

# THE BLOOD MILES

## GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*Below are some questions that you might find helpful for group discussions of The Blood Miles (along with the suggested corresponding chapter sections). If you would like some more general questions, see the “General Discussion Prompts” very end of this document.*

### Chapters 1-3

1. What do we find out about the town of Spillan in these opening chapters?
  - what do we find out about their political situation and history?
  - what is their relationship to the Central Government?
2. What have we learned about the Tox so far?
  - how are the people of Spillan trying to deal with it?
3. What have they got wrong according to Eve Veracis?
  - what are the signs of Tox infection according to her leaflet?
4. What is the Central government’s answer to the Tox?
  - why might people prefer the Spillan approach? (Matt 23:27-28; Luke 18:9-14 might help)

### Chapters 4-5

In *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (TPP), Christian makes a brief (and nearly fatal) detour to Mount Sinai on the advice of Mr Worldly Wiseman. In *The Blood Miles* (TBM), written for the modern world, this detour takes a little longer ...

1. What do we find out about the citizens of Ockham?
  - what things do they value and despise?
  - how do their values determine their treatment of people?
  - how does their approach to the Tox differ from that of Gaia?
2. How does Vera Eugenia understand the Tox and its effects?
  - what does her “cure” do to Chris and the man from Ockham?
  - do you have any thoughts about the discussion between the two of them about the meaning of life?
3. Why might reading the Roadbook help Chris with his colour-blindness? (You might get some help here by reading Ps 104 and thinking about its way of viewing the world.)

4. Different groups and cultures have identified many different qualities that make a person valuable. Who deserves respect according to the Bible? (see Genesis 9:5-6; Proverbs 17:5; James 3:9-10)

### Chapter 6

1. In this chapter, Chris returns to following (and learning about) the pipeline. How does this affect his thinking about Central and the Pantarch?
  - How does the pipeline let him down?
2. What else stops him getting closer to Central?
  - Do you have any idea what the cube represents? (1 Kings 6:20 and Revelation 21:1-16 might give some clues)
3. How does the history he reads about in the book differ from what he was taught in Spillan?
4. What are your own thoughts about the Pantarch after reading this chapter?

### Chapters 7-9

1. What do we find out about the man who rescues Chris at Horeb?
  - what response does he want from Chris?
  - what is the final outcome of their encounter?
2. Chris is intercepted by HORD militia as he reaches the gap (“Wicket” means narrow c.f. Matt 7:13-14). How do they try to stop him from going further?
  - how does he escape them?
3. Eve takes Chris into the pass and up to the communications base at Mt Didasko. What does he learn there that worries him?
  - What is the answer to Chris’s concerns? (see Ps 32:1-5)

### Chapters 10-12

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. (John 16:8)

1. Make a list of things that Chris learns in the monitor room.
  - what does the session reveal about the Central government?
  - what impression does it give you of life as a Central loyalist?
2. As Chris runs away and is rescued, what do we find out about...
  - the way he thinks about his own life?
  - the way the Desolator attacks?
  - how Central wants him to think? (Mark 2:16-17 and 1John 1:8-10 might help)

3. Chris discovers that the bog is part of the same river “The Law”) that he tried to cross with Flex. Can you see the significance of this? (Rom 3:19-20 might help)

### Chapter 13

1. In this chapter, Dr Klesia gives Chris an overview of his current problems and the Pantarch’s offer to help. Make a list of ...
  - the different problems he begins with
  - the solutions offered by Central
  - what he has to do to receive them.
2. What status does Chris have after taking the pledge and receiving the treatment?
3. *The Blood Miles* describes what the Envoy does for his people in different ways. The Bible has its own (and many more) ways of talking about Jesus’ work, but you might see some overlaps in these examples.
  - o Eph 2:12-13,19
  - o Rom 6:8-13
  - o 1 John 2:1-2
  - Are there any other Bible ideas or verses that this chapter reminded you of?

