

CHURCH STATISTICS

April 30, 2023

Budget: \$5,800
 Contribution: \$5,753
 Benevolence: \$58
 Attendance: 116

----- SPECIAL MISSIONS CONTRIBUTION -----

Phase One Goal: \$27,000 | COMPLETED ✓
 Phase Two Goal: \$27,000 | COMPLETED ✓
 Phase Three Goal: \$54,000 | Due May 28th

\$14,092.98 (26%)

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WEEK?

MAY
10

Men's Midweek
 Location TBD @ 7:30 PM

MAY
12

Campus Devotional
 Location TBD @ 7:30 PM

MAY
14

Mother's Day

MAY
14

Mother's Day Service
 Elia Middle School @ 10:00 AM

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 17 Women's Midweek
 MAY 19 Campus Devotional
 MAY 19 Singles Devotional
 MAY 21 Sunday Worship Service
 MAY 22 Victoria Day
 MAY 24 Men's Midweek
 MAY 26 Campus Devotional
 MAY 26 Married's/Mature Singles
 Devotional
 MAY 27 ICCM Session

BIBLE TALKS / CONTACT INFO

CENTRAL REGION: Evan & Kelly Bartholomew (905) 699-4809 / (905) 699-4806

Mature Singles/Marrieds (OASIS): Ghislain Normand & Elizabeth Wademan (365) 724-2114 / (647) 860-3113
 Single Professionals (Living Water): Rich Chan & Valentina Lobo (647) 562-8333 / (647) 527-1431
 Ryerson University (Level Up): Dylan Hoerner & Isabella Raudales-Montes (416) 894-3601 / (438) 334-4871
 Ryerson University (Next Gen): Nero Cabatuando & Zonya Charles (416) 318-6421 / (647) 916-3259

YORK REGION: Kirk & Margie Hamula (647) 806-2576 / (647) 906-9481

Mature Singles/Marrieds (One In The Spirit): Tony & Vita Ventura (416) 904-0958 / (416) 904-0959
 Single Professionals (Northern Lights): Joshua Groves & Da-Shara Quant (647) 425-9632 / (647) 648-6125
 York University (Un): Isaiah & Elizabeth Famurewa (647) 785-9969 / (647) 514-2319
 York University (Deux): William Koroluk & Patrina Gosine (403) 669-2250 / (647) 395-1124



IF IT IS FIGHT OR FLIGHT; IT IS FIGHT

SUNDAY BULLETIN

MAY 7, 2023

"One of Crete's own prophets has said it: 'Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.' This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith." (Titus 1:12-13)



Joseph asks Lihle to be his girlfriend! And she said, "Yes!"

When Paul left Titus in Crete, he was fully aware of the situation that one of his dear sons-in-the-faith would face. In fact, as Paul wrote to Titus, he states, **"The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished..."** (Titus 1:5) There was a lot of things Titus had to straighten out, especially since Crete was a very difficult city. Why was it so difficult? Well.. because it was full of Cretans.

Those who lived in Crete at this time had developed quite a reputation. And Paul did not hesitate to take that into account when



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Will and Patrina are now dating in the Kingdom!

reminding Titus of what he needed to **“put in order.”** He said, **“One of Crete’s own prophets has said it: ‘Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.’ This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply...”**

This quote was undoubtedly authored by Epimenides, a fellow Cretan. And though Paul refers to him as a **“prophet,”** He was not a prophet in the same sense as biblical prophets. He was actually more of a poet. Epimenides simply wrote his opinion into his poetry, but his words proved to be so true that Paul considered them to be quite prophetic. Therefore, he reiterates Epimenidas’ words by saying, **“This saying is true.”** This was not just Paul’s opinion. Since Paul’s writings were inspired by the Holy Spirit, (II Peter 1:20-21) we must accept this as indisputable fact!

Quite understandably, Paul’s statement could have been perceived as harsh or even culturally insensitive. It may have also been perceived as an unfair generalization. Imagine if you were an honest Cretan that worked hard, and tried to live a good moral life. How could Paul say such a thing about all Cretans. Was every Cretan always a liar? Was every Cretan an evil brute? Were all of them lazy gluttons? Of course not. So what was Paul saying here?

Simply put, every culture has sins that are pervasive throughout its people. This does not mean that every person within the culture struggles with these sins, or that these sins exist in the character of every individual, but that they are so common within that culture that you can expect them to be an issue, typically in varying degrees. Therefore, they must be addressed.

Imagine building a house in an area that has a problem with termites. You would surely understand that not every piece of wood in your house is going to become infested with the wood-eating bugs. You would also understand that perhaps not even every house in that area would have an issue with the termites. However, because it is an issue in that particular area you would make sure that all the lumber you use for building your house was treated for termites. You wouldn’t call it an over-generalization that an area is infested with termites, and you wouldn’t call it insensitive to the residents of that area. It is simply a problem that exists, and that needs to be addressed.



Farrah is baptized on Wednesday night at the Central Region Women’s Midweek Service!

In the same way, when building a Church in any city, it would be foolish not to take into account the cultural sins of that city. Like termites making a nest in a new home, cultural sins can borough their way into the Church, eating away convictions one small bite at a time. This must be addressed, and the sin must be treated!



Samuel is baptized by the TMU brothers!

So what are the cultural sins of our city? Interestingly, in looking back and analyzing all of those who have fallen away within the last few years, there is a certain obvious trend. Although you may think that most disciples fall away relatively shortly after their baptisms, this is actually not the case at all. It seems that the most vulnerable time for disciples here in Toronto is the four-month to the nine-month mark of discipleship. Why is that?

As I was reflecting on this, it occurred to me that discipleship is like a marriage. When someone makes their vows at the wedding altar, they all believe that their commitment is for life; or “until death do us part.” But how often do those commitments actually stand the test of time? When the honeymoon phase wears off, and the frills of romance start to dwindle, does the marriage last? For over fifty percent of marriages in Canada, it unfortunately does not. That means that fifty percent of the time, despite how messy and complicated divorce can be, couples choose to call it quits rather than to fight it through, or even change. In other words, it’s fight or flight; and in most cases here, it’s flight.

I believe this “flight” mentality is one of our cultural sins. And it makes sense that it is, since Canada was formed by loyalists who did not want to fight against the status quo of England, and

migrated North during and after the Revolutionary War. Sadly, this mentality can exist even in the hearts of disciples who say “Jesus is Lord,” and believe that their commitment is for life. But when the honeymoon phase wears off, and the thrill of everything new starts to dissipate; when they are no longer little brother or little sister, and are now being called to become big brother or big sister to others; or when push comes to shove, they walk away.



Samuel is hoisted up after his baptism!

Like Titus, we must **“put in order what was left unfinished”** and build into the Church deep convictions on faithfulness and perseverance, as well as a spiritual toughness to counteract the flight mentality that many of us have. It has been said that there are three stages to a relationship: acquaintance, conflict, and intimacy. The intimacy only comes after you go through conflict. Therefore, the best parts of relationships, and also the best part of discipleship, only come when you “fight.” Disciples must be fighters; not flight-ers. Let us learn to fight against our cultural instincts, let us fight for our relationship with God, let us fight for our city, and let us fight to the end! To God be the glory!

Evan Bartholomew