



Autumn has come and it will not be long before the trees are mere dark skeletons – a shadow of their former glory.

When last autumn was in full swing and the leaves took on their usual, red, gold and russet shades, my grandkids were making a collection of them. So, I collected some beautiful red and yellow ones from St. Albans Park and sent them to Wales, where they live. Most people really enjoy a beautiful autumn, visually drinking in the glorious shades and hues. And truly, this latest “Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,” as John Keats referred to it, was a kaleidoscope of colour that seemed to go on and on. Strange that we only pay attention to the leaves when they are dying, any other time of year we pretty well ignore them. Yet the whole time that they are attached to the twigs of the tree they drink in poison (CO₂), from the air and refuse to return in kind but exhale life giving oxygen for us to breathe in order to survive. It has been said that “Trees are the lungs of the world!”

Even when leaves die and fall to the ground, at face value they look totally useless – apart from being in a pretty photograph or the collection of some children. But surprise, surprise even at this final stage of their life they become even more useful as they offer up everything to bring nourishment to the soil. All these fallen leaves are at present becoming food for worms and eventually leaf mould to nourish forest floors and gardens over the winter and build up the soil as a foundation for the beauty of spring flowers, bluebells, daffodils, and all the others, to add once again to our enjoyment and our benefit – such fragile things but what a life of service and giving to humanity. So, why do we need to bother to appreciate leaves that are here today and gone tomorrow?

Because, God creates billions and billions of them season by season, and he does so faithfully, year after year – or we wouldn't be here to take the time to appreciate them, or acknowledge him as Creator.

We live in a world of wonders but most of the time they have become run-of-the-mill. We dwell amongst incredible miracles but we have grown blind to them, we are lavished with gifts that we now expect or ignore.

For example, as one anonymous writer puts it: "A man whispered, 'God speak to me' and a meadowlark sang. But the man didn't hear. So, the man yelled, 'God speak to me' and the thunder rolled across the sky. But the man didn't listen. The man looked around and said, 'God let me see you' and a star shone brightly. But the man didn't notice. Then he

shouted, 'Show me a miracle', and a child was born. But the man didn't know. In despair he cried out, 'God, touch me and let me know you're there' and God reached down and touched him. But the man brushed the butterfly off his shoulder and walked away without knowing."

As God's children we all need to laugh and rejoice in the creation of God, as we see clearly and appreciate the beautiful gifts he has given us – even a bunch of leaves; as one person remarked – "Autumn is summer's last loveliest smile!"



In 1964 I spent six months on active service in Borneo. I was attached to the 1st Battalion, the Royal Green Jackets, and we were there because the Indonesian government was trying to take over the half of Borneo that belonged to Malaya. It was called an insurgency rather than a full scale war, but during our tour of duty three of our soldiers were killed.

The regiment was based at Semengo Camp, just outside of Kuching. We also had three forward outposts which were manned constantly, from where we sent out patrols to stay in touch with the local tribespeople, and also so that the Indonesian insurgents could never be

sure where we were.

Sometimes they attacked these forward bases at night. On one occasion I was visiting the forward base at Bau Lake, a lovely part of Borneo. The helicopter had to evacuate a soldier who was ill, so there was no room for me on the return trip. That meant an overnight stay at the base. Between 10 and 11pm we heard shooting somewhere in the jungle. The camp went to action stations and we all went to our defensive positions. In the jungle at night it is pitch black – you could not even see the person next to you in the trench. If we were attacked you would not see the people attacking us, just the flashes of their gunfire. Therefore, the defensive po-

sitions are planned so the arcs of fire overlap, covering every approach to the base: so there is a lethal curtain of fire to kill any attacker.

Throughout the long and tense night we peered into the darkness, from time to time thinking we saw an imagined movement, but our discipline held and nobody fired at a shadow. At intervals throughout the night the shooting continued.

At first light a patrol was sent out to investigate. Eventually they found a Malayan army patrol who were lost in the jungle and firing into the air in the hope that someone would come to find them. So, apart from losing a night's sleep, on this occasion no harm was done.

While not realising it at the time, this incident had some useful lessons for us Christians. Let's draw a comparison between what happened to our experience in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

First, the army trained us so well that, despite any fears we may have had, we responded to the orders immediately, and went to our defensive positions ready to do what was necessary to defend ourselves and our camp. As Christians, we too should be trained well and be active Christian soldiers in prayer and bible study. Our church and our ministers help and encourage us to train ourselves in developing our relationship with God, but we must make an effort ourselves.

