

Clifton News

301 July - September 2023

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News

The Easter Holiday Club numbers were lower than last year with a total of 27 different children coming during the four days. 44 in total were present for the prize giving with a few parents attending. However, we are thankful for God's blessing with some children added to the Wednesday Seekers as a result of the effort. Friday Club is struggling at the moment with low attendance and prayer is valued for an increase in numbers.

On Saturday 15th April Will and Sylvia were able to have their long delayed wedding reception at Clifton for family and friends here and it was a blessed time enjoyed by all.

On July 2nd we shall be at South Norwood Festival but this year there has been opposition to the work. Last year someone made malicious complaints about the leafleting the young people were engaged in and the organisers have forbidden tracting the public except within our stall. We pray that God will overrule the opposition of the Devil and we shall see blessing in salvation.

We have also booked a stall at the Grange Picnic in the Park which will take place on Sunday 10th September.

We also welcomed a new addition to the fellowship when our sister Shilu Mathews came over from Kerala, India to work as a nurse at the Croydon University Hospital. There are more nurses on the way we are told and we look forward to their joining us, God willing.

On a sadder note there was a murder of an elderly lady on Labrook Road near the hall which shocked many in the area. It was reported in the national papers. As the nation continues to descend further into spiritual darkness and sin, we pray that God will speak to those living on that road who were brought up in our Sunday school and heard the gospel over many years yet continue in their unbelief.

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Meetings

Lord's Day

Breaking of Bread	11.00 am
Young People's Bible class	12.15 pm
Family Service	4.00 pm

Monday

Prayer and Bible Teaching	7.45 pm
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Wednesday

Seekers	6.30 pm
(Term time only for under 10s)	

Friday

Friday Club	7.30 pm
(Term time only for those over 10)	

(Please check our website before coming for any changes to time or cancellations)

SUNDAY AFTERNOON FAMILY SERVICE

July

2	South Norwood festival outreach
9	Clifton young people
16	Jonathan Varghese
23	Alastair Rodger
30	Richard Catchpole

August

6	Clifton young people
13	Nitish Patel
20	Richard Catchpole
27	Nitish Patel

September

- 3 Clifton young people
- 10 Grange Picnic in the Park outreach
- 17 Thomas Taylor
- 24 Mike Surry

MONDAY PRAYER AND MINISTRY

Subject: The signs in John's Gospel

July

- 3 Stephen Buckeridge - *The changing of water into wine (2:1-11)*
- 10 Stephen Buckeridge - *Healing of the nobleman's son (4:46-54)*
- 17 Richard Catchpole - *The man at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-9)*
- 24 Richard Catchpole - *Feeding the multitude (6:1-14)*
- 31 Alastair Rodger - *Jesus walking on the water (6:15-21)*

August

- 7 Nitish Patel - *The blind man receiving sight (9:1-41)*
- 14 Nitish Patel - *The raising of Lazarus from the dead (11:1-45)*
- 21 Alastair Rodger - *The miraculous catch of fishes (21:1-11)*
- 28 No meeting (Bank Holiday)

September

- 4 Colin Roberts
 - 11 Daniel Rudge
 - 18 Daniel Rudge
 - 25 Robert Bennett
- (Report Meeting regarding the: Retired Missionary Aid Fund)*

Our Monday night ministry meeting and Family Service is broadcast on Zoom. If any of you would like to listen to God's Word, please enter the following on the Zoom website to join in.

Meeting ID: 756 5533 4423

Passcode: 186868

Question Box

Why do we need to pray if Jesus says “your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.”?

In Matthew chapter 6 the Lord Jesus tells his disciples not to turn prayer into something to try and impress people or God with - either by making it into a big show for everyone to see or by babbling on and on in the hope the God will hear you. Instead, He tells them to pray in private and to remember “your Father knows the things you need before you ask him” (Matthew 6:8).

It's perhaps easy to understand why the Lord Jesus doesn't want us to turn prayer into something that we use to impress people with, because by doing that we're only looking for their praise, not to please God. But then it's perhaps harder to understand why we need to pray if God knows what we need before we ask Him. If that's the case, why bother asking? Won't he just give it to us anyway?

