How relevant is the Old Testament to the Christian? Many believers are put off by the Old Testament due to its strange ceremonies, weird animal sacrifices, and various wars and battles. Added to this are the strange customs, funny names, and ancient empires long confined to the dust-bins of history.

1. But according to Romans 15:4, why was the Old Testament written for New Testament believers?

While the Old Testament was not written to us, it was written for us.

2. What are the two sources of hope for the believer according to Romans 15:4?

Hope is a positive expectation about our future. To live without hope is to despair. The Scriptures both give and reveal why the believer now has hope. Often times the believer’s vision of their source of hope is obscured because they find themselves in conflict with another believer. For those of us who have come through such times, we realise that our intimacy with God is directly affected by relationships with others -especially our brothers and sisters in Christ.

3. With this in mind, who is/are the intended beneficiary/ies of Paul’s prayer in Romans 15:5? Discuss.
How important is *singing* to Christian worship? Apart from some forms of Judaism, Christianity is one of the few religions where singing is considered an act of worship.

4. Tick which of the principles in Romans 15:6 are true-

   ___ Only those in choir robes should sing in church
   ___ Singing together in worship of God is an act of unity
   ___ Singing should only be in major keys because minor keys are of the Devil
   ___ When Christians sing together they are engaging their hearts and minds
   ___ Because singing worship is an act of reverence, only those who can sing in tune should participate
   ___ Singing worship to God can involve singing melody, harmony, bass and baritone

The church is comprised of believers from *different* backgrounds and nationalities.

5. Read Ephesians 2:13-14. According to this passage, what is remarkable about who comprises the members of a local church?

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In Ephesians 3:10, the apostle Paul states the church comprised of people who formerly hated each other, is a testament to the manifold wisdom of God. Who knows, this Sunday, God may bring into the church the most unlikely people!

6. Based on Romans 15:7, (i) How are we to respond to newcomers? (ii) In what way should we do this? (iii) Why should we do this?

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*Amen.*