

SALVATIONISM 301

Captain Denise Walker

INTRODUCTION Post-Modern Culture

Captain Denise Walker is most recently Public Relations Director for the Maritime Division in the Canada & Bermuda Territory.

From her base of television producing experience with 100 Huntley Street previous to her officership, and through DYS and Corps Appointments Denise uses the culture as a connection for the Kingdom to establish a Godly beach head in today's world. Gifted with unique creative ability, Denise contributes our chapter on **POST-MODERNISM**.

We are in a unique time and place in our "God-View" as well. That old time religion is a thing of the past. Today people feast on a smorgasbord of faiths- each choosing his/her own unique path to God. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is hard to find- the Bible no longer taken literally. So where is God in this Post-Modern World?

This series of devotionals will seek to address that very question. We will see that God is indeed God for this Postmodern World! We will see that He is the only one to give true meaning and hope to life today. He is the only one to provide true solutions to every problem and challenge we face. We will see that He is a living God who wants us to experience Him every moment of every day!

RESOURCES: (try to incorporate these resources with the daily lessons).

BOOKS:

Charles Colson. HOW NOW SHALL WE LIVE?

Charles Colson. THE LINE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG: Developing a Personal Code of Ethics.

Josh McDowell. THE NEW TOLERANCE. (Tyndale House)

Charles Colson. BURDEN OF TRUTH: Defending the Truth in an Age of Unbelief.

Cynthia Crossen. TAINTED TRUTH: The Manipulation of Fact in America.

Tom Beaudoin. VIRTUAL FAITH: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X.

Leonard Sweet. POSTMODERN PILGRIMS.

Walt Mueller. UNDERSTANDING TODAY'S YOUTH CULTURE.

TV: TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL; SEVENTH HEAVEN

MOVIES: BLESS THE CHILD. (depicts the new age v. Christianity well);

THE MISSION;. (two worlds);

THE APOSTLE; LEAP OF FAITH; LIAR, LIAR

ONLINE:

www.fotf.org (and a free magazine!)

www.thefamily.org

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INTRODUCTION

"For God so loved the Postmodern World, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

"Worldview is a set of assumptions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, constantly or inconsistently) about the basic make-up of our world."

James Sire, *The Universe Next Door*

The world is in a unique time and place. We're a global village- connected by modern technology. We know what's happening around the world 24 hours day. We're current on the latest political challenges- world leaders as well known as the local mayor. We track weather patterns for weeks- watching where it's been and accurately predicting it's future path. We make purchases from the Far East as easily as from the corner store. We're no longer strictly a part of one cultural scene- as familiar with the spicy tastes of Mexican cuisine or American Sports Leagues as we are with Chinese Dragon Races or the great Art Museums found in the former Soviet Union. We live in a world where knowledge is at our fingertips and choice is unlimited.

We also live in a world where reason and logic have been pushed aside by first hand experience, immorality has faded into amorality, truth is negotiable, diversity and tolerance is the higher road, hope is scarce and despair is plenty. People long for acceptance and community and deep down, believe all roads lead to Heaven.

The tension lies in the generation gap- the Modern World grasping to hold onto the glory days of their youth- the Post-Modern World stockpiling supplies for the natural disaster sure to bring about the end of days.

Modern World Era

The **Mature Generation** was born between 1909 and 1945. They survived two world wars and the Great Depression, gathered the family around the radio, and danced away to the Big Band sounds. They were hard working and sacrificed for the betterment of others, leaving a legacy of promise for the next generation. The **Baby Boomers** were born between 1946 and 1964. They benefited from everything their parents started for them. Theirs was a generation of progress- modern progress- Televisions and VCRs / Sports Cars and Sports Franchises- Higher Education and Careers / The Sexual Revolution and Rock N' Roll. They were peace protestors and flower children- leaving a legacy of diversity for the next generation.

