

A Pastor's Promotion of Vacation Bible School

By Dr. Franklin L. Kirksey

The burden for Vacation Bible School came in the late 1800s and continues to this day. I use the word "burden" in the sense of a prophetic burden or a call from the Lord. This is a burden that should not be burdensome, much like our Lord said, "My burden is light" (Matthew 11:30b).

The benefits of Adult Vacation Bible School are multifaceted. For example, leading the Adult VBS before VBS for other age levels provides a preview element to make teachers aware of the Bible passages. This will require planning and scheduling of the Adult VBS in advance of the Children and Youth VBS times. Please remember that you may also conduct Adult VBS in conjunction with VBS or at another time. The benefits derived from providing Adult VBS allow the pastor to employ his preaching/teaching gifts in a more relaxed setting. The use of Powerpoint can greatly enhance the educational benefit. Adult Vacation Bible School can create a climate for the spiritual growth and development of the church.

The blessing of personal involvement in Adult Vacation Bible School is that it can produce eternal rewards. Our desire is to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant" from "the judge of all the earth", our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the past five years it was **my privilege** to lead clinics for Pastor/Evangelism and Adult Vacation Bible School in the Baldwin Baptist Association (2005-2009). Soon after becoming pastor of the First Baptist Church of Spanish Fort someone invited me to lead the Baldwin Baptist Associational Pastor/Evangelism Training Clinics and to promote Adult Vacation Bible School.

My purpose was to encourage pastors and other church leaders through a sermon interpreting the theme verse. I begin the process of writing the sermon almost as soon as I learn the theme verse for that particular year. I felt led to begin an Adult Vacation Bible School in the First Baptist Church of Spanish Fort and attempted to encourage other pastors to do the same. Some pastors in our association do lead Adult VBS in their respective churches on five consecutive Sunday evenings and others plan to conduct it on 5 consecutive Wednesday evenings. Of course, if they use the sermon interpreting the theme verse, it would involve 6 weeks.

This particular study titled "Boomerang Express: It All Comes Back to Jesus" is a biographical study of the life of Simon Peter. Please notice each outline corresponds to the lessons found in the Adult VBS Leader Pack published by LifeWay. My outlines should serve as a supplement to the LifeWay materials.

In my Vacation Bible School Training Clinics I encourage pastors to tailor the Adult VBS to their particular church setting. The non-negotiable items are Bible Study, evangelism and prayer. However other elements might not fit your particular church personality.

It is **my prayer** that you will be encouraged by **a pastor's promotion of Vacation Bible School.**

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Outlines for Adult Vacation Bible School 2009 corresponding to the LifeWay Adult VBS Leader Pack followed by Introductory VBS Sermon titled “Boomerang Express: It All Comes Back to Jesus” based on (1 John 4:9)

Boomerang Express: It All Comes Back to Jesus

FOLLOW HIM

Track 1

I. ENCOUNTER (John 1:40-42)

Have you met Jesus?

We discover the context and background for this passage in John 1:29-39.

Dr. Jerry Vines wrote a book titled *Interviews with Jesus* (Nashville: Broadman, 1981) reprinted under the title *People Who Met Jesus*.

Do you remember the song titled “I Met the Master”?

II. EXPERIENCE (Matthew 4:18-22)

How do you respond to Jesus’ invitation?

Is your response marked by rejection or by reception?

R.S.V.P. is an abbreviation for a French phrase meaning “please respond”.

Some invitations are marked “Regrets Only”. In (Luke 18:18-30) we read about the regret of the Rich Young Ruler.

Another invitation of Jesus is recorded in (Matthew 11:28-30).

III. EDUCATION (Mark 8:27-30)

What do you know about Jesus?

Someone said, “A PhD without Jesus is just a post-hole digger or a phenomenal dud.”

Jesus asked in (Matthew 16:13-20) “Who do men say that I am?” and to Peter “Who do you say that I am?”

[Notice at His triumphal entry (Matthew 21:11) they called Him “Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.” Although it was a high complement, this statement reveals their lack of understanding of His identity.]

Some say Jesus was just a man but He is the God-man.

Paul offers a great statement about our Lord’s identity in (1Timothy 2:5).

IV. EVALUATION (Mark 8:31-35)

Do you really want to follow Jesus?

Dr. Stephen F. Olford said, “Decision not desire determines destiny.”

