

The Explorer

January 2017

Free



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Puzzles

Young folk are encouraged to complete the various puzzles in the magazine and send them in to:

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Younger readers who find the questions too hard may like to do a drawing based on one of the articles and send it to the same address.

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Skipper's tales



SKIPPER AND THE WARNING SIGN

Like most people we have a letter box in the front door. I don't know why it's called a letter box because it is just a hole with a cover, but there is no doubt some historical reason. Anyway, we also have a proper letter BOX at the front gate with a lock on it so that only we can open it. The reason for this is to save the postman opening the gate and maybe forgetting to close it again. You see, if he forgets to close it, Skipper will think it's a great idea to run off and visit our neighbours and then we have to go looking to see which neighbours he has decided to visit that day!

Well, a couple of weeks ago, we opened the letter box at the gate in the morning and there was a card in it to say that at 6.30pm the previous evening a delivery man had attempted to deliver a package but there was no one in the house. At first we just accepted the explanation but then when we thought about it we realised we had been in the kitchen with the light on and when we checked the front and back doorbells they were working, so we wondered what had happened. It was obvious the delivery man had not even come in the gate because if he had and we had been in the kitchen, Skipper would have got excited and given a wee happy bark because, like us, he just loves visitors.

We had to go all the way into Inverness and pick up the package ourselves, which was a bit of a nuisance, especially as it was only half of the delivery we were expecting. We forgot all about our annoyance and just put it down to the delivery man being busy and not seeing lights at the front of the house and just assuming we weren't in.

A couple of days later at about the same time, Skipper got quite excited and sure enough a few minutes later there was a ring at the back doorbell and a delivery man with the rest of our expected delivery! We explained the whole thing to him as he has been here before and he and Skipper are old pals so they were glad to see each other. He couldn't understand it at first but then he thought about it and said he knew what was wrong. We have a jokey picture of a border terrier on the gate with the words, 'BEWARE OF BORDER TERRIER' and he thought the other delivery driver probably thought we had a dangerous dog and just put a card in saying come and get your own parcel!

Of course, anyone who knows anything about Border Terriers and particularly our Skipper, knows they are the friendliest of dogs and just love people. But obviously, the poor delivery driver doesn't know that. It made us think; we put that warning sign up as a bit of a joke for our friends and it has been there for years without anyone ever assuming it was a real warning. Of course we will now take it down; we don't want to have to go looking for any more parcels!

Part of the reason that it has never been a problem is that most people take very little notice of warning signs. God's Word is full of warnings. Perhaps you could get help to look some of them up. Whenever you see the word 'warn' or 'warning' in the Bible it should be like a flashing light in your mind. If mum or dad are driving down a country road and see a flashing light warning of danger ahead they will immediately slow down and use caution.

Do you always take heed of warnings and warning signs? Skipper can't because he can't read and we have to guide him! The delivery driver was quite right. He did not know if Skipper was a wild dog who might bite him if he dared to come in the gate. He heeded the sign and we did not get our parcel but he went home feeling safe and that was more important. Each week, the minister preaches and very often gives us warning signs in his sermon. Listen, and look out for them and tell him you heard them; he will be very pleased to know.



From The Editor

Dear Friends

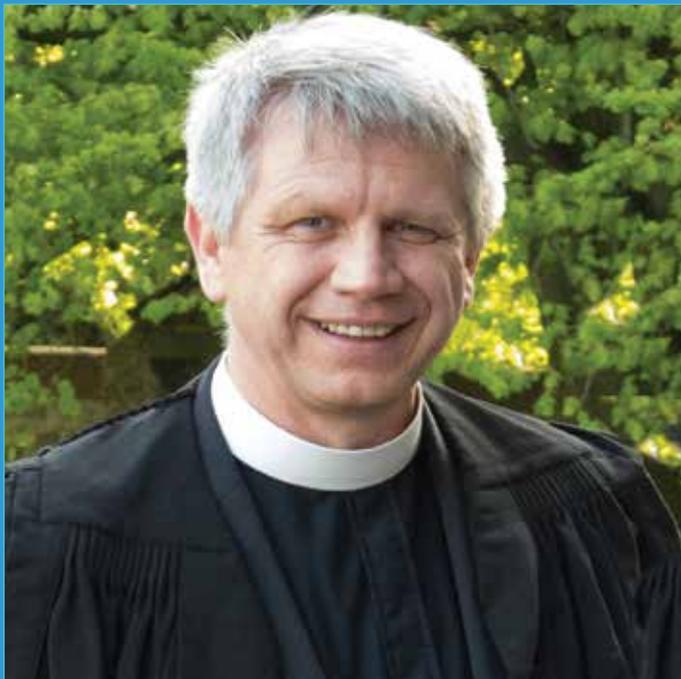
Can I begin by wishing all the readers of the Explorer a Happy New Year. I am not alone in these good wishes as the Moderator of the last General Assembly also has a New Year message for all of us at the Explorer and you can read about that on page 4. Mr. McGlynn and I both hope that this coming year will be a happy and peaceful one in all your lives and that above all else it will be a year in which you seek and find the Lord's blessing.

