

Inviting all Young Adults to Sign up for IGNITE ME



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To **ALL** the writers and contributors to this Edition of The Hope Newsletter, **THANK YOU!** Your thoughtful contributions and submissions have made this edition worthwhile reading. We look forward to your continued support as we seek to produce more informative and meaningful newsletters.



Church Mission Statement

- This church shall exist for the **glorifying of God**; it shall be **accessible to all peoples** and shall seek to **be efficient in its working**. Its purposes shall be **to proclaim the total plan of redemption** as made manifest in the life and death of Christ for our sins, His burial and glorious resurrection, His ascension to the high priestly office, and the extension of His personality through **world missions** and final consummation of His church in His glorious return. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Matthew 28:16-20; Hebrews. 9; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.)
- This church shall seek **to minister to the spiritual and moral needs of all mankind**, regardless of race, color, culture, national or social origin, for the church is the bride of Christ. (Ephesians 5:25-27)
- As Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing - that she might be holy and faultless..."
- It shall also be the aim of this body of believers **to minister to the material needs** of the indigent to an extent consistent with our potential and in accordance with Christian principles.

THE HOPE NEWSLETTER

2017 Winter Edition



Our Pastors:-

*Rev. Frank Williams, Rev. Dr. Pauline Heslop,
Rev. Dr. Pedroto Graham-Brown*

From the Pastor's Desk:

Dear Members & Friends:

The Advent season brings with it a clear hope in the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The prophesy of His birth is recorded in Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given."

Significant in this passage is the fact that the Child is born to us. The word "us" indicates that the Child's purpose has direct implications for humanity. He would grow up to be a prophet, the sacrificial lamb of God, and the Savior of the world. It was proclaimed that He would be King of kings, Lord of lords and the Prince of peace. There is no other mention in the Bible where this message is said of another child.

Therefore, the birth of Jesus Christ is fundamentally God's declaration to "us" the He has spoken—"peace on earth and good will toward men."

How gracious it is of God to make such a declaration.; that His intent



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Vision Statement:

"To Make Disciples who communicate Christ, influence the culture, and impact the community."

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toward us is good; that salvation is good, and it has come to the nations.

So, at this time of the year, don't just focus on the festivities, but remember that two-thousand years ago, in a lowly manger to ordinary parents a Child was born to bring "us" hope. The hope of salvation, the hope of forgiveness, the hope of peace with God, the hope of eternal life. God has given us His most precious gift, the gift of His love in Jesus Christ – "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Let us continue to be sacrificial in our giving, and in our living so we too can shine God's light in dark places, and illumine other lives with the love of Christ.

Your Pastor and Friend.

Think on These Things

Rev. Frank I Williams



“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” Genesis 1:27

The existence of God is the most believable statement concerning life that I could imagine. The more I contemplate our existence. The more I think about the ability to think about thinking, the more utterly impressed I am with the absolute genius of Elohim (the Hebrew word for God in Genesis 1:1). How fascinating it is to have this ability to increase in wisdom, knowledge and understanding. We are not fixed, we are dynamic. We are not stagnant, we are fluid. All qualities endowed upon us by our Creator. The existence of God is not only believable, but it is also necessary. It was Voltaire who said, “If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him.”

God gives meaning, accountability, and justice to existence. So, what does it mean to be created in the image of God?

First of all, it must mean that each person has inherent value. A value that is not dependent upon the opinions or preferences of others. I conclude this because to invent a being as complex and intricate as the human being must have required an incredible amount of power and purpose. The invention of people, and the making of an environment to sustain such existence is obviously intentional and purposeful. This purpose carries an innate value that is derived from God, because it was imparted by God. Therefore, we don't ascribe value to each other, we affirm it; we don't endow value to each other, we respect it. Because God values humanity, we are valuable.

