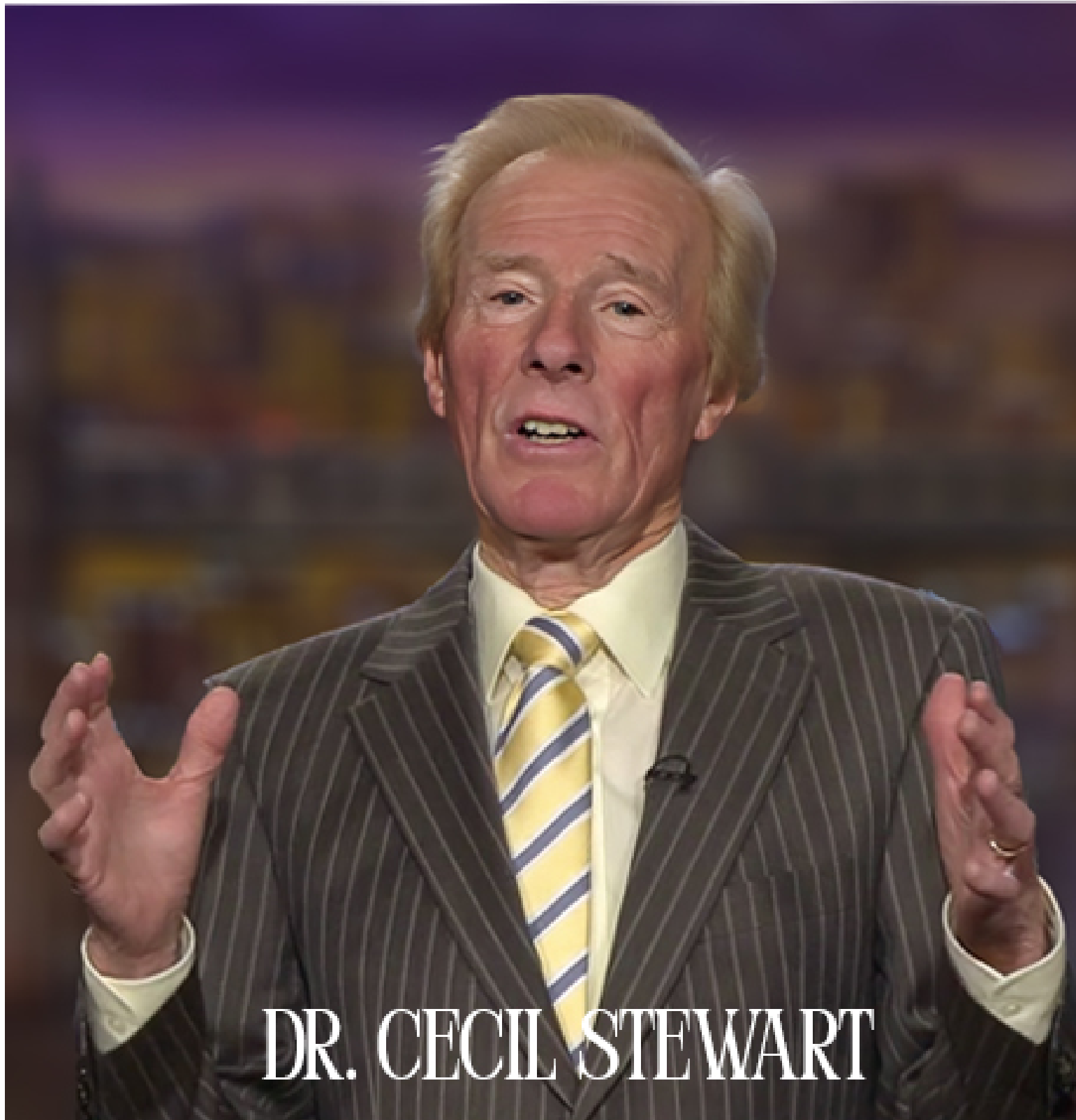




ISSUE 8

3-in-1

# THE VOICE



DR. CECIL STEWART



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FRONT COVER  
DR. CECIL STEWART OBE

## WELCOME!

Hello again and welcome to our eight edition of 3-in-1 The Voice!

January turned out to be a hectic month! Firstly, I had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing Pastor Bill Wilson Founder of Metro Ministries. The interview had been scheduled prior to the Haiti earthquake, but as the disaster in Haiti unfolded it became apparent very quickly aid was needed and fast! We therefore launched an additional supplement that you can download free online in our new supplement section, and read part of Pastor Bill Wilson's interview about the Haiti crisis. You can read the rest of the two-part special interview with Pastor Bill IN FOCUS, in forthcoming issues of 3-in-1 The Voice. We will be publishing updates on the Haiti situation throughout the coming months... The relief effort will be an indefinite ongoing situation but in the meantime the people need our help urgently, financially and in other ways, children have been orphaned, the elderly are sick, dying and homeless, the country is in turmoil. The worst disaster in recent history requires a biblical response so please do what you can and access the links in this issue and online to make a donation - \$8 will send a family package out there...

