. Somehow they knew that the man had been blind from birth, and the disciples used the opportunity to ask Jesus a theological question that had puzzled them: Whose fault is this, they asked, did the man sin before he was born, or is he being punished because his parents sinned? Problems like this, they assumed, are the result of sin, but who sinned?

Neither answer seemed right, and Jesus agreed. “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” Jesus said, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life” (v. 3). Did God cause the man to be blind just so that Jesus could do a miracle? I don’t think that is what Jesus is driving at.

Jesus seems to be talking about the result rather than the purpose or cause. The man was born blind,



and it doesn’t do him or anyone else any good for us to speculate about whose sin caused it. The man does not need a discussion about the causes of evil—he needs his sight, and Jesus said that the result of his condition is that “the work of God” would be seen in him. And by that, I think that Jesus was talking about more than a miracle.

“As long as it is day,” Jesus said, “we must do the work of him who sent me.” A modern proverb that is



Jesus healed a man who had been born blind. He came to help people see, to help them understand something about God’s love for them.

roughly equivalent is, “Make hay while the sun shines”—or work while you can, because, as Jesus warns, a time will come when you can’t: “Night is coming, when no one can work.” When will that be, we might wonder. When will it not be possible to do the work of God?

Jesus continued, “While I am

in the world, I am the light of the world” (v. 5). As long as he is here, it is daytime—but a time would come when he would go away and the work would stop. Fortunately for us, that “night” did not last long, for Jesus was raised from the dead and now works in and through his people. (We also need to work while we can, because a time will come for each of us when we can do no more.)

Blind obedience

To illustrate what he meant by being a light to the world, Jesus spit on the ground, made a little mud, put it on the eyes of the blind man and told him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. It’s hard to know from this account how much the man knew about Jesus. He knew his name, but may not have known much more than that. But he went to the Pool of Siloam anyway, and he was healed. It would have been interesting to see his reaction, but all we are told is that he went home (v. 7).

Now, why did Jesus heal the man in such an unusual way? If he just wanted to display a miracle, he would have healed him instantly. He could have said to his disciples, I can give spiritual sight just like this: snap! But the disciples did not see a miracle—all they saw was that Jesus put mud on somebody’s face and then told him to go wash it off.

John never does tell us how they reacted when they eventually found out. So the story that John is telling here is not so much about the miracle—it is about how the man learns who Jesus is, and how he reacts when he does. This is the far more important work of God. **See A Blinding Light, page 4**

A Blinding Light

Continued from page 3

that is being demonstrated in this man's life.

The news got around, and the man told people that "the man they call Jesus" had healed him (v. 11). Then the Pharisees, the self-appointed judges of all spiritual truth, started to investigate this supernatural event. Some of them had already concluded that Jesus couldn't be from God because he worked on the Sabbath. (Even God himself had to keep their rules, apparently.)

Others were more open-minded, saying that sinners (at least the sinners they knew) couldn't do miracles like that (v. 16). So they asked the formerly blind man what he thought. "He is a prophet," the man replied. He is like Elijah, sent by God with a message.

The Jews, or at least some of them, didn't seem to like that answer, so they searched for a way to discredit the miracle. They asked his parents about it, and the parents verified the facts: He was born blind, but now he can see, but we don't know who did it. They didn't offer an opinion on whether Jesus was from God, because they were afraid of being expelled from the synagogue (v. 22).

I feel sorry for the parents. They had probably lived for years with the accusation that their son was blind because they had sinned. They needed the synagogue because faithful attendance was the only way they could show they were good people after all.

Even though their son could now see, they were not willing to risk expulsion—and John probably includes this because it was precisely the situation that some of his readers faced. After Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, the Jewish leaders regrouped and began demanding more conformity; they did not

allow people to attend synagogue if they had any forbidden beliefs about a messiah.

John has set before us several types of people: 1) Some who have already made up their minds that Jesus is ungodly. 2) Some who are puzzled by Jesus but still try to discredit him. 3) Some who refuse to say, and probably don't even want to find out because they are afraid of the consequences. 4) The man who viewed Jesus as good, and was willing to learn more.

Growing in faith

The Jewish leaders went back to the healed man and asked him again, and he told them again. "We know this man is a sinner," they said (v. 24). I'm not sure about that, the man replied, but I know for sure that I've been healed. He must have been a little exasperated with their attitude, for he asked, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" (v. 27).

The leaders were offended by this idea, so they responded with insults, drawing a line in the sand: "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses!"—and you can't be a disciple of both. John knew his readers needed to hear that, too. Don't worry about getting kicked out of the synagogue, he seems to say. You should have left it long ago, anyway.

The man became bolder, saying, You don't even know whether this man is from God, but he opened my eyes, and God doesn't listen to sinners! "He listens to the godly man who does his will" (v. 31). In other words, Jesus is a godly man who is doing the will of God. "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." That's the central question that runs throughout the Gospel of John: Is Jesus from God? The man declared that Jesus is from God.

The Jewish leaders became angry at this layman who tried

to teach them theology, and they expelled him from the synagogue. They didn't want him telling his story to more people.

Jesus heard about it and went looking for the man. "When he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'" (v. 35). Here Jesus seems to be using the "Son of Man" as a messianic title, perhaps derived from Daniel's vision of "one like a son of man" who was given supreme authority (Dan. 7:13-14). "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." If you say I am supposed to believe in somebody, then I will.

Jesus revealed himself to be the Son of Man, and the man worshipped him (v. 38). Just as he could see physically, he could also see spiritually, and in this way he displayed the work of God in his life.

Judgment

Jesus now gives another theological lesson: "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." Jesus is the category by which all humanity will be judged. If people accept him, then God accepts them. But if they reject him, they are rejected. In other words, when a person refuses light, they have only darkness. Jesus is claiming to be the way, the truth and the life. Here he says he is the light, the one who enables people to see.