Second, because of that training we had confidence in each other and our officers even though we could not see them. We knew the man next to us would not let us down and, in turn, we did not want to let them down. Although we Christians cannot see our leader in the physical sense, let's have complete confidence in Him. We know, with absolute certainty that Jesus Christ will never let us down.

Third, we were confident that our defensive arcs of fire would not allow any attacker to get through and that

every approach was covered. Similarly, although humanly we may feel vulnerable to attack, Jesus Christ is our complete defence and has every approach covered.

Fourth, although it was pitch black and we could see nothing, we remained alert and kept checking the area in front of us. This world in which we live can sometimes feel pitch black and cause us to wonder how effective we are. The key is remaining alert, constantly checking our training manual, the bible, and casting all our cares on God. We may not see through the darkness but He does.

Fifth, we were confident that we were on the right side and doing the right thing, and that we would win in the end, which, of course, we did. How wonderful it is that we can be absolutely confident, that however strong the opposition, we are on the winning side. The Bible says we must endure to the end and although we don't know exactly when that will be, we know it's coming and that, through Christ, we will win in the end.

Sixth, it was interesting that relief came at daylight when we were able to send out a patrol and find out what the shooting had been all about. We too are living in a dark age as humanity has done from the beginning. But we can look forward to the true light, Jesus Christ, returning and bringing real relief and genuine hope for all.

Finally, as devastating as the deaths of those three soldiers were at the time, I know that they rest in the hope of the resurrection, as do all those who have died in wars, natural disasters, accidents or from diseases.

The Bible says, in referring to us, that the way of peace they know not. Sadly, war seems to be the way humans choose rather than peace. We look forward to the day when the God of peace will send out a spirit of peace, and humanity will beat their swords into ploughshares.

The banner features a screenshot of a website article from 'day by day' dated 22nd March 2013, titled 'Auto Pilate?'. The article discusses the historical figure of Pilate and his role in the crucifixion of Jesus. The banner also includes the 'day by day' logo and a call to action: 'To sign up to receive Day by Day by email everyday visit: www.daybyday.org.uk'.

OPEN THE GATES!

BY FRASER HENDERSON

What is the purpose of a wall?

Part of my formative years was spent in Kenya and in South Africa, and I remember the walled communities in both countries. Sometimes they were like little private villages, with the only access being through gates or barriers where armed guards patrolled. Usually the residents were diplomats, ex-patriates or wealthy citizens who wanted to protect their families and possessions from the less privileged locals. The purpose was clear: to keep out the riff-raff of society.

In France work has begun on a UK-funded wall, dubbed the “Great Wall of Calais”, with the hope that this will help reduce the number of migrants attempting to gain entry into the UK. In the US, the idea of a wall along the border with Mexico has become a hot topic in the presidential debate. In Israel the government has announced plans to build a 37-mile long underground wall around its Gaza border in order to block the network of tunnels dug out by Hamas. Walls have a long and varied history in human civilization. For millennia they were built to protect against invaders. For example, both Hadrian’s Wall and the Antonine Wall in the UK were erected by the Romans to keep out marauding barbarians such as the legendary Picts. The infamous Berlin wall kept opposing political ideologies apart. In modern times walls have become more a symbol of division than of protection. Walls such as the ones already mentioned along with the others such as the Israeli West Bank Barrier (pictured above) all demonstrate that the human solution to conflicts and differences is to create barricades that separate us from one another...but is there another solution?

The late civil rights activist, Maya Angelou, who famously wrote *I know why the caged bird sings*, and of course a cage is just another type of wall, reminded us that *Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.*¹ Doesn’t that challenge us personally in our relationships with other people?



There was another wall of separation in our history, one far greater than even the Great Wall of China. It’s a spiritual wall. Maybe something comes between you and someone else and you liken the issue to a wall that’s come between you. This spiritual wall is a similar analogy. It’s referred to in the Christian Bible as the wall of sin that separates us from God. The thought is that this sin-wall is so strong that we can’t destroy it by ourselves. For us it’s indestructible. It’s so big we can’t climb over it, so deep we can’t dig under it, so wide we can’t get around it, so dense we can’t make a dent in it. Not even the *Hulk* could smash through it. There’s no escape save for one way, and that’s where Jesus Christ comes in. Christ came into the world to break down this wall, calling us to join him in his work of reconciliation and reconstruction. *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,* is how the New Testament writer, Paul, puts it (Ephesians 2:14). God, therefore, is not a God of separation but of unity, reaching out for all people to be unified in Him.

