



The Chronicle

A Publication of The Church of God (England)

January to March 2023, Volume 18, Issue 1

“Watch out, there’s a thief about”

Philip C. Bennett

This is a caption from many years ago which some of us older ones will remember. It was from one of the public information adverts - meant to alert the public to the fact that thieves were about and ready to steal their belongings. Jesus said: *“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”* (St. John 10:10)

Who is this thief that Jesus was talking about? We all know him to be the devil. Thieves are normally looking to steal something of value. Satan the master thief is looking to steal the most valuable possession we own, our souls. Jesus said on another occasion: *“But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.”* (St. Matthew 24:43)

Jesus was admonishing His hearers to be alert and watchful. Thieves do not publicise when they are going to come. They come at the most unexpected time.

Some thieves plan their robbery thoroughly by observing the behaviour of the would-be victim. They observe habits and see if there are any vulnerable areas or carelessness. That is why people sometimes change their pattern of behaviour - for example when leaving their homes.

Some thieves are opportunists. They are in and out in no time, just grabbing what they can. Others are career criminals who do a thorough job when they enter the house of the victim. When the householder returns home, nearly everything is gone or destroyed. Satan, the thief of all thieves has not just let loose the third of the angels that followed him to roam about aimlessly. He assigns numerous demons/fallen angels to each of us. Their jobs are to watch us, frustrate us and keep us busy so that we are not aware of what is really going on. This is a tactic used in warfare. While we are busy looking about some trivial matter, the enemy is causing serious havoc and damage.

Unlike us who are flesh and blood, Satan and his demons do not sleep, take breaks, get tired or go on holidays.

Therefore, we need divine help to be constantly on our watch. Just like we have security devices to guard our earthly homes and property, God has given us our consciences. Some of us have the added security of being filled with the Holy Ghost. Both of these are like a watchman or an alarm system to sound the alarm when there is danger.

On one occasion, after Jesus had cast devils out of a man, the Jews accused Him of casting out devils by the power of Satan. This was a part of Jesus' response: "*... how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.*" (St. Matthew 12:29)

Our conscience can be likened to a strong man which God has given us for protection. It can also be likened to a watch dog. Sometimes, to get past a vicious dog, criminals will feed it meat laced with poison, a sedative or incapacitate it with some weapon. The devil does the same to us. He will attack our consciences by promoting things that are enticing and attractive but poisonous to the inner man. Each time we succumb, our consciences become weaker and weaker. Eventually we end up with a dead conscience where even the presence of the enemy does not cause any alarm. Sadly, some have allowed the devil to kill their conscience, while he still convinces them that all is well. They are fast asleep - not really knowing what is going on around them. They then develop a false sense of security which is not true reality.

I once saw a film where thieves broke into a building and bypassed the security cameras, which guarded a very expensive item. The camera showed what appeared to be a real time account but was actually the frozen frame from an earlier period in time - when everything was ok. So the security guard was watching a false camera footage, when in reality the thieves were operating in the background.

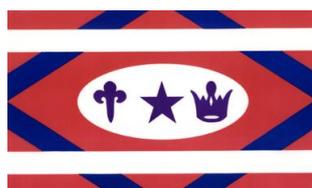
They had no one to confront them; because as far as the guard was concerned, all was well. The reality only came to light some time later when it was too late and the valuable item had already been stolen. The scripture warns us: "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*" (1 Peter 5:8)

Let us not allow the devil to dope us into adopting a false sense of security. Our Advice to Members encourages us to: "*Examine yourself occasionally and see if you are in the faith.*" Jesus sent a stern warning to the church at Ephesus. He started off by commending them for their good deeds but then showed them where they were coming short. ⁴*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.* ⁵*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*" (Revelation 2:4-5)

Sadly, some people are living off past experiences and reputations like the church at Sardis. They had a name that they were living but in actuality they were dead.