First, we see that Jesus is telling us that we don't pray to God trying to persuade Him to do something for us. As if the longer we pray for, the more likely He is to give us what we want. He's telling us that we're praying to a God who loves us and knows all that we need. That makes a difference to how we treat prayer.

Secondly, prayer is not only about asking God for things. For a lot of people, that's all that prayer means to them. Before my granddad became a believer, he said he used to pray to God to keep him safe – however that was probably mostly during WW2! It was later in life, when he trusted in the Lord Jesus, that he realised prayer is much more than that. It's how we talk to God, how we thank Him, how we bring our concerns to Him and how we express our dependence upon Him.

That's the thing, prayer changes us and our relationship with God, we don't pray just to ask for things, we pray to communicate with our Father. We see that with the Lord Jesus. Throughout the gospels, we find the Lord praying. In the morning (Mark 1:35), at night (Mark 6:46) and undoubtedly throughout the day (Luke 11:1), in times of joy (Luke

10:21) and in times of deep sorrow (Luke 22:44). If the Lord Jesus needed to pray and speak with His Father, we certainly need to!

How does prayer change us? The examples that the Lord Jesus uses to illustrate prayer all picture someone in a weak position making request of someone in a stronger position. A child asking for food from his father (Matthew 7:7-11), a man asking for bread from his neighbour at midnight (Luke 11:5-8), a widow asking a judge for justice (Luke 18:1-8). As we pray to God, we show that we're dependent upon Him for all that we have. The more we recognise our dependence, the more we look to Him to provide for our needs and the closer we grow to Him.

The opposite is true, if we start to feel that we're in control of everything in our lives, we pray less, we start to depend less on God and we drift more and more away from Him.

Knowing that our Father knows all that we need makes a difference to how we pray, as we understand we're praying to One who gives us what is best for us, not necessarily what we want. He is working all things together for good for those who love Him (Romans 8:28). Therefore if (when) we pass through difficult circumstances we can bring our difficulties to God in prayer and ask Him to show us what He's teaching us or how we can use the experience to help others.

For example, look at Joseph, as he went from being thrown into a pit to being sold into slavery and then thrown into prison. All circumstances he wouldn't have wished for, but he surely learnt how to be humble, how to serve others and gained opportunities to be responsible before ultimately being able to save his family. Looking back, he could see how God was at work (Genesis 50:20).

We might not experience such dramatic ups and downs, but we too can have confidence that God is in control of our lives and knows all that we need. And with that confidence in Him, we can pray to Him, expressing all that is in our hearts and look to Him to answer our prayers.

Alastair Rodger

Bible Teaching

SIX COMINGS OF THE LORD JESUS

By the late John Wallace (Hartlepool)

1. HIS COMING INTO THE WORLD (1 TIMOTHY 1:15)

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” (1 Timothy 1:15). This is a familiar yet profound verse. It poses five questions. (1). Who came? (2). Where did he come from? (3). Where did he come to? (4). What did he come to do? (5). Who did he come for?

2. HIS COMING TO THE CROSS (MATTHEW 27:33)

“When they were come unto a place called Golgotha...” (Matthew 27:33). This verse implies two things, the time; the place. This is more than just a historical record there is a deep significance here.

The time. The time was fixed by God in Exodus 12 when the children of Israel celebrated the Passover; the fourteenth day of the month in the evening. The word is literally, between the two evenings. It was evening when the Lord Jesus made his way to the garden of Gethsemane and as another evening was drawing on He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. Paul writes in Roman 5:6 “in due time Christ died for the ungodly”.

The place. The place was fixed in Genesis 22 when Abraham took Isaac up to mount Moriah. Abraham said after it was all over, “In the mountain of the Lord it shall (note future, not it was) be seen”. The Temple and Jerusalem actually stood on Mount Moriah.

3. HIS COMING TO HIS OWN (JOHN 14:18)

The sympathy of the Saviour, “I will not leave you comfortless”, The support of the Saviour, “I will come to you”.