Someone else said, “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”

From Joel 3:14 we read, “Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision.”

Do you remember the song titled, “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”?

Boomerang Express: It All Comes Back to Jesus

WORSHIP HIM

Track 2

(Matthew 14:13-33; 1 Peter 2:16-18)

Introduction

Worship is what Satan desires and it is what Jesus deserves.

We see Satan's lust for worship demonstrated in his fall in Isaiah 14:12-15 and in his temptation of Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 4 and Luke 4.

I. WITNESSING (Matthew 14:13-21)

Feeding the five thousand

II. WALKING (Matthew 14:22-26)

Jesus walks on the Sea

III. WORSHIPING (Matthew 14:27-33)

"But immediately..." (v. 27)

Peter walked on the Sea and after the calm the disciples worshiped Jesus.

[Note they went from saying, "It is a ghost" (v.26) to "Truly, You are the Son of God." (v.33).]

IV. WARNING (2 Peter 1:16-18)

A warning about false teachers

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CONFESS HIM

Track 3

I. The Inevitable Reality (Luke 22:31-34; 54-62)

A. Sometimes we are tested (Luke 22:31-34)

B. Sometimes we fail the test (Luke 22:54-62)

II. The Inspiring Verity (Luke 23:44-46)

Jesus is always faithful

III. The Inviting Opportunity (Luke 24:1-12)

We can believe

Boomerang Express: It All Comes Back to Jesus

SERVE HIM

Track 4

I. Returning to the Familiar

(John 21:1-8)

II. Receiving of the Favor

(John 21:9-14)

III. Repenting over the Failure

(John 21:15-17)

IV. Reinstating with the Father

(John 21:18-19)

Boomerang Express: It All Comes Back to Jesus

OBEY HIM

Track 5

(Acts 4:12-22; 12:1-17)

I. OBSERVATION (Acts 4:12-18)

Look at what Jesus does

II. CONSIDERATION (Acts 4:19-22)

Decide what we will do

III. PREPARATION (Acts 12:1-4)

Be ready for trouble

IV. SUPPLICATION (Acts 12:5-10)

Pray for God's help

V. APPRECIATION (Acts 12:11-17)

Acknowledge God's answer

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"Boomerang Express: It All Comes Back to Jesus."

By Dr. Franklin L. Kirksey

1 John 4:9

"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

Introduction

"John, what animal is peculiar to Australia?" asked the teacher.

"An elephant, sir."

"An elephant! Elephants aren't found in Australia."

"That's right, that's why it would be peculiar."¹

Australia is an interesting place, known for crocodiles, kangaroos, koalas and boomerangs.

The theme for Vacation Bible School 2009 is "**Boomerang Express: It All Comes Back to Jesus**". The theme verse is 1 John 4:9.

From the website for Boomerangs.org you can learn the following: where and when to throw, basic throwing technique, fine-tuning your throw, catching your boomerang, boomerang maintenance, competition and games.²

There were no organized games in ancient Egypt. Sportsmen went out alone or with their families. They might hunt in the desert with bows and arrows and dogs, go fishing, **try to knock down birds with a boomerang in a marsh**, or go driving in a chariot. Boys and young men among the peasants especially enjoyed wrestling. Soldiers participated in war dances, which were a sort of physical drill. A game like checkers was the chief indoor game of men and women alike."³

The boomerang is a marvelous weapon. Just a crooked stick in appearance, but what a mighty factor in the primitive economy of the Australian bushman.

With the boomerang, he fells his game and feeds his family. With careful aim he hurls the missile, and should it fail of its object, it will return from its fruitless errand and fall humbly at the feet of its master.

The boomerang has become a symbol and a figure of speech. It conveniently characterizes the actions which go out today and returns tomorrow—with multiplied significance!

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Eccles. 11:1).⁴

"To prove that savages may by their own exertions become civilized he refers to such facts as the following: The Australians had formerly bark-canoes, which they have abandoned for others, hollowed out of the trunk of a tree, "which they buy from the Malays." The Peruvians had domesticated the llama; the Polynesians made bark-cloth.

