



It would be nice to be able to say that the start of 2017 heralded the beginning of a new era of godliness in our nation, with a restructured educational program that glorified the Lord Jesus Christ.

It may be truer, however, to say the state of education in our nation will be more of the same, only potentially worse.

Nevertheless, Christians don't live according to circumstances, but rather by faith in a great God. Thus, we look at 2017 through the eyes of faith and we see a triumph and

victory in the midst of triviality, foolishness and strife. It is not that we are unaware of the problems — we just don't let them give direction to our lives! Through the eyes of faith we rejoice in the family that God has entrusted to us, and we press on in God to understand our part in the outworking of His plan for our family.

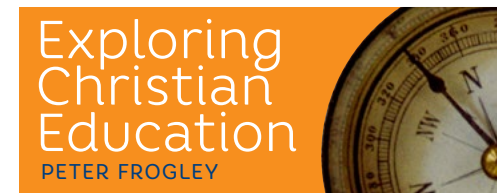
Although this world's scenario seems to be becoming more difficult for Christians as we move from a society built upon biblical values to one built upon man's foolishness, we are actually moving to a society that is common, even the norm, in the history of the church. That history features the persecution of Christians. The point is that most of us have lived in a relatively unusual time bubble in most western nations when Christianity has been acceptable and therefore persecution minimal. But we do need to be preparing ourselves and our families for the historical norm, as we can all see the trend away from the Christian faith taking place at quite an alarming rate.

With that we welcome you to a fresh new year of endeavour in Christian education. I trust your year has begun with you well refreshed in the knowledge that you are right in the centre of God's will, in either training your family for God's glory or training a classroom of children in God's ways.

This Issue

In *Exploring Christian Education* I consider a possible interpretation of the unusual events of our day from a biblical perspective. We reproduce a fascinating, up-to-the-minute health article from Hallelujah Acres on drug-induced nutrient depletion, and Evelyn Garrard contributes another LEM Phonics corner. Wendy Hill has now finished her twelve-article series on music, and we thank her for her efforts to expand our understanding of God's heart for music. Wendy has been quite ill which has necessitated her taking a different direction for the future, and we pray God's richest blessing for her in the days ahead.

We trust also that this issue will be a blessing as you seek to serve the Lord in education.



No. 102: God works in mysterious ways

The Western world, at least, is seemingly entering a new phase in the exciting journey of life.

There is evidence that the conservative world is waking up and challenging the liberal, left-wing, progressive, humanist world of the media and the politically correct in a manner we have not seen for some time. But the way in which this is happening is somewhat bewildering. The media, along with their friends, have gone into a frenzy because they are not used to someone opposing their ideas. Many of us Christians are left scratching our heads and wondering what is going on as we have watched an ongoing deterioration in the social credibility of our faith!

Because our God is Lord of all, we can rest assured that He is at work for good! But who of us is smart enough to actually understand what our God is up to in this world today? In pondering the situation I found myself going back and reflecting on history and ways that God has acted in the past. From that I want to make some suggestions as to what may be happening.

I wonder if perhaps you may have been pondering something similar!

Let's look at history

The biblical and historical narratives contain numerous examples of God using some unlikely people for His purposes — even nation-changing purposes.

God used a very corrupted man in Henry VIII to occasion the English Reformation, despite Henry doing as much as he could to prevent it taking place.

God used a man after His own heart in David for the blessing of Israel, even when he was so entrenched in his sin he did not recognise his guilt. God had to send the prophet to identify it for him:

Then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul"'.
2 Samuel 12:7

Cyrus the Persian was no Bible believer, but God used him for His purposes. Indeed, God was so committed to His plan that He informs us of Cyrus in the book of Isaiah 210 years before the events happened (according to commentator Matthew Henry):

Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."'
Isaiah 44:28-45:1

Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held — to subdue nations before him

and loose the armour of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut.

Isaiah 44:28-45:1

God even calls Cyrus His 'shepherd' and His 'anointed'. Following through to the passage below in Chronicles, God stirred up Cyrus to make proclamation concerning the temple in Jerusalem:

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!
2 Chronicles 36:22-23

Cyrus was not a believer — he was not very nice and there was some doubt about his ethical behaviour — but God chose to use him for His purposes, in a most profound manner.

Space does not allow to tell of many others — suffice to say God does not seem to follow what would seem to us an appropriate course of action in achieving His ends. He seems to delight in using quite unsuitable people to serve His purposes. But then it would prove very difficult to find any perfect people to serve Him.

