

Pembroke Bible Chapel

... from darkness to light ...



Welcome to the Pembroke Bible Chapel Newsletter - April 2008

This spring newsletter features an article on April Fool's Day. You will also find a devotional, a Science and Creation article on the amazing hairy woodpecker, a commentary on Fathers and daughters, a Missionary article on life in Africa, and a review of a play and of a movie.

If you would like to read past editions of the newsletter [click here](#).

We are looking for your feedback - [click here](#) to take a quick survey



FEATURED ARTICLE

April Fools' Day - by Mark

The origin of April Fools' Day is not widely agreed upon, but seems to have its roots in festivities associated with the vernal equinox during March 25 to April 2. Celebrations in France date from the 16th century, while it became a common custom in 18th century Great Britain.

As a boy growing up in the city of Guelph, Ontario, I remember the local newspaper (The Daily Mercury) running an annual hoax story on its front page. This would always include a picture of something zany (such as flying cows). On April 1, 1998, Burger King ran an ad in USA Today advertising a hamburger for left-handed people whose condiments were designed to drip out of the right side. Not only did customers order the new burgers, but some specifically requested the 'old', right-handed burger. One whopper of a prank, methinks.



The scriptures predate the celebration of April Fools' Day by many centuries, so there is no mention of it in the Bible. However, the Bible has much to say about 'fools'.

Psalm 14:1 states, 'The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God".' Thus, God's Word proclaims that atheism is foolishness. Romans 1:18-23 explains that those who, in their own 'wisdom', refuse to acknowledge our Creator-God, become fools having futile thoughts and foolish minds. The verses that follow this passage explain the inevitable decline in morality that follows from atheism, much of which is observed in our culture today.

The Bible also states that those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ are considered fools in the eyes of the unbelieving world: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" (1 Corinthians 1:18ff).

This passage indicates that foolish arrogance toward Jesus Christ, His gospel and those who follow Him comes about as a result of a 'worldly wisdom' that chooses not to know or acknowledge God for who He is and what He has done (1 Corinthians 1:21). The passage goes on to assure us that God has chosen to reveal His wisdom and power in the things that this world considers foolish.

In view of this, Christians should not be surprised that the message they proclaim of sins forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ is often met with scorn. The Bible encourages us that we are not to become discouraged if we encounter a 'fiery trial' when we publically identify with Jesus Christ. In fact, we are called to rejoice to the extent that we share in the public humiliation that He endured, knowing we are commended by God and will share in the glory of Christ when He is revealed (1 Peter 4:12-14).

So the question for April 1, 2008 is "what type of fool are you?"

"If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you" (1 Peter 4:14).

HIGHLIGHTED DEVOTIONAL

THE REAL ENEMY by Stanford, None But The Hungry Heart

"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14).

"Hatred for others comes easy for some but to fully hate one's old man comes hard for all. The Lord Jesus loves us too much to allow us to go on loving ourselves.

"The Christian's victory is not over others, but over himself. His sword is drawn, not to slay his fellowman, but to slay himself. He wins by losing. He triumphs by being defeated. He lives by dying. His crown is a crown of thorns. His throne is a Cross. His weapon is not strength but weakness.

"His victory is not found in establishing his own cause but in establishing that of his fellowmen, the poor, the sick, the disinherited, the brokenhearted, the wayward, the lost. This may be foolishness to men. But we must not forget that 'the foolishness of God is stronger than men' (1 Corinthians 1:25). -F.J.H.



"How blessed it is to know, and at the same time how solemn to realize, that the sin of the child of God is against his Father, and that it is the love of relationship that is called into exercise about it-love which acts towards us 'for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness' " (Hebrews 12:10).

"It is impossible that He should treat it lightly, and it will be impossible in the end for any one of His own to treat it lightly either. Grace abides towards us, and because grace abides, sin cannot be permitted to have sway over "The objects of it." -W.K.

"Let not sin, therefore, reign. . . " (Romans 6:12).