Some people refuse to see. Some are afraid, because Jesus nullifies their badges of righteousness. And when they turn away from Jesus, from the only true Light, they go further into darkness. In this story, the leaders of the synagogue would rather be blind than to admit that they had been wrong.

Some Pharisees asked, "Are we blind too?" And Jesus explained his parable: "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your

See A Blinding Light, page 

BRING the children: Principles for effective ministry to children

Principle 2

Relate to Children at Their Level

By Ted Johnston

In this series we're discussing five principles for effective ministry to children, summarized in the acronym BRING.

Last time we looked at the first principle: Bless children with Jesus' love. We come now to the R of BRING: Relate to children at their level.

To be an effective missionary requires a working knowledge of the mission field. And children are a wonderful, fruitful mission field with a particular openness to God and his love.

In children's ministry training seminars I ask the audience of adult Christians how old they were when they first committed their lives to Christ. The overwhelming majority indicate that they did so in their early teens or before.

A study by the Barna Research Group confirms my informal survey, showing that 75 to 85 percent of Christians in North America made their initial faith commitment before age 15. Furthermore, this research indicates that the probability of becoming a Christian is 32 percent at ages 5 to 13. This probability then decreases to 4 percent at ages 14 to 18 and increases only slightly to 6 percent at age 19 and older. Children have a particular openness to God's love and the message of the gospel.

Our challenge is to communicate the gospel to children at their level—in ways they can readily understand and experience.

Now, I have to confess something. I once thought the gospel



was too complex for a child to fully understand. But I was wrong. The essential good news (gospel) is not hard to understand.

Rather it's the simple message about Jesus—his life, death and resurrection; his love and gift of salvation.

To trust Jesus to be who he says he is for us is, in itself, a childlike attribute. Maybe that's why Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14).

Indeed, children can come to Jesus in trust and belief. As adults, we have the privilege and responsibility to lead them to faith in their Savior so that they can learn to follow him.

So where do we begin? We begin where they are. That is, we begin at their level. God and his love must be communicated in ways that connect with a child. Making the connection involves a basic understanding of a child's stage of intellectual, physical, social, psychological and religious development.

You don't have to be a child psychologist to understand this, of course, though some basic information on child development might be of great help in learning to relate well to children (see my article, "Building Believing

Children" in the March *Odyssey*).

Ideas

Here are a few simple ideas about relating the gospel to children at their level. First, tell them about Jesus in ways that are meaningful to them. This is not hard to do from Scripture, because the Gospels are full of stories about Jesus that children readily relate to.

Take for example the story of the prodigal son, where the father represents God who is lavish in his grace toward sinners (represented by the prodigal son as well as by his older brother, who despite his obedience, was envious and bitter).

This story can be acted out for and by children. It can be told in dramatic form. It can be illustrated in pictures or by using a flannel board.

And as stories from the Gospels are told to children, the message is always brought back to Jesus, to his love and forgiveness and his invitation to follow him and learn from him.

Let me add a note of caution about teaching children

from Scripture. In making it simple so children understand, don't dumb down the teaching of the Bible. Children often have far more capacity to grasp spiritual concepts than we give them credit for. With thoughtful teaching that

See Children, page 6



Motivated by God's love for children, we reach out to them in ways that will connect with them at their level.

The Glorious Freedom

By John McKenna
World Mission University
Commencement, 2005
Los Angeles, California



Beginnings, old and new, are essential for understanding the world, and I love new beginnings.

Across the pages of the Holy Scriptures we read of the way that God with his divine freedom is free with himself to renew his covenanted relationship with his people. Ultimately, the Bible teaches us that God shall fulfill his covenanted purposes for his people with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the biblical covenant relation-

ship we are taught by the Bible, new beginnings are absolutely necessary for his people. I would speak to you today of the new beginning you are making as the 2005 graduating class of World Mission University. It is a

commencement that belongs to the way of Jesus Christ.

Let me quote from the apostle Paul: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not of its own choice, but by

the will of the One who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Romans 8:18-21).

It is with this glorious freedom you make your commencement today. The immediate context for Paul's claim about the glorious freedom of the children of God is provided by Romans 8:1 ("There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus") and Romans 8:38-39 ("For I am convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all

Children

Continued from page 5

uses vocabulary they can understand, children can grasp the basic concepts of Christian doctrine including such things as grace, sin, forgiveness, eternal life, the resurrection and, of course, the basic teachings concerning Jesus' incarnation, birth, life, ministry, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and return. Some wonderful teaching curricula are available to help us in this teaching.

Don't forget that music is a powerful medium we can use to relate to children and to communicate to them the gospel. I love it when congregations include children in their worship music at church.

I attended a church service where the worship team on stage included several young children helping a few adults lead the congregation in singing. They did a wonderful job with all of the music, but you

should have seen them come alive with joy when the music was more youthful and exuberant in its tone and content.

Their joy in the Lord was infectious as they sang about God's power, love and grace. They knew all the words and they understood what they were singing and kids in the audience picked right up on the music and the message. Through music that relates, children were teaching and receiving the gospel.

We can also relate to children at their level as we teach them to pray. If prayer is sometimes a challenge for adults, it is often natural for children. They lack a lot of our adult hang-ups and self-consciousness. They have little reticence talking to God even though he is not visibly present.

I spoke not long ago with a Sunday school teacher who, as part of her weekly class for 6-to-9-year-olds, provides a variety of stations where they go in a room to spend time with God. One involves materials for drawing pictures that illustrate their understanding of

what they learned in the teaching time. Another station is sort of like a fort they can go inside of one at a time to pray.