Post Modern Era

Generation X'ers were born between 1965 and 1980. Their worldview is simple- "Life isn't fair- so get what you can." They gather their friends around the giant screen TV to watch *SIENFELD* and *FRIENDS*. They drink café mocha while working on their personal computers. Suicide is a viable option and institutions are not to be trusted. **Generation Next** - have been born since 1980. They are techno-wizards with a steady diet of MTV and Sci-fi TV. They surf the net and talk for hours on their cell phones. They have their own gold card and a healthy budget for entertainment - movies / sports events / concerts and trips to Miami. Choice is the only option- nothing is written in stone.

We are in a unique time and place in our "God-View" as well. That old time religion is a thing of the past. Today people feast on a smorgasbord of faiths- each choosing his/her own unique path to God. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is hard to find- the Bible no longer taken literally. So where is God in this Post-Modern World?

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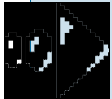
Post Modern 1



Acts 17:16-31



By faith, I mean, in its general sense, the belief of what God has said, and by saving faith, I mean the trust of the soul to and in Christ as the only and all-sufficient Saviour for time and eternity (General William Booth, SALVATION SOLDIER).



In 1994 actress Shirley MacLaine walked nearly 500 miles along the Santiago de Compostela Camino in the north of Spain. Armed with little more than a sleeping bag and a New Testament, she began her spiritual journey on a quest to find the meaning of life. During one of her afternoon naps she visions a man named John the Scot, who becomes her guide- not of Spain but through time and space. In one of her many conversations with this vision she discovers that rather than some spirit being, John the Scot is actually someone she has created. He encourages her to trust this vision anyway because "You have the god energy within you and you are the co-creator with that." She goes on to ask him "Then what is God?" and he tells her "God is the loving energy with which you create."

Her creation as it turns out, is a mixture of faiths and ideals- a melting pot of 'higher thinking'. She creates the meaning of the cosmos, the secrets of lost Civilizations, and the path to a higher love. MacLaine readily admits people find her visions hard to believe. In fact, the gentleman who gave me MacLaine's book says, 'She's a crack-pot'.

Yet for many people living in this postmodern world, creating their own faith isn't so uncommon. In today's pluralistic society it is politically correct to believe that all faiths ultimately lead to the same God. That we will all reach Heaven together- but how we get there is up to us. It leaves plenty of room for individualized spiritual journeys- in sharp contrast to what people believe to be institutionalized religion.

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Post Modern 1 - - - - - ●



How have you viewed church and religion in the past?
Where has your spiritual journey taken you?
What image best describes God for you?

Who does Jesus say He is?

John 8:54-58 (compare that to Exodus 3:13-14)

John 6:35-40

John 11:25

John 8:12

John 14:6-7

John 10:14-18

Do these verses change your image of God?
Were there any surprises?

Paul met a group of people who believed in many gods. They even had an idol for the unknown god! How was he able to point them to the one true God? Acts 17:16-31



Watch an episode or two of the OPRAH WINFREY SHOW. Guaranteed there will be many, many examples of mix-and-match faiths. Why do you think people so willingly believe Oprah and anyone she has on her programme? How can their variety of beliefs be misleading to people?

Check out the web site for Bellview Baptist Church for an example of a church reaching out in a postmodern culture (www.bellview.org/index.asp).

What image of God is presented in the following - and are they accurate or misleading?

TV - TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL, SEVENTH HEAVEN

Movies - BLESS THE CHILD, THE MISSION, THE APOSTLE, LEAP OF FAITH

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Post Modern 2

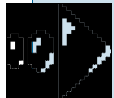


John 8:32



"Christ does not give Himself the name 'Custom' but 'Truth'.

Augustine



Television's Judge Judy says she's a 'Truth Machine'. She's been a judge so long that she can tell when someone's lying to her. Often she stares the plaintiff or the defendant in the face and says, "I don't believe you- you're lying to me." More times than not they admit it and proceed to correct their stories. President Bill Clinton has proven he isn't so easily intimidated. In recent years he has developed a whole new criteria for telling 'the truth'- hiding behind technical loopholes and sidestepping issues by twisting words to his advantage.

And OJ Simpson? Well, everyone has their own opinion of whether or not he told the 'truth and nothing but the truth'.

