



**The Sovereign Military Order of
the Temple of Jerusalem**

**Priory of St. James, Toronto,
Canada.**

**Newsletter
April 2011**

**Prior:
H.E. the Rev'd Dame Nola Crewe, GOTJ**



Greetings to the Dames, Knights, Postulants and Friends of the St James Priory:

We present for your edification and entertainment, our April Newsletter.

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Nola, Alastair, William & Harold
Your Scribes

**Homily
on the occasion of the...**

MARTYRS' MASS 1119 -1314



18 March 2011

To-day is not the day to reminisce over the victories and triumphs of our predecessors: their establishment by nine knights, led by Hugues de Payens, in 1119, of the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon; endorsed by the Pope; disciplined by the Rule of St Bernard de Clairvaux, their mentor and patron; committed to the protection of the Holy Lands' pilgrims.



Nor is it the time to recount their rise to power and influence as a fierce fighting force on land and sea, a favoured charity of kings and peasants alike, and the original bankers. They were principled, and committed to their faith. And they were one of the most feared combat forces of medieval times.

Nor is this a time to atone for the excesses of the Crusades or the barbarity exercised across Europe and the Holy Land in the Name of Christ, against fellow Christians as readily as against Muslims and Jews. In truth, Templars have less to atone for than most of the players of that barbaric time.

Instead, to-day is a day to remember the dark time when greed and debt drove King Philip IV of France and Pope Clement V to seize the assets and the members of our Order for their material advantage.



On Friday, October 13th, 1307 Philip ordered the arrest of the Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, and scores of French Templars were simultaneously arrested, on the grounds that "God is not pleased. We have enemies of the faith in the kingdom". In other words, the Templars were heretics: guilty of such wide ranging crimes as apostasy, idolatry, heresy, obscene rituals, homosexuality, financial corruption, fraud and secrecy. Torture was able to extract "confessions", but not truth. And torture was employed to that end and many succumbed.

On November 22nd, 1307 Pope Clement issued a papal bull instructing all Christian monarchs in Europe to arrest all Templars and seize their assets. In 1310 many French Templars were burned at the stake. In 1312 Pope Clement disbanded the Order, citing the public scandal generated by the confessions.



Two Templars burned at the stake.
From a French 15th century manuscript

Ten years ago, the "Chinon Parchment" was found in the Vatican's Archives. In it Clement absolves the Templars of all heresies: and the date is 1308 . . . four years before he disbanded the Order and six before the last Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake in Paris by order of King Philip IV. The Chinon Parchment lends weight to the notion that it was Philip who was the instigator and Clement, unable or unwilling, to protect the Templars, from the monarch set on their destruction.

It is in the spilling of innocent blood for base purposes that Martyrs are born: men and women who inspire others to follow in their footsteps, in serving their neighbour and loving their God. Our predecessors by their retraction of confessions secured through torture, and their embrace of death, rather than falsely confirming such confessions to heresy, blazed a trail that 700 years later we still follow. The first miracles of Molay came in the fulfillment of his prophesy that both of his tormentors would be before the Judgment Seat within the year. They were.

Further miraculous works are seen in the restoration of the Order, in its service to the poor and the victims of war, in its defence of the Holy Lands, of Christians and places of worship and its example of the Christian life to the world.

To-day we salute our martyrs. We cherish their memories. We commit ourselves, our Priory and our Order, to be worthy of the sacrifices made by those who went before us. May we so live our lives as to serve as an inspiration to those who follow us.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved – compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.

AMEN. Colossians 3:12-15

H.E. The Reverend Dame Nola-Susan Crewe, GOTJ
Prior – St James, Toronto, Canada

Dates

6 April 2011

Tartan Day in Canada and the USA for the Scots in our midst.

23 April 2011

St George's Day for the English in our midst.

28 April - 1 May

Spring Business Meeting, Mechelen (near Brussels) Belgium

28 May

Simon Peter Investiture (Ottawa) at Our Lady of the Airways, "*Our Lady of the Airways*" on the Uplands Military Base.

19-28 September (dates to be confirmed)

Knights Templar Castle Tour in France

24 September 2011

St James Investiture, at St James Cathedral and followed by our Banquet - details will follow

26 September 2011

The Feast of the Canadian Martyrs

5 November 2011

Ascension Investiture (Windsor) at the Church of the Ascension of Our Lord, 1385 University Avenue West, Windsor.