Could it be that something similar to the past is happening in our day? Would God use people who (as far as we know) are not godly?

What is happening in Australia?

Christians generally lament that things are not what they used to be — meaning there is little knowledge of God in this land and people's behaviour reflects this. Those that

perhaps if the media think Trump is that bad, he must be doing something right

in some way represent a Christian base for behaviour and attitudes (the conservatives) also seem to have left their value base (which was historically the Bible) and have opted for the ways of men. The outworking of this is that our nation is losing its way and many Christians are giving up hope or are assuming that Christ must be returning any day to deliver us from the problems we see all around us.

Then in the midst of this disappointment and frustration arise some interesting personalities, who don't appear to be very Christian and are certainly not favoured by the political and chattering class. Of those at the moment in Australia, Pauline Hanson stands out as being politically incorrect and presenting a number of ideas that resonate with many Christians. But, we might be tempted to think, she is not a Christian

and thus could not be doing God's will. Or is it that many of us Christians have not taken note of the way God has done things in the past and as a result do not read the signs of our times?

Well, what about America?

We have been perhaps amused, perhaps horrified at recent events in the USA. The media has gone into meltdown as their candidate lost the Presidential election. Everything they could think of has been done to endeavour to discredit Donald Trump. As a cynic, I wonder that perhaps if the media think he is that bad, he must be doing something right!

Most of us don't understand the governmental structure and workings of the USA and thus unfortunately can only be guided by the media — who throughout the tedious election process have embarked on a character assassination of Donald Trump. Whilst Trump has given them plenty of ammunition, there is perhaps some truth in Trump's term 'false media'. Against all the odds, Donald Trump is now President of the United States of America.

Now Christians believe that God controls the destiny of nations. He puts one up and pulls another down — it's His world and He can do whatever He wants according to His character! Trump's victory was not a surprise to God, even if it was to most people. So, what is the plan that God has? I don't know, but I know He has a plan. Let's indulge one another and wonder: Is God able to use such an apparently flawed

man? Has our God anointed him, as He did Cyrus those many years ago?

My observation is that I agree with most of the decisions Trump has made. Many of them are decisions I would expect from a biblical Christian! Then I read of his appointments to office, and (according to one Christian writer) he has for the most part put together a remarkable cabinet. It would also seem (from my limited understanding of the situation and the people involved) that he has chosen many strong conservatives holding biblical values to lead Departments of State. Trump has overturned President Obama's recommendation for appointment to the Supreme Court, appointing a strong conservative Judge. All this is most interesting and encouraging, but for me the most conclusive evidence that Trump may be an upholder of godly values is still the unity of the media against him. To say their activity is frantic is to perhaps to understate the case!

What conclusion can we draw?

Let us remember that God is on His throne, and there is no challenge to His sovereignty. It sometimes appears to us that God has lost His way, but faith declares that He is at work for His good purposes eternally. Rather than wringing our hands in despair, let us enjoy watching what God does throughout the West in the days ahead. It will not be boring — the enemies of God will not go away and in their fury will turn against the people of God. I make just two observations from many possibilities.

1. It is 500 years since Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to a German church door in 1517. Clever people tell us that God needs to send a reformation every 500 years or so to rescue humanity from self-destruction. I believe that Christian education is one of the tools God is using to prepare His church and I suggest we are in the early stages of the next great reformation.

Christian education is one of the tools God is using to prepare His church

2. God presents a plan covering all eternity and sees the time of our lives as just one small piece of His plan. We are limited by our life span and we tend to assume eternity will be outworked before we pass away, our presupposition being that our importance mandates God confining His plan to our lifetime.

To sum up, God has created you as part of His great eternal plan, which implies (at least) that there is Divine purpose in your existence. We were created *by* God — *for* God. We were created to be part of His family and every part of every life contributes to His great plan. ■



Drug-induced nutrient depletion

Have you ever taken a round of antibiotics?

How about the birth control pill? You may have also taken pain relievers or antacids.

Ever heard the phrase that for every action there is always a reaction?

We have all taken prescription and over-the-counter drugs at some point in our lives to treat an infection, a psychological condition, or pain. These medications can provide lifesaving benefits, but are they doing more harm than actual good?