So what do we use as a basis for the knowing the truth? Is it science, or history? Are the only sure things in life the things you have personally experienced and discovered? Do people trust the Bible? Recently there was a news story about a young Jewish boy who attended a Christian Event with his friends in which he responded to an invitation to make Jesus Christ his Lord and Saviour. The problem came when he returned home to tell his mother that they had to call off his Barmitzvah because he didn't feel very Jewish anymore.

The news reporter interviewed the pastor of the Baptist church in question- concerned that any church would try to convert a child to their beliefs without the parent's consent. The reporter concluded that the Baptist Church took the Bible literally when it says Jesus is the only way to the Father, "unlike the other churches."

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Post Modern 2 _ _ _ _ _ ●



What kinds of things do you find hard to believe? Easy to believe?
Do you believe everything you read in the Bible?

What does the Bible say about The Word? John 1:1-14

Who is the Word?

What does vs. 1 & 14 tell us about the Word? John 14:6-7

Why is it important to believe Jesus? John 8:32

What will knowing the truth do for you?

What is more important- proving scientifically that the Bible is truthful
(which can be done!) or simply believing what God has said and
done?

Why is it so hard to simply believe?

Jesus was anxious that people know He was telling the truth.

Skim Matthew Chapters 5 - 26 and see how many times He says, "I
tell you the truth."



Check out: Charles Colson. BURDEN OF TRUTH: Defending the
Truth in an Age of Unbelief.

Cynthia Crossen. TAINTED TRUTH: The Manipulation of Fact in
America.

Jim Carey's movie LIAR, LIAR is about a man who is a smooth
talker. He runs from lie to lie, broken promise to broken promise.
He son wishes his father would tell nothing but the truth for an
entire day. When the son's wish comes true Carey's life turns to
chaos.

**What kind of changes would you have to make in your own
life if you suddenly could only tell the truth?**

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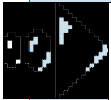
Post Modern 3



Hebrews 6:13-20
Hebrews 9:27 - 10:25



"My generation inherited not free love but AIDS, not peace but nuclear anxiety, not cheap communal lifestyles but crushing costs of living, not free teach-ins but colleges priced for aristocracy."
Tom Beaudoin (Gen X'er)



What were you doing New Years Eve 1999? Were you celebrating with family or friends or hiding in your newly constructed bomb shelter, waiting for disaster to strike?

People's reaction to the approaching Y2K bug disaster was varied. Western countries worked hard to fix the computer problem but worried about the effects 3rd world country computers- which had not been made Y2K ready- would have on our global village. Y2K Action Planners created elaborate strategies to handle any number of crises while other less technologically minded folk filled their bathtubs with water, bought a few extra cans of soup, and stocked up on candles and batteries. Ok, ok so did I! But I was responsible for an emergency shelter- should the need arise! One man even converted his entire back yard into a vegetable garden and had stock piled wooded, figuring he could barter for other goods when money became worthless. Still others laughed it off, not really caring one way or the other.

Some would argue that there has always been a heightened sense of hopelessness each time we have come to the end of one century and begun another.

Maybe that explains the rash of movies with doomsday themes. ARMAGEDDON/ DEEP IMPACT/ END OF DAYS...- all pointing out that it's not a matter of IF the world is going to come to an end- but WHEN. Even Christians have a renewed interest in end times. Just ask Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins, the authors of the LEFT BEHIND series. Their books are best sellers- they can't write them fast enough. There's even a series for kids.

But our fascination with the end of days doesn't explain why deep down- young and old alike have lost any sense of hope for the future. We see it all around us- increased suicides, mothers abandoning their children- or even worse parents ending their children's lives along with their own. People just don't see a light at the end of the tunnel- there is no silver lining in the clouds above us today.

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Post Modern 3 - - - - - ●



In what ways do people try to plan for the future?
In what ways is the future out of their control?
What are you hopeful for?

Who has brought hope to suffering people in the past?

Exodus 3:7-10

Matthew 8:1-3

Judges 3:9

Luke 7:11-16

Judges 6:7-16

Mark 5:9ff

How have you experienced a sense of hope from God?
What kind of hope does God give you?