A daily devotional like this one can be found on our website at www.pembrokebiblechapel.com

SCIENCE & CREATION

An Amazing Head-Banger: The Hairy Woodpecker by Chris

There are several species of woodpeckers, some of which are amazing. The Hairy Woodpecker is probably not that interesting, compared with other ones, but it is fairly widespread in North America. When we see a Woodpecker knocking its beak against a tree trunk, we should wonder about its marvels. We Humans couldn't knock as hard: it would give us an instant headache, or worse, it could kill us.

Its beak is its most interesting feature: it chisels holes in softer woods to create a nest. Being inconspicuous and difficult of access, nesting in a tree trunk limits the number of predators, and shelters against wind, heat, cold, and rain. Its chisel-shaped beak is also made to drum on hollow branches, thus calling for mates and proclaiming territory. Some discover that drumming on metal downspouts makes a loud noise too ...

Its beak is made of keratin, like all other birds. It is the same protein that can become hard, and form fingernails, claws, feathers and scales. Its nostrils are narrow and slightly covered with feathers to filter wood dust away. As the Woodpecker knocks on wood, all the impact occurs at the point of the beak, and the high pressure chips wood easily. But the same pressure is spread to its thick skull, which transmits the shock wave to the brain. The brain, being soft tissue, can easily tear apart. So how does it stand the frequent and long-lasting hammering? This is what the Creator did to protect His special creature: the beak is attached to the skull by an elastic ligament, acting as a shock-absorber, and the skull itself is located above the beak, so it doesn't get a direct blow.

Unlike most bird species, Woodpeckers have special shock absorbing muscles in their necks, doing double-duty: they help the bouncing of the head like spring action, as well as protecting the rest of the body from severe impact. If the angle of the chisel beak was different, it would injure its head. The Hairy Woodpecker is amazing in that while knocking a tree trunk, it is concentrating on aiming straight, and listening to the sound of the knock for softer wood and holes. When it finds prey, the Woodpecker extends its harpoon-like tongue into the insect or larva, and glue-like saliva helps to extirpate it from the tiny tunnel the bird just drilled. It retracts its long tongue in an original way: the tongue is wrapped around the skull down into the nostril, so it can easily extend 2-3cm to spear its prey.



The Woodpecker has to brace itself really well to peck. Its Creator made it with two very stiff tail feathers to brace it against the tree trunk, and long sharp claws allow it to hang effortlessly on bark and wood. It is designed to resist very cold climates: it still forages when the temperatures plummet below -40°C (-40 °F). It is adaptable: it also feeds on fat and seeds in the winter. Though not the most interesting Woodpecker, the Hairy is nonetheless very well designed!

COMMENTARY

Through Your Daughter's Eyes by Joel Hilliker from the Trumpet

"A Note to Daddy," read the little paper on my nightstand. "Daddy, will you take me on a date on Thursday, please? Love, Zoe."

The heart melts.

That note reinforced something I learned recently - something I thought I already knew, but the full truth of which is more powerful and exciting than I had realized: that is, just how potent a father's influence is.

It hit me with greater force thanks to a book I heartily endorse as a must-read for every man with a daughter: Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters by Meg Meeker.

Meeker's decades of experience practicing pediatric and adolescent medicine, as well as counseling teens and parents, are clearly rooted in a basic respect for the biblical, father-centric model of family. In clear, frank language, she gives us a new, breathtaking

perspective: seeing ourselves through our daughters' eyes.

"Dads, you are far more powerful than you think you are," she writes. You are nothing less than the epicenter of that little girl's world.

"Daughters are never lukewarm in the presence of their fathers," she writes. "They watch you intensely. They hang on your words. They hope for your attention, and they wait for it in frustration - or in despair. They need a gesture of approval, a nod of encouragement, or even simple eye contact to let them know you care and are willing to help.

"When she's in your company, your daughter tries harder to excel. When you teach her, she learns more rapidly. When you guide her, she gains confidence. If you fully understood just how profoundly you can influence your daughter's life, you would be terrified, overwhelmed, or both."

I have weighed these words against my interactions with my own daughters and found them to be true. I was simply not aware enough of just how focused my girls are on trying to gain my attention, to win my affections. I did not see how sensitive they are to my words, my deeds, my touch.

You are your daughter's hero. She craves your awareness, your love; she needs your protection, your security; she values your convictions, your stability. Far more than you think.