Comfortless. The word comfortless is literally orphans. These men had left all to follow the Lord Jesus, family, homes, jobs, and friends and now He is

telling them He is going to leave them. Where will they go, what will they turn to, they would have nothing. The Saviour is not unmindful of this.

I will come to you. He will still be their support in time of need and distress. There is a lovely example of this in the experience of the apostle Paul. In 2 Timothy 4:17 he speaks of his experience when he stood before Caesar, He writes, at my last answer no man stood with me but all forsook me. It is hard to imagine this; Paul was probably the greatest servant of the Lord of all time and yet he stands before Caesar alone. Where were all his fellow labourers, his fellow Christians? He writes, all forsook me, he stood there alone. Nevertheless, he writes, "the Lord stood by me and strengthened me". The Lord Jesus came to him in his moment of need and supported him. The Lord Jesus understood for had he not stood alone before Pilate and there was no one to stand by Him.

Another comforter. The Lord Jesus begins to speak about another comforter (John 14:16). The word another can have two meanings; another of a different kind or another of the same kind. One of the beauties of the language in which the scripture was originally written is that if there is a different meaning there is a different word. The word used here is another of the same kind. We know who the other Comforter is because the Lord Jesus says specifically, the Holy Spirit. Gleaning from what the Lord Jesus says here we may discern:

1. His abiding presence – "He shall be with you forever".

We have a lovely picture of this in Abraham's servant in Genesis 24. He is sent off to find a bride for Isaac and having found her he accompanies all the way until she enters into Isaac's presence and then his task is completed.

2. His special purpose

- a) instruction - "He shall teach you all things" (14:26)
- b) direction - "He shall guide you into all the truth" (16:13)
- c) revelation - "He shall testify of me" (15:26)
- d) exaltation - "He shall glorify me" (16:14)

If we would desire the Holy Spirit to be our teacher we must be willing to be taught. If we would desire the Holy Spirit to be our guide we must be ready to be guided. If we would desire the Holy Spirit to show Christ to us we must have a desire for Him (the Lord Jesus).

4. HIS COMING TO THE INDIVIDUAL (REVELATION 3:20)

"I will come in to him and sup with him". There are a number of things here for our help and blessing.

a) Challenge. This letter to the church at Laodicea makes sad reading. The church hadn't been in existence for very long and we wonder how a church could get into such a condition in so short a time. If the first signs of decline appear either in our personal or assembly life it is good to ask, what is happening here?. This might save us from asking at some time in the future, how did we get here?

Where is the Lord? He is standing at the door. If someone were to tell us that there was someone at the door we wouldn't have any other thought than that they were outside. Is it possible that an assembly can go on from week to week supposing they had all the right things and were doing the right things and not realising that the Lord is outside it all? This is a truly challenging thought.

b) Encouragement. Has the Lord abandoned them, turned His back on them? Not at all. Scripture would lead us to believe that the Lord is ever seeking the fellowship of those who are His own. In John 10 the Good Shepherd comes to the fold to call out those who are His own to Himself. When the Lord chose the twelve disciples He chose them that they might be with Him (Mark 3v14). See again the simple but beautiful picture here; He is patiently standing, knocking at the door – amazing grace.

c) Appeal. "If any man hear my voice and open the door". It would be those who were truly His who would hear His voice; He said in John 10, "my sheep hear my voice".

The thing that is immediately noticeable is that it is individual, He is not appealing to the assembly, we note the expressions, if any **man**, I will come in to **him**. We must be careful that we do not allow conditions either in the world or in the church to be an excuse for our not enjoying personal fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

d) Promise. "I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me." What a beautiful picture of fellowship, sharing. Fellowship implies togetherness, participation, joy; our highest fellowship is with the Lord Jesus Himself. The Lord Jesus holds this out to each one of His own to enjoy with Him here and now. It is of significance that the Lord Jesus speaks of supper; supper is the last meal of the day. In John 21 the Lord provided breakfast for His loved ones, now He speaks of supper. The day is far spent, the world is heading for the darkness of night, we are looking for

the bright and morning star; He is coming quickly, He is coming suddenly, He is coming soon; even so come Lord Jesus!