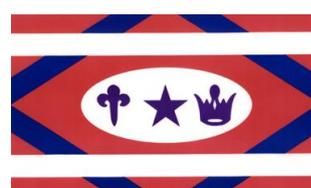
We need to examine ourselves to see where we used to be and where we are now. We need to look at what we used to do e.g. fasting and prayer and see if we are doing them now. If not, we need to repent and if the Holy Ghost prompts us then we need to start our first works again. Let us be on the alert, Satan the thief is prowling about seeking to rob us of our most precious possession, our souls. If we allow him to succeed, the Bible says: ³⁶*For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* ³⁷*Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*" (St. Mark 8:36-37) 📖

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Rikki Prince	National Family Camp Co-ordinator/National Music Director
Beverley Wilson	National Reporter
Karen Richards	Assistant Editor of <i>The Chronicle</i>



From the Overseer's Desk

As we embark on our journey through the new year of 2023, I pray for God's continued guidance upon our pathway.

The great hymn writer, Fanny J. Crosby penned these beautiful and apt words in one of her hymns:

*I must have the Saviour with me,
For I dare not walk alone;
I must feel His presence near me,
And His arm around me thrown.*

Jesus, in one of His discourses with the disciples, reminded them: "*...for without me ye can do nothing.*" (St. John 15:5)

Let us not lean upon our own understanding, where our service to God becomes mere formality. The Apostle Paul in one of his letters to Timothy wrote of those: "*Having a form of godliness...*" (2 Timothy 3:5) but no power behind their profession. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria: "*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*" (St. John 4:23)

God is not interested in mere **formal** worship; He requires **fervent** worship.

Upcoming Events:

National VLB Convention	-	Saturday 8 th April 2023
National Family Camp 2023	-	Monday 10 th to Thursday 13 th April 2023
National Sunday School Quiz	-	Saturday 20 th May 2023
National Ladies Retreat 2023	-	Friday 26 th to Sunday 28 th May 2023
National Convention	-	Friday 7 th to Sunday 9 th July 2023
National Men's Retreat 2023	-	Friday 21 st to Sunday 23 rd July 2023



ABM BOOST

Claudine Brown –
National Assembly Band Movement Co-ordinator

The general Assembly Band Movement theme for the assembly year 2022-2023 is:

'Care for Everyone'

(1 Corinthians 12:25)



THERE'S A SALE ON!

In these times where Morrisons own brand 3 litres cooking oil costs £5.69 and you can no longer get a month's shopping for the family in Aldi for under £60.00, the word "sale" is a friendly one. "Free" is better, but I will take a sale any day. In the spirit of ABM and '**Caring for Everyone**', I've experienced brethren sharing where deals can be found, where

bargains can be bought and where corners can safely be cut. (If you haven't downloaded the Vinted app yet, give it a try!) The world is calling it a 'cost of living crisis' but in times of hardship – God's true sheep know what to do. We trust in Him, and look out for one another. The sale I'm referring to today is the best bargain you will find, ever.

Isaiah 55:1-2: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ²Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

What? This sale is irresistible! If you are thirsty for more of God, a deeper relationship with Him, more grace, strength, just to be in His awesome presence – it will not cost you a penny. In fact, if you are spiritually 'broke', but thirsty - you are invited to come, buy, eat... and this SALE will be on until Jesus vacates the mercy seat. Man – the foolish virgins missed out on a sale and a half. They wouldn't have needed any money; they could have just turned up with their empty lamps and got them filled! I have heard of people (not naming any names, but they're related to me 😊) who have queued up early for a sale. I've done it myself, actually. Being able to get what you need for a low price is a blessing. The wise virgins understood this well and ensured that they were 'in the queue' on time.

There's a sale on brethren, and it's actually free to all. If you are thirsty, and spiritually barren – come. Jeremiah 29:13 says: **"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."** That's a promise. If you need help finding the Lord, your band leader awaits your call, or your text - however you feel to reach out. There's a sale on! Don't wait until the shop doors close. Love you.