Also we attended 'The Open Heavens' conference in Bangor Co.Down at Towerview Free Methodist Church – where 3-in-1 The Voice conducted an interview with Mr Graham Gilliland. Graham and his wife Rachel were the chief organisers of the event and have many exciting plans for more events like this in Bangor in the future. You can read a full report coming in a forthcoming supplement...

In this edition we feature a **Dr CECIL STEWART O.B.E** who is the founder of CCN ministries based in Whiteabbey, N.Ireland. The ministry outreaches to all in need through various mediums, Television, Radio and most recently it has been involved in an exciting new project called The Dream Centre – read more IN FOCUS... Lorraine Wylie touches on the subject matter that has been on everyone's lips this month – First Minister Peter Robinson and his wife Iris and examines how we ought to respond as Christ did. There have been a couple of changes in the POET's CORNER, Cameron McIntyre due to unforeseen circumstances has decided to step down but we would like to thank him so much for his input in the initial stages of 3-in-1 The Voice and taking that leap of faith with us! Stepping up in his place is Zara Matthews, we will also start an important serialisation of Zara's story in our next issue which is both heart wrenching and inspirational, this is not to be missed defo! We welcome back Cecilia, Sylvia, Simon, Brigid, Mel and Lianne...And remember:-

**'Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup>because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.'** Romans 8: 1 & 2 (NIV)

Karin McBride-Chenoweth– Editor-in-Chief

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## Missionary Section



Brigid Kerr, our Youth Missionary Editor travelled down to Cork last summer to help out the summer camp and writes now to tell us about the Club.

### Cork 2009

As I mentioned in my review of 2009, during the summer, I was part of a team involved in reaching out to kids and teens through a Holiday Bible club in Cork. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you more of how God worked wonders in this city.

We had expected a good number of kids to register but on that first morning during registration, we were filled with excitement as we saw how God brought more and more kids through the doors. The kids were split into four separate groups according to their ages and then once they had been presented with name badges, they joined the singing and dancing in the main hall.

The aim of the morning club through Bible stories, crafts, a video and theme songs, was to show the children how Jesus gives them the power to be brave, to help others, to tell others about Him and to live forever. We hoped that we would also be able to show them that they were loved so much and that Jesus died for them.

Throughout the week, I saw God ministering to one of the little girls in our group and this experience really touched my heart and will stay with me forever. At the start of the week, this little girl hung back from the group, terrified and overwhelmed by the whole situation she found herself in and nothing seemed to persuade her to venture any further than the edge of the room. The only One who could help her is of course Jesus and so silent prayers were uttered on her behalf. Throughout the week, I experienced how Jesus

ministered to her heart and slowly but surely, by the end of the week, she was giggling with joy and participating in the activities! Jesus had given her the power to be brave! Of course, He ministered to every single kid in that club that week but they would hopefully have seen a difference in their little friend in the corner and my prayer is that they all became aware of His love and would one day accept Him as their Saviour.

As well as the kids club in the mornings, there was a club for teens in the evening. What is so special is that a lot of these teens have been coming to the club for years and have built up amazing friendships with some of the team who have faithfully come for the past ten years or so. Each evening, as well as games and songs, different members of our team did a talk for the teenagers. The talks were loosely based on the themes taken from the morning club i.e., how Jesus gives us the power to help others, tell others about Him etc.

However, we centred these talks on the core theme of a crossroad. At the end of the talks, after showing them that Jesus died for their sins and could do powerful work in their lives, we gave them the choice - did they want to follow Jesus and go God's Way in life or did they want to go their own way? The Lord worked His miraculous power in the evenings too. A couple of the guys sought out some of our team members to ask more about Jesus and one of them even made a commitment!

Yet more wonderful bonds of friendship were made during this week and these young people are kept close to the team's hearts throughout the year. I pray that those who have made a commitment keep close to the Lord. I pray that there will be mature Christians who will draw alongside these young people to encourage them in their walk with the Lord. I pray also that others who have not done so yet accept Him as their Lord and Saviour in years to come. I am so thankful to the Lord for His mighty works in Cork and I know that the rest of the team are equally as thankful.

**If you are a missionary please forward to Brigid  
your story at: [info@3in1publishing.co.uk](mailto:info@3in1publishing.co.uk)**



By

Simon Pearson, Zara Matthews & Keith Dickinson

### Holocaust Memorial Day 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010

*Lest we forget*

January saw the passing of Holocaust Memorial Day. Whilst maybe some of us pondered for a short time, there wasn't two minutes silence from Governments around the world to mark this day. Instead each Jewish community within their own country would mark this moment in their own way, quietly, peacefully and the world would again just continue to rotate with everyday life as usual; the haunting screams of the dead just an echo through time. The generational loss of the Holocaust cannot be overestimated, it was an abomination. Our world's most evil of moments...