One Sunday, an 8-year-old boy went into the prayer fort and did not reappear for 20 minutes. When he joined the group, the teacher gently asked what happened while he was in the closet. His reply: "I was meeting with God. I talked to him and he talked to me."

There was no self-consciousness in the reply, no religious facade, just a young boy who had been taught by a caring adult how to commune with God in prayer. So that's what he did.

The key is to use activities that children enjoy. Remember to use their names and to recognize their achievements and concerns. Show them by your facial expressions, your manner, your interest and your concern that you care about them and that they matter to you and to God. In your example, they experience Jesus and his love in action. What a blessing it is to be used of God in such an important way. 🦋

creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”).

Behind us lies “no condemnation.” Before us is the “love of God.” We as his children are a people free from condemnation and for the love that God is. The creation, we are informed, itself bears witness to this glorious freedom of the children of God and waits for the full realization of its purpose.

Thus, the glorious freedom of the children of God is crystallized in a context where no condemnation can be found for the people of God, and where God’s love shall never fail with his creation. A solid understanding of this freedom cannot be apprehended without the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Within the boundaries of his divine forgiveness and love we may grasp the meaning of the glorious freedom we have been given by our Savior. It is a freedom that transcends every created thing and rests upon Christ’s love of his Father and his Father’s love for him.

For this reason, we may say that without condemnation and for the love of God we live beyond the vanity of the creation. Even the vanity of the creation waits to be free as we have been freed for the glorious freedom. The whole of created reality waits for the time when the glorious freedom of the children of God shall be realized utterly.

The doctrine of the vanity or frustration of the creation is known to Paul through the proclamation of the Preacher in Ecclesiastes. All is vanity, says the Preacher. All is vanity, says Paul, about the Old Testament world.

But about the New Testament world, Paul can say that in and with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, all that was vanity has been vanquished. The Preacher’s call to the people of God to trust their God is not vanity. It is a call to trust even in the vanity of the creation that God will give mean-

ing and significance to life in the creation.

With the same freedom that the Lord God delivered Israel from Egypt, he will give ultimate meaning and significance to the vanity of the creation. The whole of God’s creation beholds the way the Lord has kept faith with this trust in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

As his children, the people of God are called to trust him as their Creator and their Redeemer, and their destiny belongs to the beginning he has made with himself in



Jae Soon Lim (right), president of World Mission University, and John McKenna, vice president. [Photos by Mickey McKenna]

the world. The creation itself now waits for the full realization of this beginning and its promise to his sons and daughters. Because of this beginning, they live in the glorious freedom without condemnation and for the love of God for all creation.

This Creator-Redeemer is known to Paul as the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the revealer of the Father by his Spirit. This person has revealed his Father to the apostle Paul and by the Holy Spirit given Paul to know the One who is who he truly is. It is in the light of this

only One that the apostle can teach the believers to trust their Redeemer and their Creator for their destiny.

The believers in Christ can know that they participate in a beginning that is without condemnation and led by the love that God is for them to their destiny. The believers are to give up all condemnation, including all self-condemnation, and they are to live following him whose divine freedom and will shall never fail them in this world. Thus, they are in Christ the sons of God, the children of God. They live in the glorious freedom that is without condemnation and with the love of God.

In our time, the concept of freedom calls anew for our attention. As Americans, we believe in the freedom of the human race. At the founding of our nation, the concept of freedom played and continues to play a central role.

Freedom from the rule of an English king was foremost on the minds of many Americans. “Give me liberty or give me death,” was a cry heard round the world. Better to be dead than a live slave to the tyrant. That is the beating of the American heart from the beginning. But the freedom to worship God according to our conscience was just as much on the minds of the Founding Fathers.

President George W. Bush even now makes our concept of freedom central to his policies at home and around the world. Ever since Sept. 11, 2001, we have witnessed a new beginning of a new resolve in our nation’s freedom against the tyrants of this world. It is a resolve that must be compared with the resolve our country possessed in its beginning.

Now we are saying that our freedom has value not only from an English monarch, but for the whole world of nations. It possesses a universal value that peoples everywhere ignore with jeopardy. It is a **See Glorious Freedom, page**

Glorious Freedom

Continued from page 7

liberty for which we are prepared to fight around the world.

All the laws and all the might of all the nations in this world are only made to serve this freedom. This freedom and the responsibility for human rights go hand in glove together against every tyrant on our globe. Yet it is a policy whose cry is not easily heard by everyone. Freedom can and does mean different things to different people. Evidently, the concept of freedom needs explanation that does not meet the naked eye.

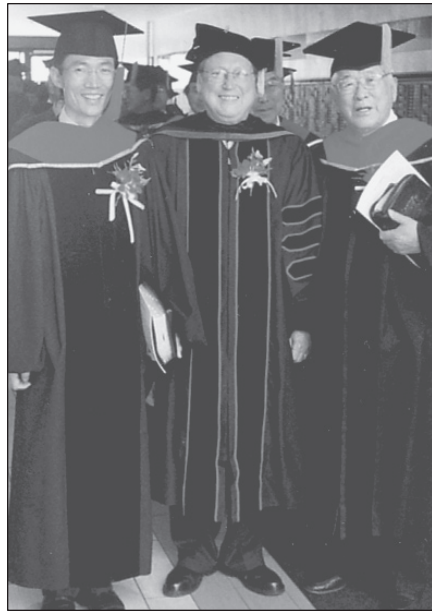
Great minds have contemplated it. In his book, *The Logic of Liberty*, Michael Polanyi argues that freedom sought by communities and individuals cannot find coherence except upon a transcendent ground neither individuals nor communities can afford to ignore. Freedom evidently makes demands upon us that take us quite beyond ourselves as individuals and as communities.