Even your teenage daughter who is pouting or shouting and pushing you away is actually testing your commitment to her. A father must be man enough - his love must be tough enough - to tear down those obstacles and prove that he cares.

Our daughters need our masculinity, our ability to confront and solve problems, our logic, our firmness. "Let me tell you a secret about daughters of all ages," Meeker writes. "They love to boast about how tough their dads are - not just physically, but how strict and demanding they are. Why? Because this allows daughters to 'show off' how much their fathers love them. If only you could be privy to the private conversations of girlfriends."

It is from you that your daughter learns what it means to be loved - what proper, respectful male attention looks and feels like. It is from her interactions with you that she gains the sense of self-respect so necessary to resisting inappropriate male advances.

Our world is full of toxic influences. Pressures on our daughters to look and act in ungodly ways. Assaults on modesty, decency, virtue. This world tries to make them self-centered, beauty-obsessed and materialistic. Meeker does a superb job of giving the reader an unblinking look at this ugly reality - exposing the sexualized messages being pushed in public schools, within teenage and even pre-pubescent relationships, throughout the media. "While you want the world to be cautious and gentle with her," she writes, "it is cruel beyond imagination - even before she is a teen." The truth is shocking, and saddening, and enraging - but a failure to recognize it makes a father ill-equipped to battle it with sufficient firepower.

You, with God's help, are your daughter's number-one protection. You need to stand between her and those satanic poisons, and give her a chance to grow up with her innocence preserved and her dignity intact. Be a shining knight with a lion's heart, carrying God's banner in her life.

This book fanned the flames of my devotion to my daughters. It swelled my appreciation for how God designed the female mind to embrace fatherly authority. It increased my desire to take advantage of the limited time I have in their fleeting childhood to exercise that influence for good.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have a date to go on.

Life as a Missionary

No Fixed Address by Chloe, an MK from Guinea, West Africa

February 29, 2008

We're pretty much settled into life here after getting back from Texas in February. I think when we first arrived I experienced some culture shock, but that wore off pretty quickly. It is good to be back "home" now. It's amazing how much quieter life is here. In Texas it was go, go, go! To church, to youth group, shopping, to one event or another ... I liked it for a while, but I think it would be too much if I lived like that all the time.

The flight over here went really well. My grandparents came to see us off at the airport. It's always hard to say goodbye. Dad and Mom were relieved when all eighteen of our suitcases and totes were safely checked in. We got through customs and all the checks quickly and were soon on the plane. The nine hour trip to Paris was actually one of the best I've had, as I got a fair bit of sleep. Then we had a seven hour wait in the Paris airport which went by fairly quickly. We found a comfortable, quiet place to hang out and rest while we waited for our flight to Conakry.

Saturday, March 9 2008

Today has been a long day of good hard work. Started by cleaning the living room rug. We scrubbed it with water, laundry soap and scrub brushes and scraped out the muddy water. Boy, was it dirty! It still looks kind of dirty, but it feels cleaner.

Then Mom, Phoebe and I repainted our main bathroom. Not until I started painting, did I realize just how dirty it was. After painting the bathroom, Mom and I took our paintbrushes and paint and went around the house brushing up other dirty areas. Once you see how white and clean things look painted, it makes you realize how dirty everything else is!

March 28, 2008

I could just sense the excitement in the air today over the wedding that is taking place in the village. Mom and I just came back from going in to greet people and seeing what was up. At the bride's compound there was a group of women gathered around the drummers. The adventurous ones would hop into the circle and dance a lively jig. The yard resounded with laughter and talking. At the groom's place the women were in the process of cooking the evening meal of rice and sauce. A huge pot of yellow sauce boiled furiously on the open wood fire. No catering services here! A few other ladies sat with bowls of rice flour in their laps mixing in water to form small round balls. These little pea-sized balls are then laid out to dry in the sun until the morning when they will be used to make a sweet, slimy porridge known in Susu as monee. (I was brave enough to try some monee this morning, but could only handle a bite!)