I wonder whether we are all guilty putting up defensive and divisive walls. The American poet, Robert Frost, had this to say about the walls we build:

*Before I built a wall I’d ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence*².

The last mention of walls in the Bible is in the book of Revelation, where it describes the great and glorious walls of the New Jerusalem, referring to the future of humanity with God. Yet these heavenly walls have a curious aspect to them, their gates are always open (Revelation 21:15)! What would that look like? What would that feel like?

As for us, let’s make sure that we are not among those who put up walls of separation when we should be opening wide the gates of unity.

1. <https://goo.gl/Mhf7u8>

2. From *Mending Wall* by Robert Frost, 1874-1963

BROADCASTING THE WORD

Philip Stevens believes the future of religious broadcasting lies with the Internet:

Back in the 1950s television in the UK would shut down between 6.15 and 7.25pm on a Sunday to allow viewers to attend evening services at their local church. Although the close down rule was eventually relaxed, generally only 'religious' programmes were permitted between these times. Beyond that the two television channels (BBC and commercial) usually carried a church service each Sunday morning, while each evening ended with an Epilogue. Here, a message with a scriptural theme was delivered immediately prior to the National Anthem and shut down (No 24 hour channels in those days!).

Things have moved on, and while religious programmes are still provided by the main broadcasters, many dedicated channels have appeared designed to cater for the spiritual needs of viewers. Subscribers to Sky, for example, have access to around 15 channels appearing in the religion category.

But, and perhaps more importantly, some broadcasters have turned to the internet to provide programming for their viewers.

New platforms

One organisation in the latter category is United Christian Broadcasters (UCB). "The way people listen to radio and watch TV has changed dramatically in the past few years and we know it's important that we adapt to this and give people more ways to engage with us," explains Thom Price, Head of TV Programming. "In 2015 we focussed on new platforms which meant UCB's radio and TV is available to millions more homes in the UK. This was a decision taken by UCB because we were finding that more and more people were watching and listening to our stations through computers and mobile devices."

In order to help with this transition, the organisation invested in UCB Player that allows viewers to watch and listen to all of UCB's content, both live and on-demand. "UCB Player gives us new opportunities to reach the huge proportion of the UK population that have internet access and allows us to offer features that were never possible via satellite and cable," states Price.

Opening for GCI

As far as GCI is concerned, UCB has provided opportunities for outreach through Dr Tkach's *Speaking of Life* programmes and the radio *GodSpots* in Ireland. And it could be that other openings will be available in the future.



Studio 865 in Bulgaria now enjoys the freedom to interview people about their beliefs.

The switch to internet based programming has not changed the operation of UCB's headquarters at Stoke-on-Trent. Here two studios operating to broadcast standards are used to produce a number of programmes. These include *Facing the Canon*, a 60-minute interview, *Real God Real People*, a 5-minute testimony, *Since I Became a Christian*,

a 30-minute testimony, *Foundation*, a teaching programme, *The Think Tank*, a half-hour current affairs discussion, *God Spots* 60 seconds inspirational thoughts, and *Now Hear This*, 30-minute acoustic sets with an interview with the artist.

So what does Price see as the biggest changes in religious broadcasting in recent times? "The improvement of the quality of programming brought about by the reduction of cost and ease of access to production equipment. This, along with higher computer literacy amongst producers, allows for more complicated productions."

He continues, "I believe the future of religious

broadcasting will be led by the audience. As the viewers continue to move away from linear watching we must follow and provide them with the best content in a convenient place whenever they choose to watch it, moving away from being broadcasters and towards being content providers.”

Serving Bulgaria

A similar move to internet-based broadcasting has taken place in Bulgaria. Since that country’s transition from Communism in 1989, the Christian community has enjoyed greater freedom. Studio 865 is a media association founded and run by local Bulgarian Christians that has seized the opportunity and built on that liberty.