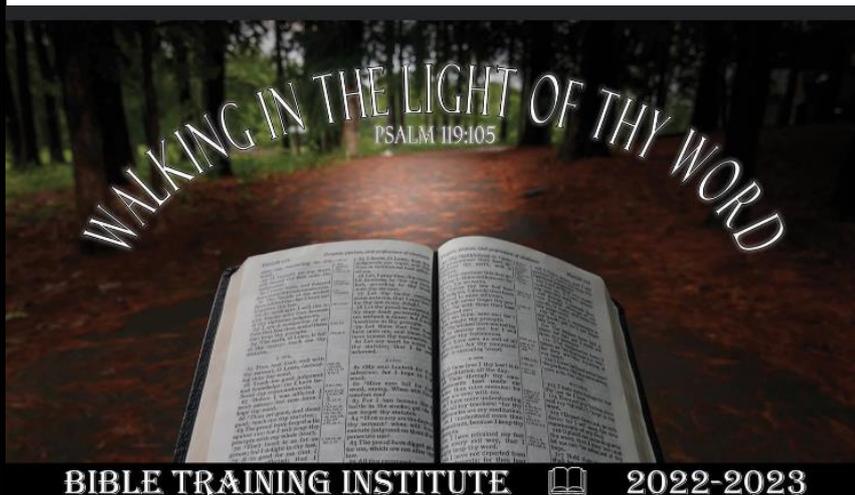
CPMA/BTI BOOST

Stuart Brown - National CPMA/BTI Co-ordinator



The new general Church of Prophecy Marker Association theme for the assembly year 2022-2023 is: **‘Follow the Star’** (Revelation 22:16, St. Matthew 2:10)

The new general Bible Training Institute theme for the assembly year 2022-2023 is: **‘Walking in the Light of Thy Word’** (Psalm 119:105)



Greetings to all in the mighty name of Jesus. I hope you are well and ever striving to walk in the light. I am very excited about the future of the BTI/CPMA departments. God willing, there will be some activities to establish and settle us in our walk with the Lord and service to The Church of God.

Please keep us in prayer. These departments are here to help us remember our biblical identity as

the Church and to maintain who She is. We **must** keep this identity intact, so the Scriptures that apply to the Church will be evident in us. Revelation 22:17: **“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come...”** Don’t you want to walk in agreement with God’s Spirit?

I want to encourage us with a thought that was laid on my heart. James 2:19: ***“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”*** There are many thoughts to take from this Scripture:

- Devils know who God is and are scared of Him! They are no match for Him, so we can have the victory through Jesus over every devilish endeavour.
- Belief in the one, true God is a good thing. It is our starting point of faith and we do well to remember that.

The essence I want to focus on is that faith in God and a profession of faith **is not enough!** There must be the right works and fruit to back up true faith.