As we look at the images which must be engraved in our minds we cannot ignore that some human beings with an inner strength somehow arose from the ashes and still resisted the Nazi's and all they stood for; with considerable personal risk to themselves and their families they fought back and became instant heroes. I have visited the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and it is a very moving experience, one I will never forget, particularly the memorial to the children, it was completely and utterly heart wrenching.

But as Holocaust Memorial day came and went one of those righteous people also passed away at the age of 100 years – MIEP GIES. Although she may not have been able to 'save' the Frank family, she became the custodian of one of the most important manuscripts - Anne Frank's Diary and in a way kind of 'saved' us from ourselves. As we all know this diary was written by a little girl. It became the candle of hope in all our lives and one of the most utilised tools to educate the next generation about the Holocaust. Therefore the power of the written word also cannot be overestimated. Thanks to the years of tireless work of many Jewish people in our communities from survivors of the camps, to film makers and to a little girl who wrote a diary, we have an opportunity to remember and to examine ourselves.

So as we pause we offer up our prayers for the dead, we draw alongside our Jewish brothers and sisters and we state 'we will remember them'...to not remember and learn and pass on what happened - well that would surely be the greatest crime...and we ought to offer up a prayer also for ourselves - that we will never ever again be found wanting...

Editor

### PAPER THIN HEART

A blackness fills man's heart. A void darker than  
night itself.

A bringer of pain, sorrow, shame and misery.

The brilliance of heaven is eclipsed by the glory  
of the King upon his throne. The pinnacle of  
grace and mercy

Tear filled eyes soak heavens floor.

A fathers heart broken by children's sinful plight.  
A lament rises from the depths of God's heart,  
reaching to the furthest regions of heavens  
domain. Angel voices chorus their creators cry.

His messengers take flight, with his lament to a  
world below.

Hear it!!! It's carried along on a breeze down the  
streets. Past the dancers who dance to sin's  
merry tune. It whispers in the doorways, where  
huddled bodies naked, unclothed, nurse their  
wounded lives.

The tear stained pillow.

The skin deep paper thin heart, cut to pieces by  
a strangers hand. Locked away from the outside  
world's glare. How it weeps!

It's sorrow too deep to describe man's  
forgetfulness. Down the road it goes, to the left  
to the right.

To homes bright with light., it knows they are  
filled with warmth and love. Can you hear it's  
gentle, still, voice upon the breast of your heart.

"Hungry and thirsty am I will you feed me?"

"Naked am I will cloth me?"

"Sick am I , will you tend to me and visit me?"

Hear this cry upon your heart today.

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## IN FOCUS

**Dr CECIL STEWART O.B.E**

Founder/President Christian Communications Network (CCN)

Dr. Stewart founded CCN in 1989 as part of the continuation and expansion of the ministry that he had been involved with since the early 1960s. In 1997 thirty nursing homes were sold to allow Cecil to devote more time to ministry and charitable works. Ordained by International Gospel Outreach in 1966 Cecil has received PhDs in Ministry, Humane Letters and Religious Philosophy and been conferred the Order of the British Empire (O.B.E) in 1998 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

**Q Hello Dr Stewart, lovely to talk to you. Ok here is my first question – you have become one of the foremost businessmen and consultants in Ireland, businessmen are motivated by different things what drove or motivated you to succeed?**

**A Really it is I believe vision and purpose in business that is the main key. What you feel you're really meant to be etc – you must have the vision to see a dream become a reality and that is what has motivated me over the years. I never lost sight of the dream.**



**Q You have been a believer since a teenager, did you ever feel that there was a special anointing on your life? If so did you ever consider becoming a pastor?**

**A Yes indeed I received salvation as a teenager, however, I nearly always had a sense**

*that there was more to life than just financial gain and that I was meant to bring the good news of the gospel. Being redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, yes I feel that I have been an evangelist and with the help of the Holy Spirit I have pursued this at Government level and within Church leadership. It has always been important to me to benefit humanity and help to empower others to catch the vision of what God wants to do in their lives.*

**Q How do you feel that your faith shapes the important decisions that you have to make on a day to day basis?**

**A It is absolutely key to making wise decisions and to depend on God's wisdom and not one's own. However, we are only human and make mistakes, I have made many but I have always found that God will always adjust your path and course if you do make mistakes so long as one tries to do the right thing, God's mercy is always there.**



**Q Dr Stewart you have been honoured by Her Majesty the Queen what did this mean to you personally to be recognised at such a level?**

**A Initially I was quite shocked and surprised whenever I received the letter from the Queen and that I was to be awarded the OBE. It was indeed a great honour but I really felt it didn't just belong to me but to my team and family as well.**

**Q People whether in business or not are suffering the effects of an economic recession, what advice would you have to any man or woman trying to ride out the current economic storm?**

A *Lean on Jesus. It is written 'In the world you will have tribulation...' (John 16:33) weather the storm; cast your cares upon Him. We are His and we are told that He will look after us. Anxiety at times can appear to overwhelm us but I really believe that if we each count our blessings not our problems which are temporal we will overcome adversity — 'And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus' Philippians 4:19*

