



# STRIVING FOR

“...By this all will know that you are

(cont'd from page 5)

33:19...they will feast on the abundance of the seas, on the treasures hidden in the sand. The Dutch have reclaimed their land from the sea and South Africa has great wealth from diamond mines.

Dan as a *serpent by the way* is understood as a serpent biting at your legs, indicating guerilla warfare as in the IRA problems. Northern Ireland would be identified as Judah and Simeon; Southern Ireland as Dan. The Simeni (from Simeon) were a warlike tribe of Celtic peoples in Britain.

**Dr David Lewis's experience...was evident. It was extremely interesting to see how some of the latest discoveries in archaeology and historical research can add colour and texture to the biblical narrative. After all, it is always nice to have historical support for a doctrinal perspective.**

*A member of the audience*

Manasseh was to be a single nation and the name means *causing to forget*, referring to Joseph forgetting his difficult early life. Today Manasseh tends to want to forget Europe and be isolationist. They love new approaches, and don't cling to tradition as Europe does. When God said Manasseh would be a *great nation a superpower* is meant.

Ephraim was to be *doubly fruitful and restored*, referring to preserving tradition. England threw out the monarchy, then in 1660 restored it again. Australia, starting as a penal colony, in a short space of 200 years became *the lucky country* and is a good illustration of being doubly bountiful.

The meeting ended at 5 pm with some discussion afterwards. Most literature on display was taken and a number of requests placed to receive the booklet on the lost tribes in prophecy when it becomes available. The entire day was profitable for members and the public alike. □

*Graemme Marshall*

## Audio Tapes Available

**Four audio tapes of Dr David Lewis's lectures are available, as well as four audio tapes of Mr Melvin Rhodes's lectures. Contact the National Office to request your copies.**

## STAYING STEADFAST...

There's an interesting scripture in *Revelation 3:11* that is very relevant to the circumstances in which we find ourselves in the Church: *Behold, I come quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.* I am reminded of this scripture whenever I visit other church areas. Travel is always an opportunity to see old friends and, invariably, I find each time I return to a place somebody I have known for many years is no longer attending our fellowship. Quite often their departure is a result of not having taken to heart this verse.

The fact is many people leave their congregation because of a *man*. They may reason they are not really leaving the Church because they are still a part of the Body of Christ, but leaving a fellowship after many years is very sad and rarely necessary. Some who depart then become angry over something in the past, and may subsequently turn their backs on following God at all.

The words, *Behold, I come quickly*, seem to be aimed particularly at those who will live until the return of Christ. Even if we don't live until then, Christ's return is still sudden in the sense we don't know when we will die and our next moment of consciousness will be in the resurrection. So, *Hold fast what you have....* Hold tight to the truth and to your calling, always keeping focussed on the ultimate goal, which is the kingdom of God. Do not become discouraged even when others around you may be going through periods of discouragement. Realise *His grace is sufficient for you (II Cor 12:9)*.

There are two main ways in which another man can be a stumbling block to us. One way is if we follow a man who is seeking *the preeminence (III John 9)*, desiring to be elevated above others, rather than humbling himself as the Apostle Paul admonishes us to do. *Philippians 2:3* reminds us: *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

Sometimes people will follow a man who has revealed *new truth* to them. In my experience, *new truth* is usually an old debate, resurfaced. We must be careful to study the matter and get advice. If we still feel our new understanding is right, we need to consider if it's really necessary to depart from our fellowship because of it. So often one man discovers *new truth*, then teaches it to others stirring up controversy and causing division among the brethren. Nobody would admit to seeking a following, but that's

# BROTHERLY LOVE

disciples if you have love for one another." John 13:35



effectively what happens. A new church group is often formed revolving around the leader. In time, the new group will also divide, with some following one man, others another. Remember the divisions in *I Corinthians 1:11-13*, with different factions following different men?

A second way in which a man can cause us to lose our crown is if we allow bitterness and resentment toward somebody else to cause us to leave our fellowship. Sometimes it's the pastor who has offended us in some way or, maybe another member. Printed material showing past leaders of the Church in a bad light has caused some to lose faith and turn away from God. If you have a problem with somebody else, then follow Christ's instructions in *Matthew 18*. (Please see David Sandland's article opposite on the Framework of Reconciliation for more explanation.)

As a church pastor I am anxious that every single person in my congregations feels comfortable coming to me with any problem they may have – even if the problem is me. Sometimes I need the help of others to see things more clearly, and I'm not always right. As one member of the Council of Elders put it at our recent conference, we are all learning we can't have our own way all the time.

The United Church of God is set up in such a way that we are having to work through our differences in order to work together. That's another reason why it's so sad to see people leave our fellowship. When people do so they are missing out on opportunities to learn to work together, thereby growing in love for one another, the sign to the world that we are truly His disciples (*John 13:35*). Surely reconciliation, godly love and respect for each other is what God wants as preparation for the time when we will all work together with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God. We miss out on valuable lessons when we walk away rather than deal with the problems and differences we have with each other. □

Melvin Rhodes  
(pictured top left)

## A FRAMEWORK FOR RECONCILIATION

Have you ever, in a state of agitation, tried to approach someone who is equally upset and not been able to resolve the matter? We may then wonder why *Matthew 18:15*, the age-old advice to approach our brother, does not always work. The answer is simple. That advice is only *part of the process* within what I like to call the *framework of reconciliation*. Actually, *verse 15* is the fourth step in a seven-step process of reconciliation is spelled out in *Matthew 18:3-35*. If we take the entire context into consideration and apply all the steps, we can achieve true reconciliation with an aggrieved brother.

First of all, we are admonished to be in a certain frame of mind when approaching a brother (*verses 3-5*). That frame of mind should be *that of a child*, humble and not bearing grudges. *Verse 4* spells out that step, *Therefore whoever humbles himself....* Not an easy step, but none of the steps are easy without the help of God's Spirit. Study other scriptures concerning humility for a broader grasp of this point.

The second stage in the process is covered in *verses 6-9*. We are told we should have a determination not to give offense. Christ even equates the giving of offense to sin! We should never approach an opportunity to achieve reconciliation as a chance to get revenge or to exert our supposed spiritual superiority, but only as a prayerful opportunity to, in true Christian humility, achieve peace without offending.

Now notice *verses 10-14*. The third step is to show respect and avoid putting down our aggrieved brother. A terrific opportunity to put into practice *1 Cor.13:4-7*. A chance to approach a fellow child of the Great God, a *brother*, as mentioned in *verse 15*.

Then we come to *verse 15* itself – the fourth step, which is simply to approach our brother in private. A tough ask as, humanly, we want to gather support and sympathy behind us. But Christ admonishes us to go in privacy, in humility, respect and true brotherhood. If we do that, then *verse 15* works!

But the process doesn't necessarily stop there. It sometimes leads to stage 5 (*verses 16 and 17*). Sometimes, as a last resort, we need to seek help of those who then become *witnesses* to what is said and achieved. More often than not, just the presence of others settles everyone and everything down and allows reconciliation to be achieved.

*Verses 18-20* cover stage 6. We need to appreciate God will back us up if we have followed the previous five steps. Compare *Proverbs 3-6 and 16:7*. God promises to *direct our paths* and to make our enemies to be at peace with us. He can soften attitudes and allow an environment to develop where reconciliation is achievable.

The final and seventh stage is covered in *verses 21-35*. That stage is, quite simply, for us to be compassionate and forgiving (*Eph 4:32, Matt.6:14,15*). What a magic stage to set when we approach a brother forgiving, just as Christ has forgiven *both* of us. □

David Sandland  
(pictured top right)