Just the other day I heard someone say that she wished she had a telescope with which to see ahead into the year. I know what she meant. Most of us have things in our lives about which we would love to be able to see into the future. How will this turn out? How will that develop? Will I pass this test? God hasn't given this sort of telescope and that was very wise.

It is a great blessing that many things are hidden from us. Difficulties are hard enough when they come without knowing a long time in advance that they are coming closer. But wouldn't it be alright if we could only see the good things? Not really; you see, if that were the case there would be no good surprises. It's fun to try and sneak a look at presents (and who hasn't done that?!) but it spoils it for later when we actually get the present. The Lord may have great, sweet blessings ahead for us in 2017 and it's better we don't discover that until the time. Besides all of that we wouldn't use that telescope well. As sinners we have a way of misusing what the Lord gives us. He knew that and that's why he didn't give us the ability to see into the future.

We don't have a telescope to see into the future but the Lord has told us enough in his Word to allow us to plan wisely for this new year. He tells us that at some point in the future we will have to stand before God and face judgement. He has also told us that the only way in which we can prepare for that is by repenting of our sins and trusting in Christ as our Saviour. God's Word is the only telescope we need so let's begin 2017 by looking into it and taking to heart what we see.

Murdo A N Macleod



A New Year Message from the Moderator of the 2016 General Assembly

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” Jeremiah 29:11

Throughout 2016 this verse kept coming up. It was a blessing for me as it is filled with encouragement from God. It is also good to remember that the truth it declares is not just for a short time or a year, it's for life.

God is in control of everything. Even when things seem difficult and too hard for us to understand, God is still working out His perfect plan. Have you noticed what it says at the beginning of the verse? God says; 'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,' or, as we might put it 'For I know the plans I have for you'.

Jeremiah was writing to God's people in Babylon, and reassuring them that God had not forgotten them. They were in captivity, but God was still working out His plan for their good. Whatever the last year has brought to you, even if it has been hard, never forget this truth. God has a plan for His people, 'thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.' Never forget God's good plan for you, this year and every year as you seek to follow Him.

Rev T J McGlynn

We are grateful to Mr McGlynn for his New Year's message for the Explorer. In this short interview he tells us a little bit about himself.

1. Could you tell us a bit about your family background?

I was raised on the east coast of Scotland in a seaside town called Dunbar. The eldest of four children, I have three sisters. We were raised Roman Catholic as that was the faith of my father.

2. When did you become a Christian?

I professed faith as a youngster but after a while slid back into the ways of my friends.

3. Most boys like the army - you spent some years there didn't you?

I entered the army and was stationed in Germany as part of an infantry battalion that operated from helicopters and for a short time was in Northern Ireland. It was during this time in the army that I returned to the Lord.

4. The Lord then called you into the ministry. Where have you been a minister?

After I left the army I entered Faith Mission Bible College in Edinburgh, which was a great blessing to me spiritually. Later on, after helping in my local congregation, I felt called to enter the ministry and went to train at the Free Church College in Edinburgh, 1991-95. My first congregation was in Sydney, Australia the Mount Druitt or Hawkesbury-Nepean congregation of the PCEA. We were there for just over three years and during our time there my daughter Sophie was born. We returned in 2000 and shortly afterwards my second daughter Verity was born. In 2001 I was called to Scalpay and remained there until 2008. While we were there my son Matthew was born.

5. You have been minister in Aberdeen for a number of years. Could you tell us a little about the congregation there? You have an exciting new development with a church building don't you?

We moved to Aberdeen in 2008 and remain there until now. The congregation is mainly made up of families and has a rather young average age. Many people who come to Aberdeen are involved in the oil industry. That is true of many in the congregation and we continue to be encouraged by the warmth and faith of the members and adherents in Aberdeen. We are hopeful of completing the purchase of a church building for the congregation very soon. It is an exciting time for us here in Aberdeen.