Second, it must mean that we carry an ever-increasing capacity to be creative and productive; and that these abilities come from an organic place in us. Think of all the technological advancements of just the past 50 years. Amazing achievements in science, technology, architecture, and travel. Humanity continues to excel in knowledge. Because we are in His image and in His likeness, and have His breath of life in us, we are creative learners, innovators, always pushing the boundaries of our limitations – be they imagined or imposed. In that sense, we are empowered. Perhaps so much so that to dwell on it too long puts us in danger of thinking too highly of ourselves, which will only pull us, like gravity, into the darker aspects, and all too familiar regions, of our humanity; that place where pride dwells with its cousins – pushing us to consider ourselves to be all that. A fault that further incapacitates us, because very few can handle such knowledge and empowered awareness, and still remain leveled, humble, teachable, accessible, and meek.

We must feel the cracks of being human and be well acquainted with our clay. It distracts us just long enough so that are again consumed in the necessary fray of work and responsibilities, reminding us that these bodies require daily management. And so, the average person won't expend much time exploring and exercising the full capacity of the Divine nature in us. At least not until we learn sufficiently and embody faithfully the prerequisites of humility, trust, and love.

Therefore,
we don't
ascribe
value to
each other,
we affirm
it; we
don't en-
dow value
to each
other, we
respect it.
Because
God values
humanity,
we are val-
uable.

Answers to BBC Trivia

Sharon Evans-Gordon

20.

Answers to BBC Trivia:

1. To make disciples who communicate Christ, influence the culture, and impact the community.
2. Deacon Cecil Rose
3. Jesus loves the little ones like me, me, me.
4. Posture yourselves to receive
5. June 2014
6. 2117 Daly Avenue
7. 1977
8. Renewed by Grace
9. Iris Leveridge
10. Zola Graham-Brown
11. 13 members
12. Renee Trewick, Roy Jennings, Dr. Pauline Heslop, Charles Copeland, Dr. Heslop, Dr. Graham Brown
13. 3 members
14. 5 members
15. To avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger.
16. David
17. October 6, 2002
18. A basin and towel
19. Deacon Chibuzo Urakpa—Nigeria
20. Discipleship Division

Where to find Comfort and Encouragement in the Psalms

When you feel abandoned	Psalm 10
When your world seems to be falling apart.....	Psalm 46
When you are afraid.	Psalm 23;91
When you feel guilty.	Psalm 51
When your family gets on your nerves.	Psalm 127;128
When you are facing a daunting challenge.	Psalm 27
When you do not feel thankful.	Psalm 107
When you are tempted to lose faith in God	Psalm 62
When you feel like you are barely hanging on.	Psalm 86
When you want to know God better.	Psalm 42; 63
When you need to be reminded of the goodness of God.	Psalm 103
When you need to recommit yourself to serving God.	Psalm 116
When you need wisdom	Psalm 119
When you need a reminder of God's mercy.	Psalm 136

Submitted by Yvonne Castello

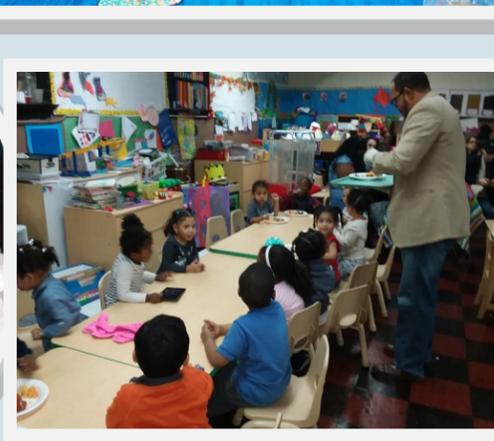
In 2017 we said good-bye to the following stalwarts:

Urine (May) Editha McLean
....1/2017

Wynsome Felicia Sharpe
....2/2017

Wayne David Coit
....7/2017

Day Care Fall Family Lunch



Which leads me to the final point. I believe that the image of God in us demands that we be life long students of love. Love defeats selfishness, shreds lust, and kicks hatred, discrimination, and fear to the curb. Hear the words of Paul the apostle in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, “If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing” (NLT).

John further expounded on this when he stated, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18 NKJV).