5. HIS COMING FOR HIS SAINTS

"I will come again and receive you unto myself". (John 14:3). We hear often about the signs of the times in relation to the coming of the Lord Jesus. It is important to see that the signs that the Lord Jesus spoke of relate to His coming in glory, not to His coming for the saints. There are no signs to be fulfilled with regard to his coming for His saints. The only thing that the Lord Jesus laid down was, "if I go away, I will come again". He has gone away, but not to stay, He is coming back again. He is coming to take us to be with Himself. So much is said by believers about going to heaven; our hope is to be with the Lord. Paul says, "so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1Thessalonians 4:17). Note the word in the Authorised Version is "ever" not "forever". It is precious to see that we shall not only be with the Lord for all time but we shall be with the Lord all the time.

6. HIS COMING TO REIGN

"This same Jesus will so come as ye have seen him go.." (Acts 1:11). It is important for us to see that in this coming which is referred to in the Old Testament Scriptures and in the gospels; there is much confusion today in the mind of many professing Christians in failing to discern this. We as believers are not waiting for the Lord coming to set up His kingdom. This coming is referred to in 2 Timothy 4:1 as "his appearing". In Revelation 1:7 we read, "behold he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him". He will reign for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4) during which time the devil will be shut up and rendered inoperative. He will reign over the whole earth and His reign will be a time of righteousness and blessing (Psalm 72)

Paul tells us that if we suffer we shall also reign with him" (2 Timothy 2:12). The question has been asked, "How near will be to the Lord in His kingdom?". The answer given was, "As near as we have been to him down here." Today we share in His rejection; in a day to come we shall share in His glory. Our faith is tried and tested now in the circumstances of life but it will appear unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:7).

Good News



SEARCH FOR THE LOST

On May 1st 2023, a small plane crashed in the Amazon rainforest of Colombia killing the pilot and two passengers. It took two weeks to locate the aircraft on 16th May and when the rescuers came to the Cessna C206, they found that the children of the dead woman, Magdalena Mucutuy were missing. She had been travelling to Bogota to meet her husband to start a new life together. While dying she had told them to save themselves. Footprints, eaten fruit and a bottle showed that these children aged just 13, 9, 4 and a baby of 11 months were still alive but lost in the jungle trying to find their way out. They were in much danger from jaguars, poisonous snakes and starvation. The children were part of the Huitoto people but officials had hope because the oldest girl, Lesly, would know how to survive in the forest having being taught skills by her grandmother.

An extensive search was made involving the Air Force, 150 soldiers with dogs and 200 volunteers from local indigenous tribes. The rescue teams covered 1600 miles and the story captivated Colombia and many in the world. Finally they were found alive after 40 days causing much jubilation. The army radio broadcast the code for a child found alive, "miracle, miracle, miracle, miracle!"

They were covered in insect bites and malnourished but alive. After

medical treatment they were reunited with their tearful father, Manuel Ranoque. President Gustavo Petro declared, "A joy for the whole country! "They achieved an example of total survival that will go down in history".