Alphabet Quiz

- WHAT **A** WERE THE DISCIPLES ALSO CALLED? _____
- WHICH **B** WAS FREED WHEN JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED? _____
- WHAT **C** IS A NAME FOR JESUS? _____
- WHAT **D** DID JOSEPH HAVE LOTS OF? _____
- WHICH **E** WALKED WITH GOD? _____
- WHAT **F** GUIDED THE ISRAELITES IN THE DESERT AT NIGHT? _____
- WHAT **G** IS A BOOK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT? _____
- WHAT **H** WAS THE NAME OF THE KING WHO TRIED TO KILL JESUS? _____
- WHAT **I** IS GOD? _____
- WHICH **J** LED THE ISRAELITES INTO THE PROMISED LAND? _____
- WHAT **K** WAS JESUS CALLED? _____ OF THE JEWS
- WHAT **L** WAS SACRIFICED BEFORE CHRIST DIED FOR US? _____
- WHICH **M** WAS ONE OF JESUS' DISCIPLES? _____
- WHAT **N** DID JONAH PREACH IN? _____
- WHAT **O** IS A BOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT? _____
- WHAT **P** WAS THE SPECIAL SERVICE THE JEWS KEPT TO REMIND THEM THEY HAD BEEN FREED FROM EGYPT? _____
- WHAT **Q** DID THEY EAT IN THE WILDERNESS? _____
- WHICH **R** WAS ONE OF JOSEPH'S BROTHERS? _____
- WHICH **S** WAS THERE 2 OF IN THE BIBLE ONE IN THE OLD AND ONE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT? _____
- WHICH **T** WAS ONE OF JESUS' DISCIPLES? _____
- WHICH **V** WAS THE NAME OF THE OTHER QUEEN IN ESTHER? _____
- WHAT **W** DID SOLOMON ASK GOD FOR? _____
- WHICH **Z** WAS JOHN THE BAPTIST'S FATHER? _____

November entries

1st Prize:- Lily Grace MacLeod

Runners Up:-

Partick:- Kenny MacKinnon

Stornoway:- Lily Craig, Sarah Craig, Thomas Craig, George MacDonald, John MacDonald, Lydia MacDonald, Peter MacDonald & Susanne MacDonald.

Name _____

Age _____

Congregation _____

Address _____



What would you write?

(The Editor first read about this in the Explorer 15 years ago. As we mark another New Year he thought it would be appropriate to remind our readers of 'Mr Eternity')

The Millennium when we moved from 1999 to the year 2000 seems a long time ago now. Some of you weren't even born then! At the time there were many events to mark the end of the twentieth century. Millions of pounds were spent building the Millennium Dome in Greenwich in London. Sadly, despite Britain's Christian heritage, very little was said about God or the Bible. Thankfully that was not the case in every part of the world.

if you had been in Sydney Australia at the time of the millennial celebrations you would have seen a very strange thing. The word 'Eternity' appeared over Sydney Bridge. It was in memory of a man who came to be known as 'Mr Eternity' . Why would such a big city like Sydney remember this man? Was he a millionaire or a politician? Was he a scientist or a celebrity? No. His claim to fame was that he used to write the only word he knew how to write on the pavements of Sydney, 'Eternity'.

As he was growing up, Mr Eternity (Arthur Stace was his real name), had never heard about eternity. He was born in 1884 in Balmain, Sydney, and suffered a violent and poverty-stricken childhood. His father had a severe drink problem and his mother often left the children to look after themselves. At the age of 14, having attended very little school, he went to work in a local coal mine.

The following years were spent going in and out of prison. He became like his father and alcohol became the most important thing in his life. He was also a great gambler, losing and wasting what little money he had. He went on to serve in the Great War as a stretcher-bearer. However when he returned to Sydney in 1919 he slipped back into his old ways. Like some alcoholics even the alcohol was eventually not strong enough and he soon began to drink methylated spirits. He found that this helped him to escape his sad, appalling life.

How did this 'Chief of Sinners ' come to be known as 'Mr Eternity'? In the 1930's there was a great shortage of work in Australia and many churches in Sydney tried to help those who were hungry and sometimes even homeless. One of these churches was St Barnabas Anglican Church which ran 'A Meeting for Needy Men' which provided spiritual and physical food. On the 6th of August 1930 Arther

Stace wandered into this church. He got a cup of tea and a rock cake and he heard the gospel being preached. He left the church and went across to Sydney University Park where he fell on his knees. With tears of repentance he cried out, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' Years later the converted Arthur Stace recalled, ' I went in to get a cup of tea and a rock cake but I met the rock of ages.'