Prior's Perspective

We have been busy the last few months. Preparing the Annual Report; getting through the AGM; attending the UN's 55th Session on the status of Women as a Knight Templar NGO Delegate; preparing our annual report for the Grand Prior; and encouraging what looks to become a new Commandery, if not a Priory, in Edmonton this year.

We also have had a far greater number of potential Templars in Toronto than we have ever had. I am looking forward to the upcoming events when we will all get a chance to meet and greet them. We hold two events each year during the time of discernment. These events give us the opportunity to decide whether these candidates are a good fit, whether they will benefit our Priory and fit well with our membership. It is also a time for the candidates to decide if our mission and membership confirm their expectations and whether they continue to wish to become Templars.

Chev Nick Migliore has generously offered to host an event at the Albany Club. The date and time to be included in a soon-to-come invite. If there are days of the week that just don't work for you, please send them to one of our event organizers, Chev Derby Crewe at derbycrewe@rogers.com and we will try to accommodate the greatest number . . .

We now have a significant number of members and potential members in the north-west region of the GTA and Chev Tom and Dame Sabina are preparing our second social event of the year, one that involves BBQing a whole pig and having grand Templar feast. This will take place in Woodbridge.

Both events will give us the opportunity to renew and cement the friendships/relationships we already have and to get to know others. If you know of anyone who you see as a Templar for the future: bring them along to these or any other Templar gathering.

An event they might have enjoyed was on the 18th of March when we held the first (of what we trust will become an annual event) Martyrs' Mass for the Templars who were sacrificed to the greed of a dishonest and avaricious King 697 years ago. Tortured for years, long after the Pope had pronounced them innocent of the trumped up charges against them, and ultimately burned at the stake, they provide an example in which all Templars may take pride. They were not perfect. They wavered and weakened, but ultimately, they chose their God and their faith over the temptations and machinations of those who sought to destroy them. To-day our Order is challenged to emulate them.

We are still looking for volunteers for committee work: please consider how your talents and time could benefit our Order and those we seek to serve. Contact the Chancellor, Chev Keith at chancellor@torontotemplars.org or me at prior@torontotemplar.org.

Blessings and Peace
nnDnn

Jaw-Jaw or War-War?

**Bishop Pierre Whalon, Bishop of Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe.
Posted: March 10, 2011 02:27 PM in the Huffington Post**

Winston Churchill famously said, "It is better to jaw-jaw than war-war." Clearly, it is only when dialogue has ceased that the fighting can begin. But it is equally true that two sides -- nations, religions, tribes -- are either on the path to peace, or the path to war. There is no third way -- none.

René Girard, that great student of human motivation, describes in his new book, *Battling to the End* (original title *Achever Clausewitz**) how war starts from mimetic rivalry, following the classic theorist of war, Carl von Clausewitz. He described it clearly in his unfinished treatise, *On War*. As hostile feelings and intention between two peoples grow (the ground of war), "reciprocal actions" (*Wechselwirkung*) take place. In these reciprocal actions, Clausewitz fears a possible escalation to extremes (*Äußersten*), from "armed observation" (*bewaffneten Beobachtung*) to absolute war, but believes that counterweights to extreme action (such as fear of the enemy's potential for destruction, the "friction" of real elements (terrain, logistics, commanders' will, etc.), and the "fog of war" will always forestall such an eventuality. Underlying every conflict, Clausewitz detected a "strange triad" (*eine wunderliche Dreifaltigkeit*): "primordial violence, hatred, and enmity"; forces like "friction" and "the play of chance and probability"; and war "as an instrument of policy."

Since the beginnings of Islam, Christianity has been in a difficult relationship with it. When we are celebrating what we have in common, we are on the road to peace. When we perceive our differences as rivalry, we are starting down the road to war. In the 21st century, war is waged less and less between nation-states, but through terrorist groups who serve as proxies. There is certainly enough reason to wonder whether we have once again allowed "violence, hatred, and enmity" to surface in our relations as religions.

Of course, this is an abstraction. Religions do not relate, people do. But as we see fanatics hounding Christians out of the Middle East -- ancestral lands they have lived in centuries before Muhammad's birth -- the question becomes, whom are we dealing with? The killings of two government officials in Pakistan, seemingly with impunity if not outright approval, because they opposed the draconian blasphemy laws in force in that country ups the ante. As the Archbishop of Canterbury said on Monday last to the Pakistani government, "Do not imagine this can be 'managed' or tolerated."