"Another very strong case," he says, "is the boomerang of the Australians. This weapon is known to no other race of men," and therefore, he argues, cannot be a relic of a higher state of civilization."⁵

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "There is an Australian missile called the boomerang, which is thrown so as to describe singular curves, and to return at last to the hand of the thrower. Sin is a kind of boomerang, which goes off into space curiously, but turns again upon its author, and with tenfold force strikes the guilty soul that launched it."⁶

"The proper way to throw a boomerang is end on—that is to say, in a vertical plane, with the curved or hooked shape pointing forwards. It must be thrown with an overarm action something like a serve at tennis and needs to be given as much spin as possible in the direction of flight.

Although a boomerang is thrown straight up and down edgewise, its two sides are not the same: one side is flat, the other has a curved shape which is similar to the aerodynamic curve on the top side of an airplane's wing. In fact, this curvature on the boomerang serves the same purpose as the curvature on the wing of a plane.

This purpose is to provide lift. Because an airplane flies with its wings spread out horizontally and with their curved sides upwards, the direction of the lift as the plane moves forwards through the air is upwards. The faster it flies the more powerful is the lift. Similarly the slower it flies the less powerful the lift becomes until at last, if the pilot flies the plane too slowly, it will fall down." — Ryke Magnus⁷

In his book *Standing for Light and Truth* Dr. Adrian Rogers explains, "An atheist is somebody whose inborn knowledge of God makes him uncomfortable. So he tells himself that if he can get rid of the idea of God, he can get rid of his uncomfortable feeling. But that does not work for him. **He is like the man who bought a new boomerang and almost killed himself trying to throw the old one away.**

An atheist can never completely get rid of the knowledge that there is a God to whom he is accountable. Neither can a pagan who has never heard the name of Christ. Make no mistake: All men have some light from God and are accountable for that light. John said of Jesus Christ, 'That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world' (John 1:9). The revelation

factor says that God has given all people the witness of creation and conscience."⁸

Ken Ham, founder of *Answers in Genesis* is from Australia.

I. The Love of God toward us.

"In this the love of God was manifested toward us. . ." (1 John 4:9a)

In John 3:16 we read, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

II. The Labor of God for us.

"that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world" (1 John 4:9b)

Dr. Adrian Rogers tells, "I once had an opportunity to witness for two hours to Muhammad Ali, the former heavyweight boxing champion. Ali, who is a Muslim, asked me this question: 'If you say that Jesus is the Son of God because He was born of a virgin, wouldn't that make Adam more the son of God than Jesus because Adam did not have either a father or a mother?'

I said to him, 'Champ, Jesus is not the Son of God because He was born of a virgin. He was born of a virgin because He is the Son of God.' Jesus never had a beginning. He is the Eternal Son, the unchanging One, 'the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8)."⁹

III. The Life of God in us.

"that we might live through Him." (1 John 4:9c)

Paul writes in Colossians 3:3-5, "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

Conclusion

In the words of George Beverly Shea, "I'd Rather Have Jesus"¹⁰

We know from John's Gospel Jesus Christ is God's Son and that He came to give His life on the cross to provide everlasting life. John also explains that the God the Father has committed all judgment to Jesus Christ, His Son. Salvation or condemnation comes from Jesus, therefore, it all comes back to Jesus.

Invitation

The Frank Jenner Story by Stephen Tucker

During a time of testimonies at Lansdowne Baptist Church, Bournemouth, England in the summer of 1953, Rev Francis Dixon heard two very similar stories from two British sailors who had never met each other before. Both sailors, while on shore leave in Sydney, were approached by a man who asked the question: **"Young man, if you were to die tonight, where would you be, in heaven or in hell?"** In the course of time they both returned home, but the encounter with this mysterious man on George Street, Sydney, left such a deep impression on their hearts and minds that they both sought spiritual help when back in England. Later, they both became Christians, Francis Dixon himself having the pleasure of leading one of the sailors, Peter Culver, to Christ.

Shortly after this, Francis Dixon departed with his wife Nancy for his first preaching tour to Australia and New Zealand. Deeply fascinated by the coincidence of the two stories of the sailors and recognising that he was heading to the land where these events had happened, he resolved to investigate the matter further. Who was this unconventional street-evangelist? Why had he chosen to act in such a way? And how many other people had been impacted by his ministry?

It didn't take long to get some answers. The tour commenced in Adelaide and, while preaching in a large hall one night, Francis Dixon related the stories of the two sailors from England. At this point, their host - who happened to be sitting next to Mrs Dixon, and to whom they had just been introduced - waved his arms around, jumped up, and said, "I'm another! I'm another!" This man, Murray Wilkes, later told them that during the war the evangelist had approached him while he was running to catch a tram, and that he had given his life to Christ in an army barracks two weeks later.