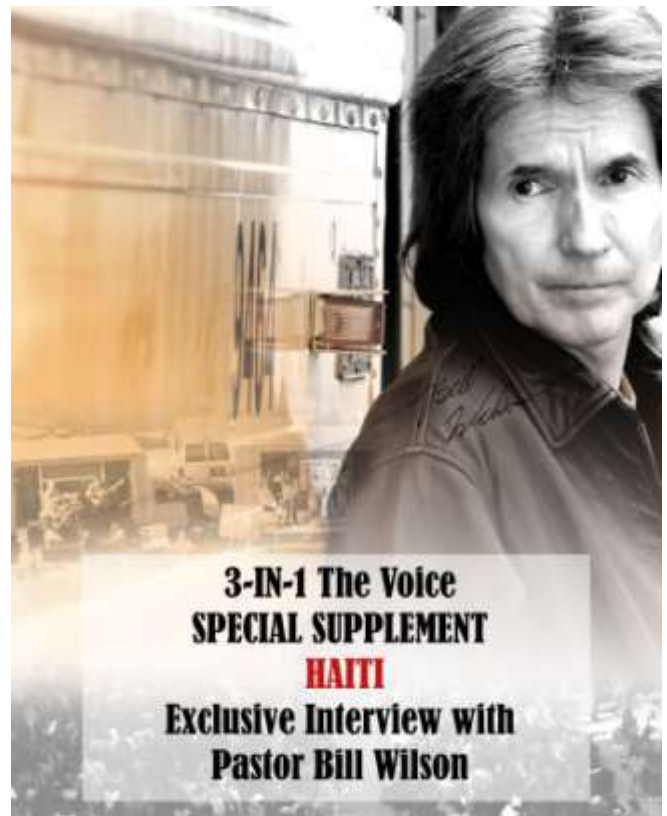
Q On a previous visit to the Dream Centre in LA, you were asked to bring this vision to Ireland how will this enhance the lives of people living here?



A *The Dream Centre is really in its infancy but will help people with addictions, the young, those who are broken-hearted and single mums. Our aim is to mobilise people, organisations to network and utilise their power and ability. We are exploring this possibility in Northern Ireland and currently studying how this will work. We would ask people to pray for us and if they are interested to get in touch with us at website.*

Q Finally Dr Stewart what plans do you have for the future?

A *We are expecting very exciting days ahead to help the young people and give them a vision of hope. We already broadcast to the nations and are reaching millions every week but there is still much to do...*



OUT NOW! – 3-in-1 Special Supplement Section – HAITI Disaster Update with Pastor Bill Wilson Metro Ministries...

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**Next time – Graham Cole - Actor**

## HEROES



### FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE – Part I

By

Lianne Henderson

#### EARLY LIFE

Florence Nightingale was born in Florence, Italy on the 12 May 1820. Her father was the wealthy landowner William Nightingale a Unitarian and a Whig (those who opposed the religious policies of Charles II), and was involved in the anti-slavery movement. Florence was very close to her father as a child, he did not have a son and he treated Florence as a friend. He educated her in Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian, history, philosophy and mathematics. Florence's mother Fanny Nightingale was very different to her husband. She was a domineering woman whose primary concern was finding her daughter a perfect husband!

#### GOD'S CALLING

When Florence was seventeen she had an experience that would change her life, she felt like God wanted her to do some great cause, which was not as yet revealed to Florence. Because of this experience she caused great upset to her mother whenever she turned down a marriage proposal to the Lord Houghton. She then refused many other suitors and at the age of twenty-five she stunned her middle class parents when she said she wanted to become a nurse. Feeling that this was the calling that the Lord wanted her to do Florence embarked on what would become a pivotal moment in her life and make her a history maker...

Her parents were against the idea of her becoming a nurse, as nursing was associated with working class women. This left Florence very discouraged, however her desire was reinforced when she met Elizabeth Blackwell at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London. Blackwell was the first woman to qualify as a doctor in the United States. Florence learned that Blackwell had to overcome extreme prejudice and she encouraged her to keep trying to convince her parents to allow her to become a nurse. In 1851 Florence's father gave her the permission she so eagerly desired. The overjoyed woman now 31 went to Kaiserswerth Germany where she studied nursing at the Institute of Protestant Deaconesses. After two years of intense study she was appointed resident lady Superintendent of a hospital for women in Harley Street London.

#### THE CRIMEAN WAR

In March 1853 Russia invaded Turkey. Britain and France, who were concerned about the growing power of Russia, went to Turkey's aid. This conflict was known as the Crimean War. Soon after the British Soldiers arrived in Turkey, an outbreak of Cholera and Malaria struck them, within a few weeks 8000 men were suffering from these two deadly diseases.

Mary Seacole, an expert nurse in dealing with Cholera, heard about the Cholera epidemic. She travelled to London to offer her services to the British Army. Due to the fact she was a woman serving in medicine the government rejected her offer. Soon afterwards The Times publicised that a large number of British Soldiers were dying from Cholera causing a public outcry and the government was forced to overturn its decision. Nightingale volunteered her services and was eventually given permission to take thirty-eight nurses to Turkey.