Those of us who have been "jaw-jaw"-ing have even more items to talk about. In America, there is a growing movement to reject Islam out of hand. Peter King, the congressman chairing the Homeland Security Committee for the House of Representatives, is holding hearings on the place of Islam in America. In Europe, David Cameron, Prime Minister of Britain, and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France have denounced multiculturalism as a failure. There are disturbing trends being instrumentalized all around, Muslims praying in the streets of Paris, North Africans being discriminated against in Spain.

Are these not the "reciprocal actions" Clausewitz and Girard warn against? The threat of violence against moderates on both sides silences the voices of reason, those who understand best the value of dialogue.

This writer had the privilege to be part of the Washington Christian-Muslim Summit, which made a step toward the commitment of religious leaders to act for peace. But we need more and deeper dialogue with Muslims, in America and elsewhere. We Christians have something to explain to our dialogue partners, namely, that we have come a long way from our own tendency to murder everyone who disagreed with us. There were the pogroms against the Jews that indirectly helped the Holocaust to occur. The wars of religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries decimated Europe -- at least a third of the population was slaughtered in the name of the Prince of Peace. This laid the groundwork for the rise of modern atheism.

And there were the Crusades. They were an unabashed denial and betrayal of Jesus Christ as

well, as western Christians used the conquest of Jerusalem by a Muslim army as an excuse for war. We must recall not only the slaughter of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the First Crusade, but also the sack of Constantinople by Christians against other Christians.

We learned two things from our history: first, no religion should ever run the state, for it will end up being corrupted by the exercise of power. Islam is not exempt from this principle, by any means, as history shows very clearly. Neither is Judaism or any other religion. State atheism has the worst record of all. Second, no one should ever be put to death because of religion. Every human being must be free to encounter the divine on his or her terms, as Article 18 of the United Nations Charter states, and which all the Middle Eastern nations have signed. These two principles, written as it were in an ocean of human blood, are universal. They alone can stay the rise of hatred, if respected.

This means that Muslims must re-examine their own traditions, if we are to find the road to peace. We Christians have a tool developed over the past two hundred-fifty years. I am referring to what is generally known as the historical-critical method of examining the Bible.

This method examines the sacred texts from the point of view of historians and literary critics. Line up the four Gospels so that you can read them all at once, what is called a synopsis. Soon any reader will begin to notice how similar they all are, and how divergent as well. Matthew, Mark and Luke are more similar -- John stands out. Matthew and Luke seem to follow Mark, though each adds some materials of his own, and the two have material in common that Mark does not. How did these happen? What might they mean? Another kind of historical criticism collects and compares ancient manuscripts so as to compile texts that are as faithful to the originals as possible. Still another looks at ancient languages like Ugaritic and Aramaic to see what might lie under the finished Hebrew and Greek texts.

While some Christians complain that scholars using these methods are too skeptical, most Christians accept the value of historiography and literary studies of our Scriptures. We can now establish the historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth and demonstrate that the origins of the Church began with him, specifically, immediately after his death. We can show that our biblical texts have far more historical backing and accuracy than any other writings of the ancient world. Of course, none of this is ground for believing in Jesus Christ, but it discredits the claims of real skeptics that, for instance, Jesus never existed, that the New Testament is a fraud, or that the Church was an invention of Saul of Tarsus or later people.

By the same token, these studies undermine fundamentalistic readings of the Bible.

Many scholars, including some Muslims, have begun to examine the Quran and the origins of Islam with similar techniques. Their work is increasingly available. For example, Etienne-Marie Gallez has published a massive two-volume investigation of the origins of what eventually became Islam. (*Le messie et son prophète : Aux origines de l'Islam*) Among the findings of these scholars is the strong influence of Ebionite and Nazorean Christians on the earliest Muslims. These people read hardly any of the New Testament, and lived in expectation of a military-political Messiah on earth who would establish their religion around the world by force. The rise of the Damascus caliphate also strongly influenced the editing of what became the Holy Quran, as the interests of the caliphs were highlighted in the succeeding editions. There is also the collecting of the hadith, sayings of the Prophet, over centuries, and how they changed.