Polanyi argues that freedom's real meaning cannot be grasped without consideration of the role of the transcendent in communal and individual freedoms. One cannot understand, he says, the value of the role of freedom in the various fields of human knowledge and endeavor without taking into consideration the value of the transcendence in human life.

If freedom does have meaning, it possesses significance from beyond our communities and our individualities. The responsibility of freedom comes from beyond us, from beyond the dimensions of our sciences and our religions. The loss of this transcendent, Polanyi shows, plagues our modern world with a disease that involves the real loss of the meaning of freedom in our time.

Korean-Americans are no strangers to this struggle for freedom's meaning in their history. The folk song *Arirang* is to Koreans what "God Bless America" is to Americans. From "the tears of sorrow and separation" to freedom in the United States, Koreans have suffered, fought and died beside Americans for freedom's sake.

When Sammy Lee became the



From left: Jae Soon Lim, president of World Mission University; John McKenna, vice president; and Pastor Joon Min Kang of the Oriental Mission Church.

first Asian-American to win an Olympic gold medal in 1948, he brought a newfound freedom for the Korean people in America. And even in our own times, beyond the 1992 riots in Los Angeles, Korean-American people have learned again to suffer and to die for this freedom's sake.

No doubt World Mission University will stand for this freedom in the future. The concept of freedom for which we suffer and die and again live is vital for all of us. It deserves real attention.

We may consider the explanation of freedom by contemplating the faces of what I have called freedom's counterfeit coin. On the

heads side of the coin, we have engraved the face of freedom as an abstract idealism, a timeless principle that we may apply all the time everywhere, as if it were the same as eternal truth. With it, we may seek to provide an explanation of all the order and reason we may experience in the world.

Greek philosophers could swoon passionately over this kind of principle. Their *logos* was the source of all that was beautiful and orderly and eternally true in the world. For these philosophers, the heavens themselves appeared eternal, their motions divine, while the temporal things on the earth appeared but temporarily in a decaying world.

The contrast between the heavens and the earth was absolute. Everlasting life had to do with being free from earth's temporal things and free for the eternal things of the heavens. Salvation rested among the eternal verities in the heavenlies.

On the tails side of the coin, we have engraved a romantic idealism. Freedom is understood on this side of the coin as individualistic freedom. It is bound up with the autonomy of the freedom of the individual and existential decision-making that in the vast impersonal nature of things is rendered ultimately meaningless.

Modern existential philosophers understand human freedom in this way. Humanity is imprisoned in the nothingness of the world that shapes a theatre of the absurd for the existence of human life in a universe vastly indifferent to our humanity.

We are free to make our decisions in the world, but the nature of this world is absolutely indifferent to the autonomy of our freedom. Our freedom has no ultimate consequence in the large picture of things. Human existence as vanity is surrounded by the nothingness of a world where we romantically work out our destinies in it, but

without any ultimate significance.

When freedom is understood either as abstract idealism or as romantic idealism, we must realize that both sides of the coin are inadequate to explain real freedom. Neither the timeless principles of communal beliefs nor the autonomous assertions of free individuals can justify our concept of freedom.

I believe that we must face the fact that the whole of this freedom coin is a counterfeit. When it comes up heads and we live responsibly in our public commitments, we tend to suppress the real significance of individual freedom.

When it comes up tails and we exercise our freedom as individuals without coordination with public freedom, we tend to suppress the external controls necessary for true spontaneity and creativity.

If it is heads, we may find ourselves boasting. If it is tails, we may find ourselves despairing. But neither the pride of our boasting nor the sloth of our despair can stand for the real face of freedom.

In its pride and in its sloth, writes the great theologian Karl Barth, the human race seeks its consolation with the Liar, and its condemnation. "The man of sin," he wrote, "in his fully developed form as a liar is the man who goes forward to his condemnation" (*Church Dogmatics* IV.3.1, p. 462). We must learn to strike a whole new coin.

But to strike a new coin of freedom without the glorious freedom of the children of God is, I believe, impossible. The transcendence for which Polanyi has argued can have nothing to do with abstract principles or existential passions, but must be defined by the transcendence of the ascended Lord of all space and time, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Jesus Christ, we know no boasting or despair. With the glorious freedom he has given us we

belong to that for which the whole creation longs to see. We belong to his new creation.

In this way, we belong to the Spirit of Almighty God. We belong to the One who alone can give human life in this world. In this freedom, the human race lives as children of God. In this freedom, we shall be established as the children he has raised up for himself, as the Creator and Redeemer. It is with this freedom that we may proclaim as his church the kingdom of Heaven, Christ and God.

It is with this freedom that we may live beyond the vanity that the world is without him. It is with this freedom that we may discard the lie of the Liar.

It is with the freedom of this truth that the apostle John writes: "So if the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

Like Paul, the apostle John crystallized his thoughts about the freedom of the believer in Jesus



John McKenna (right) talks with a Biola University student.

Christ within a certain context. In John 8:12, we read Christ's claim as the Son of God to be light of the world.

And then before the religious leaders of his time, he claims an identity with the Great I-AM of the burning bush to be who he truly

is even before Moses, even before Abraham, who he once called out of Babylon (John 8:58).

Between these two claims lies this truth. Man in Christ is given his freedom for God. They are given to participate with him in the new beginning he has made with himself.

It is this divine and human freedom that is the transcendent ground upon which we stand and grasp the meaning of the glorious freedom of the children of God in Christ's new creation.

In Galatians 5:1, the apostle Paul writes once more about this glorious freedom: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free." Even in the midst of an unbelieving world, we may stand as his children with this glorious freedom. We are neither Jew nor gentile. We are sons and daughters of the free God.

