



The Chronicle

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Give Us Of Your Oil For Our Lamps Are Gone Out

Philip C. Bennett

In His sermon on the mount, Jesus makes reference to the members of the Church - first as salt and next as the light of the world. He then spoke of the Church as a city on a hill: *"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

(St. Matthew 5:13-16)

Salt is classed as a catalyst. This means it changes what it comes into contact with whilst remaining the same. Salt is a precious commodity which gives flavour to food, acts as a preservative and can be used to clean wounds.

We can be members of the Church and yet lose our savour (saltiness). Some take comfort in Church membership and boast about being a member, but we need to make sure our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. We can be in the Church and yet not in the kingdom of God. We have to let our lights shine. One song encourages us to let our lights shine as: *'someone down in the valley is trying to come home.'* If our light goes out then we are no different from those in the world, even though our names are on the Church register.

In another parable, Jesus referred to the believers as light bearers with a lamp. Sometimes we read the Bible but do not understand some of the analogies which are drawn. Some have grown up with electricity all of their lives, but as a child growing up in Jamaica, I knew what it was like to depend upon a lamp.

The lamp is a vessel which contains fuel in its base. It has a wick where the lower part sits in the fuel and the top part protrudes out

of the top. In order for the lamp to function effectively, the owner must take good care of it. He has to ensure that the wick is trimmed and in good condition as well as being in contact with the fuel source. To trim the wick one has to remove the burnt bit, otherwise the wick will smother when lit and give more smoke than light. A wick in good condition when lit will give light to those around and keep people from stumbling in the dark. Sometimes, a glass shade is provided to protect the flame from being blown out by the wind or a draft: *"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept."* (St. Matthew 25:1-5)


We note from the Scriptures (verses 1 and 2) that they were all virgins, but five were wise and five were foolish. From verse 4 we see that they had more than one vessel together with their lamps. In verse 5, the Bridegroom did not come at the expected time but delayed His coming. Some of us have been saved for a long time and probably thought Jesus would have come by now. If we are not careful, we can become careless and fall asleep: *"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."* (St. Matthew 25:6)

This parable that Jesus used here concerned the Jewish marriage custom. Traditionally, the groom would leave his father's house to find his bride. Once he found her, he would pay a price for her and then return to his father's house to prepare a place for her. After all the preparation was completed, he would return to claim his bride and take her to live with him at his father's house. This would normally be the following year. The bride did not know the exact time of the groom's return, but she knew the season. Whilst the groom was away, the bride-to-be would not just sit idly by awaiting his return.

She would be busy preparing herself and getting everything together for his return. When the groom returned to claim his bride, the event would normally take place at night. He would be accompanied by a procession and someone would go before to sound the alarm that the groom was on his way. On hearing the alarm, the bride and her attendants would quickly grab all their belongings and go to meet the groom.

This parable in reality referred to Christ, the Groom who left heaven to seek his Wife the Church whom He purchased with His own blood. He has been away for over 2,000 years making preparation for her. The Bride (Church) in the mean time needs to be busy getting herself ready for His return: *"Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out."* (St. Matthew 25:7-8)

How did they get themselves into such a state? They were not observing the time. They neglected the state of their vessels. They became careless and fell asleep. More importantly, how would we get ourselves into such a state? By neglecting prayer. By neglecting the study of the Word. By missing services and prayer meetings. By neglecting the advice of those over us in the Lord, to name a few things: *"But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."* (St. Matthew 25:9-10)

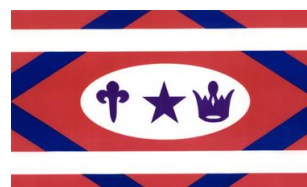
Once the door was shut, there was no re-opening. As with Noah and the ark, it was God - the Groom's Father who would have commanded the door to be shut: *"Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."* (St. Matthew 25:11-13) 

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From the Overseer's Desk

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

(St. Luke 21:25-28)

As we start another year, it brings us a little closer to the return of our Lord. We are reminded of the end time signs that Jesus foretold before His departure. If you've been listening and watching the news recently, you will have heard much about comets and other strange signs in the heavens.

Nation after nation are seeing the collapse of their economies with no apparent solution to their crises. Even nature seems to be upside down with strange weather patterns all over the globe. All these events are preparing the world for the coming anti-Christ, but we the children of God are encouraged to look up for the return of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We have a busy year of activities ahead of us and are trusting that God's blessings will be upon each event. Let us work the works of Him that sent us while it is day for the night cometh when no man can work (cited from St. John 9:4).