When Nightingale arrived to Turkey she was shocked and appalled at the conditions of the army hospital in Scutari. The men were kept in rooms without blankets or a decent floor. They were unwashed and were still wearing their army uniforms that were stiff

with "Dirt and Gore". Nightingale realised that in these conditions it was no wonder that in army hospitals, war wounds only counted for one death in six. Disease such as typhus, cholera and dysentery were the main reasons why the death rate was so high amongst wounded soldiers. Nightingale knew she had to reform the military hospitals to prevent any more death, she soon began to realise that this was the unknown cause that God called her to do when she was seventeen.

#### A FIGHT FOR BETTER CARE

Military officers and doctors objected to Nightingale's views on reforming military hospitals. They interpreted her comments as an attack on their professionalism and made her feel very unwelcome. Due to the lack of support from the military Nightingale decided to use the contacts that allowed the nurses into Turkey in the first place. She used The Times to report details on how the British Army treated its wounded. John Delane the editor of the newspaper took her cause, and after a great deal of publicity Nightingale was given the task of organising the barracks hospital after the battle of Inkerman. By dramatically improving the sanitation she was able to dramatically reduce the death-rate of her patients, her voice had won out!

Part II next issue...





## EXCLUSIVE

### *A Thing Called Love!*

By Lorraine Wylie

February used to mean a bouquet of roses, dinner for two and a heart shaped box of my favourite chocolates. Thirty years and three kids later it's a Chinese take-away in front of the telly. If he's feeling very romantic, a tub of Haagen-Daz ice cream is added to the menu. How times have changed!

St Valentine's may be the day when the world's attention is focused on love. Cynics could point out that it is just another commercial enterprise designed to lighten both wallet and purse. But for romantics everywhere, it's time for sentiment and expressions of affection.



But for all who claim to be Christians, there is no such definite date. It might be easier if we only had to exercise patience, kindness and charity on an annual basis. Instead God, not only expects, but commands us to demonstrate His love every day of the year. As though that weren't enough, he also tells us to practice the non selective variety. In other words Christians don't get to choose the recipients. They are meant to love neighbour and enemy alike, regardless of who makes the heart flutter.

It's a Christian principle most find difficult, still, Jesus' teaching is clear, true Christian love has no exceptions. But trying to fan a non-existent emotion can at best lead to frustration and guilt or become a masquerade for hypocrisy. Surely the love that Jesus had in mind would never bear the hallmark of insincerity. Obviously, its character must be something other than sentiment or emotion.

Still, the story of the Good Samaritan isn't recorded for its entertainment value. It is an example of 'love' in action. The man who went to help the unfortunate victim didn't ask his religion, before dressing his wounds. Neither did he consider if he liked the man enough to get his clothes bloodied before carrying him. Scripture doesn't say if the Samaritan was in a hurry that morning but the incident certainly cost him some time, a valuable commodity in any culture. It also made his money bag a lot lighter. Finance is a currency we all understand and most, from sheer necessity, guard carefully. Yet, such was the depth of compassion for a total stranger's misfortune, that the man from Samaria gave from his storehouse of what we often treasure most, time and money. This is the true nature of love for our fellow man. Sentiment costs nothing; emotion is subject to moods and circumstances. But it is compassion that bears the fruit of Christian love.

### THE ROBINSON'S

Recently, the papers have been filled with the tragic tale of betrayal. There are no words to describe the agony of the wounds inflicted by those we trusted and loved most in the world. The gut wrenching ache that seems to spread to every part of the body, infiltrating the deepest recesses of mind as well as spirit, is indescribable. They are the deepest cut of all. Yet, in all the media coverage, it appears that the only people to pass by the scene are those suffering from detached apathy, moral indignation or morbid curiosity. There was no



sign of mercy. Not a Good Samaritan in sight. In fact, the only voice of compassion came from the corner least expected, Peter Robinson.



Iris Robinson

Later, a different tragedy hit the scene of time, bringing chaos and destruction to, not one, but hundreds of thousands of families. The Haiti earthquake did what Mother Nature's fury often does, it focused attention on the most basic aspect of life - survival. While the West dallied with lurid rumours and speculation, the people of Haiti fought for their lives. Somehow, the sound of children weeping manages to drown the inconsequential whispers of tabloid rumours.

No doubt Peter Robinson and his family will feel their pain for a very long time. There is no remedy to ease or shorten their suffering. But perhaps, as Good Samaritans, we can pour in a little oil of understanding and sympathy. Give them the space and time necessary to heal.

As for Haiti that is a disaster where passing by on the other side of the street is just not an option. Regardless of political or religious beliefs, our humanity demands that we do our utmost to help. Already, organisations like the Red Cross have swung into action bringing the glue of compassion to help piece together the fragmented pieces of shattered lives. Celebrities, politicians, businessmen, and many from other walks of life are heeding the cries of despair and contributing from their individual storehouses.