We know that death shall have no dominion over us. We know that we live in him without condemnation. We know that we may live in him for the love of God. We who once lived in Adam as slaves in this fallen world, now may live in Christ for his new creation. We live as his people with this glorious freedom. We live because he lives in this glorious freedom.

You are the graduating class of 2005 of World Mission University. You are ready to begin your new lives and ministries in the world. We are deeply grateful for you. We thank our Lord and God for you. We pray that his rich and great blessings will be upon you in the glorious freedom of your love of God. We pray that you will go forth in this glorious freedom, free from condemnation, free for the love that God is, and free to proclaim his light and life to the world.

Only as you go in this glorious freedom shall we be able to explain the existence of World Mission University and its freedom in this world. We believe it is, indeed, a glorious freedom! 🦋

'Great Schism' of the Church

July 6, 1054 was rapidly approaching, and the Christian world was about to experience a major event on the road to a rupture that continues to our day—the schism between the Western and Eastern Christian churches. The central actors in the looming conflict were Michael Cerularius, the patriarch of Constantinople,¹ and Leo IX, the bishop or pope in Rome.

In the months leading up to July 6, 1054, Cerularius had strongly condemned the Western church for some of its religious practices and beliefs.² As part of his attack, Cerularius excommunicated the bishops of Constantinople who followed certain rites of the Western church, and he closed down their churches.

Meanwhile, in April 1054, Leo had sent a legation to Cerularius, headed by Cardinal Humbert, with his own set of demands and accusations against the patriarch. As it turned out, Leo died in the midst of the mission, but the legation continued with its task. Tragically, the meetings between Cardinal Humbert and Patriarch Cerularius were acrimonious. Mistrust and a desire to maintain ecclesiastical power ruled the day. No useful dialogue could occur in such a poisoned atmosphere.

Mutual excommunication

Finally, relations between Cerularius and Humbert were strained to the breaking point. The Roman legates marched into Constantinople's St. Sophia church and placed a papal bull (decree) on the altar, excommunicating Cerularius. That fateful day of July 6, 1054 had arrived. After being excommunicated, Cerularius convened his bishops and issued further polemical statements against the practices of the Western church. These also condemned the legation from the papacy and anathematized Humbert. With the mutual excommunications, the possibility of healing and reconciliation became a shattered dream.

The mutual excommunications of 1054 were but a

1. The city once called Byzantium was renamed Constantinople after the Roman Emperor Constantine, who moved his capitol to the city in A.D. 330.

2. Perhaps the most notable difference had to do with the issue of the procession of the Holy Spirit. The Western church added what's called the Filioque clause to the Nicene Creed, affirming the double procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. This was rejected by the Eastern church, which taught that the Spirit proceeded solely from the Father.

dramatic interlude in a centuries-long period of growing estrangement between the two areas of the church, East and West, despite the fact that in earlier centuries they had been solidly united against a number of heresies, including Arianism.³

The split between the Eastern and Western halves of the church also had much to do with the political and geographical reality of the Roman Empire. The political disunion in the Roman Empire was replicated in the church. The last Roman emperor to rule over a united empire was Theodosius the Great, who died in A.D. 395. The empire was then divided into eastern and western halves, with each having its own emperor. The Western Roman Empire was torn apart by barbarian invasions at the end of the fifth century, while the Eastern Roman Empire, or Byzantine Empire, continued, with its capital at Constantinople, the modern Istanbul, Turkey.



Leo IX, the bishop or pope in Rome

The churches of Rome and Constantinople grew in power and became rivals more for their political status rather than for any spiritual or religious reasons. In earlier centuries, ecclesiastical authority in the church had become concentrated in five bishops in the main Christian centers of Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, Jerusalem and Rome. This had occurred as early as the fourth century A.D.

A growing reconciliation?

For hundreds of years after the tragic events of July 1054, the Eastern and Western churches essentially went their separate ways, though there were contacts between them and periodic attempts at reconciliation. Meanwhile, the Western church expanded into the Americas and experienced further splits, which created the Protestant Christian world. The Eastern

See Great Schism, page 11

3. In the later Patristic period (ended about A.D. 450) theologians from areas that in 1054 became the original Eastern church had an integral part in fighting heresies and in giving authentic expression to the New Testament understanding of God's nature through their theological leadership and participation in the first seven ecumenical councils. One of the biggest threats confronting the church had been the ideas of Arius, who claimed that Jesus Christ was not true God of true God, but a created being. Churchmen from the East were instrumental in combating this heresy. The Second Council of Nicea, in 787, was the seventh and last council accepted by the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Peace in Christ

By John McLean
Ambassador College of
Christian ministry
associate program director



In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told his listeners, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). Small wonder, since God is a God of peace (Philippians 4:9; Romans 15:33; 1 Thessalonians 5:23), and Jesus the Messiah fulfilled the Old Testament expectations of the Prince of Peace.

God’s children, then, would reflect their parent and be peacemakers. Yet peace is in drastically short supply. Just watch the television news. Inner peace, peace between and among families and communities, peace among nations is all preciously rare. The whole history of humanity has been described as a history driven by war. And the last century has the dubious distinction of being the bloodiest of all. Small wonder, either, that the apostle Paul wrote of the human condition, “the way

of peace they do not know” (Romans 3:17).

Peace within and among church congregations can also be strained and tested and broken. This is in spite of Paul’s lofty instructions to the church to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3), and to “let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace” (Colossians 3:15).

We know that the ideal of the church is to be the redeemed, unified community of Christ, quite literally living and sharing the gospel, which is a gospel of peace. We also know that the reality is sometimes quite different.

Lesslie Newbigin points out that Jesus never wrote a book himself. Rather, he established a community. This was his legacy. The greatest hermeneutic of the gospel, Newbigin says, is a spiritual community that seeks to live by the gospel. A lack of peace in the church does not just harm the

church—it harms the gospel witness and message.

