



## Dog Walking and Daily Bread!

Among the hundred-and-one things that have been different about my year as Moderator is that my time has been split between Edinburgh and Arbroath - my home for the last twenty-nine years. With the various lockdowns that we've been faced with, it made no sense for me to be living in the Moderator's Residence in Edinburgh when I couldn't fulfil a single 'in-person' commitment, welcome visitors to the flat or engage in any travel. Being at home has meant that I've been part of our family bubble and, given our good broadband connection, my work - which has been 99% online - hasn't been curtailed in any way.

During these 'at home' spells I've been able to resume my normal practice of walking the dog each morning. Apart from rare occasions, it's the first thing I do each day; hail, rain or shine. And just as I ready myself to step out the door, having found the dog lead and put a couple of dog biscuits in my pocket, I pop my AirPods in and turn on my 'Bible in One Year' app.

So I'm ticking several boxes at once; exercising the dog, exercising myself and starting the day with portions of the Psalms and Old and New Testaments.

When I think back to childhood years, my understanding of 'habits' was that they were essentially bad in nature. Whether it was biting my finger nails or picking my nose, my mum left me in no doubt that these were 'filthy habits' to be discontinued forthwith! And no doubt she was right!

But it took me until a little later in life to see that habits can be entirely positive. In my first year at secondary school - others of you will remember the same - members of the Gideon's Society attended an assembly and, at the end of the session, presented us each with a New Testament. The parting shot was an encouragement that we read a part of it every day. Being a conscientious kid, I did!

And so, for me, began the habit of a lifetime.

I can't pretend it's always been easy. I can't say that there weren't days that I missed. I can't say that there weren't spells when I was simply going through the motions. But by and large, it's been a habit that's been crucial to my journey of faith.

There's no reason to be surprised by such a conclusion. Jesus said, '*One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God*'. Just as my body benefits from a healthy bowl of granola and fresh berries and natural yogurt, so my inner-self benefits from '*words that come from the mouth of God - daily bread*'.

Of course there are a great many ways to engage in this timeless spiritual discipline - never more so than in these times when electronic options abound. Various Christian organisations produce daily Bible reading notes - carefully chosen passages with explanatory paragraphs and short prayers. And as I indicated earlier, in terms of my own preference at this juncture on my journey, there are loads of apps that offer Bible readings, reflective music, prayers, illustrations etc. While walking the dog, I'm listening to the passages rather than reading them and though it amounts to the same thing, I personally enjoy the experience of hearing the words being read.

So much for me. I trust that you'll have, or will find, a pattern that suits you and ensures a healthy serving of daily bread.

Martin Fair.

### Thank You

We received a letter dated 21st December from Home-Start in relation to the Gift Day appeal for toys. It reads:

Dear Congregation

From the staff team of Home-Start Angus, a huge 'thank you' to everyone who kindly donated toys and gifts for distribution to the families that we work alongside. Your very

kind donations were distributed to young families across Arbroath last week. We are very grateful for your continued support and we know how much receiving these gifts means to the families receiving them.

Wishing each of you and your families a peaceful, healthy and happy Christmas.

With love

Audrey and the staff team of Home-Start Angus

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**ST. ANDREW'S ARBROATH****Member Records****December 2020 /January 2021****Baptisms and Blessings** - None**Weddings** - None**Funerals** - Nancy Craig**IMPORTANT DATE****MARCH EDITION****Word Processed files, as attachments, should be  
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## A 100 Minute Bible

We very often don't appreciate what we have until suddenly it's taken from us....life swiftly becomes a little different....the familiar becomes unfamiliar....the normal, abnormal....the important, unimportant.

The Coronavirus Pandemic has enforced us to examine ourselves and to change in so many ways. What was important yesterday may not be today....what we will do tomorrow will be different to what we do today.

But one thing is certain, no matter how well we are coping....we all miss something we were so used to doing before the virus took its toll.

I miss being in and around the Church ... and can't wait to get back.