**'Passing by? Not an option':** A child is rescued by an emergency worker from the rubble in Haiti. The earthquake hit the country in January 2010.

It is interesting to note that, in the Biblical account of what makes a Good Samaritan, there is no mention of an epilogue to the story. Finally as we examine the story of the Good Samaritan further we could stop to ponder as to whether or not the men became friends or not but this remains a mystery. Perhaps gratitude led to a more neighbourly relationship? On the other hand, maybe bigotry and hatred won out? But it doesn't really matter what followed, the important fact is that Christian love doesn't mean liking our neighbour. It has a much stronger more profound character. After all, doesn't it say that Christ died for us while we were still the enemy? This kind of love doesn't need to be cultivated, neither can it be. If we belong to Christ, surely His Spirit will ignite the love He desires. In the face of need, whether it's that of Peter and Iris Robinson, the people of Haiti or even the woman next door, we should be there, oil and wine - ready and waiting!

# The Gate

Melanie Henderson

3-in-1 Publishing welcomes regular columnist Melanie Henderson to The Voice. Melanie will explore the Holy Land in this series. She will explore the different biblical sites throughout Israel.



Click on image to see more detail

## The Golden Gate



As it is called in Christian literature, the Golden Gate. It is the oldest of all the other gates in the Jerusalem Old City Walls. In Jewish tradition, the Shekhinah (or Divine Presence) used to appear through the Golden Gate, and it will appear again when the Messiah comes. As you can see it is written in **Ezekiel 44:1-3**: *"Then the man brought me back to the outside gate complex of the Sanctuary that faces east. But it was shut. God spoke to me: 'This gate is shut and it's to stay shut. No one is to go through it because God, the God of Israel, has gone through it. It stays shut. Only the prince, because he's the prince, may sit there to eat in the presence of God. He is to enter the gate complex through the porch and leave by the same way.'"*

That is why the Jews had to pray for mercy at the former gate of this, hence the name, the Gate of Mercy. In Christian apocryphal texts, the gate was the scene of a meeting between the parents of Mary. In Arabic, it is known as the Gate of Eternal Life. In ancient times, the gate was also known as the Beautiful Gate.

There were remains found of a much older gate dating back to the times of the Second Jewish Temple. The present one was probably built in the 520s CE. An alternative theory holds that it

was built in the later part of the 7th century by Byzantine artisans employed by the Umayyad khalifs.

The Golden Gate is situated in the middle of the eastern side of the Temple Mount. In this position of the portal, it was believed to have been used for ritual purposes in Biblical times. In the Jewish tradition, this is the only gate through which the Messiah will enter Jerusalem.

Ottoman Sultan Suleiman I sealed off the Golden Gate in 1541 in order to prevent the Messiah's entrance. The Muslims also built a cemetery in front of the gate, in the belief that the precursor to the Messiah, Elijah, would not be able to pass through, since he is a Cohen. A Cohen is a Jew who is in direct descent from the Biblical Aaron, the older brother of Moses, with an honoured status in Judaism

The Golden Gate is one of the few sealed gates in Jerusalem's Old City Walls, along with the Huldah Gates, and a small Biblical and Crusader-era postern located several stories above ground on the southern side of the eastern wall

## Attractions

### THE DOME OF THE ROCK



The main attraction that is next to the Golden Gate is the Dome of the Rock. The Dome of the Rock is a beautiful Islamic shrine which houses the

Foundation stone. The Foundation Stone is the name of the rock at the heart of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The Foundation Stone is situated in a safe place inside the dome. It is highly precious, and it is also referred to as the Pierced Stone due to the rock having a small hole on the south-eastern corner of the rock that enters a cavern beneath the rock. This is known as the Well of Souls. The Well of Souls is a natural cave, which is located immediately beneath the Foundation Stone in the Dome of the Rock, on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

In addition to this, a small well-shaped hole in the stone that looks into the cave, there is also an entrance on the southern side, which you can see a set of steps passing through a gap between the stone and the surrounding bedrock. This cave takes the form of a moderately sized room (this is similar in floor space to the stone).

From the ceiling curved gently to the floor having been flattened and carpeted, the southern end of the cave, through which the steps enter it, has man-made walls in order to provide structural support to the cave roof above the site.

It is the holiest site in Judaism and one of the holiest sites in Islam, and it is a major landmark which is located on the Temple Mount, Jerusalem. This spectacular structure was completed in 691, which makes it the oldest ever Islamic building in the world. Its significance stems from the religious beliefs to do with the rock at its heart! It is believed in some quarters of Judaism that it contains the rock on which Abraham took Isaac to offer him up to God as a sacrifice, it is special to Christians as they believe that it is also the place of the ascension into heaven by Jesus and in Islam it is believed that it is the site where the prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven accompanied by the angel Gabriel...this makes the site one of the most important to the three main religions in the world today and one of the most visited...

