



**CHRIST CHURCH  
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**Humility - the Christian's greatest honour**

**Vicar's ten - minute reflection**  
**“HOLY HARRY” and “HUMBLE JOE”**



**Luke 18:9-14**

Have you ever noticed someone who is constantly bringing attention to himself? No matter what story he is telling it always ends with him being the hero. And if you're telling the story, he always seems to have one better or more important to tell. Everyone knows someone like this, if you don't, you may want to take a closer look at yourself. We have an example of someone like this in the Bible. Jesus tells us the story of a Pharisee who even in his prayer is continually exalting himself.

The Jewish law of that day required that the faithful give 10 percent of their income from **crops** and **livestock** to God's work. "Holy Harry" went beyond that; he gave 10 percent of **all** his income. Churches nowadays would fight over such a man. Jewish law required that the faithful fast or go without food just one day per year. "Holy Harry" did it two days per week. He was a religious over-achiever. He stood at the front of the sanctuary, glanced around at the other worshippers; some he eyed with contempt. Then offered a prayer which if translated into modern terminology would sound something like this: "O Lord, how thankful I am that I'm not loitering on some street corner; I am not a drug abuser or alcoholic, or living off welfare. I thank you that I'm not a cheat and liar and not involved in any sexual sins. I am a regular in church and pray regularly...O Lord, it's hard to be humble when you're perfect in every way."

**Jewish law required that the faithful fast or go without food just one day per year. "Holy Harry" did it two days per week. He was a religious over-achiever.**

But "Humble Joe" was also in the temple that day, said Jesus. He stayed out in the remote area, the Court of the Gentiles, not feeling worthy to come into the sanctuary. He was a tax collector - which meant that he was an unpatriotic thief and extortionist. He was so broken by his recognition of his failings that he could not bear to look upward to heaven. Instead, he beat his breast in pathos, crying out, "O God, be merciful to me. I am a sinner." That is beautiful brokenness.

From these two prayers we learn three things. The first one is that no man who is proud can pray effectively. One must first humble himself before coming to God in prayer. (Continued on page 3)



The second is that in prayer we do not lift ourselves above our fellow man. The third is that we are to set ourselves beside the life of God. We need to remember that no matter how good we are, the question does not change. The question is not, "Am I as good as my fellow man?" The question is, "Am I as good as God?" When we are truly broken before God, we realise that there is nothing in our hand that is worthy of being presented to God.

If I were to call you a "broken" person, you would probably resent it. But the Bible says that a certain kind of brokenness is essential if we are to be close to God. That tax collector went home that day as a forgiven and redeemed person. Beware when the world labels us as successful; then pride and self-sufficiency make us less able to be broken and beautiful.



Proud people focus on the sins of others; broken people know their own spiritual needs. Proud people need to prove they are right; broken people are willing to yield the right to be right. Proud people claim their rights with a demanding spirit; broken people yield rights with a meek spirit. Proud people desire to be served; broken people are willing to serve others. Proud people have an attitude which says, "The church is lucky to have me in it." But broken people feel this way: "I don't deserve to have any part in this ministry. O how good of God to include me." Proud people keep others at arm's length; broken people are willing to be vulnerable and close to others. Proud people have a hard time saying, "I was wrong and I'm sorry." Broken people are quick to confess and are genuinely repentant. Proud people, in a conflict, wait for the other person to apologise; broken people take the initiative to reconcile, regardless of who was at fault. Proud people don't believe they need revival, but are sure everybody else does. Broken people continually sense their need for a fresh encounter with God. Proud people compare themselves to others and feel superior; broken people compare themselves to the holiness of God and beg for mercy.

The late William Barclay told about travelling by train from Glasgow, Scotland to London. As they passed through the Yorkshire moors, he noticed a little whitewashed cottage. It seemed to shine with almost a radiant whiteness. A few days later Barclay made the return trip to Glasgow. In the interval, snow had fallen and was lying deep all around. (Continued on page 6)

## THE HARD QUESTIONS THAT CHILDREN ASK



I was sitting in the vestry of my church when I received a call from a distressed church member. What could we do about her child who was insisting that he didn't believe in God and didn't want to come to church anymore?