How, then, do we have and make peace? The answer cannot be exhausted in a library of articles, but let’s consider the following essential concepts from Ephesians 2:11-22, a key New Testament passage on peace.

Speaking of Christ Jesus (v. 13) Paul says emphatically that “he himself is our peace” (v. 14). Christ is the perfect peacemaker. He not only gives us peace, but our peace is—only—in and through him.

Both Testaments affirm that peace is not merely the absence of fighting and conflict. Biblically, peace is a holistic term that is relational and encompasses all of life. It is a comprehensive term describing salvation and fellowship with God.

Through Jesus Christ, we have peace, access, closeness and fellowship with the Father. But peace in Christ doesn’t stop there. In Christ, we also have peace with one another.

Through the cross, in breaking down the old covenant barriers be-
See Peace in Christ, page 16

Great Schism

Continued from page 10

church pushed northward, making many converts in the Balkans, in Slavic Eastern Europe and in Russia.

A significant step toward reconciliation began in March 1991, when the Eastern Orthodox Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches reached a consensus on the Filioque Clause disagreement. Theologian Thomas F. Torrance was instrumental in the dialogue.

Overtures have also been made by the leadership in the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches to build relations between them. On Dec. 7, 1965, Pope Paul VI and Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras issued a joint text that mutually nullified the joint excommunications of 1054. The declaration was read simultaneously at a public meeting of the ecumenical council in Rome and

at a ceremony in Istanbul. The declaration showed a desire for reconciliation between the two churches.

In June 1995, Patriarch Bartholomew⁴ met with Pope John Paul II in a series of meetings intended to pull the two churches closer together. The patriarch, along with other leaders of Eastern churches, attended the funeral of Pope John Paul II on April 8, 2005. This provided a hopeful symbol—an olive branch extended to the Roman Catholic Church for reconciliation. The new pope, Benedict XVI, has said that he, too, wants to find reconciliation and dialogue with other Christians.

Only time will tell whether full reconciliation will occur in the future and what shape it will take. Christians can only pray that the unifying love and Spirit of Christ will shine forth from all who desire his body, the church, to exhibit a genuine unity and oneness.🦋

4. Bartholomew, whose seat is in Istanbul, the former Constantinople, is given the honor of primacy in the broader Orthodox faith. Self-governing national Orthodox churches choose their own patriarchs.

Lessons from the Gospel of Mark

Mark 5:21-43

Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. . . .

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

By Mike Feazell

I hate crowds. I hate the jostling, the noise, the sense of being herded in directions I might not want to go and the frustration of proceeding at miserably tedious speeds. It's no wonder that Jesus disciples' were a bit sarcastic when he once asked the crush of bodies knocking him around in a Judean crowd, "Who touched my clothes?"



As it happened, Jesus was in this crowd only because he was on his way to heal the feverish daughter of a synagogue ruler who pleaded that Jesus have mercy on his dying child. Mark likes to tell his stories about Jesus like sandwiches—one story sandwiched in the middle of another—kind of like Jesus was sandwiched in this crowd.

"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples asked, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

Yes, that's exactly what Jesus could ask. He could ask because he'd felt something quite different from the normal collisions of shoulders and elbows and sandals and hips and thighs. He'd felt that "power had gone out from him" (verse 30). He'd sensed that someone had touched his clothes with a definite purpose in

mind, a definite need, and that this person had done so believing that through this act God would give deliverance.

And indeed God had. Mark fills in the story for us, even though at the time the disciples were in the dark about what had happened. It seems that a woman had been suffering from debilitating menstrual hemorrhaging for 12 years.

This woman had spent everything on doctors to try to find a cure, and they had done nothing but make her problem worse. Now she was out of options, but that's when she heard that Jesus was coming to town. She decided that if she could just touch his clothes, she would be healed. So she bored her way through the sweaty bodies, came up behind Jesus, and touched his cloak. Instantly, the bleeding stopped and her suffering was over.

The mustard from Mark's sandwich of two stories begins to leak over onto both slices of bread at this point. Jairus, the synagogue ruler, was not afraid to walk right up to Jesus, fall at Jesus' feet, and plead for the daughter he loved. But the sick woman was different. She was just as determined and just as believing as Jairus in Jesus' power to save. But she was too afraid to approach this mysterious man of God head on. Un-

See [Lessons from Mark, page 16](#)



When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed."

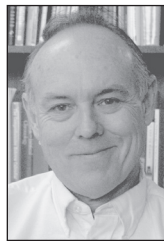
How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth—

Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

By Terry Akers

Now in its third edition with more than half a million copies sold, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* has become a standard resource for the Christian lay person.

The newly revised paperback edition is an excellent teaching tool for the inquiring seeker and Bible student. Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart have combined their talents to make the principles of sound biblical interpretation accessible to the modern reader.



As the back cover explains: “In clear, simple language, it helps you accurately understand the different parts of the Bible—their meaning for ancient audiences and their implications for you today—so you can uncover the inexhaustible worth that is in God’s Word.”

The book is widely used in seminaries for introductory courses in biblical exegesis, and the updated edition features revisions that reflect current language and scholarship. Considerable rewriting of several chapters also makes the text more readable and user-friendly. Fee and Stuart’s easy-to-understand style brings the art of biblical interpretation into the everyday world of the layman in a way that makes Bible study interesting and rewarding.

The authors, one an Old Testament scholar and the other a New Testament scholar, cover issues of translation, the literary genres (epistle, narrative, parable, poetry), and the meaning of the writings for their original audience and their implications for the church throughout its history. They show how proper interpretation requires various methods of exegesis according to the literary type being studied—Gospel, Law, Apocalypse, Wisdom.