### Chapters 14-16

*For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?*  
(Romans 7:22-24)

1. As Volume 2 begins, we see Chris having disagreements with lots of different people. See if you can identify the differences between Chris and the following people and discuss the rights and wrongs of their disagreement.
  - Eve (and Dr Klesia)
  - Mallory
  - The silver-suits
  - The other travellers
2. How does Chris feel about his own progress?
3. What are your hopes and fears for Chris at this stage of his journey?

### Chapters 17-19

*So he went on, and Apollyon met him. Now the monster was hideous to behold ... When he was come up to Christian, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance, and thus began to question him.*  
(*The Pilgrim’s Progress*)

Boneyard Road, where Chris encounters Bird once again is an echo of The Valley of Humiliation in TPP. In both cases, the pilgrim, having experienced a high point (Crux in TBM, The House Beautiful in TPP), stumbles and struggles – and finds an encourager.

1. What are the highlights and low points of Chris’s journey in these chapters?
  - are you noticing any patterns?
  - how is Chris’s idea of travelling different from Central’s ideas? (Eph 4:11-16 might help)
2. How does Lieutenant Bird try to persuade Chris to give up his journey?
  - what do you think of Bird’s arguments?
3. Can you see anything significant or symbolic in the way Chris escapes Bird? (It might be helpful to read Eph 6:17 to get some background on the *machaira*. The coat, which features throughout TBM, is sort of a hybrid image that brings together the new identity given to Christians – c.f. Gal 3:26-29 – and the spiritual protection provided to those who trust in Jesus – like the shield in Eph 6:16)
4. What are your impressions of Caleb at this stage? (You might get some insight by looking up the meaning of his name)

### Chapters 20-21

*My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.*  
(John 17:15-18)

1. In chapter 20, Chris and Caleb encounter a last challenge at the end of the valley. How does this one manifest?
  - in what ways is it similar or different from what Chris has already encountered?
2. Who helps them and how does he encourage them?
  - what do you think Clem’s viewer (and advice) represents? (1Pet 3:13; Col 3:1-4; Phil 3:18-21 all might help)
3. In the following chapters we will encounter the prosperous Corp city of Addle. What do we find out about the secrets of its success in Chapter 21?
4. What do you think of Chris’s suggestion that they might go around it?
  - what might a real-world equivalent of that look like?
  - what’s Clem’s advice about that?
  - what would you say to someone who was thinking of trying that?

### Chapters 22,24 (Caleb Parts)

1. What things surprise and disturb Caleb as he begins to meet people in Addle?

- Fergus says people can't hear what Caleb is saying because the Tox blinds and deafens them. Is he right? (2Cor 4:1-6 and 1Cor 2:13-14 might help)
  - Fergus's advice is to "keep on shouting at 'em ... till Prax send some help." Is there anything you would add to that or disagree with? (2Tim 4:1-2; Phil 3:13-16 might help)
- Fergus says that the Scorchers have become part of the system they think they're fighting. Why does he say that?
  - are there any other things in this discussion that you agree/disagree/half-agree with?
- What are we learning about the different ways Addle control's its citizens?

### Chapters 23,25 (Chris Parts)

*God forgive us our love of ease. God forgive us that so often we turn our faces from a life that is even remotely like his. Forgive us that we all but worship comfort, the delight of the presence of loved ones, possessions, treasure on earth.*  
(Amy Carmichael)

- What are your impressions of Pru & Trev?
  - what threat do they represent to Chris? (Mark 4:18-19)
- We only get a brief glimpse of the Professor and the others at Museum Station, but what can you work out about their goals and motives?
  - what would you say to them if you had a chance?

### Chapters 26,28 (Caleb Parts)

- We've already seen some of the ways Addle controls people. What new methods do we see here?
  - what do the Addle authorities want with regard to Travellers and Central?
  - do you think there are similarities with things that go on in our world?
- What do you notice about Gaius and Phoebe as you read about them?
  - what is their relationship to the people and government of Addle?

