

# Pembroke Bible Chapel

... from darkness to light ...



Welcome to our Spring Newsletter May 2007

This newsletter is focused on Spring and the new life that comes at this time of year. Our feature article considers the new life that is found only in Christ. Spring is also a time of joy. We also think of things like the end of school, weddings, and the future. You will find a devotional on the joy of faith, an article on the gypsy moth which appears in spring, an interesting article on what happens to a married couple after death, a teen missionary diary entry, a recipe for spring rolls, and a book review on joy.



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## FEATURED ARTICLE

The Creation Testifies of the Creator - Mark

Romans 1:20 explains that God's eternal power and Godhead are clearly demonstrated in the things that He made. Jesus illustrated spiritual truth using illustrations in nature (e.g., Jn 15:1ff). It's no mistake that nature proclaims the fullness of salvation we have in Jesus Christ.



Newness of Life

When faced with the question of whether resurrection was real, the apostle Paul used an illustration, explaining that in the plant kingdom, life springs up from death (1 Corinthians 15:35-37). God designed plants so that they would be a symbol of what He has done for us in Jesus Christ. It's true that Christians look forward to getting a new heavenly body, and that those who have experienced death will have their old bodies raised up into new glorious ones (1 Thessalonians 4:13-16). But we don't have to wait until the future to experience resurrection life - the Bible says that if we have put our trust in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, we have been raised up in newness of life (Romans 6:3). The seasons that God created remind us of this great truth. In the fall/winter, we see death and dormancy in the plant kingdom. This speaks of our condition as lost sinners. In spring (hurray, it's here!), we see new life spring from that which was apparently dead. This speaks of how God has taken us from a state of being dead in trespasses and sins and made us alive together in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:5,6).

"The Way Up is Down"

When we consider what happens to many plants as they progress through the seasons God designed, we are also reminded of a truth concerning Christian living. Christian life and service is likened in the scriptures to "bearing fruit" (Jn 15:5,8; Galatians 5:22,23). In the plant kingdom, the fruit-bearing cycle is regularly punctuated by a season of death before the next season of fruit bearing. So it is with the Christian - in order for us to exhibit new life and bear fruit unto God, we must experience death to the old. Our old, sinful nature is incapable of serving God - it must be put away (buried). Do you ever wonder why at times the Christian life seems to go so well, while other times it is such a struggle? God puts us through "spiritual seasons" so that we can experience a greater measure of death to our old ways that will ultimately give way to periods of greater fruit bearing. Jesus proclaimed this when He said, "unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain" (John 12:24). The apostle Paul echoed this truth when he reflected on his hardships: "For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body" (2 Corinthians 4:11).

Consecration: Old or New?

As Christians, most of us are taught the importance of presenting (consecrating) ourselves to serve God. A careful examination of the scriptures reveals an important "new life" truth. Perhaps the best known consecration passage is Romans 12:1 - "...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service". I've italicized the word "living" to emphasize its importance. In the Old Testament, the sacrifices presented to God were dead. In the New Testament, there is no sacrifice left to be made for our sins - Jesus died once for all. What remains is for us to give back to Him what He has given to us - our new life. We cannot serve God in our old ways - they are crucified, dead and buried. God wants that which is new and alive: "...present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead" (Romans 8:13). We are called to serve in the newness of Christ's Spirit - the only One capable of bringing forth fruit that is pleasing to God (Romans 7:5,6).

## HIGHLIGHTED DEVOTIONAL

The Joy of Faith by Miles Stanford, None But The Hungry Heart

"Whom having not seen, ye love in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8).

"Although both faith and joy are included in 'the fruit of the Spirit,' joy can only flourish upon the foundation of faith. When faith is present and active, favorable circumstances are not necessary for joy trials and tribulations cannot daunt it.

"There are some Christians who seem to be afraid of enjoying all the rays of the Son of Righteousness. They are afraid of being too happy. Perhaps some of us have not really considered that 'joy' is itself a part of that fruit by which the Father is glorified. There is nothing to be gained by despondency. Doubts are not marks of humility; unbelief is really evidence of pride. And there is no cloud that so effectively shuts out the glad sunshine of our gracious Father's face as the thick cloud of unbelief." Evans Hopkins



A daily devotional like this one can be found on our website at [www.pembrokebiblechapel.com](http://www.pembrokebiblechapel.com)

"Although as to His circumstances the Lord Jesus was the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, yet He had a joy always before His eyes. But we never find Him rejoicing in anything but the will of His Father. 'I delight to do Thy will' was His true testimony. So may we 'rejoice in the Lord' though all is dark around, with the joy of faith that sees the unseen and looks beyond the present and temporal to the eternal." George Gardner

"The Old Testament believer had joy for God's gifts to him. God's power made things here contribute to him. But the Christian's joy is in heaven and springs from what the Father is to him there. He demands nothing from this world, but in the life of the Lord Jesus he contributes to it, of the grace that nourishes and comforts him outside it." J.B.Stoney

"Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. In thy Name shall they rejoice all the day" (Psalm 89:15,16).