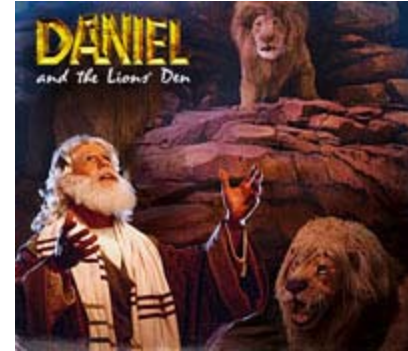
March 29

Last night there was music playing in the village until at least one o'clock in the morning. I think they may have danced all through the night... Music and dancing are a big part of the wedding celebrations. Hopefully it'll be quieter tonight. I think everyone's tired out! When there's something big going on like this and there are lots of guests, there aren't enough beds for everyone so some people end up having to sleep sitting down... or not sleep at all.

PLAY REVIEW

Review of Daniel and the Lions' Den by Chris

Daniel and the Lions' Den is the title of a musical play produced by Sight & Sound Theatres, currently playing at Millennium Theatre in Strasburg, Pennsylvania. My family and I went on a trip to North Carolina during our March Break. On the way back, we stopped to see this play located about half an hour's drive west of Philadelphia. It was so well done that I highly recommend it. It is being played until May 17th, and is well worth seeing.



Daniel and the Lions' Den was produced 5 years ago, and came back by popular demand, with some revisions. It is so professionally done that the audience feels it is part of it. The stage has a center part about 30 m (100ft) wide, and wings that wrap around the lower part of the theatre. Real animals were used: a parrot, a dog, a cat, horses, an ox, a dromedary camel, as well as all kinds of visual and sound effects.

All parts of the stage were used from the beginning, beautifully portraying daily life in Jerusalem, and the lack of faith of the Israelites despite the prophets' warnings. The second scene depicted the capture of the Jews, and the long walk of the captives towards Babylon, with the emotional journey acted and simultaneously projected on a screen. Scene 3 is about the Jews' arrival in Babylon and the new roles assigned to individuals, the separation of dear ones, the culture shock and the new unpleasant reality of becoming servants.

The following two scenes are about Daniel's preparation and standing for his faith in God. There is more drama in the 6th scene: king Nebuchadnezzar dreams, and Daniel interprets the dream. Daniel's friends are sent to the Fiery Furnace in the following scene. Great light and sound effects made it look pretty realistic. Later, king Nebuchadnezzar dies.

The second act shows some action at a quarry where Jewish prisoners, including some prophets, meet and discuss their situation, showing the despair of the Captives and a desire for freedom, which can only come with faith in God. Then there is that fantastic banquet given by Belshazzar, during which a big hand writes on a wall, right after the king and his wives and nobles drink from the Lord's cup. The interruption of the feast is followed by a dramatic destruction of a huge idol, with excellent special effects.

Daniel is shown to have a great relationship with king Darius, who is tricked by the jealous commissioners and satraps. A tremendous décor of a lions' den is pushed on scene, with 30 plush lions (and tigers), some of them moving mechanically for yet another great effect. The whole play concludes with a vision of the King of Kings riding on his white horse, travelling in the air above stage, and ascending to His throne on high.

The whole play lasted 2 ½ hours, displaying acting talent and scenery marvels. It made us feel emotional at times, and surely challenged our faith. There were great parallels of the Old and New Testaments, with the full acknowledgement of Christ being the center of it all. This play is definitely worth the day's drive to beautiful Amish country. Here is the URL for more information: sight-sound.com.

MOVIE REVIEW

Amazing Grace reviewed by Mark



This movie was originally released in 2007 February and is set in 18th century England where William Wilberforce, a member of British Parliament, struggles against the slave trade practices of the British Empire. This historical movie is not fast-paced, and probably best suited for adults (rated "Parental Guidance"). Perhaps the most intriguing character in this historical tale is John Newton (pictured; played by Albert Finney). Newton, the author of the famous hymn "Amazing Grace", was a former slave trader who realized his sinful ways and put his trust in Jesus Christ. Newton was a spiritual mentor to Wilberforce - the pinnacle of the movie comes in a discussion between the two, when Newton proclaims, "I am a great sinner, and Christ is a great Saviour". The film has some mildly crude language and features costumes typical of the era, including "busty" gowns - mild by today's standards, yet immodest by the biblical yardstick.

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