The name Muhammad occurs only four times in the Quran, and twice he is called Ahmad. Why? How did he come to be seen as the central figure, the last Prophet? Why is the story of Caliph U'mar (Omar)'s peaceful conquest of Jerusalem in 634 completely contradicted by other historical sources of the time? What do these mean? These are the types of questions that the historical-critical method raises in relation to Islam.

They are questions that we Christians need to ask our Muslim brothers and sisters to examine for themselves. It is not for us to presume that we can know the answers for them. But unless our dialogues are conducted not only in the respect that we are all people of faith -- the real ground we all share -- but also a quest to find the truth together, "jaw-jaw" will

eventually be silenced, and new wars of religion will become inevitable. The fundamentalisms that are distorted versions of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism are setting down the first leg of the strange and terrible triad of war, enmity between peoples. The movements of intolerance in the Middle East, mirrored by developing movements in the West, are the modern equivalent of armed observation. Terrorists perform "reciprocal actions" that can rise to total war.

Clausewitz, argues Girard, glimpsed the horror of total annihilation, but only as a theoretical possibility. He believed in the rational pursuit by political leaders of national interests, famously stating that "War is merely a prolongation of policy/politics (Politik) by other means." Furthermore, he thought that total war was impossible due to the logistics of "friction". But weapons technology has come a very long way since the Napoleonic wars that nurtured Clausewitz's vision, and nation-states have declined in the face of globalization. Total annihilation is now a real threat.

Is that what the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ wants? Does Allah require us to destroy our planet, and ourselves with it? This is of course unthinkable, and yet we both have found ways to think lesser versions of it in the past. Christians and Muslims need to jaw-jaw a lot more, a lot more deeply, and more sincerely, if we are to be people on the road to peace. There are certainly risks that must be taken. However, the alternative is so horrible that the risks are minimal by comparison.

My review of Achever Clausewitz can be found at
<http://anglicansonline.org/resources/essays/whalon/OnWar.html>

The Charlie Schulz Philosophy

The following is the philosophy of Charles Schulz, which we've Canadianised for our readers, the creator of the 'Peanuts' comic strip.

You don't have to actually answer the questions just ponder on them.



1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five MVP winners of the CFL.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss Canada pageant.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of Stanley Cup winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school

2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special!!
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier?

The lesson:

The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They simply are the ones who care the most.



Be Yourself. Everyone Else Is Taken!

Would You Like To Be Happy?

By Chevalier William Upper, CKTJ, MSc

For those of you that have not had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know our International Grand Commander, Major General Robert C.G. Disney, GCTJ, GMTJ, New York Army (retired) you are in for a treat as you will meet the genuine embodiment of our Order's purpose. International Grand Commander Disney not only teaches but also lives in an attempt to model his lifestyle to that of the original order of The Knighthood of The Temple as set out by St. Bernard in 1130. With such an example I would think it should be thus our individual goal as modern Knights & Dames to recall our oath which in part told us "to encourage all that makes for the spiritual and moral strengthening of mankind in accordance with the first great principle of the Order embodied in the motto:

"not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but thy name give glory"

On just about every occasion in which I have had the pleasure of hearing our International Grand Commander Speak he has reminded us to take time out each day to meditate. Now, in my travels I have learned that just about all civilized men and women have agreed on this single principle, that we should be leaving one day a week for contemplation against the other six which we should use to practice our goodwill towards our neighbors and friends. It has occurred to me that most, if not all, Knights & Dames I have met to date from around the world are individuals seeking to make the world a safer and happier place. Personally, I have and continue to strive towards, that illustrious objective but have found that I needed that extra little help from my spiritual self. Listening to the Grand Commander's request to mediate and not knowing just how to do so I started to research and read a wide variety of books on the subject of meditation. I discovered much, but one of the more important discoveries was about myself and my happiness. I would think that most reading this article would agree that we all want to be happy and would then further agree with me that it is much easier to make others happy if



we ourselves are happy. So I started looking within perfect silence at the light that was burning in my soul, my inner self, to be a better, happier individual, husband, partner and Knight. Of all the books that helped, one entitled THE ART OF HAPPINESS – by his Holiness the Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler, M.D. offered me the mental challenge I was seeking, the means to truly look within and discover me.

We, as Knights & Dames, do much for others by either giving of our time, talent or riches, isn't it time we gave ourselves a little gift of and to ourselves? We need to remember that those who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it to be goodness. Nothing is as sacred but the integrity of your own mind and soul. I encourage you to read this book and if at the end if you are not a happier person then at least you'll know why you are so happy with yourself.