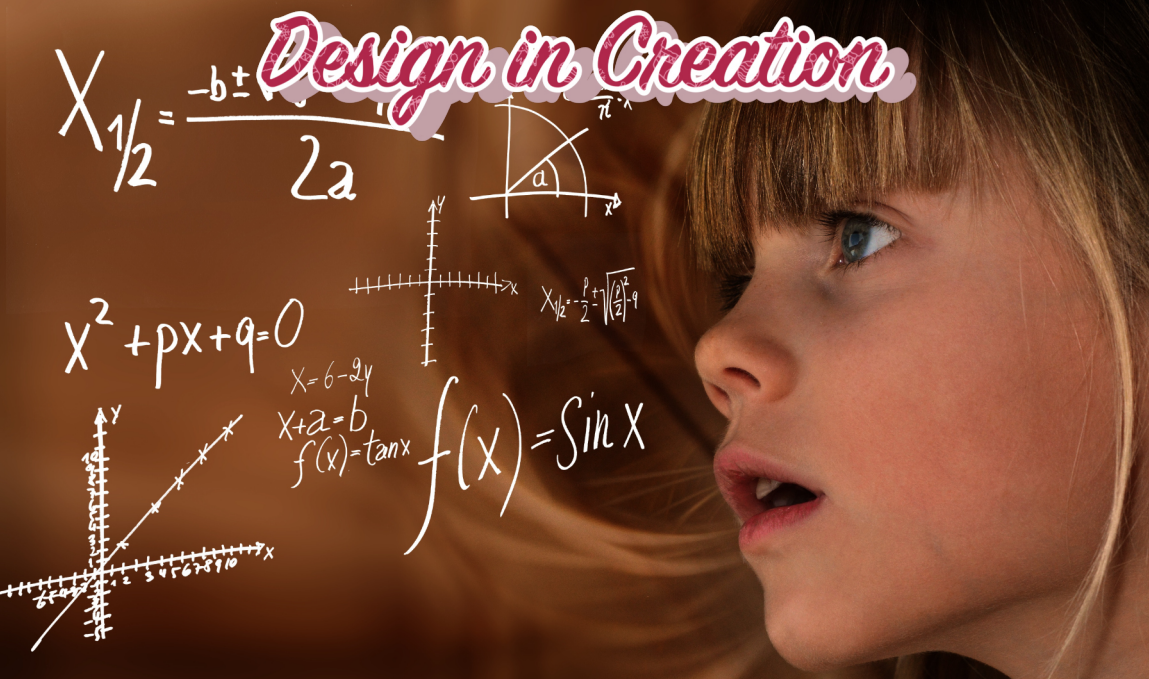
However, the second search and rescue story which gripped the world had a sadder ending. On Sunday 18th June 2023, the OceanGate Expeditions submersible, The Titan, and its 5 passengers went missing as they went down 12,000 ft to visit the wreck of the Titanic. At that depth the pressure is 4000 tons per square metres and it is an extremely dangerous place if the slightest defect occurs in the vessel. It was believed that they had only 96 hours of oxygen remaining and were trapped in a small tube of a vessel in pitch darkness and near freezing temperatures at that depth. Banging noises were heard which led many to believe they were still alive. But when a robotic submarine found debris of the Titan near the bow of the Titanic it confirmed what experts feared all along that it had imploded instantly killing all on board.

These stories of the search for the lost grip our minds and we all hoped that they will be found even at the last moment. The thought of dying in such extreme places is terrifying to think of.

The Bible is about a greater search and rescue mission. Jesus said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10) and Paul wrote, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." (1Timothy 1:15)

The lost are those who are lost because of sin, wandering away from God to a certain and terrible eternal judgment in hell. We are the ones who are lost for we are all sinners. The cost of this search and rescue was so great that it involved the sacrifice of Christ, God beloved Son, on the cross bearing the judgment of a guilty world upon Him. God raised Him from the dead and He is a living Saviour and Rescuer for all who believe on Him. When you call upon the name of the Lord to be saved, you will be justified before God and forgiven. You will be rescued from sin, death and hell. The Bible calls it "so great a salvation" (Hebrews 2:3).

Reader, are you still lost? If so then a seeking Saviour is not far from you if only you will call out to Him.



OUR AMAZING BRAIN

The human brain has rightly been called the “most complex object in the known universe”. Its secrets have still not been fully understood.

The human brain is the most fatty organ in the body and is composed of 60% fat and the remaining 40% is a combination of water, protein, carbohydrates and salts. It is only about 2% of the weight of our body and weighs about 3lbs or 1.36 kg. It needs 25% of all the oxygen required by the body. The brain is divided into two hemispheres and each half has different functions. Men’s brains are slightly larger than women’s brains. They are about 100 grams heavier. The human brain is not fully formed until we reach the age of 25. It develops from the back to the front. It is a myth that we only use 10% of our brains but we do use all of it but not at the same time. The brain functions in an energy efficient manner.