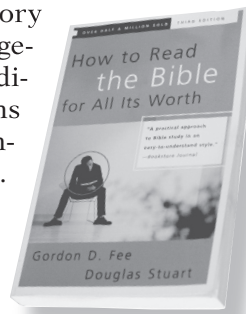
How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth guides readers toward a better handling of Scripture by teach-

ing them how to avoid misinterpretations through the proper use of context. Throughout the book, the importance of reading a passage holistically, according to the overall content of Scripture, is emphasized.

Bad exegesis and quirky doctrines often result when a particular biblical statement or passage is taken out of cultural, historical or theological context and emphasized apart from the whole of revelation.

The book’s introduction explains: “The aim of good interpretation is not uniqueness; one is not trying to discover what no one else has ever seen before. Interpretation that aims at, or thrives on, uniqueness can usually be attributed to pride (an attempt to ‘out clever’ the rest of the world), a false understanding of spirituality (wherein the Bible is full of deeply buried truths waiting to be mined by the spiritually sensitive person with special insight), or vested interests (the need to support a theological bias, especially dealing with texts that seem to go against that bias).”

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth demonstrates how the Bible must be read theologically—through the lens of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ—rather than in overly literalistic or idealistic ways. By remaining safely within the “middle swath of orthodoxy” and learning to listen in humility to God’s revelation, Bible reading is shown to be not merely informative, but transformative. 🦋



A Blinding Light

Continued from page 4

guilt remains” (v. 41). When he said, “Those who see will become blind,” he was not talking about people who really had spiritual insight. Rather, he was talking about people who only thought their insight was spiritual light, when it really was only darkness.

They claimed to know spiritual truth, but when the Truth was right in front of them, they would not see it. People are judged by the way they respond to Jesus. If they admit their ignorance and are willing to be taught, they are not counted guilty. But if they claim to see, yet reject the only true Light, then they are guilty.

When you look at Jesus, what do you see? 🦋

What Kind of Messiah?

a study of Matthew 16

By Michael Morrison

Jesus praised Peter for accurately identifying him as the Messiah, and he promised him great authority. But in almost the next breath, Jesus gave Peter one of the strongest rebukes in all of Scripture. The incident, and the teaching of Jesus that surrounds it, tells us much about the purpose of the Messiah.



Seeing a sign

First, some **“Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven”** (Matt. 16:1, TNIV throughout). Jesus had already done many miracles, but the Jewish leaders wanted special proof. Jesus refused to take their test, because they were asking the wrong questions.

He responded by quoting proverbs about the weather: **“When evening comes, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,’ and in the morning, ‘Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times”** (vv. 2-3). They could not interpret the signs because they were looking for the wrong kind of signs.

Beware of wrong ideas

Matthew changes the scene, but still has the same subject in mind. **“When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. ‘Be careful,’ Jesus said to them. ‘Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees’ ”** (vv. 5-6).

Jesus meant this as a metaphor, but the disciples

thought he was warning them about real yeast. Instead of asking Jesus what he meant, **“they discussed this among themselves and said, ‘It is because we didn’t bring any bread’ ”** (v. 7).

But Jesus knew what they were discussing, and asked them: **“You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Don’t you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?... How is it you don’t understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees”** (vv. 8-11).

I am not worried about bread, he seemed to say. If we need to, we can make some more. The disciples then understood that Jesus was using a figure of speech: **“He was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees”** (v. 12).

Although Jesus could have had various teachings in mind, Matthew puts it in the context of ideas about a Messiah. The Jewish leaders had just asked for proof that Jesus was the Messiah. They had ideas about what a Messiah would do, but they were wrong, so Jesus tells his disciples not to listen to them.

‘You are the Messiah’

The next scene that Matthew describes occurs north of Galilee, in a gentile area ruled by Herod’s son Philip. It was a safe place to discuss the word *Messiah* without any bystanders getting the wrong idea. **“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’ ”** (v. 13).

“They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; oth-



Some Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. Jesus had already done many miracles, but the Jewish leaders wanted special proof. Jesus refused to take their test, because they were asking the wrong questions.

ers say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets' " (v. 14). It is doubtful that they thought Jesus was really John or Jeremiah come back from the dead. Rather, they were guessing what sort of prophet he was: a miracle-worker like Elijah, or doomsayer like Jeremiah, or some other messenger from God.

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

"Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God' Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven' " (v. 15-17). Peter probably thought the idea was his own, but Jesus tells him that the thought actually came from God. Jesus accepts the titles that Peter has given him, and reinforces them by revealing a special role for Peter:

"And I tell you that you are Peter [Greek *Petros*], and on this rock [*petra*] I will build my church, and the gates of death will not overcome it" (v. 18). Some

interpreters conclude that the "rock" on which Jesus built his church is Peter; others say it is his confession. Even if Jesus means Peter, however, he is not predicting apostolic succession or hierarchy. Jesus used Peter to build the church, but he also used the other apostles (Eph. 2:20). And he promised that death would never conquer the church.

Jesus promised Peter authority: **"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (v. 19).** The meaning of this verse is widely debated, but the safest interpretation seems to be that Peter would open the gates of heaven to more people by preaching the gospel.

When rabbis spoke of "binding" and "loosing," they were talking about which commandments were required for the kingdom. Jesus apparently meant that through the gospel, Peter would tell people that by God's grace, Jesus was the Way into the kingdom of God. In Matthew 18:18, Jesus expanded this role to all the apostles. Their teachings are authoritative guides for us.

Then Jesus **"warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah" (v. 20).** Since people had the wrong concept of the Messiah, they would only misunderstand if the disciples used that word for Jesus.