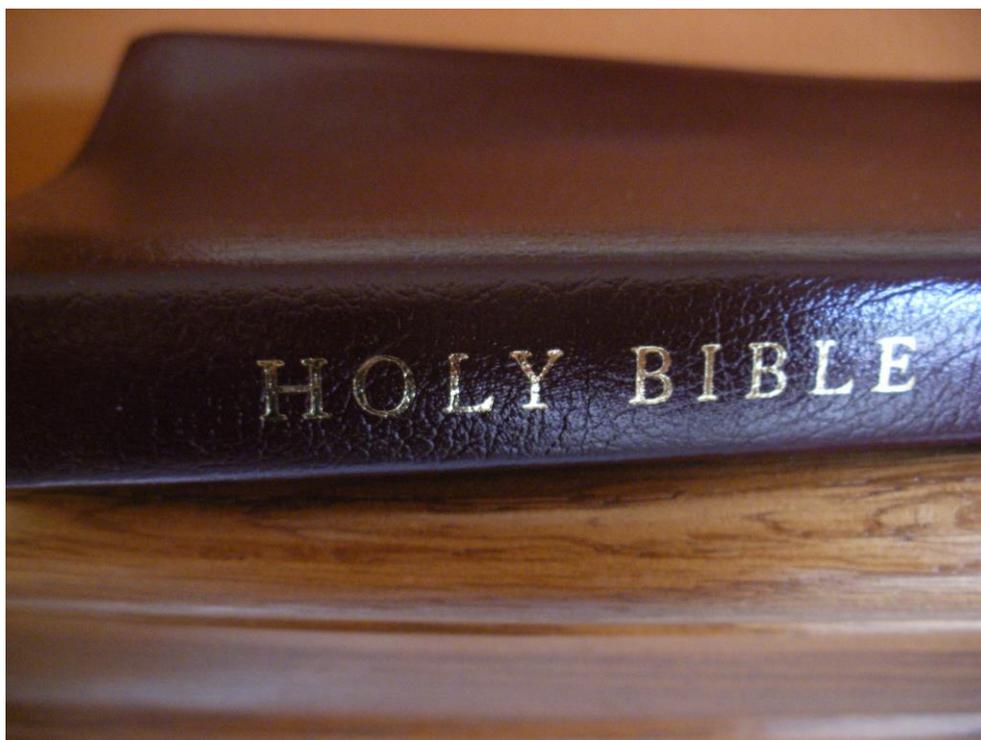
One of the Church’s challenges today is discerning the “Christian and religious world” around us and resisting the pressure to conform. I encounter many professing Christians who feel as though just saying they are of the faith is enough to have influence. They make big claims and boasts on who they are in Christ and what they can do and offer. They speak about their enlightenment and how deep their relationship is with God - to the point of judging my walk with God, doctrines of the Bible, Church teachings and our history as being outdated and unnecessary.

Let us not feel inferior to big boasts of faith and talk of belief in God that come from the Christian world - whose works display worldliness, fleshy pursuits and sinful practices.

***“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:
from such turn away.”***

(2 Timothy 3:5)

We should not be “wooded” by a show of faith and what people say when the Bible gives us clarity. St. Matthew 7:20: ***“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”*** Our faith and works need to be in alignment with what is said in the Holy Scriptures on the subject.



Sunday School Department



The Church of God

SUNDAY SCHOOL BOOST

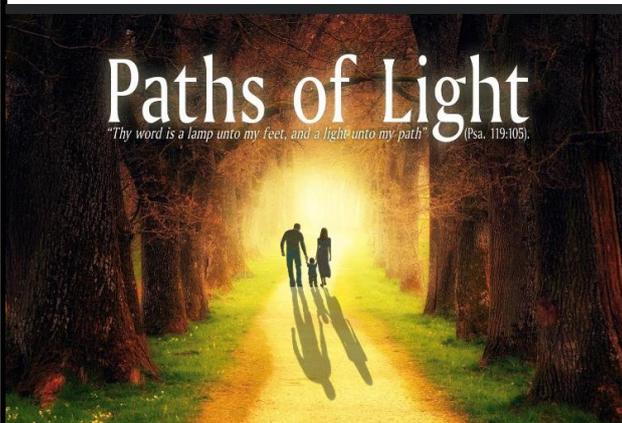
Jennifer Thompson - National Sunday School Co-ordinator

The new general Sunday School theme for the assembly year 2022-2023 is:

'Paths of Light'
(Psalm 119:105)

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

Greetings to all from the Sunday School department.



Genesis 19:4,13: *"But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: ¹³ For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it."*

Two angels were sent by God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of their corrupt and ungodly living. Enough was enough. Mankind has not changed over the years because sin has not changed. It was the decline of

moral standards that caused the destruction of these two cities and today, we can see the decline of moral standards in our society. Thank God for the light of His Word.

Lyrics from John H. Sammis's *Trust and Obey* state: *"When we walk with the Lord, in the light of His word, what a glory He sheds on our way!"*

We are at war with sin and evil. People today may mock and ignore the Word of God, but one day will remember *"...thy word is truth."* (St. John 17:17). Amen! God bless.