BILLIONS OF NEURONS

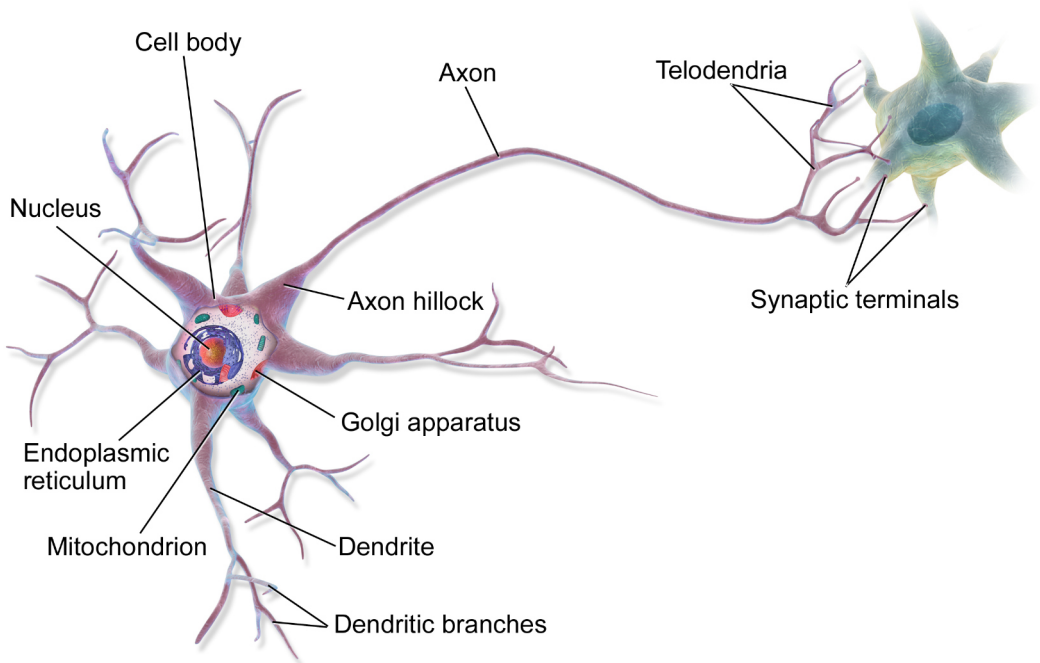
The brain has an estimated 100 billion microscopic cells called neurons which can make connections to thousands of other neurons

and to the rest of the body through the nervous system. These neurons communicate by electrical signals created in the axon and sent out through the nerves. This information travels between neurons at 268 miles an hour. The electrical output of the brain is around 23 watts and enough to power a light bulb.

QUADRILLION CONNECTIONS

This means there are over a quadrillion synapses or connections yet the neurons are capable of much more than this. They are not like a computer memory that gets filled up but are able to join together and store multiple memories. It is estimated that in computer terms it has a storage capacity of 2.5 petabytes or a million gigabytes but its exact storage cannot be exact calculated.

Researchers at the neuroscientist at the University of North Carolina have found recently that even the microscopic branches the dendrites coming out of the axon of each neurone are not just wiring through which signals are sent but capable of actively processing information in themselves like mini computers. The processing power of the human brain is far greater than scientists even imagined.





MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY SUPER COMPUTER

The current most powerful super computer in the world is the Exascale-class HPE Cray EX Supercomputer at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, USA. It can calculate a million, million, million (10^{18}) floating point calculations per second. No human can do this many calculations per second but the brain is faster and more powerful than any super computer man has made when it comes to processing and understanding the huge amount of information coming to it through the eyes, ears, nose and other senses and being able to make instant and correction decisions based on it. If we see a small child about to run across the road, within a split second we can process that we are looking at, what is going to happen and act quickly to save its life. We are able to create works of art and music, look at colour, beauty, scenery and listen to music and be awed by it. These things are beyond the capability of a mere machine.

