

Keeping in Touch K.I.T.

Our Aim: To know Christ and make him known

No 91: Autumn 2017



Subversive Humility

OUR LIFESTYLE believes if we just push enough, work harder, and earn more, we can have more. Maybe then we will feel whole, proud, happy... noticed... feel like we matter.

This idea that more is more, was something the disciples struggled with too. Though attracted by the love of Christ, they thought that they would be rewarded materialistically, based on their efforts, or sacrifice, or commitment. They cherished a spirit of self-exaltation, of self-complacency and they made comparisons. When one of them failed in something, the others indulged in feelings of superiority.

Matthew 20: 1-16 shows how Jesus decided to address the disciples' pride. It shows how God deals with all his children and how He expects us to live for others.

For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

The owner heads to the market where those without work assemble hoping for a job – any job avoiding the humiliating rejection of not being asked. He selects some workers and offers them the standard wage. Halfway through the morning the owner returns there.

Andsaid to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'

What is it that drove the owner over and over again, every three hours, to the market? His motive was compassion. That compelled them to trust that he would be just. The justice pictured here includes respect for the dignity of the needy and a deep concern for their welfare. The early Christian Church saw this as a primary expression of the Kingdom of God, a kingdom in which everyone has enough, and no one is marginalized or disadvantaged.

Suddenly the owner's steward appears on the scene. In verse 8:

So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the labourers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.'

Why wasn't he doing the footwork to the market throughout the heat of the day? We see here that the landowner, or Jesus', unconditional love for people, for you and me, infuses his character with a subversive humility. That necessitates a radical compassion surpassing conventional culture and norms and says *I care about you, regardless of your class, status, gender, sexual identity, race or nationality*. It goes against the general expectations. It's what leads Jesus himself, the landowner, to go to the hurting. Trekking through the heat and dust throughout the day he demonstrates his costly love to those standing in the market places of society in search of dignity and meaning.

Another surprise - the owner instructs the steward to give all a full day's wage:

So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the labourers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.' And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius.

This is Jesus telling the parable and Jesus, wants his disciples to understand what radical grace and compassion looks like when extended to others. They could sense the rising tension in the first group as they observe what is happening with the other four categories of workers. And the climax comes in verse 11:

And ...they complained against the landowner, saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'

You see equal pay for equal work is a centuries-old understanding of justice. But the parable focuses on an equation filled with amazing grace, which is resented by those who feel that they have earned their way to more.

The complaint is from the justly paid who cannot tolerate grace. "You have made them equal to us" they shout angrily. For most of us, our worth as human beings is directly related to how much our reward will be. But God's grace places human worth and dignity back where it should be. Not in who you are, but in whose you are.

See verses 13 to 16:

But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'

There is no joy in a more is more approach to life. Instead joy is found in the grace and compassion of a journey of faithfulness.

Taken from a sermon by Pastor Jacques Venter

WHO IS a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry for ever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.

Micah 7: 18 and 19 NIV

In Christ's Object Lessons page 403, E.G. White makes this comment on this parable:

THERE ARE many who have given themselves to Christ, yet who see no opportunity of doing a large work or making great sacrifices in His service. These may find comfort in the thought that it is not necessarily the martyr's self-surrender which is most acceptable to God; it may not be the missionary who has daily faced danger and death that stands highest in heaven's records. The Christian who is such in his private life, in the daily surrender of self, in sincerity of purpose and purity of thought, in meekness under provocation, in faith and piety, in fidelity in that which is least, the one who in the home life represents the character of Christ—such a one may in the sight of God be more precious than even the world-renowned missionary or martyr...That which even the greatest and wisest cannot earn, the weakest and most humble may receive. Heaven's golden gate opens not to the self-exalted. It is not lifted up to the proud in spirit. But the everlasting portals will open wide to the trembling touch of a little child. Blessed will be the recompense of grace to those who have wrought for God in the simplicity of faith and love.

Well TO BE FAIR... - Richard J B Willis MA MSc FRSPH

WE ALL want to be well, but our physical make-up and function is pretty largely down to our particular genetic profile. The Japanese philosopher Haruki Murakami says, physically speaking, *Human beings are ultimately nothing but carriers -- passageways -- for genes. They ride us to the ground like racehorses from generation to generation. Genes don't think about what constitutes good or evil. They don't care about whether we are happy or unhappy. We're just means to an end for them. The only thing they think about is what is most efficient for them.* Hardly fair to be sure! Our genes are arrangements of four molecular bases abbreviated to A, C, G and T. In various clusters and combinations this code of molecules amount to some 3,088,286,401 letters of DNA, which if written out in standard sized lettering would cover 1,5M pages [that's 60 times the size of the Encyclopaedia Britannica!].