## SCIENCE & CREATION

Why Would a Good God Create Parasites? by Hugh Ross, fall 2006

Some skeptics base their rejection of the Christian faith on bugs-specifically parasites. They argue that the existence of parasites is incompatible with belief in the all-loving, all-powerful God of Christianity. While human beings will never know all God's reasons for creating parasites, the following true story illustrates how their existence may be considered a good thing, rather than an excuse for rejecting God.

In the nineteenth century, a famous Harvard anatomy professor, Dr. Etienne Leopold Trouvelot, took up the hobby of studying exotic insects. One afternoon in 1868, a few gypsy moths he had obtained from Europe escaped from his home laboratory. Unchecked by any predators or parasites, the moths multiplied to pandemic proportions. Within several years, deciduous forests all over the eastern United States were stripped bare as the moths in their larval state consumed every leaf. When this happened, not only were the forests devastated, but so were hundreds of species dependent on those forests, including the gypsy moths.



For some time, the only significant control on the gypsy moth population (and its effects) was the episodic deterioration (quality and quantity) of forest foliage. Following each devastation, the forests would take decades to recover, and when they did, the moths would multiply again-leading to another cycle of widespread destruction. What's worse, each cycle yielded a progressively weakened gene pool for all species involved.

Eventually, local carnivores, primarily birds and mice, adapted to the new source of prey. Epidemics became less catastrophic but were still very destructive.

A turnaround began with the introduction of a virus (from Europe) that attacked only gypsy moths. It hastened the collapse of the gypsy moth population but did not stop the epidemics.

Major help arrived in 1989. A second parasite, a fungal pathogen, was introduced to the gypsy moths. Finally scientists saw evidence that the cycle of epidemics could be broken and balance restored. They found that multiple predator species and at least two different parasite species must feed on the moths to prevent epidemics and ensure that North American forests remain healthy-healthy enough to sustain hundreds of different species, including gypsy moths, with an optimal quality of life.

As this story demonstrates, without the right parasites, everybody loses. But, with an adequate number and diversity of parasites, all species in the ecosystem thrive, even the species the parasites attack. In this one simple case, where researchers gained a fairly complete understanding of the relevant ecological data, the existence of parasites proves clearly compatible with an all-loving, all-powerful Creator. And while the data for more complex creatures (than moths) and their ecosystems prove vastly more complicated, this one case might encourage a skeptic to reconsider his position before charging God with weakness or malice.

## COMMENTARY

Will Death Do Us Part? by Ronald Nash, Professor of Philosophy and Theology, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002.

Trying to trick Jesus, the Sadducees told him the following story: "Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too" (Mark 12:20-22). The Sadducees then confronted Jesus with this question: "At the resurrection, whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her" (Mark 12:23).

Jesus' answer puzzles many people. "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven (Mark 12:24-25). This reply causes many loving couples to wonder: Is Jesus saying that their most important earthly relationship ends with death! What do His words mean? Several simple distinctions can clarify the case and remove the misunderstanding.



Some human relationships are primarily legal in nature. While the marriage relationship transcends the legal requirements of the state, the legal dimension cannot be ignored. This aspect takes on many forms - including tax responsibilities, inheritance, and property rights. The marriage must be recognized by the state. Laws describe the rights and duties of each partner.

In addition to legal ties, the husband-wife relationship certainly includes physical components, such as sexual intimacy and sharing a household. But does it go beyond these dimensions?

The husband-wife relationship can and should be a spiritual relationship (see Ephesians 5:22-33). Some spouses in the physical and legal dimensions never become husband and wife in the spiritual sense. Disrespect, unfaithfulness, lack of love, and the absence of mutual commitment to God may indicate an absence of spiritual connection.

These distinctions create a position from which to understand Jesus' point in Mark 12:24-25. Obviously, death brings an end to legal and merely physical relationships. A natural way of understanding Jesus' words is that this suspension of physical and legal relationships continues after the resurrection.

But there is no reason to suppose that spiritual relationships begun on earth ever dissolve. Christians who have loving relationships on Earth can believe with confidence that those spiritual relationships continue after death. Even more, they can be confident that without the sin that taints all earthly relationships, the fellowship to come will be more marvelous than anything comprehensible at this time. Nothing Jesus said in Mark 12 provides the slightest justification for doubting that heaven will mean the reunion of husbands with wives, as well as parents with children, grandparents with grandchildren, and friends with friends.

