

# Coffs Encourager

Newsletter to the Coffs Coast area  
Nambucca, Port Macquarie,  
Saphire Beach & Woolgoolga

*Issue 6-05/10*



Coffs Coast church of Christ - [www.coffschurch.org.au](http://www.coffschurch.org.au)  
CWA Hall, 3 Dalley St. Coffs Harbour Worship-Sunday 10am, Study-Tuesday 6pm  
Back Issues are available from our website.

## THE PLAN OF SALVATION by Marvin Ancell

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Through out history, man has found a wide variety of different ways to get himself into some real 'fixes'. Bad leadership, bad finances and bad luck have taken their share of the hearts of mankind. But what is really wonderful is the inventive ways that man has found to get him self back on the course and to reinvent himself in such a way as to make the past insignificant and to clear the way forward for an advance of some form.

This is true in every field except one, and that is in the field of the God and Man relationship. This particular field is one where, like the very precious vase that gets broken, when breakage occurs, it maybe put back together to some degree, but it is always still broken. Sin has done that to the relationship between man and God. The relationship has been broken. There are shards everywhere and no matter how hard we start to repair the damage, it will remain obviously, broken.

That is so, from man's perspective, but God, being God and so very far beyond any mere man, has a way to heal the breakage through the great gift of Jesus and His sacrifice. What man can not do, God has already done at the cross.

The point is, however, that the repair of the relationship will require that man follow the appeal process that God has set up, if man wants to heal that relationship. Man must hear the

word of the Lord, and then come to a point of full and real belief. (This belief is going to produce an act of surrender to Jesus as the Lord of my life. It is not just mental ascent to the idea that there really was a Jesus back in the first century, over in the land of Palestine.)

The next step is the one that we struggle with so much today and that is grief. Man must realize and admit his culpability in the breakage of the relationship. He must not only recognize this, but he must repent of it as well. (Repentance is a change of will, a change of attitude, and a change of actions.) Man will then have to confess his belief in the fact that he now accepts and devotes himself to Jesus as the Lord of his life.

The last action in the plan of salvation is the one that requires that I do something that may seem as totally out of keeping with the spiritual actions so far indicated. Man must be baptized, totally immersed in water for the process of the remission of his sins to be completed. Naaman, a Syrian general is a good example of this factor. He learned that the saving power of God was already prepared for him, if he would dip seven times in the Jordan

river. While he did not like the idea, he did it and only upon completing the dipping process was he cleansed from his leprosy. The same is true for us as sinners: we may not see the value of baptism, but in the end, God sees our willingness to accept anything that He requires, thus validating His absolute lordship over the individual.

The plan of salvation is then six significant points: the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross to purchase our pardon from our sins and then the hearing, believing, repenting, confessing and dipping, other wise known as being baptized that we are to do to appeal to God for His fixing the broken vase that is our lives.

There is one final thing that we must do: we must from that day of our new birth, the day that we rise from our own river at our baptism, -we must live for Jesus in every part of every day. It is the continuation of the whole salvation process, in my life. We need to exhort each other, encouraging one another, loving one another, as we worship the Lord with the saints.

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## LET ME OUT OF HERE P. Tickner

A couple of months ago we bought ourselves a new lawnmower. It was brought home in a box and we had to assemble some of it ourselves. When it was all put together I was about to break up the box and put it in the recycling bin, but then had a great idea that the children might like it as a cubby house. It has served its purpose well and given them endless hours of fun. At times it has been covered with blankets, or been used as a boat for getting away from crocodiles. It has also been a great hiding place when playing hide and seek.



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# PERHAPS THE HARDEST THING TO BELIEVE P. Tickner

There was a time “when I went to church” that I wore the best I had. We called it “our Sunday best.” There was a time when I went to a wedding or a funeral that I wore the best I had. There was even a time when people went on a long trip (especially if they went by train or plane) that they wore the best they had. In those days, there were many occasions that called for wearing the best that you had. No more! Now ‘casual’ is the appropriate attire on many occasions, and ‘casual’ is defined by the one who wears, not the occasion.