St James Priory in the Holy Land



Dame Deb and Capt Chev Rob Tyler represented our Priory on their visit to Israel last year (and were excused from the Investiture to do so). We are now looking forward to a report for our Newsletter on all their adventures (hint, hint, nudge, nudge).

If any member is going to be visiting Templar sites or Pories on their travels, and would like a letter of introduction or some other greeting, please contact the Prior at 416 466 0311 or prior@torontotemplars.org

A Mechanic & A Doctor

By Chevalier William Upper, KCTJ

A motorcycle mechanic was removing a cylinder head from the motor of a Honda Spirit 750 low rider when he spotted the local cardiologist walk into the shop. The cardiologist was there waiting for the service manager to arrive and take a look at his Harley-Davidson bike when the mechanic shouted across the garage. :Hey Doc, want to see something?"

Curious the Doctor somewhat surprised, walked over to when the mechanic was working on the motorcycle. The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a oily rag and in a condescending tone said, "so Doc, look at this engine. I opened its heart, took the valves out, repaired all damaged, and then put them part in, and when I finish in another few minutes, this bike will run like its new."

"So how came I made \$32,000.00 a year and you make \$1.6 million when we do basically the same kind of work?"

The cardiologist paused, then leaned over, and whispered to the mechanic in a very calm voice. "try doing it with the engine running".

Knight Protector

The priory of St James is particularly blessed in our Knight Protector: Chev Nick Migliore, the President of The Reilly Group of Companies. Professionally Chev Nick provides security world-wide and at home he ensures safety for Templars. In his position Chev Nick receives a plethora of information as to what is REALLY going on in the world and why we should be concerned. Because much of this is for "Canadian Eyes Only", his materials will be made available in the Members' Only section of our website: www.torontotemplars.org

Annual Report

We now have the final copy of the Annual Report. It is being printed and copies will be available for purposes of introducing new members to our Priory's activities. However, do feel free to share this copy with anyone you are considering proposing for membership. You can download the report at <http://www.torontotemplars.org/documents/2010annualreport.pdf>

Anyone Can Sing

Anyone can sing. You just open your mouth,
and give shape to a sound. Anyone can sing.
What is harder, is to proclaim the soul,
to initiate a wild and necessary deepening:
to give the voice broad, sonorous wings
of solitude, grief, and celebration,
to fill the body with the echoes of voices
lost long ago to bravery, and silence,
to prise the reluctant heart wide open,
to witness defeat, to suffer contempt,
to shrink, lose face, go down in ignominy,
to retreat to the last dark hiding-place
where the tattered remnants of your pride
still gather themselves around your nakedness,
to know these rags as your only protection
and yet still open - to face the possibility
that your innermost core may hold nothing at all,
and to sing from that - to fill the void
with every hurt, every harm, every hard-won joy
that staves off death yet honours its coming,
to sing both full and utterly empty,
alone and conjoined, exiled and at home,
to sing what people feel most keenly
yet never acknowledge until you sing it.
Anyone can sing. Yes. Anyone can sing.

UN Report

Report on attendance of St James Prior, Nola-Susan Crewe, at the 55th Session on the Status of Women at the United Nations

In February I attended the 55th Session as a delegate of the Knights Templar. We are a recognized Non-Governmental Organization and as such were actively participating in the parallel events organized by the Member States and UN Entities. The particular session the Templars sponsored dealt with 21st century enslavement of women and girls. It was a time of new ideas, perspectives and people. Some that seemed so familiar and others so exotic. But all-in-all a tremendous learning experience. The group committed itself to doing even more next year, so if you have any ideas on what should be presented or what we have to offer that is unique: please talk to me about it.

I cannot recommend too highly our participation in International Templar and UN events whenever possible. Not only does it give us another perspective on our Order's works throughout the world, but it also increases our links with Templars world-wide.



Canadian Templars at the UN

This was my first chance to attend as a member of an NGO (non-governmental organization) and it is a very different perspective than when you wander through as a tourist. In fact, it was only as the session was winding down that I felt I had a clear grip on how to participate: despite the advice and companionship of all the other Templars.