While in Perth, Francis Dixon again shared the story of the two sailors. This time, a man approached him after the talk to say that he too had become a Christian as a consequence of the single sentence uttered by the evangelist on George Street, Sydney. What's more, he had gone on to lead Christian Endeavour for Western Australia.

And so, Francis Dixon reached Sydney determined to meet the man behind these stories. On arrival, he related the stories to local Christian worker Alec Gilchrist, and asked if he knew the evangelist. "I know him well", said Alec. "His name is Frank Jenner. Like me he works with the Forces and he is a sailor himself. He worships at one of the Christian Brethren assemblies in Sydney". Later, in Frank and Jessie Jenner's humble town-house, as Francis Dixon told the four stories of the men who had responded to the evangelist's simple question, Frank Jenner, with tears in his eyes, fell to his knees and prayed: "O Lord, thank you for tolerating me". After a time of prayer, Jenner confessed that after speaking to 10 people a day for the previous 16 years, this was the first time he had heard of lasting results. "You know, I never heard that anyone I ever

spoke to had gone on for the Lord. Some made professions of salvation when I spoke to them but I never ever knew any more than that", he said to his guests. Those who knew Frank Jenner testify that his nature was generous and warm, that he quickly inspired trust in others, and that his life was marked by persistence in prayer.

The circumstances of the Second World War - particularly the horrific images of Japan after the atomic bombs - so heightened Jenner's sense of urgency that he felt it necessary to confront others directly about their standing before God. Not that this came easily: Jenner struggled to overcome a gambling habit acquired as a sailor, and he suffered persistent health problems throughout his life. He was so aware of his weakness that before each encounter on George Street he silently prayed: "I can do all things through him who gives me strength". He first coined his now-famous question in 1937, and over the years probably asked nearly 100,000 people.

It is no surprise, then, that his influence extended far beyond Australia. Just a month after meeting Frank Jenner, Francis Dixon spoke at a Methodist Church in Keswick, England. After the service, a man who worked for 'Mission to Mediterranean Garrisons' approached Mr Dixon and said, "I too was challenged by Mr. Jenner and now I am in a soul-winning work myself". Four years after this, while ministering to missionaries in India, Mr Dixon found another convert from George Street, Sydney. She had responded to the evangelist's challenge and offered her life for service in India. In all, Francis Dixon knew of 10 people who had come to Christ as a consequence of the influence of Frank Jenner. I wonder how many more there are?

Frank Jenner, in his own way, and to the embarrassment of some Christians, got to the heart of the issue: he directly challenged sailors about their standing before God. His simple question is not a formula for us to copy, but his life is a wonderful testimony of how God can use those who remain faithful to him.¹¹

A skeptic once derided a Christian man by asking him: "Say, George, what would you say if when you die you found there wasn't such a place as heaven after all?"

With a smile the believer replied: "I should say—well, I've had a fine time getting there anyway!"

Then the Christian sent a boomerang back to the skeptic—a question not quite so easy to answer.

"I say, Fred," he asked, "what would you say if, when you die, you found there was such a place as hell after all?"—*Free Methodist*¹²

Simon Peter declares: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

If you do not know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord you can pray a prayer like this:

Dear God, I know that I am a sinner, in thought, in word and in deed. I am a sinner by nature and a sinner by choice. I believe that Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of my sin and that he rose from the grave on the third day. I ask Jesus to take over my life and to be my Savior, my Lord, and my King. Thank you for giving me the forgiveness of my sin and everlasting life. Amen.

¹Herbert V. Prochnow, *A Speaker's Treasury* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 129

²Available from: <http://www.boomerangs.org/how.html> Accessed: 08/16/08

³*Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, editors Philip W. Comfort & Walter A. Elwell (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 2001) Database © 2006 WORDsearch Corp. "Throwing and Catching a Boomerang"

⁴ENCYCLOPEDIA OF 15,000 ILLUSTRATIONS: *Signs of the Times: A treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers.* , By Dr. Paul Lee Tan, Copyright © 1998 Paul Lee Tan. All rights reserved. Database © 2004 WORDsearch Corp. #14463 "The Boomerang"

⁵*Systematic Theology*, by Charles Hodge D.D. Database © 2005 WORDsearch Corp.