This was going to be tricky. Our own children weren't yet at the age of asking awkward questions. My wife couldn't think of a time when she hadn't believed. I had been through a brief patch of uncertainty during university, but had never been an atheist. And anyway, wasn't outright scepticism a phenomenon of teenage rebellion? Children just believe...right?

So we listened to him. 'If God's there why doesn't he show me? The Bible says God created the Earth in six days, but that's not scientific is it? Why doesn't God answer prayers?' Good questions, worthy of an adult, just as much as nine year-old Steven. We did our best for 45 minutes and by the end he seemed to leave a little more satisfied than when he arrived. We on the other hand felt a bit deflated. There simply aren't easy answers to these questions whatever age you are, and we felt under-prepared. So what can we do to make the case for Christianity to children asking tough questions?

### **Apolo-what?**

My day job is presenting a radio show and podcast called Unbelievable? on Premier Christian Radio. Every week I'm joined by believers and non-believers to debate whether Christianity makes sense, and I love the cut and thrust of engaging with sceptics. Adult sceptics that is. I had barely considered the idea of presenting an apologetic case for Christian faith to children.

'Apologetics' comes from the Greek word 'apologia' meaning 'to make a defence'. It's an ancient branch of Christian theology and philosophy that goes back to the beginning of the Church. Paul was doing apologetics when he debated with the Greek thinkers at the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17). Peter the apostle summed it up when he wrote: 'Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have' (1 Peter 3:15). Modern apologetics has a bit of an image problem; the idea that it is only for intellectuals and not for ordinary' Christians  
(Continued on page 5)

## The hard questions that children ask

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'has become entrenched. This explains why 'apologetics' rarely, if ever, crops up in children's ministry. But as Steven proved, children can experience doubt and come up with just as challenging questions as any adult. So we need to be ready to give an answer (as 1 Peter instructs us) - which is what apologetics is all about.



### Children have questions too

The Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics recently held a training day for young people called Reboot. Ruth Jackson of OCCA says the event grew out of a sense that, while adults were being provided for, there was no 'meeting in the middle' for young people who needed their questions answered.

The London event was aimed at 12-18 year-olds, but was also attended by some children who were younger. One ten year-old travelled all the way from Devon to be there, after hearing apologist Michael Ramsden speak at a conference he had attended. Jackson says we shouldn't underestimate the intellectual questions of many children like him. 'He was struggling in Sunday school as he didn't feel like he was having his questions answered. But after he heard Michael give an apologetics talk he began devouring his videos on YouTube. He then came to Reboot and had an amazing time.'

The 'but why?' question is a very common one among younger children. It may be annoying when asked for the 18th time, but it should be welcomed says Ruth Jackson. 'I don't think we ask that question enough as adults. Children are often the ones asking "but who made God?" and trying to get their head around the big questions about eternity, whereas teenagers and adults tend to focus on the nitty-gritty ethical questions.'

Chris Sinkinson teaches apologetics at Moorlands Bible College.

The father of two boys, he says he is always surprised at how deeply his children think about things. 'The questions have grown over time, from "what happened to the dinosaurs?" when it comes to creation and evolution, (Continued on page 9)



## “Holy Harry” and “Humble Joe”

Continued from page 3

He noticed again the little white cottage, but this time its whiteness seemed drab and soiled and almost gray, in comparison to the virgin whiteness of the driven snow. Our level of righteousness may seem high if we compare ourselves to certain other people; but when compared to the absolute holiness of God as we know him in Christ Jesus, we are simply soiled sinners. The closer we get to God, the more broken we will be. Only the broken folks can be filled with God's Spirit and used for his purposes. God can fill only that person who has some available space. If we want revival to break out in Christ Church, we must be beautifully broken for Jesus. Are you broken enough to allow Christ to mould you like clay? Are you broken and beautiful?