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

(Galatians 6:9)

Upcoming Events:

Annual General Meeting	-	Friday 17 th May 2013
National Ladies Retreat	-	25 th to 26 th May 2013
National Sunday School Challenge Day	-	Saturday 8 th June 2013
Long Lane Gospel Concert	-	Saturday 22 nd June 2013
National Convention	-	12 th to 14 th July 2013
Druids Heath Concert	-	Saturday 20 th July 2013
National Family Camp	-	29 th to 31 st July 2013
International Youth Camp	-	16 th to 19 th August 2013
General Assembly	-	20 th to 25 th August 2013

Sunday School Department



The Church of God

SUNDAY SCHOOL BOOST

Ray Prince - National Sunday School Co-ordinator

The general Sunday School theme for the assembly year 2012-2013 is:
'Going on unto Perfection'

Diary Date:

National Sunday School Challenge

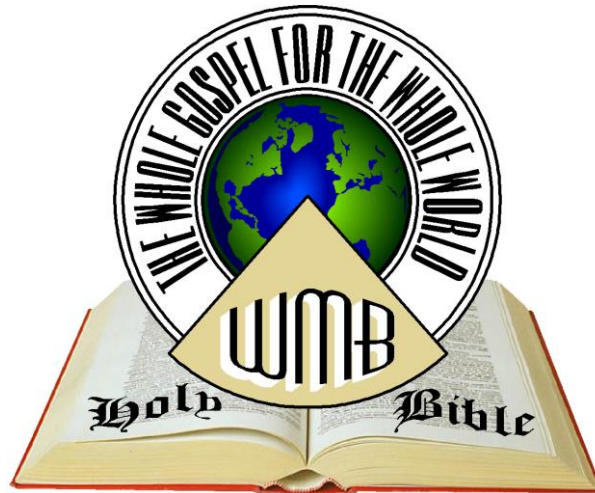
**Saturday 8th June 2013
at 6:00 pm**

Venue:

Maypole Centre, Idmiston Croft, Druids Heath, Birmingham B14 5NJ.

Treasures of Truth literature to study:

"Sin's Exceeding Sinfulness" - October-December 2012



WMB BOOST

Beverley Anderson - National Women's Missionary Band Co-ordinator

The general Women's Missionary Band theme for the assembly year 2012-2013 is:

**'Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields;
for they are white already to harvest'**

(St. John 4:35)

'LIFT UP YOUR EYES AND LOOK' *on the fields for they are white already to harvest*

The part of the general Women's Missionary Band theme I have been focusing on this Assembly year is ***'Lift Up Your Eyes and Look'***.

Generally, I have found the theme this year so appropriate for the times we are living in. It is a time of business and speed. But as Christians, we should be careful that we are not caught up in this business so we cannot see the needs of those around us.

The general theme is focusing on the harvest field and how ready the souls are, but it would seem otherwise for those of us who are burdened for souls. It would appear that the hearts of men are so hardened that the Word of God cannot reach them. As Samuel said to the children of Israel, ***'Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?'*** (1 Samuel 6:6)

Although the hearts of men are hard, we are admonished to go and speak with them in the great commission in St. Matthew 28:19, despite their reaction.

However, I have focused the national theme on ***'Lift Up Your Eyes and Look'***. We need to look at those within our local congregation as well as the open field and see the needs of our people. This is the motto of the Women's Missionary Band. We do not just pray and go, but we must give. Some of our people are in great need and if we the Church cannot reach out a brotherly arm to them, then someone else will - to our detriment.

Yes, we address the spiritual side but we also need to focus on the physical and mental sides of our people. They are a part of the community we are working with. So **lift up your eyes and begin looking.**

National Ladies Retreat 2013

25th to 26th May 2013

Theme:

'Lift up your eyes and see the signs'



Venue:

**Holiday Inn
Chapel Lane
Great Barr
Birmingham
B43 7BG**

**Come along, refresh your souls and hear what the Lord has in store
for His people.**

What's happening in Long Lane Church?

On the evening of Sunday 17th February 2013, the CPMA department had a fund raising programme. Brother Stuart Brown, local and National CPMA Co-ordinator was in charge of this event.

The evening was fun and full of an exciting variety of items. There were some stand-out performances, including a musical rendition from Pastor Bennett on bass guitar. He was assisted by Sister Whitter who played the drums.

Sister Cynthia Opoku entertained the congregation by performing a rap rendition of a poem. The poem was an item presented by Sister Antonette McKenzie.

The congregation were also given a little more insight into the wonderful work of the CPMA department around the world, as a ministry.

We are also happy to report the congregation gave very generously that evening. This enabled the local church to become 100% in CPMA membership.

We thank the Lord for a great night.

Brother Rogier Wright
Reporter

Special Note:

The Chronicle is an official publication of The Church of God (England) with Philip C. Bennett National Overseer and Editor. Articles intended for publication in the next issue of *The Chronicle* should be received **before 31st May 2013**. These submissions will be for the Apr-Jun 2013 issue. Please send to: Karen Richards, 12 Cherhill Covert, Druids Heath, Birmingham, B14 5YB. Email: kazgirl_uk@yahoo.com

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