About seven in every ten Americans take prescription drugs — with antibiotics, antidepressants, and painkiller opioids among the most common prescriptions given, according to the Mayo Clinic. Meanwhile, 20 percent of American adults are on five or more prescription medications. The side effects of these drugs include depleting the body of nutrients from iron, zinc, selenium and magnesium.

This is especially concerning since most Americans are already suffering from nutrient depletion — which is also the very reason many other conditions develop.

Nutrient depletion occurs when medications block the absorption, storage, metabolism, or synthesis of important nutrients into the body. When these nutrients are blocked or depleted for a long period of time, secondary health problems can develop as a result. Nutrients such as vitamin D, magnesium and zinc are among the most common deficiencies in the US population. Each of these nutrients has an important role in maintaining and protecting health.

Certain medications reduce the absorption of specific nutrients in the gastrointestinal tract by binding to them before they're absorbed into the bloodstream. The antibiotic tetracycline, for example, can block absorption by binding with minerals in the GI tract such as calcium, magnesium, iron and zinc.

As another example, antibiotics are commonly used to fight bacterial infections (like certain fungal infections and some kinds of parasites), as well as bladder infections, sinus and ear infections, and strep throat. Antibiotics can eliminate bad bacteria, but they can also deplete good gut bacteria, resulting in digestion problems like diarrhea, bloating and gas, as well as yeast infections and colitis. This depletion can be combatted with fermented foods like unsweetened yogurt and kefir, cultured vegetables like sauerkraut, and probiotics. Taking certain probiotics at least two hours before or after antibiotics can help with antibiotic side effects.

Many drugs (such as the stimulant Ritalin) are prescribed for attention deficit

disorder. These can reduce appetite, which in turn decreases the intake of beneficial nutrients. Some antidepressants also tend to have this appetite-reducing effect.

On the flip side, some drugs can deplete nutrients by increasing the desire for unhealthy foods, such as refined carbohydrates. Many of the anti-psychotic drugs and some antidepressants cause insulin resistance or metabolic syndrome, which results in blood sugar swings. People then crave simple carbohydrates such as sugar, bread and pasta. Steroid drugs, including those given by an inhaler, can create similar issues as well.

Antacids are widely used to help settle an uneasy stomach. They act by neutralising the acid pH of the stomach. This reduction in stomach acid decreases the absorption of iron, as well as folic acid and zinc. This is especially problematic among the elderly, who often are already low in stomach acid. This can be improved by the consumption of iron-rich foods such as spinach, cooked beans, and dried fruit (prunes, raisins and apricots). However, too much iron can be toxic.

Weight loss drugs and cholesterol-lowering medicines similarly bind to healthy fats, preventing them from being absorbed.

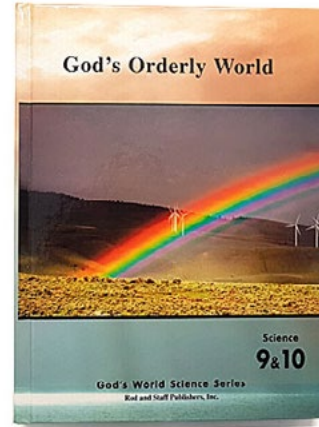
Nutrients are essential to the metabolic activities of every cell in the body. They're used up in the process and need to be replaced by new nutrients in food or supplements. Some drugs deplete nutrients by speeding up this metabolic rate. These drugs

include antibiotics (such as penicillin and gentamicin), steroids (such as prednisone), and the gout medication colchicine.

Other drugs block the nutrient's effects or production at the cellular level. In addition to the intended effect on enzymes or receptors, medications can influence enzymes or receptors that help process essential nutrients. For example, widely prescribed statin drugs block the activity of HMG-CoA, an enzyme required to manufacture cholesterol in the body. This action also depletes the body of coenzyme Q10, which requires HMG-CoA for its production. This has a serious negative impact on muscle and heart health.

Drugs can also increase the loss of nutrients through the urinary system. Any drug that does this can drain the body's levels of water-soluble nutrients (including B vitamins) and minerals (such as magnesium and potassium). The major offenders are medications to treat hypertension, particularly the diuretics that reduce blood pressure by increasing the volume of water flushed out of the body.

Dr Hyla Cass, a medical doctor who treats people with nutrient deficiencies, says, 'Physicians often tell their patients that symptoms arising from nutrient depletion are simply 'part of the illness' or just signs that they're 'getting older.' To make matters worse, physicians frequently try to address the symptoms arising from drug-induced nutrient depletion by prescribing even more drugs, further compounding the problem.'