A truly humble man is hard to find, yet God delights to honour such selfless people. Booker T. Washington, the renowned black educator, was an outstanding example of this truth. Shortly after he took over the presidency of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, he was walking in an exclusive section of town when he was stopped by a wealthy white woman. Not knowing the famous Mr. Washington by sight, she asked if he would like to earn a few dollars by chopping wood for her. As he had no pressing business at the moment, Professor Washington smiled, rolled up his sleeves, and proceeded to do the humble chore she had requested. When he was finished, he carried the logs into the house and stacked them by the fireplace. A little girl recognized him and later revealed his identity to the lady.

**A truly humble man is hard to find, yet God delights to honour such selfless people**

The next morning the embarrassed woman went to see Mr Washington in his office at the Institute and apologized profusely. "It's perfectly all right, Madam," he replied. "Occasionally I enjoy a little manual labour. Besides, it's always a delight to do something for a friend." She shook his hand warmly and assured him that his meek and gracious attitude had endeared him and his work to her heart. Not long afterward she showed her admiration by persuading some wealthy acquaintances to join her in donating thousands of dollars to the Tuskegee Institute. Dele Agbelusi

# DEBATE ON BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

## Your Bible and its tribe

What depresses me about Bible translation debates today is **tribalism**. Some have raised the bar of this conversation to such heights that variation is tantamount to heresy. But let's have a little fun with the tribalism that does exist, that seems almost inevitable, that does sometimes lead to uncharitable divisiveness, but that can lead us to see ourselves in humorous tones at times.

Translations can also be a window to our heart and theology and preferences. So here goes with a sketch of tribalist translation tendencies. Each of these is partially true but not wholly true, so let's not reify but have a little fun...

**NRSV** for liberals and Shane Claiborne lovers;

**ESV** for Reformed complementarian Baptists;

**HCSB** for LifeWay store buying Southern Baptists;

**NIV** for complementarian evangelicals;

**TNIV** for egalitarians;

**NIV 2011** for peacemakers;

**NASB** for those who want straight Bible, forget the English;

**NLT** for generic brand evangelicals;

**Amplified** for folks who have no idea what translation is but know that if you try enough words one of them will hit pay dirt;

**NKJV** and **KJV** for Byzantine manuscript-tree huggers;

**The Message** for evangelicals looking for a breath of fresh air and seeker sensitive, never-read-a-commentary evangelists who find Peterson's prose so catchy.

**CEB** for mainliners who read their Bibles.

Translations are now officially and unofficially connected to tribes, and it is not a little bit humorous and also at times quite sad. Sometimes it sounds like culture wars, and that is sad. Here's my point: the authority is the original text, not the translation. The original texts are in Hebrew and Aramaic (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). The authoritative text is not in English, regardless of how accurate the translation. No matter which translation you prefer, it is not the authoritative text for determining which translation is best. Yes, we need more to devote more time to study of the original languages. (Continued on page 8)

## Debate on Bible Translations

Continued from page 7

The sweeping conclusion is this: unless you can read the original languages, you should avoid making public pronouncements about which translation is best. Instead, here's my suggestion: if you don't know the languages and can't read them well enough to translate accurately on your own but you want to tell your congregation or your listeners which translation is best, you need to admit it by saying something like this: "On the basis of people I trust to make this decision, the ESV or the TNIV or the NRSV or the NLT is a reliable translation."

Here's an example, and it's a good one. The translations of [James 3:1](#) translate in two ways:

**NIV:** "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers..."

**NIV 2011:** "Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers..."

**NASB:** "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren..."

**ESV:** "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers..."

**NLT:** "Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church..."

**TNIV** (same **NRSV**): "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers and sisters..."

**CEB:** "My brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers..."

Pretty obvious, isn't it? NIV and NASB and ESV translate with "brothers" while the NLT and TNIV and CEB have "added" or "clarified" or "included" [women in the audience] by adding "and sisters." NIV 2011 splits the difference and opts for "fellow believers" (you get to guess on gender). This is not a debate about which of them has a better theology or about which one is more inclusive but about which one is more accurate to the original Greek.

