

Breaking Bread

Newsletter – The Brisbane Society of
The New Church,
Brisbane and south-east Queensland
March / April 2015



Art Work By Lenore Sandow

From Darren

Overcoming the Spirit of Offence

Hell has many strategies designed to take us away from the Lord.

Why?

Well, Hell is full of evil spirits that despise the Lord and all that He stands for. They take great delight in causing offences towards anything Holy, Good and True.

A lack of understanding around offences, what causes them and what are their real purposes might well be one of the best and biggest strategies of the hells.

It is essential that we have a good understanding and preparedness to deal with offences when they come.

The Lord warned us about this in the Gospels: -

Matthew 18:6-8(KJV)

6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! 8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

These are mighty powerful words. We should note the Lord's use of the word 'woe'. He uses it a total of twelve times in the Book of Matthew and eight of them are in direct connection with the religious Pharisees who had an outward form of holiness but no inward correspondence.

Do you know anyone who has actually removed a limb because it has caused them to be offensive to others or themselves? The Lord was not talking literally here but spiritually as He almost always did. Our 'hand' has to do with our power or our actions and choices. If we are 'acting' or 'doing' things that are offensive and fall into the category of 'evil' we need to

cut off such activity immediately. Our 'feet' speaks about our sensual thoughts and our desires. If they are 'walking' us down a path to what is false and evil then we need to 'turn around', that is repent immediately.

Notice also that the Lord said '**...for it must needs be that offences come...**'. The Lord is telling us that offences are an unavoidable part of spiritual life. Once you choose to walk the path towards heaven, you make an open enemy of the hells and all the evils contained therein.

So offences are inevitable, however we do not want to be the cause of them for others and when we are, we need to do all we can to bring healing to the hurt. Nor do we want to fall into the evil trap of being offended.

The Lord uses such graphic imagery concerning those who are careless and even deliberately cause offence: '**...it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.**' This can also be translated as '**it is best for him that a millstone is hung about his neck...**'. In other words, when you are causing offences, the spiritual process represented by the 'millstone around the neck' and the 'casting forth into the ocean' speak of uncomfortable but necessary regenerative processes that separate the root causes of the offences from our lives. It is similar to this phrase, '**And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.**' (Mat21:41). It is better to consciously weed out offences rather than leave it to fate and hope for the best only to discover that regeneration in this area is now extremely difficult and painful.

A millstone is a large grinding stone often powered by hand which has a large hole in the middle about the right size for an adult head to fit through. It was used daily to grind grain into flour. Imagine wearing one of these as a necklace and then being dropped off the edge of a boat in the middle of the ocean. It would not take long for a person wearing a millstone to travel down many kilometres into the dark depths of ocean water.

As mentioned earlier the hells want nothing more than to attack people (especially heavenly people) with a spirit of offence and thereby cut them off from the Lord's Love and Life:-

Spiritual Experiences (Odhner) n. 3535

3535. Those treacherous spirits were with me wanting to infuse their poisons concerning the Lord, as those usually do who are made up of nothing but offences.

FIVE THINGS TO BE AWARE OF ABOUT OFFENCES

1. Offences in the largest sense or most general sense are any sins that separate us from the Lord and our Neighbour

Doctrine of Life (Dick) n. 5

5. "The way and means to be received as worthy partakers of that Holy Table is, first, to examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments, and whereinsoever ye shall perceive yourselves to have offended, either by will, word, or deed, there to bewail your own sinfulness, and to confess yourselves to Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life; and if ye shall perceive your offences to be such as are not only against God, but also against your neighbours, then ye shall reconcile yourselves unto them, being ready to make restitution and satisfaction, according to the utmost of your power, for all injuries and wrongs done by you to any other, and being likewise ready to forgive others that have offended you, as ye would have forgiveness of your offences at God's hand; for otherwise the receiving of the Holy Communion doth nothing else but increase your damnation. Therefore if any of you be a blasphemer of God, a hinderer or slanderer of His Word, an adulterer, or be in malice or envy, or in any other grievous crime, repent you of your sins, or else come not to the Holy Table; lest after the taking of that Holy Sacrament the devil enter into you, as he entered into Judas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to destruction both of body and soul."