⁶*My Sermon Notes: A Selection from Outlines of Discourses, Delivered at The Metropolitan Tabernacle With Anecdotes and Illustrations*, By Charles H. Spurgeon, Database © 2006 WORDsearch Corp.

⁷ENCYCLOPEDIA OF 15,000 ILLUSTRATIONS: *Signs of the Times: A treasury of illustrations, anecdotes, facts and quotations for pastors, teachers and Christian workers.* , By Dr. Paul Lee Tan, Copyright © 1998 Paul Lee Tan. All rights reserved. Database © 2004 WORDsearch Corp. #11123 "How To Throw A Boomerang"

⁸Adrian Rogers, *Standing for Light and Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), p. 85

⁹Adrian Rogers, *Standing for Light and Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), p. 19

¹⁰George Beverly Shea, "I'd Rather Have Jesus" © 1922, 1939 by Rodeheaver Co. (a division of Word, Inc.)

¹¹Available from: <http://www.wordsoflife.co.uk/FrankJenner/FrankJenner.htm> Accessed: 08/16/08

For further reading: *JENNER of GEORGE STREET* by Dr Raymond Wilson Obtainable from: Paul Young 31 Fairmeadows Cwmfelin MAESTEG Mid-Glamorgan CF34 9JL UK E-mail: Paulalisonyoung@tesco.net ;

Also available from the author: Dr Raymond Wilson PO Box 485 Mango Hill BRISBANE Qld 4509 Australia Phone: (07) 33850563 E-mail: redowilson@smartchat.net.au

¹²Walter B. Knight, *Knight's Master Book of New Illustrations*. Copyright, 1956 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Database © 2007 WORDsearch Corp. "The Inevitable Alternative"

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<http://www.webspawner.com/users/franklinlirksey>
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"We have thought about it for several years, but only this year did all the pieces come together. All five Bible studies involve a relationship with Jesus Christ through snapshots of the life of Peter. It is the first time we have created a VBS curriculum that allows for a character study of one person. Through the life of Peter we see that truly it all comes back to Jesus."

The VBS Scripture is 1 John 4:9

"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

The Boomerang Express and travel to different destinations throughout the country."

The daily Bible study outlines for children are Track 1, "Follow Him" (Peter's invitation); Track 2, "Worship Him" (Peter's discovery); Track 3, "Confess Him" (Peter's challenge); Track 4, "Serve Him" (Peter's mission); and Track 5, "Obey Him" (Peter's obedience).

Available from: <http://www.sbcbaptistpress.org/BPnews.asp?ID=28235> Accessed: 06/24/08

Hop on Board

Take a thrilling train ride across the Land Down Under with LifeWay's Boomerang Express! As kids wind their way through Australia, they'll discover the vastness of God's love and they will learn that no matter where they go or what they do in life – it all comes back to Jesus.

Scripture

1John 4:9

Motto

Follow!
Worship!
Live through Him!

Terms to Know

Kids: Kidaroos
Teachers: Outback Guides
Daily Challenge: Boomerang Challenge

Site Rotation

Worship Rally Central
Bible Study Outback
Music Opera House
Missions Harbor

Crafts Crossing
Recreation Rock
G'Day Café

Children's Bible Content

Track 1: It all comes back to Jesus – Follow Him

Bible Story

Peter's Invitation (John 1:40 -42 and Matthew 4:18-22)

Memory Verse John 15:9

Life Application Because Jesus loves and chooses me, I can follow Him.

Track 2: It all comes back to Jesus – Worship Him

Bible Story Peter's Discovery (Matthew 14:22-33)

Memory Verse John 20:31

Life Application

Because Jesus is the Son of God, I can worship Him.

Track 3: It all comes back to Jesus – Confess Him

Bible Story Peter's Challenge (Luke 22:31-34, 54-62; 23:44-46; 24:1-12)

Memory Verse Romans 6:23

Life Application Because Jesus died for me, I can confess Him as Savior.

Track 4: It all comes back to Jesus – Serve Him

Bible Story Peter's Mission (John 21:1-19)

Memory Verse 1John 1:9

Life Application Because Jesus forgives me, I can still serve Him.

Track 5: It all comes back to Jesus – Obey Him

Bible Story Peter's Obedience (Acts 1:1-17)

Memory Verse Philippians 4:13

Life Application Because Jesus helps me, I can follow God's Plan for my life.