The fact is this: the Greek word behind this, adelphos or "brother," sometimes refers to a congregation of Christians, including men and women, and sometimes refers only to males (but there is a Greek word for male and James did not use that; gender is not the most important thing in his mind; spiritual kinship is).

Scot McKnight (To be continued in March edition)

## The hard questions that children ask

Continued from page 5

to why do bad things happen?" after the death of a family relative or a pet. As our older son has grown up, the questions have become more complex, such as asking about how the Old Testament law applies today.'



Suffering and unanswered prayer are also things that children want to talk through. Michelle Tepper is an apologetics speaker, and married to an ordained minister Peter. Their four year-old daughter Sophia has been asking about answers to prayer. 'We've been praying for more children for a while now, and Sophia had been praying for a sibling,' says Michelle. 'It hasn't happened yet so we've been talking through all of the issues with her, even though she's only just turned four. Without getting too intense, we will explain how the doctors are trying to help and that God gives them gifts. I also talk about waiting on God's timing, and remind her of different things she had to wait for, and how she felt when she got it. I'll remind her that we as her parents didn't change during that time of waiting, and nor does God. He is still good.'

**The reality is that the internet has made it possible for even the youngest children to come into contact with a vast amount of sceptical atheism online.** Helping children to engage with the issues from a younger age has become an ever more urgent task.

Britain's most well-known atheist, Richard Dawkins, has famously suggested that bringing up children in the Christian faith is a form of mental abuse, as children shouldn't be indoctrinated into one religion or another. In reality however, apologetics is not about indoctrination, but about teaching people to think for themselves.

Tom Price, an academic tutor at OCCA believes that, despite Dawkins' words, it's a mistake to suggest that children can grow up in a 'faith neutral' environment. 'I would say that if we don't do apologetics with children then somebody else will do apologetics for something else with them. Whether that's the beauty industry, the fashion industry, secular worldviews, or the Christian gospel, is up to each parent.' (To be continued in March edition)

Adapted from Childrensworld magazine

# LAUGHTER LINES

## Motion Detector



On a recent car trip, our four-year-old son, Ryan, became fidgety. I suggested we sing a song. As I began "Itsy-Bitsy Spider," Ryan stopped me and said, "Mom, you sing and I'll do the commotions." —Lisa Hammil,

Since the number of Christians in Asia (250 million and rising) will shortly overtake the number in Western Europe (280 million and falling), here are some gems from Asian Christians:

1. A young woman confessed to her priest that she was guilty of the sin of pride: "I look in the mirror and think of myself as beautiful." The priest said, "That's not a sin, that's a mistake."

2) Christian Doctor: "Your recovery was a miracle!" Christian Patient: "Thank God! Now I don't have to pay you."

3. A pastor says to a man about to be baptized: "Baptism is a serious step. Are you prepared for it?"

The man replies: "Yes. My wife made sandwiches and a cake."

The pastor says: "I am talking about the condition of your spirit."

The man says: "Oh, that. I have two bottles of vodka and some scotch."

4. A priest is on a subway train. A man opposite lowers his newspaper to reveal himself to be a hard-living man who smells of alcohol, has lipstick on his collar and is wearing rumpled clothes in which he has clearly been all night. With pain in his eyes, the man asks the priest: "Father, what causes dyspepsia, gout and cirrhosis?"

The priest replies: "My son, they are caused by a wild lifestyle, gluttony, alcohol abuse, and the company of wicked women."

The man says: "Amazing."

The priest says: "Would you like to be free of these ailments?" The man replies: "I don't have them. The newspaper says the Pope has."

# LAUGHTER LINES



© 2009 Dennis Fletcher. More at [kiddensjournal.net/Cartoons](http://kiddensjournal.net/Cartoons)

"We're teaching our children the importance of regular church attendance . . . what time should we pick them up?"

## Modern Philosophy

A man was beaten up by robbers on the road. He lay on the side of the road, half dead. A humanist came along, saw him and passed by on the other side. A Samaritan came by and also crossed to the other side. Finally, a modern Christian came along, looked at the man and said: "Whoever did this to you needs help."