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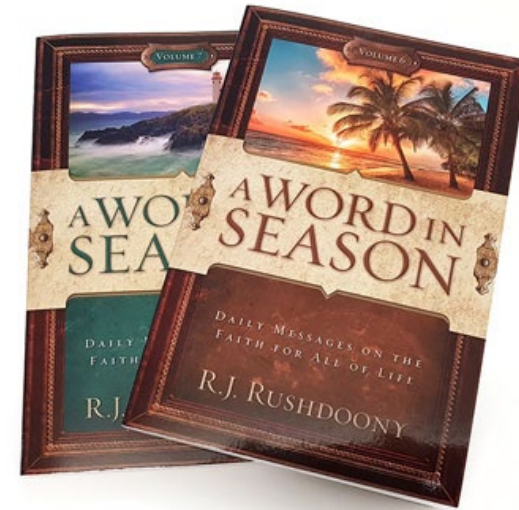
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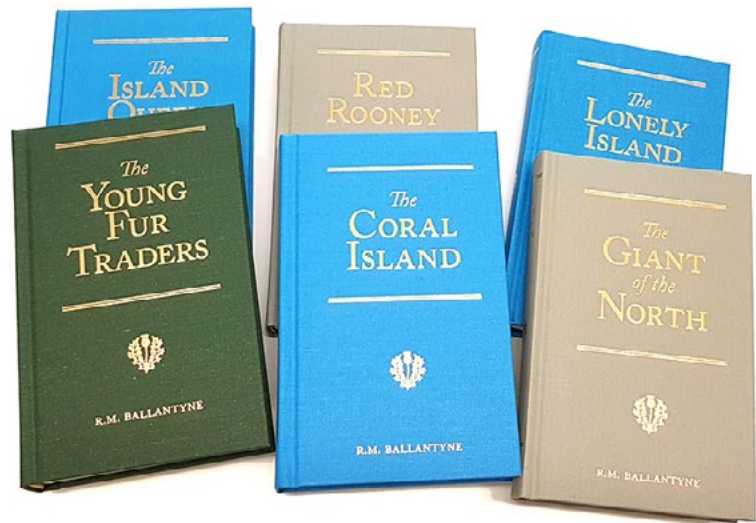
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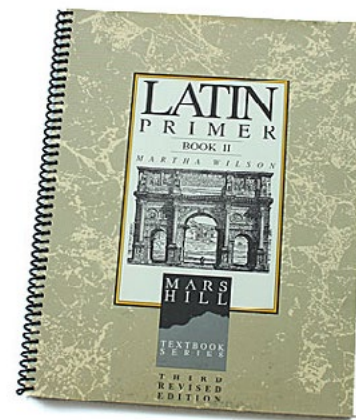
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LEM Phonics

EVELYN GARRARD



It has been a rather long time since I have been out in the field to teach a face to face Introductory Course.

Therefore it was a delight to go to Townsville to conduct two courses there — one for the Cranbrook State School and the other for the teachers of a Seventh Day Adventist school in Cairns. The teachers came down from Cairns to do their course, utilising a lovely SDA property located in Townsville.

The school in Cairns is a relatively new school for Aboriginal children, and I am really excited that they have encountered LEM Phonics and have chosen to use it.

Unfortunately only two days had been designated for each of these courses, which was not enough time to complete everything. I would advise principals who wish to have conferences for their school teachers to allow at least three days for a course.

Now back in Canberra I continue to conduct intermediate and advanced courses in LEM Phonics via email. It has been very rewarding to have quite a number of students complete the intermediate course and we are seeing others moving along well with the advanced course.

Other than that I really have nothing more to say from my end!

It would be wonderful to hear some feedback from those who are doing LEM Phonics. Are you finding it easy to teach? How are your children progressing? Does anyone have any new ideas to add to what we have? Do you use the workbooks? Please send an email to evelyn@lem.com.au and let me know how you are going.

I hope I can get a lot of feedback from you so that I can write more next time.

Blessings,

Light of Life

Light Educational Ministries is a faith ministry, working in the area of Christian education.

Our Ministry is to spread the vision and concepts of Christian education. Light Educational Ministries staff are available to share with and assist groups interested in or involved with Christian education. Our staff prepare and distribute resources and develop curriculum and LEM training programmes.

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