### Chapters 27,29 (Chris Parts)

- These chapters begin and end with Johnny. What do we find out about him and his history?
  - what has gone wrong with him?
  - what would you say to him if you were Chris? (Rom 8:5-11 might help)
- How would you assess Mallory's situation?
  - do you see any weaknesses in her plans?
- Do you have any theories about what happened to Rose? (the timing of her collapse might give you a clue)

### Chapters 30-31 (Caleb Parts)

- In these chapters we encounter a number of different sorts of Travellers. Who are they, and what can you work out about them?
  - how does Gaius explain the differences between his brother Fergus and some of the younger Travellers?
- How do you feel about the behaviour of the people in the amphitheatre?
  - what things are they most worried about?
  - are there things in our world they remind you of?

### Chapters 32-33 (Chris Parts)

- See if you can summarise the disagreement between Chris and Mallory in the first part of these chapters.
  - is she wrong to want the miracle pills?
  - what would you say to her if you were Chris?
- Chris tries to rescue her. What goes wrong? (Prov 14:29; 16:32; Rom 12:17-21 might help)

### Chapters 34,36-37 (Chris Parts)

- We now come to the hardest part of Chris's journey. As you read through it, what does he spend most of his time thinking about?
- Looking at the clues around him, what has happened to other Travellers in the same situation?
- Is there any hope for Chris? What would you say to him in this situation?
- What do we learn about the goals of the Corp and the Administrator in these chapters?
  - what's the antidote (Eph 6:10-18 and Rev 12:10-11 might help you think about these questions)

### Chapter 35 (Caleb Part)

- Do you see any similarities between the way the authorities are treating Caleb and what's happening to Chris?
  - what are they trying to prove?
- What advice would you give to Caleb? (1Pet 4:12-19 might help)

### Chapters 38,40 (Chris Parts)

- What is new thing happens to Chris in these chapters?
  - how does it change his thinking? (Ps 119:49-56 ,among other verses!, might help)

2. What do we learn about Lenny?
  - is Chris right in what he says to him?

### Chapters 39,41 (Caleb Parts)

1. “I guess I thought that it would go better if I was trying’ to follow the Envoy.” What has been happening to Caleb to make him say that?
  - what does Phoebe say to encourage him?
  - what would you say?
2. “Most things turn out to be a disappointment when you finally get there.” Do you think Seini is right?
  - Is there any exception (John 4:13-14 might help)
3. Can you think of anything Caleb might have said to persuade Seini not to go?

### Chapters 42,44 (Chris Parts)

1. What new things do we find out about the Tox and its purposes?
2. The Administrator suggests that the Corp is “giving everyone what they want”. What does he mean by that?
  - how does the Corp see the people of the AZ?
3. What does Chris do that helps?
  - can his response help us? (Ps 22:1-5 might help)

### Chapter 45 (Caleb Parts)

1. What does Caleb discover in on the data stick and what is the significance of it?
  - what new light does this shine on life in Adde?
  - is there any way to avoid it? (Ps 146 might be helpful)

### Chapters 46-48 (Chris Parts)

1. What things have changed for Chris as he goes into this final battle?
  - what is the same?
2. What does he regain that saves him?

### Chapters 49-50 (Chris Parts)

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*  
(Romans 8:18)

1. Chris is given a new perspective in these final chapters. What does he learn about:
  - the AZ and its future
  - his friends
  - the Pantarch’s relationship to his own journey
  - his suffering
  - his failures
2. What questions does the chapter leave you with?

### Epilogue

1. Finally we come back to the beginning. What new things do we learn about:
  - Callan (Stick)
  - The Mayor
2. What do you think is going to happen next?

## GENERAL DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. What ideas do we find here about the world’s problems and how to deal with them?
2. Can you see things the main character is getting wrong or right here?
3. Have you learned anything about the history of the AZ and/or the Central government?
4. Did anything in this chapter remind you of things in the Bible or in our world?
5. Does this bit leave you with any mysteries or questions?