Some years later Arthur Stace was in church on a Sabbath evening. The minister preached on Isaiah 57:15 , 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity'. During the sermon the minister kept repeating the word eternity. He said that he wished that everyone on the streets of Sydney could hear this word. Time and again during the sermon he called out to the congregation ' Eternity - where will you spend eternity?' The sermon had a dramatic effect on Arthur. He said years later 'That night Eternity was ringing through my brain and I felt what I believe was a powerful call from the Lord to write the word 'Eternity'. I had a piece of chalk in my pocket and outside the church, I bent down right there and wrote it.....the funny thing is, that before I wrote it I could hardly write my own name. I had no schooling and I couldn't have spelled 'eternity ' for 100 dollars. Yet it came out smoothly, in a beautiful copperplate script. I couldn't understand it and still can't.'

It is reckoned that Arthur Stace wrote the word eternity about 500,000 times. He was questioned by the police twenty-three times but never charged. On one occasion when a young policeman challenged him he replied: 'it is a word from the Bible which I want the people to read; and don't forget that when you were sworn into the Police Force you placed your hand on that Book.' The policemen left Arthur to get on with his work.

One of the more unusual places where he wrote the word was on the bell of the General Post Office tower in Sydney which towered over the city. Apparently you can still read it there to this day. It is an amazing thought that a man who spent 46 years of his life in the gutter of sin, with not one thought of eternity, was the means of bringing the thought of eternity to thousands of people in Sydney. Only eternity itself will reveal how many people saw the word and were affected by it. We do know that about two billion people tuned in to watch Sydney's millennial celebrations and saw the word 'Eternity' on the Harbour Bridge.

In July 1967 Arthur Stace entered eternity. Ten years later, in July 1977, a plaque was unveiled in downtown Sydney . The plaque, placed in the pavement, had the word 'Eternity' in copperplate writing, just as Aurther Stace used to write it.

The great question is, 'Where will you spend eternity?' God can save a sinner like Arthur Stace and he can save you. Your life might be nowhere near as bad as Arthur Stace's but we are all sinners. We all need to come to God for mercy. We are all going to eternity.



THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - CHAPTER 12

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!

PETER'S ARREST (vv1 - 5)

You will remember that wicked man King Herod who tried to kill Jesus when he was a baby and succeeded in murdering many other little children in Bethlehem. The Herod we meet in this chapter was his grandson. Sadly he was very like his grandfather and was violently opposed to Christianity. He tried to get rid of the leaders: first arresting John and then putting Peter in prison. The devil will always attack faithful ministers, and we must pray for them as the church did for Peter (v5). There is a long history of government opposition to Christianity. We see it in our own day and we read about it in many places in the Old Testament. If you read Psalm 2 you will find it there all these years ago.

PETER'S DELIVERANCE (vv 6 - 11)

Herod relied on his soldiers and the high walls of the prison but the church had confidence in God. Peter was in his cell awaiting execution but it tells us in verse 6 that he was asleep! Does that surprise you? Well, it shows us that Peter was at peace with God and was eternally safe; death, if it was about to come, would only be a temporary moment of pain. (Psalm 4:8)

In verse two we are told that the Lord did not intervene and save James from death but, according to his own wise purpose, he set Peter free by sending an angel to bring him out. Guards and chains cannot frustrate the power of God. (v6) In the same way the devil and sin can't prevent Christ from setting the sinner free. Has Christ set you free from these powers in order to follow him? (John 8:34-36)

Peter was led out by an angel. They are spirits who are constantly used by God in the world, especially to help his people. They can also be used to afflict God's enemies, as Herod was about to find out! (Psalm 34:7 and 1 Samuel 2:9)

AT MARY'S HOUSE (vv 12-17)

No-one was sleeping here. They were praying without ceasing. Isn't it strange that when God answered their prayers in such a wonderful way they found it hard to believe? Even Peter himself seemed to lack optimism and confidence in God. (v9) Perhaps this is one of the problems with the church in our own day. We too are slow to believe. Look up Ephesians 3:20 and see what it has to say about this.

THE DEATH OF GOD'S ENEMIES (vv18 - 23)

Firstly the soldiers. We might feel a little sorry for them but we have got to remember that they had been involved in fighting against the Lord. They had obeyed the king and not God. They had no right to oppress the church and they actually failed in their duty to both God and the king!

Secondly Herod. His death was a solemn, public example of God's judgement. While the world applauded him God condemned him. He was seeking his own glory and not God's and that's always a bad, dangerous thing to do.

THE WORD AND THE WORKERS CONTINUE (vv 24-25)

John had died but Paul and Barnabas kept on preaching and teaching. They delivered to the Jerusalem elders the money which had been raised in Antioch for the church there and returned taking young Mark (Barnabas' nephew) with them. It's always good for young men training for the ministry to be in the company of older ministers as there is so much that they, like Mark, can learn from them.