I had not been in Brechin Cathedral for a number of years when I returned there as Locum in 2018, and as I entered the sanctuary the first sound I heard was the wonderful tones of the organ....shivers ran down my spine....I simply had to stop, sit down and listen.

I had heard the organ on many other occasions, but this time it seemed so warm and welcoming....different than anything I had witnessed before....the familiar had become unfamiliar.

Talking of which....A few years ago, while visiting an elderly lady, she gave me a copy of the 100 minute bible....it's a 57 page booklet....and yes, you've got it, it can be read in 100 minutes. But being a very slow

reader it took me half an hour longer.

The synopsis on the back of the book read thus.... "So many people know about the Bible but so few have read it at all, let alone from cover to distant cover. This version of the Bible has been written to bridge that gap. The 100 minute Bible picks out the essential elements of Scripture from Genesis to the Revelation of John using universal language. Most people will be able to read it in 100 minutes, making it the ideal companion for that upcoming rail or aeroplane journey, or for an enjoyable evening of enlightenment."

The lender of the book asked me to take it....read it...return it....and give her my opinion. Sadly the old lady passed away before I re-visited so my thoughts were, sadly, never revealed until now.....I liked it.

I wonder what she would have thought of the 50 words Bible I came across a few months ago.....read on!

God made ... Adam bit ... Noah arked ...  
Abraham split ... Joseph ruled ... Jacob fooled ...  
Bush talked ... Moses balked ...  
Pharaoh plagued ... People walked ... Sea divided ...  
Tablets guided ... Promise landed ... Saul freaked ...  
David peeked.... Prophets warned ... Jesus born ...  
God walked ... Love talked ... Anger crucified ...  
Hope died ... Love rose ... Spirit flamed ...  
Word spread ... God remained.

Maybe during lockdown the Bible is worth another visit.....or a re-visit...whatever version you choose to read....

Blessings all, **Ian Gray**

## Dalitso Update

Like here in Scotland, Malawi is currently living under tighter restrictions due to a massive increase in Covid-19 cases and deaths. Group gatherings are limited, there are evening curfews and schools are again closed. In order to keep up to date with the fast changing situation, the team have been keeping up to date through the Malawi Government's press releases and recently attending a virtual meeting run by the Scottish Malawi Partnership. The meeting brought together MPs from the Scottish and UK Government, representatives from the Malawi Government and key organisations, plus 250 groups and individuals. Speakers presented about the worsening situations reporting shortages of oxygen and beds. All those from Malawi had one thing in common. All had been di-

rectly affected by Covid in the last few weeks, either personally or through a friend/family member.

There is real concern about the speed of the spread but we have to thank God that as of now there have been no cases directly affecting our centres. Our clinic continues to be fully stocked with PPE with the specialised visors ready if required. A group of our management team meet weekly to pray for the work and the ongoing situation with the virus, with our administrators sharing prayer points. As a charity we are asking you to join us as we pray for our friends in Malawi. So whether in your own personal prayers or in prayer groups you attend, please do pray for the children we sponsor, the vulnerable guardians that are their carers, our staff and for protection for the country of Malawi.

**Charis**

## Theophilus

Before we think about the ten commandments (and I want us to think about them devotionally in terms of using them in our personal prayers), we need to understand where they fit in to the Bible's whole plan of God's grace and love towards his people—the usual word is our 'salvation'.

There has been some misunderstanding regarding the ten commandments. Some teachers have thought that keeping them faithfully was the way to earn salvation, that is, earn a guarantee of God's eternal grace and favour. They called them a 'covenant of works' and saw keeping them as God's 'Plan A' which he devised after humankind sinned against him and was alienated from him. If we keep all these commandments without failing in any of them, scoring 100% in every one of them, then we will be sure of eternal life. 'Plan A', these teachers believed, belonged to the Old Testament.

But alas, none of us could be perfect, no matter how hard we tried. So God came up with 'Plan B', these same teachers thought. He would send his Son to die for us and so, even though we cannot score 100% (ten times over for each commandment), then through Jesus we can find God's grace and favour and be granted salvation., 'The New Testament', they said, 'is Plan B.'