When God looks on us, He sees us for what we are. Clothing does not hide sin or conceal faithlessness. God sees character flaws, not skin blemishes. He sees the negative emotions we try to hide. He sees lousy attitudes we conceal. He sees genuine heart motives. Every moment of every day in every situation, He sees the ‘real me’. The only being in the whole world that knows the total truth about us as individuals is God. Our wives or our husbands know us well, but not like God does. Our children know many of our inconsistencies, but God knows all of them. Our best friends know our imperfections, but not as accurately as God knows. He knows all we think. He knows the correct answer to every ‘why’? He knows the actual motives in every situation, even when we manage to deceive ourselves. He even knows the controlled but unsaid.

Yet, the most amazing thing is this: He has all that accurate knowledge of us as individuals, and He still loves each of us as a person. He is able to forgive me when I cannot forgive myself. He can forget what I did when I cannot. He



can ignore weaknesses that haunt me. When I fail, He will let me begin again as if I never made the mistake. When I absolutely hold myself in contempt, He still cares about me. When I arrogantly claim I am not responsible for my faults, He can inform me of the worst thing I have done, yet, He still loves me.

When I condemn others for their flaws, He shakes His head and, in love, hopes I repent (He sees the plank in my eye while I look at specks in your eye). He sees my anxieties when I justify them, and, in love, hopes I listen to Jesus’ call to come to him. He saves me in all my imperfections because He loves me.

He asks of us but three things:

- (a) let Him be our measuring stick;
- (b) trust what He did for us in Christ; and
- (c) love Him in return for His love for us.

Being flawless is not a divine expectation. Human flawlessness is never an option. All I can do is trust Him to love me as much as He says He does. My mistakes may be bigger than your ability to forgive me. However, my mistakes are never bigger than His forgiveness. He can actually love me when I refuse to love myself. Perhaps this is the greatest expression of faith: to believe God loves me as much as He says He does. Only then will I forgive me because He first forgave me.

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The other day Laura had stood the box up on its end and closed it. While playing around inside it fell over and she found herself trapped inside, unable to open the lid as now she was sitting on it. It wasn't long before we heard her screams "Let me out of here!" At first I thought she was just playing around until I investigated and found that she could not get out and as all dad's do I came to the rescue.

That box reminds me that Jesus came to "proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners," Isaiah 61:1-3. He applied that verse to Himself when He read the scroll in the temple. "He sent me to proclaim release to the captives. . . set at liberty them that are bruised," Luke 4:18 [ASV]. In His day, Jesus often dealt with the "prisoners of Satan." He healed a woman on the Sabbath Day, Luke 13:10-14. He posed this question relating to her condition, "Then should not this woman. . . whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what has bound her?" On all the occasions that Jesus healed the demon-possessed, He set the victims free from the "box of Satan." After He healed the unruly demoniac in the area of the Gerasenes, the victim was found, "sitting. . . dressed. . . in his right mind," Mark 5:15. He had

been set free. He was out of the box. Many civic organizations have "rescue" as their mission. In America, people in danger or trouble quickly dial 911.

In Australia 000 gets you to an operator who can put you in touch with police, ambulance or fire brigade or a combination of all three. The trade mark of Christianity, too, is "rescue." We sing the song that encapsulates the mission of Jesus: "Rescue The Perishing, Care For The Dying." Jesus confirmed His "seek and rescue" mission by saying, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost," Luke 19:10.

When we preach the gospel to the lost, we work with Jesus to set them free, "Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" John 8:32. We let them out of their box of confinement. Isn't it great to be free? Isn't it wonderful not to be enslaved to anyone or anything? Paul said, "It is for freedom that Christ set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yoke of slavery," Galatians 5:1. We are no longer victims of a despotic tyrant named "Satan." Jesus came to break the chains and set us free, 1 John 3:8. Now we may live outside the box of conformity to a world that would bend us out of shape. We are transformed into the image of Christ. Ah, free at last!

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*And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.*

*Hebrews 11:6*



Photo of Grace by John Marcotte / Stock Exchange