And, as noted in this column, the person encountered in heaven will be the same person who was known and loved on Earth. Jesus therefore assured believers that death does not end human existence or human identity, and that spiritual relationships begun on Earth will continue in heaven.

## Life as a Missionary

Diary entry for April 15, 2007 by Chloe

It is Sunday morning. I have woken up to a quiet, sleeping house. The rest of my family are all a-snooze in their beds. Outside my window, I hear birds chirping cheerily. From further away come sounds from the village. People shouting, a baby crying and roosters crowing. My bedroom is on the east side of the house, the side nearest the village. From my window I can see the dirt road leading into the village, but there are some trees in the way, and I cannot see the first house. Sitting here, cool air is sifting in through the screens of my window. It's still a pleasant temperature in the mornings, but once the sun comes out it heats up quickly. I'm looking forward to rainy season which should be here in a month or so. The earth is so dusty and dry!



But it would be too early for the sound of rain drumming on our tin roof just yet. The villagers still need to slash and burn their fields in order to plant rice, peanuts and other grains. Also, the village women have begun the interesting process of making salt down near the rice fields and marshes. Yesterday morning, four of my younger siblings and I walked down to the salt "camps" and wandered around on the dikes. The women were busy scraping the salty dirt laid down by the tide and carrying it back to their camps. There, they will filter water through this dirt, and the water that comes out the other end of the funnel (made of sticks, straw and mud) will be salty brine. They will then boil this brine in large pans over open fires until the water evaporates, leaving coarse, tasty salt. It is such a neat process to observe!

Outside my window, the mangos are beginning to ripen. The big leafy trees in the distance are burdened with green and orange mangos. Yesterday, near a small mango tree in our front yard, my mom saw a green snake. (It was probably the very poisonous, but common mamba.) We didn't manage to shoot it so we hope that it will slither far away from our yard.

On Sunday mornings, my family and the two other missionary families in our village of Tarencha meet together in one of the three houses. Today church is at our house. Most Sundays we eat lunch together afterwards.

Yes, now my house is waking up. I hear my youngest brother asking for his morning cup of Cerelac. (baby cereal that he drinks like a milkshake in a sippy cup) Someone else sneezes, low voices murmur at the back of the house. Gideon and Simeon must not be up yet; it's still pretty quiet! Oh, the familiar noises of my home. Just stop and listen for yours sometime.

## RECIPE of the MONTH

Spring Rolls by Natalie

These spring rolls dipped in a fish sauce are sooo good!

2 lbs ground pork  
 4 (1 ounce) packages vermicelli (soak in warm water until soft for 30-60 min)  
 1-2 eggs  
 1-2 onions  
 green onions  
 salt and pepper  
 1 teaspoon sugar  
 rutabaga chopped finely

The fish sauce, rice vermicelli, chili garlic sauce, hoisin sauce and rice wrappers can be found at Asian food markets.

Mix ingredients together.

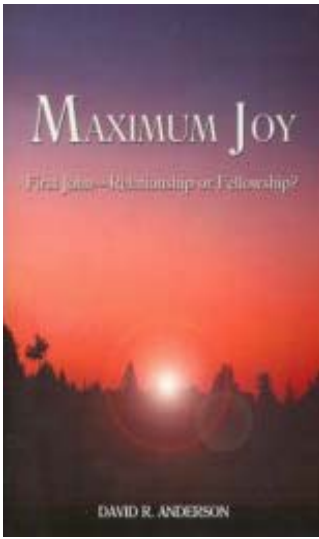
Place 1 tablespoon of mixture in spring roll wrapper

Brush edge with egg to seal roll

Deep fry 10 min at 350 degrees



## BOOK REVIEW



Maximum Joy: First John - Relationship or Fellowship? by David Anderson  
Reviewed by Hugh

Is 1 John intended to provide a means by which we can know we have eternal life (1 John 5:13), or to provide a message of how to experience genuine joy (1 John 1:4)? Is it a letter with guidelines to determine if we have a relationship with God, or a means to experience a deep fellowship with God? There is no doubt that any true fellowship with God cannot occur unless a relationship first exists. But is it possible to have a relationship with God, yet have very limited fellowship with Him? Does a loss of fellowship also imply a loss of relationship, or perhaps indicate that no true relationship ever existed?

David Anderson attempts to unravel these questions from a pastor's perspective. He takes us through this controversial epistle in a well developed manner. He teaches from the perspectives that our position (relationship) is secure and eternal, and that our condition (fellowship) needs attention so that we can live with "Maximum Joy". Through many (often humorous) stories, he develops the theme of Fellowship using Right Living, Right Loving and Right Learning.

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