## The Pathway



### THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WAR ON CHRISTIANITY

By Cecilia Chiwaka

Africa is one of the most beautiful places on earth. It is a wild, untamed beauty. The animals, though dangerous, range between being majestic, like the lion and elegant or elegant like the antelope. The sunsets are unrivalled. The people are friendly and welcoming. Underneath this façade, though, lurks the sinister world of ancestral worship and witchcraft and unfortunately this rivals Christianity.

I was raised by Roman Catholic parents. My parents went to church without fail every Sunday, but my father practiced (and still does) ancestral worship. He believed in old traditions such as when a member of the family died, after a few months, the living relatives would have a ceremony where cattle was slaughtered and the blood smeared on the grave of the deceased. In some instances, potent beer was brewed and drunk by the men. This was supposed to make sure that the spirit of the deceased would rest in peace. On some occasions, people can start behaving like animals, writhing on the ground like snakes or jumping around like monkeys. The belief was that the spirits of other past deceased relatives were manifesting in these people showing their appreciation. This of course is a belief that contradicts the word of God. God clearly said that we should not worship any other God besides Him and these traditions are clearly idolatrous.

My paternal relatives also liked to visit witchdoctors whenever they had a problem or a conflict in the house. Witch doctors are similar to sorcerers. They are believed to predict where your problem is coming from and give you instructions on how to get rid of them. These instructions are very unsavoury and most of the time include the use of blood and potions made out of plants and/or animals. Many children are abused as purity is seen as a source of cleansing people from misfortune as advised by witch doctors. I remember as a child being in a room with my aunts who were half naked and kneeling on the floor. My grandfather drank some water and proceeded to spray it with his mouth over all of us. I was very young at the time but I can only presume it was some sort of cleansing event!

It was very hard growing up in such an environment as I loved the Lord from a very young age. Something deep within my soul told me that these witchcraft practices were wrong. I was in conflict with my father and my relatives

because of their beliefs. Fortunately my grandmother was a very strong Christian and often took me to a bible believing church every time I went to visit her. African praise and worship is powerful. The presence of God is always felt so strongly in church so whenever I went to a church service I was uplifted and fed but when I returned home, there was a dark atmosphere I could not explain. It seemed that, as soon as I had received nourishment from the word of God, it disappeared in the acidity of evil. I had many nightmares growing up and even slept with the light on and I believe this was because of evil spirits called upon by my father and relatives. I had the light of Jesus in me, but it was not bright enough yet as I lived in constant fear and not faith.

There are many churches in Africa but unfortunately, the same people who worship regularly on Sunday, would visit witch doctors on the other days of the week. People do not fully trust the Lord to deliver them from their problems so they seek alternative means. It is a parallel to what happens in the first world where the people who attend church and believe in the bible can also take drugs or other addictions as an escape from problems or sufferings. Suffering will make you do anything to try and diminish the pain that you are feeling. The African people suffer very much from poverty, war and famine so they are vulnerable to lies and manipulation. It is ironic that the very people from whom they seek redemption from poverty, i.e. the witch doctors, offer their services from the interior of a very small and very dirty mud hut. They do not themselves drive flashy cars nor live in mansions!

Much of the ancestral worship in Africa is ritualistic and there are always certain procedures to follow. One example is that when you are married and are pregnant with your first born child, your husband is obliged to leave you at your parent's house until you give birth where your mother helps you to look after the child. Your husband has to buy a goat which he in turn has to kill and drain of blood. Most of these rituals are to appease elders who wish old traditions to be carried on but the bible tells us that the only one we have to please is God and that the only blood that redeems us is that of Jesus Christ.

The conclusion to my story is that I chose to follow the Lord with all my strength. I sought Jesus, whom the bible calls the Light of the World, to deliver me from the darkness of witchcraft and the more I prayed and understood the bible, the lighter I felt, the more peace I had and the happier I was. My father disowned me for a while because I decided to follow my own path and not his but it was worth the sacrifice. Africa needs this same light, pure and unmixed with any other practice to free it from the darkness of witchcraft. Animals like the leopard, the lion and the buffalo look powerful and awesome from afar, up close they are extremely dangerous. Witch craft is the same. From afar, it seems powerful and capable of solving problems but up close it is a deadly force which is impossible to tame. However, the bible tells us that we are more than conquerors and many Christians intend to win this war that is raging between Christianity and witchcraft.



## *The Grapevine*



3-in-1 The Voice is delighted to introduce you to Sylvia Reeve.

## *An Identity Crisis*

For as long as I can remember I have had an identity crisis. Being the youngest of three children, I was known as 'the baby of the family', 'the little one', even 'the last of the litter', by my parents and siblings. Then over the years I would hear the terms; chunky, chicken, luv', darlin', and couz'(cousin), all terms which were and still are, recognised in the north of England where I grew up.