“The name Studio 865 was selected because in the year AD 865, Boris I proclaimed Christianity the official religion of Bulgaria,” explains Stoyko Petkov, director of Studio 865. “As a Christian media association utilising TV, radio, Internet, and print our aim is to encourage the Christian community in Bulgaria, but just as important, to address the needs of those yet untouched by the Gospel.”

In recent times, Studio 865’s distribution has become more focussed on online platforms than on traditional media channels. “As with other niche programming there are more opportunities in Internet distribution and digital TV compared to terrestrial television,” states

Petkov. “Also there is much more content available, although it’s mainly church services and teaching. Also, for ‘small languages’, it is now possible either to translate or produce better and more content, thanks to the drop in prices for production and distribution.”

Alongside its own programming, Studio 865 transmits content from other producers.

Reaching the unchurched

Studio 865 has made significant progress in its mission, but how does Petkov see the future of religious broadcasting? “The distribution of religious programming in future may be more in ‘narrowcasting’ than the big broadcasting channels. The new online distribution platforms are a better option for a specialised content. However, quality of that content, ready access to it and the level of interactivity of the platform will be the key for future success.”

He concludes, “I firmly I believe that religious audio-visual content can reach a very big audience if it is produced and distributed according to the new expectations of online users. In the analogue era religious broadcasting was more geographically limited, but now the Internet is offering time shifting and easy access to millions of people. Our message is not just for those who already have a faith, but also for those who are looking for answers.”

C:> Was the Internet Predicted 2500 years ago?

by Richard Fowler

Did you miss the anniversary?

No, not your husband’s or wife’s...panic over! Actually, one that has shaped your life, quite possibly, more than your better half.

Why? Because if it wasn’t for the anniversary of three particular letters in the alphabet you may not have met that special one...or have your job...or, for that matter, have access to the incredible library of information that is ‘on tap’ every day to feed your mind on everything from the Presidential election to the latest celebrity break-up...(and there was me thinking the Brangelina combo would stay!)

And what are these three letters you may ask? Well, of course: www! Now, we all love a good old acronym,

and unless you have been in cryogenic sleep for the last 25 years, you too would have heard of the ‘World Wide Web’ – its 25th anniversary celebrated last month.

But was this global colossus of an information sharing platform predicted 2500 years ago? Now, I like people who predict things, the only problem is: they’re usually wrong! So, if I read something in an ancient text that would appear to predict the coming of an information age (yes, before it even happened...) then I may have to put aside my cyber cynicism for one moment – after all, you can’t believe everything you read on the web!

And that’s why this prediction is so different; it wasn’t written on the web. Nope! So where? Well, actually, in an ancient Aramaic-Hebrew text by a Babylonian statesman.

Ok, wait a minute. Are we meant to believe that someone living in the economic and educational powerhouse that was the Babylonian Empire around 600BC wrote about something that has come to redefine Maslow's hierarchy of needs, (Wi-Fi is now on the bottom of the pyramid of needs), namely, the world wide web?

Well, the awkward answer may well be yes...to some degree!

But before we get carried away, let's remind ourselves what the web actually is for a moment. If we compare the internet to roads – the pathways in which information runs down, then the world wide web is the buildings on the sides of the roads. These are the 'locations' you go to look at things on the internet and pick up information: anytime you want to surf down the internet road, the 'www' provides you with a location for you to go and 'pick-up' any information you want, or look at a website. And let's not forget how this has comprehensively changed our lives. From live tweets coming from Mars sent from Curiosity, to live streaming of Drone attacks in Syria. The access we have to knowledge and information is something no one could have dreamt of 100 years ago, let alone 2500 years ago.

But in 1989 British computer scientist Sir Tim Berners-Lee gave birth to the web idea so that it was easier for his scientific buddies to share information. And now, get this: every two days we create as much information as we did from the dawn of civilization up until 2003. It means that every minute Facebook users like 4,166,667 posts and in the same 60 seconds YouTube users upload 300 hours of new video.

Talk about a running to and fro of information. Cue our ancient prediction: "...seal the book until the time of the end; **many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase**" (Daniel 12:4). I don't know about you, but that is a pretty good description of what has happened because of the world wide web.

Now, you might be thinking, 'yeah, but anyone could have said that.' True. But the point is, why would they have? Our highly educated statesman – Daniel – was living in the cultural, social and educational epicentre of the ancient world – the Babylonians were at the top

of the academic pile, so to speak – knowledge was as available as it could be. But rather, Daniel predicted that in the latter days, knowledge would increase. And it has – exponentially! His predication could have found no greater fulfilment than that of the internet and the world wide web.