The purest expression of love is not seen in how we treat those who love us and are kind to us, but is instead demonstrated in how we treat people we think we don’t need; and how we respond to people who actively dislike us. Love casts out fear. It is in that place where true empowerment can be realized and our Divine nature exercised. It is in that place where we realize why Jesus Christ is necessary. If you find that place and Jesus is not there as Lord, keep searching. “[For] this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son [Jesus Christ].¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.¹³ These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:11-13).

It is there that we come face to face with our most passionate perspectives and intelligent ideologies about life and hang our head, somehow knowing that in Christ we have encountered perfect love; and our hearts are simultaneously drawn and repelled by it. Why? Because it reveals our utter need for emergency spiritual care – pride says, I don’t need this, but humility desperately cries out, thank you Lord. For this cause, Jesus was born – proceeding forth from the very substance of God and becoming flesh in the form of a baby (John 1:14; 8:42). And maturing into a perfect adult man, He died that humanity might have the opportunity to be fully restored into that intended image of God. “Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners” (Romans 5:7-8 NLT). This is how we know that God is love (1 John 4:16b). God did for me. God did it for you. He did it for all of humanity. Only believe. Until next time, walk good my friends and think on these things.

51st Anniversary Celebration

Sharon Evans-Gordon



Rev. Dr. Loren Russell

In 2016 our church was alive with a flurry of activities surrounding our 50th Anniversary. All of this climaxed with a grand gala at Eastwood Manor.

This year, the opposite happened as we celebrated our 51st Anniversary. There was no excitement and there was no grand gala. We simply observed our 51st with a special service on November 12 with Rev. Loren Russell as the guest speaker.

The praise team sang their usual gospel songs, the youth group danced and both Wake Eden and Bronx sanctuary choirs sang their prepared renditions.

Rev. Russell in his message addressed how changes were needed for today's churches. He said that our church has embraced some of the changes since its 1966 opening and continues to stand majestically in the community.

He was amazed to see the youth sandwiched between the praise team and the sanctuary choir dancing their praise. He compared 51 years ago where it was unheard of for dancing to be done in the sanctuary. We have to make a change if we want to meet the people, and in order to meet the people we have to embrace the changes that are taking place in the society today.

He also said that Bronx Baptist cannot do things for the future like they did in the past. If Bronx Baptist does not embrace the changes that are taking place, they will become like a museum. Its time to create space for the next generation and the generation to come. People are not going to churches like they used to.

We have to look at whom we are and plan for whom we want to reach not for whom we want to keep. We have to recognize the microwave mentality of the culture. There is too much competition for the now generation. society and tailor the service to meet them as they are not going to be in church all day long.

Rev. Russell ended by encouraging us to embracing the changes and make space for the new generation who will eventually take our places in the society.

Jamaican Rum Cake

No Christmas in Jamaica is ever complete without our traditional Jamaican Christmas Fruit cake. This cake is a labor of love that is rich with flavors from rum soaked fruits. Also known as Black Cake or Christmas Cake this dietary supplement is very popular in the Jamaican culture.

Courtesy of international recipes.net, here's one of the simplest form to make this cake.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups flour
- 3 cups sugar (brown)
- 2 cups butter
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- 1 dozen eggs
- ½ lb. mixed fruits
- ½ lb. raisins
- 2 tbsp. rum
- ½ c. wine
- ½ c. molasses
- 1tsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. mixed spice



Preparation:

- Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy
- Beat eggs thoroughly in a separate container
- Add eggs to the creamed butter and sugar
- Add flour 1 cup at a time and fold in. (Remember to sift the flour)
- Add baking powder and salt.
- Stir in fruits, mixed spice, vanilla, rum, wine and molasses until you get a smooth paste. (Fill baking pan to ¾ of the pan)
- Bake at 350 degrees for about 1 ½ hour

Submitted by

Sharon Evans-Gordon

Living

Want to live longer?

(TAKEN FROM WEB MD)

Submitted by Sharon Evans-Gordon

A network of good friends is a great start. But according to a recent study, the better path to longevity may be our happiness and close relationships with family members.