## God, you've got to look it up!

Often, the best humor is accidental. It's almost impossible to take a small child to a church or temple without him saying something to make you crack up, like the child who prayed:

"Dear God, please send me a pony. I never asked for anything before. You can look it up."

## Dial a prayer

Let's give the last word in this column series to atheists:

**Q:** Did you hear about the Dial-a-Prayer service they have for atheists now? **A:** You dial the number and it rings and rings but nobody answers.

## **BUILDING STRONG MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS**

### **21 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR WIFE FEEL SPECIAL**

1. Ask her to dance when you hear your love song.
2. Polish her shoes for special occasions.
3. Have good conversations.
4. Give her a back rub with no expectations of love-making.
5. Buy and plant a rose bush as a surprise.
6. Keep your home repaired and in good order.
7. Make sure the car has good tyres and is in good running condition.
8. Hold her hand when you lead the family prayer.
9. Write out a list of all your important documents and where you keep them.
10. Find a way to save something from every pay check.
11. Ask her input before making decisions.
12. Hold her tenderly when she cries and tell her it's okay.
13. Ask her out and plan the complete date yourself— including making the reservations.
14. Occasionally, eat quiche and dainty desserts with her at a local restaurant.
15. Understand when she forgets to enter a check in the ledger.
16. Shave on your day off.
17. Call if you're going to be more than fifteen minutes late.
18. Encourage her to take time out with her friends.
19. Remember to carry Kleenex or a clean handkerchief when you go to a romantic movie.
20. Tell her she will always be beautiful when she worries about getting older.
21. Ask yourself one question everyday: "What's it like being married to me?"



### **20 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR HUSBAND FEEL SPECIAL**

1. Don't interrupt or correct him when he is telling a story.
2. Compliment him in front of his children, your parents, his parents and friends.
3. Be as concerned about your looks as you were when you were dating.
4. Let him have some time to relax when he first gets home.
5. Develop a genuine interest in his work and hobbies (Contd. on p.13)

## Building strong marital relationships

6. Admire him for his strength and significance.
7. If he wants to take a lunch to work, pack it for him.
8. Try to be home (and off the phone) when he gets home from work, and up in the morning when he leaves.
9. Help your kids be excited about dad coming home.
10. Buy him new socks and underwear on ordinary days instead of giving these as gifts on holidays and birthdays.
11. Keep your bedroom tastefully decorated and clutter free.
12. Understand when he wants to spend time enjoying sports or hobbies with his friends
13. Keep his favourite snack on hand.
14. Stick to your budget.
15. Watch his favourite TV sporting events with him.
16. Try to go to bed at the same time he does; understand if he falls asleep in the recliner after a hard day.
17. Trade babysitting with friends so you have some nights at home alone.
18. Keep lovemaking fresh and exciting, and remember he probably has more frequent desires than you have.
19. Bake homemade cookies for him to take to work.
20. Ask yourself one question everyday: "What's it like being married to me?"



*Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned. Song of Solomon 8: 6-7 (NIV)*

### Memory Verse

**If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.**

**(2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV)**



## WHAT'S ON: 09 FEB. 2014 - 09 MAR 2014

Date	Time	Order	Theme	Texts
09/02	1030hrs.	<b>ALL-AGE SERVICE</b>		Special Programme
		<b>YOUTH SUNDAY</b>		
	1700hrs.	<b>(EW) I AM- YOUR DELIVERER</b>		Exodus 2
16/02	1030hrs.	<b>(MP) WHAT IS SUCCESS - II</b>		John 13:1-16
		<b>SERVING</b>		
	1700hrs.	<b>(EW) I AM YOUR GOD</b>		Exodus 3
23/02	1030hrs.	<b>(HC) WHAT IS SUCCESS-III</b>		John 21:15-17
		<b>LOVING</b>		
	1700hrs.	<b>(EW) I AM YOUR CALLING</b>		Exodus 4
02/03	1030hrs.	<b>CONFIRMATION SERVICE</b>		Special Programme
	1700hrs.	<b>NO EVENING SERVICE</b>		
09/03	1030hrs.	<b>(MP) TEMPTED &amp; UNDEFILIED</b>		Matt. 4:1-11
	1700hrs.	<b>(EW) I AM GOD ALONE (1)</b>		Exodus 7

