



Fall 2011

Dear Friends and Praying Family,

AT A GLANCE

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UPCOMING LECTURE TOPICS

- Epistemology**
- The Kingdom of God and the Holy Spirit**
- Bible and Social Justice**
- Nahum**
- Prayer: Thy Kingdom Come**
- Calling and Vocation**

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<http://www.labri.org/canada/lecture.html>

L'Abri Canada 2012 Terms

- Feb 16 - April 9, 2012**
- May 14 - July 30, 2012**
- Sept 4 - Nov 19, 2012**

It is bittersweet that it is finally time for me to say farewell to my family at Canadian L'Abri as well as to all who support and care for us here. I still remember arriving on Bowen Island two and a half years ago, planning only to stay for four weeks, and meeting the people who have so impacted my life. What a gift it has been! When I think back to all who I have met, the things we've accomplished, and how much I've grown, I am so thankful. It is so obviously through God's grace that I was able to stay and participate in this work at Canadian L'Abri.

The summer term was due to be my last. We continued to pray for a my replacement as Jeff and Carrie were expecting their second child before the fall term began. The summer came closer and closer to the end, and I still had as much energy as I had had at the beginning of term (something very rare for us here)! To my own surprise as much as to the



surprise of the other workers, I suddenly felt urged to stay for two more months. I was nervous as we were expecting this term to be a very difficult one. Jeff and Carrie would need to care for Gabriel as well as a new baby during term while Clarke and Julia would be caring for Samuel and expecting their second child this Christmas! It seemed impossible but together we continued forward knowing we were in God's hands and that so many people were also praying for us.

Step by step God has provided in miraculous ways. Although we are all still tired, our prayers have been answered. The Adams' had a beautiful baby girl, Isabelle, born on September 1st. Carrie had a difficult delivery, but continues to mend while still fitting in time to see students (she is amazing!). God has sent us a wonderful group of people this fall. There are six of them who have
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If you'd like to apply as a student please visit our website for more information about our branch and a broader treatment of what to be mindful of as you consider joining us on the island. Alternatively you may call or email us, but keep in mind that as we are often engaged outside of the office, email is usually the more effective form of communication.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

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“Bound To Love”

By Clarke Scheibe

Is God obligated to his grace? Is he bound to love us? There has been a recent proliferation of books that suggest or state that God is in fact bound to love us because he has committed himself to this in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Cross is for the renewal of all things and therefore of everyone. This is the barebones of Christian Universalism (CU). This is not the “all roads lead up to the same summit” Universalism. Rather this is an attempt and a hope to be biblical and evangelical in an articulation of the cosmic scope of God’s redemption in Christ alone.

Here at L’Abri we have seen an increase in those who desire and espouse this view and it is increasing among those who attend evangelical churches. There is a history of this view in the church, albeit a minor one, as seen early in Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, later in someone like Schleiermacher, and recently in Thomas Talbot, “Gregory MacDonald”, and perhaps Rob Bell and Paul Young, the author of *The Shack*.

One of the major points of contention between CU and the traditional view lies in how one perceives God’s character in his relationship to final judgment and to hell. Could God be good if he excludes any from his glorious presence? Could God be just if he punishes eternally as Jesus seems to intimate?

For the CU, words about hell and final judgment are necessarily warnings of a purgative process or perhaps only existential threats. God is into correcting, not into punishing without the possibility of redemption. The fires of hell are either descriptions of what life affected by sin feels like in the here and now or a refiner’s fire, a fire that will burn away any wickedness that may be parasitically hanging onto the one made in the image of God. That person will continue on and become what he or she was always meant to become. Any divine judgment will only last as long as one stands against God’s invitation to be in relationship with him. This eternal bliss will be possible once they enter into the gate that shall never be shut. God is and will always be open to those who want to turn to him.

Yet it should be said, the Christian who holds the traditional view does not regard hell as a desirable end; nor does that Christian hold to the traditional view because he or she is sectarian, triumphalist, or sadistic, though we may sadly know Christians sinfully acting like that.

Instead, for the one who holds the traditional view, Christian Universalism simply appears counter both to the statements in the Bible and to the tone of its authors. Time and again the biblical authors, as does Jesus, speak about hell and final judgment as something immediate, disconcerting, and eternal. It will come like lightning. It will come like a thief in the night. It will catch us without enough oil. It will be a wedding banquet where even one who sneaks in is thrown out. Many will say “Lord, Lord,” but Jesus will say, “Depart from me. I never knew you.” We also hear a tone from the authors that would be significantly different had God revealed to us and to the authors that God’s salvation were universal. Instead there is a great grief over those who do not know or who stand against the Cross of Christ (Phil 3:18 – 21), an anger and a promised judgment against those who pose falsely as Christian teachers (2 Peter 2), and a condemnation against those who reject the blood of Christ, for if they reject that, what is left for them but a terrible judgment (Hebrews 10). This is not to mention Satan and demons. Will they too be saved?