Even though we didn't choose them, we feel pulled to stay close and support each others over time.

Scientists have discovered for many years that happiness can also have a real positive effect on our physical health and longevity.

A university study suggests that older adults with close family relationships may live longer. Surprisingly, this wasn't as true for relationships with close friends. What is it about family? Some experts think we attach special meaning to family ties.

It has been suggested by the Academy of Family Physicians that when you notice something you like about a family member, tell them. It's okay to have different opinions, agree to disagree. Pick your battles and let the smaller things go. Finally, treat your family like friends. Reach out, work toward a common goal, or place regular activities together.

For one, happy people likely take better care of themselves and choose healthy behaviors—like exercising, eating well and getting adequate sleep—over unhealthy ones.

PUT THE PHONE DOWN

Idle hands might not be such a bad thing. Researchers asked college students about their smartphone use and examined their hands, wrists and arms. Those who spent more than five hours a day clicking away on their smartphones were more likely to show symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome than those who limited their use to less than five hours a day.

(MAGAZINE)



KEEP QUIET

Submitted by Marion Bennett.

Social media has taken hold in our lives to the point where we're drawn to it for opinions, personal contacts and even words of wisdom. Facebook has taken on a life of its own, giving access to the world, and to all that they have to say. In my opinion some of the expressions are not worthy of our time or consumption but on the other hand there are some that are worthy of a second look. Here's an example of a post that is worthy of reproduction from the Facebook page of Princess Perfection. It's entitled, 'Keep Quiet'.

'One of the things that you and I as believers must learn if we want to be faithful servants in the kingdom of God is how to keep our mouths shut. We need to master that skill.

When we get our backs up about something, we think we must let everyone know about it by saying that you're going to give them a piece of your mind. Don't make that mistake. Nobody wants or needs a piece of your mind. If you do, you'll only end up alienating people and bringing harm to yourself. Instead learn to keep quiet. This especially applies to spiritual insight.

When the Holy Spirit gives you discernment about a situation, don't go spreading it all over town because if you do you'll come to a place where the Lord can't trust you with revelation and insight into things and situations, (Proverbs 29:11).

I've seen that happen. I've known intercessors who have received revelations about someone's weakness or needs. They were given insight into problems concerning someone's life. Instead of keeping that information between them and God and praying for the person they revealed the information about the person to others. As a result, they destroyed their credibility as an intercessor'.

As a maturing follower of Christ, I cannot confirm the veracity of this account but there is wisdom in its thrust that encourages prudence in the life of my brothers and sisters who serve in the kingdom of God, (James 3:1-13).

Anniversary Highlights



Insights into the Spiritual Discipline of Meditation

Donald Sharpe



I recently completed a course of study that introduced me to the Spiritual Disciplines. It was sponsored by The Bronx Baptist Church in keeping with its focus on developing disciples of Christ who are being prepared to communicate the unchanging Christ in an ever-changing world.

The course used Richard Foster's book, 'Celebration of Discipline' as its main text that introduced us to twelve spiritual disciplines that opened a doorway to a deeper relationship with God and a wonderful sense of liberation. The twelve

disciplines that were covered: Meditation, Prayer, Fasting, Study, Simplicity, Solitude, Submission, Service, Confession, Worship, Guidance and Celebration. As a sample of these disciplines I will give some insights in a familiar discipline, Christian meditation.

There is great wisdom to be found in mastering the time-tested discipline of Christian meditation. But we must be careful not to confuse it with Eastern or secular meditation. The reason is that these systems of meditation focus on the emptying of the mind whereas Christian meditation does the opposite; it focuses on filling the mind. Filling it with the word of God.

If we hope to transcend the superficiality of secular and religious cultures we must be willing to go deep into the silence of contemplation.

The discipline of meditation was not unfamiliar to the writers of scripture for they referred to it numerous times in their writings. They spoke about the contemplation on God's word; the reflection on God's works; the rehearsing of God's deeds and deep contemplation of God's laws.