**Note: (HC) - indicates Holy Communion (Common Worship); (MP) - Morning Prayer; (EW) - Evening Worship (AA) - All Age/Parade Service; (HA)- Healing and Anointing. There is Holy Communion Service every Sunday at 8am using the Book of Common Prayer, except 2nd and 30th March.**

### WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Imagine a day when Christian women all over the world and from many denominations meet to worship together. Starting in the South Pacific, the next 24 hours are filled with prayers, praise and thanksgiving, continuing all round the globe. This is the Women's World Day of Prayer, and it has been taking place on the first Friday in March ever since 1926. This year 170 countries will take part, adapting a service written for 2014 by the women of Egypt. You can take part in this inspirational event by coming to our local service at St. Peter-in-chains, Womersley Road, N8 9AE, on Friday 7th March at 11am. Do join us! -Sheila Wheeler

# HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENCE

**E-MAIL FROM GOD (38)**

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From: **GOD, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

To: **You, My beloved child**

**With your help I can advance against a troop;  
with my God I can scale a wall.**

Subject: **YOU CAN'T BUT I CAN**

My Child,

If you will do the possible, I will do the impossible. In My book, the Bible, a soldier named Jonathan tracked a huge army of enemy soldiers and defeated them all with only the help of his butler. Two guys beat a whole army!

Was Jonathan a Superman or Rambo? No, he was a fairly decent soldier, but he was just a person. Jonathan did what he knew was right. He fought the enemy. I did the rest.

If you will step out and do what needs to be done, I will finish the work you start in My name. Are people hungry in your town? Begin feeding a few of them, and I will help you feed the rest. I will tell you to do things that you can't do. But don't be afraid. If you start it, I'll finish it.

Your General,  
God

Adapted from 'e-mail from God for Teens'-Clonigers

## TEXT FOR THE YEAR (Isaiah 41:10. NLT)

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

### FINDING OUT ABOUT ...CHRIST CHURCH?

Tel/Fax: 020 8340 1566

We are a family of men and women, boys and girls who are resolved to live for God in a world that has largely chosen to ignore Him.

We believe that it is God's world and that He has given the answer to all human problems in Jesus Christ. As a body of believers, we offer to all who come, regular opportunities for worship and service that point the way to God as our strongest resource in all aspects of life.

We will be pleased to welcome you to any of our activities.  
You will find a warm welcome at Christ Church.

#### Times of worship and fellowship are shown below:

- Sunday** - **8.00 am.** Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)  
- **10.30 am.** Main service with Crèche facilities  
There is all-age/parade service once every month - usually the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated.  
- **5.00 pm.** Evening worship

#### WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

- Sunday** - Choir practice in church (9.30 am)  
**Monday** - Prayer meeting in church - 17th February, 3rd and 17th March.  
**Wednesday** - Fellowship Meal in church (6:30 pm) followed by,  
Bible Fellowship (7.15 pm)  
**Thursday** - Homework Club (5 pm-7 pm )  
**Friday** - Scouts meeting in church and hall (6.30 pm)  
- Music Team practice in choir vestry (6.00 pm)  
**Saturday** - Intercessors prayer meeting in church (7-8 pm)  
**Enquiry/Counselling/Prayer Lifeline** - please phone 020 8340 1566  
**Editorial Board:** Sheila Wheeler, Iyabo Agbelusi, Dele Agbelusi  
**Vicar:** - Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi  
**Church Wardens:** Peter Green, Jibola Fapohunda, Charles Murphy  
**Lay Ministers:** Richard Mercer, Iyabo Agbelusi  
**Organist:** -Position vacant

YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

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