2. In more specific terms, 'being offended' with someone or by them is nearly always founded on Self-entitlement.

When we believe we deserve something or are entitled to something, we have lost sight of our true spiritual condition – that is, the Lord alone is Life and everything we have is from Him and belongs to Him. I remember many years ago talking with a fellow Christian about the reality of hell. His response was that he did not want to talk about it because it was not 'edifying'. We dropped the subject, however, when I was alone and thinking about it later in the day, I realised that the Lord loves us and has done everything (and is doing everything) to ensure that we do not 'go there'. In the big picture of things, a realisation of the Lord's Love and what He is 'saving' us from is very edifying and also very necessary for humility and appreciation. Humility is a large part of staying free from being offended by others (see below).

Some other foundations for offence are:-

Selfishness – wanting things one's own way.

Insecurity – Disconnected from love and healthy relationships therefore easily rejected.

Negativity – Having a negative mindset and always envisioning the worst possible outcomes.

3. Offences always separate – they are Of-Fences.

One of the main evil goals for offences is to separate people through loathing, hate and disregard etc. In regard to Marriages, the Lord stated that Moses was allowed to inaugurate divorce because of people's hard hearts (Mat 19:10). Sometimes marriages just don't work and the Lord wants peace not continual conflict. He also loves us and works with us through all our life complications. What I'm saying is that there is no condemnation for failed

marriages but there are many good marriages that have been ruined by the invasion of a spirit of offence. Being aware of this evil device might well save some good 'Godly' marriages from ruination.

4. The main word for offence in the Greek is Skandalon from which we derive our word 'scandal'.

'Skandalon' is the Greek word used to describe the trigger on which meat or a bait is set so as to catch an animal in a trap. Hell loves to bait us and thereby trap us in offences. We must remember that all inward feelings of offence are rooted in evil spirits that want to trap our soul/emotions and keep us from the freedom, love and liberty found in the Lord's Holy Spirit dwelling with us. It is so easy to look at the offensive act and not see past the outward choices of others that has become the bait which now lures us into states of pain, hurt and resentment.

21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. (Matt. 16:21-23)

In the Writings this is translated as the Lord actually turns away from Peter:-

"...when the Lord, turning away from Peter, said to him, Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things which are of God, but those that be of men" (Matt. xvi. 21-23).

The Lord, that is the Word, never turns away from us but from that which is offensive. It only appears to us that the Lord is turning away from us. If we can identify the offence and put it aside or away, we will immediately be restored into the states of the Lord's love. The Lord has not left us. It is the offence that appears to have created a blockage between us and the Lord.

Continuing from the scripture above, the Lord then goes on to tell His disciples that if we are going to **'take up our cross and follow him'** we must deny ourselves. This is how we can escape the path that leads to offence – through self denial. This word scandal covers deliberate acts as well as unknowingly causing someone spiritual trouble and ruin. Such unaware offences are also called 'stumbling blocks'. The apostle Paul wrote in the New Testament **'and do not give the devil a foothold.'** (Eph 4:27). For a mountain climber the tiniest ledge of an inch in width feels secure and like walking on a footpath for us. Evil spirits do not need much room to get in to poison our minds. Humility and putting others first will fill up the gaps were spirits might try to gain entrance or a 'foothold'.

5. There is a strong connection between forgiveness (as mentioned in The Lord's Prayer) and

sin, debt and offences.

The word forgiveness as used in The Lord's Prayer is **Ahiemi** and means to send away or even divorce, such as to 'put away a wife'. We are in effect praying to the Lord to release and 'send away' our sins even as we release those who have sinned (committed offences) against us. We need to work towards a place where we are not holding onto or seeking recompense against those who have wronged us. By releasing others we are initiating spiritual processes that release us from the various prisons our own sins have created. Forgiveness is 'For Giving' and the Lord desires to give us the keys to open the 'prison door'. This is what forgiveness is 'for'. Remember that offences are one of the strongest and most common prisons for our souls.

HOW TO OVERCOME OFFENCES

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. (Ps 119:165)

Lift the whole situation out of time, place and person.

We live in the world of effects which means that the real cause of the offence is spiritual. Look past the person you are struggling to release from the offence and see the real enemy.

Be like the Angels who cannot but see the good in others.