One only has to read the psalms to feel the closeness between the psalmists and God that only could have come from a protracted communication between the two.

I look forward with eager anticipation to the day when I can shed the trappings of this world and make room for our Lord to come and 'dine' with me. I am becoming acutely aware of the word 'discipline' for it suggests that a conscious effort must be made to incorporate within us a different life style. For example, the removal of some ingrained habits to make room for new ones with a commitment to being available to God and being obedient to His every command.

There are good examples in the scriptures of people who reluctantly submitted to God and was used mightily by Him. A good example is Moses, not a paragon of virtue, but he was obedient to the call of God and spoke to Him face to face. In the book of Acts, chapter 15, it tells of how the people learnt to hear God's voice and lived based on His guidance. This type of relationship is not restricted to the pages of scripture but is relevant to us through the discipline of meditation. The resurrected Christ is at work in our world for all who believe and give Him access.

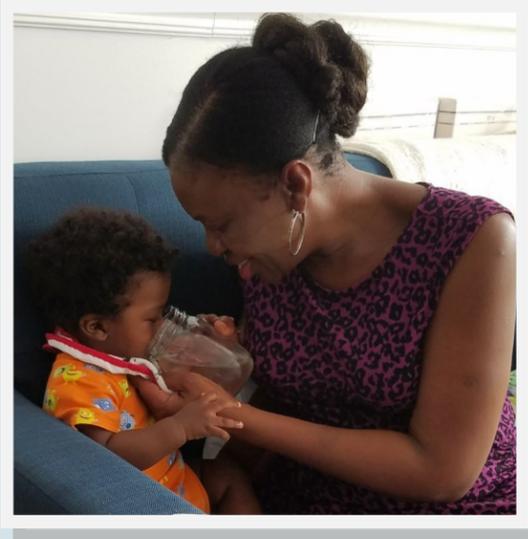
Mission Trip to Lonsdale Baptist Church- TEN

Winter Edition 2017



Children are a Blessing

Sharon Evans-Gordon



Children are a Blessing

When my older daughter announced her pregnancy last year, I was thrilled at the prospects of seeing another generation grow up. I also knew that payback would be coming for all the hardships and challenges that both her and her younger sister had unleashed on me. But most of all I knew that my status would be changed, and I would become the ancestral head of my family.

The days leading to the delivery of the baby, my friends and family members asked what I would like to be called, I had no hesitation. I proudly announced that I would be called grand-ma. No euphemisms, no inappropriate use of my first name. I don't subscribe to trendy names—just simply grand-ma. Family means everything to me and mine was about to expand.

My grandson arrived soon after Christmas and I was elated. I was involved at every step of the journey and even helped with the delivery. I was giddy with excitement as I watched in

awe as this little bundle of joy squealed his way into the world. I would get another chance at life, another chance to reboot with my grandchild. Fix some of my maternal mistakes and make amends for the errors I made as a mother. But most of all another person for me to love.

Now that he is approaching his first year and getting into all the mischiefs that one-year olds get into. I applaud gleefully at each stage of his development: the first time he crawled, his first step, the way he claps his hands and tries to snap his tiny fingers. All these are precious moments to me.

I look forward, with great anticipation, to my weekly visits so I can catch up on all my grandson's new developments. Each time I visit, as I approach the door and he sees me, I chuckle with share joy as he greets me and flashes a "gummy" smile as I sweep him off his feet and into my arms.

I call him "Scooter" because he enjoys scooting across the living room to get to his goal which is always to spill the water inside the dog's bowl or to play with the food set aside for the dog. Sometimes to use his pinchers to scoop up scraps or unidentified objects from the floor.

Another one of my special moments is to cuddle this little energetic bundle of joy and sing silly lullabies to him. The joy of cuddling a little baby all over again is something I look forward to doing. However, without the responsibility of trying to instill discipline or correcting a behavior. I can pop in and out of the home at my discretion.