You can read the report at

<http://www.torontotemplars.org/documents/UN%20Report2011Prior.pdf>

In fact our Web Master Stephen Lautens GCJ, CLJ, KCTJ, keeps all our documents at

<http://www.torontotemplars.org/documents.html>

Christians at Risk

Chev. Harold Nelson, KTJ

It would be lovely to have a Newsletter in which there were no atrocities to report. This month isn't going to be one of them. On March 20th in Jos, Nigeria, a bomb exploded prematurely, killing three men who were carrying it toward two churches: the intended targets were worshippers at the Evangelical Church Winning All (EDWA) and the nearby Church of Christ in Nigeria (COCIN). The same day, a bomb planted at the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Church in the same city failed to detonate.

In neighbouring Bauchi state, more than 4,000 people were displaced in a series of night attacks by Muslim Fulani tribesmen. 463 homes, 11 shops and 13 churches were burned.

Anti-Christian violence has increased in northern Nigeria since January of this year, when 200 armed Fulani youths attacked churches and Christian homes. Sectarian violence between Churches and Muslims in Nigeria began in 2001 with a large-scale riot in the city of Kaduna.

If you have the stomach for it, there is a site that keeps track of Islamic Terror Attacks on Christians since 9/11. It goes on for 28 pages.

<http://www.thereligionofpeace.com/Pages/ChristianAttacks.htm>

The Bible

And while we are on the subject of Christians, Chev Alastair started a discussion on that topic on the Electric Scotland Religion Forum.

I've been thinking recently about how it was that the Scots did so many amazing things in the world.

I have noted that religion was a huge influence in their lives and they certainly took that all over the world with them and as a result built thousands of churches.

I've often seen references to the fact that often the Bible was the only book they possessed and recently that has made me wonder if that was perhaps the key to why they did so well.

The Bible being the one book they possessed was obviously also used to teach children to read and write. And with all the books in the Bible there is much that can be learned from it as a way of living your life.

Now I'm not getting all religious here but I can't think of even one book today we would all read like the Bible was read in Scots homes a century and more ago.

I've commented in the past on how children could recite whole passages of the Bible. The visiting ministers would examine the children as to their knowledge of the Bible.

I remember at the church in Ahmadi, Kuwait we were given the task of learning all the names of the books in the old and new testaments and then when examined and we got them all correct the next Sunday we were presented with a copy of the Bible. I still have that Bible today and indeed used it for my swearing in ceremony as a Canadian citizen.

So in many ways the Bible was used as a school book and memorizing sections of it must have developed a retentive memory. This must have developed a mind set that helped the children when they attended schools. And the Ministers were quite often the school teachers.

The Bible is certainly not read as often today as it was a century ago. Church attendance is well down as well. So what has taken its place?

As far as I can see nothing has taken its place.

Most of the major publishers in the world were Scots. A lot of the major universities in the world were founded by Scots. But even if you discount Scots most of the Universities in the world were founded by Christians.

I keep looking at the inventions of Scots that totally changed the world. Transport - bridges, roads, canals, railways, steam boats, etc. In fact having just published the book Scots in England I was amazed at what they achieved in medicine and health care.

Then I compare that to what Scots are doing today and we seem to be a pale shadow of what we were. In many respects this seems to equate to the loss of the Bible in our lives.

And so I looked at what has replaced the Bible. You could say that the Internet has replaced the Bible. While it is a recent shift it seems that Facebook and Twitter and other social networking sites have replaced the Bible. I'm not sure what effect this is having on the minds of children. Is it helping them with developing a retentive memory? I somehow don't think so. In fact I've often said that my memory isn't that great and so the search engine on my site makes up for that.

Then if you watch any commentary on TV about education you can't help but be concerned how kids today are not doing as well at school. In the old days in Scotland school was free although you did need to pay something to go to higher schools and University although much of that was really just living expenses.

Today we seem to be caught up in a multi-cultural attitude where it is no longer "correct" to say Happy Christmas. You no longer get to sing a hymn at school. Yet we get to the point that the Muslim faith are building mosques in former Christian countries but a lot of Muslim countries won't tolerate Christians in their countries and won't let you build a church.

I'd go further in that the Muslim countries are gradually and steadily getting rid of Christians. See the recent bombings of churches in Iraq and Egypt. Turkey has almost eradicated Christians whereas it was formerly a very Christian country. Iran, Lebanon, etc. see dwindling number of Christians.