Once you are able to see the real source of offence, remind yourself that the Lord loves the person you are offended with. As far as seeing bad in others, I tell myself that I'm identifying the evil in the other because it lays dormant (or maybe even active) in my life and that is why I am seeing it.

Lift the person up to the Lord in prayer.

I desire that God forgives me and in like manner, I need to practise forgiveness towards others. If you are not sure what to pray then hold that person in your thoughts while reciting The Lord's Prayer. When you pass through the words 'forgive my debts as I also forgive those indebted to me' release loving feelings toward the person in your mind and heart. Ask the Lord for the strength to forgive the offender and remind yourself that He alone has the power to forgive and release the sin.

Put on the cloak of Humility

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. – Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. - Col 3:12(NLT)

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

Many years ago I had the opportunity to engage in missionary work amongst the Navaho Indians in Mexico. I would like to share a story from one of the small churches over there in Mexico. This story comes from a visiting minister:-

At the end of a service in a small church in Mexico, a lady in her 60's came forward for prayer for pain in her hips and lower back. She said she had been suffering for about a year and that neither prayer nor physicians had been able to help her. I asked her if something significant had happened about the time the pain started. She told me that about that time some people in the church had started causing problems for her daughter who was the pastor of the church. They had started to slander her, tell lies about her, and this had caused strife in the church and suffering for her daughter. I asked her if she had forgiven those people. She was quiet for a moment and then said no, that she had held a lot of resentment toward them. I told her that I believed there was a connection between her unforgiveness and the pain in her back and asked if she was now willing to forgive them. When she said that she was, I led her in a prayer of forgiveness and then prayed for her healing, and instantly all the pain left her back and hips.

During the course of my years of ministry I have seen many people healed physically as well as emotionally when they obeyed Christ and forgave someone. Before I pray for someone to be healed physically, I always try to determine the condition of her heart. If there is unforgiveness, bitterness, deep grief, anxiety, or fear, then I minister to her heart before I minister to her physical problem.

Think about a time when you have been offended and you finally came through that experience to forgive and love the other person.

Can you remember what you did or the other person involved did to help bring healing?

Spend some time thinking about how you might be able to apply the above suggestions next time the hellish 'offence trap' comes your way.

Love and Blessings in the Lord
Darren Brunne

The Months Ahead Unpacked

An explanation of the upcoming events throughout March and April

From Monday the 30th of Feb to Friday the 3rd of April, I will be sending out daily a total of five Easter devotions via email to help people's thoughts and affections come into focus. Keep an eye out for these.

In April there will be a joint meeting for the Council of Ministers (COM) and the NCIA. These will run on Friday, 24th and Saturday, 25th. I will be away from Thursday, 23rd until late on Saturday, 25th. I will be contactable via mobile on 04 21 31 92 52.

Your Community



Brian Heldon

"I was brought up in The New Church and had the good fortune to spend three years in school and college in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania and enjoyed it so much that I determined my children should have that same opportunity, which they took in their turn. Although my working life took me in a different direction, my interests really lie in the mathematical and political worlds and I enjoy watching most sports. Go the Dragons!"

Gaye Heldon

"I have always loved drawing and painting and these past two years have at last afforded a little more time to indulge the practice. I am still developing my style so my works range from oil, acrylic and watercolour to collage and book binding. My aim is to produce spiritually inspiring works to help others appreciate the beauty of Swedenborg's Writings."



Painting of The Tree of Life by *Gaye Heldon*

The **What Would Love Do?** Program

Session Two

Water for life – Love Brings Truth

The Family service will involve a short youth focused message about drawing out living water, the need to discover our life purpose and helping each other in this focus. After the message we will then break up into three groups *Gold, Silver* and *Bronze*.

Gold is primarily for the adults

Silver is primarily for the teens

Bronze – the younger ones

We would like to encourage everyone to feel free to enter different classes. Our goal will be to disseminate info to everyone about each level before the groups start. This might be via the Brisbane New Church Google Group or an announcement at the end of the message. If you are not a part of the Brisbane Google Group, feel free to email me at this address drbrunne@gmail.com and ask me to add you.

The New Christian Bible Study

Read the Bible and explore the New Christian perspective on its inner meaning.



