

25<sup>th</sup> April

### Memory Verse

If we confess our sins  
**he is faithful and just** to forgive us our sins  
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.  
I John 1:9.

### The mystery solved

Do you remember the lesson for 20<sup>th</sup> April? We left Herr Thomas Döring and Dr. Falk Eisermann wondering what to do with the ancient manuscript they had found that had been used, hundreds of years after it had been written, to make binding material for another book which in its turn was now very old and precious.

By 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006 the secret had been revealed. The age of the manuscript alone was enough to justify taking the little book apart to allow it to be read. Do you remember the words Professor Schmid had deciphered: *sten* (stone), *idise* (women), *giungarom* (disciples), even before the book was dismantled? Did you guess? They were part of a retelling of the story of Christ's resurrection. The discovery was the oldest known writing in the Old Saxon language and it had been written some time in the ninth century.

But the manuscript turned out to have some very important connections too. The books (they were actually two books bound together in the same binding) were in a style recognisable as that of a printer from Wittenberg. Wittenberg is a city with strong connections with Martin Luther.

The page turned out to be part of a copy of the *Heliand*, ("The Saviour") which is:

A Harmony of the four Gospels... written about 830 or earlier, an alliterative epic in the old Saxon language, [which] was doubtless written in the circles of the British mission on the Continent.<sup>1</sup> It contains the Gospel narrative in a form calculated to appeal to the people for whom it was written, and is remarkable for being free from any adoration of the Virgin or the saints, and from most of the characteristic features of the Roman Church at that period.<sup>2</sup>

American researcher Timothy Blaine Price has found evidence that this manuscript may have actually once been owned by Martin Luther. Luther is said to have owned a copy of the *Heliand*. Luther translated the Bible into German and to do this he had to forge words for concepts that until then were not available in the German language of his day. He may well have used Old Saxon words in the *Heliand* to help him in this task. It is uncanny to think that this manuscript, found in 2006 may have been on Luther's desk as he worked at his Bible translation.<sup>3</sup>

### Something to do: look for the unexpected in your books!

What can you find in your *own* book collection? Even up to quite recent times, book binders have used old paper from other books inside the bindings of new ones. Sometimes if an old book gets damaged and the spine falls off the hidden pages are revealed – as you can see in the picture on the right! Generally these recycled pages were not pages from books that had been bound, sold and



1 Missionaries from Britain were active at this period, bringing the Gospel to heathen tribes on the continent.

2 E H Broadbent, *The Pilgrim Church* (1931)

3 For an interesting video about Luther's German translation of the Bible which gives a glimpse of the big library of old bibles held by the Trinitarian Bible Society see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=raVQakIY7kQ&t=5s>.

used. They were books that the publisher or the binder had had left on his hands. I'm **not** suggesting you take any of your books to pieces but you might be surprised at what you see if, using a torch to help you, you peer down the inside of the spine of an old book. Do treat your books with care and respect though!

Another interesting thing that you can sometimes find in an old book is a list of other book titles in the last few pages. Publishers sometimes had a number of spare pages at the back of a book due to the constraints of the binding process. Rather than leave them blank, they would fill them with lists and descriptions of books they thought might interest the reader and tempt them to make a purchase. Look in the back of your old books and see what you can find. More than once I have discovered a book that I had never heard of but which sounded very interesting in one of those lists. They can be a good way of identifying enjoyable books to get hold of and read. Get searching in *your* bookcase!

#### A letter to read<sup>4</sup>

25th April, 1935

We have been sailing up the mighty Amazon for the first two days, and this morning at 6.30 we entered the Xingu. By midnight we shall have reached Altamira, where we shall disembark. From there we commence the Xingu advance proper.

How did it all come about? Another long story, so I am writing this in order that our many friends may know what we are about, and that they may advance with us by intelligent prayer and its inevitable outworking both here and at home.

Fred Roberts, being in the way that the Lord led him, arrived in Brazil again for the second time on April 20th. We were soon to learn that he had with him an excellent kit, including a 41 horse-power Chapman motor for our canoe, a microscope and other scientific instruments, together with a supply of cash to commence the much-prayed for advance to the wild Kayapos of the Rio Xingu.

So great was our joy in the Lord's abundant answer to our prayer, we could only exclaim together as one man: 'Hallelujah!'