So plenty of scope for typos, malfunctions, omission and/or additions. Whilst it may not be fair individually, there is hope. As Oswald T. Avery states: *If we are right ... it is possible to induce predictable and hereditary changes in cells. This is something that has long been the dream of geneticists.* As it is, our carrying or absence of certain genes does not mean that we shall inevitably exhibit the conditions with which they are clinically associated. All the usual components of healthy living and lifestyle may keep inherited and thus inherent problems in check. It pays us to be concerned about the environment we live in to help redress the balance in our favour. The life you save may be your own! Well, that's fair isn't it?

KIT FLASHBACK.

HERE are two more photos from June 19 when **Joellyn Sheehy** married **Marco Presutto** in Italy. My husband **Roy** and I met Joellyn as a toddler, but as she sat upstairs in church, many of you may need to put her in context as it were. The second photo shows Joellyn's family. They are, left to right: **Patrick** (brother) & **Richard Sheehy** (father), Joellyn, Groom - Marco Presutto, **Arnetta Harper-Sheehy** (mother), & **Alex Polegenkyy**, the latest addition to the family - he's Ukrainian & came to live with them around 1 1/2 years ago



NEWS, NEWS, NEWS!

IF YOU ARE LIKE ME, you are thinking, *What is subversive humility?* Please be sure you read our editorial this time. It is about a man mentioned in one of **Jesus'** parables. Perhaps like me, you didn't realise what a wonderful man he was and how incredibly he behaved, In fact he represented Jesus himself.

Coming back to our news, we are sad to report the passing of three much-loved members of our community. The first, **Rex Davis**, has left behind his wife, **Jean**, son **Mike**, daughter **Jean Davis-White** and grandchildren **Ashley and Christian**. The second, **Philiip Evers**, died on 17 October leaving behind **Andrew** and **Libby** who lost their mother not long ago. The third, **Pastor Arthur Cooper**, leaves behind his sons **James** and **John** and daughter **Sharon**. We send our condolences to all those named, to the extended family members and to all those who will miss these three gentlemen.

Happier news is that the family celebrated the 65th wedding anniversary of **Pastor Roy and Sheila Burgess** on 19 August. Warmest congratulations to both of them. Congratulations too to **Christian Guenin and Charlotte Moore** who got engaged in September. Also to **Terry LeCorre** who reached the grand age of 80 in September. As well as his daughters, **Celine, Kirsten and Marcella**, Terry's family now boasts five grand-daughters and two great-grandchildren. Another new octogenarian is **Adina Farrant** who reached 80 on October 28. Congratulations to Adina.

October 7 was a big day for the **Aguiar and Zagara** families. They dedicated daughters **Orla and Hayli** and **baby Jonathan** to God. The lovely photo by **Dan Sabatier** shows how delighted they all were that Sabbath.

On Sabbath July 29, a beautiful baby called Daniel Ross was dedicated to the Lord.

WANTED a photo of Daniel please, alone or with his parents. If you can help, please send it to my email address below.

At least five of our young people were off to university in September. They were **Aarinola Ayoipaye** and **Eva Papaioannou** to study medicine, **Nadene Moser** to study law, human rights and social justice, **Elizabeth Roberts** to study midwifery, and **Simeon Beckford-Tangs**. If you read this Simeon, please tell us what you are studying.

You'll be wondering why I haven't mentioned our flower festival in this Kit, the reason is we can do it more justice if we wait a little longer.

Since the last KIT we have lost three members and gained two. On September 2, **Yvonne East** transferred her membership to the South England Conference, however we gained **Gabriel and Corina Popa** from Kettering Church. On October 14, we lost **Pastor Paul Tompkins and his wife Dawn** to the Scottish Mission. We are sad to lose Yvonne, Paul and Dawn and hope they'll be happy in their new locations. We hope Gabriel and Corina are happy worshipping with us.

Contacts: Stanborough Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, 609, St Albans Road, Garston. Watford. WD25 9JL
Our Church Clerk, Pat Swan's, new mobile number is 07926 119981.

Website: www.stanboroughchurch.org

Web TV: www.livestream.com/stanboroughparkchurch

Hope Channel: www.hopetv.org.uk

KIT: kit@stanboroughchurch.org



KIT Autumn 2017. KIT is published quarterly and authorized by the church board at Stanborough Park Seventh-day Adventist Church. Bronwen Atkinson (editor) - address bet@roybron.plus.com, Audrey Wolfram (design and layout) and Mary Kapon (secretary). Others to whom we are grateful are Pastors Jacques Venter and Richard Willis; Lorna Annable who produced Junior KIT; Lorraine Cooper; Sheila Stickland; and Peter Walton who produced Teen Page. We are also grateful to our photographers - Frank Blewitt, June Coombs, Jef Nascimento, and Dan Sabatier. the deaconesses helped with distribution. KIT was printed by John Browne of 24 Hour Printline of Rochester, Kent.