The tone of the biblical authors in today’s culture appears harsh and these passages are often unheard in churches. (We must ask why and how that affects a reader who runs into these statements in Scripture.) Now it is true that many have revolted against the harshness of many church leaders who have armed themselves with a superiority over those who do not (yet?) know Christ, and for that, we should all agree that the church has abused its power; and so Peter’s proclamation that the church will first be judged should bring a stern warning. Yet it does not mean that we should not take seriously the implications and descriptions of God’s coming judgment; we should take it as seriously as the biblical authors took it. We should consider why Jesus took hell and judgment as seriously as he did and taught it explicitly and frequently.

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What we find in the Bible is not merely a sadness over those who will be lost; there is also a joy in God's justice being displayed. As difficult as that may seem to us when there are those who will be lost, we should try to grapple with why it will also be a joyful day.

That day will be one of delight in God's revealed glory in him being the one (in fact the only one) just to judge. It makes that final judgment a day of which we may rightly fear – for no one stands innocent or holy – but it is also a day of which God will become “all in all”, when there will be no longer any mistaking his identity as Lord over all. Paul in Philippians speaks of this day when Jesus will be proclaimed above every name, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, for he is the only one who has been perfectly obedient to the Father – even unto death on a Cross – and who has secured a way for people to come to God. On that day God will be revealed as having vindicated his name and his people and shown to have the right to judge all the nations. Therefore this universal confession is not a salvific one, for as we see in Mark 5 even the demons knew the true identity of Jesus; we wouldn't claim their declaration as salvific, nor would Jesus; rather it is the confession that God is right to judge them as the Holy One. This of course does not arm those who know Christ with the power of judgment over their foes; it is for this reason Paul uses the same Isaiah passage to call the Roman Christians not to seek vengeance for it is not their place. It is because of final divine judgment that Christians do not need to place justice within their own hands; they can trust in the Lord's.

Now it is a godly desire that none shall perish, cf. Ezekiel 18:23; 2 Peter 3:9. However it is not the same thing to say that none shall perish. There is a vast difference between saying that God desires people to know him and that God needs people to know him. God is enough within himself that he gives us the freedom to reject him, to give us our way. God is enough within himself that he can extend his grace in a way that is merciful and that is beyond any justified expectation, without our demanding that he must show it to those who reject him for him to be good.

If you like to hear more on this, please listen to the lecture online at

http://www.labri.org/canada/lecture_65_46575473.mp3 ! Please wait for it to load; it takes a few minutes.

You do not need a player for it to work.

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been here the entire term and will continue on till the end. We have also had many weekend visitors who have all integrated themselves well, including a full house of almost thirty people for Canadian thanksgiving. We have only two helpers although they work as hard as four. One is from Switzerland and the other from Kansas. They had both spent terms at English L'Abri and somehow ended up here. They are a dream team and a support to each other. This term has been full of music, laughter, games, and hard work. In a way we have felt cared for by the students as they tackle physical jobs with such positive attitudes. It is obvious that God is working in them as they wrestle with how to have a genuine faith and to not rely on people's affirmation only. It is also obvious how God is working in us as workers. We are daily faced with challenges as well as the confirmation that God is near and faithful.

As I prepare to leave, I continue to pray that another worker will come to take over the additional work that needs to be done on the property, with meals and in the student house. I pray for the Scheibes as they are expecting their new baby and as they and the Adams' try to balance the work of L'Abri with a young family. I think about the difficulties of living in a dark and rainy climate as they approach winter, and I especially think of them financially as we still struggle to pay our bills and salaries. It is a life of faith. I can't imagine how much more faith it takes when you have young ones who count on you for everything. I am sad to be leaving, but I feel as though this chapter is over. I'm also excited to see what will be next for me. After seeing so many people leave Christian ministries broken, burnt out and bitter I am incredibly amazed at how full of life and love I feel. I see how God has sustained me in this work. That is a gift that I could not have imagined.

Thank you to all who care for and follow the work of this small and still young branch of L'Abri. I hope that you will pray with me and know that it makes a difference in what is done here.

*Sincerely,
Jessica Bell*

Praying Through Fall Term

"I call on you, O God, for you will answer me."
Psalm 17:6

Please join with us as we mindfully bring ourselves and our cares to God our Father. Each day is marked with a specific prayer suggestion. Our serving families appear regularly as a reflection of our deep and continuing need for God's daily provision of grace that we might be more like His Son, Jesus.



			November 9			
			Students	Adams Family	Bowen Island Churches	Canadian Board
			Students	Jessica Bell	Bowen Island Community	Canadian Trustees
			Students	Adams Family	Bowen Island Churches	Canadian Board
			Students			