Even though children are a blessing, my love for "Scooter" is limitless. I know that it's not my responsibility to get up in the middle of the night for a diaper change, to feed him or to entertain him when he just wants to play. Those are times when I can safely say, it is great to be a grand-ma and all the unavoidable tension between parent and child is now left to mom and dad.



Oliver "Scooter" Anthony

Turn Your Thoughts into Action

Rachel Aulet-McGann



This is the time of the year that people start evaluating their lives and making resolutions for the upcoming year. While resolutions can be helpful, they can also be detrimental to the psyche. Studies show that 41% of Americans make resolutions. Of this 41% only 9.2% feel that they were successful in achieving their resolutions (Statisticbrain.com, 2017). Failure to achieve resolutions can leave a person with feelings of depression and actually increase the habits that people some people were trying to break. According to Dictionary.com, a resolution can have multiple meanings. One of these definitions is a decision or a determination to do something. This is the definition that describes the mindset of many resolution makers. An alternate definition "the act of resolving or determining upon an action, course of action, method, procedure, etc." takes a thought and turns it into an action and is the key to successful achievement of resolutions.

This can be done by conducting needs assessments and creating action plans for our lives. Needs assessments have been taking place since the beginning of time. The first needs assessment can be seen in Genesis 1: 1-18 when God examined his creation of earth and man and saw that "it was good." Although pleased with his work thus far, God saw that man needed more and so he created the animals and the birds of the sky. The second needs assessment was conducted in Genesis 2:18 when God once again stepped back and examined his work. This needs assessment resulted in the creation of woman, as God saw that man needed a suitable companion. We can see in the course of creation, God did at least two needs assessments and formulated two plans of action (Barrett & Sorenson, 2015).

A good needs assessment should not only examine the areas of need, but also areas of strength. When God examined his work, he saw that what he had accomplished thus far was good (Genesis 1: 18). He then looked for ways to improve upon his success. Likewise, we should also recognize the areas of our lives in which we are successful and formulate ways to expound on that success.

This information can then be used to create an action plan. A strong action plan, not only includes goals, which are more general in nature, but objectives which are specific, measurable, actionable, reasonable and time-sensitive. For example, the general goal "to lose weight" would be paired with the more specific objective to "lose ten pounds in a period of three weeks." The objective is specific, easy to measure, able to be completed, is reasonable and has an allotted time-frame for completion (S.M.A.R.T). An even stronger action plan would contain indicators, which are specific signs or behaviors that indicate completion. For example, an indicator of the loss of desired weight loss would be the number on the scale or the ability to fit into a certain piece of clothing. A further component of an action plans are specific actions that are to be taken to accomplish each objective. An example of an action statement is "walk on the treadmill for 30 minutes a day, 3 times a week." Just as in the case of objectives, action statements should be SMART.

Completion of a needs assessment and action plan does not guarantee that you will reach your goal. It is important to remember however, not to view every setback or obstacle as a failure. Goals and objectives should be revisited and adjusted as needed and action plans should be reassessed and revised periodically. When evaluating your progress, you should look for areas in which you were successful and build on those successes rather than focusing on the areas in which you fell short. The most important and the hardest step is the first one- taking a thought resolution and turning it into action.



BBC TRIVIA

Sharon Evans-Gordon

We all love our church and our pastors now lets see how much we really know about the ministry.

1. What is the church's Vision statement?
2. Who is currently our longest serving deacon?
3. What song do the Children's Church sing most Sundays?
4. What does our Lead Pastor usually say before pronouncing the Benediction?
5. When did Pastor Pedro and family move back to the Bronx?
6. Where in the Bronx did Rev. Simpson have his first church gathering?
7. What year was the Day Care started?
8. What was the theme for our 50th Anniversary?
9. Who is currently our oldest member?
10. Who is currently our youngest member?
11. How many members currently make up the Usher Board?
12. Who are the current Division leaders?
13. How many members participated in the bulla eating contest this past July at the Annual Church Picnic?
14. How many of our youth are currently seniors in high school?
15. What is the ninth component of the church's covenant?
16. What Biblical character was the focus of the Lead Pastor's recent series?
17. What year was our Lead Pastor ordained?
18. What symbolic object was given out at the last elevation service in 2013?
19. Which Deacon is not from the islands? Where is he from?
20. Which Division has the most groups? Who heads this Division



BIBLE TRIVIA

Submitted by Lana Small

What is the shortest chapter in the Bible?