Paul tried to explain his hope in Christ in the book of Hebrews.
Hebrews 9:27 - 10:25 Hebrews 6:13-20

Do you have the same hope he speaks about?



Check out these books:

Tom Beaudoin. **VIRTUAL FAITH: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X.**

LEFT BEHIND - www.leftbehind.com

Read your local newspaper- looking for stories of people who have lost hope. What is the outcome of their story?
What kinds of things could you or your group do to bring hope to people who have given up.

Watch the movie **DEAD MAN WALKING**.

What kind of hope is this movie talking about?

Does it bring to life the words of a great hymn- "The vilest offender who truly believes, That moment from Jesus a pardon receives."

Discuss the lyrics of Song #755 in the Salvation Army's Song Book.

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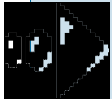
Post Modern 4



Exodus 3:1-6
Acts 9:1-19



"Western Christianity went to sleep in a modern world governed by the gods of reason and observation. It is awakening to a postmodern world open to revelation and hungry for experience."
Leonard Sweet



Game shows are-a-changin! No longer are contestants or viewers content to guess the price of produce or spin the giant wheel. No- today's 'fast-fingered' participants ponder their final answer with the help of life-lines or choose to walk away while they're still ahead. Still other, more adventurous types, willingly allow themselves to be castaway on a deserted island- anxious to prove they are survivors by chowing down on gooey bugs or BBQ'd rats. Why the popularity of these new games shows?

All agree it's not the money so much as it is the experience. Leonard Sweet in his book POSTMODERN PILGRIMS, writes:

Moderns want to figure out what life's about. Postmoderns want to experience what life is, especially experience life for themselves. Postmoderns are not willing to live at even an arm's length distance from experience. They want life to explode all around them. Postmoderns don't want their information straight, they want it laced with experience.

We have become masters at creating experiences. Travel agents sell adventure tours climbing mountains or trekking across deserts. Sports fanatics have left conventional sports behind and are now riding their bikes off cliffs and snowboarding out of a plane. Yes, even I have tried bungee jumping and white water rafting. Video games are becoming increasingly life-like, and theme parks- Ahhhhhhhh! Have you been on the Jurassic Park Ride at Universal Studios? And Disney? You have to love that Mouse.

The bad news is that the Army is finding it hard to compete. People aren't just interested in coming and sitting and listening and then leaving again. You've heard it: "The meeting is boring." So how come? Don't we serve a living God? A God of miracles and wonders? Doesn't the living Spirit of God guide us? Isn't God present in our Corps?

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Post Modern 4 - - - - - ●



What is your experience like at Sunday meeting?
Do you ever feel like God doesn't always show up on Sunday mornings?
Have you ever been present when His Spirit has moved in incredible ways?

What kind of personal experience did Moses and Paul have when they encountered God?
Exodus 3:1-6- Moses
Acts 9:1-19- Paul

How did they experience the presence of God?
Does that ever happen today?
How did their experience change their lives?

The 33AD Salvos were alive with the presence of God. What were the key elements of their time together as a group?
Acts 2:1-21; 2:42-47; 8:4-8; 8:26-39; 13:1-3
(if you've got time, keep going- there's more!).



Leonard Sweet. **POSTMODERN PILGRIMS.**

You'll want to read the whole book - but there's an interesting section where he looks at the Game Show WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?- and is able to pinpoint 4 elements that make the program so popular for today's culture. What can we learn from them?
What is it about a similar Game Show GREED that we're uncomfortable with?

Recall a moment when you experienced the presence of God.

(During prayer? worship? praise? etc.)

How did it change you?

Think about the following; "Postmoderns don't give their undivided attention to much of anything without it being interactive. It is no longer enough to possess things or to enjoy positive events. One now has to be involved in bringing those events to pass or brokering things into the home." Leonard Sweet. POSTMODERN PILGRIMS.

"There are no more professional clergy and pew sitting laity. There are only ministers who look to leaders to mobilize and release ministry through them. All 'participants' are full partners." Leonard Sweet. POSTMODERN PILGRIMS.