So with the Bible going out of fashion it seems that Christianity is dwindling as well. We don't seem to care that much about it any more and so the Muslim faith keep expanding as they obviously care a lot more about their religion than Christians do.

What I can't yet see is any evidence that the Muslim faith is producing the thinkers and innovators of tomorrow.

And so my question in all this is has the loss of that one book (The Bible) made a significant change to the world and to the Scots?

Alastair

And that evoked a response from our Prior . . .

As a minister, I would love to agree that it is the lack of the Bible that is responsible for the decline, but I fear it is much more that we have lost faith not merely in Christianity, but in ourselves and our values.

We have abandoned the old convictions that all we needed can be found in the Bible (which is true) and have found nothing to replace it with. We endlessly beat ourselves up for the wrongs we have done in the name of God/Christianity, but rarely do I see an outline such as in this article about the great things the Bible has inspired in us: personal responsibility, hard work, creativity, creating a better world for all. Respect for others, compassion, caring and charity are the virtues and values that Christ required of those who follow Him.

As parents, many have abandoned the concept of "spare the rod and spoil the child", but in its place all we have is a mushy "defend the child against any criticism or folly". Teachers and parents alike are threatened with social workers if they so much as give a punishment or criticize poor school work. A dose of reality is what is needed if society is not to face permanent decline.

Unfortunately, this uncertainty of what is "right" has also translated into refusing to pass on the faith of their family for fear the child will not want it: so they wait for faith to magically transform the child's life when "they can decide for themselves". How bizarre when we see it as our duty to pass on other values.

Muslims on the other hand, continue to have their children memorize the Koran, in a faith which does not permit dissent or discussion on how to interpret the real message and meanings of the writings in the 21st century of its passages (which was what the Enlightenment was all about).

The Bible if slavishly followed can lead to a lack of respect for science and rights. But a well-educated person needs the Book to provide values in their life and a context for their history. Hopefully, the great value of the Bible will once again be recognized before it is too late and it will return to its rightful place as the most influential book ever written.

Feel free to join the debate at

<http://www.electricscotland.org/showthread.php/1369-The-Bible>

With Chev Alastair on a roll, we move right along to the issue of money, medical care and justification . . .

Does everything need to be about money?

By Chev Alastair McIntyre KCTJ

Being a diabetic I take insulin and on a visit to my diabetic specialist this past week I was commenting about how the blood glucose meters seemed not to be giving entirely accurate results.

This came about as I have 2 meters and so decided to compare the results and got different readings from both.

I was told that the reading can be up to 30% out but it's the best system available to people testing at home.

I was quite horrified about this and suggested that with new meters coming out all the time that some research could be done to find the most accurate meter.

I was equally horrified to hear the specialist tell me that there was "no money in that".

How hard can it be to do tests on the most recent blood glucose meters or for that matter to contact the companies producing them for information?

You'd think that anyone would want to do the best they can to be good at their job and to my mind not doing simple research on an area that you work in every day and give out advice on is truly unacceptable. And to justify it by saying there is no money in it is just terrible.

Shirley & Marcy

A mother was concerned about her kindergarten son walking to school. He didn't want his mother to walk with him. She wanted to give him the feeling that he had some independence but yet know that he was safe. So she had an idea of how to handle it.

She asked a neighbour if she would please follow him to school in the mornings, staying at a distance, so he probably wouldn't notice her. She said that since she was up early with her toddler anyway, it would be a good way for them to get some exercise as well, so she agreed.

The next school day, the neighbour and her little girl set out following behind Timmy as he walked to school with another neighbour girl he knew. She did this for the whole week.

As the two walked and chatted, kicking stones and twigs, Timmy's little friend noticed the

same lady was following them as she seemed to do every day all week. Finally she said to Timmy, 'Have you noticed that lady following us to school all week? Do you know her?'

Timmy nonchalantly replied, 'Yeah, I know who she is.'

The little girl said, 'Well, who is she?'

'That's just Shirley Goodnest,' Timmy replied, 'and her daughter Marcy.'

'Shirley Goodnest?' Who the heck is she and why is she following us?

'Well,' Timmy explained, 'every night my Mum makes me say the 23rd Psalm with my prayers, 'cuz she worries about me so much. And in the Psalm, it says, ' Shirley Goodnest and Marcy shall follow me all the days of my life', so I guess I'll just have to get used to it!'

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

May Shirley Goodnest and Marcy be with you today and always.

Your Editorial Team