Yet, as we stand as masters over the ocean of free flowing information, it has failed to bring us answers to our most basic of global problems. And especially, in the pursuit of peace. Do you know how many countries are not involved in a conflict or war right now? Just 10! And those countries are: Botswana, Chile, Costa Rica, Japan, Mauritius, Panama, Qatar, Switzerland, Uruguay and Vietnam.

25 years of the world wide web has taught us that more information does not equal more solutions. It appears that Einstein was right when he said, "The more I learn, the more I realize how much I don't know." What is needed is not more information, but rather, **essential knowledge**.

And there is a difference. Information tells us the what and how; it helps us understand the material world: culture, politics, economics, religion and $2 + 2 = 4$? However, essential knowledge tells us the why; it helps us understand our place in this world and why we are here. But more than that, if properly applied it helps us to understand each other and how to get along. Essential knowledge reveals essential principles that

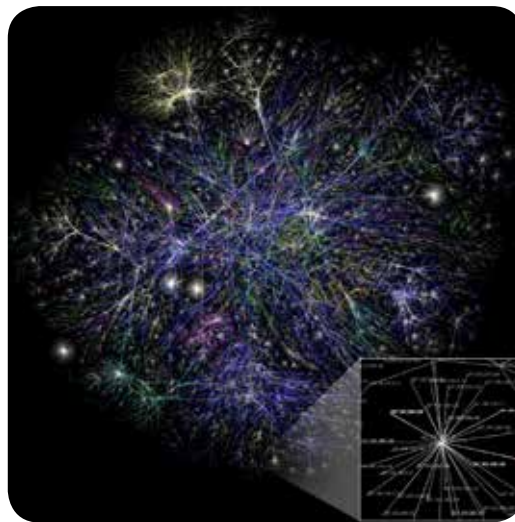
produce peace in our relationships, whether at home, work or between nations. Oh, if only America, Russia and Syria would find it!

Well, if there was a heart in them to look, they would find this source of essential knowledge in the catalogue of books our ancient prediction comes from: The Bible.

This prediction, millennia ago, makes it a book for our time; a book for you! Why don't you open it up and find out what else it has to say about the future... your future?

References:

1. <https://goo.gl/ZH4D41>
2. <https://goo.gl/bI5G2b>
3. <https://goo.gl/2Tqm9b>
4. <https://goo.gl/hdx18i>



A visual representation of part of the internet

Speaking of Life:



Take Up Your Cross

There's a building in lower Manhattan in New York that has weathered the fires of the Revolutionary War and watched one of the greatest cities in the world grow up around it. It's called St. Paul's Chapel. Some might know it by another name – the Little Chapel That Stood (pictured below). Located less than 100 yards away from the World Trade Center, it was given that nickname after it survived the collapse of the Twin Towers on September 11th, 2001.

During the hours and days following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, St. Paul's was used as an operating base for first responders. It became a place where thousands of volunteers from all different faiths came together in a desperate attempt to work through the tragedy. Members served hot meals and aided in the clean up efforts. They offered comfort to those who had lost loved ones.

During times of darkness and tragedy, such as war and disaster, we can ask the question: "Where is God?" I think the Little Church might point us toward part of the answer. We know that even in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, God is with us. Christ has joined himself to our humanity, becoming one of us, a light

shining into our darkness. He suffers with us, his heart breaks with our hearts and it is by his spirit that we are comforted and healed.

The Little Church That Stood continues to remind us that even in times of great tragedy, God is there – and there is hope in him, through Christ our Lord. The church as a whole stands as a witness, reminding us that God does not allow anything in this life to occur that he will not completely redeem in the fullness of time. As we remember those who lost their lives in world wars, I pray that we will also remember that our Lord was, is and will forever be there with them and with us.

I'm Joseph Tkach, Speaking of LIFE.

Speaking of Life is now on TV! It is used by UCB (United Christian Broadcasters) in between longer programmes and is aired on UCB on

Thursdays and Fridays between 7.15 - 7.30 am and between 1.45 and 2.00pm, on Saturdays between 6.45 and 7.00 am., and on Sundays between 1.45 and 2.00 pm. These timings may vary.



Photo: wikicommons



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