Announcement: National Sunday School Quiz on Saturday 20th May 2023

Venue: The Church of God, Long Lane, Halesowen, B62 9LL

Time: 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm



WMB BOOST

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

The new general Women's Missionary Band theme for the assembly year 2022-2023 is:
'I am hath sent me unto you'
(Exodus 3:14)

LADIES' retreat

3 DAYS/ 2 NIGHTS
.....
£178*

.....
26 - 28 MAY 2023
The Hayes Conference Centre, Hayes Ln, Swanwick, Alferton DESS 1AU

* includes Fri evening meal, 3 meals on Sat and breakfast/lunch on Sun

WORKSHOPS **FELLOWSHIP** **WORSHIP**

For bookings contact Pastor Anderson on:
07852 306 526
plummetry@hotmail.co.uk

Find our more about the venue here:
www.cct.org.uk/the-hayes/the-hayes-conference-centre



VICTORY LEADERS BAND BOOST

James Mwila - National Victory Leaders Band Co-ordinator



The new general Victory Leaders Band theme for the assembly year 2022-2023 is:

**'Anointed to Serve 2.0
the next step in God's plan'**

OUTREACH LITERATURE

The Victory Leaders Band is tasked with raising funds to print and translate literature.

This is so that the gospel message can reach

every area and language of the world, that desperately needs to know Jesus Christ. Through the fund-raising efforts of our young people, the gospel is printed, translated, and shipped to souls who need to know the peace, comfort, joy, and salvation that only comes from God in Heaven.

Every local Victory Leaders Band is encouraged to raise a special offering throughout the year for Outreach Literature. These fund-raising projects, in addition to generous online giving and monthly offerings, are a vital part of the work of The Church of God. The lost souls of the world are waiting to hear about Jesus Christ. Will you help us publish His Word today?



Let us continue to look at the theme for this Assembly year and seek the Lord's anointing. We need the anointing for us to be effective witnesses of Christ. The anointing will give us "POWER" for service. With the anointing, we will be able to wholly trust in God and will not be limited by what our feelings may tell us.

Remember, it was in the midst of a crisis that David was selected to rule over the nation of Israel. After Saul proved to be a great failure (1 Samuel 15), the Lord came to Samuel and instructed him to anoint a new king, who would replace Saul.

At first, Samuel was afraid to follow God's instructions because he knew that Saul would kill him if he learned there was a conspiracy to replace him (1 Samuel 16:1-2). In any case, God reassured Samuel with a plan to keep secret the true purpose of his mission in Bethlehem. So he went forth to the house of Jesse. What followed was a long process of having each of Jesse's sons stand before Samuel - one at a time so that he might discern which of the sons the Lord had chosen to be the new king.



Certainly, God could have just told Samuel to find the boy named David and anoint him straightaway. It seems that He had Samuel go through the process to teach him and those who would hear and read this story a lesson. We often select good-looking and charismatic people for leadership, not the "least likely" candidate. But in having Samuel choose the least of Jesse's sons to be the king, God demonstrated that the real way to choose a godly leader in the Church is to look at the heart of the person under consideration. Samuel thus anointed David according to the Lord's will, and the Spirit of God came upon the young man to prepare him for leadership.

VLB's, we NEED God's anointing! David was the least of his brothers and was not even considered by Jesse, his father. Jesse overlooked David, possibly due to his age and stature. God does not look at our abilities, countenance, talent, passion, self-drive, how eloquent we can speak, confidence etc. God knows our hearts. If our hearts are right with God, He will use us. Acts 13:22: ***"And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."***

Will God say the same about you today?

SALVATION

JESUS PAID IT ALL

SIN	PAID
SHAME	PAID
REGRET	PAID
PAST MISTAKES	PAID
UNFORGIVENESS	PAID
HURT	PAID
ANGER	PAID

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DEBT	PAID
CHANGE	0.00

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Subtotal	0.00
GRAND TOTAL	0.00

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For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ROMANS 6:23



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 2023**. These submissions will be for the April-June 2023 issue. Please send to: Karen Richards, 12 Cherhill Covert, Druids Heath, Birmingham, B14 5YB. Email: kazgirl_uk@yahoo.com

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