The New Christian Bible Study Project was started under the auspices of the Pittsburgh Society of the New Church, and it is being carried forward by the New Christian Bible Study Corp. It is an online place for people who are interested in the Bible, not just in its literal sense, but in its inner, spiritual sense. The theological underpinnings of the site are based on Emanuel Swedenborg's religious works from the 1700's.

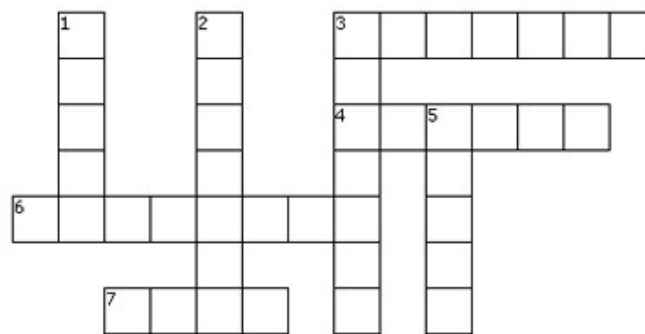
To get to the website click the following link

<http://newchristianbiblestudy.org/>

Let the Children Come



He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Mark 10:14b (NIV)



ACROSS

3. Bringing happiness, pleasure, or contentment to someone
4. Small in size
6. Sons and daughters, young people
7. The parts of the body which connect the hands to the shoulders

DOWN

1. A statement accepted as fact
2. A country or territory ruled by a king or queen
3. To be a member of a group, such as a club or organization
5. To come in contact with or to feel with your fingers

little	touch	kingdom	arms
children	truth	belongs	blessed

Birthdays

To all our friends celebrating birthdays throughout these months we wish you birthday greetings and blessings.



In March

Mark Pitts (5th); Sarah MacFarlane (21st); Ruth Evans (30th); Russell Eyles (31st);

In April

Lachlan Duff (8th); Gaye Heldon (15th); Alex Duff (16th); Peter Larsen (20th); Lachlan Glenn (27th); Kyan Heldon (28th); Jordan Brunne (28th);

CHURCH CONTACT DETAILS

The Church is at 21 Agars Street, Rosalie, just up from Baroona Road. Always check the Calendar for services the last page.

Pastor: Rev. Darren Brunne, contactable on 0421 319 252

Treasurer: Mr Brian Heldon, contactable on 07-5577 8772

Secretary: Mrs Gaye Heldon, contactable on 07-5577 8772 / 0419 778 717
Address: P. O. Box 359, Sanctuary Cove, Qld. 4212

For activities on the Gold Coast and Mt Tamborine meetings contact Mrs Gaye Heldon on 07-5577 8772

Sunday School Co-ordinators:

Julie & Ken Barns, contactable on 07-5463 4282
julie.barns@gmail.com
ken.barns@gmail.com

CALENDARS

March

Sun 1st **1st SUNDAY FAMILY SERVICE** including the
HOLY SUPPER led by Darren at 10.30 a.m.
'WHAT WOULD LOVE DO?'- Water for Life -
Love brings Truth. Group work. Lunch together
afterwards, bring something yummy to share.
***COMMITTEE MEETING FOLLOWING
LUNCH***

Sun 8th **Worship Circle**, 10.30 a.m. *Know your Bible*
Genesis 2 – The Garden of Eden

Fri 13th Mt Tamborine Discussion Group at
Brian and Gaye Heldon's at 2 pm.

Sun 15th **Adult Service** led by Darren.

Sun 22nd **Free for Home Church Visitation**
We are looking for those who would be happy to
open their home for a house church meeting. We
have the option of a morning meeting -10am until
11:30am or afternoon – 1:30 until 3:00pm.

Sun 29th **No Service**

April

Sun 5th **1st SUNDAY FAMILY SERVICE** including the
HOLY SUPPER led by Darren at 10:30am
EASTER SERVICE
All in Family service

Sun 12th **Worship Circle**, 10.30 a.m. *Know your Bible*
Genesis 3 – The Serpent

Fri 17th Mt Tamborine Discussion Group at
John and Lenore Sandow's at 2 pm.

Sun 19th **Adult Service** led by Darren.

Sun 26nd **Free for Home Church Visitation**