Then, I became an auntie, a wife, a mother and Foster mother. Sadly when my first marriage ended, I was often introduced as the ex-wife of---; so and so's mother, or foster mother; not '*this is*', or '*do you remember*', adding my name. I became so incensed by 'not being me', I once went on holiday, telling my grown up children if they needed to contact me urgently, my solicitor would be able to get hold of me! It really felt so good being anonymous for a while, albeit conceding to a tiny shred of guilt. That feeling was short lived though, because everything went back to normal when I returned home. I must have been very naive or desperate to think it would all go away.

As the years rolled on, I picked up other titles, some I won't enlarge upon. I became very receptive to jibes and people's weird sense of humour and, as a result of the rejection I felt as a child (another story) feeling hurt by a thoughtless comment, or joke at my expense. It was many years before I was able to look at myself with a feeling of self worth and self esteem. If it hadn't been for a very special person in my life, who showed me the way to Jesus, it could have taken a lot longer.

But why do I say have an identity crisis? I know who I am, those close to me know who I am, and more important God knows who I am. He knows everything

about me, the good, the bad and the ugly. Oh yes, I do not pretend that my life and how I live it has always been good; nor do I pretend that there haven't been ugly times when I have failed in my promises to my Saviour. There have been times when I wished my life wasn't so transparent to His eyes, that He couldn't see what I had done, heard what I said, knew what I was thinking and even those things which will lay dormant until He decides it is time for them to emerge.

I wonder if *He* thinks I have an identity crisis and that I am many different people in one body, the body He made, just as He made all of us- in His image. In *His* image! Well that's frightening, if it were true; but isn't it? He *did* make us in His own image, a perfect being; only to see that piece of clay so carefully sculpted by the supreme potter; succumb to the heavy hand of temptation, sin and denunciation, altering its shape so that it begins to look distorted. The extreme heat and power of the fiery furnace, fuelled by hate, violence, abuse and war, cracking the masterpiece until it becomes abhorrent to His eyes.

Do I fit into any of these categories? Do any describe me in one of my many identities? I pray not. Perhaps in the past some of them, but hopefully I have atoned and my Saviour is leading me on the path of righteousness. He holds me in His grasp, without chaining my soul. For it is I who must take what He offered; respect what He suffered and died for; share what He bestowed on me; yes *me*; the one with the identity crisis, which is - or was only in my eyes. In His eyes I *am* special, individual, and above all worth suffering for. What an honour! All I have to do is to remember who I am, and who He is. The road is still long and tough; and there will be many choices to make, but the sign posts are laid down in His word, so I will endeavour to trust and obey.

My phone doesn't often ring, most people contact me by e mail or msn; so when I hear the word '*mum*', after picking up the receiver, my heart lifts, because that is the only identity for the last forty two years, which has not been in question.

Whatever title we answer to in our daily life, if we love the Lord, then *whatever* and *whenever* He calls us, we are His child, He is our Father. May God Bless you all.

Sylvia

Oh and by the way, since living in Derbyshire, I am now a '*duck*', but so is everyone else!





## *The Word of God* February

1<sup>st</sup>

*Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?"* **2 Chron 1:10**

2<sup>nd</sup>

*Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I believe in your commands.* **Ps 119:66**

3<sup>rd</sup>

*One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.* **Prov 11:24**

4<sup>th</sup>

*to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.* **Eph 1:6**

5<sup>th</sup>

*She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.* **Prov 31:20**

6<sup>th</sup>

*but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.* **Isaiah 40:31**

7<sup>th</sup>

*Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.* **Ps 37:7**

8<sup>th</sup>

*The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying, 'Destroy him!'* **Deut 33:27**

9<sup>th</sup>

*my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my Saviour- from violent men you save me.* **2 Sam 22:3**

10<sup>th</sup>

*But my mouth would encourage you; comfort from my lips would bring you relief.* **Job 16:5**

11<sup>th</sup>

*For your Maker is your husband - the LORD Almighty is his name - the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.* **Isaiah 54:5**

12<sup>th</sup>

*Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.* **Rev 1:7**

13<sup>th</sup>

*"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."* **Rev 22:7**

14<sup>th</sup>

*He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

**Rev 21:4**

15<sup>th</sup>

*"For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity. In my faithfulness I will reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them.* **Isaiah 61:8**

16<sup>th</sup>

*The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.* **Jer 31:3**

17<sup>th</sup>

*I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.* **Luke 15:7**

18<sup>th</sup>

*Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!* **Rom 5:9**

19<sup>th</sup>

*For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."* **Heb 8:12**

20<sup>th</sup>

*An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.* **Prov 24:26**

21<sup>st</sup>

*It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.* **Luke 17:2**

22<sup>nd</sup>

*God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you <sup>7</sup>and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well.* **2 Thess 1:6**

23<sup>rd</sup>

*He **is** the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just **is** he.* **Deut 32:4**

24<sup>th</sup>

*He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters.* **Ps 18:16**

25<sup>th</sup>

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.* **Matt 11:28**

26<sup>th</sup>

*Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the **joy** of the LORD is your strength."* **Neh 8:10**

27<sup>th</sup>

*I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.* **Rev 21:2**

28<sup>th</sup>

*He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.* **Rev 3:5**

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