A: Psalm 117

Which chapter is the center of the Bible?

A. Psalm 118

What is the longest chapter in the Bible?

A. Psalm 119

Facts: There are 594 chapters before Psalm 118. There are 594 chapters after Psalm. Add these numbers up and you get 1188

Disaster Planning = Preparation

The nation got a wake-up call from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma recently. Disasters don't plan. You can.

Find helpful planning tips at:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/ready/ready-new-york.page>



TO LIKE OR NOT TO LIKE

NAIVETE

Donald Sharpe

I have entitled this slice of life, this bit of memoir, naiveté. When I was about twenty years old, a few years out of high school. I had an encounter with a con-man that has left a mental scar on me that is so deep that I have never forgotten it.

The encounter happened one pleasant Friday afternoon. I had just received my paycheck and gone to the nearby Citibank to cash it. I was a salesman for a major industrial supplies company in Kingston, Jamaica.

I had quite a successful month and was now flush with cash. I was feeling good about myself and there was a bit of swagger to my walk and my attitude. As I was on my way to my car in the bank's parking lot I was approached by a well-dressed young man. He seemed to be about 10 years my senior.

He greeted me very courteously and struck up a conversation about my pride and joy, my car, a gray late model 'VW' (A German made Volkswagen). This car was everything to me. It was my source of independence. It allowed me to move around my sales territory and earn a decent living. It was also a status symbol because not many young men my age had late model cars. Not to mention the advantage I had with girls. This car, therefore, played a central role in my life. I must confess, though, that much credit goes to my late father who did the initial negotiations with the bank so I could purchase my precious car, my pride and joy. All I had to do was to work hard and pay the car note.

My new acquaintance and I stood for a while in the bank's parking lot talking about and admiring my beloved car. Then he calmly gave me some privileged information that was only available to a chosen few. He said that a shipment of new tires had just been cleared from wharf and are now in the nearby warehouse. He continued to say that he was personal friends with its manager and as a result he could get four new tires for my car for a very reasonable price. This was my first time being confronted with temptation like this and though feeling uneasy about the situation I stepped into his carefully set trap. I was tempted. Despite my sixth sense that sounded the alarm within I yielded to the temptation and committed the cardinal sin of asking the question: "how much?"

Anyone who owns a car, over time will develop an awareness of the cost of replacement parts for their car. So, when he told me the price for these four new tires I remember thinking that this was a steal. I then went into my pocket and gave the money to my new-found friend. After taking the money, he instructed me not to go anywhere but to wait for him in the parking lot. He would go to the nearby warehouse pick up the tires and come right back.

I am now congratulating myself on making the deal of a lifetime. I would soon be sporting four brand new tires that I could show off to my friends and family while describing how I made the deal of the century. So, I got comfortable, leaning on my car, and waited for my new-found business associate. I waited. A half an hour went by and nothing happened. What's taking him so long, I wondered. The warehouse is close by. I then rationalized that it may be taking a little while longer after all it was not the purest of deals. An hour went by. I was now getting a feeling of dread. But I refused to believe that I was taken.

I waited for another hour, but there was no friend. No tires. I had no other alternative but to conclude that I was taken. I was conned out of my hard-earned wages. My naiveté had taught me one of life's many lessons: watch for illicit but attractive lures in life.

As I slowly got into my car and began to drive away I felt defeated and disappointed in myself for falling for the lure of the temptation of what I knew was an illicit transaction.

In conclusion let me say that the attractive lure of illicit temptations has been with us, are with us today, will always be with us and will approach where we are most vulnerable, our perceived wants and desires.

All that glitters is not gold.