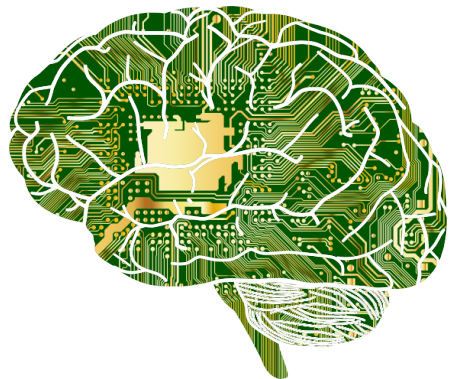


ITS ORGANISATION

Different regions of the brain perform different tasks and the brain has been likened to well organised bookshelf with different spaces allocated to each sense or motor skill. Each one competes for space inside the brain so as we increase skills in one area, another one has space taken away. This is why people who are blind have a much better hearing than those who can see.

The brain changes its structure as we learn. For example learning to ride a bike or play the piano. As we try again and again new connections are formed until the skills are impressed into the brain.

A man made computer is hardwired and software uses the circuits to perform functions but the human brain can change its own structure and connections, forming new ones and changing old ones. This is what makes it superior to a man made computer.



Even when damaged, depending on the severity, the brain has built in redundancy and neuroplasticity, the ability to reorganise its connections. In extreme cases of epilepsy when at a young age, the cerebral hemisphere, about half of the brain, is surgically removed or disconnected from the rest of the brain in an operation known as a

hemispherectomy, the outcome is good for remaining part of the brain rewires itself.

MAN MORE THAN A BIOLOGICAL MACHINE

The one thing that no one has been able to explain is the existence of consciousness, the awareness that we have of ourselves, the world around and also the knowledge that there is a God who made us. This shows that the mind is not just a physical thing but we also have a spirit and soul. We are not mere biology but created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27).

The atheistic evolutionists who believe that man's brain is the result of millions of years of mindless chance with no intelligent Designer don't seem to see the irony that if their brain is the result of no intelligence then how can they even trust the reasoning of their own brains! How can they know then if the very thoughts they have denying God and Creation and their belief in molecules to man evolution is correct.

Despite these wonders of the human brain, the mind of man has been corrupted by sin and capable of believing every nonsense possible instead of the truth.

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:" (Ephesians 4:17-18)

But the believer in awe and wonder can say, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." (Psalms 139:14)

As Christians, like the man called Legion whom the Lord delivered, we are found sat at the feet of Jesus in our right minds (Luke 8:35) and our lives are lived with our minds on Christ, "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:2). We are transformed by the renewing our our minds (Romans 12:2).

(Opposite: general diagram of the function of the four main lobes of the brain with the cerebellum and brain stem)



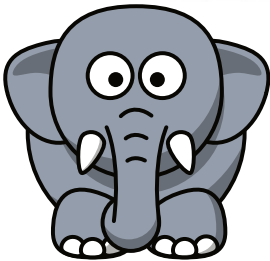
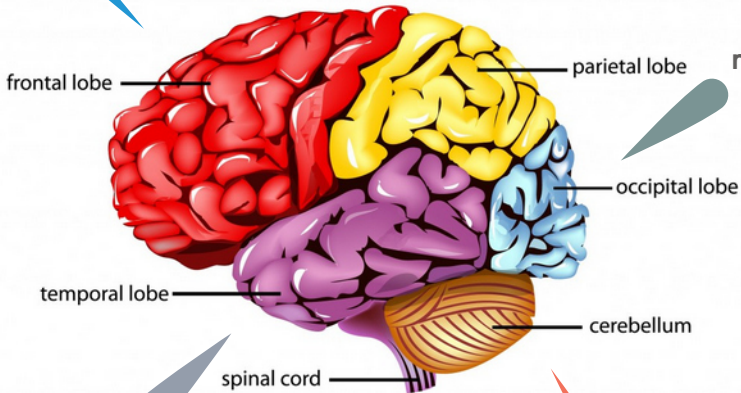
Emotions, behaviour,
Problem solving



Language, reading,
understanding,
interpreting the senses

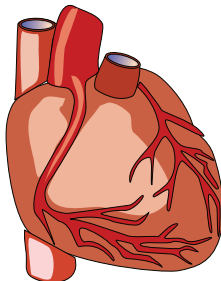


Interprets
vision,
movement



Memories,
hearing,
organising

Basic life functions



Balance, co-ordination,
motor learning



River Jordan near Galilee

