



DAVID ASSCHERICK
co-director

HAPPY DIGGING

PAUL THE APOSTLE said some strange things, things hard to understand. Even Peter agreed (2 Peter 3:15). And if some of his writings were admittedly puzzling back then, how much more so would that be the case today, nearly two millennia later?

I used to be exasperated over Paul's occasional inscrutability, but no longer.

And the reason is an interesting one: the joy of discovery—you know, that *aha* moment when, as the Australians would say, “the penny drops,” that moment when the fog of perplexity clears and light floods a formerly opaque passage. It's a beautiful and rewarding thing; it is, truth be told, one of my favorite things about being a follower of Jesus and a student of Scripture.

Let's take a brief look at one such passage. Galatians 2:19 (which comes just before the oft-quoted Galatians 2:20) reads: “For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.”

Huh?
You've heard people quote Galatians 2:20 a thousand times. How about Galatians 2:19? Quite probably, you've *never* heard someone quote it from memory.

Can you make heads or tails of this verse? If so, good for you. Most Bible readers, however, I would bet, cannot. How can Paul have “died to the law?” Is this some kind of diminishment of the Ten Commandments?

Is the Sabbath somehow threatened?
Is Paul confused?

First, an initial observation. Many Christians are, as strange as it may seem, actually afraid of the Bible. Yes, afraid. Not of all the passages, to be sure. Not even most. Certainly not, say, John 3:16. But some passages seem scary and even threatening. Some passages are to be avoided for fear of discovering something threatening and destabilizing. I know this, because I used to feel this way.

But not anymore.

And the reason is pretty simple: my job is not to be a denominational or creedal or doctrinal apologist, but a Jesus follower and Bible believer. Whatever it is that Scripture *actually* says, *that's* what I want to know, and *that's* what I want to believe.

I sure hope you agree!

So don't be afraid of Scripture. Read it. Love it. Enjoy it. Study it. Be frustrated by it. Discover it.

MANY CHRISTIANS ARE, AS STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM, ACTUALLY AFRAID OF THE BIBLE.

You won't regret it, and in fact it will give you the lifelong pleasure of personal discovery and joy. And believe me about this: the Christian walk is best and sweetest *when it's your own*. Your shoes. Your steps. Your journey. Too many believers are living on someone else's discoveries and journey.

Don't be one of those.

Get into the text for yourself. And into worship for yourself. And into ministry for yourself.

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TY GIBSON
co-director

A NAMELESS MASS?

SIX MILLION PEOPLE.

It's a big number. When I hear it, I don't see faces.

But God does.

To me, it's a number that represents a nameless mass.

But not for God.

He sees faces, behind which are personal histories and heartaches, individual predicaments and potentials. He sees actual persons with names. Each one lives in a particular place, wakes up each day, faces their issues and navigates through the obstacles that confront them. And God feels everything each one of them feels. He sees every detail of every experience that has gone into making each of them exactly who they are at this very moment.

The particular six million people I'm talking about are the inhabitants of Sierra Leone. For most of us, that's a world away. We have no way of really wrapping our minds around precisely who these people are. But we can know, and do know, that each one is intimately known by God and is of infinite value to Him.

Sierra Leone means *Lioness Mountains*, a name bestowed by Pedro de Sintra, a Portuguese explorer. Until 1792, this western African country with the third largest natural port in the world, was a major player in the transatlantic slave trade. In March of that year, Freetown was founded by The Sierra Leone Company as a refuge and home for slaves liberated from the British Empire.

This strategically positioned

nation is rich in natural resources, especially diamonds, uranium and titanium, which form most of its economic base. And yet—don't miss this—70% of the people live in poverty because those resources are largely pilfered by foreign greed. Less than 50% of the population has access to safe drinking water. You would think those running off with all the diamonds and uranium would at least invest some of those resources back into the country to supply safe water for the people whose land and labor is enriching them. Directly connected with this severe poverty level, Sierra Leone has a one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world, with approximately 77 children per 1000 live births not living past their first birthday.

One of the most heartbreaking aspects of the country's profile is

NOT ANOTHER SOUL

"The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son."

Ellen White
Steps to Christ, p. 100

YOU'RE IT

"You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book."

Psalms 56:8, NLT

EMPATHY, NOT SYMPATHY

"Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father's heart."

Ellen White
The Desire of Ages, p. 356



SIX MILLION PEOPLE.
GOD KNOWS EACH ONE BY NAME.

that during its most recent Civil War, 1991 to 2002, large numbers of children were enslaved as soldiers and forced to commit horrific atrocities leaving them and their families mentally traumatized. It is estimated that approximately 400,000 of these children, who are now teenagers and young adults, suffer from mental illness.

Sierra Leone is composed of a diverse city of historical indigenous cultures, with 16 distinct ethnic groups, each with its own language. However, due to British colonization, English is the official language of the country. And yet, tragically, two thirds of the adult population are illiterate. This is largely due to the sheer lack of access to literature of any kind. The people manifest a hunger for knowledge, but they simply do not have reading material. Our

experience with other countries, such as Zambia, is that access to reading material dramatically increases literacy rates. Upon visiting Zambia a few years ago, conference leadership informed us that government officials were attending our public meetings because they had a particular fondness for Light Bearers. When we asked why, we were told that the literature Light Bearers has sent to Zambia over the years, numbering in the tens of millions of publications, has not only served to introduce the Zambian people to the gospel of Christ, but has also dramatically increased the literacy rate as well as the general quality of life in Zambia.

Thanks to your support, Light Bearers is meeting this need in Sierra Leone, by supplying reading material of the highest possible

character—publications that proclaim the gospel of Christ.

You will be happy to know that we have sent 2,065,899 pieces of truth-filled literature to the precious people of this unique and needy country. The literature will be distributed by the Sierra Leone Mission Conference to local churches and schools to be used for evangelistic campaigns scheduled throughout the country.

On behalf of the people of Sierra Leone, thank you for your prayers and your financial backing, which make what we do possible.

Six million people. God knows each one by name. It is our privilege to share the glory of His name with them.

COME SEE US!

MARCH 8

Roseburg Seventh-day Adventist Church
Roseburg, OR
541.672.1542
James Rafferty

MARCH 14-15

Grants Pass Seventh-day Adventist Church
Grants Pass, OR
541.476.6313
James Rafferty

MARCH 14-15

Rose City Fellowship
Portland, OR
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MARCH 15

Downers Grove Adventist Church
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APRIL 12

Veneta Seventh-day Adventist Church
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APRIL 18-20

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... HAPPY DIGGING *(continued from page 1)*

You will find, I promise you, that the journey is much more joyful, breathtaking, challenging, and rewarding that way.

Now, about that text, Galatians 2:19 where Paul says that, "through the law [he] died to the law," just what did he mean?

Oh my, would you look at that? We've run out of space! Well,

hmmmm, I guess this is as good an opportunity as any for you to try and find out for yourself. Have fun, and embrace the frustration! For, as someone once said, "there's gold in them thar hills."

Happy digging . . .

CONVOCATION



JULY 1-5, 2014

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