Still greater perhaps was my own inward joy to learn that the Lord had honoured me and that I was to be one of the party. We are three – Fred Roberts, Fred Dawson and myself. Two Australians and an Irishman, a strange combination. Still, without the Lord even such a combination is doomed to failure, so I correct myself – we are four!

There is no time lost in getting off, Roberts arrived on the Saturday and on the Tuesday immediately following, we were aboard the launch *Tuchaua*. Mr. Harris and the others at the base accompanied us to the city to give us a last farewell. Mr. Morris, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and Mr. Hutcheson, of the New Testament League of South America, bid us God-speed as we steamed out of Belem at 9 p.m. bound for the Xingu.



<sup>4</sup> Map By Kmusser - Own work using Digital Chart of the World and GTOPO data., CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4747584>. Information from WM. J. W. Roome, *The Three Freds Martyred Pioneers. for Christ in Brazil* (London, 1936) and other sources.

The intervening time was taken up in packing and making last purchases to complete our kit. On the Sunday we gave our farewell messages to the Brazilian Church of Santa Izabel. Amongst our last few purchases was a six foot cross-cut saw, a good supply of ammunition that we may not go short of food in the forest. Six sheets of galvanised iron, a supply of rivets and some strong tin cutters. I asked surprisedly, 'What on earth are the rivets and sheet iron for?' 'To fashion for ourselves steel jackets,' was the reply. 'You may as well understand from the outset that the Kayapos shoot at sight.'

We do not wish to unduly alarm anyone, neither for the sake of the work or the success of this trip do we care to minimise the dangers. We are taking every precaution so that foolhardiness, or negligence, may not be laid to our charge. Within a few weeks we shall be outside the pale of civilisation, then we shall purchase a canoe, fit the motor, don our coats of galvanised iron, and the search for the Indian souls will begin.

So far as we can ascertain, the Kayapos are numerous. We shall be the first white men to have intruded upon their freedom. Therefore we are fully aware, that humanly speaking already we are as good as dead men, but brethren stand by us as one man. Do not criticise, we are beyond criticism as we go forward in the name of the Lord and under his command having first fully counted the cost. Finally, it is well to remember that Calvary was, and still is, the greatest victory of all time. Death to the Christian is not defeat! Should the Lord will that we are taken, our prayer is that more men, and money, will be rushed out to follow up this advance. Let our generalship be greater than that of our great arch-enemy the devil, and set aside all sentiment for the sake of the spread of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in this our day.

I should like to say that the day before we set out I received a letter from my mother, who was then totally unaware of our proposed advance, with this command and promise contained in Joshua 1. II. 'Go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it.' Praise God for praying mothers! Please remember daily the Three Freds.

Yours, in the train of His triumph,

FREDERICK H. WRIGHT.

The 'Three Freds': Fred Roberts, Fred Wright and Fred Dawson went out to evangelize amongst the Kayapo people. They travelled up the Xingo and then its tributary, the **Riozinho**. The Kayapo people had had little contact with any kind of civilisation. They carried out savage attacks on the homes of Brazilian settlers. They would kill the men and carry off any women into the rain forest. When nothing was heard from the three Freds (the letter above was the last one from them), Horace Banner (1906-74) who, with his wife, worked among Amazonian Indians went out to look for them together with William "Jock" Johnstone.

This was no easy task. First there was an 800 mile journey by boat and motor transport before Horace and Jock reached the edge of hostile Indian Territory. Taking armed guards with them, they eventually got 200 miles into Indian Territory to stand below the waterfall known as Smoke Falls. Here they found the sunken motor boat and the clothing remains belonging to the three Freds.

When the search party returned to safety, Horace turned to the second chapter of the book of Ezekiel and read verse 6:

...and thou, son of man, be not afraid of them.....be not afraid of their words, nor dismayed at their looks.....Thou shalt speak my words unto them.

Horace Banner took these words to heart. He and his wife Eva Banner went on to spend 40 years in

the service of God amongst the Kayapos Indians along the River Xingu and its tributaries in the Amazon Rain Forest. Horace Banner was the first person to reduce the Kayapo's language to writing and he translated many Bible passages and also hymns into Kayapos. Today there are many Christians among the Kayapos.

### Map work

Can you find the places highlighted in green in your atlas?