The fatal flaw in their 'covenant of works' idea was that of course God knew perfectly well that no one (apart from Jesus) could ever score 100% ten times over. So, if the ten commandments were not a 'covenant of works', what were they? The answer is easy. And we find it in the simple intro-

duction to the ten commandments.

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery (Exodus 20:2).

Before ever giving the freed slaves the ten commandments, God says to them, 'I have delivered you, redeemed you. You are my people. Now this is how you must live.' It is therefore clear that the commandments were not a 'covenant of works' but rather were a 'covenant of grace'. So why did God give his redeemed people this 'decatalogue' (the 'ten words')? For three reasons.

First, to teach them his mind and will for them. They were a guide for living, or to use a metaphor, a road map for life's journey. By keeping them his people would live in harmony and safety. Ignoring them would lead to unhappiness and trouble.

Second, he gave them the ten commandments to teach them what sin is. Breaking any single one of them is to commit a sin in the eyes of God.

Third, he gave them to put a restraint on those who could be rash and rush headlong into big trouble, the way a bit and bridle is put on a horse so that a high-spirited animal can be guided by its rider in the right way to go.

So in the next issue of Quest we will try to see how we can use the first commandment as a prayer in our private time of Bible Reading and meditation.

**David Searle**

## Guild News

What a difference a year makes – or perhaps I should just be saying what a different year! No Guild Christmas party but a Christmas gift bag full of seasonal goodies.

Our Guild continues to be "Guild at Home" but unfortunately due to further restrictions we are now not able to deliver our "Guild at Home" bags even to the doorstep, so the material is being emailed or posted. There's always a way!!

Our first 'meeting' of the year was on 25th January when Fiona and Jenni encouraged us with Bible verses and a reminder of the 'try, try, try again' wee spider. Our next 'meeting' is on the 8th of February which is entitled "To Jesus with Love" a craft evening being planned by Joyce and Pat.

At the end of November, I asked Pete Donald, Port Chaplain, Sailors' Society how I could get the knitted hats to him. He kindly offered to pick them up. I took a 'socially distanced' photo and include his very encouraging letter of thanks.

"Please pass on our sincere thanks to your members for their kind gift of 33 woolly hats, all lovingly knitted for the benefit of the seafarers visiting us on ships at Dundee and Montrose. I always tell them that every stitch is a prayer for their safety. They are always well received and greatly appreciated by the guys and gals working on all shapes and sizes of vessels from tiny coasters to mighty cruise ships. The hats are a practical gift, usually a cheerful bright colour that warms their heads – and a spiritual gift that warms their hearts to think that there are people who care for them although they may never meet. The hats also give us the opportunity to tell them that just as the hats are given freely without cost, so God has commended His love towards us by giving His one and only Son, Jesus, to die for their sins. So there are many wonderful blessings from the simple knitted hats and once again a big thank you for your contributions towards this ministry".

Pete was pleased to know that we are still knitting hats and I'm sure his letter has encouraged us to keep knitting!

"Whose we are and whom we serve."

## Dementia Café

Over the last year we have been keeping in touch with our lovely Café guests by dropping off a wee gift every month. The last time was when we delivered Christmas hampers to their homes. They love our visits, even though mostly on the doorstep, as it was a way of keeping in touch and sharing some concerns and we also enjoyed visiting.

Unfortunately for many, this last year has been very difficult, as their loved ones with dementia have found life in-

creasingly stressful as they didn't understand what was happening, why they couldn't do the things they used to do and particularly why friends and family couldn't visit. In turn this has made it more stressful for those caring for their spouse or family member.

At present we can only keep in touch by telephone so I would ask you to spare a prayer for these lovely folk and others who you may know in the same situation.

Thank you.

## Christmas At St Andrew's



The beautiful advent calendar arrangement made by the late Nancy Craig.



The 'In Memory' tree.



A worthy collection of food parcels.



Pete Donald, Sailors' Society Port Chaplain at Montrose, picking up 33 hats and very happy to come back to collect more when we have them.