How are these statements true in your corps?

How can your corps help others experience the presence of God?

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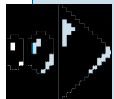
Post Modern 5



Romans 12:1-21



The most serious aspect of the nature of sin is that it is anti-God, inspiring not only movement away from Him, but hostility toward Him (Handbook of Doctrine).



Last year two college students took a few days from studying and headed to Las Vegas. Late one evening the two were hanging out in a casino when one of the two noticed a nine year old girl. She seemed to be wandering around alone- waiting for her father while he played blackjack. He followed the young girl into the washroom- where he proceeded to viciously rape her.

But surprisingly enough, it wasn't his actions that outraged people so intensely. It was his friend's actions. The friend had noticed him follow the girl into the washroom and shortly after he too went in. He watched from the next stall, trying to convince his friend not to do what he was doing. But when he saw it was going nowhere he left, and waited for his friend outside.

Later, when the two were arrested his response to questions about his failure to go for help shocked people everywhere. He said he didn't want to rat on his friend. He said he didn't know the girl so he didn't care what happened to her. He laughed at her fate. He maintained he did nothing wrong, that there was nothing else he could have done. As far as he was concerned his conscience was clear.

Moderns know right from wrong. It hasn't kept them from doing wrong, but at least they know it's wrong. Today thinking has changed. No longer is there a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. We find ourselves in the same place as the Israelites of long ago: "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes..." (Judges 16:6 KJV). We see this playing out in our society in business practices/ politics/ special rights groups, and among our youth in increased gang activity/ school shootings/ gratuitous sexual activity. Just watch any one of the many talk shows where the even the hint of values or morals is missing.

Even in the Christian church the line between right and wrong is slipping. E. Stanley Jones says, "Christianity is irrelevant. Not that the gospel is irrelevant, but Christians are failing to model it."

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Post Modern 5



What effects are 'no morals' having on the community in which you live?
What is your community doing to try to solve the problem?

What does Paul tell us about "no morals/sinful nature" - Galatians 5:16-25

What are characteristics of the sinful nature?

What are characteristics of the Spirit?

Why do they contradict each other?

Why is it so hard to live by the Spirit?

What is the key to living in the Spirit?

How does the Spirit act as your conscience?

How do you react to feeling of guilt?

Paul studies the idea of living guided by the Spirit even further in Romans 12:1-21.

Does Paul suggest that holy living is a natural development or more a conscious discipline?

What is his advice for holy living in vs. 9?



Check out these books:

Charles Colson. HOW NOW SHALL WE LIVE?.

Charles Colson. THE LINE BETWEEN RIGHT AND WRONG: Developing a Personal Code of Ethics.

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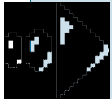
Post Modern 6



John 8:2-11
Luke 19:1-9



Salvationists share with fellow Christians the conviction that true moral values are not derived from circumstances, nor the way we happen to feel at the moment, not by our particular genetic inheritance, not even by the interplay of social forces. They are rooted in the very nature of things, in God Himself (Clarence Wiseman, A BURNING IN MY BONES).



The last two episodes of Fox Channel's Teen Drama DAWSON'S CREEK had viewers everywhere on the edge of their seats. And who could blame them? We'd been waiting all season for Joey and Dawson to get back together! What was she doing falling for Pacey? But that's not the story line that made front page news. It was Jack and his problems taking his date to the prom. The Christian girl organizing the whole thing wouldn't even sell him a ticket, not wanting 'his kind' there. "You'll spoil everything."

Dawson comes to the rescue organizing an alternative prom. And what a celebration of diversity it is! But alas, even there Jack can't find true love. When he finally works up the courage to kiss his date he discovers his friend is already seeing someone else. In his anguish he lashes out as his father, tired of having to work so hard at being normal.

"It's like having all the problems of a typical teenager, but there's this whole other level of constant fear, and pain. Do you know the anguish I went through over a kiss, one stupid little kiss? Most people don't have to do that. Then why me? I don't want to be different. I didn't ask to be gay...."