A Messiah who dies

Jesus then taught his disciples what his role as Messiah really was. It was not to raise an army or bring prosperity. **"Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many**

things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life" (v. 21). The Son of God had to die and be raised.

This was so far out of Peter's concept that **"Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him."** Just a few minutes before, Peter had proclaimed Jesus to be a representative of God; now he tries to correct him.

"Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" (v. 22). We can prevent that, he seemed to say.

But Jesus told him that he was completely wrong: **"Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns" (v. 23).** Through his ignorance and preconceptions, Peter was tempting Jesus to use power for his own benefit, just as Satan had tempted Jesus earlier. But the Son of God did not come to serve himself—he came to give himself.

Jesus had a different approach: **"Those who want to be my disciples must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, but those who lose their life for me will find it" (vv. 24-25).** Jesus is not talking just about martyrs—he is also talking about people who lose their lives metaphorically, giving up self-centeredness, egoism and self-seeking. The selfish life will fail, but if we give our lives to the service of Jesus, we enter new life, eternal life.

"What good will it be for you to gain the whole world, yet forfeit your soul? Or what can you give in exchange for your soul?" (v. 27). Even if you conquer the entire Roman Empire, what good would it do you, if you use military methods to do it? You would then be no better than the Romans. The bigger battle, and the real reason that we need a Messiah, is spiritual transformation, transformation from the stress, fear and anxious care of selfish living to the inner rest and peace of life in Jesus Christ. 🦋

A focus on this life will fail, but if we focus on Jesus, we will be given a new life, an eternal life.

Questions for discussion

- What kind of "messiah" do people look for today?
- How do modern hopes and desires affect my expectations of what I want Jesus to do for me?
- Is special revelation still required for people to say that Jesus is the Messiah?
- Does the church today have the power to bind and loose?
- In what way do Christians lose their lives for Jesus?

Lectionary Readings for July-August 2005

July 3

Genesis 24:34-67
Psalm 145:8-14
Song of Songs 2:8-13
Matthew 11:16-30
Romans 7:15-25

July 10

Genesis 25:19-34
Psalm 65
Isaiah 55:10-13
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
Romans 8:1-11

July 17

Genesis 28:10-19
Psalm 86:11-17
Isaiah 44:6-8
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
Romans 8:12-25

July 24

Genesis 29:15-28
1 Kings 3:5-12
Psalm 119:129-136
Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52
Romans 8:26-39

July 31

Genesis 32:22-31
Psalm 145:8-21
Isaiah 55:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21
Romans 9

Aug. 7

Genesis 37:1-28
1 Kings 19:9-18
Psalm 85:8-13
Matthew 14:22-33
Romans 10

Aug. 14

Genesis 45:1-15
Psalm 67
Isaiah 56:1-8
Matthew 15:10-28
Romans 11

Aug. 21

Exodus 1:8-2:10
Psalm 138
Isaiah 51:1-6
Matthew 16:13-20
Romans 12:1-8

Aug. 28

Exodus 3:1-15
Psalm 26:1-8
Jeremiah 15:15-21
Matthew 16:21-28
Romans 12:9-21

Sept. 4

Exodus 12:1-14
Psalm 139:33-40
Ezekiel 33:7-11
Matthew 18:15-20
Romans 13:8-14

Peace in Christ

Continued from page 11

tween Jews and gentiles, Jesus made the two into one. "His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God" (vs. 15-16). He did not turn gentiles into Jews, or Jews into gentiles, but rather in himself made a new creation—new in time and quality or essence.

This new man is in fact a community creation—the new creation of the spiritual community of the church, which is the spiritual temple where God dwells through the Spirit. This is a peace, a fellowship, that transcends race, culture, opinion or even doctrinal understanding and discernment.


Like truth, it is more relational and personal than propositional. It is found in the person and work of Christ, not in our debates and argu-

ments about him. It is lived in a holistic, all-of-life way, in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

What might that look like? Many things, but one snapshot is Romans 15:7, "Accept one another, then, just as Christ has accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

This is not a shrug of the shoulders and a plaintive "why can't we all get along?" It's not a glib peace at any price—it's peace at the ultimate price, the price of the cross. It's peace in and through Jesus Christ.

It's a willingness to seek and pursue peace. It's an openness to ask ourselves honestly, are we a peacemaker, or a peace-taker, peace-breaker and troublemaker?

Embracing this peace in Christ changes everything—including how we see and interact with one another. It's taking seriously our elder brother's call to act like and do the work of the Father—who is the God of peace. What a blessing peacemakers truly are. 

Lessons from Mark

Continued from page 12

like Jairus, she sneaked up behind Jesus, flicked a finger across the wrinkles of his robe and sunk back into the anonymity of the crowd.

But despite her fear, despite her low opinion of herself, maybe because of her status as a woman, but even more likely because of her status as unclean because of the purity laws about menstrual flow, Jesus noticed her. And he called her to him. And he called her daughter.

Meanwhile, Jairus' daughter died, and the messengers of this news told Jairus not to bother Jesus any more about it—after all, it was too late. But Jesus ignored them. He went straight to Jairus' house and despite the scorn and

disbelief at his statement that the girl was not dead, but only sleeping, he took her by the hand and gave her back her life and Jairus back his daughter.

Jesus doesn't care who you are. He doesn't care if you're timid and shy, young or old, a leader or an outcast. He knows you, loves you, cares about your needs and fears and crises, and is ready to help. He listens to your up-front, head-on pleas and he senses hopeful hearts at the back of the line and behind the door. Your personality, your temperament, your status, nor even (especially) your sinful history can erect a barrier he can't bring down like the walls of Jericho.

What's your need? What's your crisis? What's your fear? Take it to Jesus. Take it to him in whatever way works for you. He loves you. He's on your side. And he's waiting. 