

## PRAISE

- **Praise God for opportunities Carl had to promote the work of Challenge in New South Wales recently.**
- **Praise the Lord for the visa extension of five years for Andrew Trezona and family living in USA.**
- **Praise the Lord for a generous gift received recently towards our India project.**
- **Praise the Lord for the opportunity to meet with Prison Fellowship Board regarding commencement of a Australian prison edition of Challenge possibly February 2014.**
- **Praise the Lord for a number of gifts received towards an upcoming trip to USA for Carl who will be doing promotional work with Andrew.**

## PRAYER

- **We have been informed by the Immigration Department our visa application has been rejected. Please pray with us as we seek the Lord regarding our future direction. Please continue to pray for the Newell family as we work through our options for the Editor position at Challenge.**

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### Psalm 23:5

**You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over**

Continuing our studies on Psalm 23.

In biblical days a shepherd would need to move his flock on to new pastures. However, before he did that he would spend time checking out the pasture for possible dangers and risks.

Some of those risks might involve toxic weeds and grasses. Some years ago I was visiting a farm and I was invited to take a tour of the property with the owner. We entered a paddock

with a large number of sheep, and as we got close to the animals we noticed several were falling and stumbling. It was like they had been drinking too many beers. The owner explained the problem was Rye Grass toxicity. The excessive gas given off from the lush Rye Grass caused the inebriated symptoms.

Also the shepherd would have been keenly looking for the presence of viper snakes. They lived in holes in the ground, and once found the shepherd would take a bottle of oil from his belt and pour oil in and around the hole. This slippery environment hindered the snake's movement around its hole. So in a literal sense the shepherd was preparing a table for his sheep in the presence of their enemy.

I experienced this on a recent trip. I was aware of God's protection and of His direction to prepared contacts. The sheep were able to go about their lives in peace and enjoy safe surroundings. In the same way I was able to go about promoting Challenge with the care, provision and protection of God. It is wonderful to know that when God has sent us on a mission, that He has gone before us in every situation and circumstance that may arise. It is only as we rest in Jesus, our divine shepherd, and have confidence in His care and thus experience His presence, that the Christian life becomes a walk of calmness and quiet confidence.

*Continued over*

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Email: info@challengenews.org

### PRAYER CONTINUED

- **Please pray for our Malawi project. Ananda and Grace Pula have taken over from Jonathan Newell. Ananda is responsible for the development, promotion and distribution of the Challenge newspaper. Isaac Chigawa oversees the administration plus gathers stories for each edition of the paper. Please pray for the Lord's care, protection and provision for both families.**

- **We would value prayer for the ongoing financial needs of the ministry as it continues to grow and develop both here and overseas**

- **Please pray for the Trezona Family in USA. Growing the work takes time so please pray with us for open doors and growing orders plus good health and protection for Andrew and the family.**

We need to see another aspect of this verse. Oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit and His power.

One of the common problems that a shepherd had to deal with was the sheep being tormented by Nasal Fly. They had the rather unpleasant habit of laying eggs in the nasal passages of sheep. Once hatched the maggots would feed on the sheep's delicate nasal tissue. A shepherd would know that he had a problem because a sheep infected with maggots would become irritated and distressed. To solve the problem the shepherd would use a mix of linseed oil, sulphur and tar. Once applied the oil treatment would bring about an almost instant transformation in the sheep's behaviour.



*A practical reason for applying oil to the sheep: dislodging nasal flies*

We as Christians can sometimes have a problem with being irritated, impatient and critical, perhaps even subject to fits of anger. But once we allow the Holy Spirit to fill us He brings about a transformation in our behaviour and attitudes.

The realisation comes to us that our Shepherd's care is so very personal ... indeed my cup runs over.

Another version of Psalm 23:5 reads: **You prepare a feast before me in plain sight of my enemies. You refresh my head with oil; my cup is completely full.**

CARL CARMODY, EDITOR OF CHALLENGE

## MY RESPONSE

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