What is normal? What is wrong with being different? Scan the classroom of any urban North American school playground and you'll see diversity at it's best. North America is a melting pot of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. With so many traditions and beliefs, compromises have been made and strong teaching in acceptance of others a vital part of the education system. Tolerance is the 'gospel message'- give others' chance - seek to understand and embrace the differences. Anything less is racism and hate-motivated.

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Post Modern 6



Have you ever felt like an outsider of a group?
Have you ever been treated differently than everyone else?
How did Jesus treat people He met?

John 8:2-11 / Luke 19:1-9

What made these two outcasts 'different'?

In keeping with the Law - what should have been Jesus' response to meeting them?
How did he respond?

Are there people you find difficult to be friendly/ sincere with?
How do you respond to the outcasts of your community?

Jesus spent much time teaching people how to treat others. In one instance he says, *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."* (John 13:34)



Check out:

Josh McDowell. THE NEW TOLERANCE. (Tyndale House)
Leonard Sweet. POSTMODERN PILGRIMS. pages 126 - 132.

Sweet looks at the different rules for the treatment of others.
Do you agree with his observations?
What other rules apply today?

SHE'S ALL THAT is a movie about a group of high school boys who wager a bet. Can the ugliest girl at school be made 'cool'? It's an interesting study on what young people today think is needed to be popular, and what they are willing to do to be that. How readily do we accept young people for who they are?
How well do we make them FEEL accepted and loved?

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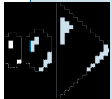
Post Modern 7



Ephesians 2:11-22
Philippians 4:2-9
1 Corinthians 12:12-27



He does not promise we shall be spared from bereavement, but
He does rescue us from the ultimate loneliness of a godless
universe (Federick Coutts, THE ARMOURY COMMENTARY-
THE FOUR GOSPELS).



Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks became friends via email in YOU'VE GOT MAIL. I have to admit it was a cute, romantic comedy, but where outside of Hollywood would you find this fairytale unfold so perfectly? There they were, two of the beautiful people, who happen to find that the only person they can be themselves with, they haven't actually met yet. Only they have, and face-to-face they don't like each other much. In fact it's Hank's character that ruthlessly puts Ryan's character out of business! I won't give away the ending- no, actually I will because you already know what happens- they discover the truth and quickly choose to set aside their differences, opting for a face-to-face relationship. Love at first sight so to speak!

If only it were that romantic for others who search the web for friendship and love. Chat rooms are filled with lonely people who indeed sense a freedom to be themselves- or anyone they want to be- while typing out conversation after conversation with people from around the globe. In fact, many people prefer to chat on-line.

What effect is this having on today's society?

As we see more of a worldwide community emerge, we also see a further decrease in local community and family support. While a First Lady of the United States writes that, "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child," proof of that actually happening in the Western Hemisphere is hard to find. Young people today readily admit that their strongest support is among their peers. Their relationships with friends are more important than anything, even life itself. While moderns worked to support and keep families together (often 3 generations living in one home) postmoderns are independent and isolated.

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Post Modern 7 - - - - - ●



How close is your family?
What are your Holiday get-togethers like?
Which relationships are more important - extended family or friends? Why?

What can the early church teach us about the family of God?

Acts 2:42-47

Acts 12:1-13 (especially Vs 5 & 12)

Acts 5:1-11

Acts 6:1-7

Acts 16:11-15

What would the ideal Family of God look like?

In what ways can newcomers be included in your church family?

Paul often wrote on matters about the Family of God. Look at each of these passages. What did Paul say was important?

Ephesians 2:11-22

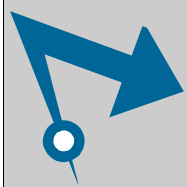
Philippians 4:2-9

1 Corinthians 12:12-27



Focus on the Family - has a helpful web site - www.fotf.org. and a free magazine!

Check out www.thefamily.org. It seems this is a Christian community 33AD Salvos sense of the word! Is this what Paul was talking about? Is this realistic for today?



GROUP WORK:

Pick your favourite interactive part of this week's lesson and share it with the members of your group.

You might even decide to stay late and watch the most helpful postmodern movie!